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### Enduring Dreams: Social Capital and Hydro Development in Northern Manitoba

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#### Abstract

The Canadian province of Manitoba has long pursued an aggressive strategy of hydroelectric development. This effort was predicated upon a mix of old and new assumptions, including long-held beliefs that power must be cheap and that the province, operating through its crown utility, Manitoba Hydro, possessed the only legitimate claim to northern land and water resources. The province also recognised the need to remove Aboriginal communities from lands and resources to be used for hydro development notwithstanding the fact that these communities and individuals had long practiced what was, by many accounts, a comfortable and economically viable way of life. Using a social capital framework developed by both sociologists and political scientists, the consequences of this strategy on the displaced Aboriginal residents of South Indian Lake, a small community located in Manitoba's northern hydro region, are examined. The analysis is based on interviews conducted with former residents now living in a number of urban centers throughout the province. It is concluded that these individuals have been largely, if not entirely, unsuccessful in forming the variety of communal bonds emphasised by social capital theorists. These difficulties continue today, as individuals who were left on their own, with little assistance either from back home or from the state, exist in a world largely devoid of supportive social networks.

#### Introduction

More than a half-century ago, a panel of experts convened by the then-recently constituted United Nations to 'study the rapid economic development of the under-developed areas of the world' concluded that '[P]rogress occurs only where people believe that man can, by conscious effort, master nature. This is a lesson which the human mind has been a long time learning. Where it has been learnt, human beings are experimental in their attitude to material technique, to social institutions, and so on' (United Nations 1951, 13). According to these experts, a welter of attitudes, preferences, and social structures can stand in the way of modernity and the associated expectations of material development. While a 'lack of interest in material things . . . due to the prevalence of an other-worldly philosophy which discourages material wants and . . . a relative preference for leisure' (1951, 13) could impede progress, even more important were customs and laws that discouraged producers from engaging in innovative activities' (1951, 14).

Traditional societies, warned the United Nations' experts, required otherwise entrepreneurial and innovative individuals to consider 'the demands of family [which] may discourage initiative if family obligations extend over a wide network of persons, and if enterprising members of the family resent being subject to the claims of their more distant relatives' (1951, 14). Progress, therefore, necessitates some 'painful readjustments. Ancient philosophies have to be scrapped; old social institutions have to disintegrate; bonds of caste, creed, and race have to be burst; and a large number of persons who cannot keep up with progress have to have their expectations of a comfortable life frustrated' (1951, 15).

Rehabilitation of the individual, however, is only one of the conditions necessary for development; the state also plays a crucial role. Among its responsibilities is the creation of a political and legal infrastructure required by the innovative individual, including an educational system capable of producing a technically proficient workforce; a legal system that respects and preserves essential private property rights over communal landholdings; a tax system capable of generating an adequate flow of domestic capital; and a modern infrastructure adequate to supply the energy necessary for the production and transportation of agricultural and industrial goods. Once these conditions were met, then the private entrepreneur would be free to move 'resources in the desired direction' (1951, 68).

Development could be undercut if either of the two primary actors failed to understand their respective roles. The state's planners, for instance, must be aware of a 'tendency towards excessive centralization which discourages individual effort. The only way of meeting this is to be on one's guard constantly and to ensure that the political and economic planning mechanisms provide the fullest scope, at each stage, for individual and local participation' (1951, 68). At the same time, the entrepreneurial individual must guard against backsliding into the generally more comfortable and secure world of supportive familial relations.

The necessities of development as understood by the United Nations' experts have long permeated the institutional thinking of countries around the world, perhaps nowhere more so than in the case of large dam projects, some 40–50,000 of which now populate the planet's rivers (International Rivers 2011a; McCully 2001, 3).<sup>1</sup> Regardless of geography, culture or climate, the promises and rationales offered by the dam builders have been remarkably consistent. In the United States, for instance, planners at the Bureau of Reclamation have asserted that the 'many positive environmental effects' produced by large dam projects allow 'man [to] comfortably live and prosper'. The United States Army Corps of Engineers seconds the claim, insisting that at the core of all of its typically massive schemes is a desire to 'restore, maintain and enhance the natural and man-made environment in terms of productivity, variety and spaciousness, beauty and other measure of quality . . . and to create new opportunities for the American people to enjoy the environment and the use of natural resources' (Goldsmith and Halyard 1984, 5–6).

In Africa, Egypt's Aswan High dam was offered as a means to lift the country out of the despair created by a largely pre-modern way of life, mainly through the provision of cheap and abundant electricity (Goldsmith and Halyard 1984). Similar claims were made for many of India's large-scale dams, including the massive Sardar Sarovar project (Baviskar 2004; McCully 2001).

At the other end of the African continent, the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, in addition to securing significant quantities of cheap energy to Lesotho and plentiful supplies of much-needed water to South Africa, has been said to provide the added benefit of serving as the basis for improved transnational relations (Mwangi 2007). Similar stories played out on the other side of the Atlantic. Thus, Honduras' El Cajon dam was meant to lift the region out of the grinding reality of poverty (Loker 1998) much like Guatemala's Chixoy Dam and its Pueblo

Viejo Hydroelectric facility was intended to provide the electricity for that country's take-off into modernity (Johnston 2005).

All of these efforts, of course, pale in comparison to China's commitment to dam building. According to the advocacy organisation International Rivers, 'there are more than 25,800 large dams in China' the construction of which has meant the relocation of more than 23 million people (2011b). Perhaps the best known of these projects is the world's largest hydropower project, the Three Gorges Dam, whose planners promised that it both control the vagaries of nature, that is, repeated flooding and associated dislocations all along the Yangtze River basin, and usher in an entirely new era of prosperity that would allow the estimated 1.3 million affected residents to become "stable and wealthy . . . through resettlement in newly built cities or township seats that [would] accompany the relocation of old urban sites and secondary or tertiary industries' (Tan and Yao 2006, 352).

Despite the questionable success of these and many other projects, dam builders around the world continue to insist upon the overwhelmingly positive benefits associated with mega-hydro projects. Enamored with the apparent success of Three Gorges, China is moving forward with ambitious new rounds of dam building. Plans call for a doubling of capacity to 380,000 megawatts by the year 2020 while simultaneously exporting its development expertise to many other parts of the world (International Rivers 2011b). In Brazil, home to a hydrological system nearly the size of continental United States, developers are quickly bringing to fruition projects throughout the Amazon basin, including the Belo Monte Dam on the Xingu River, the Santo Antônio and Jirau dams on the principal tributary of the Amazon, the Madeira, as well as a host of dams on the Tapajos, Araguaia and Tocantins rivers. Malaysia's Bakun Project is equally forward-looking, with proponents insisting that the dams will be the instrument through which the nation will realise its goal of massive industrialisation on the way to a 'higher stage of development' (Keong 2005). In all cases, central planners are promising prosperity and security not only to the nation as a whole but also to the many thousands of Indigenous people that will have to be uprooted and resettled.

