Sustainability in Canadian and Indigenous Environmental Policy-Making

by

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B.A., Queen's University, 2003

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ABSTRACT

Building on the premise that Canadian government thus far has been incapable of enacting a working model of how to implement sustainability, this thesis defines Canada's basic environmental position and takes it as a starting point to a prospective shift in our national value system. Using a case study of a the Detroit River International Crossing Project, a government-initiated development project in Windsor, Ontario, and a careful analysis of publicly available documents, it measures Canada's stated values with respect to the environment against the project's actual pathways of action, thereby unearthing the embedded value system which governs environmental ethics and policies in Canada. Also, this thesis will draw comparisons with the value system of the Walpole Island First Nation – a representative Indigenous community located near Windsor – in order to present alternative ways of relating to the earth and of conceptualizing environmental ethics and policies.

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DEDICATION

To my mother, Lorraine Myskow (1950 – 2007), who taught me to loathe injustice,
and to my grandmother, Gizella Myskow (1923 – 2007), who taught me to
love all living things.

Chapter One: Introduction to Canada's Enviro-Political Climate

Sustainability is defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development as: "That which would meet the needs and aspirations of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". While the term has taken on a decidedly economic connotation in recent times, it cannot be denied that in addition to this quantitative element – the feasibility of economic growth vis a vis the depletion of natural resources – what is also being referred to is our ability as a society to create stable health conditions and to maintain long-lasting quality of life. What is lacking from the standard definition given above is any critical examination of whether the 'needs and aspirations' of the present generation are justified or even capable of being maintained 'sustainably'. Sustainability may be the modern buzzword on everyone's lips, but as of yet it is unclear what we as a society are in fact striving for when we talk about sustainability and sustainable development. This thesis assumes that Canadian society as a whole is awakening to the idea that some type of environmental reform is becoming necessary to protect Canada's current standard of living, but that the Canadian government thus far has been incapable of implementing a working model of how to accomplish this. Perhaps this is because it is that very standard which needs to be revised. This paper then, as a starting point to exploring the prospect of a shift in societal values, seeks to define Canada's basic environmental position by examining it against the environmental position of Indigenous peoples, for whom traditionally the land holds sacred value, and by revealing the relationship between the two.

Lacking in a general sense from the discussion surrounding climate change and environmental preservation is the inclusion of the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island (North America). Government policies typically include references to 'Aboriginal rights', to land use, and the necessity to conduct consultations concerning large environmental projects. The stakes of some Indigenous groups may furthermore be recognized in specified partnerships with resource extraction industries. These references notwithstanding, Indigenous peoples are rarely acknowledged or respected in their inherent roles as the original caretakers of this land. The strong stands taken by certain Indigenous groups in recent history have been treated by governments and corporations at minimum as an irritation, and have at times resulted in flagrant standoffs and long, bitter court cases. Still, there have been inspiring successes that have significantly raised the enviro-political currency of Indigenous groups, notably in the case of the James Bay Cree, whose stand resulted in the cancellation of what would have been a multi-billion dollar hydroelectric project in Quebec (Poelzer, 2002). According to Greg Poelzer, in his essay "Aboriginal Peoples and Environmental Policy", "The ability of the James Bay Cree to alter the policy outcome of a resource development project of such an enormous scale and provincial importance demonstrates how far First Nations have moved towards the centre of environmental and resource policy communities" (Ibid: 93). While these successes are a powerful testament to the commitment of these groups to maintain an Indigenous way of life, the fact that long, stressful and often physical confrontations are routinely involved in achieving this level of environmental protection speaks to the degree to which begrudging state governments continue to fundamentally disrespect the Indigenous life ethic. Interestingly, in 2002, the James Bay Cree did come

to an agreement with the Quebec government which allowed for the construction of the Eastmain power station on Cree land. This situation speaks to the pressure exerted on Indigenous nations to concede to the economic imperatives of the state, so that even when a stand is made to uphold traditional values, the colonial paradigm of resource extraction for short-term profit often wins out at the end of the day. In this day and age, it is becoming apparent that state governments do this to the detriment of their own resource bases, the health of their citizens, and their international reputations. The degree of harm to the environment itself caused by state government policies and projects is yet unknown, but even average Canadian citizens are beginning to feel the heat (so to speak), and demand change.

The connection between justice for Indigenous peoples and the development of environmentally stable practices in North America has thus far been marginalized by mainstream environmentalism and for the most part unexplored. Some environmentalists however, most likely considered by the majority to represent the 'radical' end of the spectrum, have alluded to the connection. Author Dolores LaChappelle, in her essay "Ritual - The Pattern that Connects" has recognized the following of Indigenous cultures: "they had an intimate, conscious relationship with their place; they were stable 'sustainable' cultures, often lasting for thousands of years; and they had a rich ceremonial and ritual life. They saw these as intimately connected" (LaChapelle, 1995: 57). She goes on to suggest that: "If we are to reestablish a viable relationship (with the environment), we will need to rediscover the wisdom of these other cultures who knew that their relationship to the natural world required the whole of their being" (Ibid: 57,

parenthesis mine). Other environmental scientists – like the famous David Suzuki – have spoken explicitly about the need to develop "a new kind of science that approaches the traditional knowledge of indigenous communities" (Suzuki, 1997: 26). In Suzuki's *The Sacred Balance,* he admits that "environmentalists like (himself) had been framing the issue improperly. There is no environment 'out there' that is separate from us" (Suzuki, 1997: 7). Although these writers tend not to take a well-defined political position, they do acknowledge that the strategies they are bringing to the fore have been inspired by wisdom known to Indigenous societies for centuries and perpetuated today, in spite of colonial oppression. How is it that up until this point the discussion surrounding environmental transformation has for the most part excluded the peoples whose societies hold the very wisdom that modern North American societies are so urgently seeking – how to live sustainably on the Earth? It can only be North America's long-standing belief in its superiority to Indigenous cultures that affords it such self-assurance even when, by all measures our attempts "to relate to the world around us…are clearly failing" (Lachapelle, 1995: 58).

Project Description, Methodology, and Key Players:

In order to evaluate this relationship and to draw out the intended comparison, I will conduct a case study of a government-initiated project entitled: "The Detroit River International Crossing" Bridge Expansion project, commonly referred to as the DRIC, which is a project designed to choose the ideal location for another border crossing between Windsor, Ontario, and Detroit, Michigan. This project involves determining potential impacts on the proposed areas and people living in and around these areas

through environmental assessments, as well as through consultations with affected parties. The DRIC is used in this analysis as a current model of how the Canadian government (and in some examples the United States government) conduct environmental business. Duly, the project is mammoth, implicating all three levels of Canadian government, several local Indigenous nations, stakeholders in industry, as well as groups of Canadian citizens in an intricate web of influence, pressure, partnership, and communication. The premise of the analysis is that a sense of responsibility to the environment has become undeniable, a sense that is reinforced by government publications in Canada which announce a commitment to the "health of our environment – not only for tomorrow or the next year, but 100 years from now" (Government of Canada, 2002: iii). This comparative analysis is conducted within a context where it is generally and publicly acknowledged that: diversity and the strength of the eco-system are in decline, human health is in decline, and citizen empowerment and participation in the democratic process are in decline. In light of these realities, and as a scholar and citizen of the country of Canada, I am driven to seek out and reveal the government's values where the environment is concerned. I will accomplish this by examining environmental policy through public archival evidence in order to flush out the true ethical position, when measured according to government action from the professed Canadian environmental ethic.

The parties who I have identified as playing a major role in this study are the Federal Canadian government, the Ontario provincial government, the municipal government of Windsor, The United States government, and the Walpole Island First

Nation (WIFN). Walpole Island was selected because of their close geographic proximity to the DRIC's proposed study area, and because their reserve is situated within the borders of the Canadian state, which I wish to focus on for the purpose of this critique. In the interest of thoroughness, it would have been ideal to include the environmental visions of both Walpole Island First Nation and Oneida First Nation, the two Indigenous nations concerned in the DRIC project on the Canadian side, and to expand the section on the interface between Indigenous and non-Indigenous interests to include the government's considerations of each of these nations. Unfortunately, time and resource constraints limit me to focus on just Walpole Island, which will be taken as representative of an Indigenous environmental ethic. This is not to say that the position of Walpole Island represents the positions of other Indigenous nations, rather that Walpole Island in this case will be used as an example of one Indigenous perspective, to stand in contrast to the Canadian one. Despite these limitations, the inclusion of just one Indigenous nation will not inhibit the aim of the study, which is to reveal Canada's environmental position. In fact, the inclusion of just Walpole Island may even simplify the points I am seeking to flush out, making conclusions easier to draw at the completion of the study. In any case, all of the information required to conduct this analysis will be gathered from public sources, and will be systematically reviewed according to the aim of the project. This is to say that I will be analyzing WIFN literature with the focus of exposing their environmental vision, and I will be analyzing DRIC documents by seeking out their stated values against the real life choices that they pursue within the project.

This paper has been divided into three main chapters, each reflecting one branch of Western environmentalism's interpretation of sustainability, entitled *Ecology, Economics,* and *Equity* respectively. This framework is one that many people consider to be the most influential on modern environmental policy. American author and consultant Andres R. Edwards, in his book *The Sustainability Revolution*, explains that: "The emergence of sustainability in its contemporary form stems from the UN's creation in 1983 of The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), headed by Gro Harlem Bruntland, former prime minister of Norway" (Edwards, 2005: 16). In 1987, the Bruntland report was issued, and according to Edwards, "the report contained the first key to contemporary sustainability – the importance of evaluating any proposed initiative with reference to the interaction of three fundamental criteria: ecology/environment, economy/employment and equity/equality, known today as the Three Es." (Ibid: 17). The values and ethics under discussion in this paper will be framed within these three headings, and will therefore create quite a comprehensive analysis of the scope of environmental policy implications within society. This is to say that the prima facie DRIC documents that I take as indicators of the Canadian environmental ethic will be contextualized within the broader environmental discussion, using texts related to my chapter topics, each denoting one major branch of the environmental debate. The first chapter, Ecology, will highlight the way North American versus Indigenous societies function and develop in respect of living things. The main focus of this chapter will be an in-depth analysis of the way both societies relate to the notion of 'diversity', evidenced in the DRIC documents and in documents released by and pertaining to WIFN governance methods. The second chapter on Economics seeks to expose some obvious

and some less obvious economic influences on environmental policy, and to reveal the effects of these on the state of human health in this area. The third major chapter, concerning Equity will delve into the interface portion of the analysis, discussing how the government incorporates competing interests and how they respond to alternative value systems, particularly among groups with less decision-making power than they possess as colonial powers. This chapter will focus both on how the DRIC and WIFN engage their own citizens in environmental projects and concerns, as well as on the consultation process the DRIC has executed throughout its tenure.

The DRIC project is in a sense, a perfect case study for this research question for several reasons. Primarily, it is a massive, expensive, time consuming venture, involving government on every level on both sides of the river. Consequently, there exists a rich array of public documents on this subject in which many different aspects of the environmental ethics question are well represented, making it ripe for political critique. Furthermore, this project implicates the people of the city of Windsor in a very emotional way, which stems from the inherent references in the project to these people's health and livelihoods, and that of their city. This resulting intensity surrounding the project makes it both relevant and engaging, and also very practical to learn about, on a personal note. I would like to share with readers that I am living in Windsor solely for the purpose of caring for an immediate family member who has been living with cancer for eleven years. At the current age of fifty-six, bone cancer is causing her skeleton to painfully degenerate before my very eyes. There is no one person to blame for what is happening in my family, yet, as the analysis will demonstrate, my family is not an isolated case.

There are known carcinogens and deadly toxins in the Windsor eco-system in higher concentrations than elsewhere – high enough that Windsor has been called the canary in the coal mine – and my argument therefore is that the good intentions of average citizens and policies are not enough to impact on this problem. The intention of this case study is to determine the extent to which the values that the Canadian government holds in relation to the environment are rooted in a life ethic, or in other words, the sustainability of life itself. Correspondingly, I wish to analyze documents released by one of the implicated Indigenous nations in order to understand what one Indigenous framework of environmental values looks like, and to what extent these values are similar or dissimilar to the Canadian government's. The WIFN documents that I present are also contextualized within some of the broader discussion about Indigenous peoples and the environment. This is not done in such a way as to homogenize or to fully develop the Indigenous perspective, rather, to highlight the primary difference between Indigenous and colonial peoples – where colonial people see the earth as a commodity from which resources can be extracted, and Indigenous peoples the world over live in a relational way to the organic world.

The Question of Ethics

One of the underlying premises of this work is a belief in conscience and of a fundamental morality. It is generally understood that individually speaking, morality is transmitted through the community to each child in a way that profoundly affects the child's character throughout his or her life. Culturally assigned positive values are emphasized over negative ones, and in this way the identity of the culture is continually

renewed (VanWynsberghe, 2002: 55). For an organization such as a government, corporation, or project team, the crafting of a moral framework is a much less organic process due to the large number of isolated members, all with disparate backgrounds. Also within such a group, there is inconsistency in members' attachment levels to the group's goals, which causes the underlying morality of the group to be even more fractured, and the development of a binding ethical system to be that much more artificial.

Despite this tendency for moral superficiality among large and internally varied organizations, a standard of morality is nonetheless presumed to guide the decisions and pathways of action that these groups choose to take. Revealing this implicit system reveals the government's flexibility in terms of big changes, as well as its limitations as per the parameters of its established belief system. Accordingly, unearthing the value system of the Canadian government in relation to the environment will help determine whether the current system is capable of amending itself to be able to accommodate "sustainability" – a notion that up until this point in North American culture has been foreign and even counter to the economic and philosophical trends of governance.

Alternately, it is possible that the incremental changes proposed to the liberal democratic system by the current regulations of environmental policy are not sufficiently flexible and creative to facilitate a transformation in the way North American society relates to the environment. In the latter case, fundamental changes to the value system and hence governing system will need to occur in order to allow for the continuation of

the society. Although some ideas about what a new system may look like may be inferred at the conclusion of this project, these are incidental to the project's aim.

The project's aim is not to design or construct a new value system, but to deconstruct the current system in order to educate myself, my family, and my immediate community on the lessons that will emerge from this study for the purpose of becoming better prepared to take a stand in future environment-related issues. Perhaps the information gleaned from this study will prove useful within the context of the very project under analysis (the DRIC) since my family and I live in Windsor, Ontario, and since the project will remain on-going past the point of the completion of this writing. In this sense, one element of the design of this study is its intention as a learning experience both for you, the reader, and equally for me, the writer. In addition to this, it is crucial to note that my intention for expanding on the Indigenous perspective of environmentalism is not to critique this position, as I mean to do with the North American (and mainly the Canadian) one. Rather, I wish to include an Indigenous perspective in order to provide a reference for an alternative way of relating to the Earth, and to be able to examine whatever power dynamics become apparent in the interface between Indigenous and non-Indigenous environmental interests.

Of importance to this project is the recognition that where colonial governments are concerned, there often exists a gap between what values are made explicit, and the actual governing value system, which remains implicit. Eugene Lee and Anthony Perl draw attention to the "relationship between what is said and what gets done" (Perl and

Lee, 2003: 3) with reference to Canada's environmental policy making. They go on to explain that: "From global climate change to local air quality, it is worth comparing the ways in which Canada identifies environmental challenges with the means that are adopted to deal with them. The resulting contrast yields a range of dissonance between policy aims and outcomes" (Ibid). So, by examining the actions of the government, visible in the DRIC project, compared to its professed values, the underlying moral framework can be unearthed. The comparison with an Indigenous environmental ethic will help clarify the government's direction with reference to 'sustainability'. To this end, an in-depth examination of each group's statement of values is required.

Introduction to Walpole Island First Nation

A brief background section on the people of Walpole Island will be a useful reference to guide the reader through the remainder of the analysis. Walpole Island and the surrounding region is called Bkejwanong in the Anishnaabe language, or 'where the waters divide.' It has been home to Indigenous people for over six thousand years.[1] The Bkejwanong Reserve is the southernmost one in Canada, and is located at the place where the St. Clair River empties into Lake St. Clair, which serves as the body of water that links together Lake Huron to the North, and Lake Erie to the South. Walpole Island has a population of 2,300 people and a band membership of 3,100, although author Robert VanWynsberghe, who lived on Walpole Island for a time, notes that this "official count does not acknowledge the fact that the population size is extremely fluid because of short-term moves off of and onto the reserve" (VanWynsberghe, 2002:9). Walpole

[1] www.bkejwanong.com

Island's population is comprised almost exclusively of the peoples that make up the Three Fires Confederacy – the Ottawa, The Potawatomi, and the Ojibway,[2] and the territory they live in is considered 'unceded', meaning, "that it is a reserve of land left to Native people but never accorded private property rights" (VanWynsberghe, 2002: 8). The Natural Heritage website of Walpole Island further explains that: "Bkejwanong Territory was not included in any of the 18th and 19th century land surrenders and treaties. The Walpole Island First Nation continues to assert and exercise Aboriginal Title to its territory, unceded lands and waters".[3] It was clear to me on a recent trip to Bkejwanong territory, that the 'purely' Indigenous quality of the land is a source of pride and identity for the peoples of Walpole Island, evidenced in the displays of "Unceded Land" on the welcome sign and water silo of the territory. It was clear to me as a Canadian visitor that the people of that place did not believe in the prescribed tenets of the mainstream value system.

Indeed, VanWynsberghe testifies that Walpole Island "has had to struggle to maintain itself as a distinct culture, not only in the past, but also in the face of current attempts to use this community as the kidney of the Great Lakes" (VanWynsberghe, 2002: 8). What the author is referring to is the resistance effort that the peoples of Walpole have had to put forward in efforts to stop powerful corporations (including Esso, Shell, Dow, Sun Oil, Dome, Novocar, and Chinook) from dumping huge amounts of toxins into the lake and polluting the wetland ecosystem (Ibid). He explains that:

From 1986 to 1992, these offenders produced 550 chemical spills, seventeen of

[2] www.bkejwanong.com.
[3] Ibid.

> which were severe enough to force Walpole Island's water treatment plant to shut down. Walpole Island was being polluted because the First Nation living there did not have the power to stop companies from discharging their waste into the St.Clair River and calling it a spill. Discharges and spills are a normal part of doing business.
>
> Ibid: 3

The community of Walpole Island has politically and physically resisted the use of their land as a dumping site. VanWynsberghe says of this struggle that: "A variety of social and historical forces have structured a community whose ability to supply itself with an autonomous set of meanings is a testament to the resiliency of its people" (Ibid: 8). From resistance to encroachment, to resistance to assimilation, to resistance against environmental racism, Walpole Island has defiantly opposed pressures from the mainstream society, and today continues to foster a unique identity.

