Strategic Foresight in Métis Communities

LESSONS FROM INDIGENOUS FUTURISM

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Abstract

In this paper, I explore and critique the use of strategic foresight methods with Métis Nations and consider the possibility of Indigenous futurism for decolonizing the field. Working in collaboration with the Métis Nation of Ontario to explore their future as a self-governing nation, I assess the suitability of the Three Horizons foresight method in an Indigenous context. Collecting data from a facilitated Three Horizons workshop and a focus group session, the paper follows an Indigenous methodological approach. My findings show that while the Three Horizons method was robust in engaging the Nation around this subject matter, futurists must revisit the mental models from which they approach futures studies. Concepts and lessons from Indigenous futurism could challenge futures practitioners to explore new understandings. I conclude by arguing that to avoid colonizing the future, futurists must make space for foresight practices that are community-led, privilege Indigenous voices, and shift power away from expert-led dialogues.

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Introduction

Introduction

The growing field of futures studies uses a suite of theories and methods, all of which have been developed and tested by futurists, to enable practitioners and people, in general, to anticipate the many futures that exist and, importantly, shape them to their preference (Dator, 1995). Futurists are not concerned with predicting the future but rather forecast many alternative futures for study and evaluation to help organizations, governments and others articulate and move towards their preferred future (Dator, 2012). A branch of futures studies known as strategic foresight uses these methods and practices to develop organizationally useful insights to shape strategy, policy, or explore new markets and products (Slaughter, 1997).

With the practice of strategic foresight becoming linked to business and strategy development (Major, 2001), many organizations are adopting it as a core practice. Foresight can provoke organizations, communities and individuals to think creatively about what possible futures might hold, and when implemented correctly, its methodologies ground the practice in evidence-based research. However, many are beginning to question the colonial narrative on foresight (Whyte, 2017). Western perspectives on the future could be misaligned with Indigenous views and negatively impact Indigenous adoption of the practice (Milojevi & Inayatullah, 2018). Settler culture often traps Indigenous cultures in the past and repeatedly places these communities in history while ignoring their futures. To avoid utopian authoritarianism (Zaidi, 2019) and the colonization of the future (Sadar, 1993), futurists must consider how certain voices are privileged over others in this work.

This paper examines the use of strategic foresight methods within an Indigenous context from a critical lens informed by Indigenous futurism scholars such as Grace Dillon, Jason Lewis, Yvonne Tiger, and William Lempert, among others. First coined by Anishinaabe scholar Grace Dillon, Indigenous futurism renews and recovers Indigenous People's voices and traditions through the use of images and themes in science fiction to envision a future from a distinctively Indigenous lens (Lidchi & Fricke, 2019). I argue that concepts and lessons from Indigenous futurism can engage futurists to revisit the mental models from which they approach futures studies. By critiquing strategic foresight methods through this lens, I outline how the field has privileged (primarily white) western voices and results in the exclusion of Indigenous people from envisioned futures.

Specifically, this work examines strategic foresight practices in collaboration with the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) to explore the future of self-governing Métis nations and to identify barriers to foresight that exist for the Métis culture. Using an Indigenous methodological approach that is grounded in the principles of interconnectedness and community, this work was executed in a way that respects and is of value for the Métis community. As one of the first Métis Nations in Canada to sign a self-government agreement with the Canadian government, this new political landscape provides a unique opportunity for the MNO to explore how strategic foresight could be used to create a shared vision for the future, and build resilience.

Undertaking the critical endeavour using an Indigenous methodology requires me to place, or situate myself, alongside the work. First placing myself physically, this work was conducted in tkaronto (Toronto) on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples. I also travelled to Ottawa for aspects of this research and would like to acknowledge the Algonquin Nation whose traditional and unceded territory we were gathered on. Further, many of my choices and motivations for this work were driven by my identity as a citizen of the Métis Nation of Alberta. My relationship with this aspect of my identity is complex and is something that I continue to discover and connect with. Influenced by the disconnection from my culture and Métis relations growing up, and to some extent still today, I approach this work with caution and extreme care, recognizing that I am still on my learning journey.

My critical analysis of strategic foresight from a decolonizing perspective is structured as follows. First, I explore the Indigenous context in Canada and examine the literature on strategic foresight, as well as Indigenous futurism. I draw connections between strategic foresight and Indigenous futurism by highlighting the need for self-governing Métis Nations to develop nationhood through social policy. I end by articulating the possibility of Indigenous futurism for decolonizing strategic foresight practices. I then describe my methodological approach and reflexive selection of methods through a discussion on the research design for this project. The following section presents my findings that show how the MNO's experience using the selected foresight method varied compared to its typical use presented in the literature. I then close with a discussion of the key barriers to strategic foresight for Métis Nations, a reframing of the Three Horizons method for practitioners to explore futures in a way that prioritizes Indigenous ways of knowing, and finally, next steps for the research.

Background

Background

The Indigenous Context in Canada

Canada is home to a diverse and growing Indigenous population. Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution recognizes First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples as three distinct groups with unique histories, languages, cultures and spiritual beliefs (Government of Canada, 2009). The Indian Act, first introduced in 1867, governs First Nations people while Métis and Inuit people are excluded from this legislation (Henderson, 2018), and are governed by separate legal and judicial means.

Despite this convoluted legislative approach, Indigenous peoples (First Nation, Métis, and Inuit) comprise the fastest growing population in Canada. In 2018 Indigenous people accounted for 4.9% of the total Canadian population, growing by 42.5% since 2006, four times faster than the rest of the population (Government of Canada, 2018). Indigenous people are also significantly younger than the settler population, 8.8 years younger, on average (Government of Canada, 2017). With the population of Indigenous people expected to break 2.5 million within the next two decades, the Métis population is the fastest growing (Government of Canada, 2018). As a distinct community with a history unique to Canada, the future of the Métis and the growing assertion of Métis rights (Forrest, 2019; Galloway, 2019) should be top of mind for the Canadian government.

The Métis

The Métis culture is one that is unique to Canada, and to some extent, northern parts of the United States. As the fur trade spread across what is currently known as Canada (Keene, 2018) in the 1700s, a new culture emerged; a mixed race people born from European contact on Indigenous lands. Métis communities are now found extensively in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, as well as parts of Ontario, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories (Government of Canada, 2013). Culturally, linguistically, and historically distinct from other Indigenous groups, the Métis are also politically unique. In 2003 the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in R. v. Powley affirmed the existence of Métis Rights, specifically an Aboriginal right to hunt for food as recognized under Section 35 of the Constitution Act (Government of Canada, 2009). The Powley decision also played a role in defining who is and is not, considered Métis. The Powley test, as it is known, is a legal test that an individual must pass to claim Métis heritage, and the associated Aboriginal rights (Conn, 2018).

Often referred to as "half-breeds," Métis people are of mixed European and Indigenous descent (Government of Canada, 2013) and are officially recognized as Indigenous Peoples under the Canadian Constitution (Gaudry & Welch, 2016). This mixed heritage, coupled with the legislative impacts of the Powley test on Métis identity, results in a culture that is fluid and is still being reclaimed today (Richardson, 2006). One should not assume that Métis culture is grounded by the same principles that operate in First Nations or Inuit cultures; the Métis people are unique. Walking between two worlds, individuals and communities have different worldviews and ways of knowing (Métis Centre, 2010). This diversity in the Métis way of life separates this group of people from other Indigenous cultures.

Arguably, the Métis culture is one that has largely been ignored throughout history and still today, academically. Still undefined by the Canadian Constitution, Métis people find themselves in the hands of the courts, who hold the power to define who is and isn't Métis (Inoue, 2004). However, decades of work done by the Métis people of Canada to have their Nations' recognized as distinct and separate is now coming to the forefront. Recently several Métis communities have asserted their rights as Nations by signing self-governance agreements with the Government of Canada (Métis Nation of Alberta, 2019).

The political landscape around Indigenous self-governance in Canada is complex and ever-changing. Traditional forms of Indigenous governance were removed by the signing of Treaties or forced removal from the land, and for over 140 years, Indigenous people have been governed by Canada (Government of Canada, 2008). While the Canadian Constitution guarantees the right to self-governance for Indigenous people, there is no single approach to contemporary self-government. However, there are several examples of self-governance agreements based around land claims, resource and harvesting rights, and precedent-setting court cases (Henderson & Albers, 2018). These policies and agreements are with First Nations and Inuit nations, but Métis people are now beginning to assert their right to self-governance as well.

For the first time in history, Métis Nations in Canada have self-governance agreements with the federal government (Forrest, 2019). In the past, Métis communities were considered special interest groups, rather than sovereign nations. Still, these agreements mean that governments are now obligated to engage in nation-to-nation discussions and resource development companies must consult with Métis communities who may be impacted by proposed projects (Galloway, 2019). The Métis Nations in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario were the first to

sign these historical agreements, paving the way for others to follow suit. This new landscape for Métis communities in Canada provides a unique opportunity for these Nations to explore how strategic foresight could be used to create a shared vision for the future, and build resilience in these changing times.

Strategic Foresight and Social Policy Development

While legal scholars argue that the right for the Métis to exercise self-government would be better guided by international human rights frameworks, such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), these doctrines are only as powerful as the degree to which they are recognized by nation-states (Chartrand, 2008). At the present moment, Canada has chosen not to fully adopt UNDRIP into Canadian law and instead seeks to "meaningfully implement" the Declaration (Boutilier, 2017). Without this international approach, self-governing Métis Nations must come to terms with operating within the context of the Canadian nation-state.

The complexities of governing as a nation within a nation will be challenging to navigate as Métis organizations across the country re-imagine governance. There are three main activities that Indigenous Peoples must enact in the process of asserting nationhood, as argued by Cornell (2015); identify as a nation, organize a political body, and act on behalf of Indigenous goals. Cornell goes on to describe an essential aspect of operating as a nation is shifting away from the ever-changing policy decisions of the colonial government and towards an Indigenous-centred approach.