Any list of countries that have accepted the nostrum of prosperity through the wholesale re-engineering of nature must also include Canada and, in particular, it's several hydro-endowed provinces.<sup>ii</sup> Windsor and McVey, for instance, point out that 'since the early nineteenth century, the economy of British Columbia has traditionally depended upon the exploitation of its plentiful natural resources', the modern extension of which are a number of mega-hydro dams (2005, 151; Waldram 1988; Porteous and Smith 2001, Chapter 5). While impressive, British Columbia's ambitions are dwarfed by those of Quebec's. Most forthrightly expressed by former Premier Robert Bourassa in his 1985 book *Power from the North*, the idea was not simply an engineering scheme breathtaking in its scope and hubris; it was, rather, a project designed to show the world, and perhaps the rest of Canada, that the Quebec *nation* had the capacity to achieve great things (Martin 2008; Young 1999, 5–6). While the reality has not quite matched the vision, Bourassa did manage to launch the James Bay Hydroelectric project, the first phase of which, the so-called La Grande complex, consists of nine major dams, 206 dikes, 37 generating units, thousands of kilometers of transmission lines and 15,000 square miles of total water surface area, of which 72 percent represents newly flooded lands (Warner and Coppinger 1999, 23–24). Though suspension of the Great Whale project temporarily stymied the province's momentum, the anticipated 2012 completion of the Rupert River diversion project will once again put Quebec in the forefront of the world's dam builders (HydroQuebec 2011).

Manitoba's hydro dreams have been equally substantial (Hoffman 2008; Hoffman and Bradley 2008). Once again, harnessing the electrical generating capacity held captive by free-flowing northern waters was understood as a prerequisite for what Netherton has called 'provincial continental modernization' (1993). According to the province's planners, development was

predicated upon a mix of old and new assumptions, including long-held beliefs that power must be cheap and that the province, operating through its crown utility, Manitoba Hydro, possessed the only legitimate claim to northern land and water resources. The province also recognised the need to establish mechanisms meant to remove Aboriginal communities from lands and resources to be used for hydro development (Netherton 1993, 294–5), notwithstanding the fact that these communities and individuals had long practiced what was, by most accounts, a comfortable and economically viable way of life (Van Ginkel Associates 1967). Yet, in language virtually identical to that of the United Nations', provincial authorities argued that this way of life had to be sacrificed, not just for the good of the electricity-consuming south but also for the benefit of those soon to be displaced and relocated. Finding a problem where none seemed to exist, the dam builders concluded that 'the ultimate solution' for the Aboriginal residents of northern communities was to become fully engaged members of 'technocratic society. [W]hether this society is perfect or not is irrelevant. There is simply no choice but to take part in that society, if the individual is to achieve full status' (Van Ginkel Associates 1967, 8).

Like many analyses before and since, the Van Ginkel report failed to acknowledge many of the human and social costs that were to be visited upon the north's Aboriginal residents. Principle among these costs was the erosion of social capital and the failure of resettlement schemes to replicate, in any meaningful way, that which was to be lost to the region's rising waters.

### **Social capital and human development**

Starting with Hafinan's 1912 study of the socio-economic problems facing his West Virginian community, the idea of 'social capital' has played an increasingly central role in sociology's understanding of community and community decline and how each of these may impact on specific individuals. Hafinan coined the term to describe how social intercourses, solidarity and other communal or associative institutions create social relations favoring the cohesiveness of the group. Hafinan observed that modernisation was, in certain circumstances, associated with decay in community cohesion and social capital. However, he also described how a rural community, by developing its social capital, had succeeded to greatly improve its health, moral and economic conditions. Hafinan's work was able to explain the erosion of the community in the face of industrialisation as well as the 'survival' of some communities facing similar circumstances.

Despite its explanatory power, the concept of social capital was largely unused until Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988) in the late 1980s put it on the intellectual agenda. Since that time, there has evolved some common understanding about the nature and definition of social capital. First, networks are assumed to be at the foundation of social capital. Second, social capital builds up when we have recourse to it and decays when one stops using it. Indeed, the more people lend and borrow, or get involved in associational activity, the higher the level of social capital. On the other hand, not using the social resources and networks provoke their erosion. Third, social capital is both a public and a private asset. This last point puts the study of social capital at the intersection of two sociological approaches: the study of the rational choice and the anti-utilitarian school, which contends that underneath the market, communal institutions (such as reciprocity) still contribute to shape social relations. Finally, social capital is not only the product of communal institutions but also associative institutions. Dense networks of social interaction, such as the family, produce social capital, as do political parties and unions based on the voluntary association of individuals.

Regardless of the type of social unit, at its core are shared norms and standards, trust, reciprocity and mutual obligations that simultaneously foster individual success and build up the economic and social viability of a community (Herrerros 2004; Zhang 2001; Woolcock and

Narayan 2000). From this perspective, social capital functions in a reciprocal fashion, that is, the social unit is sustained by norms that support the individual in his or her personal pursuits who, in turn, supports the social unit as a collective enterprise. Unlike development notions of the sort advanced by the United Nations experts and the practitioners at Manitoba Hydro in the 1960s and 70s, social capital theorists conceive of social relations, including ties exhibited by extended family networks such as clans and tribes, to be enabling of development rather than as relations that are burdensome, exploitative and/or irrelevant.

Over the last several decades, researchers have distinguished various forms of social capital, the two most commonly identified types being *bonding* and *bridging*, terms first coined by Gittell and Vidal (1998). Social networks, whether family or community based, that provide individuals with emotional and material supports, constitute the former.<sup>iii</sup> Bridging networks, on the other hand, refer to membership in voluntary and/or political organisations, participation in which allows individuals to become involved with the broader society, including people from different ethnic, socio-economic or religious backgrounds. Woolcock (2000) and Onyx and Bullen (2000) identified a third form of social capital, that is, *linking*, or 'relations between different social strata in a hierarchy where different groups access power, social status and wealth' (Voyer 2003, 31). While bonding refers to traditional forms of social interactions that contribute to secure community cohesion and place people at the core of a web of reciprocity, bridging and linking refer to social relations that put the members of a community, or the community itself, in a web of social interactions based on something other than proximity, affinity or even reciprocity. Instead, these relationships are based on voluntary associational behaviors that connect individuals or the community with individuals or institutions that 'hold different position in a system of social hierarchy' (Iosifides et al. 2007, 1345).<sup>iv</sup>

The concept of social capital has also proven to be of great value to political scientists, mainly as a means of understanding the role of 'civic engagement' in the development and maintenance of a healthy and viable democratic discourse. The origins of this analysis are found in Tocqueville-ian concerns with civil society; that is, those groups that stand as an intermediary between the individual citizen and the institutions of the state, the role of interest groups as expressions of the political and social interests of citizens, and the nature of a pluralist political system (Edwards, Foley and Diani 2001). Chief among the contemporary writers on this subject is Robert Putnam, whose analysis of political differences in the northern and southern parts of Italy evolved into a more general concern with the state of democracy and, in particular, with the declining rates of civic participation on the part of the American public (2002; 2000; 1993).

