Visualizing Indigenous Perspectives of how the Saskatoon Community Youth Arts Program (SCYAP) Addresses Social Exclusion

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Abstract:

This study explores how the Saskatoon Community Youth Arts Programming (SCYAP); addresses social exclusion. SCYAP is a non-profit community based organization that delivers culturally appropriate and artistic programming designed to address the social, economic, and educational needs of urban youth. In the context of addressing social exclusion for Indigenous youth, SCYAP uses art as a medium through which clients may foster a positive identity while providing individuals a way of expressing themselves through a creative process. The study is qualitative in nature and utilizes the tools of ethnography critical to the development of increasing Indigenous social inclusion. The article provides original data pertaining to urban Indigenous people.

Introduction

> Show me an open door… not necessarily push me through it, but guide me through it. My life, I've been institutionalized since I was 12 years old. It took tell SCYAP for me to want to turn my life around. People [staff] here give me space and work with me too. (First Nation male, 24 years of age)

Most of the clients at SCYAP are Indigenous, many of whom take sanctuary within an environment that offers a non-toxic and stimulating place. The clients who attend SCYAP are considered at-risk and face many challenges. Such challenges, to name a few, include racial discrimination, impoverishment, and

underachievement in school. Such cumulative challenges provide this urban Indigenous community with a sense of social exclusion. Fortunately, SCYAP serves to create a space for the urban Indigenous client that accepts social justice ideology and cultural diversity.

The purpose of this article is to examine how the Saskatoon Community Youth Arts Programming (SCYAP); addresses social exclusion. We claim there is a need to envision Indigenous perspectives in order to enhance our knowledge regarding how to addresses Indigenous social exclusion. As Barry (1999) advises that while culturally diverse societies are complex, developing an understanding of the "other" is critical for policy development and the management of intercultural relations. Both Acoose and Dell (2009) and, Acoose and Charlton (2014) concur providing recent Canadian based research that documents how such culturally based programs empower both individuals and community. In fact, the necessity of developing an understanding of the "other" must be understood as an issue of justice designed to start rectifying past wrongs as it is harder to "other" someone whose humanity is visible (Charlton and Hansen 2013). We discuss the perceptions of urban Indigenous clients as a body of notions, and will make visible how the clients can enhance our understanding of increasing social inclusion for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit offenders in general. Being visible can be empowering for Indigenous people in Canada who have a history of being socially excluded, silenced and oppressed (Champagne 2015; Hansen and Antsanen 2015; Wotherspoon and Hansen 2013). This is the natural, logical and ethical effects of social inclusion. Social inclusion is the source of conforming to societies norms. For example, Papachristos, Meares, and Fagan (2012), note that people are "…more likely to comply with the law when they believe (a) in the legitimacy of legal actors, but especially the police, and (b) that the substance of the law is consistent with their own moral schedules" (400).

How one perceives their environment must be considered as a central feature when examining how increased visibility is linked to social inclusion. As Brighenti (2007) notes, "[v]isibility is closely

associated to recognition" (7). Therefore, visibility has a social inclusion component that may be simply expressed as: "visibility includes, invisibility excludes." In terms of visibility and the environment, Bronfenbrenner (1979) acknowledges that environment extends beyond one's immediate setting, and places strong emphasis on the role of current perceptions by asserting, "what matters for development and behavior is the environment as it is perceived rather than as it may exist in objective reality" (4). Bronfenbrenner is echoing a central sociological tenant here, namely the Thomas theorem, which states, "[i]t is not important whether or not the interpretation is correct–if men [people] define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas and Thomas 1928: 572).

Like all other ethnic groups, urban First Nations, Métis and Inuit clients regulate and/or change their behavior as a consequence of the interplay between current environmental demands and their perceptions based on prior experiences (Steinberg 2009). However, being visible is not always positive and this notion is reflected in Brighenti's (2007) observation that visibility, "is a double-edged sword: it can be empowering as well as disempowering" (13). For urban Indigenous people, for example, visibility becomes disempowering in the impoverished and racialized inner city spaces that are increasingly under the watchful eyes of law enforcement. Such over-policing of Indigenous people in the inner city has been an important factor in the development of Indigenous peoples disproportionate rates of incarceration (Comack 2012; Hansen 2015a). As Statistics Canada (2012) youth correctional statistics demonstrate:

> In 2010/2011 a disproportionate number of youth entering the correctional system were Aboriginal. Of the admissions recorded in 2010/2011 in the eight jurisdictions that provided data, just over one quarter (26%) was Aboriginal… The disproportionate number of Aboriginal youth admitted to the correctional system was particularly true among females. In 2010/2011, Aboriginal female youth comprised 34% of all female youth in the correctional system, while Aboriginal male youth made up 24% of all male youth in the correctional

system… For both male and female youth in the general population, about 6% were Aboriginal. (Statistics Canada 2012: 7)

Prisons are an important reflection of a society; more than justice a reflection of racial and social inequality, they are examples of surveillance. According to Foucault's analysis of being watched--the Panopticon--concept, Brighenti (2007) notes that being watched in the prison is "a mechanism of visibility. But what is most important for its effective functioning is not only the first-order asymmetry of vision between the guard and the inmate. It is the whole mechanism of control that must remain invisible" (13). Therefore, concentrations of Indigenous peoples who are imprisoned serves as a vehicle of social control. According to Hansen (2014), the "disproportionate incarceration rates of racial minorities, Indigenous peoples, and women are a sad situation and can be considered a political interpretation of tough on crime discourse" (4). It is, in other words, an interpretation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit designed to perpetuate their racialization. Incarceration denies them their own identity and their social inclusion in Canadian society. As Silver (2007) notes, "… socially excluded groups and individuals lack capacity or access to social opportunity" (15). Society treats the Indigenous as abnormal, and thus discriminates against them in society's institutions.

One way to increase social inclusion for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit offenders can be understood is by looking at Euro-Canadian settler colonialism and its effects on the colonized. As a rule, the colonized Indigenous peoples are underrepresented as employees in Canada's institutions, but are overrepresented as prisoners within the criminal justice system, demonstrating Canada's colonial power relations (Hansen 2015b; Monture-Okanee 1995).

Indigenous custody concerns have continued to increase after the *Gladue Report* (1999), which requires courts in Canada to consider all sensible options to incarcerations when dealing with Aboriginal offenders. The Canadian Bar Association (2012) notes that, "Canada's Criminal Code applies to all Aboriginal people, including offences by Indians whether on or off reserve. However, if

convicted, the sentencing provisions of the Criminal Code direct judges to consider all reasonable alternatives to imprisonment, with particular attention to Aboriginal offenders" (1). This report led to the development of Indigenous justice interventions with the courts working with Indigenous communities on matters of justice throughout Canada (Green and Healey 2003; Hansen and Calihoo 2014; Ross 1996).

Agnew (1992) argues that negative relations with others can lead to pessimistic emotions in coping strategies. Those copying strategies are more likely to be criminal when the strains are severe, seen as unjust, and are linked with anger (Agnew 2001). Downey and Feldman (1996) note, "The desire to achieve acceptance and to avoid rejection is widely acknowledged to be a central human motive" (1327). In regard to perceptions based on prior experiences, research pertaining to apprehensive anticipation of prejudice, by Mendoza-Denton *et al*. (2002), found that both direct and vicarious experiences of exclusion could lead people to anxiously anticipate that they will be similarly treated in new contexts where the possibility of such treatment exists. Responses to perceived rejection have been found to include hostility, dejection, emotional withdrawal and jealousy (Downey and Feldman 1996). Medical research utilizing functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) has shown that social rejection results in the activation of similar brain regions to those triggered by physical pain (Eisenberger *et al*. 2003).

Papachristos *et al*. (2012) note that, "…punishment *processes* matter a great deal more for encouraging compliance than do punishments themselves" (398-99). It arguably seem that Canadian society is providing little incentive for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit to embrace the status quo, and it is naïve to believe that such a situation does not adversely impact issues pertaining to community safety.

Following this vein of thought, it is helpful to ponder Albany Law School's, James Campbell Matthews Distinguished Professor of Jurisprudence, Anthony Paul Farley's (2002) utterance:

> We take monstrous pleasure in creating monsters. Our monsters, to the surprise of no one, behave monstrously. For this, their monstrous behaviour, they are monstrously

> punished… We take a monstrous pleasure in punishing our monsters. Our punishments, our pleasures, create our monsters – and so it goes, we the people [the state] versus them. (Farley 2002: 1494)

Farley's passage is suggestive that buried deep beneath law and procedure, the criminal justice system is a human process predicated upon a purpose of social control, punishment and the creation of the other in order to comfortably distance the middle and upper classes from their fear of the unknown, and perhaps a deeper social responsibility for their own individual and collective actions. The inevitable side effect of such is that the criminal justice system, as an instrument of control, cannot help but promote negative relations if unchecked by the exercise of human rights.

