Labour Force Attachment and Regional Development for Native Peoples: Theoretical and Methodological Issues

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Over the past 15 years, a common theme to the various studies commissioned by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) has been the differences in the labour force and employment conditions of Native Peoples compared to other Canadians. In *Indian Conditions: A Survey* (Canada 1980: 58-59), participation in the wage economy in 1976 was 40 per cent for Indians compared to the national level of 60 per cent and Indian unemployment was estimated to be 18 per cent compared to 8 percent for the national labour force. Using the 1981 Census, Nicholson and MacMillan (1986: 52) found only 38 percent of the Indian population employed compared to 60 per cent of the Canadian population. Nicholson and MacMillan (1986: 52-53) also found the off-reserve Indians had a substantially higher employment rate (47 per cent) compared to on-reserve Indians (32 per cent) and that for on-reserve Indians, 29 per cent had never worked compared to 16 per cent of Indians off-reserve and only 10 per cent of other Canadians. Census data for 1986 show that employment rates for Indians remain low (31.4 percent) compared to those for all Canadians (50.6 percent). Twenty-eight percent of Indians on reserves were employed compared to 36.8 percent of Indians living off reserves, and 23.6 percent of Indians on reserves had never worked compared to 17.0 percent of Indians living off reserves (Canada 1989).

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In this paper, we use Native Peoples, except where an author or a document specifically uses terms such as Indian, Métis, First Nations Peoples, etc.

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The above statistics provide a rationale for examining the theoretical and methodological issues surrounding Native Peoples' attachment to the labour force and the implications for regional development. Beyond this, however, is also the recognition that self-government for Native Peoples is a fast-approaching reality. With self-government will also come the realization that it will be a hollow enterprise if it does not lead to the improved economic well-being of Native Peoples. Therefore, it is a useful first step to examine what is known about Native Peoples' attachment to the labour force.

In the first section of the paper, the focus is on labour market theories and their application to the labour force participation of Native Peoples. Labour market theories are organized around four approaches: theories which focus on individual attributes or characteristics; theories which emphasize the structure of labour market institutions; dependency theory and Marxist theory. Using the four approaches as a backdrop, methodological issues relevant to Native Peoples' labour force attachment are then examined in the remainder of the paper. Section 2 is used to identify variables which measure different kinds of Native Peoples' participation in the labour force. In section 3, individual characteristics which affect Native Peoples' wage work patterns are identified and in section 4, the nature of reserves and local economies are discussed as critical aspects to explore in taking account of Native Peoples' participation in the labour force.

Applying Theory to Labour Force Participation of Native Peoples

Much of the policy-related literature appears to subscribe to economic and sociological theories of human capital and status attainment. One of the earliest large-scale studies of Indian economic conditions in Canada, the Hawthorn Report, for example, claimed that:

"a disproportionately large number of able bodied Indians of working age are unemployed or underemployed... To facilitate the transfer of large numbers of these into more skilled or better paid fields of employment having the most favourable prospects of expansion will require an extensive, and intensive, program of education, training and conditioning of Indian workers" (Hawthorn 1966: 102).

As a result, substantial investments have been made in education and vocational training to facilitate individual adaptation to the industrial economy (Stevenson 1968; Wien 1986). Educational programs have been justified not only as a means of teaching skills, but also of transmitting appropriate attitudes and values (Hirabayashi 1962). Other strategies have been to educate managers and employers about Indian values and customs and to adapt work conditions to make them more compatible with supposed Indian work characteristics and preferences (Grant 1983).

Another approach to Native Peoples' economic development embraces themes found in the literature on modernization theory (Mead 1932). This approach views Indian cultural practices as inimical to economic development and the loss of Indian culture as desirable for, and a prerequisite to, economic growth. For the most part, this research assumes that prolonged contact between Indian and White culture would inevitably result in the adoption and diffusion of White culture.

When it became evident that assimilation was not occurring, an explanation developed which viewed the social and economic conditions on Indian reserves as the result of something which went wrong in the change from traditional to modern conditions (Honigmann 1966; James 1972). This approach is similar to Lewis' (1966) culture of poverty thesis in identifying a subculture on reserves which works against economic development. While authors vary in identifying the source of this subculture, a common theme is that Native Peoples' inability to cope with modern society provoked a socio-cultural constellation which in itself is a resistor to change.

Features of reserve society which prevent positive change include:

"child neglect, alcoholism, minor crime, truancy, illegitimacy, divorce, marital and occupational maladjustments [in comparison to] ecologically similar non-Indian communities adjacent to it" (Zentner 1972: 215).

There are a number of problems with arguments that Native Peoples' attitudes and values are not compatible with employment in the industrial labour force. Some studies challenge assertions that Indian's attitudes and motives vary from those of the larger society. Smith's (1975) survey of attitudes of Native students in the Mackenzie Delta and their "Outsider" counterparts found that attitudes and preferences were very similar. With respect to evaluations of prestige occupations and preferred places to live and work, Smith's (1971: 113) data showed that:

"Native students differ little from their Outsider counterparts. They esteem professional and skilled jobs, urban-type working conditions, and reject the seasonal, unskilled, rural and outdoor sorts of occupations with which Native people have so consistently been identified with in the past".

Reasons for choosing particular occupations were also similar between the two groups (Smith 1971 115).

Lampe's (1974) research emphasized the inaccuracy of Non-Indian's ex-
pectations about Indian job preferences. His survey of Yukon Indian males between 22 and 66 years of age attempted to identify what job characteristics were important to them. He also asked local employment experts about Indian job preferences. Indian respondents indicated that wage level, permanence and closeness to home were the most important considerations. In contrast, employment experts did not expect that Indians would consider wage levels or job permanence of primary importance, emphasizing instead ability to work with peers and to work outdoors.

