Building Common Ground: Complex multi-party governance of forests in Northwest Ontario, Canada

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ABSTRACT

The forests of Northwest Ontario, Canada are common property resources with an emerging and complex governance system involving industry and local, provincial, federal and First Nations governments. Matters are further complicated by recent shifts in the regional economy away from forest products. Additionally, movements towards inclusivity and collaboration have spurred several new partnerships for collaborative decision making respecting forests. In this context, the Common Ground Research Forum is investigating collaborative, cross-cultural governance and social learning in aid of sustainability. Our research within this forum aims to understand the complex, multi-party, cross-cultural governance systems that are developing in response to economic and societal transitions. Through the use of a learning approach to understanding complex partnership arrangements our paper explores how meaningful forms of collaboration have evolved, are maintained, and potentially affect the broader society, including reconciling past conflicts and wrongdoings in the Kenora region of Northwest Ontario. We focus on interconnected case studies that represent the movement toward collaboration. The cases involve the regional Grand Council of Treaty #3 First Nations, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, a First Nations owned and operated resource management corporation, as well as a forest product company that is 49% industry owned and 51% First Nations owned. Narrative analyses of 32 interviews are used as a way of understanding learning platforms and learning outcomes for governing forest resources and enhancing cross-cultural, collaborative relationships. Results are presented as key findings about structural governance arrangements, as well as the rules, norms, and relationships that maintain them.

Keywords: *collaboration, complexity, cross-cultural, forest governance, learning, reconciliation*

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INTRODUCTION

The focus of this paper is on novel and collaborative governance taking place in the forests covering a significant portion of the Treaty #3 area in Northwest Ontario, Canada. We understand governance the way it is defined by Kooiman (2003, p.4) as, "the totality of interactions, in which public as well as private actors participate, aimed at solving societal problems or creating societal opportunities". Further, we agree with Kooiman that institutions provide the context and establish the normative foundation for governance processes. Structurally, Kooiman (2003) describes first-order governance as problem solving and the creation of opportunities. Second-order governance is found in the individual characteristics and maintenance of institutions. Third-order or '*meta-governance*' accounts for the interactive and social-political framework, which is ultimately driven by the norms and values intrinsic to a governance system (Kooiman, 2003). Crawford & Ostrom (1995) speak of institutions in terms of the structures, rules, norms, and shared strategies affecting human actions and physical conditions. This broad definition is useful for recognizing that institutions are manifest in an array of social organizations – from formally enshrined entities, such as government agencies, to more loosely structured community groups involved in some form of collective action (Ostrom, 1990).

A collaboration is a particular type of institutional arrangement, and can be thought of as a horizontal form of multi-party participation in which the goal is equal influence in governance processes (Berkes, 2010). When collaboration happens in a meaningful way and includes key elements for long-term relationships, there is a greater chance that such partnerships will adapt over time to address issues in an effective and continuous manner (Berkes & Folke, 2004; Zurba et al., 2012). To this end, and in relation to collaborations that are cross-cultural, it is important to have mechanisms, such as deliberative and dialogical decision processes, that are capable of accommodating differing fundamental perspectives. Such mechanisms can contribute to equity within decision-making forums[3] and enhance the ability of local communities to influence policy at multiple levels of governance and different spatial scales (Zurba, 2009). Collaboration in this context can also be understood in terms of two main types. The first, a *collective*, can be defined as a group of individuals coming together to work towards a common interest or a shared goal (Ostrom, 2005). The second is a *conglomeration,* which is notably more complex because it is a group of different social organizations coming together, each having their own distinct institutions (norms, behaviours, structures, etc.) (Schlager & Ostrom, 1992).

Learning can also be central to equitable, cross-cultural, collaborative governance, but its impact depends on the extent to which the full array of governance actors is involved in the learning process (Bowen & Taillieu, 2004; Daniels, 1996; Rist et

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[3] Deliberative and dialogical processes can contribute to equity within decision-making forums, but we recognize that power imbalances among the parties pose formidable hurdles that require continuous reflection, attention and resolution (Masuda et al. 2006; Raik et al. 2006).

al. 2007).[4] We use learning as a lens for considering relationships among actors in the context of existing governance arrangements, as well as for determining how such cross-cultural collaborations can be achieved and sustained. A learning approach also enables us to reflect upon relationships within and between organizations. These relationships, where appropriate, will be understood as being personal in nature in addition to being institutional (including regulatory - discussed below). Further, recent relational dynamics will shed light on the complex arrangements guiding the regional collaborations discussed.

