In the last few decades, “First nationhood” and “First nationalism” (the terms that I use to define and highlight the peculiarity of Native Americans’ expressions of nationhood and nationalism) have characterized the political, social, and cultural actions of many Native communities in Canada and the United States. Such actions have been undertaken both by single First Nations (or tribes) and extended beyond tribal boundaries. Nationhood represents one of the newest frontiers where Native North American peoples have been searching for sources of self-determination. The use of the frontier image, one of the strongest ideological and territorial elements of North American colonialism, in this context aims purposely at highlighting the virtual inversion of the colonial march whereby Native peoples are now pushing back in the ever-growing attempts to regain their rights to self-define, self-identify, and self-rule. First nationalism and nation re-building embody some of the strongest attempts to achieve these goals going through the second decade of the twenty-first century.

In this chapter, I discuss Mi’kmaw First Nationhood and nation re-building as they have been concurrently developing in three different sociopolitical contexts and dimensions: First, Mi’kmaw First Nationhood and First Nationalism are tribal sentiments, thus expressed by people from the entire Mi’kmaw territory, also known as Mi’kma’ki, about the entire territory. The Mi’kmaw powwow circuit and the annual celebrations of
St. Anne, the Mi’kmaw patron saint, portray Mi’kmaw nationhood as a sentiment gluing people from the entire Mi’kmaw territory. Similarly, the Mi’kmaw people’s experiences in the Church-run Shubenacadie Indian Residential School have contributed to create a shared new layer of identification that has reached First national dimension in Mi’kma’ki.

Second, Mi’kmaw First Nationhood and First Nationalism are expressed distinctively by single bands (or communities). It has recently become customary for the single Canadian bands, the tribal subgroups created by the Indian Act that usually occupy the space of one reserve, to identify singularly as First Nations. Using the example of the Millbrook First Nation, a small band located in central Nova Scotia and part of the larger Mi’kmaw nation, this paper portrays First Nationhood as both a further layer in the Canadian Aboriginal people’s perceptions of community and a foundation of sovereignty at the local level. Furthermore, the Nova-Scotia-based Membertou First Nation’s pioneering political and administrative efforts toward the definition and implementation of Aboriginal governance and citizenship in twenty-first-century Canada also exemplify this expression of First Nationhood and nation building from a single community standpoint.

Finally, First Nationhood and First Nationalism, as well as the devising and implementation of Mi’kmaw nation-building strategies, have recently become a provincial affair, thus involving all the bands from single provinces—Nova Scotia, in this case. The example of the Made in Nova Scotia Process—a tripartite forum to discuss treaty and Aboriginal rights that includes the Mi’kmaw First Nations of Nova Scotia, the government of Nova Scotia, and the Canadian federal government—illustrates how Mi’kmaw First Nationalism and nation-building efforts have been recast in a more prolific and manageable context to become pillars of the bands’ collective strategy to achieve visibility and voice in the provincial social and political arenas.

Mi’kmaw First Nationalism and nation building are undoubtedly grounded on territory. Yet, the extent of such territorial base is different according to whether nationalism and nation building are expressed prevalently in economic, political, administrative, social, or cultural terms. On the one hand, legal and political discussions and actions toward the recognition and implementation of Mi’kmaw treaty and Aboriginal rights have played out in supra-tribal (read, Mi’kmaw national), provincial, and local (read, single bands) contexts. The Marshall case and the Made in Nova Scotia Process, both discussed later, illustrate this diverse territorial span of the current Mi’kmaw nation-building efforts. On the other
hand, the social and cultural Mi’kmaw expressions of First Nationhood and First National sentiments embodied in the powwow circuit, the St. Anne Day celebrations, and the emergence of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School survivor figure extend beyond band, provincial, and even international contexts (one Mi’kmaw band is located in Maine, and many Mi’kmaw people have lived and traveled across the United States–Canada border).

The inclusion of Aboriginal social and cultural elements in the Mi’kmaw people’s definitions of nationhood and nation-building strategies presented here somewhat resonates with Taiaiake Alfred’s vision, which portrays a community-level Native nationhood based on elements such as kinship, culture, and Aboriginal language rather than (and differing from) the Western model based on territorial boundaries and key Western values (1995). Similarly, Mi’kmaw lawyer and scholar Pamela Palmater traced an Indigenous nation-building path that must bypass the colonial restrictions imposed by the registration under the Canadian Indian Act and blood quantum in favor of more inclusive criteria. Specifically, Palmater envisioned broadening the set of principles determining Mi’kmaw (and, more extensively, Indigenous) identity and citizenship to include “ancestral connection . . . commitment to the Mi’kmaq Nation . . . and respect for Mi’kmaq language, traditions, customs, and practices” (2011, 208). This chapter complements and builds on these lines of investigation and those that I laid out extensively in the book’s introduction.

As a sociocultural anthropologist specializing in Native American/First Nations Studies, my research path among the Mi’kmaw people has developed from issues of tradition and traditionalism in the accessing and harvesting of natural resources (Poliandri 2003) to broader questions on the contemporary formation, transformation, and maintenance of Indigenous identity (Poliandri 2011). Much of my work with the Mi’kmaq has necessarily addressed questions of power and inequality, as well as inclusion/exclusion dynamics. From here, the leap toward addressing issues of Mi’kmaw nation-building perspectives and efforts was small and virtually seamless. This chapter is part of a larger new project on contemporary Mi’kmaw nation-building visions and strategies that I have recently started and will focus mostly on the Nova Scotia communities. It is informed by participant observation in numerous Mi’kmaw communities of Nova Scotia and, more broadly, the Canadian Maritimes; many observations of and interviews about Mi’kmaw relations with the Canadian federal government and provincial governments, as well as reserve boundaries and relations with surrounding non-Native communities; informal
conversations with Mi’kmaw and non-Mi’kmaw people on the nature and development of Mi’kmaw band communities; and use of academic and nonacademic secondary sources (such as local news, including regular monitoring of the Mi’kmaw/Maliseet Nations News, the official newspaper of the Mi’kmaq and Maliseet). Finally, this chapter benefits from numerous discussions on Indigenous nationhood and nation building that I have engaged in with U.S. and Canadian-based Native and non-Native scholars both privately and in the context of academic conferences, such as the already-mentioned NAISA meetings, over the last four years.