Among the many issues addressed by political scientists is the extent to which social capital creates the capacity for effective collective action. To some extent, this issue is confounded by the causal link between collective action and social capital. Is a reservoir of social capital understood as a set of pre-existing social networks necessary for effective political action or does effective individual and/or group action lead to the creation of social capital? In the former construction, social capital is an independent variable whereas in the latter it is a dependent variable that relies upon individual action to be called into being. In the case of the Aboriginal residents displaced by Manitoba's hydroelectric development schemes, for instance, social capital might be treated as an independent variable destroyed by either forcible or voluntary relocation, the lack of which is inhibiting these individuals from improving their material, social or psychological well being. Conversely, social capital might be conceived of as a set of social relations, the creation of which on the part of the displaced population could serve as a vehicle for furthering their well being through a variety of political and institutional structures.

## Hydro development and the displaced residents of South Indian Lake

Though social capital is a concept frequently used in the study of refugees (Boateng 2009) and in the analyses of post-disaster coping strategies (Hawkins and Maurer 2010), it is generally absent from discussions regarding the social impacts of large-scale hydro projects. Instead, researchers have favored the concept of 'social impoverishment' to quantify the adverse impacts of development-induced displacement (Cernea 1995; Cernea and Guggenheim 1993; Weist 1995; McDowell 1996, Scudder 1996).<sup>v</sup> In part, the failure of social capital to find a home in the analyses of mega-hydro projects lies in the fact that the concept has lost some of its precision and therefore its analytical utility (Lin, Cook and Burt 2001). Nonetheless, it remains a useful tool for assessing the status of individuals and communities adversely impacted by the dam development schemes, including those undertaken in Manitoba.

One such population is South Indian Lake (SIL), a small, mostly Aboriginal community of some 800 individuals located along the shores of Southern Indian Lake. Until the mid-60s, SIL, like other Cree First Nations of northern Manitoba, was not much affected by the economic growth of the province, relying as it had for many years on the monetary resources provided by fishing and trapping in combination with an informal economy sustained by the region's abundant wildlife.

The groundwork for the destruction of this way of life was laid in the early 1950s when the government of Manitoba and its crown utility, Manitoba Hydro, envisioned diverting the Churchill River into the Nelson River to produce hydroelectricity (Manitoba Hydro, no date). In 1964, studies were conducted to determine the feasibility and the economic viability of the so-called Churchill River Diversion project (CRD) and the associated Lake Winnipeg Regulation (LWR) project (Hoffman 2008). Two years later, the decision was made to go ahead with the projects largely without consideration of the environmental, biological and social repercussions associated with re-engineering the region's water regime. This was hardly surprising, since, as noted above, no matter the scale of the effects, the dam builders were convinced that employment and other material benefits created during and after construction would not only compensate for the decline in traditional activities but also serve as the basis for the necessary and desirable transition into modernity.

It is fair to say that leaders of potentially affected northern communities did not share Manitoba Hydro's enthusiasm for the dams, which were largely designed for the benefit of southern communities, including those located south of the Canadian border. In the face of stubborn resistance on the part of the province and the utility to provide information about the projects (Cobb 1992) the communities decided to form the Northern Flood Committee (NFC) to defend the land that supported their way of life and their local economy. Their strategy was based on the assertion that the projects constituted a violation of their rights established by Treaty Number 5 which stated, in part, that 'the aforesaid reserves of land, or any interest therein, may be sold or otherwise disposed of by her Majesty's Government for the use and benefit of the said Indians entitled thereto, with their consent first had and obtained' (quoted in Cobb 1992, 30). Manitoba Hydro and the government of Manitoba, however, did not recognise the NFC's right to negotiate on the basis of the treaty participants, claiming that it was solely the Crown's responsibility to ensure observance of treaty rights. Absent any other leverage, the NFC communities agreed to sign the 1977 Northern Flood Agreement (NFA).

The NFA opened the way for the development of several hydro projects and specified a number of compensation measures, although, in comparison to a similar agreement between the Cree and the province of Quebec, the compensation called for under the NFA was extremely modest. Even here, however, Manitoba Hydro and the province were reluctant to comply with the few commitments they had made in the agreement (Chodkiewicz and Brown 1999).

In fact, in the years following the signing of the NFA, while Aboriginal communities did receive some monetary payments for remedial works, few, if any, substantial long-term or self-sustaining investments in the economy were made. A similar lack of effort characterised programs that might have assisted in the social development of the communities (Interchurch Inquiry 2001; Cobb 1992).

The situation was especially problematic for South Indian Lake, in part because the community was not recognised as an autonomous band, meaning that it could not partake in even the relatively meager benefits available under NFA. At the same time, while the majority of South Indian Lake residents were Aboriginal, they were either without status or were members of another First Nation. In addition, since the village of South Indian Lake was established on Crown rather than reserve land, the province was able to force residents to relocate away from existing traditionally-situated home sites, the majority of which were scattered all along the lake.

The impact of dam development on the residents of SIL was swift and profound, a fact made evident by the province's own experts. According to perhaps the most authoritative pre-dam study, the so-called Van Ginkel report, on the eve of the Churchill River Diversion project the main economic pursuits in SIL were fishing and trapping, there being some 80–125 licensed fishermen and 80–150 licensed trappers. These pursuits were responsible for a remarkably prosperous life. Compared to the 'average income of Indians in the North of approximately \$500', SIL's average annual income per employed person was approximately \$2500 while the average family income stood between \$3500 and \$4500; approximately five percent of the residents had achieved a level of income in excess of \$10,000 per year (Van Ginkel 1967, 2). According to the consultants, SIL compared favorably with the national Canadian average. Indeed, 'if the current Canadian measure of poverty is applied (an income of less than \$3000/year), only 27.9 percent of the total number of families at SIL were poor' a percentage close to the national average at that time (Van Ginkel 1967, 36).