The purposes of this paper are, therefore, to: 1) Describe third-order governance by identifying the key actors and relationships involved in leading examples of shared land governance in the Kenora region; and 2) Begin to describe how relationships and learning contribute to cross-cultural collaborative forums through affecting first and second order governance.

STUDY AREA: NORTHWEST ONTARIO AND TREATY #3 LANDS

Before considering the details of new collaborative governance arrangements, it is important to provide some historical context for the factors that contributed to these new models (Willow, 2012). This initial discussion also provides insight on the relational dynamics that shaped these arrangements.

The history of colonization in Canada has set the stage for often-dramatic and on-going social-ecological transformations of commons (Greer, 2012). Northwest Ontario in particular was a focal point for this transformation due to being a main route for transportation and trade. In 1688, the French explorer Jaques De Noyon sighted the region as the first European. However, it was not until 1732 that major shifts began to occur with the establishment of the Fort St. Charles trading post. In 1836, the Hudson Bay Company, as an amalgamation of the Hudson Bay and the Northwest Companies, established a trading post at Old Fort Island in what is now the Treaty 3# area. This further catalyzed a scale of use and a movement of resources to support the fur trade. At this time, relationships between First Nations and the Canadian government intensified, and battles were being fought as the eastern provinces were being established.

With the changes in resource users and uses in northwest Ontario also came different forms of agreement between the First Nations and the new colonial government operating under the British crown. One of, if not the most important of such agreements to the First Nations of the region, was the signing of Treaty #3 in 1873, which took place at the Northwest Angle of the Lake of the Woods. The practice of treaty-making in Canada is grounded in the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which states that treaties would be made if 'Indian Nations were "inclined" to part with their land'

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[4] Here again we recognize the importance of addressing power imbalances to ensure equitable opportunities to shape learning processes and construct learning outcomes (Diduck 1999; Armitage et al. 2008).

(Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1996). However, Treaty #3 First Nations did not share this interpretation of the treaties. Instead, First Nations understood the treaties as the establishment of a sharing relationship - one that was expected to be reciprocal (Grand Council Treaty #3, 2011). This understanding was recorded for Treaty #3 in the Paypom document, which is a series of notes recording the treaty making process from the side of First Nations.

The area designated as Treaty #3 covers 55,000 square miles of land encompassing a large part Northwest Ontario, as well as a small portion of Southeast Manitoba (Figure 1). The Grand Council is a governance system for the Anishinaabe people led by the Grand Chief through the *Political Office of the Grand Council of Treaty #3*. The GCT3 has a current membership of 28 First Nations communities, and has a vision of "advancing the exercise of inherent jurisdiction, sovereignty, nation-building, and traditional governance with the aim to preserve and build the Anishinaabe Nation's goal of self-determination." The Grand Council of Treaty #3 did not give up the right to traditional self-governance in the signing of the treaty in 1873.
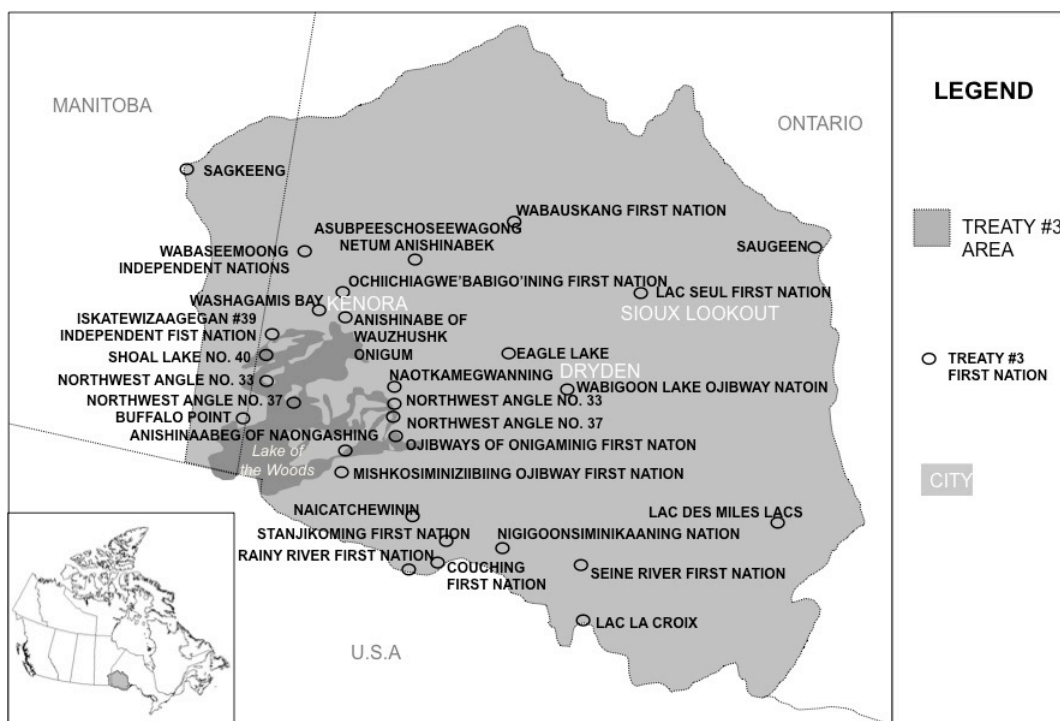