As an assertion of their continued presence on this land, Walpole Island First Nation initiated a land claim in the year 2000 on an area which includes the Detroit River. A news excerpt included on the website, dated April 26, 2000, reports that:

> The Walpole Island First Nation today announced that it has filed a Statement of Claim to unextinguished Aboriginal title and rights in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice in Toronto. In his statement, Chief Joseph Gilbert said: "This is a big step forward for our people. We have always believed that our traditional territory belonged to us".
>
> Bkejwanong homepage, Claims

The news report goes on to explain that:

> The Walpole Island First Nation, Bkejwanong Territory has formally commenced legal steps to assert its Aboriginal title to the beds of the Great Lakes within its traditional territory. Walpole Island First Nation asserts Aboriginal title to the Canadian portions of Lake St. Clair, the St. Clair River, the Detroit River, the western part of Lake Erie, the southern part of Lake Huron, and the area which was the subject of Treaty 25 on July 8, 1822 (which treaty was not signed by Walpole Island First Nation or its predecessors)… Although Walpole Island First Nation and its predecessors signed a number of treaties, certain parts of Walpole

> Island First Nation's traditional territory were never subject to any treaty with Walpole Island First Nation. Walpole Island First Nation asserts Aboriginal title in its full force to those parts of its traditional territory. However, in recognition of the longstanding presence of non-Aboriginal people Walpole Island First Nation has excluded from the territory claimed, any territory which private parties hold in fee simple, claiming instead compensation from Canada and Ontario for such lands.
>
> Ibid

Interestingly, there is no mention of this land claim or its potential implications to the government project in any of the DRIC documents, which from the outset of this analysis presents an indication of the government's unwillingness to recognize the inevitability of our shared existence on and responsibility to this land.

Orientation to the DRIC

Some basic information about the Detroit River International Crossing Project is provided here for the purpose of orienting the reader to the nature of the project. While the DRIC Project was crafted by several consultant groups,[4] it was forged by a Partnership comprised of the transportation authorities from two federal governments and two provincial/state governments:

> The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is an arm of the Department of Transportation and Transport Canada (TC) is the corresponding federal level agency in Canada. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) are the provincial and state agencies that have roadway jurisdiction on each side of the border between Ontario and Michigan.[5]

[4] Consultant Team included the following members: URS Great Lakes, The Corradino Group, IBI Group, and HLB Decision Economics. The Report states in section 2.3 of the Report under discussion that: "Other specialists and subconsultants were also on the team to provide the necessary inputs to the study".
[5] PartnershipborderStudy.com, Previous Reports, Planning Need and Feasibility Study, Environmental Terms of Release, 1.2

Perhaps the most difficult factor in navigating the DRIC information is the sheer magnitude of the project and the volume of reports included.[6]

The imperative for the DRIC project is elaborated on in the "Planning/Need and Feasibility Report" (P/N F) released in January 2004. The impetus for the project is clearly defined as being a response to the perceived deficiencies of the two main existing border crossings to efficiently handle international trade and traffic now, but especially in the future. The "Environmental Assessment Terms of Release" document summarizes the current transportation problems by citing the following problem factors: "Increased highway safety concern, Lost economic opportunity costs, Increased air pollution, Increased vehicle operating costs and fuel consumption, Increased driver frustration."[7] The P/N F Report suggests that these complications are only going to worsen with time, given the significant traffic increases projected, with projections being founded predominantly on economic trends.

The very heart of this project is summed up in the word increase; increased trade requires increased traffic, which demands increased border crossings. The writers of Report explain their approach, writing: "Based on the outlook for increased economic activity within and between Canada and the U.S., as well as projected increases in the economic sectors found within the Broad Geographic Area, forecasts of travel demand

[6] Conveniently, all of the project's reports are published on its website. The documents that I was not able to access on the website were obtained at Windsor Public Library's reference collection.

[7] PartnershipborderStudy.com, Previous Reports, Planning Need and Feasibility Study, Environmental Terms of Release, 1.2.

were developed to the year 2030".[8] According to the P/N F Report's "Base Case Annual Volume Forecasts", where the Base Case represents "what is the most likely to occur, given projection demands by various commodity producers and manufacturers and the trade relationship between Canada and the U.S.,"[9] the following growth percentages are expected for the Windsor-Detroit Tunnel and the Ambassador Bridge combined: The frequency of crossing for Passenger Cars is expected to increase 36.1%, bringing the total cars crossing from 17,102,000 in 2000, to 23,274,000 in 2030. The crossing of commercial vehicles (semi-trucks, autohaulers, cube vans, etc.) is expected to increase 117.8%, from 3,668,000 in 2000 to 7,987,000 in 2030. Finally, the crossing of buses will increase 36.5%, from 151,000 in 2000 to 206,000 in 2030.[10] In light of these exponential projections, the Report's overarching mandate is to "improve the movement of people and goods across the United States and Canadian border within the region of Southeast Michigan and Southwest Ontario."[11]

The project was initiated in 2005, and since that time the DRIC team has been following a charted schedule of key environmental assessment studies, punctuated by various public and private consultation sessions. At the time of this writing, the DRIC has identified the study area features, opportunities and constraints (which forms the basis of much of my analysis), developed an initial set of crossing alternatives, defined the area of "continued analysis", and presented specific crossing options. At this time, the original fifteen crossing options have been narrowed to several variations of three

[8] PartnershipborderStudy.com, Previous Reports, Planning Need and Feasibility Study, Environmental Terms of Release, 4.4.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid, Table 4.4
[11] Ibid,1.2

main routes, and the preferred single crossing is expected to be chosen by the middle of this year (2007). The project will continue with studies and phases until in 2008, when it intends to finalize the engineering and mitigation measures, and then "submit (documents) for approvals".[12] The new crossing is expected to be built in 2013.

The Role of the United States – Michigan

The main focus of my study is to examine Canadian environmental values, and the relationship between the Canadian government and the peoples of Walpole Island, mainly because I am a Canadian citizen and I therefore wish to hold my own government accountable to its stated principles. The project that I have selected to achieve my critique happens to be a project with international character, in that trade and travel between the USA and Canada is the driving force behind the creation of the DRIC. In consideration of this fact, I will include the role of the United States government and the state government of Michigan in certain sections of my study, while maintaining a primary focus on the Canadian side. The first chapter on Ecology pertains almost exclusively to Canada, since the DRIC's "proposed study area" on the US side has very few natural heritage features remaining, their having been mostly "completely obliterated" by industry (DRIC).[13] The second chapter on Economics will include the United States to a far greater extent by virtue of the nature of the discussion and the emphasis on international trade. The third chapter on Equity will also feature a discussion pertaining to the United States since the proposed site of the new crossing is set to displace many low-income families on the US side. Duly, the DRIC is giving the

[12] PartnershipBorderStudy.com, Schedule, Environmental Assessment Key Study Activities
[13] Ibid, 2.1

notion of environmental justice far more attention in the US reports than in the Canadian ones.

Notes on Environmentalism and Impact Analysis – Literature Review

A preliminary discussion about the nature of environmentalism and the development of the assessment process would be appropriate at this time in order to better understand the legislation governing the DRIC project, and thus to deliver a more balanced critique of its functioning. Environmental assessments and their legal necessity were created in response to a shift in government values concerning the environment, brought on by pressure exacted by the environmental movement (Vig and Kraft, 2006, Edwards, 2005). Most recounts of 'environmental history' include a reference to the book *Silent Spring* (Carson, 1962), which warned about pesticide use and which was one of the first publications to resonate with a critical mass large enough to initiate institutional changes in the way pollution was regarded. Out of these societal changes, Environment Canada was formally initiated in 1971 (Lee and Perl, 2003). Environmental scholars Michael E. Kraft and Norman J. Vig, in their essay "Environmental Policy from the 1970s to the Twenty-First Century", discuss the similar development of policy in the USA. Their conclusion is that measures taken during this time have succeeded in creating higher environmental quality, "even if it is highly uneven from one period to the next" (Vig and Kraft, 2006, 25). The success or failure of these measures over time was determined by the authors to be conditional upon on the leadership and the country's economic goals at a given time. They explain the following:

> Since the 1970s public concern and support for environmental protection have risen significantly, spurring the development of an expansive array of policies that

> substantially increased the government's responsibilities for the environment and natural resources, both domestically and internationally. The implementation of these policies, however, has been far more difficult and controversial than their supporters ever imagined. Moreover, the policies have not been entirely successful, particularly when measured by tangible improvements in environmental quality. Further progress will likely require the United States to search for more efficient and effective ways to achieve these goals, including the use of alternatives to conventional command-and-control regulation.
>
> Ibid: 28

This paragraph sums up many of the themes that I will be touching on throughout the study, including government responsibility, government failures to date, lack of a unifying environmental vision among colonial state citizens, and the need for transformation in the way environmental policy is conceptualized.

As mentioned above, the 'Three E's' framework of discussion has historically been a key way of cutting into the environmental debate. Renowned Canadian professor of environmental studies Robert C. Paehlke, in his essay, "Environmental Values and Public Policy", further expounds on the 'Three E' value framework when he describes how political struggles classically occur between "economic values (capital accumulation, enhanced trade, economic growth), and equity values (wages, working conditions, social welfare, public health, and public education)" (Paehlke, 2000: 77). I agree with Paehlke when he writes that: "In effect, environmental values (among others) have been added to, and complicate, the old debates between left and right, rich and poor" (Ibid). Missing from Paehlke's analysis, however, is the global reality of colonial hegemony over Indigenous ways of (environmental) governance, which I argue is a fundamental element of this discussion.

A particularly striking framework that I encountered was put forward by environmental scholar Judith McKenzie in her textbook, *Environmental Politics in Canada – Managing the Commons in the Twenty-First Century*. McKenzie proposes that the many divergent views regarding environmentalism can be distilled into two main streams. The first, she terms "light or shallow green", representing the "mainstream approach to environmental politics in Canada"(McKenzie 2002: 8). She describes this stream as "incremental and moderate…its ideas can be accommodated within our existing liberal democratic and capitalist traditions" (Ibid). The second stream, being "dark green environmentalism or ecologism – is much more radical. It proposes a new world view where liberalism, capitalism, and democracy are no longer the organizing principles" (Ibid). This idea became a measuring stick of sorts that I used to evaluate the other Canadian, or non-Indigenous environmental writings that I dealt with, especially those related to political critique and suggestions for political reform. McKenzie's work (like many of the otherwise engaging texts that I came across) was severely limited by her utter lack of acknowledgment of power relations when discussing Indigenous nation-Canadian state relationships. When McKenzie does touch on the colonial situation in Canada, she frames it as a positive economic reality and source of Canadian identity, rather than viewing it as an aggressive resource extraction effort and otherwise unhealthy relationship based on political domination. She bluntly states:

> In Canada, our natural resources have always been an important part of our history, our economy, and our national identity. Historians have shown that Canada's abundant natural resources – our forests, fish and wildlife, vast mineral wealth, and rich, fertile soil – were the reasons for colonization by the French and British. Until recently, Canada's economy continued to be based largely on the cultivation and sale of these resources"
>
> McKenzie, 2002: 4

Colonialism notwithstanding, McKenzie's division of the streams of environmentalism was instructive in my own work, most notably in analyzing the opportunities and limitations of the current power system.

The book which provided the most pertinent guidance to my particular study, is called, "Community, Identity, and Environmental Justice on Walpole Island", by American scholar Robert VanWynsberghe. This book makes up part of a series called *AlterNatives*, whose aim is to promote "multiethnic solutions to otherwise conflictive situations" (VanWynsberghe, 2002: vii). In my opinion, the editors, David Maybury-Lewis and Theodore MacDonald Jr., correctly gauge the conflict that exists in any colonial relationship when they propose that: "The question is whether states are willing to accept and live peaceably with ethnic differences, or whether they will treat them as an endless source of conflict."(Ibid). I add to this question whether states are capable of creating reconciliation with Indigenous peoples based on genuine respect and restitution for the lands they have usurped, including the implementation of respectful and mutually beneficial environmental policies. In concert with many Indigenous scholars, I contend that these are the precursors to the possibility of real peace (Alfred, 2005), and this question constitutes the thrust for my study.

In this respect, several of the author's points were key to my analysis. Primarily, VanWynsberghe draws out the colonial assumptions that many environmentalists bring into their relationships with Indigenous peoples, explaining that:

> Drawing upon the status of Native people as innate environmentalists, a certain timeless quality is attached to Native people that detaches from the here and now

> of mainstream society (Buege 1996). I am saying that this is a form of domination that places Native people into the past and denies them a contemporary presence.
>
> VanWynsberghe, 2002: xii

He notes that society's "profit-seeking entities that have inundated us with books and films celebrating the spiritual side of 'Indian' life, have ironically acted to symbolically annihilate Native peoples" in a new form of the 'Vanishing (Indian)' (Ibid: xiv). I agree with his assertion that: "the popularity of these items is a reflection of the desire of non-Natives to project onto Native lives the value and sense of sacredness missing in their own. As a result, yesterday's 'noble savage' has become today's 'ecological Native'" (Ibid). Scholar Paul Nadasdy takes this critique even further when he problematizes the very concepts of 'environmentalism' and 'conservation'. In his essay, "Transcending the Debate over the Ecologically Noble Indian: Indigenous Peoples and Environmentalism", he notes that these fields "are of Euro-American origin to begin with, thus rendering any attempt to use these concepts to classify indigenous ideas and practices – regardless of how subtly or precisely they have been defined – extremely problematic" (Nadasdy, 2005: 294).

As for McKenzie's framework referred to above, Nadasdy remarks that: "Environmentalists and scholars of environmental politics alike tend to treat the spectrum of environmentalism as if it represented the range of possibilities for a *single* variable: something like the 'degree of environmentalism'." (Ibid: 300). He goes on to shatter the idea of defining environmental interests according to a linear chart, where environmentalism is the variable, writing that:

> People are not merely "more" or "less" environmentalist. Instead, what we gloss as "environmentalism" is actually a complex set of overlapping, dynamic, and sometimes contradictory beliefs and practices. The spectrum of environmentalism seems to indicate a single thing: one's degree of environmentalism. In reality, however, each point represents a nexus of different beliefs, values and practices
>
> Ibid

Duly, any attempt to limit Indigenous beliefs to some degree of environmentalism are bound to end up marginalizing these beliefs and forcing compliance to the dominant, Eurocentric knowledge paradigm. Indeed, Nadasdy elaborates that:

> The problem is that by picking and choosing isolated beliefs and practices from the extraordinary diversity of indigenous experience, one can always find evidence that "proves" that indigenous people belong at some particular position of the environmentalist spectrum. And, because different sets of beliefs and practices are associated with one another by virtue of their position on the environmentalist spectrum, placing indigenous people on the spectrum on the basis of a particular belief or practice necessarily entails making a series of unjustified assumptions about some of the *other* things that they must believe and do.
>
> Ibid: 301

Thus, attempts by many environmentalists to forge alliances with Indigenous nations end up causing more harm than good and further fracturing the possibilities of peaceful co-existence on the land.

While chronicling Walpole Island First Nation's resistance efforts to toxic pollution, VanWynsberghe observes how this community has counteracted such attempts by environmentalists to limit their culture, namely, by transforming environmentalism to suit their own purposes. The author writes that:

> Native peoples have recognized, over the 100-year history of the mainstream environmental movement, that they can partially counteract a history of oppression by focusing on a 'new' history – one that, in defiance of modern cultural currents, focuses on their continued relationship to the nonhuman world
>
> Ibid: xiii

The author quotes Sider (1993: 99) who writes about the "capacity of a dominated people to attack their domination precisely in its own terms and with its own symbols" (Ibid: xiv), and further explains that:

> The non-Native conception of Native peoples' organic and intimate relationship with the environment as an intrinsic element of Native peoples identity is a source of oppositional power for Native people. This identity can, as the example of Walpole Island shows, help us ('us' being non-Indigenous people) to experience grievous environmental injustices as an intolerable contradiction that cannot persist.
>
> Ibid, parenthesis mine

Whether or not any "intolerable contradictions" are unmasked throughout this study, I do wish to the best of my ability to assure the peoples of Walpole Island and the other Indigenous nations of North America the same freedom in my work that VanWynsberghe is referring to in his – the freedom to define themselves in any way they choose. I acknowledge that I occupy a position of privilege as a part of the colonial majority in Canada, and I reiterate that the goal of my work is to hold my own government and my own society accountable to the principles of respect, morality, and honesty, rather than to engage in an environmental/anthropological study of the peoples and practices of Walpole Island. To this end, I do not engage in the politics of this nation, but simply use published sources related to their environmental ethic and approach as the base for a comparison with the Canadian government.

Chapter Two - Ecology: The Stand-off between Diversity and Hegemony

Ecology generally refers to a domain of the biological sciences which studies "the relationships of organisms to one another and to their physical surroundings".[14] In the context of this discussion, ecology represents one major branch of the values that the modern environmental movement is concerned with, that is, how exactly do all living things fit into our cultural scheme? From the perspective of North American environmentalism, scholar Robert Paehlke explains that ecology refers to the knowledge that: "All life forms are bound up each with the other in a complex, and frequently little understood, web of life" (Paelhke, 2000: 79). Though modern science and therefore government in North America still tend to view themselves as being above such interdependence, and even in control of it, the tides of today's environmental movement are beginning to turn towards acknowledging the need to protect "biodiversity, ecological systems, and wilderness" (Ibid). Perhaps this interest is strengthening as a response to reports like the United Nation's *Pilot Analysis of Global Eco-systems*, which documents the fact that "half the planet's forests are gone, 80 percent of grasslands and 40 percent of the planet's land surface suffer from soil degeneration, and 70 percent of the planet's major marine fisheries are depleted" (quoted from Hartmann, 1998: 1). Given society's heightened sensitivity to diversity-related issues of late, ecological values are well represented in the DRIC reports. Of the five "environmental concerns" detailed in the *Environmental Overview Paper* (the socio-economic environment, cultural, natural environment, air quality/noise, and landfills and natural waste), this chapter focuses on the natural environment. The Report in question reflects an evaluation phase of the

[14] Oxford Canadian Dictionary Definition.

overall project, where the land is being appraised in terms of development 'opportunities' and 'constraints'.

The DRIC Report on Diversity

Historians recount that prior to colonization, the area was utilized by a number of Indigenous nations, mainly the Huron, Ojibway, Potawatomi, Ottawa, and the Shawnee for an estimated period of ten thousand years. Many of these nations themselves profess to have inhabited this area since the dawn of time (Bkejwanong Natural Heritage Program, 2006:13). The DRIC report commences its historical account of the area at the time of contact with European settlers. According to the DRIC, the land is characterized by the early European explorers in the 1600s "by open meadows (prairies), parklands, forest groves, and wetlands" (DRIC),[15] along what is now called the Detroit River. Accordingly, this "diverse habitat exhibited an abundance of wildlife including elk, white tail deer, black bear, wild turkey, passenger pigeons, trumpeter swans, and greater prairie chicken."[16] Farming, industrialization, and the construction of the railroad in the 1800s led to a situation where: "Many wildlife species were extirpated by the end of the century due to loss of habitat and harvest" (DRIC).[17] Furthermore: "Extensive loss of natural features continued into the 1900s; over 140,000 acres of forested lands were cleared in the 1950s. As a result, by the 1980s approximately 96% of the original wetlands, and 95% of the original forest (Oldham 1983) had been lost" (DRIC).[18] Two things are clear from this historical account: primarily, that in the esteem of the writers of the report, the

[15] PartnershipBorderStudy.com, Previous Reports, Planning/Need and Feasibility Study, Environmental Overview Paper, 2.1.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.

history of this place became meaningful only through industrialization and settlement by European colonizers; moreover, the preservation of diversity was of very little concern to the early pioneers, who saw these trees no doubt as obstacles to settlement, the prairies as prime farming opportunities, and equally the peoples living on the land at the time as impediments to 'progress'.