First Nation

Let me start by offering a brief background on the concept of First Nation. The phrase “First Nation” represents the ultimate expression of sovereignty among the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. The phrase was coined by members of the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB), the institution created in 1968 to represent the status and treaty Indians of Canada, while participating in the discussions that led to the federal recognition of Treaty and Aboriginal Rights under section 35 of the Constitution Act in 1982. In the weeks following this major achievement, the National Indian Brotherhood changed its name to Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and reorganized to acquire its current structure. Today, the AFN represents more than six hundred Canadian First Nations.

Some academics, such as conservative political scientist Tom Flanagan, argued that the change of name did not reflect either the desire to simply renovate the public image of the institution or an exercise in syntax. Rather, Flanagan highlighted how such an act constituted a semantic transformation mirroring a much deeper change in the political strategy of the Canadian Aboriginal peoples. In his work First Nations?, Second Thoughts, published in 2000, arguably one of the most controversial recent studies on First Nations affairs, Flanagan underscored that whereas the term “national” in National Indian Brotherhood referred explicitly to Canada, the term “nations” in Assembly of First Nations refers explicitly to the Aboriginal nations. The rationale behind this small but significant change, Flanagan contested, must be traced in the renewed purpose of the Assembly and its constituency, as “Aboriginal nationalism in practice has oriented itself resolutely towards achievement of political power” (2000, 80). As a matter of fact, it has. But rightfully so, in my opinion, after generations in which such power was restricted or denied to them by gov-
ernmental Indian politics and policies, and even came close to extinction with the failed *White Paper* termination attempt of 1969 (Miller 2004).

### The Mi’kmaw Nation

The Mi’kmaw people responded to the *White Paper* policy—aimed at eradicating Indian status, canceling all land claims, and abolishing all federal Indian legislation—with a drive toward retribalization. In 1969, the thirteen Mi’kmaw bands of Nova Scotia sought collective representation by creating the Union of Nova Scotia Indians (UNSI), a tribal entity merging the bands’ political forces. UNSI joined all the other tribal unions of Canada in the National Indian Brotherhood (Larsen 1983). In 1986, a few bands of mainland Nova Scotia left the Union and formed the Confederacy of Mainland Mi’kmaq, the tribal council that today represents six communities: Annapolis Valley, Bear River, Glooscap, Millbrook, Paqtnkek (Afton), and Pictou Landing. Similar tribal institutions were created to represent the bands in the other provinces of Mi’kma’ki.

The 2007 Mi’kmaw Resource Guide—the official publication of the Union, the Confederacy, and the Native Council of Nova Scotia, the three tribal institutions representing status and nonstatus Mi’kmaq—describes the Mi’kmaw Nation as the sociopolitical entity containing and representing all the Mi’kmaw people. In its historical overview, the guide states, “The Mi’kmaw Nation has lived and occupied the area now known as the Atlantic Provinces and the Southern Gaspe Bay Peninsula since time immemorial. This area is known to Mi’kmaw people as *Mi’kma’ki*” (UNSI, CMM, NCNS 2007, 3, italics in original). Similarly, Aboriginal scholar James (Sákéj) Youngblood Henderson opened his historical account on the Mi’kmaw people saying, “While no explanation of the origin of the Aboriginal peoples in Atlantic Canada has been universally accepted, the Putús or Míkmaq story keepers or historians say the Míkmaq Nation forged its origins thousands years before the rise of the great civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt” (1997, 30).

References to the Mi’kmaw nation are found in several historical works, including the reports of Roman Catholic priest Pierre Maillard, who worked as a missionary among the Mi’kmaq from 1735 to his death in 1762 and served them as a counselor and negotiator with the British. Despite his representation of the Natives as savages, in accordance with the customary and widely shared perspective among European colonial personnel of the times, Maillard nevertheless acknowledged the national
character of the tribes of Eastern Canada when he said, “The original inhabitants of this country are the savages, who may be divided into three nations, the Mickmakis, the Maricheets, or Abenaquis, (being scarcely different nations) and the Canibats” (1758, 24). Although the product of Maillard’s choice of words, such a portrait, when coupled with the political services that the missionary provided to the Mi’kmaq, hints at a perception of the national character of the local tribes that he may have very well acquired and come to respect through the long-lasting and careful observation of the Natives’ institutions and sociopolitical life.

In the same period, the minutes from a council held at the house of Peregrine Thomas Hopson, the newly appointed Governor of Nova Scotia, on 14 September 1752, report a discussion about an attempt to bring the “. . . tribes of the Mickmack nation . . .” to a conference with the Governor himself in the near future (Akins 1869, 671). Again, both the colonial administrators’ choice of word to describe the entire Mi’kmaw collectivity and their belief in the possibility to address such a collectivity (or, likely, its representatives) in a single meeting reveal a perception allegedly based on the existence of an overarching national entity encompassing and binding the tribes of Mi’km’ki.

More than a century later, Nova Scotian physician and artist John Bernard Gilpin, a member of the Nova Scotian Institute of Natural Science, produced a small account on the original inhabitants of the Province, titled Indians of Nova Scotia, that he read at the Institute on 12 March 1877. Filled with scanty information and quasi-racist descriptions, the document mirrors the assimilationist views of many contemporary policymakers and administrators of Indian affairs. In a significant passage, Gilpin wrote, “They will die out as Mic-Macs . . . It is evident that the time has long passed to consider them a nation, in approaching them for their good. The sooner all national feeling, language and traditions are gone the better” (1877, 275). Such a statement provides evidence of the existence of a national sentiment that was under attack on several fronts, often unfortunately with successful results.

In the 1950s, Mi’kmaw connoisseurs Wilson and Ruth S. Wallis verified the disappearance (or lack) of national sentiment among the Mi’kmaw people. Although the Wallises acknowledged the deep knowledge that Mi’kmaw adults had of all Mi’kmaw groups across Mi’km’ki as well as the binding role of the Mi’kmaw language, they nevertheless recognized that “there is no Micmac nationalism” (1953, 120).

Such a historic development is reflected also in the changes that the Mi’kmaw leadership underwent during colonial times. The Mi’kmaw
Resource Guide describes the Grand Council as the Mi’kmaw Nation’s precontact government. The tribal Grand Council supervised the chiefs of all local bands, which had existed for centuries as loose subtribal groups (UNSI, CMM, NCNS 2007). Sákéj Henderson presented a comparable portrait when he described the Mi’kmaw leadership in the traditional seven districts of Mi’kma’ki. When speaking about the seven regional sakamowit (chiefs), who worked under the direction of a sakamow (the Grand Chief), Henderson stated, “These leaders formed one national council, the Santé Mawiómi (Holy Gathering or Grand Council), to advise the Mikmaq and defend the country under the general leadership of the great chief and their chief spiritual leaders” (1997, 31, italics added).