As Métis Nations develop their nationhood, acting on behalf of community goals will involve some form of social policy development. Determining the Métis Nation's approach to education, healthcare, economic development and the environment will need to be carefully balanced between working within the current system and moving towards a new preferred future. Typically policy development in Canada follows a cyclical process and is led by the government, as shown in Figure 1.
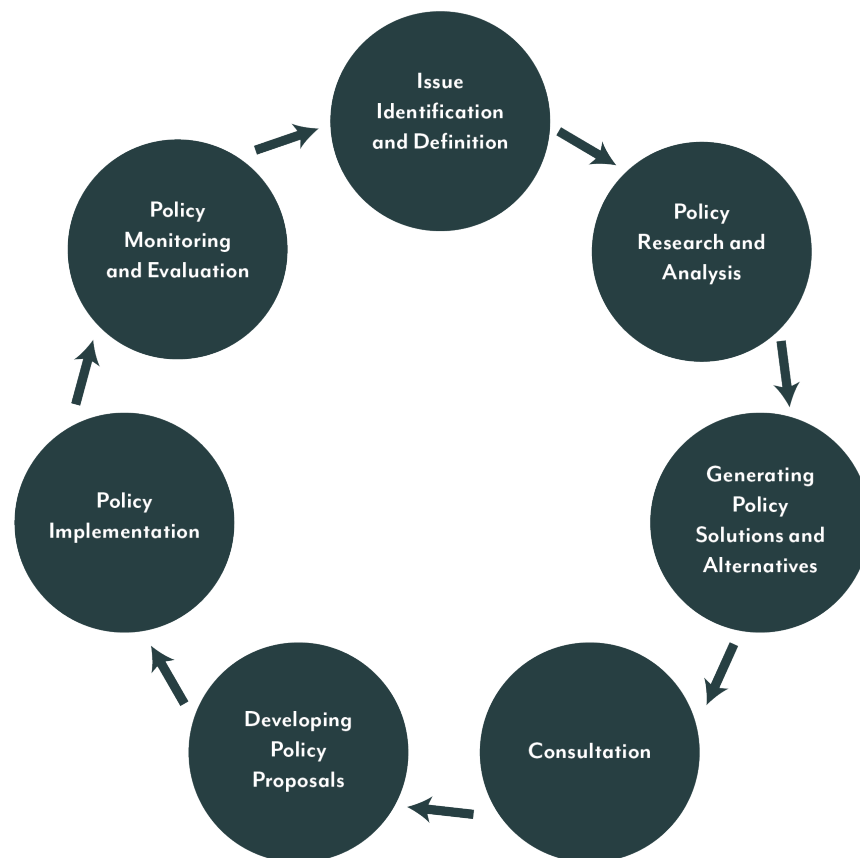

Figure 1. Policy Development Cycle. ("The Policy Cycle," n.d.)

Strategic foresight could be useful in supporting healthy social policy development in the midterm while imagining new Métis-centred approaches for the long term. Asking us to deliberately explore a future that is outside of our range of perception, strategic foresight helps us expand our awareness of emerging trends and challenges (Habegger, 2010). Also known as corporate foresight, both private industry and the public sector use the practice (Leigh, 2003; Habegger, 2010; Slaughter, 1997). It requires organizations to think beyond their standard strategic planning frame of reference, which is typically deals with three to five year timelines, to ten to 50 years in the future, inspiring the organization to learn more effectively and think more creatively about strategies and initiatives (Bezhold, 2010). When applied to the policy cycle, strategic foresight can help decision-makers develop a shared vision of the future with relevant stakeholders, and build in lead time that allows them to avoid surprises and respond appropriately to emerging threats (Habegger, 2010).

Strategic foresight grapples with high levels of complexity and practitioners are realizing the importance of having a diversity of perspectives involved in these conversations (Nikolova, 2013). Further, deep integration of systems thinking with futures research is crucial (Rohrbeck, Battistella, & Huizingh, 2015; Sharpe, Hodgson, Leicester, & Fazey, 2016) as it allows individuals to begin to see how their actions and decisions impact the future they envision (Sharpe, 2013).

One aspect of strategic foresight that is repeatedly presented in the literature is that everyone has the capacity for foresight; scholars agree that it is an inherent human trait (Slaughter, 1997; Sharpe, 2013; Nikolova, 2013). Inayatullah (2018) notes that brain researchers are divided on the issue of human's ability to think about the future, and Dator (2012) argues that while all humans can dream and plan, futurists hold the responsibility for studying, evaluating and forecasting alternative futures to help others move towards a preferred future. Regardless, the fact that forecasting the future has been a human activity since the beginning of civilization (Masini, 2006) has led to an increased interest in exploring participatory approaches to foresight.

Despite its strengths in navigating complexity and developing shared visions for the future, strategic foresight has weaknesses. For example, the practice has primarily been inclusive only of privileged perspectives (Nikolova, 2013). Further, futures studies are grounded in a western worldview and to a large extent, only promote the view of an elite population of white American, and western and northern European scholars (Sardar, 1993; World Futures Studies Federation, 2019). Practitioners have noted these gaps in the practice when working with marginalized groups. For example, through critical self-reflective practice, Inayatullah (2018) found Indigenous participants needed evidence that

futures studies were not another trick of colonialism before fully participating. Further, Inayatullah needed to change his approach completely to create space for these participants to explore futures that exist outside of the systems of oppression that are currently perpetuating historical and present-day trauma.

Sadar's (1993) analysis of the history and trajectory of future studies clearly articulates a lack of diversity in the field. Sadar argues that the growth of futures studies as a discipline has followed the same path of other disciplines that have colonized non-western cultures due to the system in which the field exists - western academia. In this system, western authorities are created through citation analysis, and the boundaries of the field are then defined based on the research interests of these authorities. This delineation of authors and scope of the domain is driven by a western philosophical approach to knowledge generation and distribution that then systematically excludes non-Western perspectives. Just as Orientalism, anthropology and development studies colonized the history, culture and present of non-Western societies, Sadar argues that futures studies will colonize the only thing remaining, the non-Western future.

These gaps and weaknesses of strategic foresight must be further explored, as they carry a certain level of risk when practiced with those in the margins of western society from an expert-led approach. As participatory foresight practices grow, there is a risk that they may be viewed as a tool to empower the public by bringing them into the decision-making process. However, this inclusion could inadvertently remove those who hold power of their responsibility for the future they help create (Nikolova, 2013), essentially enabling those in power to shift the blame if favourable outcomes are not achieved. Further, this risk is heightened if we consider the potential inability for strategic foresight and its methods to capture cultural variances in the way in which we understand our relationship with the future.

One might hope that the argument concerning the colonization of the future (Sadar, 1993), has since shifted; that the trajectory of futures studies has grown to be more inclusive of all the world's population. However, I would argue that the limited range of futures literature from non-Western scholars suggests that Indigenous, and other non-white, non-western, perspectives are still being excluded. The lack of Indigenous voices in futures work risks utopian authoritarianism, which happens when a single group or person dictates the vision of the future for an entire population (Zaidi, 2019). Here I argue that Indigenous communities in what is currently known as Canada have already suffered the consequences of settler-colonial utopian authoritarianism, beginning from the time of European contact. The vision for what these lands would become excluded the first peoples, and the adverse effects of this visioning can still be seen

today. I propose that the emerging and powerful genre of Indigenous futurism, further discussed in the section below, provides an interesting lens from which to explore strategic foresight if we are to prevent the colonization of the future.

Indigenous Perspectives on the Future

While there has been some work regarding the utilization of futures studies methods and tools with Indigenous communities to imagine possible futures (Milojevi & Inayatullah, 2018; Whyte, 2017), there is limited research on how Indigenous perspectives on the future differ from the western perspective. Further, because colonial forces have so profoundly impacted Indigenous cultures around the world, many of these cultures are now having to navigate the complexity of reclaiming traditional ways of being within the context of a rapidly changing modern world (Whyte, 2017). However, some scholars argue that this unique understanding of two different worldviews positions Indigenous communities as experts in understanding the complexities of large scale issues, such as climate change (Lewis, n.d.; Whyte, 2017).

The emerging body of work in Indigenous futurisms, exhibited primarily in art, science fiction and film, could provide a basis from which futures studies' perspectives could be diversified. Indigenous futurism is a relatively new term to define an old concept (Keene, 2018). It creates room for Indigenous cultures to reclaim their place in the future. Grace Dillion (2016), one of the most prominent scholars in the field, explains that Indigenous futurism uses the imagery and themes of science fiction to imagine a future from an Indigenous perspective. The emerging space is also represented in the arts, and there is an increasing appreciation for this genre of work in galleries and museums, as shown by the recent increase in the number of showings in North America (Lidchi & Fricke, 2019).

Indigenous futurism is more than mere inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in science fiction and art; it represents Indigenous people as culturally and politically complex as Western societies, and not just as remnants of a distant past (Lempert, 2014). We know that the lack of inclusion of Indigenous people in images of the future is damaging and is linked to the highest dropout, incarceration and suicide rates among Indigenous youth (Lewis & Skawennati, 2018), compared to non-Indigenous cohorts. Indigenous futurism increases Indigenous representation in futures imagery and challenges the assumptions that inform the current treatment of Indigenous people through social policy frameworks (Lempert, 2014).

Many of the ideas presented in Indigenous futurism are reflective of Afrofuturism, which originated in the mid-twentieth century (Fricke, 2019). Afrofuturism explores the Black experience through art, music, philosophy, technoculture and science fiction

across the African Diaspora (Strong & Chaplin, 2019). Defined as a mechanism for understanding contemporary systems of oppression in relation to the past, Afrofuturism explores future situations through the arts (Hamilton, 2017). This understanding is similar to Lempert's (2014) view on Indigenous futurism as a means by which to explore futures beyond the binds of colonialism through concepts of time, culture, and community.

Critiques from both Afro and Indigenous futurism argue that western representations of the future are often the reality these colonized populations currently face. There is a tendency for Western imaginations of the future to involve doom and disaster (Hamilton, 2017; Lidchi & Fricke, 2019). These hypothetical apocalypses that neglect non-western perspectives are all too real for Indigenous and African people. For instance, North American Indigenous populations are living in a post-Apocalyptic world following the contact of an alien other that resulted in war, the forced removal of children, and the creation of reserves, and other dystopian outcomes (Tiger, 2019).

Indigenous futurism explores this reality not through stories of survivance and autonomy to reclaim lost histories but through reconnection (Tiger, 2019). *Biskaabiiyang*, the Anishinaabe concept of returning to ourselves, is woven throughout Indigenous futurism literature and speaks to the ability of this work to connect the past, present, and future while breaking away from colonial narratives and exploring Indigenous-focused cultural regeneration (Leggatt, 2019). Creators of Indigenous futurism lean into dystopias as a source of power and knowledge. In his collection of short Indigenous science fiction stories, Drew Hayden Taylor (2016) does just that.