The degree to which cultural factors are incompatible with economic development in the first place, is not clear. Deprez and Sigurdson's (1969) study of Indians workers in five non-traditional enterprises rejected the hypothesis that traditional Indian values and culture were impediments in Indians' work performance. Cornell and Kalt's (1991) study suggested that the preservation of tribal political and social organization could facilitate economic development on reserves. Lockhart's (1989) work demonstrates that Native cultural values can be adapted to the creation and structuring of computer communications networks. Many aboriginal hunting economies have shown considerable flexibility and adaptiveness in preserving integral elements of their ways of life while accommodating the demands of modern western society. The strategies employed by the Quebec Cree in attempting to preserve their hunting economies are a case in point (LaRusic 1979). In recent years, Indian people and others have argued that non-Indians have a good deal to learn from Indian societies and economies (Loubser 1980). Finally, Knight's (1978) description of the substantial participation of British Columbia Indians in a wide variety of resource extraction industries between 1858 and 1930 forces a re-examination of the assumption that Indians have inappropriate work habits because of their cultural unpreparedness for the industrial labour force.

While an analysis which presents Indian culture as inimical to economic development must be questioned, cultural attributes may affect the kinds of jobs individuals take (Hedican 1986) and the way in which work groups are organized (Van Horn 1983; Usher 1971). In addition, some Indian communities insist that economic development must not destroy the social fabric of the community and must be compatible with cultural values (Cornell and Kalt 1990; Loubser 1980). As a result, some kinds of economic development may be rejected. In other words, it appears that Native People's cultural values may affect types rather than levels of economic development.

The efficacy of programs which focus on education and training must also be questioned. While there has been no systematic attempt to determine the total amount of public sector resources devoted to these kinds of programs, it is clear that they have largely been a failure in terms of achieving any substantial change in economic conditions. Labour market participation rates of Native Peoples are far below the national average, unemployment is chronically high, and remuneration from wage labour is individually and collectively far below that for any other definable group in Canada (Hagey et al. 1989b; McArthur 1989; Nicholson and Macmillan 1986; Lithwick et al. 1986).

Work which identifies the emergence of dysfunctional subcultures as the major barrier to economic development has been criticized from several perspectives. Elias (1975) has noted the ethnocentrism of measures of disorganization, their vagueness and their descriptive rather than analytic character. Based on detailed and historic studies, some researchers have concluded that state policies are mainly to blame for dependency and community problems, rather than Indian inability to adjust to industrial society (Driben and Trudeau 1983).

In contrast to the extensive literature which focuses on human capital and modernization theories, there are far fewer examples of the systematic application of the dual economy or segmentation perspective to the experience of Indian people in the labour market (see, Clatworthy 1981a; Hull 1984; Stabler 1989). Since the secondary jobs described in the dual economy theory correspond to the jobs which Native Peoples have been most likely to obtain, the theory has importance for a consideration of Native Peoples' labour market participation. Wien (1986) argues that segmentation theory offers some refreshing departures from more conventional models because it focuses on the differing experience of groups in the labour market, rather than on the presumed motivations of the "average" worker.

Stabler's (1989) analysis of labour markets in the Northwest Territories suggested that there was discrimination against Native Peoples in access to primary employment and in advancement once they were employed. He found that Native Peoples held a smaller proportion of jobs in the primary sector than non-native people for all age-sex-education categories except those with university education. Although the proportion of both Native Peoples and non-native people holding primary jobs increased with experience, the rate of increase appeared to be less for Native People employees in some sectors. Education, however, lessened the degree of segmentation for Native Peoples, and the university graduates were more likely than non-native university graduates to hold jobs in the primary sector.

In his analysis of the Micmac labour force in Nova Scotia, Wien (1986) found that few Micmac jobs were unionized despite their concentration in industries with high rates of unionization, that the Micmac were over represented in the marginal sector, spending considerable periods of time not working and relying on social assistance, that vocational training had no apparent impact on subsequent employment, and that unemployed or irregular workers had little success in making a transition to regular employment in the time period of the study. Hull's (1984: 14) study of Northern Manitoba Native Peoples found that Native Peoples were more likely to work in insecure, secondary labour market occupations. As a result, they had little opportunity to advance to the better paying, more secure jobs in the primary sector.

A more common counter position taken to human capital and modernization theorists has come via dependency theorists and the concept of the inter-
dependency theory to the situation of Indian reserves in Canada (Carstens 1971; Friderer 1988; Harding 1971; Kellough 1980; McArthur 1989; Smallface Marule 1978; Watkins 1977). In many applications to Indian reserves, the state is seen as a more important actor than it is in much of the dependency literature. In some cases, the state's role in supporting the interests of the private sector instead of those of Native Peoples is emphasized. In other cases, the coercive power of the state, and its creation of extensive dependency and lack of initiative on the part of Native Peoples has been identified as an agent of underdevelopment.

The role of the state on Indian reserves also affects the social groups or classes which form. In the 1960s and early 1970s, researchers noted the importance of Euro-Canada or "outsider" dominance in controlling resources and decision-making on reserves (Dunning 1959; Kew 1962; Paine 1971). With the devolution of administrative responsibilities to bands, social groups have changed, but state policies continue strongly to influence reserve social and economic structure. On most reserves, the business group is relatively insignificant in both numbers and influence. Bands function as major employers and band staff may become an elite since they link the community with external resources (Loxley 1981: 163).