With the ratification of the Indian Act in 1876, the “band” was institutionalized as a form of political organization of First Nations peoples under the Canadian law. The Indian Act made bands a legal unit, with membership lists, assigned reserves, and elected leaders with administrative and political powers. The Indian Act chiefs and council system favored the fragmentation of the Mi’kmaq nation (in fact, all Aboriginal nations) and undermined the traditional leadership role of the Grand Council. The political role of the Mi’kmaw Grand Council rapidly faded out, and its function has been reduced to mere representation devoid of any authority. Today, band chiefs and councils de facto govern the Mi’kmaq and, more broadly, the Aboriginal peoples all over Canada. In fact, even more “modern” political and administrative institutions such as the tribal councils (CMM, UNSI) work for the band chiefs and councils, who are the real repository of political power and authority.

A few years ago when speaking to me about Mi’kmaw leadership, John (pseudonym), the former chief of a Nova Scotia Mi’kmaw band, was very clear about the relationship between the traditional and current forms of government. “Tribal councils are not above the bands,” he told me. “They work for the bands and administer programs for their bands. The Grand Council has no political power . . . I don’t know really [what the role of the Grand Council is today]. They’re not chosen really by the people.”

Some Mi’kmaq have underlined the detrimental effects of such a political artifact which, they contend, often leads to disagreements among Mi’kmaw people and communities. When I discussed the issue of Mi’kmaw community boundaries with Anna (pseudonym), a Mi’kmaw woman in her mid-forties, she was prompt to underscore the customary divide-and-rule First Nations policy employed by the Canadian government to address Aboriginal affairs. “The government made each band
a First Nation, rather than the whole Mi'kmaq population under one Mi'kmaq Nation,” Anna said. “This divides the people, and the government has always looked for that. The reserves became more and more the only place that people would feel as familiar places. The spatial continuity of people's presence on the territory was definitively broken.”

In the course of a telephone interview, Victor, a Mi'kmaw individual working in the Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn (KMK; Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative)—the tripartite forum involving the Mi’kmaq bands of Nova Scotia, the government of Nova Scotia, and the government of Canada—mentioned that it was only in the 1960s that Canada began to allocate diverse resources to different bands. “Before then,” Victor said, “we were considered one band.”

These points of view resonate with the words of law- and education-trained Wet'suweten leader Satsan (Herb George), Hereditary Chief of the Frog Clan and the President of the National Centre for First Nations Governance, a First Nations controlled nonprofit organization created to help Aboriginal peoples achieve their right to self-government. Cited by sociologist Stephen Cornell in a discussion on the reserves as the inherited political framework within which Native nations must act in Canada, Satsan criticized the weakening fragmentation of the Canadian Natives into single First Nations (or bands) by the government.

Mi'kmaw Nationalism at the Tribal Level

Still, it is mainly at the tribal level that until recently the Mi'kmaw people have employed First nationalism to claim sovereignty and to address political and legal issues before the provincial and federal governments. The events and discussions that led to and immediately followed the 1999 Marshall case—in which the Mi'kmaq challenged the Canadian government over their Aboriginal right to fish beyond federal regulations, and which resulted in a historic Supreme Court decision in their favor—are a well-known example of this (Coates 2000; Isaac 2001; Poliandri 2003; Wicken 2002).

Although centered on the case of late Donald Marshall Jr., a Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq accused of illegal fishing and selling of eels in 1993 and found guilty in the lower courts, the issue became a shared battleground for all Mi’kmaq as it related to the infringement of centuries-old treaty rights to resource access and use. The repeatedly declared interest shared by all Mi’kmaw bands to preserve their rights originating from the Trea-
ties of 1760–1761, signed between the Governor of the British Colony of Nova Scotia and the Mi’kmaq, hints at a “Mi’kmaq nationwide” common determination to face the adversity. Furthermore, the heated responses from the non-Native commercial fishing industry, worried by the possible development of a Supreme Court decision upholding Aboriginal rights to fish outside regulations (although only to sustain “a moderate livelihood,” an ambiguous phrase that the Supreme Court used but never clarified), and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), interested in maintaining power and control over national marine resources, led to episodes of tensions and violence in 1999 and 2000. This favored the coalescence of the Mi’kmaq into a unified body characterized by both a sentiment of “national” solidarity for all tribal members, who were equally perceived as under attack from external forces, and the necessity to offer a strong communal front in the face of such attacks.

Yet, in this particular case, the mutual efforts to face the government and the DFO as a single national entity progressively gave way to the concerns (and interests) of the single bands, which struck individual and customized interim agreements with the government and the DFO, which outlined the regulation of their own fishing activity. When discussing the Marshall case and its developments, Albert (pseudonym), a former official of a Mi’kmaq band, illustrated this process in succinct but clear terms. “When the Marshall case happened,” he said, “all the chiefs said that we were going to stick together and do something about it. Then, one by one they all signed agreements.”

Such a scenario reflects and exemplifies the difficulties that the Mi’kmaq leaders and communities have had in constituting a national front before an external challenge; yet the unanimous concern toward preserving treaty rights that belong to all the Mi’kmaq of the present and the future—the seventh generation, as phrased by innumerable leaders and common individuals from many Mi’kmaq communities—speaks of a vision of bound destiny (albeit not translated into facts in this occasion) held by a large number of Mi’kmaq.

In the social sphere, the powwow trail and the St. Anne celebrations of late July evoke a larger Mi’kmaq community extending beyond reserve and provincial boundaries, which represents precisely this tribal national entity. As customary among many Native North American groups, the Mi’kmaq powwow season takes place each summer. During the course of almost each weekend of the season, the bands take turns in hosting their powwows, which are attended by Mi’kmaq people from the entire Maritime region as well as occasional local non-Natives. Carpooling, temporary
residence in homes of family and friends from the hosting communities, and scheduled and unscheduled visits to relatives and acquaintances living afar are integral parts of the powwow routine. The Mi'kmaw people's high degree of mobility on the powwow trail contributes to create and strengthen a network of kinship and friendship relations, which is essential for the social and cultural life of individuals, families, and communities. Anthropologist Harald Prins acutely remarked, “Individuals who do not form part of this informal network of kith and kin are effectively cut off from their social identity as Mi’kmaq Indians” (Prins 1996, 192). When discussing the powwow and, more in general, the thick fabric of kin relations linking Mi'kmaw people throughout Mi'kma'ki, John confirmed this scenario. “There are a lot of family connections throughout the Atlantic Provinces,” he said. In fact, family names like Googoo, Francis, Marshall, and Paul (just to cite a few) can be found in virtually all Mi'kmaw communities throughout the Maritimes.