The prosperity evident in SIL came to an end with the construction of the dams and the almost immediate degradation of the lake. According to a 1992 assessment by federal authorities, the project resulted in the desiccation of formerly extensive wetland areas; exposure of large river bars and extensive areas of former river bed; abandonment of former side channel areas; and localised channel and bank erosion in former, apparently stable areas. The result was 'locally significant sediment production [and] considerable shoreline erosion . . . Sediment output from SIL went from about 120,000 tonnes in 1975, to 400,000 tonnes in 1976, 600,000 tonnes in 1977 and 550,000 tonnes in 1978' (Department of Fisheries and Oceans 1992, 2).

The collapse of the SIL commercial fishery caused by these conditions foreshadowed the community's transition into penury. Prior to the opening of the dams, the fishery yielded some 333,500 kilogram of fish per year. The majority of the catch was graded as 'export' quality and was sold in southern Manitoba and American markets. In 1977, the year during which the first of the CRD/LWR dams were completed, the fishing season was normal and fishing quotas were quickly reached. Just one year later, however, fishermen noted two major changes: they had to go further to catch fish and what they did bring in was of lesser quality. Subsequent years brought further declines in both volume and quality, with prices, and therefore community incomes, reflecting the downward revisions in quality (Waldram 1983, 188).

At the same time, due to the constantly shifting water levels necessary to accommodate power demands and the accompanying increases in sedimentation levels, trapping revenues, which had long supplemented local incomes, were also adversely affected.

The deterioration of the community's fortunes is reflected in both household and personal incomes and associated increases in the dependency rates. As noted above, prior to the flooding, the people at SIL were 'very well off economically' with incomes at or near the

northern and Manitoba averages (Van Ginkel 1967, 38). Today, the average household income has fallen far below that of other northern towns while the median personal income, far from being at or above provincial averages, is now one-quarter of both Thompson, the primary regional centre, and the provincial capitol of Winnipeg (Statistics Canada, 1996).

The transition to dependency has been equally stark. As noted in the Van Ginkel report, 'a striking feature of the distribution of income by sources is the relatively small contribution to total income made by welfare and pensions', with a remarkably small 1 percent of the community's income coming from welfare payments. Another 5.5 percent of the community's income was drawn from pensions with most of the pensioners being 'unemployable due to age' (Van Ginkel 1967, Table 10, 34–35). Two decades after the flooding, well over one-third of the community's total income was accounted for by government transfers, a rate over three times that for the rest of the province (Statistics Canada, 1996). Since that time, dependency has deepened to such an extent that, according to local leaders, only a small fraction of the community's income is now privately generated. All in all, poverty, rather than prosperity, has followed in the wake of the CRD project.

By the early 1980s, the precipitous decline in the economic health of the community led to an increase in social problems, convincing numerous families to leave their community for a variety of alternative locations, including northern towns such as Thompson and The Pas as well as southern cities, primarily Winnipeg. In 1993, some 400 of these displaced individuals were organised into the Association for the Displaced Residents of South Indian Lake (ADRSIL), with a mandate to negotiate compensation with the province of Manitoba.

In order to assess the state of social capital amongst South Indian Lake's displaced residents, a qualitative research design based on the Weberian tradition of personal introspection about one's life experience was developed. Such an approach is appropriate in a study focused on issues of social capital in that it emphasises a set of social relations and networks in which subjectivity plays an important role. In order to understand and interpret the relocation experience, 24 members of the ADRSIL were interviewed in Winnipeg and Thompson during the summer of 2008.<sup>vi</sup> The instrument used for the interviews was developed in consultation with local leaders in SIL and in Winnipeg, all of whom are members of both formal and informal organisations, including the Community Association of South Indian Lake and the South Indian Lake Fisherman's Association (Hoffman 2008). A number of elders, teachers and social workers were also consulted during the development of the instrument and interview protocols and a Winnipeg-based social worker, formerly of SIL, assisted in the identification and recruitment of the displaced residents. The 24 displaced residents interviewed for the study reflect the range of ages and experiences of the 400 individuals who considered themselves as displaced residents. The interview script, which was based upon previous research on solidarity among two Inuit communities impacted by the James Bay hydroelectric project, was designed to assess changes in community networks, public life, family activities and reciprocity networks since the relocation (Martin 2003).

### **Before the dams: Traditions and a way of life**

Early Cree tribes occupied a land base that centered along James Bay and the western shores of Hudson Bay, north to Churchill, west to Lake Winnipeg and south to Lake Nipigon.

By the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this base had been expanded to include a large part of the western plains. At least nine major dialects of a common root language (Algonquian) were spoken, including Plains, Woods, West and East Swampy, Moose, East, Atikamekw or Tête de Boule, and Naskapi and Montagnais Innus (McMillan 1988, 101–102).

The Cree originated as a woodlands culture, dependent upon a mixture of big- and small-game hunting. Hunting was supplemented with fishing, which while not as highly valued, nonetheless provided an occasion for the gathering of normally widely-dispersed kinship-based hunting groups (McMillan 1988, 102). This pattern of dispersal centered around family-based fishing camps in the summer and the maintenance of trap lines in the winter with occasional community-wide gatherings endured throughout the colonial period and into the dam-building decades of the late 1960s and 70s. Indeed, an insistence upon maintaining this way of life was, by some accounts, the reason why some members of the relatively near-by community of Nelson House broke away to establish the socially, if not legally, acknowledged community of South Indian Lake.

The recollection and significance of this way of life is evident amongst the elders displaced for the benefit of hydroelectric consumers serviced by Manitoba Hydro, as expressed here by one such respondent.

Oh, that was my life. That's how I grew up. When I look at myself as a young guy, I started trapping with my late dad, fishing and all that, when I was twelve. Consequently, I didn't go to school in the fall or the spring, because we were always on the trap line. So I didn't really have much schooling at South Indian Lake, because we were always away. Unfortunately, maybe fortunately ... I don't know ... but my parents would never let me go to retail school. We were most of the time by ourselves, hunting. We had a great life.

Another elder pointed out how 'in the fall, we come home at Christmas and in the spring you go too. In the summer I went to fish camp. So, I didn't have much school. [But] I tell people it's a different type of school'. Another recollected that:

Before I came to Thomson, I was raised by my grandmother and grandfather. My grandfather and grandmother used to go fishing for three months, then they would come back to South Indian. In September, we went to the trap lands for another three months. We didn't come home until spring. That's how I know how to fish, trap. I used to watch my grandma do everything. I used to watch her put the nets on the ice.

This way of living came to an abrupt halt with the arrival of the dam builders who brought with them an era characterised by severe hardship and the virtually complete disruption of the activities, and the social networks they created, that were central to traditional Cree culture. Families who had sustained themselves over many years saw their trap lines disappear virtually overnight. At the same time, homes were either flooded or burned, the latter being a method used by the company to assure that families would not try and return to bush cabins. The now-aged daughter of one father whose way of life disappeared under the flood waters recalled that 'the island had a house [my father] built; it was a really nice house. It was submerged; the island was flooded. You couldn't see the rocks . . . there were nice rocks on the thing. It was completely destroyed'.