At a fundamental level, quality improvement for increasing social inclusion with urban First Nations, Métis and Inuit clients will have to involve determining which resource investments make a difference and which do not (Heinemann, Fisher and Gershon 2006). Judging the quality of intervention from this vantage point necessitates looking beyond the structure (e.g., staff to client ratio) to understand the process–what actually is being done in regard to intervention (e.g., the perception of fairness). This cannot be accomplished without talking with the client and then integrating that feedback into efforts aimed at effective intervention. Both organizational structure and process have the potential to influence outcomes; "good structure increases the likelihood of good process which in turn increases the likelihood of good outcomes" (Donabedian 1988: 1745).

The Current Study

The Saskatoon Community Youth Arts Programming (the research site for this study) has been in existence since 2001. The authors contacted Darrell B. Lechman, the founder and Director, of SCYAP, to discuss the idea of conducting potential research concerning Indigenous youth who utilize their program. The director expressed interest in the project and therefore approved of the study. Darrell has garnered much experience in the social justice programming

working with youth as well as businesses. In fact, one of the authors John G. Hansen worked with Darrel on the front lines as a correctional officer at Stony Mountain Penitentiary (MB.) in the 1990s. The objectives of SCYAP (2015) are as follows:

- To develop a multi-layered, community-supported art and culture-based crime prevention strategy addressing youth crime (with emphasis on illegal graffiti)

- To create an art and culture-based environment which lays the foundation for youth personal development, empowerment and direction and provides positive training opportunities aimed at developing a stronger sense of self-esteem and community ownership within the youth and "at-risk" youth of our city

- To provide youth and "at-risk" youth with the information, knowledge, and real-life experiences required in furthering their exploration of educational and career opportunities

- To educate and inspire, through art and culture, "at-risk" youth to become positive, contributing citizens and to dispel the myth that the larger world is forever closed to them

- To furnish a place for urban young people to explore and express their creative abilities, to provide entry into the possibilities for continuing education and career options within and beyond the arts and culture industry

- To partner with other youth agencies and programs in a single window delivery model to better coordinate and expand the range of services offered to youth and "at-risk" youth in our communities. (1)

This study explores ways of increasing social inclusion for urban First Nations, Métis and Inuit clients from the client perspective at SCYAP; a community based organization that delivers culturally appropriate programming designed to address the social, economic, and educational needs of urban Indigenous peoples.

Method

What follows is framed within the sociology of knowledge. It is grounded upon Kuhn's (1962) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* which challenged the notion that science is to be understood as an enterprise in which knowledge is uncovered by the steady movement toward the unraveling of objective truth (Cole 1975). As such, this research must be understood through the fact that it approaches science as an endeavor that is marked by a succession of paradigms which rule until their collapse and replacement. Indigenous peoples the world over are demanding a paradigm shift. Social movements, such as Idle No More; and CIHR's (2005) *Guidelines* are demanding that Indigenous voice be heard, and Indigenous peoples be seen.

Our examination will draw upon Denzin's (1989) notion of "thick" description, which he has described as follows:

> A thick description does more than record what a person is doing. It goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances. It presents detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another. Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. It inserts history into experience. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard. (Denzin 1989: 83)

The use of narrative, as advocated here, is an outgrowth of both the phenomenology espoused by Edmund Husserl and Soren Kierkegaard's existentialism. Husserl's logic is bound to the immediacy of experience (Natanson 1973), as his concern was with "describing what is given in [that] experience without obscuring preconceptions or hypothetical speculation" (Barrett 1990: 190-91). Husserl believed that we must look to consciousness if we wish to understand human knowledge. Central to Kierkegaard is an emphasis on the existing individual, "a call for a consideration of man in his concrete situation, including his culture, history, relations with others, and above all, the meaning of personal existence"

(Stewart and Mukunas 1990: 63). Kierkegaard believed that as lived reality cannot be detached from human experience, we must start with the person's perception of what is truth.