In the course of my residence in and several visits to Nova Scotia since 2003, I have had multiple opportunities to attend powwows all over Mi’kma’ki with Mi’kmaw friends and acquaintances from the Nova Scotia reserves (particularly Millbrook, Sipekne’katik-Indian Brook, Paqtnkek-Afton, and Eskasoni). Whether people travel to participate in the powwows as dancers or drummers, to meet with friends and family members living elsewhere, to sell their crafts and food (Indian tacos and fry bread are the powwow staple foods), or simply to attend for fun, distance and the extra-provincial nature of many trips are secondary to reconnecting with loved ones and supporting the hosting communities.

Such a scenario fits Helen Ting’s paradigm for the social construction of nationhood. Building on the work of sociologist Dorothy Holland et al. (2001) on “figured worlds”—the socially produced, culturally constructed systems of values, norms, and related behavior that provide the contexts of our social activities and are sites of identity production—Ting discussed the “figured world of nationhood or nationalism” (2008, 463). National identity, Ting argued, is produced and reproduced through the appropriation of “the nation” in concrete life experiences, more specifically, interactions with others. As “the figured world of nationhood is only one among many other figure worlds that ordinary citizens encounter in their daily lives . . . the (re)production of a particular figured world takes place through social activity . . . Social practice is the medium through which the symbolic world of nationhood is reenacted” (Ting 2008, 464–465). Powwows are a pivotal social practice for many Mi’kmaq (at least for part of the year), one that extends their range of action and interaction
across the entire Mi’kma’ki with people from all the Mi’kmaw communi-
ties. In this sense, they contribute to recreate and renovate the Mi’kmaw
Nation over and over again.

The festivity of St. Anne, which takes place every year on July 26th,
serves a similar purpose. Introduced by the French Jesuit missionaries in
the early to mid-eighteenth century as the Mi’kmaw patron saint in order
to facilitate their evangelization, the figure of St. Anne has had a strong
integrating force in the postcontact history of the Mi’kmaq (Hornborg
2002, 2004; Poliandri 2011). Her yearly celebration features processions in
every Mi’kmaw community reserve, among which stands the week-long
gathering at the St. Anne Mission on Chapel Island (Mniku, in Mi’kmaq),
a two-square-kilometer National Historic Site of Canada located in the
southeastern part of the Bras d’Or Lake on Cape Breton Island, Nova Sco-
tia. Mniku is part of the Chapel Island First Nation (Potlotek), which rests
about three hundred meters across the water, and is home to the Mi’kmaw
Grand Council. The mission on the island was established by Abbé Pierre
Maillard, a Roman Catholic missionary who arrived in Mi’kma’ki in 1735
and relocated his post to the small Isle de Sainte Famille (later renamed
Chapel Island) by 1750 (Chute 1992; Prins 1996).

Since the mid-1700s, Mi’kmaw people have traveled to Chapel Island
from all over Mi’kma’ki to attend the mission. Still today, hundreds of
Mi’kmaq from different bands own cottages or shacks on the island and
relocate to the island on the week of July 26 to participate in the festivi-
ties, which include religious functions as well as social interaction. Many
of these temporary residences are part of family heirlooms and serve as
points of reference for the families’ summer life. The celebration offers
the Mi’kmaq an opportunity to reconnect with family and friends who
reside in different locations, thus contributing to recreate and strengthen
the larger Mi’kmaw community, the Mi’kmaw Nation, extending across
the entire Mi’kmaw territory.

The national character of St. Anne’s Day developed arguably since
the early colonial era, when French-introduced Catholicism became a
powerful element of cultural, social, and political resistance available to
the Mi’kmaq against the dispossessing and assimilationist British (Protes-
tant) colonial enterprise (Jaenen 1976; Reid 1995). The association of reli-
gion with tribal independence and survival contributed to make St. Anne
and her yearly celebration a pillar of Mi’kmaw shared sense of destiny,
which has endured until today. Similarly to the powwow trail, St. Anne’s
Day has become a source of First National identification for the Mi’kmaq,
who often speak of it as the proof of larger Mi’kmaw national entity. In
a sense, the July 26 festivity embodies a Mi’kmaw national holiday, a
day of shared meaning that holds its own special place on the Mi’kmaw
people’s calendars.

If Catholicism provides a positive source of national identification
for most Mi’kmaq, it is equally associated with one of the darkest pages
in the recent history of the Aboriginal people of Mi’kma’ki—one that
has contributed to offer yet another basis for collective identification
at the tribal level, albeit marked by tragedy. The Catholic Church was
responsible for running the government-sponsored Shubenacadie Indian
Residential School from 1930 to 1967. Located near the Shubenacadie
village in central Nova Scotia, just a few kilometers from the Indian
Brook (Sipekne’katik) reserve, the institution was responsible for heavily
disrupting or compromising the cultural, social, familial, physical, and
psychological life of thousands of Mi’kmaw individuals (Knockwood 2015

The goals and methods of the Shubenacadie School were similar to
those employed in comparable institutions scattered across Indian coun-
dry in North America and, more broadly, among Indigenous populations
worldwide. They often involved the use of both physical and psychological
violence, as well as a straightforward system of rewards and punishments
in order to achieve conformity to the religious and mainstream values
instilled in the Native students.

Although attended by roughly two thousand Mi’kmaw youngsters,
who were affected directly by the educators’ inhumane and occasionally
humane teaching practices, the Shubenacadie School extended its effects
indirectly to the descendants of the former students. Many school sur-
vivors and their family members have suffered from the byproducts of a
disruptive education system that include loss of Mi’kmaw language and
culture, lack of parenting skills, inability to engage in healthy marital life,
alcohol and drug abuse, the use of physical and psychological violence as
common child-rearing practices, low self-esteem and, for some, suicidal
tendencies.

It is certainly along these perspectives, focusing on cultural disrup-
tion as well as psychological and social problems, that the connection
between surviving the school, on the one hand, and a sense of shared
destiny as Mi’kmaw (and even First Nations) people, on the other hand,
can be understood. The experiences in the Shubenacadie School resulted
in the emergence of an additional layer in many Mi’kmaw people’s sense
of identity: the Shubenacadie residential school survivor. The common
challenges, sufferings, and the few moments of normalcy endured in the school by children from all over Mi’kma’ki contributed to create a shared sense of fate in the face of colonial assimilation that translated into a collective form of identification for Mi’kmaw people of different generations, gender, and provenience (see Poliandri 2016).

