

UGSM-Monarch Business School

Doctoral Dissertation Proposal

Social Responsibility and the Crees of Eeyou Istchee James Bay, Quebec:
The Development of a Holistic Model and Integrated Approach

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THESIS ABSTRACT

The James Bay Cree of Northern Quebec, an aboriginal society of hunter-gatherers, live within an environment that has sustained their populations for thousands of years. During the 1970's, an area of 133,000 square miles (three times the size of New York State) was designated for development. (Richardson, 1991, p. 20)

The Quebec provincial government, at that time under the administration of Premier Robert Bourassa, envisioned large hydroelectric power installations; the plan would create damming of waterways and the flooding of large areas of land. At the time of the development announcement no roads existed in the territory and the waterways within the Cree environs were used for transportation. The Cree used trap lines i.e., land areas that remain to this day classified among family groups, which form an integral link between the Cree and the land. To prevent exploitation of their food supply and ensure reliable seasonal hunting individual families managed their trap line lands.

The James Bay Cree, who today continue to harvest wildlife and fish, make clothing, and take part in traditional activities based on their way of life on the land and rivers, identified the proposed development as a threat to their society. (Coon Come, 2004; Feit H. A., 1995; Richardson, 1991) The James Bay Northern Quebec Cree defended their rights with regard to the land in the year 1975. Subsequently, the courts stopped the development from proceeding on a temporary basis. The injunction to halt development was eventually overturned by the provincial court and the hydroelectric

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dams and related impacts from construction in the north proceeded (Miller J. R., 2010, p. 260).

In 1975 the Cree signed a historical agreement that is called the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement (JBQNA). This agreement formed the basis of a nation-state (Canada) versus aboriginal-nation (Cree Nation) relationship over the last four decades. The Crees began to assert their rights, and on the basis of the agreement they have emerged within Canada's aboriginal populations as a modern society while continuing to practice their traditional ways of life (JBNQA, 1976, p. 453).

Given the above-mentioned influences and historical imperatives of the Cree Nation, it is possible to believe that continued development by Euro-Canadian interests might continue to create societal imbalances and pressures that will need to be controlled and managed by both internal and external stakeholders. The research contemplated in this proposal is designed to examine and address this very important consideration.

The following quote illustrates the above sentiment:

“The quest for power is a metaphor the Cree might use for the life of a hunter; it is also a metaphor Euro-Canadians might use for the goals of both northern developers and government bureaucracies.” (Feit, 1995, p. 20)

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The aim of this research is to bring increased attention and understanding to the processes and mechanisms behind the interaction of the Cree Nation and external stakeholders with respect to corporate social responsibility within the context of future development of Cree communities as well as providing a focus on the social responsibility of the Cree toward their own constituents. The intent is to build a holistic model that identifies the interactions and mechanisms and that will define both Euro-Canadian stakeholder contributions to the above while also identifying the specific needs of the Cree Nation in relation to their future socio-economic development.

THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

In keeping the above issues in mind the thesis will attempt to answer the following specific research question:

“What are the processes and mechanisms employed by both internal and external stakeholders of the Cree Nation with respect to the social responsibility to safeguard the traditional culture (of the Cree) in view of continued development post the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement. (JBNQA, 1976)”

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Sub Research Questions

In order to address the main research question in a thorough manner, two sub-questions are introduced. Each question takes a unique perspective and discusses its implications from that perspective.

Sub-Research Question 1: (Outside-In View)

Sub-research question #1 takes an outside-in perspective from the point of view of the Cree when addressing the main research question. It focuses on the main external stakeholders and their interaction with the Cree Nation with respect to cultural preservation and development.

“What are the CSR policies, procedures and actionable outcomes that are implemented by the main external stakeholders (corporations and governments) operating in the traditional Cree land territories?”

Sub-Research Question #2: (Inside-Out View)

Sub-Research Question #2 takes an inside-out perspective from the point of view of the Cree when addressing the main research question. It focuses on the Cree and how they address their own social responsibilities with regards to the introduction of commercial demands on their land and culture.