Together Husserl and Kierkegaard contribute to the idea that understanding of self and world in story is what fundamentally contributes to consciousness. Conceptually, what constitutes stories has been operationalized by Morgan (2000) as "events linked in sequence across time according to a plot" (2). In this vein, storytelling and understanding is "functionally the same thing" (Schank 1990: 24). If we narrow our attention upon the link between identity and interpretation, it becomes apparent how enmeshed psychological narrative is with the concept of identity development (Murray 1995). As an example, McAdams (1993) based his theory of identity development upon the very assumption that we all find meaning in our lives through the stories we tell about ourselves. According to McAdams (1993):

> A life story is a personal myth that an individual begins working on in late adolescence... in order to provide his or her life with unity or purpose and in order to articulate a meaningful niche in the psychosocial world. (McAdams 1993: 5)

Consciously and unconsciously we arrange episodes of our lives, from our late adolescence on, into stories which we constantly revise as we go about our existence because "we make ourselves through myth" (McAdams 1993: 13). Our lives are our stories, yet our stories affect our lives. Thick description helps us understand and appreciate the interrelated dynamics of people's lives as it goes beyond a mere, quick, look.

As the study of discrimination has historically been dominated by research from the perspective of the perpetrator (Oyserman and Swim 2001), the power, and promise, of thick description, is that it will allow this research to glimpse the totality of the lived existence of the individuals documented within this study as they go about living upon the margins of society. The voices, and first-hand knowledge, of these individuals, will be utilized in examining effective intervention policies, procedures and practices that are

based upon the notion of "what works" from the voice of the client. As such, while open-ended questions were used to illicit responses, overall themes were derived from comparing interviews, which took place at SCYAP. We recorded the interviews with a digital audio recorder and then transcribed the digital recordings later. Next, we identifies the themes respondents themselves brought to the fore. In order to assure consistency, both researchers individually codified, then compared, the identified themes that came to light via the transcribed voices of the respondents.

The Power of Qualitative Research

Methodologically, this study qualifies as qualitative research. The data has been derived from the verbal descriptions of experience, based upon a given questionnaire, in conjunction with a semi-structured interview designed to illicit the individual's story in their own words.

The theoretical warrant for this exercise is derived directly from May's (1958) belief that the way academia has traditionally gone about the scientific exercise, by the seeking of objective truth, has "bedeviled Western thought and science" (11) because people are objectified. May's reasoning points to the need for researchers to bring the inner world of experience into their view of science. While such an endeavor is admirable, to be sure, Osborne's (1990) observation that "we are of this world rather than in it" (80), should cause us to pause as it brings up the thorny issue of researcher bias.

Researchers are not, and can never be, truly neutral (Creswell 1998). Yet this does not necessarily mean that qualitative research corrupts data to the point of uselessness. Rogers (1965) noted that because science exists in people, science has its inception, process, and tentative conclusions in people too. As he states,

> Knowledge – even scientific knowledge – is that which is subjectively acceptable. Scientific knowledge can be communicated only to those who are subjectively ready to receive its communication. The utilization of science also

occurs only through people who are in pursuit of values which have meaning for them. (Rogers 1965: 165)

The situation is clear. The presence of the researcher, in and of itself, has an impact upon what constitutes data along with how that data is collected and interpreted. Realistically, any attempt by the researcher to distance themselves from the study in fact threatens its validity (Osborne 1990).

Meaning, Not Provable Truth

As the goal of narrative research is about the lived experience of human beings, the goal is "meaning" not "provable truth." Osborne (1990) puts it as such, "natural science methodology looks for statistical generalizability while phenomenological research strives for empathic generalizability" (86). In qualitatively based narrative research, it is the human-lived experience that takes center stage. Within such rubric, validity is contextual. A different researcher undertaking this research would never duplicate entirely the interpretations postulated here. Yet this is not a weakness as multiple perspectives can lead to a richness of understanding. The central point to remember is that narrative reasoning is interested in meaning, not facts. As such, "[t]he best the researcher can do is to argue a particular interpretation as persuasively as possible, supported by references to the data, and leave the final judgment to the reader" (Osborne 1990: 87).

While the term validity is rarely used in qualitative enterprises, it can legitimately be used here if consideration is given to the reader's judgment pertaining to the goodness of fit between the data and the meaning structures teased out of them, in conjunction with the relevant theoretical knowledge examined throughout this work.

