

# **“We all know each other”: A strengths-based approach to understanding social capital in Pictou Landing First Nation**

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# “We all know each other”: A Strengths-based Approach to Understanding Social Capital in Pictou Landing First Nation

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With over three decades of attention drawn to the health of Indigenous peoples in Canada and around the world, an outpouring of health research has been undertaken. Much of this research, however, has emphasized the experience of disparity at the expense of recognizing strengths. In this case study, we challenge the damage-centred rhetoric of mainstream health research by reporting the findings of 20 qualitative interviews on community strength and health with members of Pictou Landing First Nation, a Mi’kmaq nation located in Nova Scotia, Canada. We then relate and compare these findings with the emerging conceptualization of Indigenous social capital, which is a concept that has been associated with positive health outcomes in a variety of contexts. Our findings indicate that Pictou Landing First Nation is strengthened by **qualities of familiarity, reciprocity, safety, and solidarity**, which are rooted in the value of family and embedded within a broader Mi’kmaq worldview. These strengths align, in part, with the concept of Indigenous social capital, which we suggest may be better harnessed to be a means for conducting strengths-based health research. To this end, our findings support the need for reworking social capital conceptualizations to more strongly centralize cultural identities and worldviews in order to authentically and comprehensively affirm Indigenous and decolonizing health research practices.

**Keywords:** *Social capital, community well-being, Mik’maq, Indigenous health, strengths-based research, Canada*

## Glossary

**LCAB:** Local Community Advisory Board

## Acknowledgements

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## Introduction

For over three decades, dominant non-Indigenous narratives about Indigenous peoples, as found in media, government reports, and research papers, have rarely acknowledged the strengths and abilities of Indigenous peoples. In the realm of health research, this rhetoric is manifest in the disproportionate study of Indigenous peoples' health problems (Reading & Nowgesic, 2002). Such research is problematic, as it typically neglects the distal determinants of health underlying those disparities, namely the negative determinants of colonialism and racism (Reading & Wien, 2009). Consequently, this research perpetuates a dominant narrative of Indigenous peoples as despondent and dependent (Reading & Nowgesic, 2002; Tuck, 2009) and in doing so, ultimately reinforces the colonial agenda.

To oppose this narrative, strengths-based research has been pursued by Indigenous and ally scholars to reclaim Indigenous ownership over health and well-being (Craven et al., 2016; Smith, 1999; Tuck, 2009). Approaches to strengths-based research are varied, having been applied to social work (Harris, 2006), pedagogy (Crooks et al., 2010) and health promotion (Brough et al., 2004). It should be noted that though the recognition of Indigenous strengths has only recently begun to surface in the academic literature, this knowledge has in fact been vested within and celebrated by Indigenous communities for generations. This is a knowledge that has been silenced, denied, and refuted by the colonial orientation of western academia, and it is entirely a demonstration of colonialism that strengths-based research is now emerging as a "novel" research paradigm. In this article, we explore the potential for the concept of Indigenous social capital to be used as an alternate avenue through which to conduct strengths-based health research. This

proposition exists in light of multiple studies that have associated improved health outcomes with higher levels of social capital (Ehsan et al., 2019; Kawachi & Berkman, 2001; Kim et al., 2008), as well as the intimately connected and highly social nature of many Indigenous communities (Hart, 2010). To date, the published literature on Indigenous social capital has not explicitly applied a strengths-based lens, although the concept has been discussed in association with strengths-based concepts such as resilience (Ledogar & Fleming, 2008).

Broadly defined, social capital is a resource arising from social networks and associations that generates positive benefits for members of a group through shared trust, norms and values. More simply, it has also been described as the 'glue that holds a community together' (Durlauf & Fafchamps, 2004; Freuchte, 2011). Despite the recognition that social capital may differ depending on community context, research describing the nature of Indigenous social capital as an independent construct is relatively limited. In Canada, the most extensive study of Indigenous social capital as a unique concept was undertaken in 2003 by Javier Mignone, who constructed an Indigenous social capital framework (Mignone, 2003). In this framework, Mignone compartmentalized the social capital of a community into three components: (1) the degree to which its resources are socially invested; (2) the culture of trust, reciprocity, collective action, and participation within the community; and (3) whether social networks are inclusive, flexible, and diverse (Mignone, 2009). While the formation of this framework was informed by the input of three First Nations communities in Manitoba, the degree to which this model resonates across different First Nations across the country is unclear, as is the extent

to which this model critically engages with and adopts Indigenous epistemologies into its definition of social capital.