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“What are the measures that can be implemented on the part of the Cree Nation to safeguard their traditions, heritage and identity over time with respect to the continued introduction of commercial demands and development by outside stakeholders within their territories?”

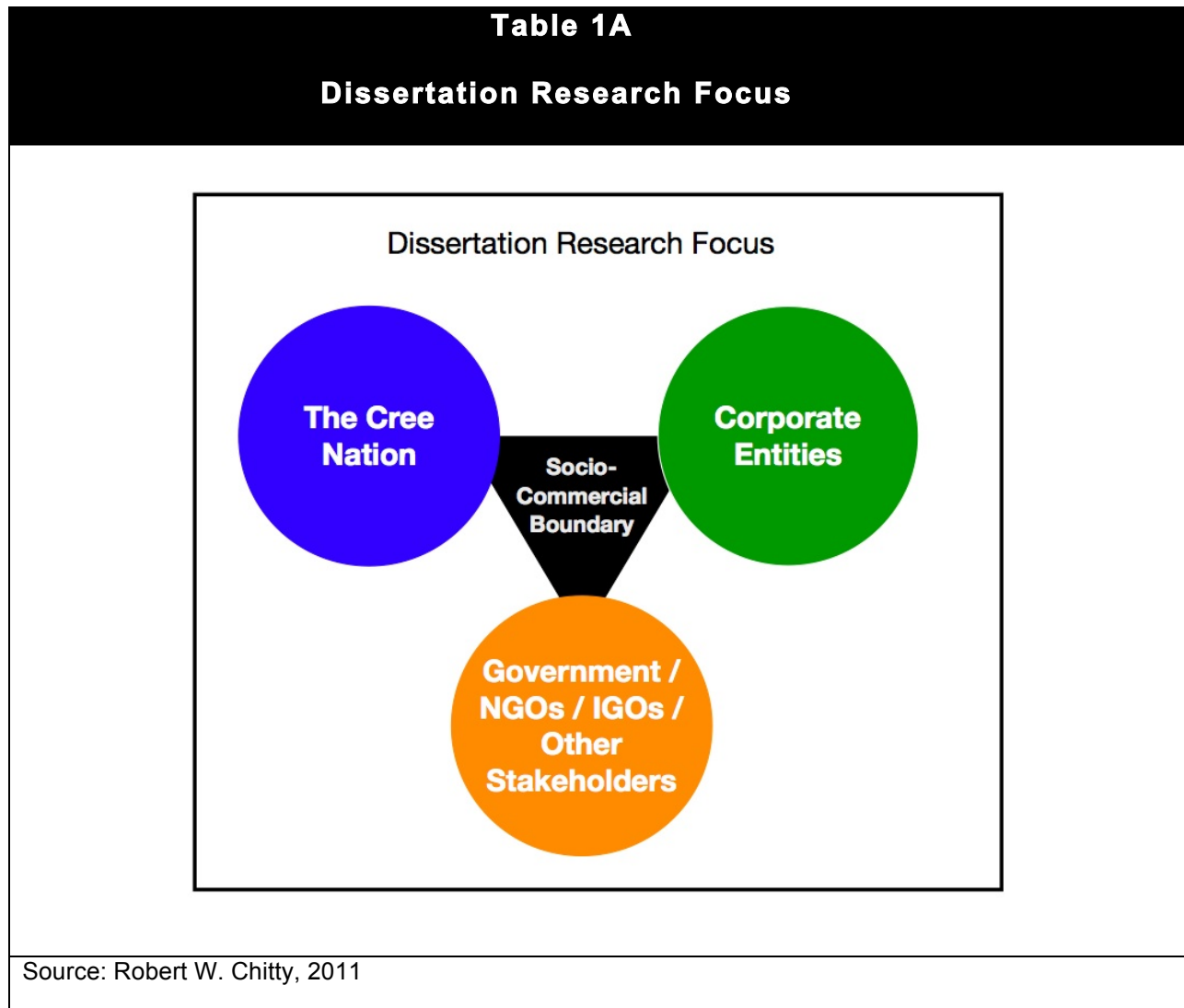
Research Relevance

The relevance of the research is to support and inform the definition and framework of the main research question:

1. Discover to what extent northern developers in the region have defined their commitment to corporate social responsibility with respect to the Cree Nation in so far as stated policies and actionable outcomes may be identified and processes, practices and mechanisms may be observed;
2. Discover to what extent the governing body of the Cree Nation have defined their commitment to the social responsibility of their community with respect to their future development in so far as it is affected by external stakeholders;
3. Define the major historical event time line and progress of CSR with regards to Northern development as occurred within the James Bay Crees' categories of land both pre and post the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement.

A New Interactive Model

The scope and focus of the study will be to develop a new interactive model that combines the above two perspectives taking into consideration all stakeholders involved within the framework of a descriptive model. Elucidation of the extent that this has occurred and the historical effects and precedents will also be identified in order to lay a foundation for the development of a more prescriptive framework.



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It is hoped that the results of the study may contribute to a clearer consideration of the processes, mechanisms and leading practices at the socio-commercial boundary between the Cree Nation, corporations who develop in Aboriginal lands, and other important external stakeholders, such as: government, IGOs and NGOs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The thesis will be grounded in the scholarly literature of the seminal writers within the discipline of corporate social responsibility and Aboriginal Studies. The literature review section will present a general overview of what the literature domain reveals with respect to elucidating the main and sub level research questions. General themes covered within the seminal literature revolve around the topics of:

1. Historical context of the early and modern era concerning European impact toward ancient civilization;
2. Ideology relating to corporate social responsibility, and management theory pertaining to development within Aboriginal categories of land;
3. James Bay Northern Quebec Crees quest for preservation of their culture in the face of invasive institutional and geo-political development;
4. Emergent levels of commitment and balance between stakeholders and resulting implications and outcomes.

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Important authors that are noted within the above domains that will be specifically discussed within the Literature Review Section include: Jim Collins, Harvey Feit, Matthew Coon Come, Boyce Richardson, Brian Craik, Ted Moses, J.R. Miller, David Denton, Bernard Allaire, Archie Carroll, Donna Wood, Edward Freeman, William Frederick, Thomas Donaldson, Wade Davis, Keith Penner, John Ciaccia, David Suzuki and Justice Berger.

OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN HISTORICAL INFLUENCES ON THE CREE NATION

Since the arrival of the first Europeans to North America, the culture of the indigenous peoples, as exemplified through the study of the Cree Nation, have been affected by several important developments. A short overview of the major influences that will be further studied within the context of the dissertation research is found below.

European Arrival and Integrative Approach with First Nations

The Cree Nation is known to be one of the oldest cultural societies still present in North America. Their people in various communities have lived on the land for thousands of years. This is exemplified in the following quote:

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“And then of course at the end of the food chain came the men - Cree hunters who moved into the forest 1000 or 2000 years after the retreat of the ice, and have been their ever since.” (Richardson B. , 1991, p. 4)

The above quote by Richardson clearly illustrates that the Cree Nation moved into its ancestral lands very early in the development of North America after the end of the last ice age. The historical imperative demonstrating the right to claim the land of the James Bay Area is well documented by several authors (Coon Come, In the Way of Development, 2004; Feit H. , 1995; Miller, 2009)

Aboriginal society and European settlers, from their first encounters, have experienced an integrative relational dynamic. Accounts of newcomer expedition to aboriginal territories during the 16th Century and forward define a period of synchronized relations built on overarching requirement of the newcomers to achieve their expansionist objectives. The early objectives included empire growth, trade route discovery and resource extraction in support of enterprising market demand. The Hudson Bay Company of British ownership established a beachhead in the years 1668/69 at Fort Rupert along the banks of the Rupert River on the east side of James Bay. Today the community of Waskaganish is located at the former site of Fort Rupert. HBC formed alliances with the James Bay Northern Quebec Crees, integrating trade based on harvesting and processing fur-bearing animals. The alliance established an interdependent commerce between the newcomers and the Crees that supported economic growth and benefits to both participants. The French and British explorers