It should be noted at the outset of this section that unlike their predecessors, the DRIC and its guiding legislation profess to have an active interest in maintaining diversity, witnessed in statements such as the following: "Assessing the project impacts to natural features such as fish and fish habitat, vegetation and vegetation communities and wildlife and wildlife habitat is an important part of the Detroit River International Crossing Environmental Assessment" (DRIC).[19] Also it is noted that:

> (The Provincial Policy Statement) includes provisions for habitat diversity and conservation/enhancement of corridor and linkage function, specifically indicating that the diversity of natural features in an area, and the natural connections between them should be maintained, and improved where possible.
>
> DRIC[20]

We shall see in our examination of the DRIC and the surrounding legislation, however, that the position taken in respect of diversity by government is predominantly 'anthropocentric', or, human-centered. According to American professor of philosophy Paul W. Taylor in his essay "The Ethics of Respect for Nature", this perspective is characterized by the following:

> From this human-centered standpoint it is to humans that all duties are ultimately owed. We may have responsibilities *with regard to* the natural ecosystems and

[19] PartnershipBorderStudy.com, Meetings and Events in Canada, Protection of Cultural Resource – Natural Heritage Features Impact Assessment

[20] PartnershipBorderStudy.com, Previous Reports, Planning Need/Feasibility Study, Environmental Overview, 6.2.

> biotic communities of our planet, but these responsibilities are in every case based on the contingent fact that our treatment of those ecosystems and communities of life can further the realization of human values and/or human rights.
>
> Taylor, 1998: 73

The concept of anthropocentrism explains why the "complex web of life" referred to above by Robert Paehlke is so "frequently little understood" by Western society: for most of the history of the European colonizers, nature was thought of as something to be feared and suppressed, as well as manipulated and exploited for the benefit of humankind alone. This deeply engraved separation between man and nature shaped the establishment of North American colonial settlements - living space has been separated from nature as cities destroy the former environment in favour of artificial constructs (Suzuki, 1997: 25). The Windsor-Detroit area is a classic example of this cultural tendency toward environmental artificiality, given the startling statistics for how little of the original natural environment remains intact.

In fact, the roots of Western society's anthropocentric view of the environment stretch back much further than the point of European settlement. Some people, like David Suzuki in *The Sacred Balance,* explore these roots philosophically. Suzuki writes that:

> Many thinkers trace the origins of our particular and violent fall from grace, our exile from the garden, back to Plato and Aristotle, who began a powerful process of separating the world-as-abstract-principle from the world-as-experience – dividing mind, that is, from body, and human beings from the world they inhabit. In the process they laid the groundwork for experimental science…human beings are the things that think…and the rest of the world is made up of things that can be measured (or 'thought about'). Subject or object, mind or body, matter or spirit: this is the dual world we have inhabited ever since – where the brain's ability to distinguish and classify has ruled the roost.
>
> Suzuki, 1997: 192

So, perhaps it was the ancient Greek philosophers who first introduced the dualistic thinking that has come to define the 'modern' rationale. Alternately, the distinguished Sioux scholar Vine Deloria, in his essay "Christianity and Indigenous Religion", frames this discussion within a religious interpretation. According to Deloria, the Christian-based ideologies that form the base of Western science place an enduring emphasis on man's initial disobedience in the Garden of Eden. He theorizes that Christianity therefore holds a belief in the fundamental sinful nature of the universe. Thus, within the Christian tradition: "Nature becomes evil and hostile toward our species and consequently we are in conflict with every other form of life" (Deloria, 1999: 147). Humankind must continually "look for the destruction of this world and the creation of another world (Heaven)" (Ibid, parenthesis mine). From this perspective: "Because the universe is evil and must eventually be destroyed, we have no real responsibility to it" (Ibid). Whatever the reason for this subconscious 'lack of responsibility' that Deloria speaks of, this trait is shown in the following pages to be one of the defining characteristics of North American environmental policy.

The deficient responsibility for nature is initially visible in the way that state powers organize environmental governance, whereby regulations are divided between the federal, provincial, and municipal governments in a patchwork of overlapping liability and miscommunication. According to this structure, the federal government can commit to certain environmental standards, but, as Lee and Perl point out, "it is largely up to the provinces to implement and enforce these policies" (Lee and Perl, 2003: 5). As a result,

"the responsibility for Canada's environment is divided" (Ibid: 11). They go on to quote Hessing and Howlett (1997: 57), who contend that:

> this situation has led to a patchwork response to environmental concerns by both levels of government in Canada. Different aspects of environmental problems are dealt with by different levels of government in accordance with resource ownership and jurisdiction as initially laid out in 1867 and modified in 1982.
>
> Ibid

Clearly, the environment and our understanding of it in 2008 is nothing like it was in 1867. Even the patriation of the Constitution in 1982 occurred only 11 years after Environment Canada had been created – before the global clamour surrounding climate change and before any serious recognition was attributed to environmental diversity. Not only is this method of approaching environmental concerns dated, but also it is further noted the jurisdictional approach "is both a cause for policy fragmentation and a potential source of federal/provincial conflict" (Ibid). It seems that regardless of the intent that a given government agency holds to achieve a level of environmental protection, competing pressures within this system can mean both the shifting of responsibility between agencies ("captured in Harrison's phrase (1996) of 'passing the buck'"(Ibid: 5)), as well as the possibility for gaps in protection policies where neither agency claims full responsibility.

Responsibility is further removed in that environmental governance is exercised by proxy. In this scenario, individuals making the decisions concerning the environment do not live with the daily repercussions of those decisions. Consequently, the way protection policies are framed within the DRIC report gives them a distinctly obligatory, administrative feel, witnessed in the following: "The recognition of natural heritage

features within the Operational Planning Documents (Municipal regulation) fulfills the commitment in the Provincial Policy Statement to recognize natural features" (DRIC).[21] To illustrate the jurisdictional intricacy involved in this process it should be noted that a full twenty-three agencies are listed as having input into the DRIC, and twenty government acts are sourced. This situation creates bewilderment for the citizen trying to grasp the government's level of concern for a 'natural heritage feature', and it is also very time consuming. Protection of woodlands in the DRIC, for instance, is characterized in the following way:

> The comprehensive inventory and evaluation of natural heritage features, which includes the delineation of provincially significant wetlands, Environmentally Significant Areas, and locally significant Candidate Natural Heritage Sites, has accounted for the majority of woodlot features that could be considered to serve some form of ecological function. Other woodland stands of trees are also included in the recreational and Open Spaces features that make up the greenway systems of the local communities.
>
> DRIC[22]

It is difficult to know which agency has labelled the remaining green spaces in the Windsor area with which designations, and what these mean in reality. What is clear, is not only this system's cumbersome and indirect nature, but ultimately its embodiment of the artificial.

Environmentalism is considered by society to be a science, and the manner in which Western science conducts research upholds the maxim that humankind is separate from nature. It is commonly understood that Western science assumes that objectivism - the belief that the observer must separate him or herself from that which is being

[21] PartnershipBorderStudy.com, Previous reports, Planning Need/Feasibility Study, Environmental Overview Report, 6.2, Parenthesis mine.
[22] Ibid, 6.10

observed - is the most effective way to conduct research (Johnson, 1992). Although most of the research pertaining to the DRIC project is necessarily site specific, the environmental evaluation nonetheless takes place within an objectivist/reductionist framework, witnessed in the rigid separation of each element under consideration. Additionally, the elements under discussion are appraised according to criteria which deem a place environmentally "significant" by breaking it into its functional parts and determining how they can be of service to human society. This method can be viewed in one of the provincial environmental regulations enforced in the DRIC which includes the identification of Environmentally Sensitive Areas, or ESAs. The ESAs are evaluated "based on several physical, ecological, and social criteria that include: significant landform, significant species, migratory stopover, significant communities, diversity, size, hydrological significance, aesthetic/historical, or research/education" (DRIC).[23] Where a more biocentric perspective on the assessment of these places would make the DRIC "morally bound…to protect or promote their good for *their sake*"(Taylor, 1998: 72), the Ontario legislation visibly functions within a framework that considers a place uniquely in the context of its gratification of "human values" (Ibid). In addition, rather than 'diversity' signifying a framework of relationship between all living things, in this case it is reduced and then limited to being one of the 'criteria' that could contribute to protection efforts being bestowed on the geographical site in question.

Municipally, the DRIC explains that: "General sensitivity…is outlined…in terms of the hierarchical environmental protection policies associated with a natural feature's

[23] PartnershipBorderStudy.com, Previous Reports, Planning Need/Feasibility Study, Environmental Overview Report, 6.2.

land use designation" (DRIC).[24] These hierarchical divisions affect the level of protection afforded the natural feature, which could range from a "Natural Heritage Feature", which is the highest level of protection, reserved for "Windsor's most environmentally sensitive and significant areas…including wetlands" (DRIC)[25], to "Environmental Policy Area A", which "May be partially developed provided that the development conserve the significant natural feature/function" (DRIC)[26], to "Environmental Policy Area B", which "May be developed provided the significant natural features are incorporated as part of the development" (DRIC), [27] and so on. In this way all the elements of the few remaining natural features of this area are reduced, evaluated, and then classified in a hierarchy of importance according to a man-made, scientific scale. Having been familiarized with the framework of anthropocentrism, it is not surprising that areas of natural heritage that "enjoy a higher level of concern and protection" (DRIC),[28] - as if the right to be alive were a luxury to be enjoyed - are considered by the DRIC team to represent 'constraints' to the new crossing development project.

The propensity to reduce places into small parts and then evaluate them according to a list of criteria is a common and widely accepted tenet of the Canadian environmental assessment process (Erickson, 1994). The compatibility between fundamentally reductionist thinking and a genuine appreciation for diversity is hereby called into

[24] PartnershipBorderStudy.com, Previous Reports, Planning Need/Feasibility Study, Environmental Overview Report, 6.2.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid, 6.13.

question, however. Paehlke acknowledges that the very concept of diversity refers to an unseen and unmeasurable interdependence when he writes that:

> Human well-being, and indeed human survival, depends on the success of an almost endless list of plant and animal species, often in ways we barely understand. Our global food reserves would endure for but a matter of months should our food production capabilities suddenly decline. That capability is determined in turn by rainfall and temperature, by the activities of many insect species such as bees, and by microbiological life within the soils of the planet. All of these are in turn affected by both plants and animals. Our well-being is determined by other species in other ways as well, not the least of which is our deep need for contact with, or awareness of the existence of, wild nature.
>
> Paehlke, 2002, 79

It is implied in this statement that Western science and the mind of modern man may not have the requisite wisdom, and therefore may not be capable of making the kind of distinctions and classifications that environmental assessments seem to formulate so breezily. This troubling recognition holds true even *within* an anthropocentric environmental worldview, like the one described here by Paehlke; even when it is solely the benefit to humans being considered, how can humans be sure that we know how to evaluate and define a benefit? The assumption that humans know what is best for humankind is probably the most accurate explanation for how Western society has manifested such utter environmental decimation in such a relatively short period of time.

The Indigenous approach to diversity is vastly different than anthropocentrism, or even biocentrism, although the latter comes a little closer. Biocentrism has been described to mean that:

> Our duties to respect the integrity of natural ecosystems, to preserve endangered species, and to avoid environmental pollution stem from the fact that these are ways in which we can make it possible for wild species populations to achieve and maintain a healthy existence in a natural state…out of recognition of their inherent worth.

Taylor, 1998: 72

This way of looking at nature is certainly a big philosophical jump from the typical North American view evidenced in the DRIC report, but the pan-Indigenous worldview that Deloria puts forward is a far bigger jump still. Consider the following description of a "tribal" view of the universe:

> The universe is a fabric, a symphony, a tapestry; everything is connected to everything else and everything is alive and responsible to its relationships in every way. The human being is not the crowning glory of creation and certainly not its master…Because everything is alive and because we have responsibilities to all living things, we cannot force the rest of nature to do what we want. Indeed, we must respectfully approach the rest of nature and seek its permission to initiate a course of action.
>
> Deloria, 1999: 148

According to this worldview, humankind enters into a respectful relationship with all elements of creation and not only attempts to consider the other elements' positions, but, recognizing the impossibility of grasping the depth of our interdependence, humbly seeks the *permission* of the surrounding environment to engage in a potentially environment-altering activity. The engagement with nature and non-human species is enacted through whatever cultural/ceremonial/religious methods deemed appropriate by the community. The other elements of the natural world are thereby not only considered, but actually consulted and treated by humans as partners, though it is often explicitly recognized that human beings have an added responsibility to the natural world vis a vis other species (Bierhorst, 1994). This system thus expresses the utmost respect for diversity and all non-human elements of nature.

If we now reconsider the position of the DRIC in light of the Indigenous worldview, the gaping distance between the government's efforts, and the efforts that a

genuine concern for diversity would yield becomes apparent. The DRIC report prefaces a discussion concerning the Detroit River by acknowledging that: "While quantity has never been an issue, quality has become a concern" (DRIC).[29] The river was accordingly deemed an "Area of Concern" under the United States and Canada Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. In true anthropocentric fashion, the DRIC first explains that:

> Under this agreement, there are 14 water quality parameters known as 'beneficial uses'…Nine of (the Detroit River's) beneficial uses have been determined to be impaired. These impairments consist of restrictions on fish and wildlife consumption, fish tumours or other deformities, degradation of benthos, restrictions on drinking water consumption, dredging activities, taste and odour problems, beach closings, degradation of aesthetics, and loss of fish and wildlife habitat.
>
> DRIC[30]

Later on in the report it is admitted that: "The requirement for the installation of road/highway crossing structures at the various watercourse crossing has potential for encroachment into fisheries habitat" (DRIC)[31] - at this instance the fish and the roadway require the same space. Paehlke speaks to this moment where our environmental ethics are challenged when he writes that: "Few would disagree with the assertion that the lives of future humans would be profoundly less rich should we humans appropriate most of the space required by other species. Yet here is the dilemma: both the animals and humans now need the same land. Who will decide what to do? And how?" (Paehlke, 2000: 84). The DRIC solves the dilemma in the following way:

> Should such encroachment be necessary, future impact investigations will be required to determine whether the impacts constitute a Harmful Alteration, Disruption/Destruction (HADD) of fish habitat productive capacity. Should a HADD be determined to exist, then authorization for the works will be required under the Federal Fisheries Act…Typically any loss of habitat associated with

[29] PartnershipBorderStudy.com, Previous Reports, Planning Need/Feasibility Study, Environmental Overview Report, 6.4
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid, 6.5

> works would require appropriate compensation as negotiated with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.
>
> (DRIC)[32]

The DRIC does not discuss what this "compensation" might consist of, since a final decision concerning the use of the space has not been made yet, but I cannot think of any amount of money or other type of advantage that could be offered to replace for the fish its home and the right to a strong and healthy existence.

A subsequent example further exposes the nature of protection efforts put forward by environmental legislation. This example is witnessed with regard to wetlands. Because of their great importance within the ecosystem, also because only four percent of the originally massive system of the Detroit River Wetland system remains, and ultimately because the Detroit River has been "designated a Canadian Heritage River" (DRIC),[33] the federal legislation takes a relatively hard line toward their protection: "Any proposed impacts to wetlands and/or wildlife habitat…will therefore undergo a rigorous scrutiny and their approval would be very much in doubt" (DRIC).[34] Furthermore, "the (Canadian Federal Government Policy on Wetland Conservation) encourages federal and provincial governments to strive to meet the objective of the federal policy which is to 'promote the conservation of Canada's wetlands to sustain their ecological and sociological functions, now and in the future'" (DRIC).[35] Yet hearkening back once again to the 'competing space' issue brought up by Paehlke, it is noted later in the report, that "development and site alteration may to some extent be permitted on *adjacent lands*

[32] PartnershipBorder Study.com, Previous Reports, Planning/Need Feasibility Study, Environmental Overview Report, 6.5.
[33] Ibid, 6.2
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid, 6.6.

to wetlands" (DRIC).[36] 'Adjacent' is then defined as being 120 meters/130 yards away. It seems that even in situations where the protection of an 'ecologically significant' space is recognized by the highest levels of government, Western society's impetus for development is permitted to push as close as possible to that space in order to maximize their own use of it. The DRIC Report negligently does not address the question of how the creatures who make up the wetland eco-system will know that this boundary has been established, or how this reduced habitat will affect these species and the overall health of the eco-system. While it is certain that this space requirement was established by 'highly qualified' environmental scientists, it is also clear that such a requirement was fabricated according to a (legislatively justified) reductionist and anthropocentric framework.

As a final indication of the ecological value system of the DRIC, I will refer to the most current stage of the project, wherein the crossing options have been narrowed to variations of three access roads and three plazas. The impacts to Natural Heritage were reported as follows. In terms of vegetation in the Area of Continued Study (ACA):

> • Seven types of vegetation communities located in the ACA are considered rare, very rare or extremely rare in Ontario and very rare, imperiled or critically imperiled globally.
> • Fifty-five plant species located in the ACA are considered rare, very rare or extremely rare in Ontario.
> • Three plant species (dense blazing star, colicroot and climbing prairie rose) are regulated as "threatened."
> • One plant species (butternut) is regulated as "endangered" in Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act*.
>
> (DRIC)[37]

[36] PartnershipBorder Study.com, Previous Reports, Planning/Need Feasibility Study, Environmental Overview Report, emphasis mine.
[37] Ibid, Meetings and Events in Canada, Protection of Cultural Resources, Natural Heritage Features Impact Assessment.

Disappointingly, all three of the proposed crossing sites - one of which will likely be chosen as the site for the new bridge - encroach on the land where these plants grow. As for the access road, which is set to link the new crossing to the main Southern Ontario highway, the DRIC estimates that: "Between 70 and 159 specimens/colonies of provincially rare plants are impacted by the access road alternatives, with minor differences among the alternatives in terms of impacts" (DRIC).[38] Furthermore, the plaza, which refers to the space where the cars and trucks will line up and be processed by border security, is set to displace between one and three hectares of tallgrass prairie and deciduous swamp within the Ojibway Prairie Complex, a Provincial Nature Reserve. This is significant considering the entire Ojibway Prairie Complex is only 65 hectares in total size (DRIC).[39]

As for the animals living in this space, the DRIC reports have measured the following populations:

> One hundred and twenty one wildlife habitat units were identified and fifty species of breeding birds were recorded in the ACA. Three Eastern Foxsnake and four Butler's Gartersnake were recorded in the ACA. Both species are regulated as "threatened" in Schedule One of the *Species At Risk Act.*
>
> DRIC[40]

In line with the analysis up until this point, the report goes on to describe that:

> One notable potential impact among the alternatives is to the habitat of the Butler's Gartersnake. The area between Malden Road and Matchette Road alongside the E.C. Row Expressway has been identified as habitat for the Butler's Gartersnake. This area is more highly impacted by Plaza A, although the access road into Plazas B, B1, and C also impacts this area to a lesser extent.

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[38] PartnershipBorder Study.com, Meetings and Events in Canada, Protection of Cultural Resources, Natural Heritage Features Impact Assessment..

[39] Ibid, Canadian Reports, Draft Environmental Overview, Volume 2 A, 5.4.1.

[40] Ibid, Meetings and Events in Canada, Protection of Cultural Resources, Natural Heritage Features Impact Assessment.

DRIC[41]

Once again it is made evident that in spite the protection policies in place which profess to value diversity and to acknowledge the need to protect non-human species and their habitats, the inclination of powerful groups within human society is given higher priority. In this way nature is consistently and aggressively devalued by environmental protection policies.