Figure 1. Study area including Treaty #3 lands, Treaty #3 First Nations, and local cities and political borders. (Source: elements obtained from Grassy Narrows map of Treaty #3 Area)

Treaty #3 leadership has the power to restructure initiatives and reallocate resources. The most recent Grand Chief was elected May 30, 2012, and he has a strong belief in the promotion of the spiritual laws of the Creator through *The Great*

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Earth Law – Manito Aki Inakonigaawin (Annishinaabemodaa language). However, decisions over how to manage the land, as well as how and whether to engage in agreements with resource development companies are up to the Chief and council of individual First Nations. Each First Nation also has different norms and desired protocols for how it should be consulted regarding resource development and other matters. This has the potential to make consultation complicated and challenging, especially for those who lack experience and pre-existing relationships in the community being consulted. This complexity highlights the importance of developing meaningful ways to communicate among organizations involved in the governance of forests in the Treaty #3 area.

Forests have always been central to livelihoods in this part of Northwestern Ontario. Davidson-Hunt (2003) describes the beginnings of industrial forestry in the Lake of the Woods area from colonial historical and Indigenous perspectives. The forestry industry formally began in the late 1870s-to-early 1880s with the building of the Keewatin sawmills. This development facilitated the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway in Kenora in 1882, and the forestry industry subsequently experienced a boom. Forests have continued to be the centre of industry in this part of Northwestern Ontario and have shaped the economy, allocation of lands, and the relationships between Indigenous peoples and settler populations since colonization. Several pulp and paper companies developed mills in the Kenora region, especially in the second half of the 20th century. However, 2005 marked a significant shift in development and the regional forestry economy when Abitibi Consolidated announced the permanent closure of its mill - the largest in the region. This was the catalyst for drastic change in the relationships in the governance of forests.

In the Province of Ontario, the regulatory relationships affecting forests are primarily administered by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR), which is vested with the authority to manage Crown forests through the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act* (CFSA). This Act came into effect in 1995 and guides forest planning, operations, information, licensing, trust funds, facilities, and remedies and enforcement (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2006). Sustainable Forest Licenses (SFLs) are given to forestry companies to manage Crown Forests on a five-year renewable basis for up to twenty years. The OMNR is also legally required to consult with First Nations on behalf the Crown as part of the procedures outlined in the department's forest management planning process. Through the Crown, the OMNR has the regulatory power and ultimate control over what is possible in terms of regional collaboration.

RESEARCH APPROACH

This research took place within the scope of the *Common Ground Research Forum* (CGRF)*,* a five-year, community-based project supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The CGRF is a partnership involving the University of Manitoba, the University of Winnipeg, the City of Kenora, three First Nations, the Grand Council of Treaty 3, and various other community organizations. The research forum is exploring social learning and collaboration in shared land governance

involving Anishinaabe (local Indigenous peoples) and settler communities (Sinclair et al., 2008).

The research utilized a case study strategy of inquiry. Cases were selected using three criteria: the cases had to be existing cross-cultural collaborations for governing land and resources; they had to be viewed as leading examples of such collaboration; and the main organizations in the cases had to be interested in generating further learning for on-going collaboration. Leading examples of collaboration were viewed as those involving a diversity of governance actors, including Aboriginal organizations and First Nations. Ultimately two case studies were selected, based on the criteria, and unanimous agreement that they were the most interesting examples of collaboration containing valuable learning for regional governance.

The cases were chosen through consultations, using semi-structured interviews, with selected key informants: a local historian and private consultant for First Nations; four managers with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources; and, two managers with the Grand Council Treaty #3. These individuals were selected because of their current roles and extensive experience in dealing with regional forms of consultation or collaboration. Once the cases were determined, information on key participants in the collaborations was gathered, and further interviews were initiated. Once interviews were conducted with these key participants, the data were supplemented with documentary data to determine the full array of the actors in the collaborations, and these become the participants in this study.

