

Introduction

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Introduction

In March, 2006, the second triennial Aboriginal Policy Research Conference (APRC) was held in Ottawa, Canada. This conference brought together over 1,200 researchers and policy makers from across Canada and around the world. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal delegates (representing government, Aboriginal organizations, universities, non-governmental organizations, and think tanks) came together to disseminate, assess, learn, and push forward evidence-based research in order to advance policy and program development. The conference was a continuation of the work begun at the first APRC held in November of 2002. The 2002 conference was co-hosted by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and the University of Western Ontario (UWO),¹ with the participation of nearly 20 federal departments and agencies, and four national, non-political Aboriginal organizations. By promoting interaction between researchers, policy makers, and Aboriginal people, the conference was intended to expand our knowledge of the social, economic, and demographic determinants of Aboriginal well-being; identify and facilitate the means by which this knowledge may be translated into effective policies; and allow outstanding policy needs to shape the research agenda within government, academia, and Aboriginal communities.

The 2002 Aboriginal Policy Research Conference was the largest of its kind ever held in Canada, with about 700 policy makers, researchers, scientists, academics, and Aboriginal community leaders coming together to examine and discuss cutting-edge research on Aboriginal issues. The main portion of the conference spanned several days and included over fifty workshops. In addition to and separate from the conference itself, several federal departments and agencies independently organized pre- and post-conference meetings and events related to Aboriginal research in order to capitalize on the confluence of participants. Most notably, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) held its first major consultation on Aboriginal research the day after the conference ended. These consultations led to the creation of SSHRC's Aboriginal Research Grant Program which supports university-based researchers and Aboriginal community organizations in conducting research on issues of concern to Aboriginal peoples.²

The Impetus for the First Aboriginal Policy Research Conference

The idea for holding a national conference dedicated to Aboriginal issues grew from simple frustration. While there are many large conferences held in Canada every year, Aboriginal issues are often at best only an afterthought or sub-theme. More frequently, Aboriginal issues are as marginalized as the people themselves and are either omitted from the planning agenda or are begrudgingly given the odd token workshop at other national fora. While Aboriginal peoples account for only about 3% of the Canadian population, issues pertaining to them occupy a disproportionate amount of public discourse. In fact, in any given year, the Aboriginal policy agenda accounts for anywhere from 10 to 30% of Parliament's time, and litigation cases pertaining to Aboriginal issues have no rival in terms of the hundreds of billions of dollars in contingent liability that are at risk to the Crown. Given these and other policy needs, such as those posed by the dire socio-economic conditions in which many Aboriginal people live, it seems almost bizarre that there are so few opportunities to promote evidence-based decision making and timely, high-quality research on Aboriginal issues. Hence, the 2002 Aboriginal Policy Research Conference was born.

In order to address the shortcomings of other conferences, the APRC was designed and dedicated first to crosscutting Aboriginal policy research covering issues of interest to all Aboriginal peoples regardless of status, membership, or place of residence. Second, the conference was designed to be national in scope, bringing together stakeholders from across Canada, in order to provide a forum for discussing a variety of issues related to Aboriginal policy research. Finally, in designing the conference, we specifically sought to promote structured dialogue among researchers, policy makers and Aboriginal community representatives.

The first conference was seen, worldwide, as an important and successful event.³ The feedback that we received from participants indicated that the conference provided excellent value and should be held at regular intervals. It was decided, given the wide scope and effort needed to organize a conference of this magnitude, that it should be held every three years. In March, 2006, the second APRC was held.

Aboriginal Policy Research Conference 2006

The 2006 APRC was jointly organized by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the University of Western Ontario, and the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC).⁴ The 2006 APRC was intended to 1) expand our knowledge of Aboriginal issues; 2) provide an important forum where these ideas and beliefs could be openly discussed and debated; 3) integrate research from diverse themes; 4) highlight research on Aboriginal women's issues; 5) highlight research on

urban Aboriginal issues; and 6) allow outstanding policy needs to shape the future research agenda.

Although the 2002 APRC was quite successful, we wanted to raise the bar for the 2006 event. During and after the 2002 conference, we elicited feedback, both formally and informally, from delegates, researchers, sponsors, and participating organizations. We acted on three suggestions from these groups for improving the 2006 conference.

