

THE BUSINESS ECONOMY OF THE FIRST NATIONS IN SASKATCHEWAN: A CONTINGENCY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract / Resume

Research shows that Aboriginal economic development is characterized by an emphasis on the creation of profitable business ventures. This paper reviews economic development theory in search of a perspective relevant to Aboriginal communities. An alternative perspective is then proposed.

Des recherches montrent que le développement économique autochtone est caractérisé par un accent sur la création des affaires rentables. L'article passe en revue la théorie du développement économique dans le but de trouver une perspective applicable aux communautés autochtones. L'article propose ensuite une perspective alternative.

Introduction

This paper has three purposes. They are to:

1. Review certain conclusions about the characteristics of the First Nations approach to economic development.
2. Develop a theoretical perspective capable of providing insight into this emerging First Nations development approach and the likelihood of its success.
3. Test the conclusions about the characteristics of the First Nations approach to economic development and validate the proposed theoretical perspective, using research into First Nations activities in Saskatchewan.

In pursuit of these ends, this paper is organized in five sections. In the first section, the characteristics of First Nations economic development are presented. In the second, economic development theories are reviewed. Modernization and dependency perspectives are rejected as inappropriate and a contingency perspective based on regulation theory, the postimperial perspective and alternative development approaches, is proposed. The third section consists of a review of research objectives and methods, while the fourth presents the results of this research into the businesses of First Nations in Saskatchewan. In the fifth and final section, the characteristics of the emerging First Nations approach to economic development and the contingency perspective are revisited in light of the results of this research.

Characteristics of First Nations Economic Development

Based on earlier research, Anderson and Bone (1995a) concluded that the approach to economic development that is emerging among the First Nations in Canada, has seven key characteristics. One characteristic relates to the overall approach, three relate to development purposes, and three to the development process.

Individual First Nations exhibit a predominately *collective approach* to economic development that is closely tied to each First Nations' traditional lands and practices and its identity as a Nation. This development approach serves three *purposes*:

1. The attainment of economic self-sufficiency as a necessary condition for the realization of self-government at the First Nation level.
2. The improvement of the socio-economic circumstances of the people of the First Nations.

3. The preservation and strengthening of traditional culture, values and languages and the reflection of the same in development activities.

With respect to the *process* leading to the attainment of these purposes, First Nations believe that they must:

1. Create and own businesses in order to exercise the control over the economic development process they require if they are to achieve their purposes.
2. Create businesses that can compete profitably over the long-run in the global economy, in order to build the economy necessary to support self-government and improve socioeconomic conditions.
3. Form alliances and joint ventures among themselves and with non-First Nation partners in order to create businesses that can compete profitably in the global economy.

Central to this First Nations approach is the belief that they can achieve their purposes through participation in the global capitalist economy. The purpose of the following section is to develop a theoretical perspective capable of offering insight into this approach and the likelihood of its success.

Economic Development Theory and the First Nations Development Approach

Modernization and Dependency Perspectives

The classic modernization perspective is of little value in addressing the emerging First Nations approach to economic development for two reasons. First, it does not adequately explain current First Nations socioeconomic conditions. According to Bone (1994), Canadian federal government officials after World War II:

Were convinced that the land-based economy could no longer support aboriginal peoples. The only alternative was to bring them into mainstream Canadian society where their children would be able to participate in the wage economy (Bone, 1994:101).

Over the years, recurring efforts involving huge amounts of money have been directed toward achieving these “modernization” objectives. Contrary to the expectations of the modernization perspective, these efforts have failed to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people of the

First Nations and instead have had a deleterious effect. Second, the current First Nations approach to development vigorously rejects the modernist view that traditional aspects of their society are an impediment to development that must be abandoned if they are to progress economically. Instead, the First Nations expect economic development activities to support, strengthen and incorporate traditional values and approaches.

The classic dependency perspective appears to offer an explanation for the current circumstances of the people of the First Nations (Pretes, 1988; Brizinski, 1989). Certainly, the outcome for the First Nations of interaction with the capitalist economic system over the past five hundred years has been chronic underdevelopment and dependency. However, the dependency perspective does not provide support for the current development strategy of the First Nations; that is, the achievement of self-reliance, self-government and socio-economic development through profitable business participation in the global economy. Instead, the dependency perspective suggests that First Nations participation in the larger Canadian and global economies will perpetuate the current state of underdevelopment and dependency.

Actual development outcomes contrary to their respective expectations have forced proponents of both the modernization and dependency perspective to modify their views. The changes in the modernization perspective have been made largely as a result of the experience of the rapidly developing countries of the Far East. The perspective now accepts that economic development is possible without the loss of unique cultural characteristics. Indeed, it is suggested that certain traditional characteristics have aided rather than hindered the development of the "Asian Tigers" (Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, South Korea, etc.) and before that, Japan (Ranis, 1991; So, 1990). The outcome anticipated by the proponents of a neo-modernization perspective appears consistent with hopes and expectations of the First Nations; that is, the creation of a self-reliant, fully developed, culturally acceptable economic system supporting self-government.

Recent changes in the dependency perspective are based primarily on the continuing Latin American experience (as was the classic approach of Frank and others). While proponents of the perspective still view dependency and underdevelopment as the undesirable and inevitable consequences of interaction with the global capitalist system, they acknowledge that an incomplete or semi-articulated economy can emerge in developing areas as a consequence of such participation (Kay, 1991; So, 1990). While this semi-articulated economy is expected to improve socio-economic conditions somewhat, developing regions are expected to remain chronically underdeveloped in comparison to the "First World". Based on this

perspective, it can be argued that the integrated economy that the First Nations wish to create will be, at best, incomplete or semi-articulated and incapable of delivering the self-reliance sought.

In spite of the recent modifications to each, it is clear that the expectations of the modernization and dependency perspectives remain irreconcilable one with the other and with many of the actual outcomes in developing regions. Will the outcome of a development strategy based on interaction with the capitalist economic system be full development with the retention of unique aspects of traditional culture and practices or will it be continuing dependency with the chronic poverty allayed to some degree by incomplete development?