In view of this previous work, we conducted a qualitative study with the Mi'kmaw community of Pictou Landing First Nation to explore the strengths of the community's social environment. In this article, we discuss the findings of this case study in the context of Indigenous social capital to identify ways this concept might better encompass community strengths and be utilized for more affirming health research practices.

### **Study Context**

Pictou Landing First Nation is a small Mi'kmaw community located on the northern shore of mainland Nova Scotia, Canada that is accessible year-round by road. Mi'kmaw presence has been traced to this region for over 10,000 years (Paul, 2006). In 1967, the community became subject to an act of environmental racism and injustice when a local pulp and paper mill began using an estuary bordering the community to operate the 'Boat Harbour Effluent Treatment Facility' (Castleden et al., 2017). This estuary was a culturally significant resource to which the community had strong relationship (Castleden et al., 2017). As the pollution by the mill began harming the quality of the water, land, and air, Pictou Landing First Nation began its rights-based legal efforts concerning 'Boat Harbour'. In recent years, community-led studies have also emerged to show how 'Boat Harbour' destroyed the lagoon and by extension, negatively impacted the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health of the entire community (Castleden et al., 2017; Lewis, 2018). In 2015, the Government of Nova Scotia passed the Boat Harbour Act, ordering that the treatment of effluent in Boat Harbour be ceased by January 31, 2020 (Withers, 2019). Pictou Landing First

Nation continued its political pressure upon provincial authorities during those five years, and the Province ultimately maintained its legislated promise. Earlier this year (2020), the treatment facility stopped receiving effluent, and the pulp mill closed shortly thereafter. Currently, extensive cleanup efforts are required, and it remains to be seen whether the harm can be undone and the Mi'kmaw relationship to the land re-established. Data collection for this study took place in 2018, before the closure of the mill, during a time when the advocacy of Pictou Landing First Nation was beginning to be recognized widely. Given that the interviews conducted for this study took place at this critical point in time, the emotions and lived experiences relayed through these interviews largely centred upon the community fight against Boat Harbour.

### **Methods**

#### **Data Collection**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 key informants from Pictou Landing First Nation. Participants were members of the Local Community Advisory Board (LCAB) in addition to others purposively recruited through a hired community-based Health Research Coordinator. All participants met inclusion criteria of being older than eighteen, having self-identified Indigenous ancestry, and having lived in Pictou Landing First Nation. Interviews were conducted by the first author. Of the 20 participants, 15 (75%) were women and 19 were currently living in Pictou Landing First Nation. The remaining one participant had grown up in and around Pictou Landing First Nation but was, at the time, living in a nearby municipality. All interviews were audio recorded (with permission), transcribed verbatim into electronic format, and emailed back to each

participant to review for accuracy, clarifications, or removal. One participant requested a minor change in their interview transcript, which was made. No other changes were requested. Interviews focused on three key areas: 1) perceptions of the strengths of the community, with focus on the social environment; 2) the effect of these community strengths on physical, mental, and emotional health; and 3) personal definitions of health and well-being. In this manuscript, we emphasize reporting our findings from key areas 1 and 3, as these organically emerged as the more prominent areas of discussion within our interviews.

### **Data Analysis**

Transcripts were analyzed using an inductive thematic analysis approach to identify common themes across the interviews (Joffe, 2012). The analysis focused on understanding the strengths of the social environment in Pictou Landing First Nation, the significance of these strengths in the context of Pictou Landing First Nation's culture and history, and the impact of these strengths on health and well-being. The process adhered to the steps articulated by Braun and Clarke (2006) and involved data familiarisation, followed by coding using frameworks developed recursively to systematically identify features of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A qualitative software package (NVivo 12) facilitated this process. Codes were collated into themes and checked in relation to coded data using thematic maps and charts. Finally, these themes were defined and labeled. The preliminary analysis was member-checked by LCAB members for credibility and resonance (Tracy, 2010).

### **Relationship**

Pictou Landing First Nation has collaborated with the principal investigator of this study on environmental health

research for nearly a decade. The study described in this manuscript took place in Pictou Landing First Nation with the permission of a Local Community Advisory Board (LCAB), which included the Chief, the Community Health Representative, and three members of the community. The community's interest in understanding the broader, contextual determinants of health has always driven their environmental health research agendas and community goals and helped create the conditions necessary for proceeding with this research in a good way (Ball & Janyst, 2008). The research was cleared by the academic authors' university research ethics board and fell under the principal investigator's larger research program approved by the Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch.