In *Dreams of Doom* (pg. 56, 2016) Taylor's protagonist, an Indigenous woman working at a newspaper on reserve in Otter Lake Ontario, discovers the Canadian government's manipulation of Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island through the use of technologically enhanced dream catchers. In this dystopia in which First Nations people are unknowingly subdued, the protagonist rebels against the powers at be, but recognizes as one individual her power is limited. However, through the oral tradition of storytelling, she records her discovery and disseminates it through the newspaper's advanced file-sharing system before she is captured. In this story, we can see how Taylor seamlessly merges tradition with technology and the protagonist's unwillingness to "go quietly" fighting against all the odds for her community, and all her relations across what is currently known as Canada.

Grace Dillon (2012) merges this idea of leaning into dystopias with *biskaabiiyang* in her concept of the Native Slipstream. Merging traditional tales with contemporary ones, Indigenous authors explore multiple futures by recovering Indigenous spaces of the

past and bringing them to the forefront for contemporary readers, allowing them to build better futures. The Native Slipstream explores moments of divergence from an Indigenous way of being, the consequences of that divergence and the potential locked within the possibility of returning to that way in a new time.

Both Afro and Indigenous futurisms are a response to the misrepresentation of people of colour in science fiction and future imagery, allowing Black and Indigenous peoples to reclaim their future. Both futurisms explore and challenge the very nature of space and time. The works imagine future worlds that consider the past, the present, and the future simultaneously (Keene, 2018; Lidchi & Fricke, 2019; Roanhorse et al., 2017; Strong & Chaplin, 2019). They draw on historical realities that were suppressed by colonial forces and pull them into the future, challenging present-day western assumptions, such as the role of culture and spirituality alongside ever-advancing technology (Lempert, 2014; Strong & Chaplin, 2019). These are important lessons for futurists to consider.

The Possibility of Indigenous Futurism for Strategic Foresight

The work of the authors mentioned in the section above provides an interesting stage from which to futher explore the relationship between Indigenous futurism and strategic foresight. Both Afro and Indigenous futurisms break the mould and create space for new imaginings of the future, not just for Black and Indigenous people, but for all of us. The lessons from these explorations in art, music, science fiction could similarly be applied in the field of strategic foresight to ensure the practice does not privilege only white voices.

Careful selection of futures methods when working in an Indigenous context plays a crucial role in ensuring the desired futures that are created are not colonized by the dominant society. Intending to create a more equitable, sustainable and desirable future, futurists have the responsibility of learning how to approach this work in a good way (Gidley, 2016). The range of methods available to futurists is broad, with some that are unique to futures studies and others that have roots in social and natural sciences (Dator, 2012). While not a comprehensive review of futures methods, the following table, based on Jim Dator's Futures Studies chapter in the 2012 Sage Reference Handbook, Leadership in Science and Technology, summarizes several methods often used by futurists.

Method	Description
Genius forecasting	Statements based on individual insight, rather methodological foresight about the future. Often used by those who would not identify as a futurist, but feel capable of making such claims based on theory.
Trends analysis	A linear extrapolation based on past and present quantitative data. Often used to generate demographic, economic and environmental forecasts.
Environmental scanning	Looking at and over the metaphorical horizon for trends and emerging issues, or signals of change. Trends are based on historical continuities while emerging issues are early stage developments. Trends analysis often informs environmental scanning.
Computer/ mathematical modelling	Often used for economics, weather and climate change, technological, and military forecasting. These models use quantitative data to combine multiple "variables" of the future to show interconnections and feedback between these variables.
Scenarios	Formal stories that show how a set of variables interact to form a future. Scenario planning is the creation of a preferred scenario that is used to inform organizational planning or policy making.
Alternative futures analysis	Typically used in future visioning workshops to expose participants to a range of possible futures. These futures are based on theories about the way the world works, and are often examples of one of four generic alternative futures: continued growth, collapse, disciplined, and transformation (Dator, 2019).
Delphi	One of the first true futures methods, the Delphi approach engages a group of experts, relevant to the subject matter, through a series of questionnaires, typically about technological breakthroughs. It attempts to generate a forecast based on anonymous expert positions.
Futures wheel	A simple technique that looks at primary, secondary and tertiary consequences of a specific technology, event or trend. The subject is placed in the center of the wheel with layers of consequence mapped in concentric rings, showing connections and feedback loops between outcomes.
Causal Layered Analysis (CLA)	A structured way of looking past surface level issues to analyze deeper layers of understanding that may constrain or define surface issues. Often used as a scenario generation method (Curry & Schultz, 2009).
Future generations	An examination of how present day actions will impact future generations, beyond our children and grandchildren. Encourages present generations to recognize and act on their ethical obligations to future generations, including those they will never meet.

Table 1. A summary of futures methods. Based on Jim Dator's description in Leadership in Science and Technology (Dator, 2012).

Using Drawson, Toombs and Mushquash's (2017) three components essential to Indigenous research methods as criteria, I critically examined these futures methods through an Indigenous lens to reveal several gaps and weaknesses in the range of methods available to futurists. These criteria are:

- Contextual reflection; researchers and participants must be able to situate themselves with the work and with whom they are collaborating in the research process.
- Inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in the research process in a

way that is respectful and reciprocal and focuses decolonizing and preserving self-determination.
- Prioritization of Indigenous ways of knowing.

For several of the methods, western knowledge is privileged primarily due to the epistemological grounding of the practices. Trends analysis, environmental scanning, and computer/ mathematical modelling rely on quantitative data gathered through western science. Further, genius forecasting and Delphi are based on the expertise of western academics, which we know

excludes Indigenous voices. In this way, these methods limit the prioritization of Indigenous ways of knowing, one of the critical components of Indigenous research.

Scenarios, alternative futures, and the futures wheel may be flexible enough to prioritize Indigenous knowledge. Practitioners can use these methods to engage stakeholders and make futures studies accessible. Scenarios may be particularly strong in this area as the incorporation of storytelling, an Indigenous research method (Drawson, Toombs, & Mushquash, 2017), could be easily executed as scenarios can take many forms, including oral stories. However, these methods may fall in regards to the second criteria, contextual reflection. Researchers and Indigenous contributors must be able to situate themselves in the work. Alternative futures and the futures wheel present a prescribed and limited exploration space. Additionally, scenario development often fails to address medium-term transition phases between the present and preferred state (Curry & Schultz, 2009), which could make contextual reflection, or the ability to situate oneself alongside the work, challenging.

Causal layered analysis (CLA) and future generations show the most promise for Indigenous futures work. Both present the opportunity to make space for Indigenous ways of knowing and the ability to contextually situate oneself. CLA is responsive to different ways of knowing, asking participants to engage with a more profound understanding of the symptoms of social issues. Users of CLA can identify their assumptions, relative to their position within the context of the work. Future generations explores time in a way that is reflective of Indigenous futurism work, linking actions of today to a time that we can hardly imagine. Further, participants will be able to locate themselves within this generational focus as both descendants and future ancestors.

The third component identified by Drawson, Toombs and Mushquash (2017) is the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples throughout the research process in a way that prioritizes decolonization and preserves self-determination. Achieving this benchmark with any of the methods mentioned above will be highly reliant on the facilitation of the technique. Even CLA and future generations, the most promising of the selection, will require skilled facilitation to ensure the inclusion of Indigenous contributors in a good way. As a practice, using any of these methods in an Indigenous context will require careful reflection on the method's history, and precise facilitation to ensure the prioritization of Indigenous voices. Practitioners must also enable all participants to situate themselves alongside the work and ensure Indigenous contributors are respected and that the work is based on reciprocity.

Not mentioned in Dator's (2012) summary, the Three Horizons

method is a futures studies framework that may meet the criteria outlined above and allow for the integration of the lessons and creativity of Indigenous futurism. First appearing in management studies, the method has since been significantly modified by Bill Sharpe and Anthony Hodgson for use in futures studies (Curry & Hodgson, 2008). For this study, Three Horizons will be explored as a practice, or method, used to engage research participants with strategic foresight. Sharpe et al. (2016) agree that Three Horizons is a practice, rather than a theory or concept, because it involves a facilitated discussion between a diverse group of stakeholders to map patterns of change. Sharpe (2013) also notes that the experience of participating in a Three Horizons practice is what reframes the participant's understanding of and relation to the future.

The Three Horizons method allows for the examination of the values that drive the way we do things now and how these values may have to shift to enable the transformation we desire (Sharpe, 2013), similar to the CLA framework. This feature of the method speaks to its ability to incorporate many types of knowledge in its use. While not strongly recognized by academics, many ways of knowing are required for transformational change, including techne, or know-how knowledge, and phronesis, or practical wisdom (Sharpe et al., 2016). Practitioners of this method have observed the ability of Three Horizons to capture these many types of knowledge (Sharpe, 2013; Sharpe et al., 2016; Curry & Hodgson, 2008), indicating that it may allow for the prioritization of Indigenous ways of knowing.

One of the gaps in future studies is the ability to not only create a shared vision for the future based on a set of values but to act on that preferred future (Curry and Hodgson, 2008). The Three Horizons method has been used extensively with a range of participants to develop these shared visions (Sharpe, 2013). Because it is relatively simple to explain, participants can readily work with uncertainty and complexity to imagine alternative futures (Curry & Hodgson, 2008; Sharpe et al., 2016). Further, the Three Horizons method naturally examines systemic patterns rather than individual change events (Sharpe, 2013), meaning participants can see themselves in these patterns and identify their role in change-making and their relation to other actors in the system (Sharpe et al., 2016). In this way, users of the methods will be able to situate themselves and their experiences in the work.

The strengths of the Three Horizons method as an easily adoptable foresight method that can capture a range of knowledges and the underlying values and metaphors driving the systems we observe indicate that it may be useful in examining the application of strategic foresight approaches within an Indigenous context. Further, the method is particularly useful for this study because of its ability to be applied at any stage of a project, from

scoping to defining strategic action (Sharpe et al., 2016). While the effectiveness of integrating ideas from Indigenous futurism and ways of knowing is still to be determined, the method will be easily integrated into the strategic planning process of an Indigenous organization, regardless of the stage of the process the organization wishes to explore.