Faced with this conflict, many suggest that the modernization and dependency perspectives are incomplete with each describing a possible, but not inevitable, outcome of interaction between a developing region and the global capitalist economy (see Corbridge, 1986, 1989; Torfing, 1991; Bertramsen, 1991; Thomsen, 1991; Stander and Becker, 1990; Shatz, 1987a, 1987b; Friedman, 1992). For example, Stuart Corbridge says that:

The changing contours of global production are no more accessible to accounts of modernization theory and neoclassical economics than they are to MDS [Marxist development studies]: indeed, a metatheoretical commitment to the logic of diffusion or to freely functioning markets is even less fitted to the task than is a faith in the development of underdevelopment (Corbridge, 1989:624).

Instead, these and other authors argue that the outcome experienced at a particular time and in a particular place is contingent on a variety of factors, many of which are under at least the partial control of the people of the developing region. In this vein, Corbridge says that there is a powerful trend "towards theories of capitalist development which emphasize contingency....a new emphasis on human agency and the provisional and highly skilled task of reproducing social relations" (Corbridge, 1989:633).

The following section reviews three of the emerging perspectives that emphasize the contingent nature of the outcomes of the development process in the search for greater insight into the First Nations approach to development and the likelihood of its success. It ends by proposing a "contingency perspective" on development that is an amalgam of the three.

The Contingency Perspective

Regulation theory, the postimperial perspective and alternative development approaches are three of the contingent approaches to economic development that have emerged from the impasse between the moderni-

zation and dependency perspectives. Together, it is proposed that they can be combined to form what might be called a contingency (as opposed to modernization or dependency) perspective on economic development (see Figure 1).

Regulation theory describes the structure of the capitalist economy and the relationship between its parts—the regime of accumulation and modes of social regulation. The postimperial perspective offers insight into the role that leaders (in a developing region and of the global economy) play in the process that gives rise to unique couplings between these two elements of the capitalist economy in a particular place and at a particular time. Alternative development strategies focus on the role that the people of a developing region must play in the development process if its outcomes are to satisfy their needs.

Common to these three perspectives is a focus on the relationship between a developing region and the global economy. All take the view that economic activity in a particular region, while it is and must be integrated into the global economy, can exhibit characteristics unique to that region and serve the particular needs of its people. In the next three subsections the key features of each perspective are described.

Regulation Theory

Regulation theory is one of the new approaches to development that emphasize contingency and human agency (Torfing, 1991; Corbridge, 1989; Bertramsen, 1991; Thomsen, 1991; Peck and Tickell, 1992; Scott, 1988, 1992; Dicken, 1992; Storper and Walker, 1989; Norcliffe, 1994). Torfing (1991) says that regulation theory refuses to explain the dynamics and outcomes of capitalism in terms of necessary and abstract “laws”. Instead, the economy is seen as an evolving social system created by people with its “laws” at a particular time “socially determinate and always related to a precise specification of the historical conditions of their validity” (Torfing, 1991:68). The process of regulation involves the “dynamic formation of rules, norms and institutions which are...constantly altered as we progress. The contingent process of regulation reflects the contingent nature of what is regulated” (Torfing, 1991:73).

The central concepts of regulation theory are the regime of accumulation, modes of social regulation, and modes of development. According to Torfing (1991), the regime of accumulation determines the general possibilities for the capitalist economy. Peck and Tickell describe the regime of accumulation as:

The dominant mode of economic growth and distribution. Elements of the accumulation system include the conditions of production (such as the amount of capital invested, the distri-

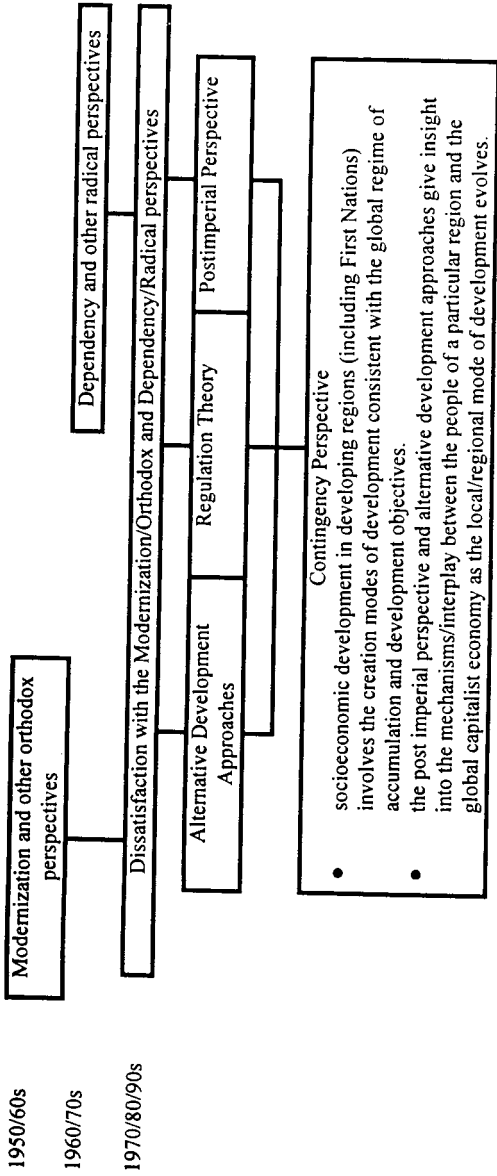


Figure 1: The Post World War II Evolution of Development Theory

bution of capital among the various branches and the norms of production) and the conditions of consumption (Peck and Tickell, 1992:349).

Scott says that:

A regime of accumulation can be rather simply defined as a historically specific production apparatus (in capitalism) through which surplus is generated, appropriated, and redeployed...[it has] four distinctive elements:

- (a) a set of production techniques,
- (b) a characteristic way of organizing production and labor relations,
- (c) a distributional mechanism governing the appropriation and redeployment of the surplus,
- (d) a process of aggregate demand driving forward the evolution of productive capacity (Scott, 1988:8-9).

Scott goes on to speak of modes of social regulation saying that the stability of a regime of accumulation is

dependent on the emergence of a further set of social relations that preserve it, for a time at least, from catastrophic internal collisions and breakdowns. These relations constitute a mode of social regulation. They are made up of a series of formal and informal structures of governance and stabilization ranging from the state through business and labor associations, to modes of socialization which create ingrained habits of behavior, and so on (Scott, 1988:9).

While regulation theory does not prescribe the exact nature of a mode of social regulation, the authors reviewed generally agree that:

1. A regime of accumulation does not create a particular mode of social regulation, "each regime, in short, may be regulated in a multiplicity of ways" (Scott, 1988:9).
2. Because modes of social regulation are based on such things as "habits and customs, social norms, enforceable laws and state forms" (Peck and Tickel, 1992:349) unique modes "can exist at virtually any territorial level—local, regional, national, global" (Storper and Walker, 1989:215).