Convenience Based Quota Sampling

With the above in mind, this research will next introduce the subjects who have graciously offered to share their experiences, and thoughts, while trying to maintain sobriety despite the fact that they reside upon the very margins of society. A semi- structured interview approach will be utilized in order to elicit the story each

individual has to offer. Of note, the selection criteria regarding participant inclusion within this research are based upon the notion of convenience based quota sampling. As such, the sample will not be random, but will, arguably, be representative – at least to the population it is meant to serve.

Convenience sampling, while open to attack on its non-random front, is not unheard of; in fact it is widely utilized, especially within undergraduate psychology classes where students are strong armed (submit to questionnaire or fail) to participate (Salkind 2009). Quota sampling is appropriate in cases where there is a need to create a sample stratified on certain variables; for this research, it is chemical dependency (Salkind 2009). As such, participants were selected, based upon their willingness to accept the author's invitation to participate within this research. Postings were displayed and made visible for the urban First Nation, Metis and Inuit clients who utilized the services at SCYAP. In this way, the sample represents people with prerequisite characteristics, but does not randomly select them from the general population.

Sample

The participants are a mix of 2 female and 5 male Indigenous clients who are involved with SCYAP, and were interviewed to understand "how" Indigenous clients perceive of increasing social inclusion for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit female and male offenders within an urban environment. The participants were recruited through postings at various bulletin boards throughout SCYAP. The postings conveyed that the study was seeking Indigenous clients between the ages of 18 to 30 who were interested in participating in a study that examines perceptions of increasing social inclusion for urban First Nations, Métis, and Inuit offenders. The reason for seeking 7 participants, 2 female and 5 males between the ages 18-30 is to address gender bias as research has historically marginalized the perspectives of women and Indigenous peoples. For ethical considerations the subjects are adult age and the researchers trusted that female and male participants will have some unique experiences to contribute to the study. The data collection comprised asking

participants 16 semi structured open-ended interview questions. These open-ended questions will integrate reflective – ethnographic interviewing procedures so that participants feel free to share their perspectives in what can be called a case study. As Creswell (1998) advises a case study can be "multiple individuals, events, processes, activities, or programs" (114). This study examines how Indigenous clients perceive the Criminal justice system. According to Burgess (1984), the open-ended questioning style provides participants "an opportunity to develop their answers outside a structured format" (102). In addition, this study echoes with what Janesick (2003) observes as "procedures that are simultaneously open-ended and rigorous and that do justice to the complexity of the social setting under study" (46). Therefore, the qualitative methods utilized will foster an interpretation of the perceptions the criminal justice system by Indigenous clients. Doing so will allow us to garner what Denzin (1989) refers to as "thick discription."

Demographic Factors: First Nations, Métis and Inuit in Canada (A Snapshot)

The term "First Nations" is used to refer to Status and non-Status "Indian" peoples in Canada (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada [AANDC] 2012; 2013). Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (2012) notes, "The Canadian *Constitution* recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people – Indians, Métis and Inuit. These are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs."

Canada's Aboriginal population is also young and growing. According to Statistics Canada (2014), the Aboriginal population increased by 20.1% between 2006 and 2011. There are two things to note. First, the general population of Canada increased by 5.2% during the same period. Secondly, the percentage of Status Indians increased by 13.7%, while the percentage of non-Status Indians increased by 61.3% (Statistics Canada 2014). This differentiation, Status vs. non-Status, is important as the federal government has treaty obligations toward Status Indians and Inuit peoples that non-Status and Métis people do not enjoy. As Wayne Beaver, of the Alderville First Nation north of Cobourg, ON observes, the

Aboriginal population is growing, but that growth is deceiving for the future of Aboriginal people in Canada due to the Status vs. non-Status divide. The reason, according to Beaver, is that when the *Indian Act* was revised in 1985, due to Bill C-31, only children born of two Indian status parents inherit status. There are two classes of Status Indian in Canada: the 6(1) Indian who has two Status parents, and the 6(2) Indian, who has one Status parent. When a 6(2) Status Indian has children with a non-Status partner, those children will not have Status (Beaver, as cited in Keung 2009). As such, while the population of First Nation individuals is presently growing, Treaty obligations of the federal government may well come to an end, over the course of time, due to intermarriage between Status and non-Status Indians. Duane Champagne (2015) refers to such policy, as is evident within Bill C-31, as "termination policy" as it is designed to strip Status away from people and integrate them into the general population. As such, there is no guarantee that the growth of Canada's First Nations will be maintained. Once someone looses Status, it is gone. In Canada, the *Indian Act* stipulates that Status is gained and lost through one's lineage.