### **Results**

The four themes that emerged from the data on community strengths in Pictou Landing First Nation were **familiarity, reciprocity, safety, and solidarity**. While these themes are individually detailed below, they manifested fluidly and in an interwoven nature within the interview data, and were expressed strongly in relation to values of family and Indigenous culture. The effects of these identified community strengths on health were reported to be largely positive. Pseudonyms are used in this article to maintain participant confidentiality.

### **Familiarity**

The social environment of Pictou Landing First Nation was described by participants as friendly and sociable, qualities that enable community members to be comfortable with one another. Participants reported that familiarity was grounded in the small size of the community and the interconnected nature of family networks.

*It makes me feel good to be part of people; it makes me feel good to be able to go to the store and say, you know, "Hi [John], hi [Robert]." It makes me feel good and these people say hi back because we all know each other - like we know about each other... I think it affects me in a positive way most of the time*

- Nicole

*I like how... you know everybody around here. Again, I'm not too sure with [neighbouring community], but with it being so big and huge, like I think it takes like 10-15 minutes to drive through or something, so you don't really know everybody; you don't have the casual head nod or smile or something nice.*

- Jordan

Furthermore, the distinction between 'the professional' and 'the personal' was often identified as inseparable and participants indicated that this benefits community members by enabling them access to resources in an informal way.

*Our community health rep[representative], she'll like...if she sees you at a crib tournament or whatever, she'll be like how's your [blood] sugars ... she's checking on you on her own time. So, she reminds you to keep on your health and stuff, so yeah like a lot of people take their work home with them.*

- Kelly

Overall, familiarity was identified as a quality of the community that makes it strong, though some participants articulated that it could also lead to a lack of personal privacy. Familiarity was also described as a

quality that enabled norms of reciprocity to exist among members, as described below.

### **Reciprocity**

Many participants expressed that the familiarity they felt with one another creates a culture of reciprocity that enables them to find help in the face of major life events. Many participants, like Christine (below) gave the example of a death in her family as an example of this community-minded act of reciprocity.

*In my family one of the major events that happened with us was when [relative] died and we didn't - actually, we weren't even thinking right or whatever... but you know she's gonna need the headstone, there's gonna be other bills that come up or whatever right. Everybody around us went above and beyond and they just raised so much money we had more than enough for her headstone and paid for everything else and we even had money left over and with the money left over we got some benches made and donated them to the church at Maligomish and bought a bunch of food and cooked it up and gave it away during the [annual gathering at St. Anne's] Mission.*

- Christine

While reciprocity is evidently displayed in times of need, many participants also gave examples of reciprocity that manifests on a regular, daily basis that exemplifies the extent to which this value is ingrained within the quotidian functioning of the community.

*When I cook at my house, I cook so much, and my husband, being from outside of the community, he's like 'why do you cook so much?' And I'm like 'well, you never know who's going to*

*stop in'. And even when I go to town, I leave my door unlocked and people will go in and eat - when I get home it's either there or it's gone. But nobody's hungry, in so many ways. That's not just with food, that's with love, that's with care, that's with consideration.*

- Sandra

Beyond enjoying the benefits of these norms, participants also identified that upholding reciprocity by volunteering and giving back to the community are sources of joy and pride for them. As Judy described (above), there is a strong moral philosophy in the community and embedded within the Mi'kmaw ethic of sharing and contributing to collective well-being. Some participants also noted that they hope to pass this value on to their children, so that the community may continue to thrive.

*I always helped out wherever I could, right, you volunteer, you lend a hand, you do what you can um, so that would never change and that's what always made me grounded in this community.*

- Alison

*You can pass on your knowledge to your kids so they can help out the community too in some way when it's time.*

- Nicholas

Overall, participants described a strong sense of reciprocity in the community as a treasured quality of living in Pictou Landing First Nation that enables members to feel comfortable, connected, and ultimately, always able to seek the help they require.

### **Safety**

Participants described the ways in which the nature of familiarity and reciprocity within Pictou Landing First

Nation gives rise to a sense of safety. Safety was discussed often in relation to family, with many participants, like Laura (below) expressing comfort in knowing their family will always be there for them in times of need. Some, like Julia (below) also attributed this to community leadership.