The encroaching waters did much more than destroy a viable land-based economic system; flooding also destroyed a reservoir of social capital that was based largely on the small, nuclear family units engaged in the traditional pursuits noted by the elders, i.e., hunting, fishing and trapping. While the community as a whole gathered only periodically, the body of experiences common to each family provided the basis for a set of enduring social bonds. Thus, despite the episodic character of communal relations, individuals and their immediate families were generally sympathetic to the demands and needs of other families and individuals when circumstances merited assistance. Indeed, assistance was expected and was reciprocated. As

noted by one elder, 'people used to go trapping and whatever. When they had all that stuff, they would share. A lot of people used to give their stuff away'. Another noted that '[B]efore the flood, the families worked together. They use to help each others, hunting, fishing and trapping'. As the next generation of SIL residents was to so brutally discover, however, the coming of the dams meant the end of this system of support and mutual assistance.

### **Dislocation and the middle generation**

The disruption of the familial units responsible for transmitting traditional values and skills appropriate to traditional routines of fishing, hunting and trapping was not, of course, caused solely by hydro development. It was, instead, part of larger effort by the state to disassociate Aboriginal populations from their history and a generally hostile climate of discrimination that oftentimes thwarted the avowed aims of assimilation and integration. A principal means for achieving the goal of disassociation was the use of both 'mission schools' run largely by the Catholic Church and other secular residential schools.<sup>vii</sup> In both cases, individuals attending these schools—mainly the generation of individuals coming of age coincident with dam building—were removed, in many cases forcibly so, from their families. In a manner completely sympathetic to the understandings of the United Nations' experts cited above, this middle generation's educational experience was intended to break the bonds of family and instill in their residents an appreciation for the 'modern' way of life. Thus, the use of English was made mandatory and any effort to communicate in a native language such as Cree was punished with more or less harsh forms of corporal punishment and/or forced isolation. As noted by one displaced resident, 'we weren't even allowed to talk Cree'. When we did 'we were punished . . . [made to] stand in the corner and kneel down for five hours or so. Sometimes if they heard us talk Cree, they'd pull our hair'. At the same time, skills useful to a traditional life, i.e., hunting, trapping or fishing, were denigrated and excluded from the curriculum of instruction (Ball 2004).

In some cases, the experiences of mission or residential schools deepened familial divisions and the erosion of internal sources of support. One interviewee, for instance, initially resisted residential schooling, a choice unavailable to his brothers. 'When they came back in the summer, they came for 10 months. I realized there was something wrong with my brothers. They didn't behave. They didn't listen. They were distanced from me . . . a bunch of them went to school and actually I was pushed out from them. They called me dumb, because I couldn't speak English.

They called me all kinds of words. They called me stupid'. Ultimately, this person did enter residential schooling and realised an experience not uncommon to many veterans of such schools:

The only words that I could talk were English and I got caught speaking Cree and I got strapped [. . .] really good strap. A lot of abuse was going on. A lot of abuse . . . a lot of things going on at night. They quit picking on me, because I knew how to handle myself. They tried . . . they tried, but I fought back. The night comes and it's a very terrible night frights [. . .] the young ones, maybe about 10 year old boys. Those men worked there. What do you call them? Supervisors. They were very big and tall and they were kind of sneaky. They picked nights, maybe about 1 o'clock, they'd come around (two of them) the bed. On each side, they'd carry them out at night and rape them or something. Every night. They tried to pick my bed one night and I had to fight back. I didn't want them to do that. I got beat up really bad. I got beat up by these two guys and they took me to the kitchen. They picked me up, gave me two black eyes, and a cut lip. They kicked my head and they kicked all over my body.

As noted above, dam development clearly was not responsible for either mission or residential schools; after all, these institutions were used throughout Canada and not just in the so-called

hydro provinces. Yet, the disruptions caused by hydro development made it much easier to take children from their families, in that the state was able to argue that children raised on a steady diet of traditional skills and values simply did not have a viable future ahead of them (Van Ginkel 1967). The fact that Aboriginal communities often were without modern educational assets, i.e., classrooms, teachers, and supplies, simply reinforced the obvious 'necessity' of forcible separation for purposes of obtaining the education necessary for participation in the modern world.

While it is extremely difficult to disentangle the independent effect of hydro development from those produced by the stated-sanctioned and financed mission and/or residential schools, there is no doubt that together the effects have been profound for the middle generation of displaced residents. These individuals spent their early years, in some cases until their mid-teens, amongst their families in summer fishing camps and, in some cases, tending to winter trap lines. As noted by one individual, 'I helped the fishermen out to make some money. I used to go out with my grandparents. They raised me since I was one. They took us all, wherever they go to: trap lines, fishing, or fish camps'. Another man of a similar age reported that he 'mostly spent my time with my dad, traditional way of living, of the land'.

These individuals were, in essence, being prepared to transmit traditional values and practices to the next generation of youth, namely, their children. Yet, as they came of age, both traditional forms of social organisation, i.e., family units scattered about a large mass of land with only occasional community-wide gatherings, and the opportunities to engage in traditional activities were being destroyed. Given the utterly different world being experienced by their children, forced separation also meant their elders and parents had little to offer in terms of counsel, advice or material resources. As a result, the middle generation participated in a world largely devoid of social networks, i.e., friends, acquaintances and/or extended family members, capable of providing the sort of assistance so vital to the construction of viable lives in a world that they knew little about. Given that they were neither fully of South Indian Lake as traditionally understood nor fully part of the modern world, this generation was severely handicapped both in their ability to form personal identities and in their capacity to either participate in or form the sorts of social capital networks crucial for their personal success.

Even if these individuals were able to secure a reasonable level of comfort and success subsequent to their forced displacement and relocation, they nonetheless understand that dam development took from them the possibility of transmitting important cultural values based upon a unique way of life. One such individual acknowledged the loss occasioned by the relocation experience:

The way I was raised? It was through trapping and fishing and hunting for your own use and the family, plus we share in the community. The generations carry on for several years. My great- great- mother she had 25 kids and they were all rose in SIL right from the fresh water fish and the hunting they did around SIL. They were all young men making their living there. Now there are only two of the 25 kids who still stay in SIL and they are elders.