As people are more than mere numbers and labels, it is simplistic to dismiss the divisiveness government policies can promote within and between groups. Sharlotte Neely (2014) observes that, "Native American groups like the Hopi point out how much longer they have been in the American Southwest than Native American groups like the Navajo" (vi). Michael Hankard (2015) examines how Bands tend to favor on-reserve individuals who hold Status, over those living off reserve who also hold Status, when they apply for funding toward accessing traditional healers through Health Canada's Non-Insured Health Benefits program. Within groups who hold Status, there is a competition toward "more Indigenousness" both amongst (on- vs. off-reserve) and between different groups (length of time present) who hold Status. There is also a divide, an exclusionary one at that, between those who hold Status and those who do not. Southern Illinois University political scientist Anne Flaherty (2014) explores how, in the US, the Cherokee nation has actively attempted to exclude the Cherokee Freemen, the African American slaves to the Cherokee and their descendants, who were extended Cherokee

citizenship through a treaty singed between the Cherokee and the US federal government in 1866. The argument is predicated upon the notion that citizenship is to be grounded within blood quantum, not adoption. In Canada, the *Indian Act* stipulates that Status is gained and lost through one's lineage.

While the above information most certainly offers an incomplete picture or a snapshot if you will, it is complete enough to allow readers to grasp just how diverse a group Canada's First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples are. The country is vast, and so are the interests and issues for all the peoples of Canada. Canada's First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples are also mobile, with many living outside their home communities.

The Importance of SCYAP

Those attending SCYAP are pleased with being in the program and are enjoying their experience. One participant stated that while one is at SCYAP "…you get to meet all kinds of people from all kinds of different background" (First Nation male, 20 years of age). "A lot of Aboriginals tend to be artistic in some way. We have stories to tell. Using art can shepherd Aboriginal youth to express themselves in ways that are not criminal" (First Nation female, 24 years of age). Another participant described how much needed and valued intervention programs are losing their funding:

> We used to do a program, Urban Canvas, but we've not done it for a few years because they didn't get funding. They'd take 12 at risk youth, under 30 years of age, and they'd teach Art for 9 months. I know that helps lots do different stuff after… like not illegally painting trains, like getting into school, finding jobs. Not getting into trouble. (Métis female, 30 years of age)

This passage clearly illustrates the benefits of being involved in art interventions, which includes staying out of trouble. This is what an intervention program such as SCYAP is intended to produce. It is intended to keep the clients out of trouble and help them establish positive ways to live and heal. As another participant explained:

> In my experience, I've noticed that people who actually want help are those who have reached a point where their lives are

really bad. People have to want to change before they seek help. Those who are trying to help need to be there and be able to establish a connection. (First Nation male, 25 years of Age)

For the Indigenous clients, SCYAP provides a community and sense of belonging. Such feelings of acceptance and inclusivity are crucial in a world that has systematically excluded Indigenous peoples.

Physical support; a sense of belonging to community because people feel so displaced…Community involvement is key. First Nation recognition is good, but a sense of community and of helping ourselves and others is very important. If you don't have family, then you can create one within the community. (First Nation male, 24 years of age)

This passage illustrates that SCYAP provides a community of emotional and physical support. Since SCYAP espouses creativity through art, the program has also been a healing experience and this development is reflected in the participant's narrative: "Creative expression is so helpful. It gives you voice and recognition. The creative process is healing" (First Nation male, 24 years of age). Intrinsic to that healing journey is developing a sense of community and belonging, assisted by SCYAP programming that is consciously aware that the clients can heal from the trauma through creative expression. SCYAP challenges the social exclusion of Indigenous people in the artistic realm. As another participant said:

SCYAP has enhanced my skills, showed me how to work and collaborate with others. It [SCYAP] has also allowed me to give back and help others through the gift given to me. Elders make a big difference. One of the things I remember is talk about treating others and the environment with respect. (First Nation male, 27 years of age)

Equally important has been the cultural components, which includes the elders that are recognized as valuable teachers on educating the clients to respect the environment and other people. One participant said, "SCYAP provides role models and gives you a safe place to go to" (First Nation male, 20 years of age). The Indigenous clients experience with SCYAP has been healing: the clients are finding

ways to heal because of their exposure to art and a community to which they feel socially included. The clients recognize that SCYAP is reaching out to help them in a genuine way; and the clients are more likely to stay out of trouble because of the relationship building that is a central aspect of SCYAP.