Reserves with a significant modern sector nearby may also develop a privileged working class segment. The longevity of this sector depends on the permanence of employment, varying from short-term resource extraction operations to permanent nearby towns and cities. The substantial proportion of the Native Peoples population, however, remains characterized by unemployment, underemployment and welfare dependency. Usher (1971: 20) argued that the impact of metropolitan Canada on the structure of northern communities was to create an economic duality:

"Two economies exist side by side. One is characterized by a few, large, single-purpose enterprises which are capital intensive, employ a high level of technology and imported skilled labour, and whose economic and transport links are directly and exclusively with metropolitan Canada. The other economy is characterized by many small scale enterprises, generally at the family level, but which are multi-purposes in the sense that they rely on the exploitation of various resources and opportunities in combination. This system employs local labour, traditional or at least small scale technology, and its links with metropolitan Canada are dependent on intermediary organizations representing metropolitan interests. Particularly significant is that the two economies, despite their geographic proximity, and despite the dependence of each upon the metropolis, are virtually independent of each other".

Some cautionary flags have been raised about the direct applicability of dependency theory to the situation of Indian reserves (Wien 1986). While reserves may exhibit many of the characteristics of Third World underdevelopment, they are found within wealthy countries which are able to ameliorate some aspects of Native Peoples' poverty with transfer payments and various social programs. Prospects for national independence are unlikely for Indian nations, and Manuel and Posluns (1974) suggest that Indians themselves are more likely to identify with other indigenous peoples internationally than with the people of the Third World.

The situation of individual reserves and Native Peoples' nations varies widely, so that it is difficult to apply one general model. Some reserves and nations lost their resource base through settlement in the nineteenth century, while the contemporary resource extraction activities of multinational corporations is more of an issue for others. Not all groups are large enough to agitate for local economic development and self-sufficiency. There are also considerable differences between reserves in terms of the survival of a traditional sector and the existence of two economies as described by Usher (1971).

Dependency theory is problematic in its emphasis on the private sector in providing and structuring employment opportunities with the state relegated to a secondary role providing support to private capital. This is clearly at odds with the situation on many Native Peoples' reserves where a very large proportion of individuals who are employed are working either for bands or Native Peoples' organizations funded by the federal government, or in various federally funded make-work projects and initiatives. Driben and Trudeau's (1983: 9-10) study of several bands in Northern Ontario found that by 1975, more than ninety percent of the income received by these bands came from the federal government. They concluded that: "if these make-work, job-training, community-development, and job-creation programs are removed, the band's economy will collapse". Stabler and Howe (1990) describe the importance of federal expenditures in creating employment for Native Peoples in the Northwest Territories during the mid-1950's. Lithman's (1984) study also notes the essential role of federally funded programs and projects for a Northern Manitoba Indian reserve. Wien (1986: 121) concludes that:

"Governmental decisions on funding levels, on the distribution of such funds to welfare programs, make-work projects, and long-term economic development, and on education and training investments will be the most important determinants of the levels of poverty and underemployment among Indians. Future theoretical work will need to make progress in developing a more satisfactory model of state action to complement the analysis of the private sector".

Despite problems of applicability to economic development on reserves, dependency theory continues to have considerable appeal. Wien (1986: 114) indicates that:
“In the Indian community, [dependency theory] represents an approach that is congruent with their view of events since the arrival of the Europeans and one that is consistent with their deeply-felt aspirations for independence....It is also an approach that avoids blaming the victim, although some would suggest that it goes too far in the other direction and overplays the role of Indians as passive and exploited people with little scope for action to determine their own fates”.

In taking more explicitly marxist approaches, Loxley (1981) and Bourgeault (1983) describe the history of Indians in Western Canada in terms of different stages, each with its own mode of production and class structure. Loxley describes the class structure of contemporary Northern Manitoba Indian reserves as being comprised mainly of a proletariat that is engaged in seasonal and short-term work. It also includes a group of public sector employees, a small petty bourgeoisie class which owns stores, garages, etc., and a large group of permanently unemployed. Loxley views part of the Indian labour force as a “reserve army of labour”; a low-wage labour force that is available when needed and that serves to keep down the cost of labour in the regional economy (Elias 1975).

There are, however, serious shortcomings in Marxist analyses of reserve economies. First, the most important social divisions on many reserves appear to be between those who are employed on a regular basis by the band or by Native Peoples’ organizations, and those who are not. There are relatively few private businesses on reserves and, as a result, little opportunity for classes based on ownership of the means of production versus ownership of labour. Second, while strategies emerging from the Marxist perspective include organizing to increase Native Peoples’ political power, the contemporary aspirations of Native Peoples for independence and nationhood make it unlikely that Bourgeault’s (1983: 75) recommendation to “develop relationships between the native and greater working class over the [common] root of their oppression” will be a priority in Indians’ attempts to improve their economic conditions.

Developing Measures of Labour Force Attachment

An analysis of patterns of Native Peoples’ attachment to the labour force would probably begin with a number of classic measures such as participation rates, employment and unemployment rates, occupation, whether individuals are working full- or part-time, and so on. However, in the absence of more complete and extensive information about how wage work fits into the work patterns of Native Peoples in a variety of situations, measures such as participation and employment rates represent only a beginning to expand our understanding. Possible additional variables are listed in Table 1, but the choice of particular measures would be resolved through an exploration of which combinations most clearly differentiate patterns of work and labour force participation among Native Peoples on reserves.