The Value of Diversity: Walpole Island First Nation

Walpole Island First Nation's (WIFN) approach to environmental governance stands in stark contrast to that of the DRIC. It is clear to me, as a Canadian person, that due to my limited interaction with the peoples of Walpole Island and my upbringing within the colonial majority, the intricacies of this belief system escape me and I will therefore make no attempt to summarize this worldview. It is further been made clear to me by many of my interactions with Indigenous colleagues and teachers, that many of the details of an Indigenous life-system defy the English language or would be inappropriate to convey so lightly as within this paper due to their profound weight and importance within the culture. In light of these truths I reiterate that I will bring forward the environmental values of Walpole Island First Nation by using only publicly released documents and also by drawing out these values as responses or counterbalances to the Canadian environmental values already established.

[41] PartnershipBorder Study.com, Meetings and Events in Canada, Protection of Cultural Resources, Natural Heritage Features Impact Assessment.

The Bkejwanong Natural Heritage Program's booklet entitled: *E-Niizaanag Wii-ngoshkaag Maampii Bkejwanong* or, *Species At Risk on the Walpole Island First Nation* elucidates the nation's environmental philosophy in both the Nishnaabemwin and the English languages. The English version explains that in order for this nation: "To preserve, enhance, and maintain a mutual respect and to continue our beneficial dependency upon the environment, we shall endeavour to co-exist with Mother Nature and protect this relationship" (Bkejwanong Natural Heritage Centre, 2006:14). Non-Indigenous people tend to discredit this belief premised on peaceful and mutually beneficial existence as naïve, or outdated (their own legally binding environmental governing system from the 1980s notwithstanding), when in fact it is more likely that they simply do not understand the depth of meaning encapsulated within this axiom. The United Nations Special Rapporteur Erica Daes, in her Final Working Paper on "Indigenous Peoples and Their Relationship to the Land", has contextualized the perspective expressed by WIFN within the larger Indigenous belief system. She succinctly explains that: "it is difficult to separate the concept of (I)ndigenous peoples' relationship with their lands, territories and resources from that of their cultural differences and values. The relationship with the land and all living things is at the core of (I)ndigenous societies" (Daes, 2001, Article 13). Deloria, in the essay "Native American Spirituality", has further noted that this belief consists of "the acknowledgement of the dignity of other life forms, which is a simple but profound recognition" (Deloria, 1999:131). A Walpole Island grandmother called Gina also explains in an interview with VanWynsberghe in his book that:

> Culture, history, and tradition are one to me and they have always been there with me so I don't distinguish them…In some ways the way we lived a long time ago

> and how I was brought up are the same. We always knew that we had to care for everything that was given to us and to respect Mother Earth and our medicines.
>
> VanWynsberghe, 2002: 41

The reductionist framework employed by Canadian society precludes such dignity from being conferred on nature, blocking the recognition of its importance in all aspects of environmental policy. In the absence of dignity and respect for nature there are no moral principles to guide policy's implementation, which accounts for the presiding selfishness and greed exhibited by environmental practice where space is concerned.

To emphasize this idea – so foreign to Canadian environmental governance – that the Earth is the mother to the people, another quote by Deloria elaborates on this concept and further connects it to the primacy of place. He writes that:

> The essence of the Indian attitude toward peoples, lands, and other life forms is one of kinship relations in which no element of life can go unattached from human society. Thus lands are given special status because they form a motherhood relationship with the peoples who live on them. Too often this dimension is twisted when non-Indians make it sentimental truism and the Indian philosophy appears shallow and without insight. But the true meaning of the motherhood of the land is that, like a mother, it shapes and teaches our species and, according to the peculiarity of the area, produces certain basic forms of personality and social identity which could not be produced in any other way.
>
> Ibid

It is for this reason that although a general Indigenous worldview based on kinship with the living world is referenced, in fact each nation abides by its own environmental conduct specific to a particular geographic place. Dean Jacobs, Executive Director of the Walpole Island Heritage Centre, echoes Deloria's thoughts in a speech given at a Meeting of the Council of Great Lakes Research Managers. He recounts that "each First Nation is different. And there are 64 First Nations within the Great Lakes drainage basin on the Canadian side alone" (Jacobs and Lytwyn, March 20, 2000). According to Jacobs:

> We have a large number of things in common, including our attitudes to resources and our search for consensus in decision-making. However, our relationship with our environment and ecosystem is specific to each First Nation, and there is no magic formula in dealing with First Nations collectively.
>
> Ibid

The people of Walpole Island's knowledge of 'the environment', therefore, necessarily grows out of their interactions with it, and the impacts of their decisions concerning 'the environment' are not considered or studied separately from their own lives.

This view is additionally witnessed in the following segment of the *Species at Risk on the Walpole Island First Nation* handbook. It reads that:

> Our traditional Native philosophies, values and practices of interacting respectfully with the natural world and not separating ourselves from it, has directly contributed to the continued existence of the natural areas and many wildlife species, both common and rare, found on the Walpole Island First Nation.
>
> Bkejwanong Natural Heritage Program, 2006: 13

Unlike the Canadian context therefore, where the link between the law makers/law enforcers/project creators, and the place (my home/Windsor, Ontario/the traditional territory of Walpole Island) is legally and administratively derived, the environmental governance of the WIFN promotes accountability as an innate quality of its structure. In this way Walpole Island's environmental policy comes from out of the land, as opposed to Canadian environmental policy, which is imposed onto the land arbitrarily. This difference in belief concerning the land forms the crux, in fact, of Indigenous – state conflict. Jerry Mander, author of *In the Absence of the Sacred* has written that:

> This fundamental difference in viewpoint between technological cultures and land-based native peoples – whether the planet is alive or isn't – is the root of many conflicts between the two groups. Americans, for example, have a particularly hard time grasping the notion of a living earth. We scoff at the idea, in fact, and anyone who speaks of it seriously. I have seen white people laugh

> aloud when young Indian activists stand at meetings to denounce some mining development as a 'desecration of our mother, the earth'.
>
> Mander, 1991: 212

Non-Indigenous people, it seems, have become so disconnected from our basic needs that we have forgotten that it is the land itself which provides sustenance. Rather, it is viewed in terms of commodities to be profited from and resources to be managed.

As a further distinction of Walpole Island's 'environmental' value system, part of the explicit environmental philosophy of the Walpole Island First Nation relates to the notion of longevity. It reads: "As our elders have done, we shall maintain laws that preserve our wildlife, lands, and resources" (Bkejwanong Natural Heritage Program, 2006: 14). Given not only the destruction wrought in only 200 – 300 years by colonial states, but also the current trouble we seem to be having in knowing how to promote sustainability in ecosystems, it is fair to say that our Canadian environmental system is failing. Conversely, Dean Jacobs points out that his people understand that it is "*because* we hold these values that we have the knowledge, the experience, the ecosystems, the rare and endangered species that you (meaning colonial states) believe are important" (Jacobs and Lytwyn, Meeting of the Council of Great Lakes Research Managers, March 20, 2000).[42] This long-standing sense of place has given the residents of Walpole Island the confidence to oppose attempts by outside forces (mainly corporate and government projects) from interfering with their lands and practices. Robert VanWynsberghe recounts several of these massive efforts, writing that:

> For example, in late 1992 the Heritage Centre intervened in an effort to stop a proposal to dig a large railway tunnel under the St.Clair River at Sarnia because

[42] Parenthesis mine.

> of its potential environmental and land claims impact. In May 1993 the Heritage Centre obtained intervenor status to oppose the construction of a hydro line that could jeopardize hunting, fishing, trapping, and land claim interest. It also successfully intervened in the construction of a new gas pipeline (that was to extend from an area near Wallaceburg to Windsor) that threatened both the environment and traditional harvesting areas. The Heritage Centre was also instrumental in ending the construction of a rotary kiln incinerator southeast of Sarnia.
>
> VanWynsberghe, 2002: 53

From the author's perspective as a visitor to Walpole Island, the resistance to encroachment onto their lands and governance methods was possible because of the people's commonly held values in relation to their environment. He states that:

> The responses of community members to environmental issues on Walpole Island is deeply embedded in their consciousness of being Native. A response to these conditions must elicit beliefs in a set of responsibilities that are accentuated by myth (the Seventh Generation prophecy), symbols (Aboriginal sovereignty based upon Aboriginal title), and values.
>
> Ibid: 54

Thus concerns for the environment and the impetus to mobilize in the face of potential environmental degradation do not designate the 'environmentally-friendly' nature of these people, but rather represent the fulfillment of long-standing cultural responsibilities developed over thousands of years.

Not only is the consciousness of Walpole Island deeply rooted in the teachings of their ancestors, but Dean Jacobs points out of his people that: "we take a long view of the land and resource, extending several generations into the future" (Jacobs, Meeting of the Council of Great Lakes Research Managers, March 20, 2000). In WIFN's *Environmental Policies, Guidelines and Information for External Project Proponents*, it is noted that:

> Project proponents should be aware that the primary issues of concern to WIFN include the quality of water, air, fauna, flora, waterbeds (particularly sediments) in our traditional territory and undisputed territory, and the effects of pollutants on

> the physical, emotional, and spiritual health and well-being of its members, both present and future.
>
> Walpole Island First Nation Council, 2002, 3

Education efforts, such as the creation of *Species at Risk on the Walpole Island First Nation* handbook, further seek to ensure the continued cultural ethic of interdependence and respect for the land. A passage of the handbook confirms that:

> We, the First Nations of Walpole Island Indian Territory, have inhabited these lands since the beginning of time. With this occupation we have developed our own language, heritage and values…in accordance with the Creator, mankind and nature. Through this relationship, we possess the rights and freedom to determine our own path. We shall carry on these responsibilities as handed down to us by our Creator, and our elders, and ensure that future generations shall be entrusted with these sacred obligations.
>
> Bkejwanong Natural Heritage Program, 2006: 13

A passage such as this one, displaying cohesion, groundedness and foresight creates a blunt contrast to the values portrayed by the DRIC report, which increasingly appear fractured, disconnected, and limited to the perceived needs of the current human society.

In spite of the ever-increasing fragility of the eco-system in this area, it is clear that the North American value system has not yet subscribed to the notion of humankind's interdependence with the environment. In his book, *A Practical Guide to Environmental Impact Assessment*, author Paul Erickson writes a passage that reflects the mechanism of current environmental policy. Denouncing efforts to incorporate a more holistic approach into environmental assessment protocols, he muses that:

> We may intuitively grasp the sense of this statement (that 'All things are connected to one another') but, in practical terms, we know that all things are not connected equally – that everything in the world does not change because one part does. We can reasonably expect that some components of the environment can change or be altered (even drastically) with no measurable effect on some other component. Although we accept the doctrine of holism – that the environment is

> a whole – practical experience tells us to discern the degree of relationship or connectedness among individual parts of any whole.
>
> Erickson, 1994: 5[43]

With this scientifically ordained view in mind, our development projects continue to exploit the land mercilessly, justifying such actions by noting "no measurable effect" on other species or elements of their habitats. Some environmentalists, aware of the destructive potential reflected in statements such as Erickson's, attribute Canadian society's arrogance to the legacy of colonialism. David Suzuki for example, writes that:

> In North America the history of settlement and conquest has created a powerful myth of the primacy of the individual, free to act and move as an independent entity. But from a biological point of view, this myth is a mistaken and dangerous version of reality. We are not completely independent and autonomous; when we look carefully at the interactions at every level between our bodies and the element that surrounds us, we see how completely we are embedded in air, all of us caught together in the same matrix.
>
> Suzuki, 1997: 32

Whether this attitude stems directly from the hostile takeover of the Americas, or whether our disconnection occurred earlier and was simply transplanted to Turtle Island, what is clearly lacking in colonial states' master development plans is a general sense of place and of kinship with living things. So long as North American people continue to deny our dependence on our environment, the idea of conferring dignity on the environment and thus incorporating a respect for diversity into development plans will remain illusory.

Recall from the introduction chapter that there is much ambiguity surrounding the real meaning of the term 'environmentalism', and furthermore, as Nadasdy pointed out – the very concept is of Eurocentric origin which makes a comparison of Canadian and Indigenous environmental practices impossible. The same can easily be said of

[43] Initial parenthesis mine.

'diversity' in that it is defined in the Canadian culture vaguely and, as the analysis of the DRIC project demonstrated, is often used to refer merely to one element of an environmental assessment on par with any other measuring tool. Moreover this term is purely Eurocentric – Indigenous groups like the Walpole Island First Nation do not count diversity as a tool for considering environmental impacts. Rather, as the analysis has shown, what approximates 'diversity' for the people of Walpole Island is actually an ethic of respect woven into the framework of the culture, which dictates their reactions to, and actions within their territory. It is clear then that for all the rhetoric in the DRIC and its guiding legislation surrounding ecological concerns, Canadian society continues to function under a framework of values which promotes the hegemony of a single species – humans, and even a single culture – Western. Alternatively, efforts that communities such as WIFN have put forward to protect and promote their way of life have been successful when measured by the high quality of diversity found within their territory. The key for their success in this respect is found in their value system, which is founded on a profound respect for life. Furthermore, this system creates a strong contrast to the North American system, which attempts but fails to balance a respect for life with economic goals.

Chapter Three: The Economics of Human Health

In addition to concerns regarding environmental diversity and conservation, mainstream society has recently become preoccupied with health and wellness. Health concerns, particularly among the affluent members of society, are manifesting in everything from obsessions with yoga, to preferences for organic groceries, to aversion of trans fats. Perhaps this trend is occurring as a response to the growing prevalence of debilitating mental and physical illnesses that a large degree of North American society is now experiencing, such as depression, diabetes, and obesity. The medical profession's tentative links between these conditions and environmental pollution has caused sustained and widespread unease throughout society, and this concern is reflected in the government's on-going efforts to reduce toxic pollutants in our soil, air, and water, and food. Unfortunately, the environmental pollutants in question are the same ones that emanate from North America's core industries, therein defining the challenge to environmental reform. Most notably, the agriculture industry thrives on chemical pesticide use, soil-exhausting farming methods, and high doses of antibiotics to livestock (Hartmann, 1998, 56-59). Additionally, North America's auto industry, which propels the economy in many major cities, is founded entirely on oil-based emissions, "creating a din of noise and a cloud of pollution in all metropolitan areas" (Hawken, Lovins, and Lovins, 1999: 23). These industries and other common ones have been said to have created a "witches brew of dangerous substances" (Ibid: 16) whose chemical traces show up everywhere from "our stratosphere to our sperm" (Ibid, quoting Meadows). So, while middle-class, SUV-driving soccer moms are enthusiastically taking up Asian meditation techniques in an effort to increase wellbeing, it seems that few are making the

connections between their lifestyles and the condition of society's health. More simply, to examine the roots of the health epidemic plaguing us is to examine the very structure and values of the economy which provides our standard of living.

Paehlke has written of the tension between economics and health in the US, reporting that: "In this debate Rep. John D. Dingell, D-Mich., was compelled to ask: 'What is the cost-benefit analysis that is going to determine the price of a healthy child?'" (Paehlke, 2000: 82). Indeed, examining the government's handling of this poignant conflict is a crucial step in understanding the bigger picture of the society's environmental values. The relevant portions of the DRIC project where this topic is concerned are the reports pertaining to economic impact assessments, air quality assessments, and the diagnostics of the city's transportation problems. Predominant in this discussion is the fact that the city of Windsor is notorious for having one of – if not the worst – health record in the country, with widespread incidences of pollution-related diseases. It is important to understand this dynamic of the local environment before the DRIC health and business imperatives can be discussed, and this section will therefore be prefaced with some health-related information pertaining to the city.

A synopsis of this city's health crisis is provided by Michael Gilbertson and James Brophy[44] in an article written for a publication entitled: *Environmental Health Perspectives.* In their article, the authors summarize the results of a Health Canada study conducted in Windsor between 1986 and 1992. This study – "Community Health Profile

[44] Of the International Joint Commission, Windsor, Ontario, Canada and Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers, Sarnia-Lambton, Point Edward, Ontario, Canada, respectively.

of Windsor, Ontario, Canada – Anatomy of a Great Lakes Area of Concern" – came into being out of an agreement between the US and Canadian governments in mutual recognition of the significant harm that pollution was causing to the Great Lakes area and its residents. The authors note that:

> The signing of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement was not only a diplomatic acknowledgment that pollution of the boundary waters between the two nations had caused injury to health and property on the respective other sides but also represented a scientific and regulatory response to this injury. Similarly, in 1991 the two governments signed the Canada–United States Air Quality Agreement to address issues of transboundary air pollution, with particular reference to human health.
>
> Brophy and Gilbertson, 2001: 828

According to the article, the seventeen Canadian (out of a total forty-two) 'Areas of Concern' designated under the Agreement each received special attention by Health Canada in the form of a health diagnostic study. The intended goal was to measure the quantitative health information gathered against the provincial 'norms'. Incidental to the DRIC project but nonetheless related, is the attitude of the Canadian Health authorities witnessed in relation to the results of these studies, as expressed in Brophy and Gilbertson's article. They assert that:

> Though the reports were published in November 1998, they were not released until November 1999 after a news reporter with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation on camera produced a copy of the report for the Detroit River Area of Concern during an interview with a Health Canada official. This reluctance to release the reports was because of the responses from environmental agencies concerned about costs of cleanup, the reactions of the medical officers of health to the widespread public dissemination of uninterpreted data and statistics, and the potential liabilities of governments for exposures of communities to pollutants and for any remedial actions.
>
> Ibid: 828

Though the results of the studies were eventually released to the public, the health epidemic in the city of Windsor has retained a vagueness which has prevented its citizens

from realizing its severity or its scope.

Windsor was subsequently chosen by Health Canada for an additional "intensive" study due to its close proximity to the "severely polluted" Detroit River and the industrial city of Detroit (Ibid). Furthermore, it is commonly acknowledged that: "Windsor is one of several Canadian cities in southwestern Ontario…on a major transportation corridor, resulting in poor air quality" (Ibid). Predictably, the intensive study yielded an enormous sample of disheartening health statistics. For example, in terms of the mortality and morbidity rates which, according to the article "can be taken as an indication of the overall health of the community" (Ibid: 830), people in Windsor died at rates eight percent higher for men, and five percent higher for women when compared to the provincial norms. In younger people the rates increased to fourteen percent and ten percent (Ibid). The authors reveal that:

> Anomalously high rates of diseases included various cancers; endocrine, nutritional, metabolic, and immunity disorders; diseases of the blood and blood-forming organs, nervous system and sense organs, circulatory and respiratory systems, digestive system, genitourinary system, skin and subcutaneous tissue, musculoskeletal system and connective tissues; congenital anomalies, and infant mortality.
>
> Ibid: 827

Incidences for certain diseases were shockingly above provincial norms, such as the incidence of respiratory cancer in young men between the ages of 25 and 45 reported at 77 percent higher, the incidence for early onset of thyroid disease for girls and women between birth and 24 years old at 208 percent higher, ovarian dysfunction for young women at 96 percent higher, and nervous system disorders for young men at 99 percent higher. The list goes on for pages. In this city, concerns about health are veritable

concerns for survival, especially among young people and children.

In spite of this fact, locally, the health issue has kept a low profile. That a human health disaster of this magnitude could have come to pass without there being a more notable reaction in the communities at risk is puzzling. The authors observe that:

> At the local level, there seems to be a ubiquitous reluctance to acknowledge these public health issues. This is not only at the level of local governments, but also in relation to industries, the unions, and the academic and medical establishments…The scale and significance of these public health issues are known by many individuals, but the technical skills to research and monitor aspects of the epidemics tend to be fragmented.
>
> Ibid: 841

How can the citizen, community, and government inaction or ineffective action brought forward in this section be accounted for? Clearly, there is a power at force within the society that is preventing the application of appropriate solutions to this crisis at hand. It will be argued in the following chapter that the power in question is that of the capitalist economy and the powerful way that citizens become embedded within it. The focus of this chapter will therefore be on the influence of the business sector on environmental values, both on the individual and structural levels.