If, on the one hand, residential schools operated all over Canada (and the United States) thus making the residential school survivor a pan-Indian form of identification rather than a tribal one, the peculiarity of the Shubenacadie School experiences endured by the Mi’kmaw people, on the other hand, allows to speak of this as a tragedy for the Mi’kmaw Nation.

The Shubenacadie School was the only residential institution in Mi’kma’ki (and the rest of eastern Canada, for that matter). The overwhelming majority (if not the totality) of its students were Mi’kmaq who were all “instructed” by the same religious personnel over many generations. Father Mackey, Father Brown, Sister Superior, Sister Mary Leonard (also known as Wikew, which means “fatty”), Sister Paul of the Cross, and Sister Adrian are some of the common names recurring in the survivors’ innumerable stories of the school days (see Knockwood 2015 [1992]). The shared nature of the Mi’kmaw survivors’ experiences and memories, as well as those of their family members and friends, makes the legacy of the school and its contribution to individual and collective identification a “national” affair. Being a Shubenacadie Indian Residential School survivor means (or implies) being a member of the Mi’kmaw nation before anything else. It provides a unique designation for people who reside in or originate from Mi’kma’ki, at the same time as it relates them to all the Aboriginal survivors of Canada (and, ideally, the world).

Such a connection surfaces also from another important aspect, namely, the sense of community and the empowerment generated by the shared struggles that many Mi’kmaq (as well as Natives across the country) have been fighting against the government and the former educational institutions to obtain both the recognition of their status as abused people and compensation for those abuses.

The case of the late Nora Bernard, the former director of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School Association that has been operating on behalf of more than nine hundred Mi’kmaw survivors since 1995, is representative of this empowerment. Through her work in the association, Nora, who spent five years in the Shubenacadie School in the 1940s, provided a sense of social belonging to many Mi’kmaw survivors who identified themselves with a community of people sharing similar
experiences. This sense of community—represented by the association, its meetings, its bonding significance, as well as by the legal struggles fought alongside First Nations people from all over the country—has provided many of these men and women also with a sense of strength and empowerment. Being a residential school survivor has become a way, and for many the principal way, in which former students identify as Mi’kmaq (and, by extension, First Nations people). Being a survivor means having gone through one of the “national tragedies” marking the recent history of the Mi’kmaq. In fact, it reflects the formation of a significant piece of the Mi’kmaw national memory and consciousness. Sharing a common destiny and struggle with other Mi’kmaw people from across Mi’kma’ki has contributed to replace what is perceived as “lost Mi’kmawness,” which was measured mostly in emotional and cultural terms, with a somewhat stable sense of identity, this time gauged in emotional and political terms. Shared by people across the entire Mi’kmaw nation, this process of identification highlights the existence of a Mi’kmaw national community.

Nora Bernard was also the person behind the class-action suit of 2000, which threatened four religious denominations (Roman Catholic, Anglican, United, and Presbyterian) with bankruptcy (Paul 2006). Tens of thousands of claims were filed by survivors of many First Nations of Canada. Unfortunately, the Canadian government’s delay strategy allowed many survivors (especially the older ones who were in the schools in the early and rougher times) to die off before they could receive compensation. Supported by the Assembly of First Nations, the lawsuit has finally come to a resolution. On December 15, 2006, the Canadian courts approved a four billion dollar settlement in favor of more than eighty thousand living residential school survivors. The compensation procedure was formally structured in September 2007.14

Reserve as Nation

A new sociopolitical phenomenon has added another dimension to the Mi’kmaw (and Canadian Aboriginal) people’s expressions of nationality. In recent times, the single bands making up an Aboriginal nation, the Mi’kmaw Nation in this case, have started to introduce themselves singularly as First Nations. This appears in the language of their public communications as well as on visual elements, such as reserve signs and band councils’ letterhead (see figures 3.1 and 3.2).
Lisa Valentine (1994) was among the first scholars to highlight such a phenomenon when she discussed the recent use of the term “nation” among the southwestern Ontario Algonquian communities and its usual association with the name of a single reserve rather than the entire tribe. Similarly, Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark (2013) recently pointed to the national character of individual Anishinaabe bands, and its distinction...
from Anishinaabe (collective) nationhood, in her broader discussion of the dynamics of Anishinaabe nationhood in the context of treaty-making with the United States and Canada.

It is worth to keep in mind that most Mi’kmaw bands, as well as most Canadian First Nations, occupy the space of one (often small) reserve which, in some cases, may have one or more minuscule separate appendixes. Both reserve residents and the neighboring non-Native populations usually envision these reserves as stand-alone communities, with variable degrees of cohesion and participation in the life of their surrounding region.

Millbrook, for instance, has a current band membership of about 1,800 (half of whom live on the reserve) and is located within the town borders of Truro, which has a total population of roughly 12,500, in central Nova Scotia. Although vexed by many of the problems that characterize the life of a large number of Native reserves (as well as inner-city and low-income areas) in North America—including alcohol and drug abuse, violence, teen pregnancy, suicide, and petty crime—Millbrook has succeeded in curtailing some of these problems and today looks different from most Mi’kmaw reserves in the region (and, more broadly, in North America). In fact, it does resemble many neighborhoods of its hosting town and, in most cases, actually looks better. The state of residences and infrastructures is more than adequate due to the band’s financial success after the opening of the Truro Power Centre, Millbrook’s commercial district, in 2001. Located alongside Highway 102—the main transportation artery connecting Halifax, Nova Scotia’s capital and largest city, to the rest of the province—and thus benefiting from the high-volume traffic, the Power Centre leases land to many companies in different business categories, including hospitality, entertainment, retail, and fuel vending. These enjoy the favorable fiscal and regulatory benefits of reserve territory and, in exchange, pay leasing money and make Millbrook a preferred destination for regional shopping and entertainment. Needless to say, the revenues generated by the Power Centre have changed the outlook of Millbrook radically and increased both the opportunities available to band members and their overall quality of life, safety included. Furthermore, as one of the main job providers in the region, Millbrook’s Power Centre offers employment to many local non-Mi’kmaw people.