The third element of regulation theory is the mode of development. It is the coupling of a particular mode of regulation with the currently dominant global regime of accumulation. Torfing describes it as the articulation of "a

regime of accumulation with the institutional features of a mode of regulation into a regulatory ensemble capable of generating growth, prosperity and social peace in the context of the international division of labor” (Torfing, 1991:77).

According to regulation theory, Fordism (a particular coupling of regime of accumulation and mode of social regulation) dominated the global capitalist economic system for the first three decades following the Second World War (Gottdiener and Komninos, 1989; Getimis and Kafkalas, 1992; Komninos, 1989; Storper and Walker, 1989; Scott, 1988; Peck and Tickel, 1992; Dicken, 1992).

Storper and Walker (1989:151) provide a typical description of the characteristics of the Fordist regime of accumulation:

- large capital-intensive factories organized around either continuous flow processes (e.g. petrochemicals, steel) or assembly-line processes (e.g. cars, electrical machinery);
- production and marketing posited on standardization of output, long production runs, and dedicated, non-adaptable capital equipment;
- large firms internalizing large parts of production systems, seeking to enhance internal economies of scale;
- the factory of the large corporation occupying the critical position between upstream suppliers and downstream fabricators, who often manufacture using batch production methods;
- multiplant oligopolistic corporations operating within a relatively stable competitive framework;
- industry-wide unions with national contracts.

Peck and Tickel (1992:349) offer insight into the mode of social regulation associated with Fordism when they say that:

The Fordist system of accumulation was complemented by a monopolistic MSR, which served to secure the conditions appropriate to the maintenance of mass labor and consumer demand. The state played a particularly important role here, as through Keynesian policies it sought to minimize the vulnerability of the accumulation system to cyclical recessions.

The Fordist coupling began to collapse in the late 1970s. Causes of this collapse include: technical limits to rigid fixed capital production techniques, working class resistance to Taylorist and Fordist forms of work organization (Jessop, 1989), a change in consumption patterns “toward a greater variety of use values...[that] cannot be satisfied through mass

production" (Amin, 1994:12), the increasing mobility of capital and the resulting ability of transnational corporations (TNCs) to move among spatially-bounded regulatory jurisdictions in the pursuit of greater profits (Leyshon, 1992), and in the face of this internationalization of capital, the inability of national Keynesian policies to avert crisis (Komninou, 1989). The period since has been one of turmoil in the capitalist economic system as a new regime of accumulation and associated modes of social regulation, struggle to emerge.

Most authors agree that the restructuring of the global economy in response to the crisis in Fordism has involved and continues to involve, the increasing dominance of the global economy by transnational corporations and a "selective move from mass production to various forms of flexible production" (Norcliffe, 1994:2). Storper and Walker compare the emerging flexible regime with Fordism, saying that flexible production systems have:

- more general purpose equipment and machinery, especially machines based around variable labor processes and/or programmable computerized equipment;
- smaller, more specialized workplaces and firms and greater reliance on subcontracting;
- greater attention to demand variations, to which the quantity of inputs and outputs can be rapidly adjusted by altering the procedures or the mix of participants;
- collective social and institutional order in place of hierarchical control exercised by the mass production corporation;
- more temporary and part-time hiring and more relaxed internal rules for assigning workers and managers to various tasks (Storper and Walker, 1989:152).

Business literature echoes regulation theory's view that the capitalist economy is passing through a period of crisis from which a flexible regime of accumulation is emerging. For example, Steven Goldman (1995:1) in an issue paper examining leading edge management processes and practices for the Society of Management Accountants of Canada, says that:

A new system of creation, production and distribution of goods and services has begun to take shape. It is defined by a distinct set of relationships, interdependencies, and forms of interaction among suppliers, producers, distributors, and customers. It demands new approaches to organizing, operating, and measuring the performance of both individual companies and clusters of cooperating companies. It will entail sweeping changes in social institutions, as well as social and personal values.

Goldman calls this new system “agile production” and the companies exhibiting these characteristic “agile corporations”. As he elaborates the characteristics of this system, it is clear he is describing flexible accumulation in all but name.

A number of authors offer observations about the nature of the modes of social regulation (and therefore the modes of development) that are emerging as people in various places struggle to adapt to the demands of the emerging flexible regime of accumulation. For example, Peck and Tickel (1992:352) suggest that “geographies of accumulation interact with one another (as well as pre-existing spatial structures), to produce unique regional couplings, which are in turn embedded within a national regime”. Peck and Tickel's observations about unique regional flexible accumulation couplings (modes of development) are echoed by other authors. For example, Gottdiener and Komninos (1989) suggest that different societies have “embarked on their own modes of development which stand in subtle contrast despite similarities.” Komninos (1989), writing separately, says that there has been a shift to the local as an important level of regulation as a result of the collapse of the national modes associated with Fordism. He suggests that this means that development initiatives are increasingly in the hands of local or regional institutions and enterprises, often in joint venture. Scott (1988:108) says that new industrial spaces result from a “very specific articulation of local social conditions with wider coordinates of capitalist development in general”. Finally, Dicken (1992:307) emphasizes that successful participation in the economic system “is created and sustained through a highly localized process” and that “economic structures, values, cultures, institutions and histories contribute profoundly to that success”.

In summary, regulation theory holds that communities, regions and nations are all part of the global economic system and must accommodate themselves to the requirements of that system's currently dominant regime of accumulation. The current period of transition from a Fordist to a flexible regime is an opportune time for a particular developing people (for example, the First Nations in Canada) to establish their place in the new global economy through the creation of a mode of development that reflects their values, cultures, institutions and histories and can meet their needs and objectives.

Unfortunately, according to a number of authors (Corbridge, 1989; Bertramsen, 1991; Jessop, 1989, 1992; Torfing, 1991; Thomsen, 1991), regulation theory does not provide much insight into how a particular mode of social regulation, consistent with the nature and needs of a particular people, can be developed and successfully coupled with the dominant regime of accumulation to form an effective mode of development. How-

ever, the postimperial perspective and alternative development strategies, the subjects of the next subsections, do.