Data which provide a more general description of the economic coping strategies of Native Peoples in different situations, and the role that wage labour plays are much harder to find. Which combinations of, for example, wage labour, subsistence pursuits and informal work are possible and which are frequently found? Are there annual or cyclical variations? How many individuals fall into each type of strategy? Under what circumstances do individuals employ one strategy rather than another, or switch from one to the other? There are a few case studies which provide information about these strategies for particular individuals, times and reserves, but the examples in Table 2 suggest that overall patterns may be varied and complex.

The dual economy thesis suggests that a dynamic element must be introduced because of the instability of employment and the rapid and unpredictable movement between categories of “employed”, “unemployed” and “not in the labour market” in the secondary labour market (Gordon 1972: 7-10). This approach also indicates that employment in the secondary sector is characterized by low wages, menial work, low skills, poor worker motivation, discrimination, poor job information, and inadequate job access. Secondary job characteristics associated with the dual economy thesis may be particularly descriptive of jobs held off the reserve (Clatworthy 1981a; Hull 1984).

Finally, research on Native Peoples’ work patterns indicates that seasonality, participation in the subsistence economy, and instability due to the fact that employment is related to band administration or to short-term government programs, should be flagged. These characteristics may be of particular importance for jobs held on reserves (Driben and Trudeau 1983; Lithman 1983, 1984). However, affirmative action and job creation programs may also operate in the off-reserve labour market (Breton and Grant 1984; Grant 1983; Stevenson 1968).

Individual Characteristics

Several studies show that strong patterns of unemployment and labour force participation exist over age groups, with lower rates of participation and much higher rates of unemployment in the 15-24 year age cohort (Clatworthy 1981a; Clatworthy and Hull 1983; Nicholson and Macmillan 1986). Young adults living on reserves are particularly disadvantaged in the labour force. This age-related pattern of employment reflects trends in broader society (that is, the increasing difficulty experienced by new entrants to the labour force) although the unemployment rates among young Indians are much higher than those experienced by the general population.

Patterns of labour force participation over age groups may also reflect cultural values and expectations about working patterns for different age groups.
TABLE 1 Measures of Indian Labour Force Attachment

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Standard Measures</th>
<th>Segmentation Theory</th>
<th>Literature on Indian Labour Force Participation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation Rates</td>
<td>Work History</td>
<td>Seasonal Participation Cycle</td>
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<td>Unemployment Rates</td>
<td>Occupational Mobility</td>
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<td>Months Worked</td>
<td>Job Stability</td>
<td>Participation in Subsistence</td>
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<td>Part-Time Work</td>
<td>Job Benefits</td>
<td>Activity</td>
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<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Income Sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>Socio-economic Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income</td>
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a. Government programs, band administration or private enterprise.

TABLE 2 Selected Examples of Native Peoples' Labour Force Participation Strategies

- Successful, full-time commercial agriculture, 'elite' sector on Saskatchewan reserve (Dosman 1972)
- Seasonal employment in high paying employment such as fire fighting, combined with hunting and fishing off-season (Hedican 1986)
- Full-time, highly paid permanent employment off-reserve combined with on-reserve residency (Ponting 1986)
- Full-time band administration position, not permanent because of vulnerability to band politics (Lithman 1983, 1984)
- Sporadic employment in short-term federal job creation projects (Driben and Trudeau 1983)
- Sporadic, non-permanent, low-paying jobs in a variety of sectors off the reserve (Dosman 1972, Lithman 1983, 1984)
- Never worked, permanent welfare dependency (Dosman 1972)
- Never worked, full-time subsistence activities (DeLancey 1985)

Guillemin (1975: 87, 226-228) found that young Indian adults were encouraged to travel and explore, free of family responsibilities. Travelling and visiting may be tolerated more for younger individuals than for older individuals. Denton's (1970) work, however, gives the impression that these expectations apply more to young Indian men than to women. Peters' (1984) study found that Indian households appeared to be more inclined to offer accommodation to younger individuals who were unemployed than to older people. This offer allowed individuals to travel with fewer expenses.

Wage work is also patterned by gender. Participation rates in urban areas appear to be lower for females than males and unemployment rates are higher (Clatworthy 1981a; Clatworthy and Hull 1983). The same patterns appear for Indians living on the reserves (Canada 1989; Hagay et al. 1989b). Hull (1987) found that gender was more important than educational levels in predicting average incomes, with women, both on and off the reserves earning lower incomes than men. On the basis of her analysis of 1986 Census data, Gerber (1990: 80) suggests that: "Indian women are particularly disadvantaged with respect to employment and income despite relative proximity to employment centres and relatively high educational attainment".

There is little material available which deals with sex discrimination in employment on reserves. However, Ryan (1978) suggested that women leave the reserve because their economic needs are given low priority in the reserve community. Nicholson (1987: 123) maintains that:

"It is evident that considerable discrimination on the basis of sex also exists in many aboriginal communities. For example, few women hold positions on band councils or in native organizations, yet in many cases these institutions control economic development resources on reserves. This is true despite the fact that native women in such positions tend to be dynamic, imaginative, and perhaps more conscious of the importance of staying in touch with the "grass roots"."

The generality of these attitudes across different cultures and reserves must, however, be questioned. Fiske (1988: 186) found that among the Carrier people in central British Columbia:

"State intervention, combined with capital inflows and development, left salmon, the most valued resource, in the hands of women, and at the same time reduced the resources exploited primarily by men...Appreciation of women who provide well for their families and communities has implications for women as political actors and community leaders. Today, women and men often rationalize female political actions by reference to their abilities as fisherwomen".

Other researchers provide similar examples of women's high socio-economic status in Indian economies (Albers 1983).