*If anything was to ever, ever happen here to me or to my daughter or to my family or anybody, somebody's gonna be right there...it's not like twelve hour wait to have to see that person or do this...they're like right there. So, I think it's pretty cool that my family lives right up the street from me.*

- Laura

*It'll always give me [peace of mind] that I have a place to go no matter how bad things get in the world..I always felt like, you know, if all else failed I have a home here...Here the band would help me, you know if I really needed it, I know it's there so it's like a bit of a safety net... instead of having that 'oh my god' that sense of doom, like I could be homeless on the street... like, no my Band would not allow anybody to be homeless on the street.*

- Julia

For many, safety was also experienced in terms of physical protection and freedom from dangers that participants associated with living off-reserve. Examples given largely related to experiences of racism outside their community. Participants expressed feeling better able to trust the intentions of those in the community and feeling safe in knowing that everyone will look out for each other if potential threats appear in the community.

*In town you might get followed, I get followed around in a store, it always*

*friggin' surprises me... following me around shopping in Walmart; it happens to a lot of folks from the rez[reserve].*

- Judy

*[On living off-reserve] Living in the apartments, you always had... you know, I always found, you know, little kids running around saying things like, "There's those Indians that make the loud noise, mommy..." and, you know, shit like that, yeah so you know I encountered stuff like that a lot.*

- George

*I almost got kidnapped... when I was a kid... that wouldn't happen here because everybody knows each other; if I see a strange car that I'm not used to, seeing it come across to some kids, I'd probably run out to the road and lose my shit [on the driver].*

- Nicole

Participants likewise expressed feeling emotional safety and mental wellbeing within their community that they derived from their shared personal and collective histories. Participants related this quality to the familiarity within the community and their knowledge of one another's lives.

*A lot of people down here have the same background as me, like I have friends or family that lost their parents at a young age like I did, that had an uncle as a parent or had their own individual home problems, so we connect on that because we grew up together, we all knew it. And then when you go off-reserve, my friends are usually shocked that I have over 20 aunts and uncles and over 50 first cousins... And then when they hear*

*about my back story of what's what, they're like, "Oh what? Really? We never would have pictured that as you," so like yeah home is a lot easier because like I said, we all know each other's stories.*

- Joanne

*I'm Native, so I feel more at home where my people are... you know, I could go down [to any community member], I could go down there and tell them, you know, what my day was about, and stuff like that, and he'd probably, he'd listen, right? You know what I mean? Opposed to someone elsewhere that's not, that can't relate.*

- Nicholas

Overall, the social environment of the community was reported by participants to possess a safety that transcends domains of physical, emotional, and mental well-being and ultimately makes their community 'home' to them in ways other places are not.

### **Solidarity**

The community's ability to come together in solidarity with one another to campaign for their rights was identified as a core strength and source of pride for members. The most salient example of this strength was with regards to Pictou Landing First Nation's sustained fight for environmental justice involving Boat Harbour.

*I think we're good fighters, because we've always, since the 60s, we've fought against Boat Harbour, so I think everybody here's a fighter. They all grew up here with a fighter mentality. I didn't grow up here, so I recognized it when I moved here: I can see everybody, yeah, they're fighters for injustice. And they're just used to it and*

*I think it's second nature... if someone [came] here and [tried to] do something else...the band would rally, and not just the band council, like everybody here would rally and stop [the] injustice if they saw it.*

- Judy

Some participants described specific events that displayed this community solidarity, including a “No Pipe” Land and Sea rally, which was held in 2018 to protest a plan from the pulp mill to create a new effluent facility in the nearby Northumberland Strait to replace Boat Harbour.

*We went out to the mouth of the harbour and there was already so many people out there, as far as the eye can see... like you can keep looking and still see a boat... and then when we were in the causeway, you can still see the boats coming into the mouth of the harbour... just to see everybody stand so strong, that was probably the best moment out of all my 35 years other than my birth of my little girl, but like seeing the community pull together and just have so much strength like that, that was amazing.*

- Jordan

Pictou Landing First Nation's solidarity has a strong intergenerational nature and a gravity of attachment to place that can only be found in Indigenous communities; participants expressed that their fight was to honour their ancestors who first observed the devastation of the effluent treatment facility, as well as for their children and future generations, who they hope will again experience the beauty of the estuary as their ancestors did.