The Postimperial Perspective

Becker and Sklar (1987:ix) describe postimperialism as “an idea about the political and social organization of international capitalism”. It is a:

paradigmatic conception of late 20th-century international capitalism ...it seeks to explain what notions of capitalist imperialism cannot: the observation that in the world's fully industrialized capitalist countries, national interests are increasingly distinct from the interests of dominant classes; whereas in the countries of the third world, the two sets of interests are increasingly congruent (Stander and Becker, 1987).

A key characteristic of the postimperial perspective is its emphasis on class. Rather than treating developing and developed areas as monolithic wholes that interact one with another, the perspective contends that the relationship between such areas is shaped by the actions of, and interactions among, certain groups or classes. According to Becker and Sklar (1987), within developing regions a managerial bourgeoisie, consisting of the entrepreneurial and bureaucratic elite (the managers of firms, politicians, professionals and the like) has emerged as the dominant class. Members of this class make the decisions about economic development goals, strategies and structures, including the approach taken to participation in the global economy (mode of development). They also direct and control the activities intended to attain these development objectives. At the same time, with the emergence of TNCs as the dominant force in the flexible regime of accumulation, the authors suggest that an international corporate bourgeoisie has appeared that exercises significant control over the activities of the global economy. It follows that the mode of development that emerges in a particular place is in large part determined by the objectives established and strategies adopted by the managerial bourgeoisie and the corporate international bourgeoisie, the arrangements negotiated among them, and the actions taken by them.

The postimperial perspective goes on to offer insight into the likely behavior of the corporate international bourgeoisie in developing regions. Proponents of the perspective contend that the managers of TNCs have no particular national allegiance but rather “are ideologically disposed to have each branch of the corporation behave like a ‘good corporate citizen’ of the country in which it is domiciled” (Stander and Becker, 1987). According to Stander and Becker, this behavioral disposition of TNCs,

called "The Doctrine of Domicile" by R.L. Sklar (1987), arises because:

The TNC's interest in maximizing global profitability and avoiding suboptimization at a subsidiary level will be weighed against another, equally important interest: the corporation must legitimize its host-country presence in order to obtain the stability it needs to plan the maximization of capital accumulation under its control (Stander and Becker, 1987).

Travis and Glade (1988) in their observations about the behavior of TNCs in developing regions offer support for the Doctrine of Domicile. They suggest that there are three approaches to interaction with developing regions available to TNCs. They are power-based, participative and combined strategies. The authors contend that while power-based strategies dominated in the past, participative strategies are now necessary if TNCs are to assure their long-term survival. The authors attribute this shift to a number of factors including:

1. Changing expectations about what constitutes ethical and responsible TNC behavior.
2. Increased TNC experience in developing regions and especially the partial naturalization of multinational management in overseas subsidiaries.
3. The growth of a business infrastructure in developing regions.
4. More experienced, technically competent, and self-confident organizations for negotiation and economic administration in developing regions.

These observations about corporate behavior in developing areas suggest that at least some companies will be receptive to arrangements intended to satisfy the objectives of people in a developing region so long as these arrangements do not impair the companies ability to survive in the global economy. In fact, according to Travis and Glade (1988), Brummer (1992), Sklar (1987) and Goldman (1995) such arrangements can even provide a competitive advantage to a firm.

Even allowing for TNC behavior consistent with the doctrine of domicile, nothing in the postimperial perspective (or in regulation theory) suggests that the mode of development that emerges in a particular place will deliver benefits beyond the elites to the general population. In fact, the plight of the majority of the people could be worsened, as has been the case for much of the "development" that has occurred in underdeveloped regions to date. Alternative development approaches have emerged as a result of this failure and are discussed in the next subsection.

Alternative Development

According to Friedmann (1992), alternative approaches to development began to emerge in underdeveloped regions in the 1970s as a result of the failure of the growth maximization strategies pursued since the end of the Second World War. In describing this failure, he (Friedmann, 1992:2) quotes from the Cocoyoc Declaration (issued at the conclusion of a United Nations sponsored conference in Cocoyoc in Mexico in 1974).

Thirty years have passed since the signing of the United Nations Charter launched the effort to establish a new international order. Today that order has reached a critical turning point. Its hopes for creating a better life for the whole human family have been largely frustrated. It has proved impossible to meet the "inner limits" of satisfying fundamental human needs. On the contrary, more people are hungry, sick, shelterless and illiterate today than when the United Nations was first set up (Cocoyoc Declaration, 1974:170-171).

Throughout the 80s and into the 90s, this failure continued and the circumstances of the world's poor deteriorated further. De Janvry and Sadoulet (1993:663) say that during the 1980s there was:

1. A sharp rise in the incidence of poverty.
2. A deepening of dualism in the types of employment (precarious versus formal) and forms of economic activity (informal versus formal).
3. A sharp rise in inequality.
4. As a result of austerity programs, a disproportionately large reduction in government social expenditures.

According to De Janvry and Sadoulet (1993), the focus of the development strategies that have failed the poor of the world has shifted from an emphasis on the market to state and back over time. The market dominated during the liberal period from 1850 to 1930. The Great Depression during the 1930s and the emergence of newly independent nations following the Second World War resulted in a shift in emphasis to the state (Keynesian policies) which lasted until the late 1970s. During the late 1970s, the 1980s and the early 1990s, the market (and its principal players—the TNCs) regained ascendancy following the failure of Keynesian policies (deficits in developed countries, Third World debt crisis, recurring recessions and inflation, etc.). Although couched in different terms, this description of change over time in the capitalist economic system corresponds to that offered by regulation theory.

Beginning in the 1970s and continuing to date, supporters of alternative

development strategies have argued that in the face of the failure of development strategies centered on the market or the state to improve the circumstances of the world's poor, emphasis must shift to a third previously neglected sector—the civil. For example, Nugent (1993) says:

Neither direct state intervention or indirect state influence through macro policies is a sufficient condition for success. Nor are the best efforts to utilize existing markets...guaranteed to lead rural residents out of pervasive poverty...Failure can be attributed to the lack of vibrant, functional, and healthy local organizations and institutions [the civil sector] and can be overcome by their presence (Nugent, 1993:623).

Proponents of alternative development do not suggest that this third or civil sector can or should replace the market or state. Rather according to Friedman (1992) alternative development

accepts the existing system of global accumulation as a fact. It does not propose to turn away from it and shut the door...Broadly speaking, the objective of an alternative development is to humanize a system that has shut them [the poor] out...Its central objective is their inclusion in a restructured system that does not make them redundant (Friedmann, 1992:12-13).

