EXAMPLE ABSTRACTS

Example 1: Private Property and the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada: Challenges at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has over the past 5 years been hearing an ongoing case between Coast Salish peoples from Vancouver Island and the state of Canada. The details of this case present a set of challenges at the intersection between Canadian property rights and Indigenous land rights. The questions raised are vexing: Are the private property rights held by individuals and corporations throughout Coast Salish territories fundamentally incompatible with the ongoing exercise of Indigenous cultural and religious practices? Are there creative legal and political spaces for the continued exercise of Indigenous jurisdictions on privately held lands? Are there prospects for significant titling and demarcation of Indigenous titles on land that is currently privately held? Do the legal and political processes of the state systematically favor private land-holders over Indigenous peoples? How can the IACHR ensure the ongoing recognition of Indigenous cultural practices on private lands? In this paper I discuss the prospects for intervention by the international community, and the limitations. In the absence of forms of international intervention that are binding for states, Indigenous peoples are developing their own strategies for implementing the political and moral will of the international community. I examine how these strategies are being adopted for the Coast Salish case, and consider the broader implications of these experiences for Indigenous peoples looking to the international community for resolution and reconciliation.

Example 2: Unsettling the Cartographic Record: Anthropology in the Salish Sea

Landscapes, territories, communities, and cultures have long been the subject of ethnographic cartography including here in the Salish Sea where maps have been produced by anthropologists for almost as long the discipline has existed. Coast Salish peoples have also taken up cultural mapping, both reifying these ethnographic cartographies and pushing them in new directions – engaging an emerging global practice of ‘counter-mapping’. Place names, territorial boundaries, resource use, community spaces, kinship networks, and mythic landscapes are amongst the subjects of these cartographies. These maps provide fascinating detail, make sweeping generalizations, and perpetuate silences and absences. They have been influenced by both colonial power and the resistance and alternative priorities of indigenous peoples. They have had perhaps surprising political, legal, and economic consequences. With the proliferation of inexpensive, accessible, and attractive mapping technologies, important new possibilities and challenges have opened up for these powerful representational practices to continue to have social impacts.

Example 3: To Reunite, To Honour, To Witness: Paintings from the Alberni Indian Residential School

March 26, 2013, the front page of Canada's Globe and Mail Newspaper detailed a unique repatriation ceremony of children's paintings created at the Alberni Indian Residential School
(AIRS). The now-closed school is infamous for some of the most horrific abuses of Indigenous children in residential schools in Canada. The paintings came to light 50 years after they were created when in 2008 they were gifted to the University of Victoria. Since 2010, Elders, Survivors, and Indigenous faculty from the university, and Survivors from the AIRS have worked to reunite these paintings with their creators. A key consideration has been the role the paintings might play in processes of healing and reconciliation in Indigenous communities, and how they form public narratives of history and identity for non-Indigenous Canadians. All at a moment when Canada seeks to educate its citizens through the Truth And Reconciliation Commission about the legacy of the residential schools. Memory, truth telling, the public exhibition of material culture related to violence, and resilience surround the images today as the paintings are exhibited in public galleries and Indigenous communities, and reported on through the media. How do these paintings act as visual ‘contact zones’ for audiences that do not share the experiences of abuse and oppression associated with the schools? This paper details our work with Survivors who created the paintings to understand how they see their childhood paintings from their personal pasts, and also how they may play a key role in the imagined future of a nation.

Example 4: Pelvic and appendicular skeletal variability in humans

Levels of phenotypic variability in a species are dependent on the interaction between plasticity (ability of an organism to adapt during life to stimuli) and constraint (genetic, developmental and selective limitations on morphology). Greater plasticity results in greater intraspecific variability, while greater constraint reduces it. The processes generating variation in humans are key to the study of our evolution, as this variation is the raw material for natural selection. The pelvic canal in humans displays differences in size and shape between males and females due to its differential functional roles in locomotion and obstetrics. These distinct roles in females may be postulated to result in stabilizing selection on canal morphology, which would limit pelvic canal variability. Levels of intrapopulation morphometric variability in the skeletal regions of the pelvic canal, non-canal pelvis, and appendicular skeleton were compared in females and males of nine skeletal samples (total N females = 126; males = 148). Mean coefficients of variation, corrected for sample size (V*), were calculated for each skeletal region, and then compared between regions using Wilcoxon Signed Rank tests (N = 9). Pelvic canal variability is significantly greater than non-canal pelvis and appendicular skeleton variability for both sexes. Levels of non-canal and appendicular variability do not differ. Males are more variable than females for the appendicular skeleton. These results indicate that stabilizing selection does not constrict pelvic canal variability in females. Plasticity in canal size and shape may instead enable females to accommodate obstetrically sufficient canals.

Example 5: The Secrets of Sutton Hoo: Examining the Evidence for Human Sacrifice and Execution in Suffolk, England

The mystery surrounding the possibility of human sacrifice is discussed in the context of Sutton Hoo in Suffolk, England. This site, known as one of the most important archaeological sites in the world, contains many low circular pagan burial mounds believed to belong to the kings of
East Anglia. Most famously, it is the home of one of the greatest ship burials of the early Middle Ages believed to belong to Raedwald, King of East Anglia from AD599-625. Furthermore, this site also contains many unfurnished burials not associated with the burial mounds. Many of these burials are deviant burials, which include abnormal body positions and differential care and treatment to human remains. In this paper, I will examine the evidence for human sacrifice and execution practices in the Group 1 and 2 cemeteries at Sutton Hoo. I conclude that Group 2 is likely evidence of an execution cemetery; however, Group 1 could either be evidence of an execution cemetery or a separate place used for the burial of ritual killings. The burials in Group 1 display some evidence of judicial killing, yet characteristics of sacrifice are also recognized, which share similarities to execution. Over all, I determine that evidence for sacrifice must not be dismissed, as there are unexplained differences that lack satisfactory answers between the burials in Group 1 and Group 2.