The flexibility and strengths of the Three Horizons, gathered through observations of practitioners of the method, also suggest that the practice could also be applied at any stage of the policy development cycle. As a framework with the ability to examine the systems in the present, future and transitionary phases, the method could be useful for self-governing Métis Nations as they work within the existing structures of Canadian politics to imagine brighter futures. The introduction of Indigenous futurism to the Three Horizons method may further strengthen its efficacy in this context, not only as a strategic planning tool for Métis political bodies but as a tool for engaging Métis citizens in the process of imagining the future of a self-governing nation.

Research Design

Research Design

Methodology

This project follows an Indigenous methodological approach. It is possible to utilize an Indigenous methodology while using only western methods (Drawson et al., 2017) and this work follows such a mixed approach. An Indigenous research framework, like the one used here, is more than a collection of methods; it is highly participatory, considering protocols, ways of being, and reciprocity (Lavallée, 2009). This project adhered to the Principles of Ethical Métis Research (Métis Centre, 2010) to ensure the work was well situated within the context of the Métis culture. It focused on collaboration with the community at every stage of the process and also considered the need to adapt and refine the research agenda to better suit the Nation's goals and objectives and recognizes participants as contributors (Martin-Hill & Soucy, n.d.).

Participants

Four employees of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) were contributors to this study. I worked closely with the primary contact at the Nation to determine who from the MNO would participate in the project, sharing the project's goals and purpose, and relying on the contact's recommendations for participant recruitment. This collaborative approach to recruitment (Lavallée, 2009) is reflective of the Indigenous methodology that this project employed and the third principle of Métis ethical research; safe and inclusive environments (Métis Centre, 2010). Working with the MNO to determine who would be comfortable participating in the project both in terms of risk management and subject matter expertise also reflected the fifth principle, research should, as it helped ensure that the study would remain outcome-driven. In other words, these participants would actively contribute to the outcome of the project, enabling them to shape the project in a way that would produce a useful final product.

All four participants were closely tied to the MNO as leadership or staff and were also members of the Nation. Throughout the paper, I refer to these participants as "the MNO." I also discuss MNO members, citizens, and communities; these are individuals who are part of the MNO but who did not participate in the research.

Methods

Three Horizons Workshop

Two methods were used to meet the objectives of this study. First, I delivered the Three Horizons foresight method as a participatory workshop exploring the question: what does the MNO look like as a self-governing nation in 2045? Initially described in the field of management, the Three Horizons method is useful for both visioning exercises and strategic planning (Curry & Hodgson, 2008). Often used as a tool for consensus building, the method is known to be easily adopted by non-experts, considerate of the underlying values of the organization and their implications, and strongly linked to strategic action (Curry & Hodgson, 2008).

The Three Horizons method has also been found to address a key challenge with futures studies: the inability of the participants to see themselves in imagined future worlds. With this method, participants can relate their actions to their ability to make change in the system (Sharpe et al., 2016). This research intended to create something of value for the participating organization, so I chose the Three Horizons method for its ability to lead to actionable strategic choices. The method's relative accessibility also makes it an excellent choice considering the short timeframe of this project.

This method explores three different scenarios, or horizons, that are all occurring simultaneously, as presented in the diagram below (Figure 2). The first horizon represents the current state. The method asks the participants and practitioners to critically examine the existing structures and systems informing their world in the present. Specifically, it aims to identify those factors or systems that are "fading out" or no longer prevalent for the organization, community, or department.

Horizon one is also used to identify pockets of the future in the present. These are factors, or signals, that indicate how systems or structures might be changing. For example, in the context of this study, the increase in Indigenous activist movements and legal successes, including self-governing agreements, are signals that may indicate how the governance system in Canada is changing.

Next, the participants examine horizon three. In this horizon, participants are asked to identify their preferred future, within the question or topic they are exploring. When exploring this horizon, participants may disagree on which is the preferred future. The Three Horizons method is flexible in its application; it can be used to capture this variance in preferred futures or to generate a shared future vision.
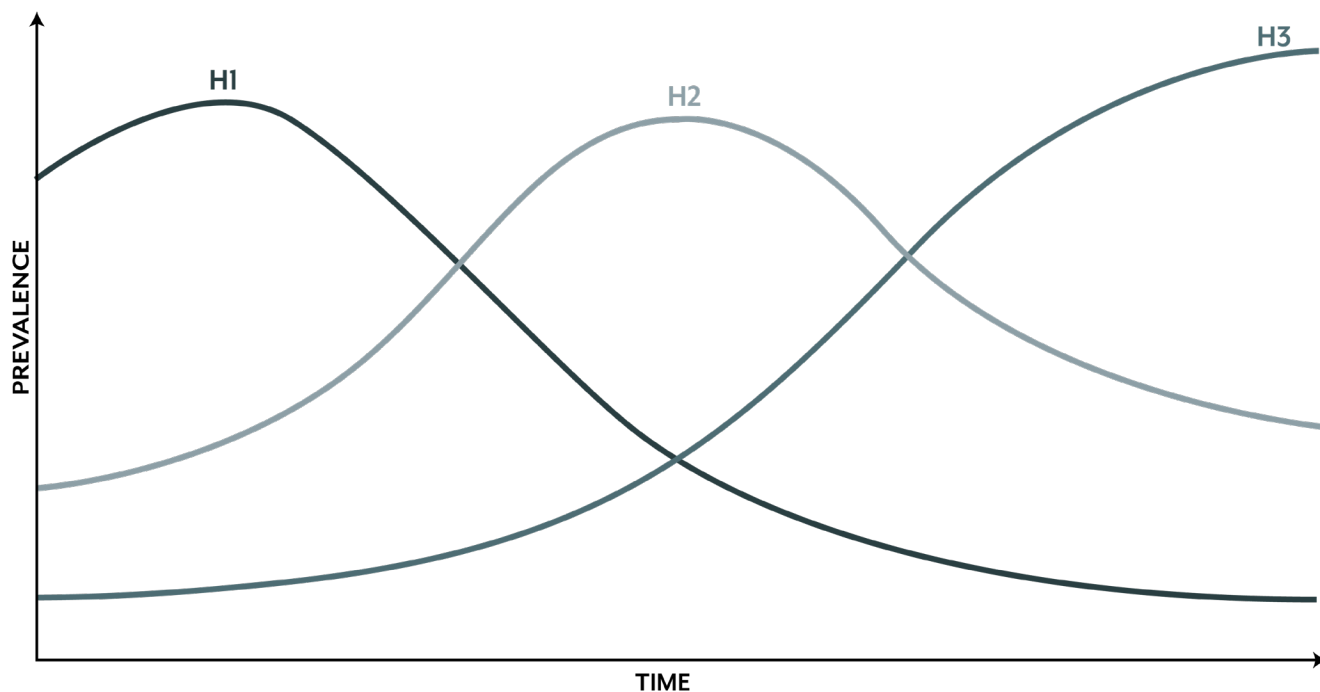
Figure 2. Schematic of the Three Horizons model. Adapted from Curry & Hodgson, 2008 (Pg. 8).

In horizon three, we imagine our ideal future world. We free ourselves of the binds of the current reality and think creatively about what could be.

The Three Horizons method approach ends with horizon two, as this is the transitionary period. In this horizon, participants discuss how their organization or community might move from the present reality of horizon one to the preferred future(s) in horizon three. Participants identify the systems and structures that need to change. In this horizon, participants can begin to see themselves in the method and understand how their actions can impact their future trajectory. Horizon two sees the old, unfit systems and structures of horizon one continue to fade out, as the new way of doing things in horizon three begins to grow.

The overarching question of this workshop was quite broad, leaving participants with many possible directions to explore within the realm of self-governance. To help the participants organize their thoughts, I used the STEEPV framework (Loveridge, 2002) during the workshop. An acronym for social, technological, environmental, economic, political and values, this framework provides categories for participants to explore in addressing a broad topic area. Throughout the workshop, I reminded participants to consider each of the STEEPV categories if they were stuck or challenged to express ideas during each phase of the workshop.

Focus Group

To collect data on participants' experience using the Three Horizons method within the context of a Métis Nation, I led a focus group following the workshop. The use of focus groups as a qualitative method became quite popular in the mid-1980s and continued for the next decade (Morgan, 1996). Often used in health and medicine research (Kitzinger 1995), focus groups differ significantly from individual interviews in that the facilitator or moderator plays an active role in creating a group discussion among participants (Morgan, 1996). The interpersonal communication among participants that happens in a focus group, such as joking, teasing, arguing and anecdotes are a rich source of data for the researcher revealing insights about common or shared knowledge among the group (Kitzinger, 1995; Morgan, 1996).

While there are, of course, drawbacks involved with focus groups, such as the lack of confidentiality among participants (Morgan, 1996) and the silencing of dissenting voices (Kitzinger, 1995), I selected this method for its flexibility in adapting to different cultural contexts. Romm (2017) describes work done with South African communities and provides a set of recommendations for adapting the focus group method to make room for Indigenous ways of knowing. Further, Dillon's (2007) work on *miindiwag*, the importance of humour and irony in the traditional stories of some North American Indigenous communities, speaks to the

importance of the rich data found in the anecdotal and natural conversation enabled by this method.

Following the Three Horizons workshop and a short break, I lead the focus group session following a set of guiding questions. In line with this study's Indigenous methodology, the focus group discussion was semi-structured and conformed to the needs of the participants. I recorded the focus group with the consent of the participants.

Reflexive Selection of Methods and Ethical Considerations

The methods outlined above were selected after careful consideration of the unique reality of the Métis people and an investigation of Indigenous research methods. Initially, I considered using sharing circles rather than a focus group. Sharing circles and focus groups are very similar in their execution, but they are fundamentally different in their underlying principles (Umaefulam & Premkumar, 2017). Sharing circles are grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing, incorporate cultural protocols, focus heavily on creating a safe space for storytelling and have been found to be more appropriate for Indigenous participants than focus groups (Loppie, 2007; Umaefulam & Premkumar, 2017; Tachine et al., 2016).

The ability of the facilitator to connect with the participants and connect with the Indigenous community at a broader scale largely influences the success of sharing circles (Tachine et al., 2016). Further, a majority of the research on Indigenous focus groups was conducted with First Nations people. The context of the Métis people is very different as compared to First Nations and Inuit communities. Métis people exist at the confluence of two cultures and have diverse ways of knowing (Métis Centre, 2010). Respecting this unique context and diversity of thought is paramount for conducting Métis research (Métis Centre, 2010). While I identify as Métis, I remain relatively disconnected from the Métis community in general, and the MNO specifically. With this in mind, and to avoid making assumptions about the worldview held by the participants, I chose a focus group over a sharing circle.