A close parallel exists between alternative development's view of the role of the civil sector in determining the relationship between a particular region and the global economy and regulation theory's concept of local/regional modes of social regulation. Friedmann (1992: vii) says the civil sector is structured by "class, caste, religion, language, regional identity, race, and gender", the same forces shape local and regional modes of social regulation and therefore modes of development. Combining the views of proponents of the regulation theory and of alternative development strategies, the participation of an active and effective civil sector is essential to the creation of a local/regional mode development that improves the socioeconomic circumstances of the people (not just the elites) of a developing region.

The Contingency Perspective

Regulation theory, alternative development strategies and the postimperial perspective can be combined to form a contingency perspective on economic development (see Figure 2).

- Communities, regions and nations are all part of the global economy and must accommodate themselves to the dominant regime of accumulation.
- The nature of this accommodation with the global economy (mode of development) can reflect local, regional and/or national characteristics, needs and objectives.
- The potential exists for negotiation of mutually beneficial arrangements (as part of the mode of development) between the leaders of developing regions and those that control the global economy.
- An active civil sector capable of articulating the needs of their people and a leadership capable of developing the strategies and negotiating the arrangements necessary to address those needs, is essential to the creation of a mode of development that will deliver benefits beyond the elites to the general population of a developing region.

Figure 2: The Contingency Perspective

From regulation theory the proposed contingency perspective adopts four key concepts. First, at any particular time, the global capitalist economy is dominated by a regime of accumulation and that the current period is one of transition from the Fordist to a flexible regime. Second, all communities, regions and nations are part of the global economy and must accommodate themselves to the requirements that economy's dominant regime of accumulation. Third, the development of an appropriate mode of social regulation is key successful interaction with that regime; that is, the creation of an effective mode of development. Fourth and finally, such a mode is "created and sustained through a highly localized process" where "economic structures, values, cultures, institutions and histories contribute profoundly to that success [the creation of an effective mode]" (Dicken, 1992:307).

Drawn from the postimperial perspective, the contingency perspective holds that the relationship between a particular developing region and the global economy (the mode of development) emerges as a result of interaction between the leaders of the developing region (the managerial bourgeoisie) and the capitalist economy (the corporate international bourgeoisie). Importantly, this interaction is not carried out in the abstract. Rather, it is played out in real time and in a real place by real people with unique outcomes. Further, based on the doctrine of domicile (and the characteristic of flexible accumulation), the proposed perspective contends

that there is the potential for the formation of mutually beneficial alliances of various types between developing regions and the main players in the global economy—the TNCs—as a part of the mode of development.

Alternative development approaches are concerned with how the relationship between a developing region and the global economy can be structured so that it satisfies the needs and objectives of the people of the region and not just the requirements of the regime of accumulation and interests of the managerial and corporate international bourgeoisies. From alternative development approaches, the contingency perspective holds that creation of a successful mode of development requires an active civil sector capable of articulating the needs of the people, a leadership capable of devising the strategies and negotiating the arrangements necessary to address those needs, and a mechanism for the people to modify these arrangements should the outcomes prove unacceptable.

In conclusion, a contingency perspective on economic development based on an amalgam of regulation theory, alternative development strategies and the postimperial perspective suggests participation in the capitalist economy can serve the interests of a developing region or people. Whether a particular arrangement actually delivers the benefits sought will depend on the characteristics and actions of the parties involved. The outcome is not preordained by some fundamental “law” of capitalism as it is assumed to be by both the modernization and dependency perspectives.

The Contingency Perspective and First Nations Development

According to the contingency perspective, the emerging First Nations approach to economic development is well conceived and has the potential to succeed.

First Nations acknowledge the necessity of participation in the global economy and are attempting to create a distinct mode of development that will permit them to do so. Central to this mode is a strategy of business creation in various forms of partnership and alliance (supply contracts, subcontracting, joint ventures, etc.) with other First and non-First Nations businesses. This strategy is clearly consistent with the characteristics of flexible accumulation. It also anticipates behavior by at least some non-First Nations companies consistent with the doctrine of domicile. Arrangements intended to implement the mode of development have involved, and will continue to involve, negotiations between key First Nation and non-First Nation leaders (for example, see Anderson and Bone, 1995a, 1995b for a description of the forestry activities of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council). First Nations values, traditions and organizational structures demand input from, and control by, people at the “grassroots” (the civil sector). If the

arrangements established through negotiation between First Nation and non-First Nation leaders produce outcomes unacceptable to a significant portion of the people of the First Nations, their reaction should cause (and has caused) First Nation and non-First Nation leaders to modify these arrangements (for example, see Anderson and Bone, 1995b).

In the following sections the business development activities First Nations of Saskatchewan are described and compared with the characteristics of the emerging First Nations approach to development and the expectations of the contingency perspective.

Research Purposes and Methodology

The research into the nature of the First Nations economic development in Saskatchewan and the resulting business economy reported on in this paper was begun in January of 1994 and continued until May of 1995. It was conducted in two phases.

The first phase ran from January 1994 to September 1994. The purpose was to obtain information about First Nations economic development in three areas: planning, structure and business ownership. In January of 1994, a questionnaire along with an accompanying letter (see Appendix 1) was faxed to the Chief of each First Nation in Saskatchewan. In February of 1994, a separate questionnaire and letter (see Appendix 2) was faxed to the Director of Economic Development of each Tribal Council. In March of 1994, a second letter and another copy of the questionnaire was sent to those who had not responded to the first. Finally, from June to September a follow-up phone call was made to each First Nation. The purpose of these calls was twofold: (1) to elicit responses from those First Nations who had not replied, and (2) to confirm the responses received and clarify any confusing or missing information received from those who had.

The second phase of the research ran from January to May of 1995. During this phase the objective was to obtain additional details about the First Nations businesses in the province. Information sought included the number and type of businesses, form of ownership and annual sales. Each First Nation was contacted by phone and asked to provide information about the businesses it owned in whole or in part and about the businesses owned by its members. Information was also obtained from two secondary sources—the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and TransGas, Ltd. In 1994, both these organizations had separately compiled lists of First Nations (or in the case of TransGas—Aboriginal) businesses in Saskatchewan.

Information obtained from these three sources was combined with that

obtained in the first phase to produce a database on the First Nations business economy in Saskatchewan. The database contains information for each First Nation and Tribal Council about (1) the presence and extent of economic development planning, (2) organization and responsibility for economic development, and (3) the number, type, annual sales, and form of ownership of businesses.