Another displaced resident noted that his reaction to the loss of a distinct cultural heritage for both himself and subsequent generations 'was very emotional', going on to say that:

[M]y relatives and us we were all sadness and depression. We were traumatized, I guess, both sides. We had no choice, but we didn't want to leave . . . you know. Manitoba Hydro, they are responsible for all that . . . then I lost! The opportunity to know my family, to have the opportunity to go trap and fish and learn the way of my people. All this was just tarnish, because of my mother got married to a white man.

I lost my language. Now I can't even speak Cree with my mother! Through this hydro process I lost these Cree skills. I also lost those values, those traditions, those cultural, that spirituality, because of the Manitoba Hydro process, you know! The thing is I lost my way of life! Once in a while I will take a trip and see my friends. The thing is I don't even know my brothers and sisters and my cousins over there because Manitoba Hydro took away that ownership of having an extended family.

Others of this middle generation were cognisant of the losses that were inflicted upon their parents and, in many cases, their siblings:

After the flooding, I saw how it was for my brother and my dad! One time I was sitting in a boat, it was so windy, my dad was just steady going like this and trying to pull a net and there was blood here and the wind was so hard on his eyes . . . he did that for 56 years of his life and he was pulling nets and there was so much debris . . . and he gave up. Before he was paddling and telling us stories.

Finally, the life experience of the middle generation was shaped by a vital, if typically overlooked fact, namely, the generally positive economic conditions experienced by SIL residents prior to dam construction. As noted above, SIL in the 1960s was a fairly prosperous place, with little social welfare and an economy that successfully combined cash with traditional pursuits. Only after the dams did SIL become impoverished and dependent. Thus, in addition to a wrenching social dislocation, the middle generation was forced to adapt to a new economic reality of poverty and dependence, a reality which, again, was, largely unfamiliar to preceding generations of SIL residents. As noted by one elder, 'I saw a big change for the worse. I saw more people standing around, on drugs, on other substances. There was none of this in my teens when I was living there . . . none of it. I believe that the people got spoiled by being profited with assistance'. Another elder points out that '[E]verybody used to go on the fish camp and trapline. We used to go on the trapline and stay there. We used to make lots of money. None of us was on welfare. The welfare came after Manitoba Hydro built the dam on the Churchill River in 1976' while another recounts that 'fishing was good, the community was self-sufficient and rich before the flood, they were making their living right from fishing and trapping. After 1974 everything was destroyed by the raised of the lake'. These assessments are, of course, supported by the Van Ginkel study.

The middle generation therefore faced an immense challenge. They were being required to step away from the world known to their parents, extended family, and indeed, the entirety of what had, up to that point, constituted the Cree cultural experience. They were then being asked to develop entirely new types of social networks, or what Halpern refers to as the 'arc of social capital', i.e., 'associational participation, political participation, informal social connections, and giving and trusting' (2005, 199). Finally, they were being asked to do so in a variety of alternative environments, the most immediate available being a newly constructed and socially distinct South Indian Lake.

As noted above, the old SIL was, in many important respects, a gathering place for families otherwise in a fishing camp or tending trap lines. This was the case even for school-age children, who combined a pattern of school attendance away from family with a good deal of time engaged in traditional activities. The new SIL, on the other hand, was a 'town' of the modern mold, albeit one with poorly constructed 'hydro' housing, inferior sewage systems, high electricity prices, notwithstanding the proximity of the nearby massive generating stations, and increasingly severe social pathologies such as alcoholism, drug abuse and physical violence, including parental and spousal abuse. Given the flooding that accompanied the hydro development, the new SIL also was not particularly amenable to traditional pursuits, except on a recreational basis. As noted in the recollections cited above, within the space of a few years

after the dams began operating, family-run trap lines were completely submerged and what had been a premier fishery was in a state of rapid decline, a condition which persists to this day (Interchurch Inquiry 2001, Part IX: Conclusion).

The new SIL also imposed a very different sort of social life. If the old SIL emphasized looser social relations for much of the year, the new SIL was one defined by more relatively permanent and continuous social interaction. The old form of association found people living 'all over South Indian'; relocation meant that people were forced 'to move in' together 'in one spot'. This was an often times difficult adjustment for those used to a relatively minimal level of contact with individuals outside of one's immediate family. Thus, far from being a newfound sense of community, the forced relocation found many residents unable 'to get along'. As noted by one resident of both the old and the new SIL:

Before the flood, everybody lived around the lake, with their individual family. Today they live too close to each others. They live close enough to interfere with each other. That way you had your privacy and when you want to see your neighbour you take the boat and cross the lake. Everybody was so happy to see each other. Everybody moved to one community. Everything turned chaotic!

Indeed, much of the sharing noted by the elders largely ceased after relocation, either because of animosities generated by a new-found proximity or simply because of the lack of available traditional food, i.e., moose, caribou, small game and fish. Coincident with this loss of 'harmony in the community' was the emergence of the social pathologies noted by many observers as common to most Canadian Aboriginal communities. In the case of the new SIL, residents would:

[G]o to Leaf Rapids . . . [where] there would be drinking, and then they'd kill one another. They'd slap them around. Most of those things happened because of drinking when they had money. Hydro used to give them money; I don't know how much. Every Christmas they used to get money. And when they got money [. . .] I can't remember how much money they got . . . A friend of mine got killed last year and I went to the funeral. It was terrible.

Another recounts that:

It was like my mind got shocked. I couldn't think anything. I couldn't remember anything. Every time I tried to talk about . . . we didn't talk about things that much. We didn't share the things that happened. Me and my brothers, we would kind of keep to ourselves. Just recently people talked about . . . just recently people would bring things up. Now my brother's having a hard time . . . suicidal. He wants to commit suicide. He wants to die drinking. Today, he's still going on drinking. I can't seem to sober him up. I'm sorry to say that. I didn't like living.

The blame for this descent into social and personal discord can be located squarely not just on the dependence fostered by the welfare system but also on the loss of traditional pursuits and the economic viability created by these activities. As noted by one elder, '[B]efore the welfare system, before the services, everybody was looking for each other if they are OK. As an example, if somebody didn't have groceries, the all community would donate something. Now, since the welfare system is there nobody does that anymore'.

Yet, if the new SIL imposed a challenging new way of life, it was at least geographically proximate to traditional lands. This was not the case for those who relocated to more distant

towns, including the southern communities of Thompson and Leaf Rapids, the latter which was soon to experience its own economic misfortunes with the closing of the areas' mineral mines, or Aboriginal communities even further north. And it was certainly not the case for Winnipeg, which was to become the new home for the majority of the displaced middle generation residents.

While each resettlement option posed its own unique set of problems, there is little evidence that any of them offered the means to achieve a successful transition to a new way of life or that the social ties characteristic of pre-dam SIL have been replaced in the new locales. Even if support systems do exist, they are much more difficult to access. As one displaced resident noted:

When you come to Winnipeg, it's not so much the communication with other people. Once you get to know them, they will help and communicate with you. If you don't communicate with anyone in Winnipeg, they won't bother you. If you really want help and open yourself up to other people, they'll come and help you. If you don't ask for help in Winnipeg, you won't get anything.