Family status appears to have several effects on work patterns: parenthood affects men's and women's readiness to engage in wage labour; there may be discrimination associated with some kinds of family status; and there is evidence that certain kinds of family groupings are a prerequisite for participation in particular economic activities.

Researchers have found that definitions of how mothering is properly performed has implications for women's readiness to participate in the labour market. Women appear to take primary responsibility for day-to-day child-rearing and for most of the decisions affecting children's well-being (Meadows 1980; Piere-Agamaway 1983: 67).

Meadows (1980) found that Indian women considered mothering to be a full-time occupation, and they expressed fears that wage work, especially full-time work, prevented them from properly performing their mothering role. The few women who had to work to support husband and family were resentful...
of the time this took away from their children. Hull's (1982) study of almost two hundred women in Winnipeg found that Native women considered childcare and family responsibilities to be major factors in their decisions concerning employment and job training. Other studies documented the tension arising between men and women when women were required to find wage work to support an unemployed husband (Cruikshank 1975).

Many Indian women spend a long period of time bearing and rearing children. For example, 1982 data from Regina and Saskatoon show that over seventy percent of Indian women fifteen and over had children living with them. Almost all of these women (96.2 percent) had one or more pre-school or school aged children. By the age of twenty, over half of Indian women in these two cities had children at home, and from the age of twenty-four to the mid-fifties, close to ninety percent of Indian women had children at home. Young children and long periods of child-rearing must present barriers to Indian women's participation in wage employment (Clatworthy 1981b). The large number of children among Indians living on reserves suggests that women also have heavy child-related responsibilities (Hagey et al. 1989a).

It is not clear to what extent values linking gender, family status and wage income apply to reserves as well as cities, or can be generalized across Native Peoples cultures. It is also not clear to what extent eligibility criteria for social assistance on reserves favour single female parents, providing women with children an alternative to dependence on male income. These are questions which require additional research.

There may also be discrimination associated with family status, especially single parenthood. Women from the Tobique reserve in New Brunswick reported that single parents had difficulty obtaining housing and money for housing repairs (Silman 1986). Falconer (1991) also suggests that on some reserves there is a stigma attached to being a single mother. These attitudes could translate into barriers to employment, particularly where wage jobs are in short supply. There has been no systematic investigation of this issue to date.

Finally, some economic strategies may not be feasible unless undertaken in the context of particular nuclear and extended family groupings. Driben's (1990) study on women in contemporary Northern Ontario Ojibwa society showed that the roles of male and female spouses were essential if hunting units were to be productive and that the economic prospects of the families of mature Ojibwa women were bleak after their deaths.

Hull's (1987) analysis of educational characteristics of Registered Indians in Canada showed that educational attainment is closely related to employment. Higher education is positively related to higher labour force participation and higher rates of employment, and the gap between Indians and Non-Indians decreased as education levels increased (Hull 1987). Armstrong et al. (1990) found that Indians showed greater gains in employment with increasing education levels than Non-Indians.

Education levels also affected the amount of time individuals had worked
Nicholson's (1987) report for the Ontario Native Affairs Directorate outlined several ways in which lack of business experience put Indians at a disadvantage. He indicated that there was a lack of sophisticated professional skills, training or business experience to start, manage and operate a businesses. There was poor institutional and informal networking where Indians' lack of business experience often stood in the way of access to investment or operating capital, and often prohibited non-native business people from getting involved in joint business ventures.

The assumption of Nicholson and others (for example, Robinson 1981) that Indian people on reserves are not engaged in business enterprises other than those initiated by band governments has recently been challenged by researchers documenting the existence of micro-enterprises in various communities (Wolfe et al. 1989). A study of a southern Ontario reserve by Wolfe et al. (1989: 19) indicated that:

"Anyone who has spent some time on a Canadian Indian reserve knows that micro-enterprises are operating. They are not labelled or advertised. They do not have to be. People in the community know well enough where to find the auto mechanic, the people who make crafts, sell small quantities of goods, run a taxi service, or, where the bootleggers can be found. But they are not easily recognized or found by outsiders....Local people use them constantly, and participate routinely in the hidden economy but are unconscious of their strengths and importance".

The relationship between business experience and employment or self-employment is not easy to measure. In the first place, it is not clear to what extent micro-enterprises can provide individuals with the kinds of business skills Nicholson considers important. Second, it is very difficult to find data to measure "business experience", especially experience in the informal economy. Nevertheless, these studies suggest that the "lack of business experience" argument must be carefully evaluated.

Hull's (1986: 53-64) study found that the parents' low socio-economic status and income had negative effects on children's educational attainment. These effects appear to be more pronounced among Native Peoples than non-native persons. On-reserve residence also discouraged educational attainment. Children in Native Peoples' families with parents who are not in the experienced labour force appear to have less than a 40 percent probability of completing high school. These results have important implications for inter-generational mobility, since educational attainment is positively correlated with income levels, and a high school education is one of the strongest predictors of Indian employment (Hull 1987).

Other aspects of the effect of family background remain to be explored. Mooney's (1976) study of urban Indians in British Columbia indicated there is no evidence of inter-generational mobility, and concluded that this finding supported the dependency model of Indian's socio-economic position in Non-Indian society. The effect of parents' occupations, migration patterns, income, and work patterns on children's labour force attachment should be examined.