A word of caution is required. Although it is impossible to estimate the extent, it is certain that the data obtained under-reports the number of businesses owned by First Nations individuals. The primary research relied on the knowledge of responders from the First Nation (Chief, Councillors and/or employees) about businesses owned by individuals from their First Nation. The secondary sources (the FSIN and TransGas databases) were each compiled by a consultant who relied on a variety of sources. With three researchers independently pursuing the same information most, but certainly not all, of the businesses owned by First Nation individuals should have been identified. On the other hand, the numbers pertaining to First Nation and Tribal Council owned businesses are accurate. All three sources obtained their information directly from the owners (First Nations and Tribal Councils) and were in general agreement.

Research Results

During phase one, seventy-one (71) First Nations Saskatchewan were surveyed about their approach to economic development planning and organization. The results of that research are summarized in Table 1.

The first three columns of Table 1 (and the detailed data they summarize) provide insight into the extent of formal economic development planning among the First Nations in Saskatchewan. Seventy-three percent of the First Nations reported that they have prepared a community development plan. Almost all of these plans (ninety-three percent) establish specific economic development goals and strategies for attaining these goals. Thirty-one First Nations reported having an economic development plan separate from their community development plan. Of these thirty-one, three reported that their community development plan did not establish economic development goals and strategies (instead the separate economic development plan did). Between the two type of plans therefore, fifty-one of the seventy-one First Nations (seventy-two percent) reported having clearly established economic development goals and strategies for attaining those goals.

Table 1: First Nations Economic Development Planning and Organization

	1 Community Development Plan		2 Community Development Plan Ec. Dev Goals		3 Economic Development Plan		4 Economic Development Portfolio		5 Economic Development Employee		6 First Nation Development Corporation	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
Total	52	11	48	15	31	32	58	5	30	33	42	21
Proportion	73%	15%	68%	21%	44%	45%	82%	7%	42%	46%	59%	30%
Total FN	71											

Table 2: Businesses Ownership as Reported by Each First Nation

	FN Individual Owner of Businesses		Individual FN Owner of Businesses		FN JV with others (not TC)		FN JV with Tribal Council		FN JV with Tribal Council or others	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
52	19	56	15	26	46	52	20	59	13	
72%	26%	78%	21%	36%	64%	72%	28%	82%	18%	

An analysis of the twenty First Nations that reported having no formal plan that establishes economic development goals and strategies for attaining those goals, was conducted with the following results. Four did not respond to that portion of the questionnaire at all. Two others are newly established Bands in the south-east of the province created as a result of a specific claim settlement. They are still acquiring land to establish their Reserves and own no businesses. The remaining twelve First Nations all reported owning and operating at least one business. Based on this ownership, these twelve First Nations are clearly involved in economic development activities in spite of the reported absence of a formal plan establishing economic development goals and strategies. Combining these twelve with the fifty-one with formal plans means that sixty-three of the seventy-one First Nations in Saskatchewan, or eighty-nine percent, have economic development goals and strategies for achieving these goals.

Columns four, five and six of Table 1 provide information about the way economic development activities are organized and responsibility assigned. Eighty-two percent of the First Nations indicate that political responsibility for economic development is assigned to a particular elected Band Councillor or a committee of Councillors. Most of the remainder indicated the economic development activities were the responsibility of the Council as a whole. Thirty First Nations indicate that they have assigned operational responsibility for economic development to a particular employee.

Column six indicates that sixty percent of the First Nations have created a development corporation to own and operate businesses on their behalf. In addition, seventy-two percent of the First Nations are members of one or another of the Tribal Councils that have created a development corporation to conduct business on behalf of member First Nations. Combining the two types of development corporations, eighty-six percent of the First Nations are involved in economic development activities carried out through a development corporation.

Table 2 summarizes information about the relative significance of four approaches to business ownership—private ownership by First Nation individuals, ownership by an individual First Nation, First Nation ownership through joint ventures with others (not Tribal Council), and First Nation ownership through Tribal Council joint ventures.

Seventy-two percent of the First Nations report at least one business venture owned and operated by an individual (or individuals) from that Nation. Seventy-eight percent of the First Nations report being the sole owner of at least one business. Thirty-six percent report that they are involved in at least one joint venture with others (excluding their Tribal Council) while seventy-two (72%) percent of the First Nations are involved in Tribal Council joint ventures. Combining the two types of joint ventures,

eighty-two percent of the First Nations in Saskatchewan participate in at least one joint venture.

Table 3 provides information about business arrangements from the perspective of the individual First Nation. These arrangements flow from decisions taken by a First Nation with respect to participation in a particular business venture. First Nations, and their individual citizens, are involved six hundred and five (605) business arrangements. Of this total, thirty-three percent involve businesses owned and operated by First Nation individuals (private ownership). The remaining sixty-seven percent of the business arrangements involve First Nations government ownership in one form or other. Joint ventures account for sixty-eight percent of these government arrangements and forty-six percent of all business arrangements.

Table 3: Number of Business Arrangements by Type of Ownership

Type of Ownership	Number of Arrangements	Proportion of Total
FN JV with others (not TC)	48	8%
FN JV with Tribal Council	<u>230</u>	<u>38%</u>
FN JV with Tribal Council or others	278	46%
FN Owner of Businesses	<u>130</u>	<u>21%</u>
Total FN owned	408	67%
FN Individual		
Owner of Businesses	<u>197</u>	<u>33%</u>
Total Business Arrangements	605	100%

Table 4: Number of Businesses by Type of Ownership

Type of Ownership	Number of Arrangements	Proportion of Total
FN JV with others (not TC)	36	9%
FN JV with Tribal Council	<u>23</u>	<u>6%</u>
FN JV with Tribal Council or others	59	15%
FN Owner of Businesses	<u>130</u>	<u>34%</u>
Total FN owned	189	49%
FN Individual		
Owner of Businesses	<u>197</u>	<u>51%</u>
Total	386	100%

The number of business arrangements exceeds the number of businesses because many of the arrangements involve decisions to participate with other First Nations as well as non-First Nation partners in joint venture businesses. The two hundred seventy separate decisions by individual First Nations to enter into joint ventures resulted in the creation of fifty-nine businesses. Table 4 reports the numbers of business (as opposed to arrangements) by type of ownership.