All this might give the impression (and the expectation) that Millbrook, more than many other struggling and more isolated reserves, represents a case of excellent integration in the regional social environment. Yet, when discussing the relationship between Millbrook and Truro with
Mi’kmaw and non-Mi’kmaw people, I received a similar portrait of the actual state of things. “There is a line around the reserve,” most of them said. “It is not a real line, but a psychological one that divides Native and non-Native territory.” I managed to identify a tangible evidence of this “unreal line” in a street sign which, until very recently, was located within the Truro city limits, thus offering a topographic representation of such a separation (see figure 3.3).

In many of their public and private communications, Millbrook leaders express this divide using the national discourse. In a casual conversation about the relationship between town and reserve, Millbrook’s former chief told me, “The reserve used to be in the area of today’s downtown Truro and was relocated to its present location in the early 20th century.” Then, he added, “Now the Millbrook Nation is here to stay and we will expand.” Victor provided confirmation to such a perception when he said that for the Mi’kmaq “the band is a distinct layer of nationality.”

Figure 3.3. Until very recently, this sign was located on Willow Street, one of the main arteries of Truro, at the intersection with the McClure’s Mills Connector Road, which provides access to and from Provincial Highway 102. (Author photo)
It is interesting, for instance, that almost every Mi’kmaw powwow (in Millbrook and elsewhere) features the formal display of the Mi’kmaw flag, the Nova Scotia flag, the Canadian flag, and the U.S. flag. Every day at Grand Entry, elders and notable individuals carry these flags into the ceremonial grounds and place them onto the poles of the drummers’ harbor. In the many occasions I attended the Millbrook powwow, I could not avoid noticing that the Master of Ceremonies, the microphone-holding individual responsible for explaining and guiding the powwow activities, extended the hosting Millbrook Nation’s official welcome to the members of all First Nations and the nations represented by the flags.

Millbrook’s commemoration of Remembrance Day, which celebrates the veterans of all wars on November 11th, offers another example of this First National discourse at the band level. When I participated in the ceremonies in 2003, I noticed the band leaders carrying the Mi’kmaw, Canadian, Nova Scotia, and American flags in a single line, while marching behind representatives of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canada’s national police force. After the parade settled on the arranged commemorative site, the Mi’kmaw Honor Song, the unofficial anthem of the Mi’kmaw people, and “O Canada,” Canada’s national anthem, were performed in sequence. Then, Mi’kmaw leaders and veterans delivered official speeches celebrating “the veterans of the Millbrook Nation.”

These examples highlight the widespread narrative found among the Mi’kmaq that portrays the Millbrook band, which overlaps the Millbrook reserve, as an independent First Nation. This suggests the presence of a further layer in the Mi’kmaw people’s perception of their community, namely the national level. Speaking from a national standpoint certainly provides a sense of empowerment.

The national character of single Native communities has recently emerged in several initiatives set up by some bands to configure and promote their First national efforts. This has been the case with a series of workshops on governance and citizenship where single First Nations share their nation-building efforts and create forums to learn from one another, although maintaining autonomy of action. In most cases, these initiatives have been coordinated by the National Centre for First Nations Governance, a nonprofit organization devoted to support the Native communities’ efforts toward developing independent governance. Among the Mi’kmaq, the financial powerhouse Membertou First Nation, located in the Nova Scotia town of Sydney, promoted a series of six nation rebuilding workshops and two community engagement sessions between October 2010 and March 2011. Furthermore, Membertou scheduled a series of five Emerging Leaders workshops on nation rebuilding in early August 2011.
The purpose of these events was to promote community awareness and to develop internal guidelines for governance development, as well as to offer hands-on examples of nation-building efforts to other First Nations. Membertou has also been at the forefront in the study and development of a new concept of Aboriginal citizenship, one that will hopefully rectify the injustices and shortcomings of the *Indian Act* offering a new instrument for First Nations self-government and community self-regulation.

**Province-Based First Nationhood**

So far, I have illustrated how Mi’kmaq First Nationhood is both a tribal and single-band phenomenon that combines political, cultural, social, and economic aspects. Yet there is another context where Mi’kmaq First Nationhood and Nationalism have recently emerged. When gauging political and administrative efforts to implement Mi’kmaq governance and, more broadly, to improve the lives of the Mi’kmaq people and communities, First Nationalism and nation building seem to work more effectively at the provincial level.

Again, Victor, explained this phenomenon clearly. “Dealing with just Nova Scotia is easier and more effective than dealing with several provinces all together,” he said. “Also the Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq nations have a history of dealing with Nova Scotia.” He then added,

There was a time when the Mi’kmaq people wrote an ‘Atlantic process,’ but many people including myself opposed it as ineffective. The problem with [a multi-provincial effort] is that issues of different bands [belonging to different provinces] overlap. So, negotiation processes may get stalled for some, waiting other people’s issues to get resolved with their province. Nova Scotia band have been so far in advance compared with those in other provinces. Thus, it made sense to act at the provincial level.

And, indeed, it has. In June 2002, the Mi’kmaq of Nova Scotia approached the governments of Nova Scotia and Canada to discuss treaty rights. After several conversations, the three parties signed an Umbrella Agreement stating the willingness to work together to resolve treaty issues in Nova Scotia. This officially started the Made in Nova Scotia Process. The Mi’kmaq people are represented by the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq Chiefs (ANSMC), the organization including the chiefs of all the thirteen Nova Scotia bands.
On February 23, 2007, the Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq, through ANSMC, signed a Framework Agreement with the governments of Canada and Nova Scotia. This agreement signals the start of a formal negotiations process “to create stable and respectful relationships and to reconcile the respective interests of the Parties through a Mi’kmaq of Nova Scotia Accord that sets out the manner in which the Mi’kmaq of Nova Scotia will exercise constitutionally protected rights respecting land, resources and governance, to the extent the issues are dealt with in the Accord.” The Made in Nova Scotia Process is expected to produce a Final Agreement, which will regulate the future relationship of the Mi’kmaq of Nova Scotia with the Province and Canada, to be ratified sometime after 2011. As of August 2015, a Final Agreement had not yet been ratified.

Also, on October 1, 2008, the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq Chiefs released the Mi’kmaq of Nova Scotia Nationhood Proclamation, a national declaration at the provincial level. The Proclamation reads:

Two hundred and fifty six years ago the Mi’kmaq signed the Treaty of 1752. This is one within a Covenant Chain of Treaties signed between the Mi’kmaq of Nova Scotia and the Crown from 1725 to 1761. We recognize and affirm that our Treaties are made Nation to Nation by their respective governments. The Chiefs of Nova Scotia hereby come together to proclaim and assert Nationhood of the Mi’kmaq of Nova Scotia over our traditional lands and waters. We, the Chiefs and Councils of Nova Scotia, as the elected representatives of the Mi’kmaq, agree to work together to develop a Mi’kmaw governance structure that unites and empowers our Nation to enhance the quality of life and well-being of our people.