First, we made a concerted effort to ensure that Aboriginal youth participated in the 2006 conference, because today's youth will be tomorrow's leaders. The NAFC organized a special selection process that allowed us to sponsor and bring over 30 Aboriginal youth delegates from across Canada to the conference. The NAFC solicited the participation of Aboriginal youth with a focus on university students or recent university graduates. A call letter was sent to more than 100 of the NAFC centres across Canada. Potential youth delegates were required to fill out an application form and write a letter outlining why they should be selected. The NAFC set up an adjudication body that ensured the best candidates were selected and that these youth represented all the regions of Canada. The travel and accommodation expenses of these Aboriginal youth delegates were covered by the conference.

A parallel track was also put in place in order to encourage young researchers to participate at the conference. A graduate-student research competition was organized and advertised across Canada. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal graduate students were invited to submit an abstract of their research. Nearly 40 submissions were received, and a blue-ribbon panel selected 12 graduate students to present their research at the conference. The travel and accommodation costs of these graduate students were also covered by the conference. The research papers of the 12 graduate students were judged by a blue-ribbon panel and the top five students were awarded financial scholarships of \$1,000 to help with their studies.

Second, at the 2002 conference, research sessions and workshops were organized by the sponsors. The sponsors (government departments and Aboriginal organizations) showcased their own research, or research that they found interesting or important. At the 2002 conference, there was no venue for accepting research that was not sponsored. For the 2006 conference, we wanted to attract a broader range of research, so a call for papers was organized and advertised across Canada. Over 70 submissions were received from academics and community-based researchers. About half of these submissions were selected for inclusion in the conference program.

Third, the 2002 conference focused solely on Canadian research on Aboriginal issues. For the 2006 conference, we accepted research on international Indigenous issues, and many foreign scholars participated. In fact, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues held one of its five world consultations

at the conference. This consultation brought experts on well-being from around the globe and greatly enhanced the depth of international involvement at the 2006 APRC.

The APRC is a vehicle for knowledge dissemination. Its primary goal is to showcase the wide body of high-quality research that has recently been conducted on Aboriginal issues in order to promote evidence-based policy making. This conference is dedicated solely to Aboriginal policy research in order to promote interaction between researchers, policy makers, and Aboriginal peoples. It is hoped that this interaction will continue to facilitate the means by which research or knowledge can be translated into effective policies.

Of course, many different groups have vested interests in conducting research and in the production of knowledge and its dissemination. Some battle lines have already been drawn over a wide variety of controversial issues pertaining to Aboriginal research. For example, can the research enterprise coexist with the principles of “ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP)”? Are different ethical standards required for doing research on Aboriginal issues? Does Indigenous traditional knowledge (ITK) compete with, or complement Western-based scientific approaches? Does one size fit all, or do we need separate research, policies, and programs for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit? Many of these issues are both emotionally and politically charged. These issues, and the passion that they evoke, render Aboriginal research a fascinating and exciting field of endeavour. The APRC provides an important forum in which these ideas and beliefs can be openly discussed and debated, while respecting the diversity of opinions which exists.

The APRC was designed to examine themes horizontally. Rather than looking at research themes (e.g., justice, social welfare, economics, health, governance, demographics) in isolation from one another, an attempt was made to integrate these themes together in the more holistic fashion that figures so prominently in Aboriginal cultures. By bringing together diverse research themes, we hoped that more informed policies would be developed that better represent the realities faced by Aboriginal peoples.

This conference was also designed to ensure that gender-based issues were prominent. In addition to integrating gender-based issues with the many topics of the conference, specific sessions were designated to address issues of particular importance to policies affecting Aboriginal women. This included, for instance, a one-day pre-conference workshop on gender issues related to defining identity and Indian status (often referred to as Bill C-31). This pre-conference workshop will have its own book that will be published as a third volume of the 2006 proceedings and the fifth volume in the *Aboriginal Policy Research* series.

The conference also gave considerable attention to the geographic divide that exists between rural and urban environments. Nearly half of the Aboriginal population lives in urban environments, yet little research or policy attention is devoted

to this fact. Specific sessions were designated to address research that has been undertaken with respect to Aboriginal urban issues.