Several limitations of the "human health argument" for environmental change are highlighted by Professor Doug MacDonald, who, in his book *The Politics of Pollution*, considers the role of the individual. According to this author: "there is considerable evidence – provided by such things as the number of people who continue to smoke cigarettes or live in earthquake prone cities like San Francisco – that people will accept a considerable degree of risk in preference to changing their behaviour" (MacDonald,

1991: 264). The author notes the particularly alarming quality of pollution, however, writing that: "the health threats associated with environmental contamination pose a special case, because of such things as their involuntary nature and invisibility, leading to less willingness to accept risk from these causes than others" (Ibid). Yet in the end, MacDonald speculates that even if Canadian citizens fully understood the risks associated with pollution, they would nonetheless prioritize maintaining their current lifestyles over making the necessary lifestyle changes to eliminate pollution. The author considers that as the price to be paid for ending pollution becomes increasingly obvious (lifestyle change), Canadians may be "as willing to accept illness caused by pollution, as a trade-off for the benefits that living in a chemical society confers, as they are to accept traffic fatalities in exchange for the mobility provided by the automobile" (Ibid). It is obvious then that citizen apathy forms a part of the health crisis, and that this apathy stems from the mass addictions to the 'luxuries' that chemical cities provide.

Conversely, many contend that individuals are only pawns and that the required changes in our society must occur structurally. Environmental economists have recognized the critical influence of our economy in particular on the organization of our society's environmental values. In their book, *Car Trouble*, authors Steve Nadis and James J. MacKenzie expand on this relationship as it has traditionally unfolded in industrial America. Referencing the boom of the automobile industry, they write that:

> The sales of tens of millions of cars early in this century put pressure on the government to build new roads for motorists. The availability of new roads, in turn, made it easier for people to live farther from cities and to commute to work by private automobile. As more and more people, lured by government housing incentives, chose to live and work farther from city centers, the pressure on the government to provide more and better roads mounted commensurately. The call

> was not only for surface roads to service the new crop of housing developments, but also for major highways to get people and goods into, out of, and between major cities.
>
> MacKenzie and Nadis, 1993: 7

In addition to this "vicious cycle" of supply and demand (Ibid), this book also discusses the success of the 'lifestyle marketing' associated with the automobile. The authors assert that this type of marketing has been key to the overwhelming triumph of the auto industry, writing that: "For the better part of a century, we have been conditioned to believe that cars are essential to maintaining the American way of life; nearly every American who can afford a car has one" (Ibid: 13). Similarly, author Jack Doyle has written in *Taken for a Ride, Detroit's Big Three and the Politics of Pollution,* that: "People…expect uninhibited movement at all times – a value emphasized throughout forty years of auto advertising" (Doyle, 2000: 458). The car-craze that has enveloped the nation for the better part of the last century has obviously meant increased commerce, but now that the mammoth environmental repercussions of mass car ownership are known, one must wonder whether this type of commerce can continue to be reasonably justified.

The DRIC Reports on the Economy

The DRIC report for its part has taken a distinctly 'business-as-usual' approach to this topic, emphasizing strictly the positive benefits of trade between the US and Canada. The writers of the *Economic Impact Final Report* highlight the fact that:

> The Canada – United States trade relationship is deeply rooted in integrated, cross-border supply chains and production processes. Over $1 billion in trade crosses the US – Canada border everyday. Fully 70% of this trade moves by

> truck. Indeed, more than 14 million trucks crossed the Canada – US border in 2002, one truck every 2.5 seconds.
>
> DRIC[45]

The majority of this trade is related to the auto industry, which is noted in the *Transportation Problems and Opportunities Report*:

> The most significant component of this bilateral trade is related to the automotive industry. The Autopact the 1965 agreement between Canada and the United States that opened the way for Canadian auto plants to produce automobiles for sale in the US, followed by NAFTA, has propelled Canada into an ongoing trade surplus situation with the US…With the 'Big Three' original automakers located across the river in Detroit, Ontario has become a leader in automotive manufacturing exports to the US. Similarly, Michigan has become a major importer of Canadian products.
>
> DRIC[46]

In making a case for the need for a new border crossing, the DRIC repeatedly refers to this area's long-established process for trade, which stipulates the importation of parts with the maximum possible speed and efficiency, captured in the industry phrase – the 'just-in-time supply chain'. The report indicates that:

> Production depends heavily on the fast and predictable trucking of components, parts and finished products across the border. The components which make up one piston for a newly manufactured automobile engine moves across the bridge between Detroit and Windsor an average of four times in four hours under the cross-border, just-in-time supply chain and production processes of Ford, GM, Chrysler and others.
>
> DRIC[47]

Importantly, the forced conformance to the economic structure of trade is made explicit, where the writers reference trade agreements such as Autopact and NAFTA. This acknowledgment is accordingly reinforced by a salient sense of urgency:

> Although NAFTA bumper stickers pledge that free trade will maximize the well-being of all trading partners, the textbook promise makes a crucial assumption,

[45] Partnershipborderstudy.com, Previous Reports, Planning Need/Feasibility Study, Economic Impact Final Report, Executive Summary, 7.
[46] Ibid, Transportation Problems and Opportunities, 2.1.1.
[47] Ibid.

> the assumption of healthy, well maintained and well connected arteries of distribution throughout the trading block, including crossing points. With NAFTA in place, regional and national self-interest in both the United States and Canada *demand* that Michigan and Ontario possess an efficient and balanced cross-border distribution infrastructure.
>
> DRIC, emphasis added[48]

The simple message here is that the creation of these trade agreements commit the government to maintaining 'healthy' trade routes, i.e., building a new border crossing. What remains submerged in this document, however, is the DRIC project's similarly crucial assumption – that a 'healthy' capacity in their view is tantamount to a *constantly increasing* capacity.

The DRIC contends, in fact, that the government's obligation to support increased trading capacity is a legal constraint. The report expounds on the government's legally entrenched commitment, witnessed in statements such as: "Both Transport Canada and the Federal Highway Administration are required by their respective national policy priorities to serve the interests of national productivity growth" (DRIC).[49] Additionally, the DRIC reports that:

> The Canada Transport Act 1966 – c.10 – strives to ensure that 'each carrier or mode of transportation, as far as is practicable, carries traffic to or from any point in Canada under fares, rates and conditions that do not constitute…(iv) an unreasonable discouragement to the development of primary or secondary industries, to export trade in or from any region of Canada or to the movement of commodities through Canadian ports.
>
> DRIC[50]

It is clear then that the historic relationship between government and the industrial sector of the economy has been mutually beneficial; the government facilitates and supports big

[48] Partnershipborderstudy.com, Previous Reports, Planning Need/Feasibility Study, Economic Impact Final Report, 5.1
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid, Transportation Problems and Opportunities, 1.1.1.

business ventures legislatively, and big business ensures that a major portion of the society is clothed, fed, engaged, and attached to a minimum comfort level that keeps them buying into the economic system. The role of citizens then, in this triangular relationship (between governments, corporations, and the average Canadian), is vital in terms of fuelling the economy. In effect though, citizens are reduced to consumers whose only value in the society is measured in terms of their financial contribution.

In spite of the powerful marketing in place that seeks to convince people of consumerism's merits, the insidious nature of this system has been noted by critics of state societies. Environmental analyst Thom Hartmann, for example, has commented on the consequence of this type of citizen 'participation', writing that:

> In modern society, few people report that they feel even remotely 'free': we are modern-day slaves, held captive by 'slave-holders' of our culture. The slave-holders use the chains of the mortgage owed the bank, the loan on the car, the unpaid credit card bills, the requirement to pay property taxes if you own your own home, and the many other subtle and not-so-subtle forms of economic and cultural pressure to extract the majority of your life's time and use it to their ends.
>
> Hartmann, 1998: 184

Effectively, the comfort level that workers are afforded renders them complicit with government and business in their stake in maintaining the status quo, while simultaneously making it increasingly difficult to resist its influence. In this case the status quo involves the sustained growth of infrastructure to support the sustained growth of trade, a structure which dictates that, should trade falter, the economic foundation of the society will crumble with severe impacts to the middle and lower classes. In this high-pressure, low-security environment, people's fear of losing their jobs takes more immediate precedence over long-term concerns for their health.

The stake of big business in maintaining the current structure is arguably the most powerful, since it is the business elites who stand to gain or lose the most profit. It is for this reason that the auto industry has struggled with the environmental movement since its inception and has called on their ties with government to safeguard them from change. In a subsequent writing, Doug MacDonald has described environmentalism like a wedge between business and government. Drawing on his own sources in an essay entitled *The Big Business Response to Environmentalism*, MacDonald writes that:

> Brooks and Stritch describe the power relationship this way: 'Business occupies a privileged position in the politics of capitalist societies. This privileged position is based on a combination of the cultural dominance of business values, the structured dependence of governments on the behaviour of business, elite linkages and the lobbying power that business interests yield through pressure politics.' It is widely recognized that environmental policy-making in Canada, and elsewhere, is essentially a process of closed-door negotiation between regulators and the polluting industry in which the latter, having greater technical expertise, strong motivation, and ample opportunities for delay, holds the upper hand.
>
> MacDonald, 2002: 69

To put the corporate response in perspective, MacDonald asserts that big business generally has two choices when confronted with government compulsion to alter its behaviour. According to this author:

> The firm can respond by changing its own behaviour…It can also, however, work to change the ideas and behaviour of those, such as governments, exerting the pressure. These are the options that have faced resource and manufacturing industries in Canada since the emergence of the modern environmental movement in the 1960s.
>
> MacDonald, 2002: 66

Specifically with regard to the local automakers, it has been documented that these companies have classically responded to government pressure by taking concerted steps to slow or halt the changes proposed by environmental reformists. In this effort they use

an entire arsenal of tactics. Several of these are herein chronicled by Doyle, who exposes the following facts:

> The Big Three have financially supported, and in some cases, been instrumental in founding various think tanks, lobby coalitions, and so-called grassroots organizations, many of which bring a distinctly anti-environmental message to legislative bodies and other public venues. They also prepare and churn out anti-environmental studies and public relations material for the media, schools, and the general public. Ford and GM continue to support organizations that generally oppose environmental causes – groups such as the Heritage Foundation, whose quarterly journal has called the environmental movement 'the greatest single threat to the American economy'.
>
> Doyle, 2000: 433

Rather conclusively then, this author contends that:

> Environmentalism, where it existed at all among the Big Three, had come about only grudgingly, as a force imposed upon them from the outside. Environmentalism was largely seen by the automakers as a threat; as something to be opposed and resisted – and when that failed, manoevered around or endlessly litigated.
>
> Ibid: 15

Considering that these corporations' raison d'etre is entirely profit-driven, their hostility toward changes that might interfere with the next quarter's profits are logically, if not morally justifiable.

The primary challenge with respect to health then, is the fact that capitalism celebrates and legitimates its forceful tactics to preserve profit gain. This is a system that reinforces its own merit without any built-in regard to the negative consequences it incurs among the less powerful. The corporate attitude sets the stage for a large degree of competition within the system, visible, for example, in the Transport Canada laws illuminated above. According to this thinking, if a new crossing is not built, Windsor will be missing out on opportunities to generate more trade and more wealth and another

city will be gaining at our expense. Similarly, on an individual level, workers must fend for themselves - if they do not do the job, no matter the effect on their health, someone else will.

Scholar Judith McZenzie, in her book *Environmental Politics in Canada*, links this attitude with the overarching structure of liberal politics. She writes that: "The ideology of liberalism embraces the idea that individuals are rational and self-interested…A liberal also believes that humans are naturally competitive and acquisitive. In a world where resources are finite, individuals must compete in order to acquire property (or wealth)" (McKenzie, 2002: 11). Additionally, she conveys that: "Liberals view capitalism as the best economic system. The necessary components of a capitalist economy – private property, economic liberty, competitive self-interest, and minimal government – are all key ideas in liberal political ideology" (Ibid:12). Thus liberal-capitalism makes the assumption that the drive for competition among individuals on a micro level, and among companies and governments on a macro level are *natural* human tendencies. With no remedial plan built into the system to accommodate the 'losers' it necessarily creates, widespread insecurity is capitalism's natural outcome. The DRIC report simply reflects this belief.

In light of an Indigenous worldview (later described), which departs dramatically from the aggressive attitude herein depicted, it is clear that capitalism's assumption is false, and that the value system it embraces is enacted by choice. The truly dangerous element of capitalism however, is its infectious nature. Thom Hartmann has linked

predatory capitalism with "younger cultures", and has compared this system to a schoolyard bully (Hartmann, 1998: 163). When you are trying to cope with a bully, Hartmann asserts, you have three choices: to avoid him, to get beat up and humiliated, or to "bring weapons or take judo lessons" (Ibid). According to Hartmann:

> Those are essentially the same choices available to healthy, sane cultures when they're confronted by a violent dominator culture. The natives of North America first tried to negotiate and make friends with the Younger Culture 'visitors' from Europe. When it became evident that these visitors were, instead, thieves and murderers and rapists, stealing the natives' lands, animals, and killing their citizens, some tried to fight back. In order to do so, however, they, themselves, had to adopt those same means to combat the aggressors. And in the process, some became 'infected' with the mental disease of domination and aggression…When two side-by-side civilizations have lived together and traded together for years, and one becomes infected with this Younger Culture worldview, the only choices the other cultures have are to flee, die or become slaves, or adopt those Younger Culture ways themselves.
>
> Ibid

Thus another of capitalism's tenets is its expansive nature, which accounts for why this system is so powerful; capitalism creates and markets a powerful status quo while actively working to limit the choices and opportunities of those who choose not to compete.

Environmental economists and authors Hawken, Lovins and Lovins, in their book *Natural Capitalism*, further break this system down into several of its underlying assumptions. These assumptions are presented in the following list:

- Economic progress can best occur in free-market systems of production and distribution where reinvested profits make labor and capital increasingly productive.
- Competitive advantage is gained when bigger, more efficient plants manufacture more products for sale to expanding markets
- Growth in total output (GDP) maximizes human well-being.
- Any resource shortages that do occur will elicit the development of substitutes.
- Concerns for a healthy environment are important but must be balanced against

the requirements of economic growth, if a high standard of living is to be maintained.

- Free enterprise and market forces will allocate people and resources to their highest and best uses.

Hawken, Lovins, and Lovins, 1999: 6

There is a clear emphasis in this list on capitalism being 'the best' system to ensure 'the highest' standard of living in order to 'maximize' well-being. The parallels between capitalism and Christianity, which professes to be the 'One True Way', are undeniable. Like Christianity, North America's economic system of choice proclaims superiority over other ways of envisioning economics, while attempting to dominate or destroy those other systems. According to Hawken, Lovins, and Lovins, this rhetoric is unsubstantiated. They write that:

> Capitalism, as practiced, is a financially profitable, nonsustainable aberration in human development. What might be called 'industrial capitalism' does not fully conform to its own accounting principles. It liquidates its capital and calls it income. It neglects to assign any value to the largest stocks of capital it employs – the natural resources and living systems, as well as the social and cultural systems that are the basis of human capital.
>
> Ibid: 5

In effect then, the rhetoric surrounding capitalism merely serves to legitimate the mass exploitation of human and natural resources that is taking place in North American state cultures.

This trend and its influence on decision-making is plainly visible in the DRIC reports, wherein emphasis is firmly placed on the need to safeguard well-being through trade. The following excerpt from the *Transportation Problems and Opportunities Report* epitomizes this idea. It reads that:

> The Detroit River frontier represents the busiest corridor for trade between Canada and the United States. The benefits of such trade to the local regional and

> national economies is represented in the prosperity, opportunities and high standards of living each country enjoys, and the prospect of continued increased trade passing through this corridor must be encouraged as well as protected. The governments of Canada, the United States, Ontario, and Michigan each have a duty and responsibility to provide for and reduce the likelihood of disruption to the safe, continuous transport of people and goods across the Detroit River frontier.
>
> DRIC[51]

Stressing the duty and responsibility of state governments, it is clear that the priorities of the DRIC project in concert with the government remain grounded in the struggle to maintain the economic system in place. Tellingly, among important stakeholders in the project, and listed alongside all levels of government and all affected First Nations, are the company names: Ford, GM, and DaimlerChrysler. Although the influence of these corporations is not explicitly stated in the DRIC project, their sway is nonetheless evident throughout, as evidenced by a news release from the Canadian Automotive Partnership Council. The statement communicates that:

> We are encouraged that the Border Transportation Partnership has further reduced the list of alternative border options and is moving forward to identify the location for a new border crossing. However, we can't lose sight of the need for continuous ongoing improvements at the border crossings…we urge all three levels of government to continue to work constructively through the process and make this project a high-priority. The smooth and uninterrupted flow of low-risk traffic is essential for the auto industry and must be achieved as we work towards implementing a new crossing as soon as possible.
>
> DRIC[52]

It is clear that the on-going expansion of the capitalist empire is protected by powerful individuals and powerful companies. Consequently, the status quo is protected and business continues to run in this area as it always has.

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[51] Partnershipborderstudy.com, Previous Reports, Planning Need/Feasibility Study, Transportation Problems and Opportunities, 2.1.1.

[52] Steve Landry (President and CEO of DaimlerChrysler Canada), Ibid, News and Information, The Canadian Automotive Partnership Council Response.

All the while the human health cost of this imperative rages on. The local press recently printed an interview with oncologist Dolores Sicheri, an excerpt of which follows:

> 'Cancer is an environmental disease,' said Sicheri, pointing to the volumes of heavy metals and PCBs in our air and water. 'There is an increase in cancers (in Windsor) -- and young cancers. There are so many young people with cancer here it's obscene. Government has failed in its obligation to provide clean air and water', she said, adding 'numbers have also jumped locally for cardiovascular problems, diabetes, autism, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease and even mental health problems', which she said can also be linked to toxins in the body. She points to Zug Island, Detroit's incinerator and border trucks as easily identifiable contributors to our health woes. 'If they build another truck route on our streets it will be the death of this city', Sicheri said. 'Diesel is killing us. The smog is so bad. You can't work outside or exercise. We are just the canary in the coal mine. Government has to put more here into prevention. It isn't enough just to treat patients after the illness'.
>
> The Windsor Star[53]

Local Customs Officer and environmental activist Leo Petrilli, commenting on the tension surrounding this issue also, added that: "You have environment on one end of this and business on the other end. But if you can't breathe, you can't do anything" (Ibid). Clearly, citizens that understand the issue are concerned, and government has of course responded to these concerns by assuring the public that the matter is being prioritized. The DRIC project, for instance, has written that: "Identifying how the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) study may change air quality is an important consideration in the DRIC environmental assessment" (DRIC).[54] The DRIC has also pledged to citizens that: "Governments are acting and industry is responding to concerns for cleaner air" (DRIC).[55] In spite of these promises and reminiscent of the previous chapter on diversity however, the DRIC's efforts with regards to air quality are suspect.

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[53] Battagello, Dave. "The Windsor Star", May 24, 2007, A1

[54] Partnershipborderstudy.com, Meetings and Events in Canada, Changes to Air Quality, 1.

[55] Ibid.