This Proclamation represents an historic milestone for the Mi’kmaq of Nova Scotia seeking to implement their rights in the province. The Proclamation also reasserts the nation-to-nation relationship established by the treaty signing processes in the 1700s.

It is significant that the Proclamation was issued on October 1, which every year marks the celebration of Treaty Day. The festivity was established in 1986 in result of the landmark 1985 ruling in Simon v. The Queen, where the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the validity of the Treaty of 1752 between the Mi’kmaq and the British. The creation of Treaty Day was intended to celebrate the unique and longstanding relationship between the Mi’kmaw people and the British Crown (McMil-
Interestingly and fittingly, Treaty Day is celebrated only in the province of Nova Scotia and marks the beginning of Mi’kmaw History Month, featuring a month-long series of initiatives aimed at promoting awareness of Mi’kmaw affairs to the non-Native population of the province. On Treaty Day, Mi’kmaw leaders, led by members of the Grand Council, meet and exchange gifts with members of the provincial government. The provincial character of this event surfaces from the Mi’kmaw people’s perception of it, which is epitomized by the informative statement on the Union of Nova Scotia Indians’ official website reading:

People continue to gather in Halifax on October 1st to enjoy various events in celebration of Treaty Day. It’s a reunion for many Mi’kmaq and a time for non-aboriginals to learn a part of Nova Scotia’s 12,000-year-old history.”

Since 2008, the Kwilmu’kw Maw-klusuaqn (KMK; Mi’kmaq Rights Initiative), the tribal agency representing all the Nova Scotia band chiefs, has been coordinating the Mi’kmaw efforts in the Tripartite Forum. In a public statement accompanying the release of the 2008 Nationhood Proclamation, Chief Morley Googoo of the Waycobah First Nation, then co-chair of the KMK Governance Advisory Committee, said,

Kwilmukw Maw-klusuagn means we are seeking out consensus. The Mi’kmaq of Nova Scotia through the Mi’kmaq Rights Initiative are trying to seek consensus on how we implement our Mi’kmaq rights today and for future generations. The Proclamation represents a first step on our journey toward Mi’kmaq Nationhood.

On March 24, 2011, Mi’kmaw leaders from all Nova Scotia First Nations participated in the third annual Chief and Council Nationhood Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The purpose of the two-day event, hosted by the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq Chiefs with KMK Negotiation Office personnel, was to discuss the next steps toward the building of Mi’kmaw nationhood. The successes and challenges of this task were presented and updated in the fourth annual conference the following year and, lastly, in its fifth edition on October 2 and 3, 2013.

Yet another historic agreement marked the Mi’kmaw nation-building process at the provincial level. On August 31, 2010, the Assembly
of Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq Chiefs and the provincial and federal governments signed the Mi’kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Consultation Terms of Reference. Ratified in Millbrook, this agreement formally established a consultation process that includes the Mi’kmaq in any legal discussion and government activities that have the potential to impact Mi’kmaw interests and rights.29

Finally, on June 15, the Nova Scotia cabinet and the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi’kmaq Chiefs met for the third time in 2011 to review the progress of the government-to-government relations between the province and the Mi’kmaw communities of Nova Scotia.30 This has been the last installment in the developing government-to-government relations between the Mi’kmaq and Nova Scotia at the provincial level. As the two parties agreed to meet again in the near future, it is clear that the Mi’kmaq, and seemingly the provincial and federal governments, have a positive outlook on the present and future potential and efficacy of this provincial-based Aboriginal nation-building process.

Conclusion: The Citizenship Path toward Mi’kmaw Nationhood

Victor told me that the Mi’kmaw Rights Initiative has been recently working at a definition of “Mi’kmaw citizenship,” a concept upgrading and, at the same time, departing from Indian Status, by which the federal government still regulates Aboriginal rights and policies. The question asked within KMK is: What are the common principles that the Mi’kmaw people have that would make up a definition of citizenship? Such a query must take band autonomy into consideration, as it is key to establish where autonomy ends for each individual band, or First Nation, and begin for the collective Mi’kmaw Nation. The identification of parameters to establish and confer Mi’kmaw citizenship also affects rights, privileges, and benefits that come with band membership, which instead is managed by the individual bands. The larger issues shaping and affecting beneficiary rights are: who belongs to the Mi’kmaw Nation? and, who belongs to the individual Mi’kmaw First Nations?

One hopes these questions will lead to measures that will address the broader concern for the current and future state of Indigenous or First Nations concepts of citizenship, a topic on which little information is currently available. In fact, Lynn Chabot stated, “It is difficult to determine whether First Nations have adopted the theoretical underpinnings
of the western concept of citizenship in developing their concepts, or are looking at citizenship from another perspective” (2007, 39). It is possible, Chabot maintained, that overly applied foreign concepts have taken deep roots in the First Nations determination of their constituency. “As of July 2006,” Chabot reported,

. . . 350 bands fell under the Indian Act rules for membership and 240 Bands exercised authority under section 10 of the Indian Act and developed custom membership codes. . . . Of those communities who have enacted custom membership codes, an overwhelming 70.8 per cent of custom membership Bands, use Indian Act, or Act-equivalent rules to determine membership. (2007, 38)

Such a scenario has given some academics and nonacademics (particularly, but not exclusively, of Native heritage) reason to question the efficacy as well as the conceptual integrity of First Nations citizenship. Alfred (2009), for instance, opposed the path leading to a (re)definition and implementation of Aboriginal citizenship. In fact, he claimed such a path as misleading in the construction of Aboriginal national visions modeled after Aboriginal worldviews and cultures. When searching for collective Indigenous identity from an Indigenous perspective, rather than from the point of view of First Nations people who work to develop institutions and philosophies modeled after Canadian and European models, Alfred contended that “the term citizenship is highly problematic” (2009, 13).