The conference engaged policy makers and Aboriginal people as active participants, rather than as passive spectators. By engaging these two groups, research gaps can be more easily identified, and researchers can be more easily apprised of how to make their work more relevant to policy makers. In addition, the conference promoted the establishment of networks among the various stakeholders in Aboriginal research. These relationships will provide continuous feedback, ensuring that policy needs continue to direct research agendas long after the conference has ended.

In the end, 1,200 delegates participated at the conference from Canada and numerous countries in Europe, Asia, Latin America, North America, and the South Pacific. The conference planning included 20 federal government departments and organizations,⁵ seven Aboriginal organizations,⁶ four private corporations,⁷ and the University of Western Ontario. Feedback from participants and sponsors indicates that the 2006 conference was even more successful than the previous one. This was not too surprising, given that there were over 90 research workshops, in addition to the plenary sessions, in which delegates met to hear presentations and discuss research and policy issues.⁸

Breaking New Ground

While the APRC brought people from many nationalities and ethnicities together, it also provided a forum for showcasing Inuit, Métis and First Nations performing arts. The conference delegates were exposed to a wide variety of cultural presentations and entertainment. Métis fiddling sensation Sierra Nobel energized delegates with her youthful passion and the virtuosity of her music. Different First Nations drum groups invigorated the audience. Juno and Academy Award–winner Buffy Sainte-Marie entertained and mesmerized everyone. We saw demonstrations of Métis fancy dancing, and the skill and artistic splendour of two-time world champion hoop dancer, Lisa Odjig. We heard the rhythmic and haunting sounds of Inuit throat singers, Karin and Kathy Kettler (sisters and members of the Nukariik First Nation), and we laughed uproariously at the humour of Drew Haydon Taylor (the ongoing adventures of the blue-eyed Ojibway). The conference was indeed a place where diverse Aboriginal cultures met, and the artistic talents of the aforementioned performers were shared with delegates from across Canada and around the world.

Research, Policy, and Evidence-based Decisions

It was Lewis Carroll who said, “If you don’t know where you are going, any road will get you there.”⁹ Knowing where you are going requires a plan, and that can only be based on understanding the current and past conditions. The

first APRC, and the 2006 conference, was centred on promoting evidence-based policy making. We stated previously that, in part, our conference was designed to deal with the communication challenges that face social scientists, both inside and outside of government, policy makers, and the Aboriginal community. Could we bring these different communities of interest together to develop a better understanding of the problems and processes that create the poor socio-economic conditions facing Aboriginal people in Canada? And equally, can we find the basis that has created the many successes in the Aboriginal community? Could we develop the co-operative relations that would foster evidence-based policy making and thereby make improvements in those conditions? And equally, can we develop those relations in order to promote the “best practices” in terms of the successes? We are acutely aware that policy makers and researchers, both those in and out of government, too often live and work in isolation from each other. This means that the prerequisite linkages between research and policy are not always present. This linkage is something we referred to in earlier volumes as the research–policy nexus.¹⁰

Our aim has been to strengthen that research-policy nexus. The APRC is first and foremost a vehicle for knowledge dissemination and, with a “captive” audience of many senior federal policy makers,¹¹ the conference was able to enhance dialogue between researchers and decision makers and, ultimately, promote evidence-based decision making. More broadly, both the 2002 and 2006 conferences succeeded in helping to raise the profile of Aboriginal policy research issues, including identifying research gaps, promoting horizontality, and enhancing dialogue with Aboriginal peoples.

Moreover, in order to produce superior quality research, there is much to be gained when researchers, both in and out of government, work in co-operation on problems and issues together. Beyond just disseminating the results of research, the APRC was also about the discussion and sharing of research agendas, facilitating data access, and assisting in analysis through mutual critique and review.

We feel strongly that the highest quality research must be produced, and in turn that research must be communicated to policy makers for consideration in formulating agendas for the future. If you wish to make policy on more than ideological and subjective grounds, then you need to help produce and use high calibre research understandings. It is simply not enough to delve superficially into issues or be driven by political agendas that have little grounding in the current situation. The APRC is designed to challenge ideologically driven thinking and push people past prejudice, superficiality, and subjectivity.