Discussion

This qualitative study is concerned with how an inclusive community based initiative, such as that offered at SCYAP, addresses social exclusion in a way that pertains to positive outcomes for at risk Indigenous clients within the criminal justice system. We found that the sense of belonging, the ability to access positive role modes, the ability to take pride in oneself and express that pride – in terms of both artistic expression and in the ability to give back all play a significant role in allowing participants to take ownership in something that is greater than themselves.

A Sense of Belonging

Overcoming the sense of individual displacement, for those on the margins, can be difficult as exclusion, social or otherwise, is an affront to one's individual humanity. The sense of "not" belonging can be devastating (Downey and Feldman 1996; Eisenberger *et al.* 2003; Mendoza-Denton *et al.* 2002).

For First Nations people, exclusion is, to a large extent, rooted in federal government policy (Palmater 2011). Drawing upon recent research, Palmater (2011) further notes:

> The problem of over-representation of Aboriginal people in federal jails [an ultimate form of exclusion in Canada since we do not have the death penalty] is getting worse: between 1998 and 2008, the percentage of male Aboriginal inmates increased by 19% and for women it increased by 131% in the same period (OCI 2009). Significantly, over 28% of federal Aboriginal inmates were raised in the child welfare system and another 15% in residential schools (OCI 2006). While Aboriginal people make up less than 4% of the total population, Aboriginal children represent over 40% of the 76,000 children and youth in

care (Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba 2001; Blackstock and Trocme 2004). (Palmater 2011: 116)

What is behind this lack of embracing First Nations? Scholars have often used the group threat thesis to explain the correlation between harsh punitive measures and large minority populations (Ousey and Unnever 2012). While not disputing Ousey and Unnever's finding, Canadian society's proclivity for othering and vindictiveness has to be considered (Farley 2002).

One reason for the success of SCYAP as an effective intervention is its inclusivity. As one respondent stated, "I think this place [SCYAP] is kind of for everybody. It's a community thing… I guess that helps… anybody can come here. Feeling safe is important (Métis female, 30 years of age). Another respondent stated, "From my experience, I've been in-and-out of institutions for a long time, mostly in, you need to find a purpose with/for your life. You need to find something that you like" (First Nation male, 24 years of age). A third respondent stated, "Community involvement is key. First Nation recognition is good, but a sense of community and of helping ourselves and others is very important. If you don't have family, then you can create one within the community" (First Nation male, 24 years of age).

In speaking to the need to find belonging as a key component of effective interventions, it is useful to look toward those on the outside, or the othered, for guidance. To this end, Turiel (2002) observed that justice entails "equal respect for persons along with freedom from oppression as the standards by which individuals and society should be guided" (5). Cone (1975), a well-known Black theologian, echoed the fact that justice entails freedom from oppression. King (1963) famously stated that, "there is a tension in society that will help men to rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood" (3). The tension King was referring to was the demand by the oppressed for justice; that is, freedom from oppression. Understanding and brotherhood result when middle-class society realizes that when Tutu (1999) drew upon the Bantu notion of

ubuntu, he was trying to impart a long-standing African cultural notion that what hurts one person hurts us all.

Following this vein, Braithwaite (2003) offers a convincing argument that "providing social support to develop human capabilities to the full is one particularly indispensable principle because it marks the need for a consideration of transforming as well as restoring or healing values" (12). To bring this discussion back around to the inclusivity of SCYAP, effective interventions must be examined not so much as a response to a crime committed, but as a healing endeavor. Bazemore and Schiff's (2001) observation that community must occupy a focal position within this process is helpful. Not only does such thinking place the locus of responsibility for healing and inclusion with the local community, it does so without alleviating any individual of their personal responsibility, whatever their role is. Punishing for the sake of punishment is simply revenge. Revenge is not a mathematical formula in which two negatives equal a positive; unfortunately, the outcome of revenge is quite the reverse.

Positive Role Models

The available level of social support one is able to draw upon is a crucial factor when considering effective interventions. Low levels of social support have been associated with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder; whereas high levels of social support have been positively associated with active problem-focused coping, a sense of control, and self-esteem (Davidson and McEwen 2012; Hansen and Antsanen 2016). Earlier research by Barber and Crisp (1995) found that the degree of social support available from the most supportive individual in an addict's social network was the primary predictor for using, or not using, over a three-month interval.