*I'm really proud of [how the community has] fought for so many years and there's been so many leaders that have dealt with that [effluent treatment facility] and so I'm carrying that legacy with me..I'm really proud of that fact that they never ever stopped fighting and I find because of them, it has brought a community to that same...expectation for me... so um I can't stop fighting because the expectation is so high that you need to make sure that you never stop talking about it and you continue to represent and um bring the issues to the forefront*

- Alison

*Especially with the fight with Boat Harbour... that's been a continuous fight and everybody's still fighting, and everybody's still together with it, so that's really...that's probably another thing that makes me proud of how strong [we are]. Of course, there's other things I'd like to see, but this is a big start because it's been going on for a long time.*

- Joanne

The solidarity of the community is being further realized by their channeling of efforts towards restoring Boat Harbour. Many participants described the strength of Pictou Landing First Nation in its ability to imagine the future with a sense of hope, optimism, and devotion to its restoration.

*I'm involved with Boat Harbour...what we want to do after it's shut down...what we're gonna do with this...we're just throwing ideas out right now...maybe a park here, maybe a walking trail here you know, maybe a plate there, where we put names on it where people passed that were helping with Boat Harbour...*

- Ryan

*The other piece I'm really proud of is where we're headed with the [Boat Harbour] cleanup project...that's becoming more and more a reality every day right, and so that [Boat Harbour closure] date is coming so quickly and then you know, to see that transformation, and so I got to make sure that I stay healthy so I see all of that...the important thing is that I want to still be here when that's all being transformed, because geez you know, the generation coming up, they will be definitely blessed to have, what well I never had it, but I'll get to see it...but they'll have what their great grandparents or great great grandparents had...*

- Alison

Of all the themes, solidarity in the First Nations' collective fight against environmental racism was the most prominent. For participants, this solidarity brought about a deep sense of pride, as it testified not only to the importance of their relationship to the land, but more broadly, to the community's power to self-determine and forge a future for the generations to come.

### **Limitations**

To our knowledge, this study is the first to critically explore Mignone's concept of Indigenous social capital for its ability to capture community strengths in a specific context. Limitations of this study include potential self-selection bias, as the study was explicit about its interest in community strengths. Furthermore, as the community strengths discussed by (predominantly female) participants related mostly to intra-community social, other domains (i.e., relationships with other communities or with formal authorities) were not explored.

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to explore the strengths of the social environment for one First Nations community in Canada and to identify ways for the study of Indigenous social capital to be adapted to better capture these strengths. Our findings identified four main community strengths within the social environment of Pictou Landing First Nation which reflect, first and foremost, an intrinsic congruence between community strength and the concept of social capital. The essence of social capital is that it is a resource within the social fabric of a community that benefits its members. In our study, participants described the strengths of their social environment within a similar vein, expressing the ways they draw upon the strengths of their community as resources for individual and community well-being.

The only existing framework for Indigenous social capital in Canada (Mignone, 2003) describes one of the key components of social capital to be community 'culture', which includes characteristics of trust, norms of reciprocity, collective action, and participation (Kawachi & Berkman, 2014; Mignone, 2003; Putnam, 1995). The community strengths of safety, reciprocity, solidarity, and familiarity identified by our study support, in some ways, the qualities of Mignone's framework, but demonstrate that the scope of community strengths is more nuanced than what has been conceptualized to date within the construct of social capital, and that adaptations to the concept must be made to adopt a stronger strengths-based orientation. For instance, the emotional and mental components of 'safety' identified in our findings are in part accounted for by the concept of 'trust' present in Mignone's framework. However, within this concept,

we found that the language of “safety” was a more strengths-oriented means of capturing the same underlying concepts, as many participants expressed that they found it difficult to ‘trust’ others in light of their shared experiences with environmental racism and dispossession, and intergenerational colonial trauma (Thibodeau & Peigan, 2007). Participants also described safety in comprehensive terms of physical, mental, and emotional security, in contrast to the emphasis on physical safety (e.g., whether it is safe to walk outside) that other social capital literature has traditionally emphasized (Bullen & Onyx, 2005; De Jesus et al., 2011; Ziersch et al., 2005).

The concept of reciprocity was another clear parallel with Mignone’s framework, emerging from our findings as well. However, in Mignone’s framework, reciprocity was described as ‘a future obligation to return “the favour”’ (Mignone, 2003), while reciprocity, in our findings, was not necessarily described in these obligatory terms. Rather, reciprocity was rooted in a language of kinship, of connection to and respect for one another. The essence of this sentiment similarly underlay the tenor of solidarity in our findings; the fight to restore the estuary exemplified a reciprocity and accountability to the natural world and to past and future generations. It was this philosophy that ultimately drove the community’s advocacy efforts. This was, perhaps, the differentiating factor between our findings and the theme of collective action in Mignone’s framework. While both concepts centre upon the community ‘coming together’ to pursue a course of action for collective well-being, solidarity encompasses not only the actionables of the collective, but a psychological unity and shared interest that drives the collective action itself.