Broad questions about roles and responsibilities within the respective collaborations were asked at the beginning of the interviews. Questions about the establishment of governance arrangements, current governance dynamics, and hopes for future governance directions were then explored. These questions were pre-constructed, however participants could elaborate on areas that they felt were important. Participants were asked to reflect on cross-cultural collaboration, its effects on governance, and if it changed anything about their perspectives and their relationships while engaged in collaborative activities. Participants spoke of broad learning outcomes, gains and losses, challenges and conflict resolution, successful and unsuccessful processes, and areas that would require further learning. The interviewer also funneled questions to be more specific as the interview went on so that detailed data could be obtained (Wengraf, 2001). A total of 32 interviews were conducted.

In order to meet the first objective, relating to key actors and relationships in third-order governance, we used institutional mapping as an analytical tool. This allowed us to develop a visual representation of the parties involved and their respective institutional connections. This technique broadly defines roles and helps understand institutional relationships (Kane & Trochim, 2007). For the second objective – describing how relationships and learning contribute to first and second order governance – we used open, axial and selective coding (Merriam, 1998; Creswell, 2009) using *Atlas.ti*, a computer aided qualitative data analysis software package. Coding themes were derived from our theoretical frameworks and three broad parent categories were developed: governance, learning, and relationships. Free codes were also developed, meaning that they were frequently occurring topics within storylines that had not been

previously considered through the theory. Verification of the data was achieved through member checking (i.e., crosschecking using reiteration and paraphrasing) during the interviews (Creswell & Miller, 2000), as well as through triangulation with other key informants (Anfara Jr., Brown, & Mangione, 2002).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Key actors and relationships in third order governance

Our first case study focuses on Wincrief Forestry Products, a corporation that is 49 per cent owned by Moncrief Construction and 51 per cent owned by Wabaseemoong Independent Nations (hence the origin of the name: WIN+crief). Moncrief Construction, formed in 1967, is a family owned business that was started by Harold and Margaret Moncrief, and is also run by the three Moncrief sons, Gerry, Greg and Alf. Wabaseemoong Independent Nations encompass One Man Lake, Swan Lake, and Whitedog communities. The three communities became amalgamated as one band following flooding from hydroelectric development in the 1950s. The band has one elected chief, and is commonly known as the 'Whitedog First Nation' because that is the meaning of Wabaseemoong in Annishinaabemodaa, which is the Anishinaabe language. In this paper, we refer to the community, which is located 48 km northwest of Kenora, as Wabaseemoong.

Prior to entering into partnership with Wabaseemoong, Moncrief Construction was harvesting within the First Nation's traditional lands through forestry licenses administered by the OMNR. This was the origin of the relationship between the key actors in the collaboration. When Wabaseemoong first started working with Greg Moncrief (the son family member in charge of the harvesting side of Moncrief Construction), they had recently established their Traditional Land Use Area (TLUA) and TLUA committee. The Wabaseemoong TLUA is 6,720 square kilometers (2,600 square miles), covering three quarters of the Kenora Forest and portions of the Whiskey Jack Forest (Figure 2). The TLUA is defined in OMNR policy according to working circles. This is the way that the OMNR divides forest districts into sub-districts. Through the TLUA, Wabaseemoong has been collecting traditional ecological knowledge and mapping significant areas with GIS technology for the purposes of building capacity and engaging in planning and management with the Ontario government (Wabaseemoong Independent Nation, 2013).

Figure 2. The Kenora Forest and the Whiskey Jack Forests in relation to Treaty #3 territory.

Wabaseemoong's TLUA working circles administered by the OMNR provide Wincrief with its industrial wood supply. In 2004, a relationship-building period began between Greg Moncrief, the TLUA committee, and Chief Fisher of Wabaseemoong with the aim of developing employment opportunities for Wabaseemoong community members on their traditional lands. This partnership was solidified through a handshake between Greg Moncrief and Chief Fisher. In 2007, Al Wilcox, the new OMNR regional manager, encouraged and financially supported a trip for the partners (Greg Moncrief, and the Wabaseemoong Chief and Council) to go to Saskatchewan to observe what other First Nations were doing with ready to move housing projects that were supplying local First Nations. After this visit, Greg Moncrief and Chief Fisher decided that ready to move housing was the appropriate direction, and the Wincrief Homes company vision was established. The Wabaseemoong-Moncrief partnership was later formalized with the official opening of Wincrief Forest Products in July 2009. Wincrief is located in a 15,000 square-foot shop in Kenora, and continues to specialize in the construction of modular homes, with a recent expansion that includes a hydro pole peeling plant. Wincrief aims to provide employment to Wabaseemoong, and currently has three full-time workers from the community. Community employment is currently low at Wincrief compared to what it has been, with up to as many as twenty Wabaseemoong members working there at one time. This change is partially due to lowered production rates, but further inquiry is necessary to fully determine the reasons for the reduction.