I identified the assumptions I was making in selecting methods for this study through a critically reflexive practice. As described by Cunliffe (2004), reflexivity is a "thoughtful, conscious self-awareness" (pg. 532). Going beyond merely reflecting, the reflexive practice required me to reflect on my reflections and act on those insights, which in turn influenced the methods that I chose. This practice also resulted in the realization that there is a high need for flexibility in this work. Using an Indigenous methodology, as previously defined, means collaborating with the community at every stage, and adapting the research to best meet the needs of the participants, but also the Nation's agenda toward self-determination (Martin-Hill & Soucy, n.d.). Keeping this

in mind, I remained open to adapting the project as the research progressed.

Alongside this final report, I also developed a strategic report for the MNO that summarized the findings from the Three Horizons workshop and made recommendations for future work. While I initially planned on including the strategic report as an Appendix here, my reflexive practice and methodological approach made it clear that this would be an inappropriate choice. This work was based on a reciprocal relationship (Métis Centre, 2010), meaning it is grounded in equal partnership, equal responsibility and equal benefits. The strategic report represents this reciprocity. It contains a detailed account of conversations about the MNO and its communities, information that is not mine to share in the context of this final report. For these reasons, I will only share the strategic report with those who participated in this project. Any further sharing is under their discretion.

This study adhered to the research ethics standards maintained by OCAD University and the Métis Centre's Principles of Ethical Métis Research (2010) were strictly followed. Before the workshop session, participants received a detailed information letter outlining the research project, consent protocol, and voluntary participation. Each participant was asked to provide consent to participate verbally or by signing an informed consent form before beginning the workshop. All participants were asked to indicate their preference for having their names used during the final reporting of this study.

Data Analysis

I used two methods to analyze data collected for this study; Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) (Inayatullah, 1998) and thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998). Described as a futures method, CLA explores issues across four levels: litany, structures and causes, worldview, and myths and metaphors (Figure. 3 and 4). It has been shown to create more robust scenarios and strategies by exposing systemic and cultural understandings of an issue (Inayatullah, 1998; Inayatullah, 2014). Thematic analysis is commonly used to understand qualitative datasets as it focuses on identifiable themes and patterns that emerge from participants' lived experiences (Aronson, 1995). Thematic analysis is a way of understanding what is common in the way people talk about a topic and to offer insights into the meaning of observed patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

I used CLA as an analytical frame to explore data collected from the Three Horizons workshop. My intention was to uncover the unique perspectives participants brought to the subject area and their view of the future. CLA also allowed me to identify the underlying worldviews, myths, and metaphors, driving the participants' responses. Wanting to understand how these

perspectives shifted across time frames in horizon one and horizon three, I excluded horizon two from the CLA.

Filtering the participant's responses through the CLA framework, I was able to sort the Three Horizons data into the litany, structures/causes, and in some cases, worldviews. Workshop data produced responses that mostly fell into the litany and structures/causes categories of the CLA. Using this as a starting point, I analyzed the responses further to identify the underlying myths and metaphors associated with the responses generated for both horizon one and horizon three. Figure 3 and 4 in the following section shows the results of this analysis.

I used thematic analysis to synthesize the participant's experience using the Three Horizons method from post-workshop focus group data. The recorded focus group session was played back and transcribed by hand. I then coded the data for relevance to either method, community or organization, and additional sub-categories, as summarized by the coding key found in Table 2.

I analyzed focus group data for common themes under each of the coding categories. Data from the workshop session notes were also coded in the same manner, with the intent of cross-referencing focus group and workshop data to analyze for common themes or incongruencies. However, because the subject matter of the workshop was so specific to self-governance while the focus group concentrated on the participants' experience, this analysis was found to be unnecessary. Each method was asking a very different question; therefore, analyzing the data together did not provide additional insight.

Category	Definition
Method • Strengths • Limitations	Comments referring to the Three Horizons method • Strengths/positives of the method • Weaknesses/negativities of the method
Community • Rights • Identity	Comments referring to citizens/community members • Comments about rights (harvesting, health, education) • Comments about Métis way of life and culture
Organization • Relationships	Comments referencing the structure or entities that make up the MNO • MNO's relationships with external organizations

Table 2. Coding protocol used for thematic analysis.

Findings

Findings

Causal Layered Analysis and Métis Perspectives on the Future

A CLA of the outputs of the Three Horizon workshop data revealed the mental models currently driving the MNO as a political and administrative organization. The analysis also highlighted the shift in these mental models that is required to achieve the MNO's preferred future. Several key themes emerged from this analysis related to Métis identity and its connection to the MNO's perspective on the future, which are summarized and discussed below.

After filtering the workshop responses through the CLA framework (Figure 3 and 4), there were significant gaps in the worldview and myths and metaphors layers of the CLA; most workshop responses fell into higher-level categories. To deepen this analysis, I identified and named the metaphors and worldviews that were expressed by participants during the workshop. Drawing on the responses captured, detailed workshop notes and my reflections on the workshop, I was able to identify the metaphors describing each of the worlds that participants described in horizon one and horizon three.

The use of metaphor for this analysis is important for two reasons. In CLA, examining our assumptions and view on the world through metaphor allows us to critique the present and create space for new alternative futures from a deeper understanding (Inayatullah, 1998). Merging CLA with the Three Horizons method allowed me to articulate the MNO's shift in perspective as participants discussed the present state in horizon one and then the preferred future in horizon three. Metaphor brings this perspective to life, communicating the realities of the MNO in a creative and relatable way. Participants spoke of this way of communicating during the focus group and referenced the natural landscape as a way of understanding their community. For example, one participant spoke about the "rivers" that make up the Three Horizons framework and referred to the importance of waterways for the Métis of Ontario. The metaphors found throughout the analysis speak to this way of knowing and communicates the essence of this future.

Horizon One - A Fragmented Forest

Examining horizon one revealed a sense of disconnection and conflict between the MNO and citizens and between community members themselves. In this present-day world, the MNO and the community it represents are like a monoculture forest that has been eviscerated by forestry. Both geography and historical

tensions separate communities. There is a sense that differences among communities are more significant than that which binds them. Participants see these metaphors play out in the form of citizen apathy, challenges with social cohesion and deep mistrust between citizens and the MNO.

From the MNO's perspective, it feels as though there is a storm brewing beneath a calm surface. While the MNO's external appearance presents a strong collective community, within, there are ever-present tensions, deep mistrust, and broken relationships. The organization is trying to fit a mould that doesn't suit the community it represents in the form of a centralized political and administrative agency that does not effectively address regional issues. This misaligned structure results in an inability to collaborate within the MNO, difficulties communicating with citizens, and regional members who do not participate in the MNO.

A key theme that emerged during horizon one conversations is the lack of a collective Métis identity within the citizenship of the MNO. As an organization, the MNO itself is also in the midst of an identity transformation. Discussion during this part of the workshop centred on the story the MNO had been telling over its 26-year existence, one of a collective nation made up of similar communities with similar issues. While this story was successful in helping the MNO win its fight for recognition and the assertion of Métis rights, many are now realizing that perhaps this story is not reflective of the reality for this Métis nation.

A new story is needed, one that acknowledges that the communities and citizens that the MNO represents are unique, with histories and experiences that vary from one another. I argue that this struggle for individual recognition on a community level is dividing the MNO. With so much effort focused on establishing how and why they are different, the community and members neglect to acknowledge the identity that they share. This tension results in conflict between members and the MNO, who is struggling to tell a new story. Without being able to articulate who they are as a nation, it will be very challenging for the MNO to imagine a future trajectory towards self-governance.

Horizon Three - Where Lake and Forest Meet

Horizon three indicates a shift in the mental model that will drive the MNO's preferred future world. In horizon three, there is a strong sense of collective identity. The community finds strength in their differences, similar to the landscape of northern Ontario; a vast mixed wood forest peppered with freshwater lakes. Communities

Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) - Horizon 1

Siloed administrative areas
Historical relationships between
 communities
Centralized political/administrative structure
Dispersed regions and offices
Reliance on government funding
Geographic barriers
Commitment to values from leadership not seen in community
MNO story of "we are one" was the wrong story
Fight for Métis rights and recognition has been the sole focus of MNO
Central dependance

Citizen apathy; Communication challenges; Not living our values; Lack of collaboration; Reacting to external factors; Challenges w/ social cohesion; Regional citizens not involved in MNO; Deep mistrust (at all levels of community); Limited adoption of technology prohibits virtual engagement; Limited to no co-management with other governments; Lack of awareness of long-term impacts of industry projects on Métis rights; Lack of focus on political leadership development (future leaders); Broken relationships (community to community, community to MNO)

Litany

Structures/Causes

Worldview

Myths/Metaphors

Duty to consult = jobs, money, scholarships, etc.
Us vs. Them; Community vs. MNO
Short-term gains over long-term priorities
We'll always have access to the territory
Differences are greater than the collective

Calm on the surface, but a storm within
Fit the mould
Take what we can get
Fighting a losing battle
Staring at a blank page
A forest traversed by cutlines

Figure 3. Causal layered analysis of horizon one. From the Métis Nation of Ontario's (MNO) Three Horizon workshop exploring the future of the MNO as a self-governing nation in 2045.

Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) - Horizon 2 Lorem ipsum

Political structure is not based on a 4
 year cycle
Multiple career paths leading to MNO
MNO is self-reliant
Responsible for fiscal management
Responsive, consensus-based decision-making structure
Political institution supports consistent regulations, principles,
 and code of conduct
MNO is a leader in protection of Métis way of life and environment
Judicial branch of MNO government established
Culturally-grounded dispute resolution process
MNO constitution that is grounded in values of community

Engaged citizens; MNO is an employer of choice; In community access to healthcare
(both natural and pharmaceutical); River by river places to learn; Co-managing
environment with other governments; Full ability to access harvesting rights;
MNO is recognized and respected as a culturally grounded government;
Regular face to face meetings with First Nation, Federal, Provincial,
and Métis governments; MNO fully resourced to provide
services; Government responsive to citizen needs and
aspirations; Appropriate application of jurisdictional
checks and balances

Litany

Structures/Causes

Worldview

Myths/Metaphors

Past-present-future approach
All my relations approach
By Métis for Métis
We are all stewards

We find our strength in our differences
Break the mould
The community is my strength
Riding the waves but keeping our eye on
the shore
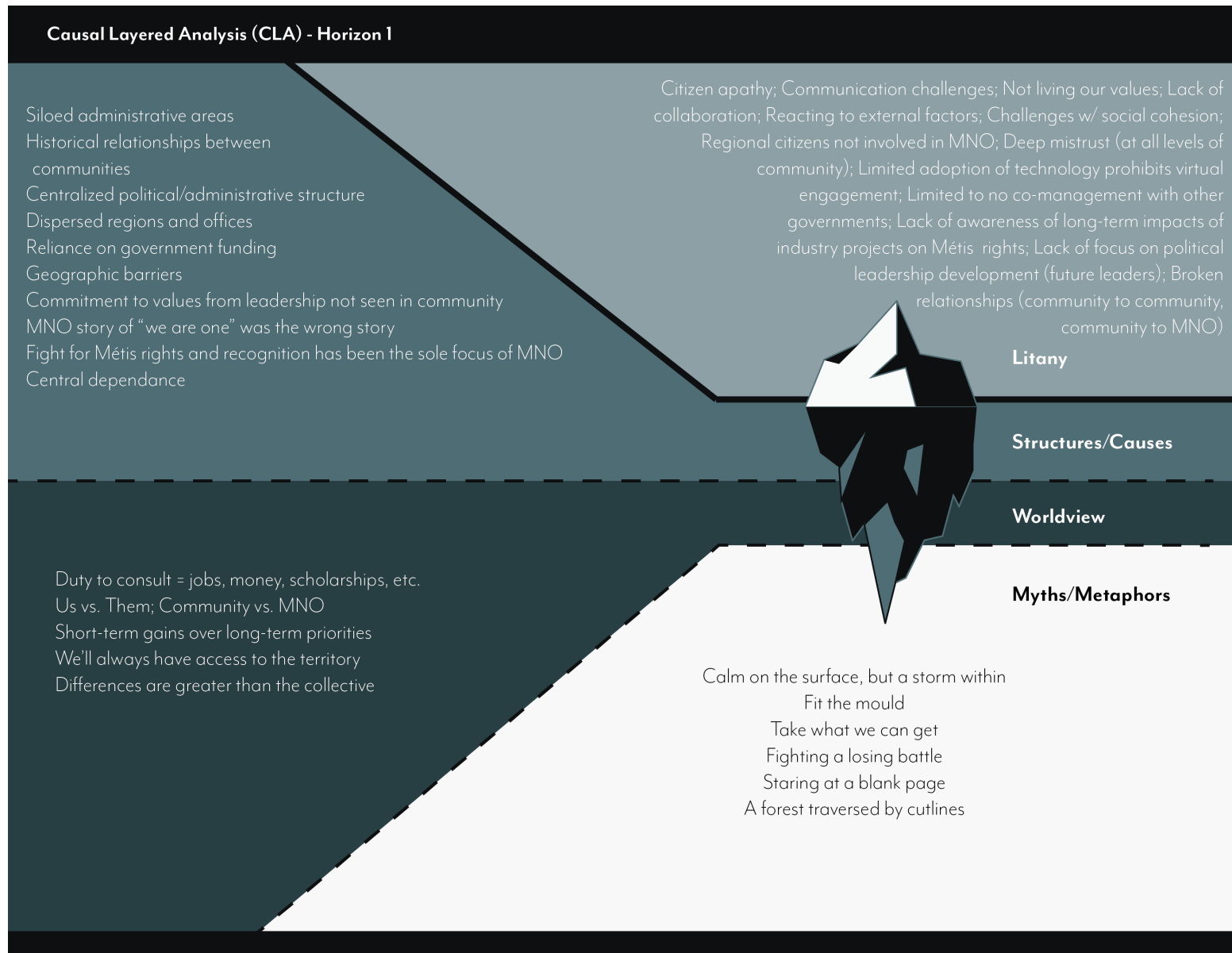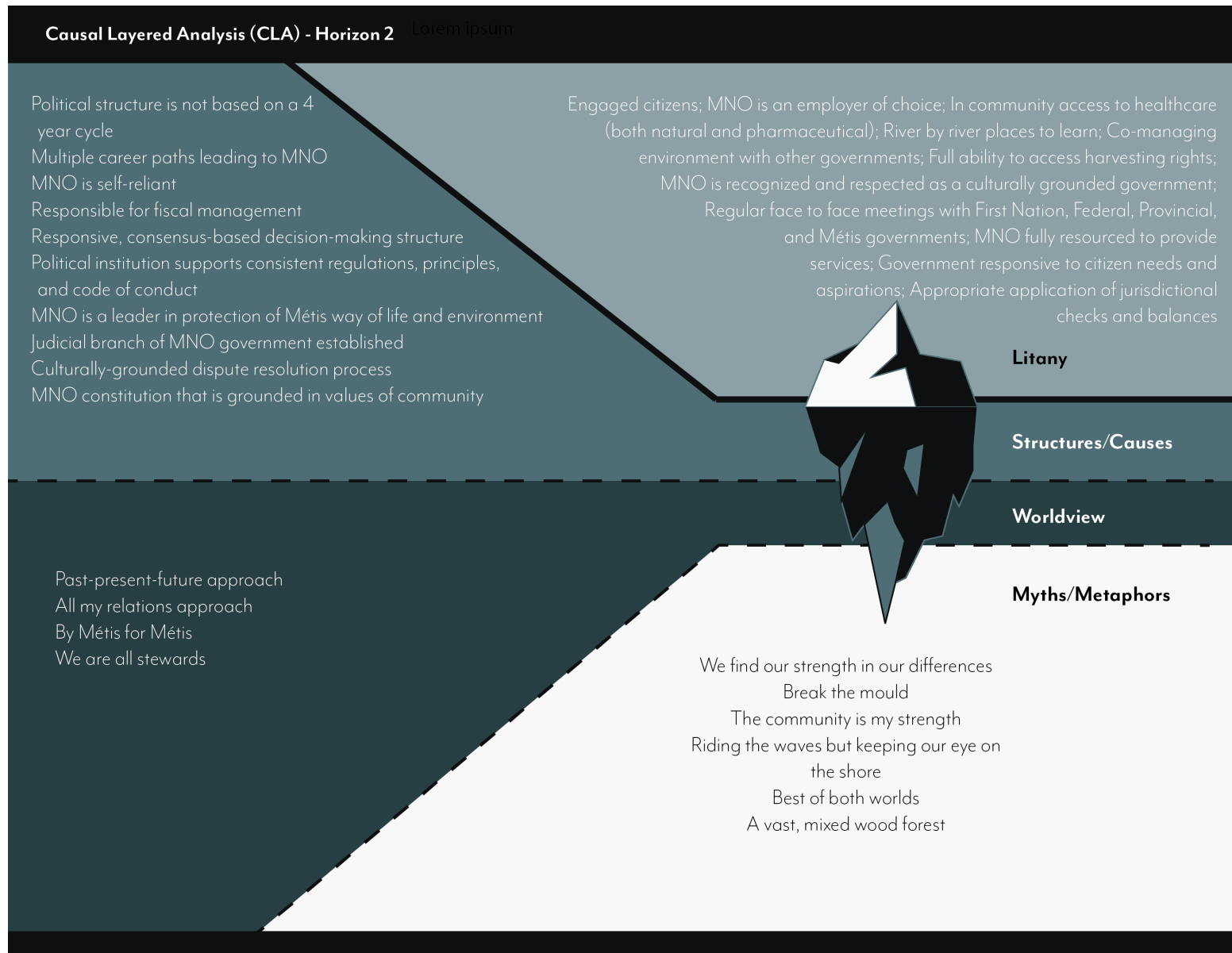Best of both worlds
A vast, mixed wood forest

Figure 4. Causal layered analysis of horizon three. From the Métis Nation of Ontario's (MNO) Three Horizon workshop exploring the future of the MNO as a self-governing nation in 2045.

and members retain their unique differences but don't view them as barriers; citizens engage with a relational understanding of the world in which every person, place and thing is connected in some way. In this future, the MNO citizenship is engaged in a responsive, consensus-based decision-making political organization and has full access to harvesting rights. The community gathers around a constitution that is grounded in a collective set of Métis values.

In this world of 2045, the MNO has broken the mould and worked collaboratively with the membership to create a "by Métis for Métis" approach to governance and political organization. Drawing on the past, present and future, this is a Nation that navigates waves of change but always has its eye on the shore. With responsible fiscal management the political institution of 2045 supports consistent regulations, principles, and a code of conduct. It is a leader in the protection of the Métis way of life and the environment. These elements, along with a culturally-grounded dispute resolution process, allows the organization to provide a range of services to the membership and establish strong working relationships with all levels of government across Ontario and Canada.

In this section of the workshop, participants were able to imagine a future in which their community regained a new sense of collective identity, one that did not deny their differences, but openly embraced them. Many of the system-level changes that would be required to achieve this sense of identity were later discussed in horizon two. Importantly, participants highlighted aspects of this future world that are built on a collective understanding of the Métis culture. Systems and processes would be structured around this collective sense of who the MNO is, beginning with the people they represent. For example, an important aspect of this preferred future was a culturally-grounded, engaged government. In horizon two, participants identified that in order to achieve this outcome, collaborative work with community members is required to develop a shared understanding of the Métis culture.

Métis Identity and the Future - The River that Always Flows

For the Métis community, identity strongly influences perspectives on the future. When citizens of the MNO feel their identity is being contested, or engulfed, defining a collective vision of the future for the nation will be challenging. Further, as noted by participants, many members of the community are working to uncover their identity and their values. Métis people have struggled with this understanding of identity for a long time. Walking between two worlds, historically, Métis families have had to choose between being treated with dignity and respect, or cultural visibility (Richardson, 2006). Participants affirmed this reality, stating that in many cases, families chose not to disclose their Métis identity to protect themselves from persecution and racism.

The foundation of the MNO's preferred future is a strong, collective Métis identity. It was only after establishing identity as a driving force in this future world that participants could begin imagining the systems and structures that could exist. Ideas such as community access to healthcare, "river by river" educational opportunities, and strong relationships with other governments will only be achieved if the MNO and its citizenship gather around a shared understanding of Métis identity. Reflective of *biskaabiiyang* (Leggatt, 2019), the Three Horizons workshop revealed the participants' need to find, or return to, what it means to be Métis in explorations of the future.