Despite the general perception of Indians as highly mobile, Siggner (1977) found that fewer Indians than Non-Indians were migrants between 1966 and 1971, according to Census definitions. On the basis of 1981 Census data which showed that two thirds of on-reserve Indians were "non-movers", Nicholson and Macmillan (1986: 15) concluded that the "high degree of non-mobility indicates a general lack of flexibility to respond to more favourable employment opportunities in other locations". Other researchers similarly observed an unwillingness on the part of reserve residents to move out of their community (Driben and Trudeau 1983; Lithman 1984). Migrant status, while it is an imperfect measure, may identify individuals who are more flexible in their choice of residence, or who are less attached to the reserve community and more prepared to look for employment elsewhere.

The relationship between wage work and traditional hunting activities, and wage income and the utilization of country food is not simple. It seems logical that cash income would allow families to substitute purchased food for country food with the result that increasing participation in the wage labour force would result in less hunting and fishing. Research in several northern communities suggests that this relationship does not hold for various reasons.

First, the high cost of store-bought food in the North and its frequently inferior quality mean that wage incomes need to be substantial for families to be equally well-off without country food. In their study of the James Bay Cree, Elberg et al. (1975) note that giving up participation in the subsistence economy means that northern people are dependent on wage labour and commercial food and have no leverage to keep prices down or to maintain fair wage levels. However, cash income increases efficiency in country food production by making better hunting equipment and more frequent expeditions to remote and less utilized areas affordable. In addition, hunters with high incomes can choose to hunt only in peak periods of the game cycle when returns are highest. Hedican (1986: 76) notes that:

"Those who have difficulty securing wage employment are doomed to a double dilemma - they have to hunt and fish when a return on their effort is uncertain, and yet they do not have the cash for expenditures on capital equipment, maintenance, and transportation costs to increase subsistence production".

Finally, while the most effective strategy would be to hunt during peak periods and to work during periods when the highest paid employment is available, these two periods often overlap (Hedican 1986). As a result, northern Native Peoples face a complex juggling act in their attempts to maximize their real
compared to their apparent income.

The availability of country food, then, has implications for the ways individuals evaluate the advantages of part-time versus full-time work. Wage levels have to be seen in the context of hunting strategies, and the timing of employment opportunities affects individuals' willingness to take them up. These relationships are complex and need to be carefully analyzed.

The relationship between cultural values and patterns of labour force participation is also complex. A number of case studies suggest that these relationships vary among different Indian cultures. Van Horn (1983) found that among the Micmac, the basic economic unit for sharing resources and performing work is the patriloclal family. Attempts to motivate students or workers through individual competition, the cultural approach of Non-Indians, was not very effective. Van Horn (1983: 105) indicates:

"Work is done for the group. Identity is found in competing along with and for a group rather than individually, a situation which is consistent with Micmac egalitarian values. If economic self-sufficiency for Micmac communities means that new work projects with increased productivity must be brought to the reserve, then the way to promote productivity is via group competition on the reserve".

In contrast, Usher (1971) emphasized the individuality and independence of work and subsistence activities undertaken by the Bankslanders.

Freilich (1958) argued that the reason the majority of Mohawk men found their niche in the structural steel industry is that it enabled them to duplicate closely their pre-reservation period social structure. Hedican's (1986: 51-54) study of an Ojibwa community found that despite approximately two centuries of participation in the wage labour market, aspects of traditional thinking regarding the mobilization of labour were still prevalent, and that this thinking affected participation patterns. Historically, the Ojibwa valued a system of reciprocal exchange and did not consider the exchange of labour for money a satisfactory arrangement because it meant that workers were not partners in joint labour exchanges, but "slaves". Hedican found that:

"In Collins, the idea that one "hires someone to do something" is not indigenously recognized as a work-concept. A task is accomplished, not by "hiring someone," but by exchanging your future labour for someone's immediate services. The second major form of labour mobilization does not involve an exchange of labour as such, but involves an exchange of goods and/or services in return for "professional" knowledge or skill".

These examples are not directly comparable, and indeed, there does not appear to be any research which compares attitudes toward wage and other work among Indians from different cultural origins. Case studies do, however, indicate that cultural values can affect labour force participation, and that the relationship between the two should be explored.

The Nature of Reserves and Local Economies

It is misleading, however, to examine the characteristics of Native Peoples in relation to their work patterns without taking into account the nature of the reserve economy and opportunities in the local area. Full-time employment on a reserve where there are virtually no full-time jobs means something quite different from full-time employment on a wealthy and extensively economically developed reserve. Chances to participate in the labour force outside the reserve also vary. The result is that there may be different relationships between individual characteristics and work patterns depending on the nature of the reserve and local economy.

There are a number of factors which need to be considered in creating a typology of reserves with different labour force structures and opportunities. These include: 1. size of the reserve population and the number of employment opportunities in relation to the reserve labour force; 2. the type and combination of opportunities; 3. community attitudes toward and support for participation in the wage labour force; and 4. community interpretations of characteristics or qualifications which make individuals eligible for different positions.

Although there are some exceptions (Peters 1989), bands constitute the primary unit of organization of the Native Peoples for planning and delivering socio-economic development programs and services. The typical band has a relatively small population living on the reserve. In 1990, 72.4 percent of bands had fewer than 500 people living on the reserve and 89.5 percent had fewer than 1000 on-reserve residents (Table 3). The small size of the individual reserve population base seriously limits the number of bands which can sustain industrial and commercial ventures on their own, and has implications for the degree to which the band population can depend on band-centred employment initiatives versus the extent to which the mainstream economy provides the main source of employment opportunities.