The governance structure at Wincrief is built around the almost equal corporate partnership (51/49 percent split) as well as previously established personal relationships (Figure 3). Wincrief has a Board of Directors and decisions are made through voting. The Board includes two members of Wabaseemoong and two members from Moncrief Construction. The CEO of Wincrief, who is Greg Moncrief, makes decisions about day-to-day activities. The president of the board is a forestry professional from Wabaseemoong. The slightly higher portion of First Nations ownership of the corporation was established so that it would be more likely that applications could be made to government sources for funding allocated to First Nations. Reflecting on our definitions for governance and collaboration, the structure described here can be considered as a *conglomerate*. It involves two interlinked and yet relatively independent (and formal) institutions, coming together to establish a new collaborative entity with formalized rules. The third-order governance framework includes the administrative and regulatory jurisdiction of the OMNR.
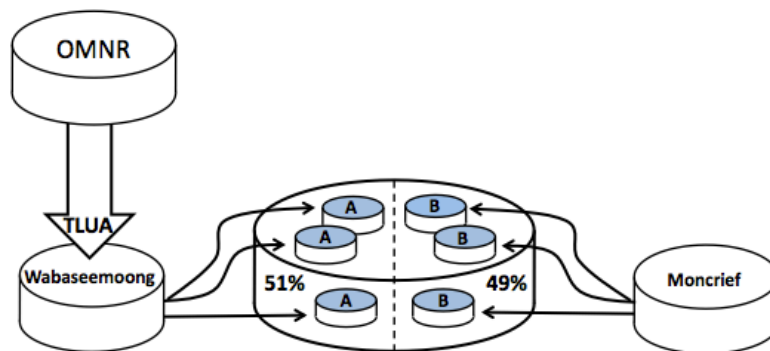

Figure 3. Third-order governance framework for Wincrief Forest Products. The large disk with several smaller ("A" & "B") disks indicates the board level where decision making happens.

The second case study focuses on the Miitigoog General Partner Inc., which involves local First Nations and industry partners. In Annishinaabemodaa, *Miitigoog* is the forest itself. As in the first case, the main corporate entity is a collaborative endeavor. The partnership, established in 2010, holds an SFL for the 1.2 million-hectare Kenora Forest (Figure 2). The SFL was originally held by the Trus Joist Kenora operations branch of Weyerhaeuser, but was transferred to Miitigoog in 2010. Miisun was formed to oversee Miitigoog's Kenora Forest SFL, and to direct the management activities in southern portions of the Whiskey Jack Forest (under contract from the OMNR which continues to hold the SFL).

The Miitigoog Shareholder Agreement describes the company structure as well as the types of shareholders, their roles, and the terms of their shares. *Class A*

Common Shares are unlimited, are redeemable and retractable, and are to only be issued to the First Nations Trust. The First Nations Trust is a partnership of First Nations that have individual claims to the Kenora and/or Whiskey Jack Forests. The Trust has goals of expanding within the Treaty #3 area, and has been increasing membership accordingly. During the first two years of operations, the Trust expanded to include three other First Nations, which were signed in through ceremony November 6, 2012. These are the Ojibways of Onigaming First Nation, Northwest Angle # 33, and the Anishnabeg of Naongashing. Miisun is directly involved in communications and recruitments of First Nations Trust members. Class A shares must at all times be equal to *Class B Common Shares*, which belong to and are issued to parties that hold a Forest Resource Planning Facility License issued by the Minister of Natural Resources. These are the larger industry partners. *Class C Common Shares* are issued to those who have overlapping licenses on the Kenora Forest, namely those companies represented by the Kenora Independent Loggers Association.

The Minister has the power to change the language and the rules set out in the SFL through amendments, which are noted in the appendices of the license (Minister of Natural Resources, 2013). The license is valid until 2022, but is subject to a five-year review and renewal cycle. The Shareholder Agreement can only be amended, as outlined in Article 26, if there is unanimous approval. Dispute resolution rules are set out in Article 23, and contemplate use of a mutually agreed upon independent mediator when necessary. With regards to the First Nations Trust, it was pre-decided that the Grand Council for Treaty #3 would become involved if disputes could not be resolved internally.