Of the total of three hundred eighty-six identified First Nation business, fifty-nine or fifteen percent are joint ventures. Thirty-four percent of the total are owned by individual First Nations. Taken together these numbers indicate that almost fifty percent of all businesses involved government ownership. The remaining fifty percent are owned by First Nation individuals.

Based on the caution in the previous section about under-reporting of individually-owned business, Tables 3 and 4 over-state to some extent the proportion of government to privately owned businesses in the First Nations business economy. In another way, however, these results understate the significance of the role of First Nations governments in the reported business arrangements and resulting businesses. Many of the businesses owned and operated by First Nations individuals were created with First Nations government support to serve a community need. Seventy-one (36%) of the privately-owned businesses provide either school bus, medical transportation, water delivery or septic tank pump-out services to a First Nations citizens on behalf of, and usually paid for, by that First Nation government.

Tables 5 and 6 delve deeper into the nature of the First Nation businesses. In particular, they present information about the relationship between the form of business ownership and the nature of the market (local, regional, national/international) that the business serves (again the caution about under-reporting of individual-owned businesses applies).

Businesses categorized as local are those intended to serve the citizens of a particular First Nation. Included are such things as school-buses, medical transportation, water and septic services, firewood wood-hauling, and retail stores with annual sales under \$100,000. Regional businesses include those intended to serve the First Nation and surrounding areas but not the larger national/international market. Included are retail stores with sales in excess of \$100,000, golf courses, resorts, road and home construction companies, and pasture rental to non-Indian users. The national/international category includes all businesses competing directly in the global economy. Most businesses in this category are in either the forestry, mining, petroleum, or agriculture sectors. The agriculture sector includes two distinct groups—(1) grain farms and ranches and (2) process-

Table 5: Business Arrangements by Type of Ownership and Market

	Joint Ventures	Individual First Nation Owned	First Nation Individual Owned	Total		
	Other	Tribal Council	Other	Farms		
National/International	24	63	10	9	23	129
Regional	24	167	69	77	n/a	337
Local	0	0	51	88	n/a	139
Total	278	130	130	197		605

Table 6: Businesses by Type of Ownership and Market

	Joint Ventures	Individual First Nation Owned	First Nation Individual Owned	Total		
	Other	Tribal Council	Other	Farms		
National/International	18	7	10	9	23	67
Regional	18	16	69	77	n/a	180
Local	0	0	51	88	n/a	139
Total	59	130	130	197		174

ing and marketing (wild rice, processed alfalfa pellets, dried meats and other specialties).

Twenty-one percent of the First Nation business arrangements target national/international markets, fifty-six percent the regional market and twenty-three percent the local (see Table 5). Sixty-seven percent of all national/international business and eighty-four percent of all the non-farm businesses in this category, are joint ventures. Joint ventures account for fifty-six percent of all regional businesses. Arrangements involving First Nations government ownership (joint ventures plus individual First Nation businesses) account for seventy-five percent of all national/international businesses (94% of all non-farm national/international) and seventy-seven percent of all regional arrangements. Arrangements involving First Nations individuals dominate the local category—sixty-three percent.

Table 6 shifts the focus from business arrangements by First Nations to the businesses that have emerged from these arrangements. Seventeen percent of the First Nation businesses serve national/international markets, forty-seven percent the regional market, and thirty-six percent the local.

Businesses owned in whole or in part by First Nations governments dominate the national/international (non-farm) and regional categories. Joint venture companies account for fifty-seven percent of the non-farm national/international businesses and nineteen percent of the regional ones. Twenty-two percent of national/international (non-farm) and thirty-eight percent of the regional businesses, are owned by individual First Nations. In combination, joint ventures and individual First Nation-owned businesses represent eighty and fifty-seven percent of the non-farm national/international and regional businesses, respectively.

One hundred eighty-five of the businesses surveyed provided information about annual sales. Table 7 reports these results by ownership type. Eighty-five percent of the businesses report annual sales of \$400,000 or less. All but one of the businesses owned by a First Nations individuals are in this group, as are sixty-eight percent of the businesses owned by individual First Nations. Only six percent of the businesses with sales less

Table 7: Estimated Annual Sales by Ownership Type

Estimated Annual Sales (1994)	Owned by FN Individuals	Owned By Individual FN	Joint Ventures	Total
less than \$100,000	105	16	4	125
\$100,001 to 400,000	15	10	8	33
\$400,001 to 750,000	0	4	2	6
\$750,001 to 2,000,000	1	5	3	9
over \$2,000,000	0	3	9	12
Total				185

Table 8a: Weighted Average Annual Sales, First Nation Individuals

Annual Sales Range (1994)	Median Sales	Owned by FN Individuals	Total Sales
less than \$100,000	\$50,000	105	\$5,250,000
\$100,001 to 400,000	\$250,000	15	\$3,750,000
\$400,001 to 750,000	\$575,000	0	\$0
\$750,001 to 2,000,000	\$1,375,000	1	\$1,375,000
over \$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	0	\$0
		121	\$10,375,000
Weighted Average Annual Sales			\$86,000

Table 8b: Weighted Average Annual Sales, Individual First Nations

Annual Sales Range (1994)	Median Sales	Owned by FN Individuals	Total Sales
less than \$100,000	\$50,000	16	\$800,000
\$100,001 to 400,000	\$250,000	10	\$2,500,000
\$400,001 to 750,000	\$575,000	4	\$2,300,000
\$750,001 to 2,000,000	\$1,375,000	5	\$6,875,000
over \$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	3	<u>\$6,000,000</u>
		38	\$18,475,000
Weighted Average Annual Sales			\$486,000

Table 8c: Weighted Average Annual Sales, Joint Ventures

Annual Sales Range (1994)	Median Sales	Joint Ventures	Total Sales
less than \$100,000	\$50,000	4	\$200,000
\$100,001 to 400,000	\$250,000	8	\$2,000,000
\$400,001 to 750,000	\$575,000	2	\$1,150,000
\$750,001 to 2,000,000	\$1,375,000	3	\$4,125,000
over \$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	9	<u>\$18,000,000</u>
		26	\$25,475,000
Weighted Average Annual Sales			\$980,000

than \$400,000 are joint ventures. At the other extreme, joint ventures account for fifty-two percent businesses with sales greater than \$400,000 and seventy-five percent of those with sales greater than \$2,000,000.