At this point in time, the individuals who personally experienced the traumas of displacement are rapidly being lost to history. The elders have either passed or will soon be infirm while many in the middle generation are aging before their time, suffering as they are from the psychological and physical scars caused by their experiences with a lifetime of displacement and disruptions, alcohol and drug abuse, and marginal experience with long-term employment.

Equally tragic are the burdens being imposed upon the heirs to this loss of history and memory, i.e., the children borne by the middle generation, who have only the slightest link to traditional culture. As one of those interviewed for this research pointed out, the children, and in some cases, the grandchildren of the displaced residents, seldom hunt, fish, or trap and if they do, it is occasional and sporadic.

This is not to say that either the middle generation or their heirs completely lack hope, either personally or in the form of potentially supportive social networks. One displaced resident, for instance, tells that:

I changed my way of life. I changed the way I was thinking. The way I was thinking I didn't want to live in this world, but then I looked at my family who died drinking alcohol and my friend who committed suicide. I said I don't want anything like that. I asked the Creator/God one day, 'Can you help my life to change?' In some way, I want to live my life; I don't want to die. I want to die sober. God helped me to stay sober today and for 18 years. I follow my way of life. I'm very grateful to teach the life skills: how to stay sober, how to not use drugs, how to talk to other people. I've got an organization. They call it First Nations Brotherhood Healing Circle. It's here in Manitoba, here in Winnipeg. We're on it . . . I'm the President of the organization. I use my experience how to stay sober and how to help other people. I tell about the dark side of my life: the drugs, drinking, whatever you name it, I did it.

Another reports being the president and founder of a northern spiritual movement. Still others argue that there is a good deal of interaction, i.e., attendance at various events, and that, if asked, support will be offered. Yet, these interactions and the development of informal networks, which at least a few of the survey participants argued are getting stronger rather than weaker, are occurring despite the absence of formally organised institutions or robust non-formal civic associations.

The heirs to the legacy of displacement face similarly ambiguous circumstances. Both the federal government and the province, for instance, are providing services that were simply unavailable to either elders or the middle generation. At the same time, First Nation leaders in Canada are beginning to link 'improvement of developmental conditions to the reconstruction of their cultural identity, revitalization of intergenerational transmission of culture and traditional language, and reproduction of culturally distinctive values and practices in programs for children and youth' (Ball 2004, 455). In the case of South Indian Lake, however, the historic community has been radically transformed and the lands and waters upon which the traditional culture thrived have been severely degraded by the dam-builders. Given these realities, a pathway towards the reconstruction of any meaningful sense of tradition is enormously difficult to discern.

### **ADRSIL and South Indian Lake**

As noted above, political scientists understand social capital as an ingredient necessary for effective political action. While individuals may be able to influence decision makers in certain circumstances, the more common route to gaining political advantage or successfully pursuing political goals is through organised activity. This includes working through established political institutions that can influence actors further up the chain of institutions, i.e., community residents may work through their local government to influence either provincial or national authorities in securing the delivery of government services. Absent these channels of influence, individuals are left without the capacity to materially affect their lives or to influence decision makers capable of doing so.

On 22 December 2005, the leaders of South Indian Lake signed a final agreement to activate their status as a First Nation, the O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation (OPCN). Great controversy surrounded the establishment of the reserve, with many parties arguing that its creation was a cynical means of obtaining the Aboriginal consent necessary to move forward with the construction of the relatively small but nonetheless important Wuskwatum dam project (Kulchyski 2008). However valid this criticism, it does appear that the creation of OPCN has laid the foundation for greater cohesion amongst SIL residents, which in turn is creating at least some opportunity for the creation of viable social networks and interactions. According to Liénafa and Martin, instead of continuing to consider 'themselves as victims of historical mistreatment, these Aboriginal people are actively engaged in shaping their present circumstances through new initiatives in a changing world. Since the creation of the reserve in 2005, members of the OPCN have achieved an institutional power that allows them to control their destiny through such initiatives as privatisation of housing, 'survival weekends', Windigo Wander'ers and the Mithwayatan gathering (Liénafa and Martin 2010, 62).

This growing ability of SIL residents to exercise at least some degree of autonomy stands in contrast to the experience of the displaced residents of South Indian Lake. Unlike South Indian Lake, the displaced residents lack any sort of institutional body through which they can advance their aims. Available candidate organisations suffer from a number of shortcomings.

The ADRSIL, for instance, is a legal entity organised by attorneys who have been hired by a relatively small number of displaced residents designed to pursue legal claims while the scattered residences of the registered members prevents regularised face-to-face interaction. Nor have the members developed any sort of electronic communication vehicle.

At the same time, the displaced residents have largely failed to maintain connections to the residents of OPCN. While there is some degree of sharing with relatives still living in SIL, for the most part contacts seem to be relatively meager between those living in SIL and the displaced residents. Some of the respondents, for instance, reported receiving traditional foods, i.e.,

moose, caribou or small game, from friends and relatives who either reside in SIL or hunt and/or fish in the area. However, such relationships are reported as tenuous or inconsistent with many reporting that visits were limited to attendance at funerals or other extraordinary circumstances. Such networks do little to provide the sort of nourishment and support offered by robust forms of social capital. Indeed, any number of individuals report a feeling of alienation from those continuing to reside in SIL, particularly since the establishment of OPCN. 'When I go to South Indian Lake, I'm lonely [ . . . ] I'm called an outsider' is a comment typical of interviewees.

In spite of these difficulties, some efforts are being made to reestablish the social capital so violently torn apart by the dams and subsequent flooding. For instance, the summer of 2006 witnessed the initiation of a now annual gathering at South Indian Lake, the Ke-We-Ka-Pa-We-Tan (*tracing back our roots*). This event was organised by a dozen OPCN residents in collaboration with a few members of ADRSIL. According to its organisers, while the event is meant to pass on Aboriginal identity, traditional culture and knowledge to the younger generation, its primary purpose is to remember the impact of the dam development projects on the environment and the community (Liénafa and Martin 2010). Theoretically, such an event might well be a positive contributor to the social capital of the ADRSIL since it will maintain a degree of connection between displaced residents and their traditional community and, hopefully, involvement in a network of reciprocity. Whether or not the gathering will become an institutionalised ritual, which is a necessary condition to become a component of the displaced residents social capital, is a difficult question to answer.