During the initial negotiations of the arrangement, it was determined by the partners that there would be an equal (50-50) number of shareholders with board-level decision-making authority coming from First Nations and industry (Figure 4). During the first year after signing, the Miitigoog board met every month, every two months the second year, and now meets on a quarterly basis. Decision making is done at the board level through consensus. The board has an independent chair selected by the founding members. The chair has a legal background and was selected because he had experience working in cross-cultural settings, had a meaningful connection to the forest from his youth, has Ojibway ancestry, and had dealt with First Nations cases, such as the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. Miitigoog is an example of a complex conglomeration involving different institutional types and scales, including communities, corporations, and governments (First Nations). The new partners to the First Nations Trust will be entering the governance system once the rotation of seats at the board level is determined.
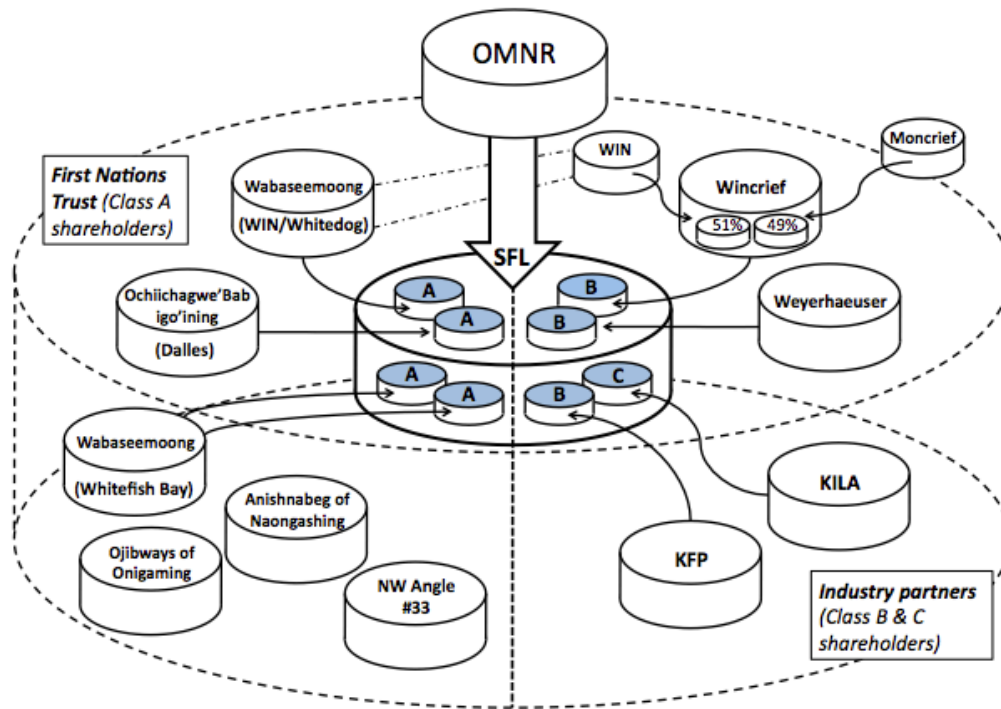
Figure 4. The Miitigoog General Partner Inc. as a nested third-order governance framework. The larger dashed 'disk' illustrates the Miitigoog shareholders. The solid 'disk' with shaded smaller 'disks' represents the board level, indicating the classes of the shareholders (i.e. A, B & C). The original First Nations parties to the agreement were Wabaseemoong (a.k.a., Whitedog), Naotkamegwanning First Nation (a.k.a., Whitefish Bay), and Ochiichagwe'Babigo'ining Ojibway Nation (a.k.a., Dalles). The originating industry partners are Weyerhaeuser, Kenora Forest Products (KFP), Wincrief Forestry Products, and the Kenora Independent Loggers Association (KILA). Other First Nations have recently joined the First Nations Trust, but are not yet part of the Miitigoog board.

While the OMNR does not have decision-making authority within Miitigoog, they often join board meetings in order to provide guidance and make sure that their legal obligations are being met through the partnership agreement. Many board members expressed that OMNR managers played an important role in keeping parties at the table, especially in the early days when Miitigoog was taking shape and disagreements were more common. OMNR managers also had key information about what was possible in terms of the provincial policies. A direct example of this is that the Ontario government is the holder of power in this collaborative system through the granting and renewal of the SFL. In a practical sense, the Ontario government can disrupt the agreement through reforming the SFL. During the past few years, Ontario has been undergoing a move towards centralization, and many fear that future tenure reforms could shift decision-making authority away from local initiatives like this one and

towards government offices in Toronto, Ontario. Individuals involved in Miitigoog have been fighting around this potential tenure reform with government officials. Miitigoog has been given five years to demonstrate successful collaboration, or could face dismantling of its SFL.