The nature of the reserve economy has a major impact on the structure of reserve labour force opportunities and on the kinds of skills or "human capital" which are valued. Dimensions of variation include the type of economic base, the degree of economic development and the degree to which bands have developed structures and institutions to meet the social and economic needs of members. Reserves in Canada demonstrate considerable variation in this respect as presented in Table 4 (see also, McLachlan 1986; Nicholson and Macmillan 1986). For example, the two groups with negotiated self-government agreements have very different emphases in managing their economies, with the Cree insisting that their strategies of economic development support and protect tradi-
TABLE 3 Registered Indian Bands by Population On-Reserve

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band Population Size</th>
<th>Number of Bands</th>
<th>Percent of Bands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 on reserve</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-99</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-249</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250-499</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-999</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000-1999</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000+</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>601</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: On-reserve includes on-reserve (own band) populations and on Crown land (own band) populations.

Source: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Indian Register, 1990.

TABLE 4 Examples of Reserve Economies

- Little economic development, low degree of institutional development (Driben and Trudeau 1983)
- Little economic development, high degree of institutional development (Ponting 1986)
- Highly developed subsistence economy; high degree of institutional development; some manufacturing and crafts enterprises
- High degree of economic development in resource extraction; high degree of institutional development (Mackie 1986)
- High degree of economic development in commercial (tourist) ventures; high degree of institutional development (Etkin 1988)

Economic development is not the only source of employment opportunities on reserves. Ponting's (1986) study of the Kahnawake reserve showed that the expansion of institutions occurred largely in the absence of major economic development. Gerber's (1977, 1984) studies demonstrated wide variation in the number and range of band institutions and organizations on reserves. Differences in the type of economic enterprise and level of economic and institutional development mean that the availability of jobs and the kinds of skill required to fill them vary widely between reserves.

Hedican's (1986: 56) model of the changing work force in Collins, Ontario may be adapted to create a typology of reserve opportunities. It shows that over time, trapping and subsistence-related activities are declining most rapidly on reserves, followed by seasonal wage work such as guiding. Much more slowly, full-time employment in manual sectors of the economy (for example, railway work) grew, but in the past 20 years this form of employment opportunity has become static. Finally, specialized employment (for example, business, administrative work) has only been growing since the 1960s, but its pace has been the slowest of all. The result is that with the rapid decline of trapping, subsistence-related activities and seasonal wage work, and the static trend in full-time manual employment and slow growth in specialized employment, there are fewer employment opportunities now than ever before.

Bands and reserves may also vary in attitudes toward entrepreneurship and employment. Driben and Trudeau's (1983: 10) indictment of federally funded economic development programs for the Fort Hope band in Northern Ontario indicates:

"[T]he band's current economic dilemma is rooted in the zeal that characterized the way government agencies promoted their White Paper initiatives in the band and in the paternalistic methods they used to deliver their programs....The outcome was that band members were rewarded for becoming dependent, stymied in their attempts to become independent, and left in a position where vulnerability to government cut-backs is now the one overriding feature of their lives".

Ponting's (1986: 155-156) study of the Kahnawake reserve pointed out how important it is for a band council to create an atmosphere of self-help and community responsibility to counteract dependency historically created by DIAND policies. Bands which have suffered major economic and cultural upheavals because of forced relocation may not provide a climate which encourages stable labour force participation (Fry 1974; Matthiasson et al. 1983).

Bands may also vary in how they define job qualifications. Some Indian organizations insist that economic development must not take place to the detriment of Indian culture, its base in the nature of the Indian community and the natural environment. Loubser's (1980: 21) summary of the 1977 National Indian Brotherhood's A Strategy for the Socio-Economic Development of Indian People indicates:

"The central thrust of The Strategy is that Indian society should be strengthened through the development of Indian economies within Indian cultural frameworks under the control of Indian political institutions anchored in and drawing their legitimacy from local Indian communities. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of all aspects of social reality and insists that the holistic principle that politics, economics, culture and other sectors not be treated as disconnected things but as parts of a whole, should guide all further development of the Indian people, as well as the reform of existing government agencies and programmes relating to them".

Cornell and Kalt (1990: 104) point out that for many American Indian
tribes, non-economic goals of political and social sovereignty are as important as economic goals with respect to development (see, Lockhart 1989; Lockhart and McCaskill 1986). As a result, employment positions may be assigned according to different criteria than in the Non-Indian economy, and may vary for different reserves. Some bands allocate scarce jobs on a family or household basis, which could result in allocating available jobs mainly to male members of the household (Nicholson and Macmillan 1986: 75). Respect for traditional leadership skills may have the result that individuals are assigned to positions with high socio-economic status even though they do not have "human capital" measured by years of formal education.

Where consensual decision-making and co-operative enterprises are favoured, individual attributes may be largely irrelevant to formal measures of employment or reserve labour force participation (Cornell and Kalt 1990). This dimension may be difficult to measure, but an attempt should be made to explore its significance. Mackie (1986: 212) points out that economic development on individual reserves does not occur in a vacuum. The number and type of employment opportunities available to Indians living on reserves is affected by local economic conditions. Elements which seem to be important include: 1. degree of geographic isolation from local employment opportunities and markets; 2. nature of the local economic base; 3. degree of discrimination; and 4. provincial policies regarding Indian employment and economic development.

In 1987, more than one third (39.0 percent) of Indians on reserves lived in rural areas, 5.4 percent lived in remote areas, and 18.8 percent lived in communities without year-round road access to the nearest service centre (Canada 1989: 15). In some rural areas and in most small northern communities, the lack of locally available jobs is a serious barrier to Native People's employment. There are simply not enough local jobs to meet the labour supply, and even if all local jobs were filled by Native Peoples, unemployment rates would remain very high. For example, a study cited by Hilderman, Feir and Witt (1978: 16) identified only 158 full-time jobs at Cross Lake, Manitoba, compared to an on-reserve labour force of 377. An additional 366 jobs were temporary or seasonal. Another community planning study for Split Lake, Manitoba found there were 35 full-time jobs in 1976 compared to a labour force of 164 (Hilderman, Feir and Witt, 1978: 16).