Analysis of the Three Horizons Method
Strengths

The Three Horizons Method provided a new framework for the MNO to explore the future of their organization and community as a self-governing nation. The participants commented on the timeliness of the workshop, as the Nation is having many strategic-level conversations regarding self-government. The MNO is now trying to articulate their goals and vision for the future. The participants felt that the Three Horizons method was useful in developing a shared understanding of what the Nation could look like in 2045.

The participants commented explicitly on the structure of the Three Horizons approach. By tackling horizon one first, the participants had a chance to outline the challenges, barriers, and issues that are not currently serving the organization. In the focus group session, the participants commented on the utility of horizon one for airing grievances. Participants also noted that they had a similar way of thinking about the question posed to them; they were all relatively in agreement about future directions for the organization. One participant (P2) commented that this would not be the case if the method were used similarly with community members:

"I think again, as [P1] was talking about, our thought processes [are similar]. I think we are approaching the grievances from a particular angle and maybe don't see them from other ways and maybe that is, not a voice that is missing from the room necessarily, [but] it would be hard to do with other voices [...] Somehow [horizon one] was the easiest, and funnily the most satisfying one to do. For me anyway. Maybe the airing of grievances, getting it all out, is always [good]. Otherwise, it stays in, and that can cause problems." (P2)

By addressing the issues of the present and calling them out at the start of the workshop, the group was able to hone in on those key issues they would like to see changed in their preferred future. Further, the use of this framework with community members could serve a therapeutic purpose. Working collectively through horizon

one may provide an outlet for community members to share their challenges with the MNO, and build a shared understanding among community members.

Moving directly from horizon one to horizon three reframed the participants' typical linear planning process and improved the visioning experience. Multiple participants commented that skipping the middle phase of horizon two, or the transition phase, was preferred because it prevented them from getting stuck in the details of how to make change happen. Participants could be more creative in the future they imagined when they didn't have to think about how to get there.

Of course, imagining a future in 2045 was challenging for participants; typically, strategic planning processes don't deal with 26-year timeframes. However, having mapped out the present state and the preferred future, participants found horizon two considerably easier to tackle. Participants were able to draw lines between the things in the present they wanted to change to aspects of their preferred future. One participant commented on the ease with which they could identify points in horizon two that could be implemented over the next year to begin moving toward the preferred future in horizon three:

"I think the easiest one was the first horizon. It is always easier to identify things in the now. 2045 was sort of challenging, but doing it in the order we did it in made it easier because by looking out farther first it was easier to draw the line between the two in terms of what could we actually start doing inside of a week, a month or a year with some type of target that is 20 some years away. I think you could do this in a different order and it could be considerably harder. The way that we did it made it somewhat easier." (P4)

Multiple participants commented on the nebulous nature of horizon two. During the focus group session, participants were asked to specify how they felt about the future of their organization and their community following the Three Horizons workshop. Overall, participants felt positive about the future of the Nation. However, there were two separate reactions to the nebulous horizon two. Some participants were concerned about the MNO's ability to execute the plans and changes identified in horizon two; it felt overwhelming. Regardless, these participants also felt confident that the Nation could achieve horizon three, but perhaps not by 2045. Other participants felt optimistic that the MNO could make the changes proposed in horizon two. One participant commented that even though horizon two was deeply complex, it could be used as a starting point to break down the transition phase into smaller actionable plans and tasks. Another participant commented on the potential to use what was defined in horizon two to create several roadmaps for the Nation over the next 26 years.

Participants also commented on the non-linear approach of Three Horizons and its similarity to a Métis way of thinking. Participants asserted that the way of understanding for Métis people is different than for non-Métis. Described as fluid and non-linear, one participant used the example of the MNO's conception to illustrate this point:

"I wouldn't say we are linear in how we do things [...] The only way we got here in the last 26 years is because we were looking at a horizon that we couldn't even really, at the time, imagine and have been adaptable enough to make it happen in a really short amount of time. Like [P2] mentioned, we have changed from our fight for rights, which everyone could understand very easily - the fight for respect and recognition. Well in many ways we got that and now it is [about] re-articulating it as a fight for self-government. What is that for the best, absolute coolest government we can make, how do we make that happen within these waves? I like how [the method], even [in the diagram], [is like water]. We are a water people here in Ontario, born of the waterways. I like the visual nature of it." (P3)

Today, the MNO is fighting a new battle, one for self-governance. This new challenge requires a re-articulation of the MNO's goals and purpose. While citizens could easily understand and gather around the fight for rights and recognition, working towards self-governance is more challenging. The MNO must now focus on aligning citizens around what it means to self-govern in a way that fits the people. Participants agreed that the Three Horizons method provided them with the flexibility to break away from their linear, more traditional strategic planning practices and be more creative.

The Three Horizons method also served to validate work that is currently happening within the organization. For example, in the horizon two discussion, participants identified several initiatives that are now underway and would need to continue to move the MNO towards the preferred future. This discovery also provided another perspective on the importance of these initiatives. For example, the MNO is currently exploring the establishment of a research institute, similar to Indigenous Educational Institutes in Ontario. Following the workshop, participants identified a new level of importance for this institute to achieve several of the goals identified in horizon three.

One participant commented that the method helped them to think more systemically, and could be used to engage the community in this type of visioning work:

"[...] sometimes we get so focused working in silos and [saying] okay, I gotta get this table painted green, [for example] and that is all we think of. We don't think of anything else and I think that [this method] helps us maybe think about more than one thing at a time and we can really

capitalize on what we do and do it in a way that will be more profitable, in the way of being, not necessarily money. It will bring us to where we want to go. Bring our citizens to where we want to go." (P1)

This participant's observation is reflective of previous futures work using thee Three Horizons method that found the method naturally examines systemic patterns and enables participants to see themselves in these patterns as agents of change (Sharpe, 2013; Sharpe et al., 2016).

Finally, when asked if participants would use the Three Horizons method again, all agreed that the tool was useful and could see its utility. Some suggestions for future use include:

- Engaging larger groups of staff for strategic planning exercises
- Engaging community members as a consensus-building tool to develop a shared vision of the future
- Exploring other topic areas such as harvesting policies of the future
- Onboarding new leadership or administration
- Engaging management teams for short term action planning
- Formalizing a team within MNO to repeatedly review and monitor progress towards the preferred future identified in this exercise

Overall, participants felt that the Three Horizons method is a useful tool that could be applied in many ways across the Nation and within the community. The method helped the group to think more broadly and break out of the siloed nature of their work, articulate new futures and explore complexity in a way that also validated current initiatives underway at the MNO.

Limitations

The focus group discussion revealed two critical limitations of the Three Horizons method for the MNO, geography and accessibility. Both of these barriers were identified during conversations regarding community engagement with the method.

During the workshop, participants raised geography as a key barrier the organization faces in engaging citizens of the MNO. Métis communities are spread across the province of Ontario. Gathering citizens, or even MNO staff, for meetings or events, is difficult and expensive. When asked about the use of this method with community members, participants again raised geography as a potential barrier and questioned the need to be engaged face-to-face.

The group discussed the possibility of utilizing video conferencing and online tools to host a virtual workshop. One participant attended this workshop via video call and did not experience any particular barrier to engagement:

"It [virtual participation] actually wasn't too bad. It was quite good. I think you could probably tweak it if you had more people connected remotely, so for example the diagram you had, and those types of things we could send that out in advance or at the time or you could have a hybrid of, say the remote connection we are doing right now, but I could interact with one of these online tools with the digital sticky notes and you could just put it up on the screen. Maybe there is a mixture of things." (P4)

Multiple participants working through a Three Horizons workshop virtually could be logistically challenging. Further, the strength of the method is in the experience of participants who work collaboratively through the exercise (Sharpe, Hodgson, Leicester, & Fazey, 2016). Virtual engagement could potentially limit the experience, especially if participants feel isolated from one another.

Participants were also asked if there was anything about the method that they would add or adjust based on their experience. At this time, one participant raised the second limitation of the method, the written aspect. This participant commented on the educational reality of many Métis people in Ontario:

"[I didn't like the stickies], I think it is because I write with a lot of grammatical errors, and I've always done things, even in school verbally, because I write like I hear - phonetically - both in English, French and Michif. That's why Michif is so nice to me [...] I am sure I am not the only one that does that. Plus, I went to a French school with English texts. So I read in English and think in French. Because our reports had to be in French, all our work had to be in French but we didn't have French texts. So that poses a bit of a roadblock when I write." (P1)

Many Métis in Ontario attended schools in French, but with only English texts, and spoke Michif at home and in the community. This blending of languages led this participant to feel self-conscious about writing their thoughts on sticky notes that others would see. The participant commented that others in the Métis community in Ontario would have had a similar educational experience, and therefore may face the same barrier. Further, this workshop was exclusively in English, a choice that may not work for the Métis community who are linguistically diverse.

Careful consideration of these limitations is necessary before exploring the use of the Three Horizons method with Métis community members. The group discussed the possibility of incorporating a narrative or oral aspect to the workshop; most felt a mixed-method approach would be useful. Presenting a wider range of options to share thoughts and comments, such as through writing, drawing, and speaking, could ease hesitations and improve the accessibility of the method. Additionally, the workshop should be conducted in the language that is preferred by the community.

Discussion

Discussion

The Three Horizons method proved to be relatively successful in helping the MNO define a preferred future as a self-governing nation in the year 2045. The method was also useful for identifying actions and choices that would help the MNO move toward the preferred future. Participants indicated that the method and topic were timely and useful for the Nation as a whole and agreed that they would like to use the method again.

As discussed by Sharpe (2013), the Three Horizons method allows for the examination of the values that underlie both the present and envisioned future worlds. This work confirmed that assertion. A CLA of both the horizon one and horizon three outputs of the workshop session showed that sense of identity played a foundational role in the MNO's understanding of present-day challenges and the Nation's relation to the future. Understanding that identity as a key driver of many of the challenges faced by the MNO and as the foundation of the preferred future is crucial for the Nation and any future visioning work that occurs.

The Three Horizons method also proved strong in its ability to adapt to a Métis understanding of the world. The non-linear approach of the method matched the participant's way of thinking, noting that their community holds a non-linear, relational understanding of the world. Far different from other strategic planning methods used by the Nation that tend to be linear and reductionist, the Three Horizons method allowed for a systemic understanding of the issue. Participants were able to understand the horizons as patterns, or waves of change, on a systems level and identify how their actions could create desirable impacts. Again, the outcomes of this workshop support the work of Sharpe (2013) and Sharpe et al. (2016).