The importance of relationships in first and second order governance

Results on first and second order governance are preliminary and will be investigated further. However, it is clear that the collaborative, third order governance frameworks described above allowed people to build relationships and learn in the process of forest management. Essentially, through learning, we can begin to understand first and second order governance as those attributes that initiate and maintain collaboration. Here we present some initial findings about relationships and how they have led to the creation of opportunities, and have contributed to maintaining collaboration. In the context of the study area, it is important that attention be drawn once again to the nature of Treaty #3 and its interpretations and the community relationships that have emerged. These relationships are integral to the type and quality of interactions that can be achieved in the collaborative space. Here we briefly introduce the different kinds of relationships that make up collaboration (both institutional and interpersonal).

In the case of Wincrief, learning about relationships was initially centered on the two key individuals from each side of the partnership, namely Greg Moncrief and Wabaseemoong's Chief Fisher. It was a pragmatic business choice for them to come together, however both participants spoke to the importance of the interpersonal relationship and the trust built during the time when they first started finding opportunities through working together. This contributed to the establishment of first-order governance in the case of Wincrief.

It started off with knowing that there is mutual benefit but very shortly thereafter it turned into mutual respect and respect as everybody knows, you earn that over time. That is the key. That says it in a nutshell. If the communities have no respect for you or trust, those two words will come up all the time. Respect for the members, respect for the land, the animals, the tree. You have to - that's how it's built. Over the years it's had it's ups and downs but the relationships with myself and Chief Fisher has never waivered.

– Greg Moncrief; CEO Wincrief Forest Products

It was all different now that it had to be mechanical. So what I did was I looked at the other cutting areas and other partners out there that I could partner up with and the best person that I've seen and had really good comments with was with Greg Moncrief, so I think that's how we approached each other for the opportunity. We had a handshake agreement originally is how we started off. We started off with road

clearing on the sites...So I think just recently we finally; originally the partnership was just based on a handshake and trust between the two of us. That trust grew to a point where we did want to put something down on paper and develop a licensed company.

– Chief Eric Fisher; Wabaseemoong Independent Nations; Wincrief Forest Products

The quotes from the Wincrief partners reflect how important relationships are to them, and how their relationship helped build confidence that a legally binding form of collaboration could work. Similarly, the idea for Miitigoog came through dialogue and pre-existing relationships between several partners. Key actors in the partnership found that exploring collaboration through conversations in an informal setting was an ideal venue for determining common visions, intentions, and expected outcomes of collaboration.

Miitigoog was originally founded in a boat. We were fishing with a number of the different parties talking about how things needed to be different. We wanted to move forward together - to change how things were being done at that time. There were some logging contractors, ourselves, and some First Nations. From there we had many discussions and changed the way forest management was handled in our area. As you can see today those discussion led to something that is quite different.

– Mike Dietsch; Operations Manager at Trus Joist Kenora, Weyerhaeuser

Friendship was an important theme in the data, as was how shared tacit experiences contributed to both the creation of opportunities and the maintenance of institutions (i.e., first and second-order governance). The relationships we heard about were nuanced, deep and complicated in addition to being encapsulated by terms used in regulatory relations, such as regulator, forest license holder and the like. Several of the learning moments that were reflected upon by the participants occurred several years prior to coming to the collaboration - some as long ago as during childhood. In relation to reconciliation of past wrongdoings, this kind of learning[5] can be explored as being a key element to meaningful and enduring collaboration. One Anishinaabe key informant involved in both Wincrief and Miitigoog reflected on this:

Yeah, I've worked with guys from Weyerhaeuser and Miisun and they're my fishing buddies now. I come out here to fish with them, they come out there to fish with me.

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[5] The type of learning described here is often conceived of as a disruption of received or indirect knowledge (Mezirow, 1991; Jansen, 2009).

Some of the one's that had become my friends I know that they wouldn't lie to me just to cut more trees. I think it's when you build that friendship - if there's something that they don't like and I don't know about then they'll tell me.