Access to employment opportunities is further constrained by the fact that hiring is done in some trades through hiring halls which are located in urban centres even though the jobs are located in remote areas. This makes it difficult for local workers to apply, even if they have obtained the required certification (Hull 1984: 14). Several studies, however, have suggested that access and isolation do not affect wage levels (Bone and Green 1986; Armstrong 1989). This result needs to be more fully explored.

The size of the local population also affects the kinds of economic development which can occur, and as a result, the kind of jobs available. A prerequisite of shopping centre development, for example, is a large population of Native Peoples and non-native persons. Small business creation and individual entrepreneurship have been most successful in or near large urban areas.

Besides the size of the local population, the nature of the local economy must be taken into account. Different sectors of the economy offer different types of jobs and there may be different propensities to hire Native Peoples. They also have varying boom and bust cycles. The nature of the local economy affects labour force participation of Native Peoples on reserves in three ways. It affects off-reserve work opportunities, the kinds of small businesses local Native Peoples entrepreneurs can offer (for example, transportation companies in areas of mining and hydro-electric development), and the spending power of Native Peoples and non-native persons who create a market for local Native Peoples entrepreneurs.

There is some evidence in the literature that levels of discrimination may vary from place to place as well, and these levels may affect off-reserve employment opportunities. Gibbins and Ponting's (1978) study identified varying levels of prejudice against Indian people in different provinces. A number of studies indicate that Indians experience particularly intense prejudice and hostility in small towns and communities, particularly those near Indian reserves (Brody 1983; Shimpo 1965; Stymeist 1976). In larger communities, there is still discrimination, but levels of hostility do not appear to be as high.

Finally, provincial policies and programs may result in variations in opportunities for Indian participation in the wage labour force. Various provinces have different programs for employment equity and regional development, they have negotiated different cost-sharing agreements with the federal government for services to Indians, and they demonstrate different attitudes toward their Indian populations (Abele and Graham 1989; Breton and Grant 1984).

Conclusion

It is clear that individual attributes do affect Native Peoples' chances for successful participation in the labour market. However, explanations based on culture of poverty and modernization theory have been seriously challenged, and various critiques indicate that the nature of labour market institutions and the structure of the reserve economy also have to be taken into account.

Dual labour market theory seems to be particularly applicable to the situation of Native Peoples working off reserves. This perspective suggests that any analysis of patterns of Native Peoples' participation in the labour market has to take into account what proportion of local jobs fall into primary and secondary labour market segments, as well as what proportion of Native Peoples fall into these segments and what are their characteristics.

Models which focus either on individual characteristics or the nature of institutions in the general labour market may not adequately explain the nature of Native Peoples labour force participation. For many Status Indians, the
reserve economy appears to represent the main pool of labour force opportunities. To date, the aspirations of many Native Peoples continue to focus on their reserves of origin (Lithman 1984: 48; McCaskill 1979; Stanbury 1975: 40-41). Driben and Trudeau (1983: 46) found, when they asked members of the Fort Hope band in Northern Ontario why they preferred to stay in their villages rather than migrate:

"Th[e] sense of community is extremely important to the band... [A]n overwhelming majority indicated that they would much rather live in the villages than in a city or town. While most had been to the south, they said that their own communities were easier to live in, provided them with a better social life, made them feel secure, and let them make friends more easily and raise children better".

Dependency theory indicates that the relationship with the larger society creates distinct social groupings and economic structures and opportunities. This structure may be quite different from that of the larger society. This suggests that the social and economic structure of the reserves must also be examined in accounting for Native Peoples' work strategies. The characteristics of individuals, while they clearly have an effect on work patterns, will be mediated by available reserve opportunities.

There are many gaps and contradictions in the literature on Native Peoples' attachment to the labour force. Past assumptions about the nature of Native Peoples' work and culture may have provided a climate which discouraged this type of research. Weaver's (1990: 12) analysis of Canadian Indian policy identifies an historic paradigm which assumed that First Nations cultures would inevitably disappear with forces of acculturation. The question of how Indian individuals and communities survived economically would not be a crucial research question under this paradigm since strategies which involved subsistence economies or otherwise flowed from Indian cultural values would be labelled at best transitional, if not backward or dysfunctional. Weaver suggests that a new paradigm is only now emerging which recognizes that Indian cultures are dynamic and can adopt elements of other cultures without losing their integrity or legitimacy.

Material on attachment to the labour force may also be scarce because the low levels of participation are as much due to structural constraints as to individual attributes. It is clear that the economic well-being of individual Native Peoples is strongly related to the opportunities available on reserves, and more research is available on reserve economies and economic development than on individual's strategies and characteristics.

Theory about Native Peoples' labour force participation is neither very well researched nor developed. The variables, patterns and relationships summarized in the preceding pages must therefore be taken as general guidelines for further exploration. Additional relationships may result from empirical analysis and attempts to model attachment to the labour force.

What is required is an exploration of what patterns exist and how they are related to individual attributes and reserve and local economies. This paper provides a basis for this type of research, identifying key variables and issues which need to be taken into account. With the release of the Special Survey of Aboriginal Peoples by Statistics Canada and as Native Peoples move toward self-government, the opportunity for regional scientists to contribute to an understanding of Native Peoples' attachment to the labour force and regional development has never better greater.

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PETERS AND ROSENBERG

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