Policy that affects Aboriginal people is made by Aboriginal organizations, Aboriginal governments, and Aboriginal communities. It is also made by national and provincial governments and the civil service and civil society that attaches to those systems. We encourage all these peoples and bodies to embrace the realities they face with the best understandings of the world that evidence can give them.

Volume Four—The Contents of the Proceedings

Section one of this book deals with health related issues. Richmond, Ross, and Bernier (Chapter 1) have heeded the call for health research that moves beyond using the medical model to make comparisons between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations. Using data from the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS), they employ Indigenous health concepts to explore the patterning of health dimensions within the Métis and Inuit populations. Three key findings emerged:

- Social support is one of the most important dimensions of health across cultural, geographic, and social groups.
- Indigenous conceptualizations of health are multidimensional.
- Aspects of physical, mental, social, and community well-being are encompassed within indigenous health dimensions.

The authors argue that health policy needs to move beyond individual-level interventions. This research supports the contention that culturally appropriate, holistic, community-level initiatives may be particularly effective in addressing health disparities.

Improving health care services is another avenue through which to reduce disparities in health. The involvement of Aboriginal peoples in all stages of health planning increases the effectiveness of the resulting services. Geeta Cheema (Chapter 2) uses qualitative case study methods to explore meaningful participation in Aboriginal health planning. She finds that not all forms of participation are considered to be meaningful; representation and reconciliation are key determinants of meaningfulness. Meaningful participation can be fostered through mutual engagement, building trusting relationships, establishing an Aboriginal advisory committee, and employing Aboriginal population health approaches.

The relatively high rates of suicide among Aboriginal peoples have drawn considerable attention in recent years. In the third paper Hicks, Bjerregaard, and Berman (Chapter 3) examine the transition from the historical Inuit suicide pattern, in which there were relatively low rates, to the present pattern using regional data. They demonstrate that this transition did not occur simultaneously across these regions—Alaska was the first region to experience a sharp increase in suicide rates, followed by Greenland, and Canada’s Eastern Arctic. Within these regions, there was a significantly higher number of suicides among young men. How can these patterns be explained? The authors trace these patterns to “active colonialism at the community level,” which gave rise to traumas that have been transmitted intergenerationally. They hope that new historical and geographic frameworks will contribute to better suicide prevention strategies.

The papers in this section affirm the importance of research as the basis for health planning, service delivery, and policy. However, in the next chapter Maar, McGregor, and McGregor (Chapter 4) point out that Aboriginal Peoples have experienced few tangible benefits as a result of past research because of serious

shortcomings. They note that collaboration and community focus have become ethical issues in Aboriginal health research. This paper describes:

- The development of a community-based Aboriginal research ethics committee on Manitoulin Island
- The work of this committee
- The support mechanism required to sustain such a committee

The authors argue that research guidelines should embody the traditional values and teachings of the First Nation involved in the study.

The chapter by Castellano and Archibald (Chapter 5) synthesizes six papers that were presented in two sessions sponsored by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF), which was mandated to document the residential school experience and its consequences and to gather knowledge about community healing. The authors propose a new healing paradigm that accounts for the waves of historical trauma experienced by Aboriginal communities, draws upon cultural and western healing traditions, and mobilizes the resiliency of individuals. They present compelling evidence from AHF-funded projects of how community-directed healing can be most effectively pursued.

The final paper in this section (Chapter 6) reports on an ongoing research project examining how sport and recreation can be used to improve the health, well-being, and leadership skills of Aboriginal youth. Forsyth, Heine, and Halas point out that research often atheoretically identifies barriers to participation using short-term and unsustainable programs. In this project, the researchers collaborated with existing sport, recreation, and educational groups in order to apply theoretically driven models to engage Aboriginal youth in culturally relevant ways. They advocate the use of multiple information-gathering methods in order to capture the social context, which shapes sports and recreation participation. The authors also discuss special considerations when undertaking community-based participatory action research.

Section two of this book deal with governance issues. The first paper in this section (Chapter 7) focuses on two themes that have received less attention in the literature on the Inuit and Nunavut: the construction of the geopolitical boundaries in Nunavut and Inuit identity. Légaré argues that these two issues are of critical importance in understanding how Nunavut was constructed and the impact it had on the collective identity of the Inuit. His analysis suggests a growth of regional civic identity and decline of culture-based identity.