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aligned with indigenous populations managing activities that supported fur trade commerce, fish harvesting, and settlement. (Allaire, 2004; Miller, 2009)

The French and British settlers interacted with the Algonkians and the Iroquis who within their societies consisted of a large number of nation tribes. The newcomers could not achieve their objectives without aboriginal people aligned and leading as partners. Aboriginal people understood survival and climatic conditions, navigation, sustainable harvesting techniques, and knowledge of adversarial risk in different forms. This period defines elements of socio-economic intent among different cultural groups that was fundamental to obtaining specific outcomes, as exemplified in the following quotes:

“An unarmed warrior stated his relationship to the land: This island of which I speak, I consider my body; I don’t want one of my legs or arms to be taken from me”. (Miller J. R., 2010, p. 121)

“He preferred to be involved upstream at the level of fur trading, less out of search for profit and more out of necessity. For the newcomers this activity was essential for continued exploration of the country and for obtaining information about the geography from the Aboriginals. In The Compagnie du Canada for example, Champlain was but one participant among many, and the only

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advantage that he allowed himself was trade conducted in the new territories he visited". (Allaire B. , 2004, p. 57)

The contributions of Aboriginal Peoples and their support of the Europeans jointly in their quests to achieve specific objectives provides the basis for how relations evolved. Protocols and other activities were implemented at the onset by both the Aboriginal Peoples and Europeans. Protocols between nations remain symbolic of diplomacy and the level of engagement and intent toward trade, progress and advancement. Levels of commitment to corporate social responsibility elucidate benchmarks that define progress and evolution within civilization . (Allaire, 2004; Miller J. R., 2010)

The above mentioned historical context between Aboriginal peoples and the newcomers set precedents that in recent times were unacceptable to the Crees; this galvanized their resolve to enshrine their rights, and protect their traditional way of life. In Canada in 1975 the Crees endorsed the first modern treaty known as the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement. (JBNQA, 1976)

Ideology Defined: Corporate Social Responsibility

The James Bay Cree of Northern Quebec reside on the Western coast and inland territories of James Bay. This area within the province of Quebec, Canada has sustained the Cree hunter-gatherer way of life since time immemorial. The river

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network within their territories forms a large watershed that flows westerly into the James Bay water basin. After centuries of development and treaty creation in Canada's southern urban demographic, development organizations determined that a large potential enterprise existed through damming the rivers within the Cree territories. The framework and protocols that enabled the development organizations and the Crees to achieve these objectives was what formed the first modern treaty in Canada. (JBNQA, 1976)

The treaty is known as the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement. The Cree endorsed the JBNQA agreement in 1975 but the development organizations failed to meet the commitments of the agreement. This was an important milestone relating to frameworks of Corporate Social Responsibility, and how an appreciation of CSR was not integral to the developer/governing organizations of the day. The Cree response was to challenge and pursue settlement from the development organizations for over four decades. The Cree eventually settled the agreement in 2008. They used a range of tactics to defend their rights, including public relations strategies, stakeholder alliances and staging of events. Court cases and other legal procedures were brought to action to gain settlements. (Miller, 2009; Craik, 2004; Coon Come, In the Way of Development, 2004)

According to Brian Craik, policies within modern treaty obligations are not inclusive to those in the way of development.

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“The Canadian policy is one of maintaining the status quo. Rather than bringing Aboriginal communities into the revenue streams created by the development that surrounds them, and rather than recognizing the interests of Aboriginal peoples in the development, the Aboriginal-claims policy promotes one-time payments and asks Aboriginal peoples to accept exclusion. (Craik, 2004, p. 184)

The Grand Chief Matthew Coon Comes, leadership provides testimony and facts regarding the Crees’ circumstances within the James Bay region.