- Marvin McDonald; Wabaseemoong Independent Nations, President at Wincrief, and participant on the Miitigoog board

Similarly, industry partners reflected on pre-existing relationships as creating a solid foundation for discussing collaboration. Stories about friendships on both sides of the collaboration were often reflected through humorous events shared among actors. The following quote indicates that the person the participant was speaking about realized that invitation to spend social time together was eventually going to lead to talk about business, but that there was also a good sense of camaraderie between them. The participant felt their relationship had a significant affect on the communications leading to collaboration.

Building relationships is the key to success and truly understanding the desires of all participants. If you don't build the relationships then you'll only ever see a tiny bit.

- Mike Dietsch; Operations Manager at Trus Joist Kenora, Weyerhaeuser

This participant also spoke how relationships outside of structured settings can contribute creativity in the development of collaborative governance. This was also spoken of in terms of easing communications.

When you think about it many places have retreats. They try and go offsite where they can concentrate on the task at hand and try and move towards that. They also try and go to a location that can hopefully spur on some creativity to work through their tasks. The other key piece of those sessions is to develop the relationship so you can have those discussions. I can say that the majority of our structured sessions in developing today's model did take place in meeting rooms. However there were also lots of conversations outside the structured sessions. There were several one on one discussions, group meetings, dinners and lunches. Today's design would not have been possible without those additional sessions.

Employees of Wincrief and Miisun, the businesses created through collaboration, were also important to the maintenance and development of their respective institutions. The building of trust and personal accountability was important for Miisun staff working

on bringing First Nations into the First Nations Trust. The following person spoke to the importance of having First Nations liaisons that can overcome communication obstacles.

Here at the liaison department we've recently added two more First Nations employees and I think this is the best approach because I've identified these individuals and I know where these individuals come from. We've been having communications obstacles so I try to have any means as an in so I can talk to them and say that we're actually helping your First Nation, employing your members and that way they have something. We're giving them something for their time and cooperation.

- Daniel Wemigwans; Anishinaabe Resource Liaison, Miisun Resource Management Company

Other Miisun staff reflected on the importance of developing relationships through communication with First Nations communities that might be interested in joining the First Nations Trust, or that might be affected by forest operations under the Miitigoog SFL.

It takes a lot more involvement to get people to talk about what you wanted to talk about as soon as you sat down and said "Hi, I'm Bob and here's my forest management plan". There's a lot more relationship building. Some of the work that Conrad was doing, he was in Daniel's role before him, he said I go talk to the elders and you may have it down that I'm supposed to speak to three in a day. I may get through half and then I go back another time and they say, "Now I remember this other story I wanted to tell you". So it doesn't follow that kind of strict project management kind of style that they want in a government manual.

- Bob Boyce; Management Forester, Miisun Resource Management Company

A manager at Grand Council Treaty #3 also spoke to the quality of communication between Miisun and the Grand Council office due to a familiarity with a key individual responsible for communications between the two organizations.

We've been pretty fortunate that one of their current employees is one of our past employees. Daniel, we talk to him just about every week.

Relationships were essential for communicating the values and essence of collaboration amongst the different actors, thus contributing to the emergence and dynamics of governance arrangements. Interpersonal relationships were important for initiating collaboration and developing creative thinking about the equitable institutional structures, rules and norms. Relationships were based on the third order governance frameworks, but were also reflective of deeper interpersonal qualities such as friendship or basic camaraderie between those who share the decision-making space. The next phase of this research will investigate the nuances of first and second-order governance through exploring deeper learning narratives about the factors contributing to and preventing collaboration.

CONCLUSIONS

The serious downturn in the forest industry in the first decade of the twenty-first century spurred key governance actors to think creatively, led organizations to reposition themselves in terms of power and authority, and resulted in the development of innovative institutional arrangements. Two leading examples of shared land governance that have emerged in the Kenora region are interconnected collaborations taking the form of *conglomerations*. Wincrief Forest Products and the Miitigoog Partnership represent a significant shift away from the predominant arrangements of the past in which the Crown primarily supported large companies in the pursuit of industrial forestry. This shift signifies a movement towards greater collaboration and equity amongst industry and Aboriginal partners – a movement that hopefully will take hold and have time to mature. In the Kenora region, the shift was manifest in the establishment of multi-layered, third-order governance structures framed by complicated legal arrangements and driven by economic development. It was also evident in various factors contributing to first and second-order governance. A preliminary analysis revealed the importance of factors such as the recognition of shared problems and opportunities, pre-existing interpersonal relationships founded on trust, and emergent interpersonal and institutional relationships growing from collaboration. The quality of those relationships was important in both of the cases, highlighting a significant difference between the former regulatory SFL relationships between industry and the Crown.

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