Morin (Chapter 8) looks at how the disparate perceptions of treaty implementation between treaty signatories evolved into growing conflict. He selects two treaty regions, Treaties 4 and 6, which cover what is now southern and central Saskatchewan and central Alberta, for a case study to illustrate his argument. He points out that the gap between the perceptions of the Crown and Treaty First Nations continue to be central issues in the negotiation and renegotiation of modern-day treaties, self-government, and land claims.

Issues of gender and political representation are at the forefront of the paper by Cancel (Chapter 9). Her paper examines the contradictions between the gender inclusive rhetoric in the political arena and Inuit women's actual experiences. The events surrounding the 1997 referendum on gender parity in Nunavut provided a rich source of data that were collected through extensive fieldwork. Her analysis suggests that Inuit women's equality in politics is dependent upon stability within the household, which has been undermined by colonialism. The intersection of the public and private spheres of women's lives is a central theme in Cancel's work.

Cornell (Chapter 10) undertakes a different type of comparative analysis. He explores the policy and research issues associated with the organization of indigenous governance in Canada, Australia, and the United States. He argues that, despite the differences between these nations, there are important commonalities related to political and legal heritage, historical displacement, and the contemporary pursuit of self-determination. Based on his preliminary analyses, Cornell offers lessons learned in the process of Indigenous self-governance in these countries. He proposes a research agenda that would assist Indigenous and non-Indigenous policy makers in addressing these issues.

Finally, Jennifer Brennan's paper (Chapter 11) presents the First Nation policy development model, which the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) has created based on the interaction between Indigenous peoples and governments in Canada and around the world. She contends that the failure of most policy and legislative initiatives can be traced to the initial process design. This model is designed to guide the process design in order to establish relationships between First Nations and governments that will produce real social change.

Section three of this book looks at the issues of housing and homelessness. The first paper (Chapter 12), entitled "Urban Hidden Homelessness and Reserve Housing," was developed by Evelyn Peters of the University of Saskatchewan and Vince Robillard of the Prince Albert Grand Council Urban Services group. This research project was a joint effort of academic and community researchers that explores the relationship of availability and conditions of reserve housing to hidden homeless among urban First Nation band members. Peters and Robillard explain the current housing situation that faces First Nations on reserves and then, through survey and interviews with reserve members, most of whom declared themselves as having no home of their own, describe participants' access to housing on reserves. The participants also discuss their perspectives on their ability to obtain housing on reserves and whether they would move to the reserve if they had access to housing there. The authors report that increasing the housing stock would have a significant effect on whether people chose to return to their communities.

The second paper in this section (Chapter 13), prepared by Stewart Clatworthy and Mary Jane Norris, is "Aboriginal Mobility and Migration: Trends, Recent Patterns, and Implications: 1971–2001." Using the recently released data from the 2001 Census of Canada, they examine several dimensions of the migration

patterns of four Aboriginal sub-groups: Registered Indians, non-registered Indians, Métis, and Inuit during the 1996–2001 time period. The authors compare migration patterns for this time period to long-term migration trends for the 1981–1996 period. Clatworthy and Norris also look at the 2000–2001 patterns of residential mobility for Canada’s Aboriginal populations living in major urban areas. They look at a series of key questions, such as the extent to which migration has contributed to the rapid increase in the Aboriginal population living off-reserve, especially that living in large urban areas; and to what extent residential moves among the Aboriginal population result in unacceptable housing situations. The authors also explore the policy implications surrounding mobility and migration patterns of Aboriginal populations in Canada.

The third chapter in this section (Chapter 14) is presented by Steve Pomeroy on behalf of the National Aboriginal Housing Association. This research paper looks at the need for a national non-reserve housing strategy. After outlining why it is needed and what a strategy would have to include, he examines in detail issues related to affordability and the assessment of need and outlines some of the key issues which need to be dealt with. This exploration of housing needs ends with a clear set of recommendations that have direct bearing on policy development.