Primarily, the air quality assessments performed by the DRIC team are executed according to the reductionist tenets of Western science noted in the previous chapter. According to this method, air pollutants are identified, singled out, and individually measured by various sophisticated "proven, state-of-the-art" (DRIC)[56] computerized systems. The DRIC reports explain that: "Results of the air quality assessment will be compared against existing Ontario air quality criteria and Canadian Federal Standards. Air contaminants to be considered include: nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, particulate matter 10 and 2.5, and ozone" (DRIC).[57] Taking the example of one of the carcinogenic pollutants on this list, particulate matter 2.5, the DRIC further explains that:

> Fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) emissions from road based transportation sources are comprised of two contributing fractions. The first is tailpipe emissions resulting from fuel combustion. The second, and higher fraction, is from road dust, which is generated from the resuspension of surface material and debris, tire and brake wear, and roadway abrasion.
>
> DRIC[58]

Though the assessment of air quality has yet to be completed, the DRIC reports that at this stage of the project it is understood that: "Since total road emissions of PM 2.5 are predominantly comprised of road dirt, PM 2.5 emissions will *increase* as traffic increases in the Highway 3/Huron Church Road corridor" (DRIC, emphasis added).[59] Therefore, in spite of professed concerns for the citizens of this area, it is clear that the 'government responsibility' to safeguard trade has taken precedence over the 'government

[56] Partnershipborderstudy.com, Meetings and Events in Canada, Changes to Air Quality, 1..
[57] Ibid, News and Information, Air Quality FAQs, 4.
[58] Ibid, Meetings and Events in Canada, Changes to Air Quality, 2.
[59] Ibid.

responsibility' to safeguard human health.

The fact of the matter is that the DRIC report is perfectly straightforward about its priorities. In a section entitled *Air Quality Frequently Asked Questions*, the following truth is revealed:

> The DRIC Study team has been clear that the goal of the project is to meet the long-term transportation and mobility needs, while minimizing the impacts to communities as much as possible. DRIC study team specialists are working in consultation with provincial and federal agencies to identify impacts and how they can be mitigated.
>
> DRIC[60]

When these writers discuss 'minimizing impacts as much as possible', and 'mitigating' the effects of pollution, they are in fact stating outright that environmental goals come second to the economic imperative. Therefore the DRIC team is not remiss when reporting that they are concerned about Windsor's health crisis, or that the project has taken air quality into consideration. The DRIC *has* considered air quality as one of the crucial elements of their analysis. Simply, they have given the economic imperative greater weight, justifying this position by reminding people of the prosperity they enjoy.

> Doug MacDonald refers to this as a "business advantage", and explains that:
>
> Canada is a capitalist society in which the principal objective of all governments, regardless of party or ideology, is to facilitate the creation of wealth through investment in capital. Environmental policy is intended to mitigate some of the worst externalized effects of production, but it has never been carried out in a way to undermine that basic goal.
>
> MacDonald, 2002: 69

MacDonald suggests that environmental reform efforts are innately structured in such a

[60] Partnershipborderstudy.com, News and Information, Air Quality FAQs, 4.

way as to acquiesce to the perceived demands of economy by expressly allowing for a degree of harm to human health. He writes of this structure that:

> (Its) limitation is inherent in the logic of cost-benefit analysis and risk assessment, the two mainstays of the reform environmentalist approach to pollution reduction. These approaches accept the fact that human health is inevitably an issue freighted with varying degrees of anxiety and emotion, but as much as possible they attempt to function on the basis of rational analysis alone. Both approaches also start with the assumption that some level of pollution is acceptable (otherwise there would be no need to either weigh costs and benefits or assess relative degrees of risk) and then aim to provide means for deciding what that acceptable level should be. These approaches, to date at least, have had little effect other than to provide a rationale for doing very little to reduce existing levels of pollution. This is in part because of the lack of good data in such areas as long-term health effects associated with chronic low-dosage exposures, but it is also because they rule out inclusion of values or mores as valid criteria for decision-making.
>
> MacDonald, 1991: 262

In light of Canadian society's capitalist value system, it is clear that changes in favour of health are not structurally plausible, and cannot become so until the economy that justifies this behaviour is completely reimagined.

Whereas the system espoused by the DRIC depends on increasing trade in order to protect society's "prosperity, opportunities and high standards of living" (DRIC),[61] Hartmann, in *The Last Hours of Ancient Sunlight,* sheds light on the fact that other societies at other times in the world's history had no such societal insecurity entrenched within their economic system. Addressing state citizens, Hartmann describes an alternative scenario:

> When we lived (tribally) thousands of years ago, we enjoyed cradle-to-grave security. The tribe took care of itself, we cared for one another. If anybody had

[61] Partnershipborderstudy.com, Previous Reports, Planning Need/Feasibility Study, Transportation Problems and Opportunities, 2.1.1.

> food, everybody had food; if anybody had a diseased or an infirm parent, everybody had a diseased child or an infirm parent. The measure of wealth in such societies was security. Mediums of exchange like money were unnecessary; the idea of hoarding food or other things was unthinkable, because everybody was responsible for everybody.
>
> Hartmann, 1998: 177

Conversely, in North American society, "we use money to try to *buy* that cradle-to-grave security that *all* of our tribal ancestors enjoyed as a right of birth, but only a very, very few of us ever achieve it" (Ibid: 178). In spite of this fact, Hartmann acknowledges that North American citizens commonly have a negative impression of Indigenous cultures, fundamentally believing their own cultures to be superior. Regarding this assertion, the author conveys that:

> The prime differences are that the 'primitive' people generally have more leisurely lives, less poverty, almost no crime (certainly no police or prisons among those who have not adopted 'the white man's ways'), a more diverse and healthy diet, less degenerative disease, better psychological health, and a culture that holds as its primary values cooperation (rather than competition), mutual respect (rather than domination), long-term renewable care for resources (rather than exploitation for a quick buck), and equality (between people, between the sexes, and between humans and nature) rather than power.
>
> Ibid: 175

The type of society described here clearly represents a more secure, stable alternative to North American capitalism.

The Modern-Ancient Economic Perspective

The Walpole Island First Nation demonstrates the way that these 'older culture' values can be represented in the present age. Similar to their previously stated attitude towards diversity, Walpole Island First Nation's approach to economics and health is rooted in a vision for life that is intrinsically holistic. Key to their approach is the notion of *connection* between people and the environment. Recall from Chapter Two the stance

taken in respect of the environment as noted in the *E-Niizaanag Wii-ngoshkaag Maampii Bkejwanong (Species at Risk on the Walpole Island First Nation*) Handbook. This publication, written from the perspective of a citizen of that nation, makes clear that:

> The people of Walpole Island First Nation have lived off the land and have successfully managed these lands for thousands of years. Our traditional Native philosophies, values and practices of interacting respectfully with the natural world and not separating ourselves from it, has directly contributed to the continued existence of the natural areas and many wildlife species both common and rare, found on the Walpole Island First Nation.
>
> Bkejwanong Natural Heritage Program, 2006: 12

The *Bkejwanong Territory Environmental Policies, Guidelines and Information for External Project Proponents* further addresses the WIFN's viewpoint with regards to human health. It explains to external project proponents that:

> (The) primary issues of concern to WIFN include the quality of the water, air, fauna, flora, waterbeds (particularly sediments) in our traditional territory and undisputed territory, and the effects of pollutants on the physical, emotional, and spiritual health and well-being of its members, both present and future.
>
> Walpole Island First Nation Council, 2002: 3

Similarly, it is written that: "Environmental activities are carried out by WIFN in response to concerns about the land, water, air, animals, and people situated within WIFN territory" (Ibid: 2). Thus, in opposition to the capitalist system surrounding them, the people of Walpole Island culturally designate health (including the health of the land and other species) as a top priority which development actions are then shaped around. This is done in accordance with the outright recognition that the health of the environment and that of the people are one and the same thing.

Mainstream society is quick to assume that when Native communities protest development projects, they are taking an anti-development stance. In fact, the long view

of Indigenous cultures gives them far wider and more accurate perspective, such that they understand that the health of their people and of the land is the wiser priority to invest in when compared with short-term job viability and financial profit. Contrary to the common mainstream perception, publications obtained at the Natural Heritage Centre indicate that this nation is open to participating in development projects proposed to them by governments and business. The nation's project guidelines specify that: "One of WIFN's long term goals is to gain recognition as a respected and principled advocate for sustainable practices. As a result, it is equally committed to building bridges with industry by engaging in continuous dialogue and consultation on environmental issues" (Walpole Island First Nation Council, 2002: 2). The stipulation they insist on, however, is that projects be initiated in a way that reflects their value system. Development proponents are informed in the project guidelines, for instance, that engaging in development ventures within the traditional territory of the WIFN may require them "to participate in the Circle on Environment and Development which brings together governments, organizations, individuals, and private business to promote an integrated local perspective on environmental and developmental issues in the St. Clair watershed" (Ibid: 6). They further submit that: "In combination with scientific-based knowledge, WIFN traditional knowledge and values will be equally considered in the project review" (Ibid: 4). Clearly, the only development projects that WIFN opposes and seeks to halt are the ones which jeopardize their health and the health of species within their territory. Alternatively, when the values that they prioritize – such as the imperatives of well-being and health – are acknowledged and respected, partnerships become possible.

This analysis has demonstrated that corporate competition, predatory capitalism, and the maximization of profit are all responsible for the health crisis that is at our doorstep. These fundamental problems have not been addressed within the DRIC project, whose writers do not even acknowledge the link between economics and health, stubbornly maintaining that the economic imperative is the ultimate key to prosperity. Complicity within the system and the financial insecurity that follows accounts for why citizens continue to accept, live, and die with these lethal health risks, forming a relationship within society that Hartmann likens it to outright oppression. He asserts that: "Slaves know when they are slaves, regardless of the words used to describe their slavery. And they'll seek escape from the slavery, be it in increasingly powerful drugs, increasingly intense 'entertainment', or psychopathic or violent behavior" (Ibid: 184). Believing capitalism to be superior to alternatives, the DRIC demonstrates a steadfastness to this system in spite of the environmental dysfunction it has wrought. The DRIC's perspective therefore hinges on the principle that: "Over the long term, the prospects for continued bilateral trade growth between Canada and the US remain strong" (DRIC).[62] Indigenous cultures such as Walpole Island First Nation on the other hand, prioritize the protection of health and well-being as an intrinsic cultural value which governs the economic imperative. Their attitude demonstrates an openness to development projects *within* the imperative for health, as opposed to the other way around. Although there are many examples of nations that have been damaged by the legacy of colonialism and have succumbed to the pressures of the market economy, those who have held to their ancestral value systems maintain alternative ways of conceptualizing the relationship

[62] Partnershipborderstudy.com, Previous reports, Transportation Problems and Opportunities, 2.1.1.

between economics and the environment. Clearly, there is a fracture in understanding among Canadian society between the state's economic practices and the outcomes of these on health. So long as this fracture goes unchecked, people will continue to suffer unnecessarily from disease and sickness and the unsustainable hardships they create.

Chapter Four - Equity: Democratic or degenerative policymaking?

The previous chapter discussed some of the ways that the capitalist system has created a forced deference within society to the economic imperative. In addition to this, it has established a well-defined class system whereby the elite members of corporations and governments wield the decision-making powers within society, while simultaneously collecting the majority of the benefits of these decisions. The middle and lower classes, who fill the factories, pay the taxes, and contend daily with the unaccounted-for, negative side effects of these decisions are nonetheless given an opportunity to vote on election day and to attend public consultations. Participation in these activities is meant to represent the fulfillment of democratic principles. Although state citizens may not be aware of the distraction tactics employed by the state to ensure their passive compliance, it could still be argued that most common people if asked, do not feel engaged with the political system or feel like they are actively contributing to the formation of the laws that govern their lives. This profound political disconnection is drowned out partially by the drone of consumerism, but beneath the surface an undercurrent of civil dissatisfaction simmers. The symptoms of this civil unrest manifest as tendencies towards anxiety, depression, and violence – conditions all related to powerlessness and alienation from community – that are becoming more and more commonplace. In relation to the equity debate, the environmental movement has noted that groups within society with the least voice in the democratic process tend to bear the brunt of polluting policies, while those who profit from these policies can afford to protect themselves from the harmful environments and harmful conditions they create. These harmful policies are carried out

in the name of the 'public', but, as we shall see in the DRIC Project, this type of democratic system actually represents the interests of only a narrow segment of society.

The failure of the democratic process has not gone unnoticed even by democracy's most ardent supporters. Ex-vice president of the United States Al Gore, in his book *The Assault on Reason*, likens true democracy to a public forum of citizen participation. Noting the takeover of the democratic process by capitalist divisions, he asserts that:

> If the forum is not fully open, then those who control access become gatekeepers. If they charge money in return for access, then those with more money have a greater ability to participate. Good ideas in the minds of men and women who cannot afford the price of admission to the public forum are then no longer available for consideration. When their opinions are blocked, the meritocracy of ideas that has always been the beating heart of democratic theory begins to suffer damage. The conversation of democracy then comes untethered from the rule of reason and can be manipulated.
>
> Gore, 2007: 75

He further notes of the withdrawal of citizen participation from the public forum, that:

> If citizens no longer participate, those among them who notice signs of corruption or illogic have no way to voice their concerns and summon the attention of others who, upon examining the same evidence, might share their dismay. No critical mass of opposition can form among individuals who are isolated from one another, looking through one-way mirrors in soundproof rooms, shouting if they wish but still unheard. If enough citizens cease to participate in its process, democracy dies.
>
> Ibid: 73

American scholars Anne Larason Schneider and Helen Ingram have similarly noted the demise of North American state democracy. In their book, *Policy Design for Democracy*, they cite government dysfunction as the root cause of this problem, writing that:

> Rather than provide institutions and symbols to ensure that the self-correcting mechanisms of pluralist democracy will be operative, (government) policies deceive, confuse, and in other ways discourage active citizenship, minimize the

> possibility of self-corrections, and perpetuate or exacerbate the very tendencies that produced dysfunctional public policies in the first place.
>
> Schneider and Ingram, 1997: 5

Although the United States and Canada continue to pride themselves on their governing systems – to the point of forcing 'democracy' on foreign countries in order to save them, these systems "(have) been proved unable to run community and society" (Ibid, quoting Drucker: 4).

The DRIC reports on Democracy

In the same vein of discussions surrounding diversity and health, the DRIC project is highly enthusiastic about citizen participation. One of their documents assures citizens on behalf of the DRIC consulting groups that: "We're listening to you. In fact, over 125 public consultation sessions have been held since the beginning of the study, and we have met with more than 50 stakeholder groups including local homeowners and business owners since March 2006, as part of ongoing consultation" (DRIC).[63] Another document is adamant that: "Community consultation is an integral part of the DRIC Environmental Assessment (EA) process. Community Consultation continues to provide us with invaluable input and the unique perspective that only residents of Windsor-Essex County can offer" (DRIC).[64] Several obstacles exist, however, that impede the meaningful exchange of opinions between those with the power to decide and those on whose behalf decisions are made.

[63] Partnershipborderstudy.com, Meetings and Events in Canada, Facts at a Glance: The Detroit River International Crossing Study – The 2006 Public Information Open Houses, 1.
[64] Ibid, Meetings and Events in Canada, PIOH #3 Spring 2006 – March 28 and 30, 2006, Community Consultation, 1.

The first of these, also mentioned in the preceding chapter, is the fact that the DRIC project is premised on the certainty of the construction of a new crossing, thus from the outset eliminating the power of the contrary opinion. In a section entitled *Myth Busters*, the authors of the DRIC project clearly convey that: "The Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) Environmental Assessment (EA) was established to identify the location for a new crossing of the Detroit River, a new plaza for border inspection, and a new access road".[65] This pre-determined fact has not gone unnoticed by concerned citizens, who, in Open House meetings hosted by the DRIC have shared their frustration. Responses from the community regarding aspects of the project are chronicled in the *DRIC Environmental Assessment Public Information Open House #2 Summary Report.* In regards to the DRIC's choice of crossing alternatives, a sampling of community opinions includes the following:

- (The DRIC) presupposes that a project will be built, does not allow for a reasoned argument to be presented in favour of the do-nothing alternative.
- Reasoned argument needs to consider human equation/ (The DRIC) presupposes project will be built.
- Cannot make Huron Church (Street) safe; don't need more trucks in the West end of Windsor.
- Don't agree with any of the proposals (DRIC).[66]

While it is true that these people have been given the opportunity to voice their opinion on this matter, in this context it is also clear that their opinions are essentially meaningless because the project will go on just as planned.

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[65] Partnershipborderstudy.com, Meetings and Events in Canada, Myth Busters, 1.
[66] Ibid, DRIC Environmental Assessment Public Information Open House #2 Summary Report, 7.0.

Another concern for the meaningful execution of democracy in the DRIC project is its highly technical nature and the resultant lack of comprehension and participation by ordinary citizens. The DRIC reports for instance that in deciding what routes would become the official crossing options, they used the "Reasoned argument method". They write that: "The Reasoned Argument method was the primary method employed to recommend alternatives for continued study, and the Arithmetic method was used to substantiate the findings of the Reasoned Argument Evaluation" (DRIC).[67] Public comments about the appropriateness of these methods yielded the following results:

- Don't understand what a Reasoned Argument method is.
- Too much information to digest; no opinion yet.[68]

Ingram and Schneider contend that "Scientific and professional perspectives construct societal problems as exceptionally complex phenomena about which only experts are able to become sufficiently knowledgeable to offer useful advice" (Schneider and Ingram, 1997: 7). An anonymous citizen comment included in the *Detroit River International Crossing 2007 Meeting Notes* reflects this notion, when the person comments that the DRIC should: "Make the technical language user-friendly. When the analysis is complete, put it in laymen's terms so that the average person can understand it" (DRIC).[69] According to Schneider and Ingram, however, "ordinary people" are in fact *discouraged* from participation in these highly expert-based projects, and that: "therefore (they) find it difficult to press their construction of the issue onto the political agenda.

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[67] Partnershipborderstudy.com, Meetings and Events in Canada, DRIC Environmental Assessment Public Information Open House #2 Summary Report, 7.0.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid, Meetings and Event in Canada, Meeting Notes 2007, 4.

Citizens become spectators – disconnected from government and public policy initiatives – leaving such issues to experts who rely on scientific studies to determine both the ends and the means of policy" (Schneider and Ingram, 1997: 7). The result is that another big portion of the society is alienated from the process that will play a heavy role in their city and their lives.

In his book *Discursive Democracy,* John Dryzek further discusses the North American societal shift towards the complex and the inaccessible. He likens this process to political tyranny, writing that:

> …whether by accident or design, the field of policy analysis now seems poised to reinstate the idea of unencumbered central control, thus constituting one more agent for the takeover of the lifeworld by expert cultures. As such, many of its efforts are consistent with an (albeit subtle) policy science of tyranny. By tyranny I mean not the authoritarian dystopia…but any elite-controlled policy process that overrules or shapes the desires and aspirations of ordinary people.
>
> Dryzek, 1990: 114

This argument is especially relevant with regard to the air quality issue, which is embedded in an incredibly complex set of legislative regulations and depends entirely on highly precise measurements and calculations. Provided here is an example of just one aspect of this issue taken from the DRIC's *Air Quality Work Plan.* It reads that:

> The Ontario Ministry of the Environment has set an Air Quality Target for Smog. This target is to achieve, by 2015, a 75 percent reduction in the number of times the 80 ppb one hour ozone criterion is exceeded. The base for calculating the reductions is the average number of exceedances in the years 1990 to 1994. The Ontario Smog Plan works towards this target. Ontario's Smog Plan is a partnership effort that sets regional and sectoral targets for emission reductions. A goal of the plan is to reduce emissions of NOx and VOCs by 45 percent from 1990 levels by the year 2015.
>
> DRIC[70]

[70] Partnershipborderstudy.com, Reports in Canada, Draft Air Quality Work Plan, 1.1.2.2.