The concept of familiarity was one that uniquely arose in our findings as a strength of the community; in Mignone’s framework, this characteristic was not directly articulated, although it is alluded to within (or exists as a prerequisite for) reciprocity. Our findings, however, argue that while these concepts are related, familiarity may benefit community members distinctly in its ability to cultivate a sense of shared identity and emotional and mental security from belonging to the community. This finding is in contrast to the ways reciprocity is typically illustrated as direct provision of material help (recognizing that this too may contribute positively to emotional or mental security). Finally, Mignone’s framework included the concept of participation to describe individual’s participation in common activities for personal interest. While participants in our study did not articulate this as a community strength, some noted that they enjoyed the abundance of activities available to engage in.

The inadequacies of conventional models of social capital in capturing the full extent of Pictou Landing First Nation’s strengths emerge from the reality that these strengths are fundamentally grounded in a broader Mi’kmaq worldview. The importance of this worldview in Pictou Landing First Nation has been intimately studied by Mi’kmaq scholar Diana Lewis in her research on the importance of the land to Pictou Landing First Nation health and well-being. In this work, she describes the concepts of *ko’kmanaq* (our relations) and *n’mit no’komaq* (all my relations) to explain the ways in which Mi’kmaq peoples, as Lewis describes, ‘extend a relationship to both animate and inanimate objects, thereby creating a relationship of respect and kinship, a reciprocity that includes values and obligations’ (King, 1990; Lewis, 2018; Sable & Francis, 2012). These values are

important ways of maintaining *tilnuo'lti'k*, translated as “how we (Mi'kmaq) will maintain our worldview” (Lewis, 2018). These values, embedded within the social fabric of Pictou Landing First Nation, shape the existence of familiarity, reciprocity, solidarity, and safety in the community. While this research is but one case study, we argue that for the study of Indigenous social capital to comprehensively reflect the strengths of any Indigenous community, it must centre the definition of social capital upon the philosophies of the underlying cultural worldview and apply a community-centred approach to the research. To do otherwise would be to place the study of Indigenous social capital at risk of applying generic measures that ignore the unique strengths of individual communities, or worse, of exclusively capturing areas of social ‘deficiency’, thereby perpetuating damage-centered rhetoric.

Figure 1 illustrates our findings of community strength in Pictou Landing First Nation, aiming to reflect their grounding in *tilnuo'lti'k*.

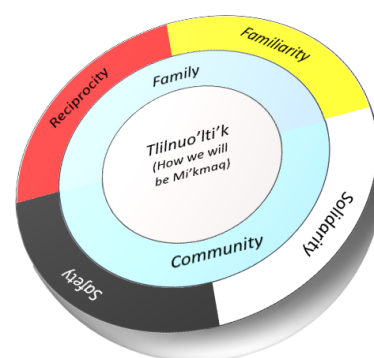
### Conclusion

The discourse of defect, flaw, maladjustment, and dysfunction has disproportionately surrounded Indigenous communities, particularly in the realm of health research, which continues to emphasize the study of health deficits. This discourse exists at the expense of appreciating the unique strengths vested within Indigenous communities that are foundational to their health and well-being. In this case study of Pictou Landing First Nation, we illuminate that the concept of Indigenous social capital, overlapped in multiple ways with the strengths of the community and suggest that the social capital framework is compatible with a strengths-based approach to health research. At the same time, our findings call for

greater consideration of Indigenous worldviews within the social capital framework, and for diversity to be better recognized across different Indigenous communities and nations. Social capital exists uniquely within different worldviews, and it is only with this appreciation that the study of Indigenous social capital may be tailored to capture the true depth and texture of the social fabric of a community.

**Figure 1**

*Thematic Findings of Key Community Strengths in Pictou Landing First Nation*



*Note.* In this model, *tilnuo'lti'k* is centrally located to represent the fundamental importance of Mi'kmaw identity in shaping the social environment in Pictou Landing First Nation. The second layer represents family and community, inseparable entities for the community. Finally, the outermost layer represents the themes we used to describe the observable social characteristics of the community, all of which are rooted in the underlying ‘layers’. This model is positioned in three-dimensional space to reflect the dimensions of time and the connection of the past, present, and future.

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