“Thousand of jobs have been created for non-Aboriginal Quebecers as a result of the extraction of resources from our traditional lands. In contrast, as I have indicated, few jobs have gone directly to Crees, in spite of treaty promises that we would have priority for these positions and for contracts in Eeyou Istchee”.
(Coon Come, 2004, p. 162)

As a result of actions and concerted focus and effort of The Grand Council of the Crees administration in responding to developer organization impacts successive and cumulative gains have been obtained.

“These changes were possible because the Cree opposition to earlier development projects had convinced governments of their capacity to oppose government-sponsored development projects effectively. In this sense, being in

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the way of development has made possible more effective negotiations and relations". (Craik, 2004, p. 185)

Cultural Ideology Vector Introduced to Invasive Development

Over the last four decades, the James Bay Northern Quebec Cree of Eeyou Istchee have contended with developer and governing organization expansion within their territories. The largest segment of development includes hydro electric publicly-owned utilities, pulp and paper companies as well as mining companies. The province of Quebec formed the James Bay Development Corporation that resulted in the James Bay Crees becoming a special colony inside the territories that the corporation prescribed jurisdiction. The James Bay Development Corporation known as Bill 50 gave developers the control to develop Natural Resources with impunity or without regard to the needs of the Cree. (Rynard, 2000; Feit, 1995; Richardson, 1991).

The Cree introduced regimes for ensuring the preservation and regulation of uncontrolled development. The early developments brought limited provision for protection of ecosystems, sustainable forestry and techniques that effected negative impact on the land and waterways. Since impacts from development were first initiated, advances including improved stewardship, governance and sustainable development have occurred. The Cree have oversight on their categories of land; they assert their control in these jurisdictions to balance the expansion and environmental

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impact of developer and governing organizations (Richardson, 1991; Feit H. A., 1995;
Craik, 2004)

“This approach cannot last forever. I know that my people, the James Bay Crees, do not intend merely to survive in the face of mega-development. We intend to ensure that it takes place only under conditions that are environmentally sustainable, consistent with our human rights, and equitable in a way that benefits our people. We are no longer going to tolerate our exclusion. We will insist at last that we are still here, that we will be here for generations to come, and that we intend to share equitably in the benefits of the land”. (Coon Come, 2004, p. 163)

Corporate Social Responsibility relating to the James Bay Cree of Eeyou Istchee was not evident in the beginning stages of development and due to the Crees’ intervention was applied in varying levels from the mid 1970’s to present. The integration of Corporate Social Responsibility and practical outcomes is the focus of this research and will elucidate core aspects of strengths as well gaps. The research will define perspectives and factual results of Corporate Social Responsibility relating to the social, environmental and economic impacts on the Cree since the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement took place in 1975.

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Aboriginal People and Traditions Versus Corporation Power and Profits.

As mentioned earlier, ancient civilizations such as the James Bay Crees of Eeyou Istchee have evolved practicing their way of life since before European contact. Cultural identity, rights, land, among other attributes are principal among Cree beliefs. These core constructs overlapping with the expansionist technological developer society is the nexus where corporate social responsibility is envisioned for positive change. Change within Aboriginal societies has occurred at a rapid pace as transformative events within urban demographics have had far reaching impacts into their regions and remote territories. The research will assemble the key elements that have established a platform for the James Bay Crees of Eeyou Istchee in preserving their way of life and building governance that regulates levels of stewardship that impacts positively within their nation. (Davis W. , 2009)

The following reference about nationalist ethic, an ethic that is emergent over time yet lacked empathy regarding Aboriginal societies is shown below. Societies who have residency upon the lands, lands core to their identity and existence, were for all sakes and purposes excluded from this ethic.

“It was this nationalist ethic, harnessed to a technological dream, which the Indians and Inuit now had to fight. The construction of big dams and the generation behind them of electricity from the waters of the teeming rivers of Quebec were the major economic achievements of the Quebecois in the

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1960s, and the James Bay hydro electric project, which the Indians were now opposing, was merely more of the same thing: from its inception it had been clothed by political leaders in the rhetoric of national development”.