Alfred’s point of view resonates as well as opposes those of many others, and it is likely to remain a part of the current and future discussions about the developments of First Nationhood and First Nationalism. Yet many Aboriginal communities have been planning and implementing strategies toward their own actualization of First Nationhood. For instance, Mi’kmaw citizenship was among the main items in the agenda of the 2011 Chief and Council Nationhood Conference, where the Mi’kmaw leaders posed and discussed the question “Who is a Mi’kmaq?” In his opening address, Membertou First Nation Chief Terry Paul, also Co-Chair of the ANSMC, touched on this issue, saying, “We are reaching a point in our history that we will have to define ourselves. Currently Indian and Northern Affairs of Canada defines who we are. We must develop our own consensus and definition of Mi’kmaw Citizenship.”

A significant part of this work has been to survey and solicit the input of community members from all the Nova Scotia bands in search of a consensual response. When
invited to elaborate on the scope and significance of this issue, Victor said, “so far, the data we collected shows that Mi’kmaw citizenship is a national issue among the Mi’kmaw people.”

Other First Nations have recently undertaken a similar task. In 2009, the Nipissing First Nation of Ontario presented the results of its community discussions about a proposed Anishinabek Nation citizenship law that would affirm the right of First Nations to determine their own citizens. These consultations have involved members of forty-two Anishinabek communities, which are looking for a concept that would replace Indian Status and band membership for good.

It seems, therefore, that a large part of the recent developments of Mi’kmaw and, more broadly, Native nation building and nationalism in Canada points at First Citizenship as one of the main goals that would guarantee full political and administrative self-determination. This aligns and resonates with Sebastian Braun's point (in this volume) about the achievement of true sovereignty being intrinsically dependent on the power of tribal nations to self-define their paths of action in an inter-related world.

In a broader context, it must also be remembered that Indigenous Nationalism has become an officially recognized right, according to the United Nations’ “Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” of 2007. Ironically (and significantly), Canada was one of the only four governments that originally refused to sign the Declaration. The others were the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. Australia and New Zealand have changed their stance and recently endorsed the Declaration, respectively in 2009 and 2010, while in Canada only the Province of Québec timidly expressed interest in doing so. In 2010, the United States government announced that it will take steps to review its original position regarding the Declaration, although it failed to provide any detail on what will be done, how, and when. Similarly, in March 2010, the government of Canada revised its official position on this matter and announced its willingness to take steps toward endorsing the Declaration “in a manner fully consistent with Canada’s Constitution and laws.” Finally, Canada at long last endorsed the Declaration on November 12, 2010. For many, this long delay sends somewhat mixed signals about Canada’s interest in considering First Nations peoples as equal nation-to-nation interlocutors at any table of negotiations.

In some way, such a development represents an official sanction and a striking examples of the kind of resistance that North American and other nation-states offer, as cleverly illustrated by Rebecca Tsosie (2003). When discussing the Aboriginal quest for sovereignty, Tsosie said,
The United States and other colonial powers [which include Canada] continue to resist the notion that Indigenous peoples share the same attributes of political sovereignty as the Western nations that have been conquered and involuntarily annexed by other Western nations. These nations . . . reject the ideals of political self-determination that would guarantee strong territorial rights. (2003, 11)

This has been the case despite the clear and longstanding objective of most, if not all, North American Aboriginal peoples to rise to full sovereign status without challenging the sovereignty of their “hosting” nation-states. Michael Asch was already illustrating this vision two decades ago when discussing Aboriginal self-government and nation-to-nation relationships in Canada. “Aboriginal nations,” Asch said, “have repeatedly asserted that their goal is to achieve recognition of their sovereignty and not to overturn the sovereignty of the Canadian state” (1993, 51). Such a notion is still embedded in the nation-building efforts of the Mi’kmaq and, arguably, all First Nations. Whether at the tribal, community, or provincial level, Mi’kmaq nation building in the twenty-first century has taken a complementary rather than a confrontational character toward the state and the provinces. In Nova Scotia, the Mi’kmaq First Nations’ vibrant participation in the all-inclusive Made in Nova Scotia Process is one testimony of this attitude. Yet, both in and out of this forum, the Mi’kmaq have been keen to remind state and provincial governments that such complementarity needs to be grounded on the premise (and promise) of equal and leveled power status, rather than representing the concession to a reduced form of sovereignty, one where Mi’kmaq control and convenience are only allowed to exist as inversely proportional.

Notes

1. This paper utilizes the Francis/Smith orthography according to which the variant form Mi’kmaw plays two grammatical roles: (1) it is the singular of Mi’kmaq and (2) it is an adjective in circumstances in which it precedes a noun (e.g., Mi’kmaw people). See UNSI, CMM, NCNS 2007, 2.

2. The territory of Mi’kma’ki includes the current provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, as well as part of southern Quebec, part of Newfoundland, and part of northern Maine. In precontact times, Mi’kma’ki was divided into seven traditional districts. See Poliandri 2011 and Prins 1996 for more information.


5. See the Union website at http://www.unsi.ns.ca, and the Confederacy website at http://www.cmmins.com (both accessed September 2015). Recently, the Sipekne’katik First Nation (http://sipeknekatik.ca)—formerly known as Indian Brook First Nation—has left the Union of Nova Scotia Indians and has joined the Confederacy of Mainland Mi’kmaq.


11. Interview with Albert, 10 April 2004.

12. See Mattern 1999 for a discussion of the unifying role of the powwow.


14. The deal recognized a compensation of $10,000 for the first year spent in a residential school and an additional $3,000 for each subsequent year. Survivors who suffered physical and sexual abuse are also entitled to additional $5,000 to $275,000. Now survivors can opt out (and choose to sue the government and the churches) or accept compensation and give up rights to sue. The Court website for the settlement is available online at http://www.residentschoolsettlement.ca (accessed September 2015). See Niezen 2013, 43 and ff. for a detailed illustration of the settlement agreement and the compensation structure.

15. Fieldnotes.


19. See the Maupeltu T’an Telsutekek/Membertou Governance website, the official informative portal of the Membertou Governance Committee, at http://maupeltutantelsutekek.webs.com (accessed September 2015).


22. Recently, the Sipekne'katik (Indian Brook) First Nation's band council voted to withdraw from the Made in Nova Scotia Process for all treaty-related matters, which the band now negotiates individually with the federal and provincial governments. The Sipekne'katik First Nation remains at the table of negotiations alongside the other Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw bands for all non-treaty-related matters.


34. See the Governor-General of Canada’s Speech from the Throne of 3 March 2010, available online at http://www.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Documents/ThroneSpeech/40-3-e.html. A video recording of the speech is also available online at http://www.cbc.ca/video/#/undefined/ID=1430608778 (both accessed September 2015).

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