Tables 8 and 9 assess the relative importance of each ownership type to the First Nations business economy. First, the weighted average level

Table 9: Contribution to the First Nations Economy by Ownership Type

	Owned By FN Individuals	Owned By Individual FN	Joint Ventures	Total
Average Annual Sales	\$86,000	\$486,000	\$980,000	--
Number of Businesses	197	130	59	386
Total Annual Sales	\$16,942,000	\$63,180,000	\$57,820,000	\$137,942,000
Proportion of Annual Sales	12%	46%	42%	--

of sales was calculated for each ownership category (see Tables 8a, b and c). These averages are: First Nation individual owned—\$86,000, individual First Nation owned—\$486,000, and joint venture—\$983,000. Then, an estimated total annual sales figure was determined for each category of ownership by multiplying the average sales for each by the number of business in each category (see Table 9).

Joint ventures, which constitute only fifteen percent of First Nation businesses, account for forty-two percent of the estimated sales. Businesses owned by individual First Nations, thirty-four percent of the total businesses, contribute forty-six percent of the estimated sales. Businesses owned by First Nations individuals contribute only twelve percent of the estimated sales in spite of the fact that they account for fifty-one percent of the businesses. Remembering the earlier caveat about the under reporting of individually owned businesses, it is nonetheless clear that First Nation owned businesses (by individual First Nations and in joint venture) dominate the First Nations business economy in Saskatchewan.

Summary and Conclusion

The research summarized in this paper indicates the vast majority of the First Nations in Saskatchewan have established economic development goals and adopted strategies for their attainment. The pursuit of economic self-sufficiency in support of self-government and the improvement of socio-economic conditions occupy a prominent place in these goals. Results clearly indicate that the strategies adopted stress the development and ownership of profitable businesses competing in local, regional and national/international markets. Joint ventures are common, especially in larger undertakings (as measured by expected annual sales) and in those competing in global (national/international) market. The extent of ownership by First Nations government as opposed to individuals is evidence of a collective or national approach. Clearly the development activities of the First Nations in Saskatchewan are consistent with the seven characteristics of First Nations economic development described in part two of this paper.

Similarly, the research results are consistent with the contingency perspective. The First Nations acknowledge the necessity of participation in the global economy and are developing a mode of development for doing so that suits First Nations goals and is consistent with their values, cultures, institutions and practices.

First Nations are clearly taking advantage of the characteristics of the new flexible regime of accumulation as they form alliances and partnerships with other participants in the global economy. They (the First Nations) are

anticipating, and others are exhibiting, behavior consistent with the Doctrine of Domicile. These alliances and other business arrangements emerge from negotiations between First Nation and non-First Nation political and business leaders.

Because of their size and traditional practices, the people at the “grassroots” level (the civil sector) remain actively involved in all facets of the development process and are able to, and do, intervene forcefully in the process if the activities or results are deemed unsatisfactory (see for example Anderson and Bone, 1995a, 1995b).

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Appendix One

January 1994

<<salute>> << firstname>> << lastname>>
<<FirstNation>>
<<street>>
<<city>>, <<province>>
<<code>>
Phone <<Phone>>, Fax <<Fax>>

Dear <<salute>> <<lastname>>:

I am a professor of administration with the School of Business and Public Administration of the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College. I am conducting research into the economic and business development activities of the First Nations in Canada. This research will help SIFC's School of Business and Public Administration better meet the needs of its undergraduate and graduate students and the First Nations that many such students will serve after graduation.

I would appreciate it if you would have a member of your staff complete the brief attached questionnaire and return it to me by fax at (306) 665-0175 or by mail to:

Bob Anderson
School of Business and Public Administration
Saskatchewan Indian Federated College
127 College West
University of Regina
Regina, S4S 0A2

Or fax it to my attention at: 1-585-1289

I would also appreciate receiving a copy of your annual report if the <<FirstNation>> produces one or any brochures or other information about your business ventures.

If you require further information please call me at (306) 931-1807.

Thank-you very much for your assistance.

Yours truly,

School of Business and Public Administration
Saskatchewan Indian Federated College
127 College West
University of Regina, S4S 0A2
Phone (306) 931-1807, Fax (306) 665-0175
First Nations Business Development Questionnaire

<<FirstNation>>

<<salute>> <<firstname>> <<lastname>>

Planning:

Does the <<FirstNation>> have a "Community Development Plan"? yes _____ no _____

If so, does this "Community Development Plan" establish economic development goals and strategies for attaining those goals? yes _____ no _____

Does the <<FirstNation>> have an "Economic Development Plan" separate from any "Community Development Plan"? yes _____ no _____

Structure:

Has the <<FirstNation>> assigned responsibility for economic development to a particular Councillor or committee of Council? yes _____ no _____

Has the <<FirstNation>> assigned responsibility for economic development activities to a particular employee? yes _____ no _____

Has the <<FirstNation>> created a development corporation for economic and business development purposes? yes _____ no _____

Has the <<TribalCouncil>> created a development corporation to pursue business activities on behalf of the <<FirstNation>> and other member First Nations? yes _____ no _____

Businesses:

Is the <<FirstNation>> the sole owner and operator of any businesses?

yes _____no _____

If yes, how many?

If the <<FirstNation>> has created a development corporation, is that corporation the sole owner and operator of any businesses?

yes _____no _____

If yes, how many?

Does the <<FirstNation>> own and/or operate any businesses in partnership or joint venture with any other First Nation(s) or non-First Nation individual(s) or organization(s)?

yes _____no _____

If yes, how many?

Appendix Two

<Name>

Director of Economic Development

<Tribal Council>

<address>

<Fax>; <Phone>

Dear <name>:

I am a professor of administration with the School of Business and Public Administration of the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College. Among other things, the School offers classes in economic and business development. In support of this activity, I am conducting research into the economic development strategies and structures of the First Nations of Saskatchewan.

I would like your help with this research. In particular, I would like information about the businesses operated by the <Tribal Council> and its member First Nations. It would be of great help to me if you could complete the brief attached questionnaire and fax it to my attention at: **585-1289**

Or mail it to:

Bob Anderson
School of Business and Public Administration
Saskatchewan Indian Federated College
Room 501, Campion Building
University of Regina
Regina, S4S 0A2

In addition, I would appreciate receiving copies of any publicly released material (including recent Tribal Council and development corporation annual reports) relating to the business development activities for your Tribal Council.

Yours truly,

Bob Anderson
931-1800 or 779-6300