(Richardson, 1991, p. 22)

Literature Review Summary

Given the above outline of issues it is shown that further investigation and study with regards to the stated research question has both societal, cultural imperative and academia worth and merit. It is concluded that the above has been an understudied area that lacks significant focus particularly among management scholars.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The thesis research methodology will be qualitative by way of a phenomenological research approach making use of semi-structured interviewing in order to be able to isolate the main aspects and influences that are found both affecting and being affected by the main stakeholders within a social responsibility paradigm. These main stakeholders are identified as: corporations, (quasi)-governmental agencies and the Cree.

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Research participants will be chosen from the following four main study groups:

- Grand Council of the Cree Leadership: elders from the community;
- Corporate Leadership: from those companies actively developing Cree land, in specific: Hydro Quebec, Mining and Pulp and Paper sectors;
- Government Leadership: Ministers and senior government officials within provincial and federal governments as well as high ranking civil servants within inter-governmental organizations;
- NGO Leadership: Senior participants of non-governmental organizations that operate or oversee the operations of corporations and governments within the discussed territory.

Research in the form of qualitative analysis will be conducted in the following manner

Primary Interview Methodology: The general strategy for the interviews is to follow a qualitative approach using the semi-structured methodology where broad questions are posed permitting free-flowing responses by interviewees. This methodology is considered most appropriate in order to capture subtle meanings and personally-held beliefs and to avoid imposing external thought complexes on participants. All interviews will be captured using video recording equipment.

Follow-up Interviews: There will be at least one round of follow up interviews with the interviewees to discuss extraneous findings, to receive feedback and to further clarify

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assumptions supporting the development of paradigmatic findings. These interviews may be video recorded or manually transcribed depending on the constraints at the time.

Research Plan

Participant interviews are scheduled to take place over a one-month period scheduled for June 2012, for approximately 1 hr and 30 min in length each at a location that is amenable to the participants. Interviews will be conducted in urban locations within the Cree territories in the northern areas of the province of Quebec.

Research Budget

The total cost of the research is estimated to be approximately \$50,000.00 Canadian. The author will fund these costs privately. No scholarly or governmental grants will be sought or used in carrying out the research. No extra supervisory costs or other costs are being requested from UGSM-Monarch Business School. The budget is presently fully funded and research may begin immediately.

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Dissertation Research Budget	
Item	Cost CDN \$
Flights	\$25,000.00
Accommodations	\$5,000.00
Vehicle Rental	\$2,500.00
Meals – 15 Days @ \$25.00 x 2 Researchers	\$1,000.00
Video Equipment Rental	\$ 2,500.00
Video Post-Production Expense	\$5,000.00
Reproduction Expense – Questionnaires & Transcripts	\$500.00
Reproduction Express – Manuscript Copies X 4 Hardbound	\$500.00
Qualitative Analysis Software	\$200.00
Miscellaneous Supplies & Other Costs	\$1,000.00
Total Approximate Costs	\$50,000.00
The above cost represents a general estimate of the cost to be incurred to successfully complete the research in its entirety. Some costs may vary.	

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Research Timeline

Time constraints with respect to fieldwork may take place due to unforeseen events.

Dissertation Research Timeline	
Date	Stage
July 2010 – December 2010	Research Start / Proposal Phase
January 2011 – June 2011	Initial Literature Review Stage, History, General CSR chronology historically in the Cree designated categories of land, comparative analysis in Canada/Globally
June 2011 – December 2011	Final Literature Review Stage Corporate Social Responsibility Theories introduced and practiced and sustained within the JBNQ Crees
January 2012 – June 2012	Interview Design Finalization Preparation And Scheduling of Meetings
June 2012	Interviewing of Participants
June 2012 – June 2013	Writing of Manuscript and Completion of Study
August 1, 2013	Dissertation Completion, Submission & Defense
The following schedule represents the best estimate of the important milestones for the completion of the study.	

Existing ongoing engagement with the James Bay Northern Quebec Cree of Eeyou Istchee will afford access and privileged opportunity to fulfill the study timelines as indicated above.

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