Clearly, without studying the issue and learning to identify what these polluting elements are, what their effects on health are, and then developing an opinion as to whether the government targets in place are appropriate, it would be impossible to evaluate the DRIC's work plan for air quality and to contribute a meaningful opinion regarding its position. The result of a plan like this is that citizens are excluded from participation, and must simply trust blindly that the project has their best interest in mind.

Duly, the subsequent obstacle to citizen participation is that more and more citizens exhibit signs of *mistrusting* government policy and policy makers. In fact, Schneider and Ingram contend that in today's society even the word 'politics' has taken on a sinister connotation. They write that:

> The term 'politics' is associated in the popular vernacular with the strategic manipulation of power to serve personal or narrow special interests at the expense of more legitimate concerns. This construction has eclipsed the classic understanding of politics as the means through which collectivities make decisions to serve the general (public) interests of the entire society. Most ordinary citizens do not expect to be able to hold public officials accountable for the results of public policy.
>
> Schneider and Ingram, 1997: 5

In this vein, the DRIC's *Meeting Notes* include a commentary by one citizen who is noted as saying that: "The 'real' pollutant levels are being downplayed" (DRIC),[71] and it is furthermore reported that: "Participants expressed concern with current and future health impacts and health costs. There was skepticism with how the analysis will be presented to the public, and the methodologies used during the analysis" (DRIC).[72] One of the particularly poignant threads of discussion in this respect centres around the proposal for

[71] Partnershipborderstudy.com, Meetings and Events in Canada, Meeting Notes, January 2007, 2.
[72] Ibid.

the access road from the main highway to the actual river crossing. The DRIC suggests that the access road could be either depressed or at-grade. Citizens who have voiced an opinion on this issue have demanded that they also consider tunneling the entire road. Controversy has arisen due to the high financial cost that the DRIC claims such a tunnel would incur, while citizens contend that this would be the best option for the city in terms of air quality. The issue has prompted public forum comments such as: "Why is it impossible to do the tunnel? If the tunnel is not feasible on this roadway, choose another roadway" (DRIC),[73] and: "The cost and size of implementing ventilation buildings are scare tactics" (DRIC).[74] These comments serve to demonstrate that an element of skepticism pervades the community sentiment among those who do participate, which inhibits many others from becoming involved and serves as a crucially limiting factor to the democratic process.

The DRIC response to these comments is measured and meticulous. The *Meeting Notes* reports that:

> A cut and cover tunnel has been determined to be feasible and is being considered along with at grade and depressed access road alternatives; however, a bored tunnel is not practically feasible due to the size of the tunnel required for the access roads, poor soil conditions within this area, high water tables and construction risks to adjacent land uses. As for choosing another corridor, in June 2005, the Study Team developed 15 different crossing locations, and evaluated each alternative according to seven evaluation factors (air quality, community and neighbourhood impacts, cultural resources, land use, natural features, mobility, cost and constructability). In November 2005, the Study Team determined that the Area of Continued Analysis (ACA) was the most appropriate location for the development of practical alternatives.
>
> DRIC[75]

[73] Partnershipborderstudy.com, Meetings and Events in Canada, Meeting Notes, January 2007, 2.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.

Given the resources that the US and Canadian governments have put into the creation of the DRIC, it is only natural that their response would be both thorough, and logical, as well as firm on their ground. Dryzek speaks to the paucity of rationality alone when applied to such a highly emotional topic as air pollution in Windsor, however, when he explains that:

> The most widely practiced kind of policy analysis aspires to rationality, but this proves to be at the expense of democracy. One reason for this result is that the policy analysis mainstream can conceive of rationality only in instrumental, technocratic terms. Yet, even the efficacy of rationality is suspect when it comes to social problems of any complexity.
>
> Dryzek, 1990: 118

Indeed, evidence supports the fact that logical soundness alone cannot satisfy the concerns among citizens that beneath the façade of the DRIC's political correctness, there is not an ulterior motive at play. Reinforcing this idea is an opinion editorial printed in the Windsor Star. Regarding the tunnel option for the access road, a Windsor citizen writes in a piece entitled, "Tunneling the Only Way", that:

> I fear and suspect that Toronto-based DRIC bureaucrats have no interest in getting the message. I suspect they have given lip service to full tunneling from the 401 (Highway) only because they were subject to the wrath of the rightfully concerned public. I also suspect these Toronto-based bureaucrats and shrewd and will come back with false arguments about why they cannot tunnel and scrub emissions.
>
> The Windsor Star[76]

In the absence of a belief among citizens that their opinions can impact on the final outcome of policy, participation wanes, the fracture between the government and the governed opens wider, and the voices of concerned citizens become less and less powerful.

[76] Gregory R. Baggio, The Windsor Star, June 19, 2007, A7.

These elements, consisting of a predetermined outcome, the lack of tools to ensure informed citizen participation, and the widespread mistrust of government policy, combine to undermine the illusion of democracy propagated in such projects as the DRIC. Al Gore has called this setup a farce, describing that:

> It looks and sounds almost real, but its true purpose is the presentation of a semblance of participatory democracy in order to produce a counterfeit version of the consent of the governed. With no ability to test the propositions presented or explore the facets of policies not revealed, the public is often persuaded to endorse and applaud policies that are actually harmful to its interests.
>
> Gore, 2007: 78

It is easy to see how, in the words of Schneider and Ingram, "Government comes to be a conversation among the few that is irrelevant to the many" (Schneider and Ingram, 1997: 7). As lamentable as this is to many Canadian citizens, it is also basically accepted as reality. In other cultures, however, this concept is not only unacceptable but unimaginable, due to people's profound and centuries-long understanding that the inclusion and equal weighting of each community member's opinion contributes to a stronger, more peaceful, more universally beneficial and therefore healthier society. In other words, consensus within the community creates sustainability within the community (Jacobs and Lytwyn, 2000).

The Illusion of the Consultation Process

An examination of the interface between state and Indigenous interests further reveals some of the obstacles that state governments have created which cripple the concept of social democracy. It is noteworthy to mention that corporate and government duties to consult with Native peoples before initiating a project that could affect their land is now entrenched in Canadian case law (Jacobs, 2002: 3). Accordingly, the DRIC

project has been very clear that consultations with First Nations have taken place. The DRIC report conveys that:

> To date, the DRIC study team has held a total of no less than 90 meetings with stakeholders in Windsor-Essex County:
>
> - 8 meetings with councils of affected municipalities
> - 35 meetings with the general public and/or community representatives including Public Information Open Houses, workshops, Public meetings, Community Consultation Groups, and Community group meetings
> - 27 advisory groups (including First Nations)
> - 24 other Study Area/Interest group meetings (DRIC)[77]

This brief mention of First Nation consultation, lumped in with other 'advisory groups', is basically the only instance where Indigenous peoples are referenced in the entire DRIC project. I reiterate that, although WIFN has had a claim over the riverbed where the crossing is slated to be built (see chapter one), there is no mention of this land claim anywhere in the DRIC project. The slide show that was presented at the consultation with WIFN is available to be viewed on the DRIC website, and it is the exact slide show that was shown to the School Advisory Group, the Crossing Owners/Operators/Proponent Group, and the Private Sector Advisory Group. In a paper entitled *The Benefits of Environmental Impact Agreements and Consulting Meaningfully with First Nations in Canada*, WIFN scholar Dean Jacobs has noted what the Crown's duty to consult should look like, according to court guidelines. The author explains that "merely inviting First Nations to participate in a public consultation process on the same basis as other 'stakeholders' is insufficient 'consultation'" (Jacobs, 2002: 4). By precluding the potential concerns of the Walpole Island First Nation in their project (at least publicly),

[77] Partnershipborderstudy.com, Meetings and Events in Canada, Community Consultation, 1.

the DRIC is in breach of their constitutional responsibility, and also the feasibility of democratic equality on a project such as this one is limited from the outset.

In reality, and as noted by a myriad of political theorists (Foucault, Chomsky, Hardt & Negri, Tully, Alfred…) the state government is founded on *inequality*, and there is too much invested in this dynamic for the state to be able to embrace inclusiveness or diversity of beliefs and values. It is this power structure which prohibits the consultation process from ever achieving a more profound level of sincerity. Al Gore points out that: "Democracy begins with the premise that all are created equal. Capitalism begins with the premise that competition will inevitably produce inequality, depending on differences in talent, industriousness, and fortune" (Gore, 2007: 83). Ideally, capitalism does separate individuals according to talent and industriousness. However, mashing together all other social politics into a category that Al Gore calls "fortune" is a romantic and far too simplistic understatement. This term fails to address the inherent trend which has defined North American states since their inception, namely, colonialism. Many scholars have defined this term and what is means in socio-political terms, but none more concisely than Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred, who writes that: "the problem (Indigenous peoples) face is Euroamerican arrogance, the institutional and attidudinal expressions of the prejudicial biases inherent in European and Euroamerican cultures" (Alfred, 2005: 102). According to Alfred, colonialism expresses itself in Canadian culture as "specific patterns of behaviour among Settlers" (Ibid). These patterns serve to:

> …support mentalities that developed in serving the colonization of (Indigenous) lands as well as the unrestrained greed and selfishness of mainstream society. We must add to this the superficial monotheistic justifications for the unnatural and misunderstood place and purpose of human beings in the world, an emphatic

> refusal to look inward, and an aggressive denial of the value of nature.
>
> Ibid

This force of traits that make up the colonial reality in Canada colours every policy that is written, and then those same policies create the legal boundaries of the society in a neverending circle which inevitably produces the continued oppression of Indigenous peoples and nature.

Similarly, Jerry Mander has written of this mainstream underlying political system, labelling it in this case the 'technological society'. He writes that:

> All things considered, it may be the central assumption of technological society that there is virtue in overpowering nature and native peoples. The Indian problem today, as it always has been, is directly related to the needs of technological societies to find and obtain remotely located resources, in order to fuel an incessant and intrinsic demand for growth and technological fulfillment. The process began in our country hundreds of years ago when we wanted land and gold. Today it continues because we want coal, oil, uranium, fish, and more land.
>
> Mander, 1991: 6

Though this underlying mandate pervades the Canadian political system, it is possible that the persons responsible for the policies and for administering the policies do not see their actions as unjust or morally reprehensible. Some of these people would be surprised at the allegation that Canada is not a post-colonial nation and that in fact the regime of colonialism is being carried out just as strongly as ever by their own actions. Insidiously, the oppressive nature of Canadian policies is normalized within the society to the point that these policies are seen not only as favourable, but also as natural. According to Mander:

> All of these acts were and are made possible by one fundamental rationalization: that our society represents the ultimate expression of evolution, its final flowering. It is this attitude, and its corresponding belief that native societies

> represent an earlier, lower form on the evolutionary ladder, upon which we occupy the highest rung, that seem to unify all modern political perspectives: Right, Left, Capitalist, and Marxist.
>
> Ibid: 6

This attitude is visible in the DRIC project's assertion that the 'need' for a new crossing is a given, with no opportunity for or consideration of critical examination by Indigenous peoples or other groups in society.

This exclusion, on the other hand, cannot be seen as entirely unconscious or naïve on the part of state governments, as state societies are founded on aggression and competition. As expanded on in the previous chapter, the actions of state governments historically and currently centre around the accumulation of profit, as global power in the 'modern' society is defined by the richness of a country's resource base and the size of the GDP in a given year. In the context of democracy, this translates to the fact that those without economic power (or those who choose not to treat the environment as a commodity) are easily and forcefully excluded from the democratic process. Sheila Neysmith, Kate Bezanson, and Anne O'Connell, in their book *Telling Tales, Living the Effect of Public Policy,* observe with reference to this topic that:

> In countries like Canada, citizenship rights have been tied to participation in the market economy. This results in the de facto exclusion of many people who do not, and cannot, participate in the paid labour force. Furthermore, such citizenship models render invisible the mechanisms by which segments of the population historically and currently are disenfranchised. The stories of Aboriginal households…reveal how rights are negated and claims invalidated.
>
> Neysmith, Bezanson, O'Connell, 2005: 11

At this point in our evolution, the drive for the accumulation of capital in state societies can be said to have overwhelmed earlier culturally defining traits such as community, religion, health, or even family. Participation in the market economy therefore is

tantamount to joining the ranks of the imperial machine – becoming cog in the wheel of 'progress'. It is not surprising then, that members of Indigenous nations – whose worldviews continue to integrally include such notions as religion, culture, health, and family – often rebuff participation in this soulless venture. In today's age, this also means exclusion from the democratic process.

It must be remembered that for the most part in Western society, one is not even afforded the choice not to participate. It is in the interest of state governments to guarantee total centralized power, therefore the personal or community choice not to assimilate to the dominant political paradigm carries with it a price. Where historically this price took the form of physical military force deployed against Indigenous nations who resisted the colonization of their lands, the domestic use of military force in today's society has become quite unfashionable. As Alfred notes: "Oppression has become increasingly invisible; no longer constituted in conventional terms of military occupation, onerous taxation burdens, blatant land thefts, etc…The forces that oppress (Indigenous peoples) today are beyond elusive" (Alfred, 2005: 58). Political scholar Adam Barker has also written on this topic that "Indigenous peoples are now assaulted on subtle social, cultural, and intellectual levels" (Barker, 2006: 20). According to Alfred, this 'neo-colonialism' creates deference to the dominant system exactly by defining the possible expressions of Indigenous culture. Alfred has named this trend 'aboriginalism', which he describes as

> the ideology and identity of assimilation, in which (Indigenous peoples) are manipulated by colonial myths into a submissive position and are told that by emulating white people they can gain acceptance and possibly even fulfillment within mainstream society…this identity is a legal and

> social construction of the state, and it is disciplined by racialized violence and economic oppression to serve an agenda of silent surrender.
>
> Alfred, 2005: 23

Within this political climate, for Indigenous peoples to simply express their cultural reality in genuine terms forces them into a position of contention with the state goal of ultimate control.

While this system appears to argue for the homogenization of the citizenry – an assault on diversity itself – its real effect is to entrench the colonial system which depends on a lower class from whom resources can be extracted in order to maintain the inflated and ill-deserved privileges of the elite. Barker has commented on this development, writing that:

> By not attempting the physical or political extermination of Indigenous peoples, but rather forcing them into the role of the "aboriginal", colonization achieves the end goal of establishing a stable social order based on a stratification analogous to that presented in Orson Wells' (sic) *Animal Farm*: all are equal, but some are more equal than others. This ensures that the elites will always have someone to exploit to increase their own power, and that the structures of contemporary empire continue to function in their intended manner as they are filled by people who know their 'station'.
>
> Barker, 2006: 21

Key to the success of this colonial program is a well-maintained semblance of legitimacy which lulls the masses (including the Indigenous peoples who endorse the 'aboriginal movement') into a sense of complacency by convincing them that their rights have indeed been upheld. By its very nature, however, the neocolonial system is not capable of accommodating diverse rights, and therefore representative democracy becomes illusory. Neysmith, Bezanson, and O'Connell explain how, currently:

> Equality of opportunity, rather than outcome, and rights, rather than social

> benefits, are emphasized. These concepts, rooted in modernist ideas of individualism, do not challenge economic and political processes that reproduce social inequities and the resulting policy orientation, referred to as neoliberalism. "Merit" becomes not only the basis for economic and social rewards, but inequalities structured by race and gender are sanctioned as they get folded into ideas of merit. Meanwhile, a narrowing definition of what constitutes 'genuine need' becomes the only basis upon which to claim state support, and, even then, support is provided under increasingly strict tests for eligibility.
>
> Neysmith, Bezanson, O'Connell: 12

Essentially what this means is that one is allowed to participate in government to the extent that one consents to the government's agenda.

Dean Jacobs of Walpole Island First Nation has further commented on the nature of state 'consultations', noting that this type of process "is only concerned with enabling (Indigenous) people to contribute their knowledge, rather than with information exchange or mutual understanding based on such exchange" (Jacobs, 2000, 1). In the context of this discussion it is plain to see that mutual understanding is not the goal of the DRIC consultations with Indigenous groups. Rather, the goal is to *appear* to extend participation rights to Indigenous peoples, thereby simultaneously fulfilling the legal/ Charter obligation to consult, as well as maintaining state hegemonic rule. All of these functions of the state, as mentioned above by Mander and Alfred, are rooted in the notion of Euroamerican superiority over Indigenous ways of being. This idea is very contentious, obviously. Mander writes: "The notion that coercive power is somehow 'higher' than systems that function without it is debatable, to say the least. So is the notion that the 'state' is an advancement over more informal nationhood, given that the term 'state' lumps together democracies and monarchies and dictatorships of all kinds" (Mander, 1991: 229). The DRIC project's version of democracy – conforming to state

practices – is to offer Native peoples the chance to voice their opinions on whether they prefer choice A, B, or C (quite literally). This notion of democracy not only is a sham, but is a sham which covers for the colonial domination of Native peoples in its present-day, placating form. This diminishment of the process of consultation is completely inappropriate when viewed through the lens of peaceful co-existence between state and Indigenous groups. Even if, for instance, during a DRIC - WIFN consultation, the Indigenous nation were asked to contribute their knowledge or opinion regarding the area, the project is structurally incapable of incorporating the Indigenous worldview.

The Nature of Public Policy Making

The tool that democracy uses to give itself shape in the society is public policy. Much like the consultation process, the public policy process (perhaps because of the primary placement of the word 'public') also projects the illusion of a certain moral standard, as if policy were created in the best interest of the public, or bearing the common situation in mind. In reality though, it is public policy which facilitates neoliberalism by giving voice to the principles and beliefs of this modern and dominant political system. As such, "(Public policy) Designs are carefully crafted to distribute benefits and burdens in accord with social constructions. The result is that existing inequalities are exacerbated" (Ingram and Schneider, 1997: 194). When public policy making is examined in terms of the trends and tendencies which define its typical behaviour, what is uncovered is a program that runs deeply counter to the original principles of democracy or equality under the law. Ingram and Schneider, for example, have concluded the following in their book, *Policy Design for Democracy*:

> Divisions along class, race, gender, ethnicity, region, religion, and the like create power available to whomever is able to capitalize on it, including policy makers as well as others. Without these divisions taking on positive and negative valences, public policy would not provide such straightforward and lucrative opportunities for political gain. Those who are able to create, control, and change social constructions are able to generate new political capital for themselves without necessarily crafting policies that either solve problems, provide justice, or support democratic values...Always anxious not to be caught in opposition to prevailing values, elected political leaders often succumb to prevailing images and stereotypes – or participate in creating new ones.
>
> Ingram and Schneider, 1997: 192

This passage reveals the extent to which the public policy process is governed by political conniving and corrupted strategies that work to maintain power and wealth in the hands of those who already have it. It shows how vulnerable the state political system is to pandering to individual weaknesses and personal insecurities rather than the overall benefit of the society. It furthermore demonstrates the way media, government, and corporations work together to perpetuate social constructions which reinforce the privileges of the ruling class.