The respondents within this study concur that role modes are important. One respondent stated, "SCYAP has enhanced my skills, showed me how to work and collaborate with others. It [SCYAP] has allowed me to give back and help others through the gift given to me…" (First Nation male, 27 years of age). Another respondent stated, "We learn from older people; talking with them is so helpful"

(First Nation female, 24 years of age). Finally, speaking directly to the need to be able to seek guidance, a First Nation female (age 30) observes, "need a place where they can talk to someone and feel safe.

Community as Social Control

Research findings grounded within social disorganization theory postulate that criminal markets are the outcome of ineffective systems of pro-social control mechanisms (Anderson 1999; Curtis 1998; Wilson 1996). Fagan (1992) asserts that criminal activity flourishes "in a context of rapidly changing neighborhoods where the... informal social controls that limited crime… have been weakened" (102). As a result, in many deprived urban contexts criminal activity not only emerges but evolves into an "obvious statistical normality" (Hannerz 1969: 103). In communities where the collective capacity to obstruct illicit conduct is weakened, the transmission of this criminal behavior is more than likely to occur (Sampson and Wilson 1995).

This literature provides an explanation of the manner by which informal social control shapes the distribution illicit markets while further suggesting that community organization partially accounts for the positive link between social structural disadvantage and drug market activity.

Empirically grounded evidence from neighborhood-level studies suggests that a large amount of variation in crime is determined by systems of informal social control (Antsanen and Hansen 2012; Bellair 2000; Sampson *et al*. 1997; Taylor 2002). Additionally, research indicates that community organization has an inhibitory effect on neighborhood-level crime (Wilson 1996). Taken together, this line of inquiry supports the supposition that communities capable of practicing informal social control are able to reduce violence by monitoring and managing behaviors of individuals (Antsanen and Hansen 2012; Bursik 1988; Bellair 2000).

SCYAP is an example of informal social control at the community level. SCYAP offers clients the ability to both express themselves

and take pride in that expression. As one respondent states, "Like it [SCYAP] helps me through my bad days. I can just come in here and paint and feel good about myself" (First Nation male, 24 years of age). Another respondent states, "There are a lot of therapeutic aspects to art. It helps you relax and focus. People enjoy it. It builds community"(First Nation male, 29 year of age). Finally, another respondent, when talking about SCYAP states, "People need to learn to dream big and aim high. We need to learn not to settle, but to work hard at getting more" (First Nation male, 27 years of age).

SCYAP, by offering at risk clients an accepting place where they can "buy" into the program, allows clients to align their moral code to the group in order to maintain contact. Not only is a sense of belonging important (Downey and Feldman 1996), it has been noted that the mere threat of punishment does little to change active criminal behavior. While some researchers (Manski and Pepper 2012) question how data alone can identify the deterrent effects of capital punishment, the fact that it occurs so frequently is problematic. Furthermore, Giordano *et al*. (2002) note that the need for a "general openness to change" (1001) is necessary for someone to move away from criminal activity. Papachristos *et al*. (2012) note that offenders reformed more readily when links to criminal social networks are weakest. As SCYAP provides an accepting community that fosters individual development within the bounds of social cohesion, both at risk Indigenous clients and the community at large benefit.

Limitations

There are certain limitations in this ethnographic research that need to be acknowledged. First, this research is conducted in Saskatoon and did not, in the end, include Inuit peoples as none were found to interview. Second, the research is qualitative in nature, and does not claim to represent or speak for all First Nations, Metis and Inuit offenders. It is, nonetheless, an example of how seven Indigenous clients perceive effective interventions.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that for seven Indigenous clients, finding a community in which they can both express themselves and take pride in that expression, and ultimately in their own self-worth, is one principle objective any future intervention with at risk Indigenous young offenders needs to incorporate. Offering individuals a sense of community while providing positive roll models allows at risk clients to willfully incorporate behavioral change as they wish to "buy in" to belonging to such a community. SCYAP is a strong example of how a community based intervention that does not undergird its presence with the threat of retribution, can work by simply offering a person something of value; the sense of belonging and acceptance. SCYAP is, in other words, an organization that provides youth with a sense of social inclusion.

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