The daunting prospects faced by the Ke-We-Ka-Pa-We-Tan's organisers can also be seen by comparing it to the Mithwayatan, an event organised by the OPCN's band council and whose goal is to connect the community to the Pan-Indian movement by introducing residents to 'global' Aboriginal values, spirituality, arts and dances. The event also welcomes leaders, spiritual guides, and healers from all over Canada and other countries. Relative to Mithwayatan, Ke-We-Ka-Pa-We-Tan has attracted relatively modest support. At best, 200 participants have attended Ke-We-Ka-Pa-We-Tan while some ten times that number attend the Mithwayatan.

More important, however, are the intentions and consequences of the two events. By appealing to larger Aboriginal values and by introducing the community to leaders outside of SIL, Mithwayatan explicitly seeks to construct bridging and linking forms of social capital. Ke-We-Ka-Pa-We-Tan, on the other hand, limits itself primarily to commiserations focused on common histories of suffering and deprivation. While this no doubt creates social bonds, it does little to enhance the prospects for recovery since, as shown by studies in the field of displacement, refugees or displaced people who lack bridging and linking social capital are much less likely to engage in new opportunities and relationships and are unable to recover from the social trauma they have experienced, even if they still maintain a strong reservoir of bonding social capital (Boateng 2009).

## **Conclusion**

The stories recounted by the displaced residents of South Indian Lake converge to a single conclusion, namely that they have been largely, if not entirely, unsuccessful in forming the variety of communal bonds emphasised by social capital theorists. The sorts of relationships that are oftentimes instrumental in 'settling down', in finding a good place to live, or in locating viable employment opportunities, simply failed to develop. These difficulties continue today, as individuals who were left on their own, with little assistance either from back home or from the state, exist in a world largely devoid of supportive social networks.<sup>viii</sup>

The absence of internal bonds of solidarity or trust has also prevented the displaced residents from forming collective structures necessary for effective political activity, a point again emphasised by social capital theorists. The lack of an organised and representative interest group has not only limited dealings with OPCN; it has also prevented the development of effective relationships with a variety of external partners, most notably the Northern Flood communities of Nelson House, Norway House, Cross Lake, Split Lake, and York Landing as well as groups outside of Manitoba such as the Quebec-based Grand Council of the Crees.<sup>x</sup>

In the end, the totality of experiences faced by the displaced residents of SIL might well mean the necessities of development as understood by both the United Nations and Manitoba Hydro will be realised. Those who were so willingly sacrificed in the name of modernity have, indeed, been required to accept a life of 'painful readjustments' whose 'bonds of caste, creed, and race have to be burst' and who, because they could not 'keep up with progress have to have their expectations of a comfortable life frustrated' (United Nations 1951, 15).

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<sup>i</sup> A 'large dam' is defined by the International Commission on Large Dams as one measuring 15 meters (approximately 45 feet) or more from foundation to crest. The industry defines a major dam on the basis of its height (at least 150 meters), volume (at least 15 million cubic meters), reservoir storage (at least 25 cubic kilometers) or electrical generating capacity (McCully 2001, 3–4). We use the term 'mega-hydro' to denote projects that oftentimes encompass a multitude of such dams across potentially numerous individuals rivers or tributaries.

<sup>ii</sup> The complex development of hydro resources in Canada is made even more so by the Canadian Constitution. Under the Constitution Act of 1867, responsibility for environmental law and policy is divided between federal and provincial authorities. Section 92 of the Act allows provinces to make laws relevant to the development of natural resources capable of generating revenues from the generation of electrical energy; Section 109 of the Act grants provinces proprietary interests in public lands unless interests 'are federally owned or the federal government has authority over them as in the case of national parks (Muldoon et al. 2009). As is often the case in federal systems, there often exists some degree of tension over, as well as complex disagreements between, provincial and federal authorities (Paehlke 2009, 292). While the doctrine of paramountcy generally prevails, according to Muldoon et. al., 'governments are more likely to have the skill to craft laws which are capable of operating without conflict' (2009, 22).

<sup>iii</sup> Of course, not all well-functioning social networks work to the advantage of their participants. Woolcock (1998), for instance, identified several forms of social capital that might well be inimical to the welfare of participating individuals. Banfield's 'amoral familism', for instance, is characterised by an excess of loyalty while the 'amoral individualism' of both isolated tribes and recently liberated populations of Eastern Europe produces social systems based upon 'integration without linkages' (Woolcock 1998, 171–173). Networks of dependency based on alcohol or drugs that involve large-scale exchange and/or buying and selling of drugs or alcohol among community members might well be included in such debilitating forms of social capital.

<sup>iv</sup> Most researchers also agree that the study of social capital and its mobility cannot alone explain the experience of people or a community, since, as Woolcock says, it 'needs to be complemented by situating communities in their broader institutional context' (2004, 186) as well as the historical relation to the state and various political institutions (Saegert et al. 2001).

<sup>v</sup> From this literature has emerged a variety of conceptual and policy tools, including social impact studies designed to document various levels of social impoverishment and so-called 'reconstruction models', both of which are strongly linked to the notion of social capital (Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau 2006, 1808). Thus, 'social impoverishment' describes the decay of community institutions the loss of which forces individuals to rely more upon external resources, including state agencies, social services, welfare program and the like. Similarly, the reconstruction model is an attempt to understand how communities rebuild themselves by mobilising and reanimating social networks and by taking advantage of external opportunities occasioned by available economic and natural resources.

<sup>vi</sup> No names or other identifying features are reported in the paper since participants were, of course, guaranteed anonymity. With very few exceptions, however, all quoted passages come from different participants, thus reflecting the range of experiences pertinent to the entire participant pool.

<sup>vii</sup> The history of the Canadian sponsored, Catholic Church-run system of residential schools is long, tragic and far too complex to discuss here. Numerous sources for those interested in this history can be found at <[www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/eng/ao20023.html](http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/eng/ao20023.html)>.

<sup>viii</sup> To a great extent, of course, this experience is typical of many populations displaced by all manner of development schemes and not just the some 40–80 million people that have been uprooted by the world's large-scale hydro projects (McCully 2001; World Commission on Dams 2000; McDowell 1996). Halpern, for instance, shows that populations displaced during the slum clearance period of the 1950s and 60s took many years to reestablish socially supportive networks, in many cases never doing so (2005, 288–289).

<sup>ix</sup> The absence of 'bridging ties' reflects the historical relations between Manitoba Hydro, the province and the affected Aboriginal communities, including South Indian Lake. Throughout the period of dam

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development, the state and its representatives treated the various communities impacted by hydro construction as discreet entities, forcing each to negotiate its own 'best deal' without consultation or reference to other, similarly impacted communities (Hoffman 2008; Kulchyski 2008). That this felling of isolation extended to the displaced residents of SIL is hardly surprising.