Easily applicable to several planning activities and topic areas within the MNO, one potential application of the Three Horizons method is particularly interesting, that being, using the method with the community to identify a shared vision of the future. Based on the findings of this research, it is likely that the method could be successful in doing so. However, two fundamental limitations, linguistic accessibility and geographic barriers, must be addressed before working with the method in the community.

Incorporating an oral storytelling or drawing aspect into the Three Horizons method could potentially address the linguistic accessibility challenge identified in this research. Encouraging participants to draw or describe aspects of each horizon may ease stress about writing on notes, and contribute to the visual nature of the tool that was preferred by participants. Facilitators

of the method with this community will also need to work closely with community members to determine how best to accommodate the range of languages spoken by the community. This accommodation could range from translation services to community-facilitated workshops, in which the facilitator is a member of the community and comfortable with all languages spoken.

Addressing the geographic barrier of engaging community members with the Three Horizons method may be more challenging. Online facilitation of the method may be possible using video conferencing, and online platforms such as Mural (Mural, 2019) to allow participants to engage with the framework digitally. Programs like Mural would enable participants to create digital sticky notes that could then be added to the Three Horizons schematic while hosting a discussion via video conferencing.

While this approach would allow members of distant communities to engage in a Three Horizons workshop, two main concerns arise from digital-based facilitation. First, a digital platform may prohibit the oral storytelling and drawing suggestions mentioned above. A virtual experience may also further heighten participant's anxiety about sharing thoughts through written word given the fact that many may be hesitant to adopt technology as a means of engagement. This lack of adoption was noted by one of the participants during this study's focus group. Second, the Three Horizons method is a practice, and its strength is drawn from the experience of engaging with a group around the method (Sharpe et al., 2016). It is unknown whether or not a digital engagement can create the same quality of experience. Participants may feel limited in their interaction with the method and with each other. Before engaging in digital facilitation of the Three Horizons method, the MNO will need to carefully consider how best to address these concerns, and test the delivery with a small, close-knit group before engaging the broader community.

Overall, I surmise that there is nothing inherently problematic with the Three Horizons method when used for strategic foresight with Métis communities. However, the ideas and concepts we embed in the framework, and the lens from which we approach the work has the potential to be damaging. The histories of Indigenous Peoples in Canada are complex, layered, and drive the frame from which we view the future. Assuming a settler gaze on the future has the potential to colonize that future. Indigenous people, who are living in a post-apocalyptic state (Tiger, 2019) may find it challenging to break away from the dominant culture's persistence into the future. However, drawing on the foundations of Indigenous futurism,

practitioners and Indigenous communities can find avenues from which to explore many possible futures in a way that acknowledges the past, draws on the importance of tradition and culture and makes way for new possibilities.

Similar to Indigenous futurism literature, this exploration of the MNO's future revealed the need to understand the past to imagine the future. It also highlighted that identity plays a crucial role in Indigenous futures. As Grace Dillion (2016) describes in her introduction of Extrapolation's special issue on Indigenous futures, Indigenous futurisms do not extrapolate to bring back a distant past, but rather highlight the spiritual and cultural paths can remain in the future, despite colonization and genocide. Similarly, participants from the MNO repeatedly reflected on the Nation's past as a way to frame the future, imagining aspects of their culture, history and legacy that would be carried into their preferred future.

Similarly, participants from the MNO reflected on the uncertainty they faced with a tenacity of knowing they would achieve their goals, regardless of how distant the future seemed. Participants were also not afraid to call out the challenging aspects of nationhood they currently face that may still exist 26 years from now, such as a loss of land to the point in which harvesting is impossible. This level of comfort with dystopian futures should not be shied away from, for within these dystopias, we can find the elements Indigeneity and identity that will remain regardless of the conditions in which we find ourselves. Indigenous People

can imagine these worlds of the future without hesitation because these are also their worlds of today.

The use of dystopias in imagining a preferred future for an organization or community may be particularly useful for the Métis both as a visioning exercise and to build a sense of identity. Using the Three Horizons model more iteratively, as shown is figure 5, engaging with dystopian futures in horizon three could reveal the aspects of community, culture, identity and legacy that will persist for the Métis despite the dystopian condition. Noting the loss of these aspects in dystopian futures will also be a key learning moment. Drawing both the past and a dystopian vision of the future, users of this model will be able to identify the critical foundations for their community across any time period. Just as the riverways across a landscape, these aspects are always present, even though they may shift and meander over millennia, the water must always flow.

Capturing this river of continuity in the first iteration of the Three Horizons workshop, as shown in the diagram below (Figure 5), will ground participants in the critical elements of any future, or the non-negotiables. The second phase, which would be practiced as a regular Three Horizons workshop (Sharpe, 2013), will offer space to explore preferred futures. In a sense, the users of the model will have gotten out all of the bad, dystopian futures before shifting to imagine a preferred state. This visioning will be supported and grounded in the constants identified in the first iteration.
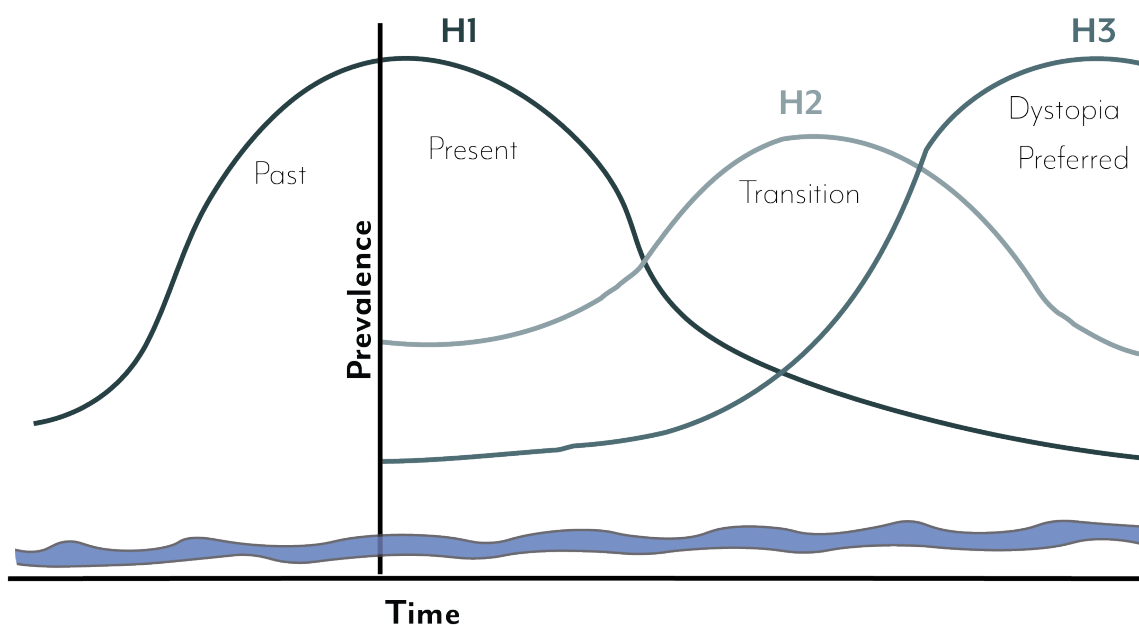

Figure 5. The River of Continuity approach. A modified Three Horizons approach to capture the past, present and future realities for Métis people.

This adaptation of the Three Horizons method attempts to bring an Indigenous lens to the practice of strategic foresight. Drawing on lessons from Indigenous futurism, such as *biskaabiiyang* (Leggatt, 2019), leaning into dystopia (Taylor, 2016; Tiger, 2019), and *miindiwag* (Dillon, 2007) along with the results from this research, the model is meant to expand the way in which futurists think about the future. It is an attempt to encourage the incorporation of past knowledge while envisioning potential futures and finding the constants in our way of being that belong in both worlds.

I want to be clear that the intention of this model is not that an outside practitioner applies it within an Indigenous community, rather quite the opposite. The purpose of this model to encourage practitioners themselves to revisit their mental models from which they approach futures studies. It is meant to drive questions like, what about my (our) past influences the way I imagine the future? What aspects of myself (my community) remain the same across time? Where do these aspects originate? The model is meant to bring a relational, time-expansive way of thinking to the Three Horizons method as a strategic foresight practice.

The use of strategic foresight, using the Three Horizons method or this adaptation, within an Indigenous community or organization, should always be community driven. As previously mentioned, I hypothesize that there is nothing inherently wrong with the methods or frameworks used to do this work with these communities. Some methods may be stronger and more appropriate than others, but it is the ideas and frames that generate the preferred futures that are the danger. Even more dangerous is the exclusion of Indigenous voices from these conversations. Foresight work must be community-led to avoid colonizing the future. If an outside practitioner is involved, the proposed model above could provide a starting point from which to understand Indigenous futures. However, the danger with expert-led dialogue is the unequal distribution of power. Indigenous communities must be free to imagine futures with or without the implications of colonization. That is up to them.

Limitations and Future Considerations

While some foresight work has been done with Indigenous communities (Inayatullah, 2018; Whyte, 2017), this study provides a first look at approaching strategic foresight through a Métis lens. It connects Indigenous futurism with a Métis perspective on planning for the future and proposes a framework for practitioners to begin to understand this perspective.

However, this work was done with a single Métis Nation with participants whose point of view on the topic area was relatively similar. The participants themselves noted that the lack of diversity of thought during the workshop likely influenced the experience of using the method. The use of the Three Horizons method with community members alongside MNO employees may have been more conflictual, especially considering the tensions between citizens and the MNO that participants discussed during the workshop. The Three Horizons method is useful in building consensus among participants with diverse perspectives (Sharpe, 2013; Sharpe, Hodgson, Leicester, & Fazey, 2016), so one could hypothesize the same would be true in this case. Regardless, the experience of working through the method with others of the same perspective undoubtedly influenced the participants' assessment of the method.

To further assess the practice of strategic foresight within Indigenous organizations and communities, additional perspectives are required. Métis communities across Canada vary from one another in history, culture, and language. The findings drawn from this study cannot necessarily be applied within all Métis communities. Further, Métis, First Nation and Inuit organizations and communities all experience vastly different realities. Researchers and practitioners must keep this diversity in mind and avoid generalizing findings such as these in attempting to approach futures from an Indigenous lens across populations. To further understand Indigenous perspectives of the future and their implications for strategic foresight, additional work must be done with more Indigenous nations across what is currently known as Canada.

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