

# aboriginal policy studies



## *Editor's Introduction* *aboriginal policy studies*

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*aboriginal policy studies* Vol. 9, no. 1, 2020, pp. 1-2

This article can be found at:

<http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/aps/article/view/29330>

ISSN: 1923-3299

Article DOI: 10.5663/aps.v9i1.29386

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*aboriginal policy studies* is an online, peer-reviewed and multidisciplinary journal that publishes original, scholarly, and policy-relevant research on issues relevant to Métis, non-status Indians and urban Aboriginal people in Canada. For more information, please contact us at [apsjournal@ualberta.ca](mailto:apsjournal@ualberta.ca) or visit our website at [www.nativestudies.ualberta.ca/research/aboriginal-policy-studies-aps](http://www.nativestudies.ualberta.ca/research/aboriginal-policy-studies-aps).

# Editor's Introduction

Dr. Chris Andersen

We would like to welcome our readers to volume 9, issue 1 of *aboriginal policy studies*. This issue contains four articles, one commentary, one book review, and a foundational document. The contributions to this issue continue to follow the journal's scope, which is to publish "original, scholarly, and policy-relevant research on issues relevant to Métis, non-status Indians and urban Aboriginal peoples in Canada." As we have emphasized in previous introductions – and as we will continue to emphasize – *aps* welcomes relevant submissions from all geographical and political regions of Canada. We still do not receive an adequate number of submissions on issues pertaining to Métis policy, nor on urban Aboriginal issues in central and eastern Canada. We would also like to give a special shout-out of encouragement to submissions that touch on subject matter of importance to Indigenous women and youth and the LBGTQ2+/Two-Spirit communities. We will soon begin to recruit submissions more heavily in these areas for future issues.

In the issue's first article, Jana Grekul uses a critical feminist lens to explore the ways in which colonial projects and their legacies – particularly in the context of patriarchy and trauma – have contributed to and exacerbated the overprisoning of Indigenous women. Theorizing a "victimization-criminalization-incarceration" cycle, Dr. Grekul explores the ways in which micro-, meso-, and macro-level factors have a distinctive impact on Indigenous women's experiences in the criminal justice apparatus, as well as demonstrating the implications of understanding the power of the VCI cycle on future Correctional Services Canada policies as they relate to Indigenous women.

In the second article, Danielle Soucy and Nel Weiman explore the complex and increasingly thorny issues relating to Indigenous learners pursuing higher education in the specific context of facilitated admission streams for Indigenous applicants in one health-related faculty (McMaster University). In discussing their process of reframing admission policies that attend to important human rights matters related to the historic disadvantage that has created barriers to entry for many Indigenous learners, the authors discuss the limitations of using a "definition" of Indigeneity that depends solely or mostly on self-identification. Instead, their article explores the development of an admissions process that accounts for dynamics of Indigenous identity relating to nationhood, community, and "seeing the applicant as a whole being." In moving from self-identification to a more productively complex discussion of identity rooted in recognition beyond the self, Soucy and Weiman point to the importance of universities building stronger and more explicit relationships with Indigenous communities as they negotiate this tricky terrain together.

Rooted in a critique of dominant Euro-Canadian understandings of appropriate fertility rates, in the third article Richard Togman lays out a discussion of how the Canadian state has attempted to suppress Indigenous fertility practices. Such suppression efforts were exacerbated by an underlying colonial notion that Indigenous lives were in need of intervention; concomitantly, such a suppressive ethos fails to provide the necessary

“wraparound services” that would ensure the healthiest possible outcomes for pregnant Indigenous women. Using narratives of Anishinaabe women in the city of Thunder Bay, Togman presents an alternate discourse that positions fertility not simply as a “miracle of birth” but as something with community-wide and even nationwide implications. As such, Indigenous narratives understand high fertility as playing a role in strengthening (Indigenous) nations.

In the fourth and final article in this issue, Karine Gentelet and Maria Samson explore some possible reasons why the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) has not been fully implemented in Canada (and here, I give thanks to my Francophone colleague Dr. Nathalie Kermaol for her generosity in serving as a guest editor for this article, to counter my monolingual limitations). Identifying barriers inherent in UNDRIP itself as well as implementation contexts specific to Canada, they suggest that rather than focusing on the slow, unilateral implementation agenda of the federal government, a focus on implementation dynamics that include local actions, Indigenous mobilization, and provincial implementations likely represents a more useful route to transforming the Declaration’s impact in Canada.

In addition to the peer-reviewed articles, volume 9 issue 1 contains one commentary, a book review, and a foundational document. This issue’s commentary, written by Nancy Van Styvendale, speaks to an arts-based prison education program of which she is part, Inspired Minds. This program, she explains, is rooted not in a discourse of “improvement” (an ethic that arguably extends the “civilizing mission” of colonial authorities), but rather in one of relationality and an ethics of care as a form of harm reduction. Following this commentary is a book review of Max Foran’s *The Subjugation of Canadian Wildlife*. Finally, we have included the foundational document *What Happened to the Promises of “Creating Choices”?*, a Correctional Services of Canada report that follows up on the groundbreaking report *Creating Choices*, which examined the correctional management of federally sentenced women.

Finally, I’d like to take this opportunity to extend my deep thanks to Merissa Daborn, who has been the journal’s editorial assistant since 2016. Merissa’s competence and perseverance in putting up with my administrative incompetencies (not to mention my squirrel brain) have ensured a level of quality to the journal that I would never have achieved on my own. She has secured a tenure-track position at the University of Manitoba, and we wish her well on the next part of her journey. I would also like to welcome our new editorial assistant, Tanya Ball, who will take over for Merissa beginning with issue 9.2.