In their chapter “A New Open Model Approach to Projecting Aboriginal Populations” (Chapter 15) Stewart Clatworthy, Mary Jane Norris, and Éric Guimond look at what factors underlie population projections and the implications for the development of Aboriginal population projections. Specifically they provide a brief discussion of the traditional or “closed” population projection model, its implied assumptions and its limitations within the context of projecting Aboriginal populations and the structure and components of an alternative projection model which incorporates the main features of an “open” population, illustrating how this type of model can be applied to projecting the registered Indian populations. The authors also discuss some of the existing gaps in demographic research which need to be addressed in order to advance the development of more appropriate Aboriginal population projection methodologies.

Balakrishnan and Jurdi set out in the final chapter, “Spatial residential patterns of Aboriginals and their socio-economic integration in selected Canadian cities,” (Chapter 16) to examine the Aboriginal population’s residential patterns within metropolitan areas at the small area level. Starting from the premise that Aboriginal Peoples in Canada not only have their distinctive culture and language but also have been disadvantaged in their socio-economic development, they wanted to see if living patterns are similar to other groups that had similar characteristics such as new immigrant Canadians and visible minorities. New immigrants and visible minorities often choose to live in neighbourhoods near others of the same culture and language. Our authors ask whether this is the same for Aboriginal peoples in the cities. The objectives of their study was to examine the spatial residential patterns of Aboriginal peoples in the 23 metropolitan areas of Canada in 2001 to see if the level of segregation increased with the size of the metropolitan

area as well as the size of the Aboriginal population. They set out to determine if the patterns for Aboriginal people are similar or different than the charter groups of British and French and various visible minority groups such as the Chinese, South Asian and black communities as well as from other European groups. Finally they wanted to determine if Aboriginals are concentrated in the poorer areas of the cities.

Endnotes

- 1 More specifically, the conference was organized by the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate, INAC and the First Nations Cohesion Project, the Department of Sociology at UWO. Dan Beavon and Jerry White acted as conference co-chairs from their respective organizations.
- 2 One of the other funding bodies for academic research, the Canadian Institute of Health Research, also has a program (the Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health) that supports research to address the special health needs of Canada's Aboriginal peoples.
- 3 The Canadian government commented on the importance of the APRC in a speech to the United Nations in Geneva on July 22, 2003. More specifically, see the statement by the observer delegation of Canada to the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations, Twenty-First Session, July 21–25, 2003.
- 4 Consequently, there were three conference co-chairs: Dan Beavon, Director of the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate, INAC; Jerry White, Professor of Sociology and Senior Advisor to the Vice President at the University of Western Ontario; and, Peter Dinsdale, Executive Director of the National Association of Friendship Centres.
- 5 The federal departments and organizations provided funding support at three different levels. Gold: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Department of Justice Canada, Status of Women Canada, Health Canada, Veterans Affairs Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation, Correctional Service Canada, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Canadian Council on Learning, Canadian International Development Agency, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Silver: Canada Economic Development, Policy Research Initiative, Canadian Heritage. Bronze: Natural Resources Canada, Statistics Canada.
- 6 National Association of Friendship Centres, Aboriginal Healing Foundation, First Nations Statistical Institute, National Aboriginal Housing Association, Indian Taxation Advisory Board, National Aboriginal Forestry Association, National Aboriginal Health Organization.
- 7 Public History, Canadian North, VIA Rail Canada, and Canada Post.
- 8 There were also four all-day pre-conference workshops organized, which attracted nearly 300 delegates. These four pre-conference workshops included Harvard University's research model on Aboriginal governance; Aboriginal demographics and well-being; Bill C-31 and First Nation membership; and records management for First Nations.
- 9 This famous quote is actually a paraphrase of what the Cheshire cat said to Alice in Carroll's book, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, chapter 6, "Pig and Pepper," 1865.
- 10 The research-policy nexus is built on the foundation of dialogue and discourse between those making policy and those discovering and interpreting the evidence that should underscore it. When superior quality research is produced and used in making policy, this completes the structure.
- 11 While there are many Canadian cities with larger Aboriginal populations, in terms of both proportions and absolute numbers, Ottawa was selected as the most logical conference site because it would have otherwise been difficult to engage the participation of such a large number of senior federal policy makers. In many ways, the conference was about educating and exposing this group to the vast array of research that has been done on Aboriginal issues.