In terms of the DRIC Project, it is not only Indigenous peoples who are marginalized by sham policies, but other disadvantaged groups in society as well. Robert Bullard, in the classic work, *Dumping in Dixie*, has linked this type of policy-making with environmental racism, noting that:

> *Environmental racism* refers to any policy, practice, or directive that differentially affects or disadvantages (whether intended or unintended) individuals, groups, or communities based on race or color. Environmental racism combines with public policies and industry practices to provide *benefits* for whites while shifting industry costs to people of color. It is reinforced by governmental, legal, economic, political, and military institutions. In a sense, "Every state institution is a racist institution".
>
> Bullard, 1990: 98, quoting Omi and Winant, 1986: 76

The environmental racism trend has in fact been acknowledged in the DRIC Report,

whose *Environmental Overview Report* explains that: "Title VI of the Civil Rights of 1964 requires federal agencies to ensure that no person, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance" (DRIC).[78] The DRIC Report goes on to indicate, however, that:

> A proposed project that has the potential for disproportionately high and adverse effects on populations protected by Title VI shall only be carried out if:
> - A substantial need for the project exists, based on the overall public interest.
> - Alternatives that would have less adverse effects on protected populations have either: adverse social, economic, or environmental human health impacts that are more severe; or would involve increased costs of an extraordinary magnitude.
>
> DRIC[79]

Therefore, decision-makers maintain the authority to carry out further environmental harm to racialized, low-income communities in the name of the 'overall public interest' (read: the narrow private interest), or not surprisingly – if it will keep the cost down.

The manipulation witnessed in respect of policies such as Title IV in the United States or in the Canadian consultation process is consistent with the above noted role of public policy, which is to support the hegemonic goals of neoliberalism. Ingram and Schneider, in another very telling quote, elaborate on the deceptive quality of public policy when they write that:

> The rules disguise who the true beneficiaries are; rationales mask the true purposes; tools are misdirected or intentionally made too weak or contradictory to have the presumed effects; and implementation structures are established to ensure that powerful groups can intervene in ways not obvious to anyone except

[78] Partnershipborderstudy.com, Previous Reports in Canada, Planning Need/Feasibility Study, Environmental Overview Report, 3.3.
[79] Ibid.

> those deeply immersed in the intricacies of the policy itself.
>
> Ingram and Schneider, 1997: 194

The result of policy manipulation such as that described in this quote give way in this case to entrenched racism and colonialism – both of which are rooted in perception of difference as a threat to be suppressed.

The Position of Walpole Island

In comparison to the very narrow purview of state 'democracy', Robert VanWynsberghe has written about how: "Walpole Island argues for a cultural diversity that clearly refutes the misanthropic views of modernity. It insists on preserving Native human and land resources simply and precisely because diverse cultures form a part of human life" (VanWynsberghe, 2002: 53). Russel Barsh, in his exploration of Indigenous social theory, has also written that for the original peoples of Turtle Island, "The human purpose is to explore the unfolding universe and to play an unending role in the drama of its creation. Each individual strives to contribute his own irreplaceable fragment of the whole mosaic and to respect and understand the pieces contributed by others" (Barsh, 1986: 182). This belief is reflected in the political systems practiced by many Indigenous groups – including the Iroquois – whose historic ability to incorporate disparate political opinions formed the model for the United States Constitution (Johansen, 1982; Mander, 1991). State governments, however, have clearly failed to understand or incorporate the notion of collective identity, while nations like Walpole Island continue to foster it. The Bkejwanong Website conveys that:

> The Walpole Island First Nation has maintained a strong community-based decision making approach sustaining its cultural heritage and traditional knowledge of the environment, while interacting effectively with the non-

> indigenous population. The First Nation has worked to educate its non-Aboriginal neighbours on the impact of pollution and development on the community. The First Nation's general approach is to seek sharing of ideas and greater co-operation on projects.
>
> Bkejwanong[80]

This passage demonstrates a commitment to fostering both internal democracy within the Nation, as well as a working relationship with the non-Indigenous populations on environmental issues which affect the land common to both peoples. Within this context, it is relationships which are emphasized, between communities and amongst community members. This model much more closely resembles the true definition of democracy when compared to linear consultation models that move information in one direction only. While the imperialist model for democracy seems to be a powerfully tough nut to crack, it is never too late to make change. The following chapter discusses possible strategies to making in-roads in this respect.

[80] http://www.bkejwanong.com/about.html

Conclusion: Bridging the Disconnect

While the federal "Climate Change Plan for Canada" assures citizens that the "[Canadian government's] Plan strikes the balance needed to enable our economy to flourish even as we reduce greenhouse gas emissions" (Government of Canada, 2002, iii), concerns regarding the 'flourishing' economy seem to continually supercede environmental concerns. Not only is Canada set to fall short of its reduction target for 2008, but Environment Canada reports that in 2006 this country reported the highest *increase* of greenhouse gas emissions of all signatory countries to the Kyoto Protocol, at 62.2% (Environment Canada, *Canada's Report on Demonstrable Progress Under the Kyoto Protocol to 2005*). In their book, *The Integrity Gap*, professors Eugene Lee and Anthony Perl explain that:

> By and large, all levels of Canadian government exhibit a willingness to identify environmental challenges rather than deny their existence or minimize their importance. Once problems are recognized, however, Canadian policies often fail to deliver solutions or even launch efforts to attain those solutions.
>
> Lee and Perl, 2003: 3

It has not gone unnoticed both internationally and domestically that Canada is struggling to maintain its current manner of conducting business within the new, global environmental imperative. This paucity of environmental ethic can be witnessed in the examination of projects that Canada embarks on within its borders, as well as in the policies that govern the implementation of such projects. If the goal is sustainability, Canada's actions in many cases do not support its achievement.

As a classic illustration of this type of ineffective action, the DRIC Project has been shown to conform fully to the current state model of conducting environmental

business, rather than to challenge it or to deliver on its stated commitment to environmental integrity. The chapter on ecology demonstrated how the state's need for space takes precedence over the needs of other species in Windsor's fragile eco-systems. In the chapter on economics, the DRIC was shown to focus fairly exclusively on the benefits of automotive trade for the economy of this city without acknowledging the toll that this imperative takes on the health of individuals in the area. The chapter on democracy showed how the treatment of Native peoples by the DRIC was shallow, ignoring not only the government's legal duty to consult *meaningfully* with Native peoples, but also contravening the democratic principles that North American countries take for granted as their own and loudly proclaim on the global stage. In light of this analysis, the implementation of the DRIC Project can be said to be governed by the qualities of short-sightedness, competitiveness, and aggression. Rather than these being traits unto themselves, these behaviours are symptomatic of a deeper insecurity underlying modern capitalist cultures who are defined by their constant struggle for increased profit. For as much as these entrenched traits are accepted by the mainstream, the fear, anxiety, hopelessness, depression, anger, sickness, isolation, and frustration that citizens regularly experience point to a basic lack of security, harmony and health.

The implications of this conclusion are fairly serious for the environmental movement. Environmental policy has been shown to be dominated by notions which reflect the liberal capitalist political system, including the tenet of constant expansion for maximum profit. According to Judith McKenzie, the mainstream approach to environmentalism argues that:

> …green values can simply be added or grafted on to each of the 'big three' 'isms' – conservatism, liberalism, and social democracy – making them richer and more relevant to modern political times. In this world view, green values are thought of as new variables to be added to the collection of principles, ideals, and values that characterize Canada's liberal democratic system.
>
> McKenzie, 2002: 14

Within this paradigm, the negative environmental effects of 'crucial' projects – such as the DRIC Project – are mitigated to reduce harmful effects to eco-systems. The unfortunate flaw of this system is there is no way that Western science can measure the heaviness in a person's heart or see when someone's spirit is wounded by the circumstances of their lives. Predictably therefore, the personal hardships associated with terminal environmental diseases are not included in any environmental impact assessment, and 'mitigating' the negative effects of a long, slow, and painful death of a family member seems to me a very shallow strategy for a problem that might have been preventable. I conclude then, that the Canadian environmental system is not at core grounded in a life ethic, but rather an ethic of destruction framed as economic progress, and that current efforts to achieve environmental sustainability will simply continue to reinforce the dominant capitalist priorities. In effect, it is not the implementation of new policies which will create societal transformation, but rather a change in our fundamental attitude towards our environments, and a revolution in our conceptualization of our place in the eco-system.

Thom Hartmann has observed that the current North American identity appears to be founded upon a value system rooted in "profoundly disconnected stories" (Ibid: 155). This author notes that:

> The people who live out such stories are disconnected from others (whom they see as either opportunities or competitors), from nature (which they see as a resource to be converted into personal wealth), or from life itself (which they view as merely a game peopled with winners and losers: those who are rich or go to heaven, and those who lost out).
>
> Hartmann, 1998: 155

Is it really okay that the cities of Windsor and Detroit bear the burden of international trade, even though the natural environments and the citizens of these centres are already in a weakened health state? In concert with Hartmann, I contend that these realities are only tolerated because North American people have lost their sense of connection to each other, connection with their habitats, and most importantly, a sense of connection within. I contend that in the absence of a reverence for life, meaning becomes a construct without a grounding in natural values, and integrity comes to be defined arbitrarily. In the place of a binding moral framework is a vacuum, allowing for policies founded on circular reasoning which can largely be validated in isolation from their impact on eco-systems. This system has allowed for the development of a culture defined by consumerism, entertainment, and single-minded profit-seeking, with no built-in way to moderate the negative repercussions of these artificial drives.

If disconnection is the basic source of Canada's environmental problems, then solutions for repairing our relationship with the eco-system must centre on reconnection, the first step of which is the development of awareness. Taiaiake Alfred has written in *Wasase* that, "A true revolution is spiritual at its core" (Alfred, 2005: 22), and as all spiritual people will tell you, awareness begins to unfold with the individual recreation of stillness. Becoming free from the constant chatter of our thoughts fueled by the fast-paced images of our media allows for the renewal of our intuition, which in turn compels

us towards an *experiential*, rather than information-based life. The individual experience of learning about the environment through interaction with it is the way to reconnection. While a paper such as this one may be informative, reading about the environment cannot substitute for the real experiences of watching for the birds returning in the warmer weather, or observing the day by day unfurling of the springtime leaves.

One local organization, the Naturalized Habitat Network, promotes this very concept. Their mission statement reads as follows:

> The Naturalized Habitat Network of Essex County & Windsor is a non-profit, community-based initiative dedicated to provide encouragement, education and empowerment toward the establishment of wildlife habitat and other environmentally sustainable practices within home landscape.
>
> The Naturalized Habitat Network[81]

This organization holds meetings, workshops, and classes to teach people how to create habitats in their yards to support local plant and animal species, rather than to alienate, poison, and eradicate them. They also conduct tours of natural areas to teach people about the local species and eco-systems. According to their website: "Through ongoing education and support, we are able to help our members incorporate native plants, attract wildlife and foster environmentally sound gardening practices. In doing so, our members experience the joys of gardening while making a positive impact on the environment".[82] This is an organization invested in the principle of connection by teaching people about their own backyards through the physical experience of nature. Reconnection with the diverse species that surround us each day – from the birds and butterflies to the insects

[81] www.naturalizedhabitat.org
[82] Ibid.

and plants – is the first step towards learning to honour and respect other species. It is in this way that state citizens will learn that wildlife is not worthy because it serves some purpose for humankind, but simply due to each species' innate quality of aliveness, and their distinct contribution to what Russell Barsh refers to as universal or transcendent kinship (Barsh, 1986: 187-188).

It is probable that many state citizens harbour a fear of wildness or naturalness passed down to them from their colonial ancestors, which expresses itself as a deep-seated belief that nature must be suppressed. As mentioned in Chapter Two, this fear fuels industrialized states' aggression toward other species and nature, and forms a tangible barrier to achieving environmental harmony or any lasting sense of sustainability. Overcoming this fear begins with individual interaction with nature, with the goal of learning to genuinely consider or begin to understand what other species need to survive. Ideally it would become this highly sensitive and connected knowledge that would inform development projects that shape the infrastructure of society. It might be said that popular notions like Traditional Ecological Knowledge contribute greatly in this respect, since there is already a well established knowledge base to draw from. It must be understood on the other hand that Canadian people will never have the same relationship to that knowledge as the peoples for whom it is genuinely traditional, for grasping the knowledge in an individual, first-hand capacity creates a unique relationship to the knowledge which is not easily emulated. Dean Jacobs of WIFN writes on this topic that: "it is a mistake to focus on traditional *knowledge*, as if it were some missing term in an

equation, and that what is needed instead is a focus on the traditional *values* that underlie and form part of this knowledge" (Jacobs, 2000: 1). Recall the Bkejwanong Territory *Species at Risk* handbook, which conveys the 'environmental philosophy' of WIFN:

> To preserve, enhance, and maintain a mutual respect and to continue our beneficial dependency upon the environment, we shall endeavour to co-exist with Mother Nature and protect this relationship. We, the Walpole Island First Nation people, pledge to use these resources to the mutual benefit of all people. We shall, therefore, ensure proper respect for all resources. As our elders have done, we shall maintain the laws that preserve our wildlife, lands and resources.
>
> Bkejwanong Natural Heritage Centre, 2006: 14

The values exhibited by the people of Walpole Island that became evident throughout the analysis centre around the words responsibility, respect, and sensitivity to the "rich tapestry" of life in all directions outward – through time and across species (Deloria, Barsh). It is clear then, that harmony is not a condition that can be legislated, but rather one that is achieved through the personal re-creation of our relationships with the living things surrounding us.

In this line of thinking, it is enclaves founded on locality which create the potential for individuals to connect with one another. The key to this idea, however, is that the community identity is based on the environmentally similar conditions that each person interacts meaningfully with, rather than out of some arbitrary geographic designation. This idea of physically-based communities extends powerfully to the social and political realms. On Walpole Island, Robert VanWynsberghe has noted the following:

> Collective identity is essential to the successful emergence of a social movement. In other words, the fight for freedom from corporate polluters can be placed within a broader community narrative of exploitation and betrayal. In this narrative, autonomy means being able to contain mainstream culture by using what is locally meaningful. The result, for community members, is a heightened

> consciousness that has the potential to fortify the community's resolve. Consciousness must be seen in the context of community understandings that deny modernity and the actions of powerful outsiders (who sponsor the 'naturalness' of environmental harm and/or tout it as the inevitable product of progress)"
>
> VanWynsberghe, 2002: 55

This type of community organization holds the blueprint for how to confront the seemingly impenetrable forces of empire; political action must be conscious and aware, it must be collective, it must be grounded locally. Whereas Indigenous political action has consistently adhered to these principles throughout time, and Indigenous nations have therefore maintained autonomous cultures in the face of unending physical and conceptual violence, do non-Indigenous people – fractured, sick, and spiritually bankrupt – really stand a chance of developing this type of community-action base?

According to Russel Barsh in *The Nature and Spirit of North American Political Systems*, the fact is that this type of association is natural and fundamental to the human spirit. The following passage offers an ancient perspective on this modern catastrophe. He writes:

> But whispers of a deeper and older consciousness abound. No matter how scientific or "objective" they try to be, human institutions always tend to collapse back into kinship networks. Heads of powerful materialistic states surround themselves with people they know. Transient urban dwellers form support groups of neighbours. We find surrogate families at every level of contemporary industrial life. Society has never really stopped being tribal; it merely replaced natural kinship with more fragile and temporary arrangements. Nor could industrialization erase the rebellious pursuit of personal identity which, in the absence of a truly free and spiritually diverse environment, usually finds expression in anti-institutions and anti-dogmas, rather than liberation from institutions and dogmas.

> Indigenous American civilization shares a deep structure with all human societies, reflecting fundamental individualistic values that are no longer fully expressed or achieved in industrialized nations.
>
> Barsh, 1986: 195

The way to achieve connection then, is perhaps less a re-creation, but more a *remembering* of something indestructible at the root of every human soul.

With reference to environmental politics, much of what is being written here has already been considered by others. Those who argue for an "entirely new 'ideological axis'" (McKenzie, 2002: 14) within society have been labeled *deep ecologists*, who consider "whole-systems…including the welfare of humans, animals, and other organisms in the environment" (Ibid). As an example, Judith McKenzie quotes author Murray Bookchin, who advocates for "heavy doses of anarchism and grassroots democratic ideals" (Ibid:16). He writes that:

> If the foregoing attempts to mesh ecological and anarchist principles are ever achieved in practice, social life would yield a sensitive development of humans and natural diversity, falling together into a well-balanced, harmonious unity…Freed from an oppressive routine, from paralyzing repression and insecurities, from the burdens of toil and false needs, from the trammels of authority and irrational compulsion, the individual would finally be in the position, for the first time in history, to fully realize his potentialities as a member of the human community and the natural world.
>
> Ibid

While in Windsor we are nowhere near achieving the vision expounded on here by Bookchin, there are still glimmers of organized hope. One local organization called the Citizens Environmental Alliance stands at the political fore when it comes to community education and action. Their webpage both introduces the group and presents their mandate:

> The Citizens Environment Alliance (CEA) is a non-profit, grass-roots, binational,

> education and research organization. We are committed to an ecosystem approach to environmental planning and management…
> The Citizens Environment Alliance will strive to protect, restore and enhance the quality of the local environment in the Detroit-St. Clair River corridors, the western basin of Lake Erie and in the Windsor-Essex-Kent Region of the Great Lakes Basin.
>
> CEC Homepage[83]

While an organization such as this one may not have broken with its colonial heritage, it nonetheless creates an opportunity to challenge the dominant political stance toward the environment and to create alliances with the Indigenous groups who are committed to the same principles. Without stepping outside of the accepted societal bounds of resistance, it remains to be seen whether a group such as this one would be able to transcend the unjust power structure that defines the modern age. It is more likely that they would, as Barsh mentions above, offer a voice of anti-dogma concerning environmental politics within a society quite devoid of diverse political opinion. Nonetheless, their courage is inspiring, the education opportunities they offer the community are useful, and their existence creates a starting point for citizens to get involved in some of the crucial local issues.

As a final note, I reiterate that the environmental perspective of the Walpole Island First Nation was included in this analysis as an example of an alternative and vastly different way of relating to the Earth. It was my intention in structuring the analysis this way, that the fluidity of culture would become evident to the reader. By this I mean to indicate that our societal *perception of reality,* is actually based on what Thom Hartmann calls cultural 'stories'. According to this author: "Culture is not about what is

[83] http://www.citizensenvironmentalliance.org

absolute, real, or true. It's about what a group of people agrees to believe. Culture can be healthy or toxic, nurturing or murderous. Culture is made of stories, and those stories…can be changed for the better" (Hartmann, 1998:164). This is where authors like Bookchin, quoted above, are misguided when they envision that a transformation towards embracing life would allow humans to realize their potential for the 'first time in human history'. This author would have been more accurate if he'd said that the life ethic would allow *Euro-centric people* to "fully realize (their) potentialities as a member(s) of the human community and the natural world" (McKenzie, 2002: 16), for, as this analysis has shown, the Indigenous peoples of North America have practiced reverence for the natural world and have organized themselves politically around the life ethic since time immemorial. In the words of Thom Hartmann, "It's not humankind that is killing Earth. It's the consequence of the *stories* of a now-dominant group of humankind" (Hartmann, 1998: 164). Without doubt, it is time for North American cultures on all levels of power to develop a new set of cultural stories, and perhaps the first one should begin with the humble acknowledgment that we *are* the environment.

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