

Framing the governance lifecycle of First Nations – industry forestry collaboration in northwestern Ontario, Canada¹

Melanie Zurba

Abstract: Forestry companies and First Nations are increasingly working together through new forms of collaborative arrangements. Wincrief Forest Products is an example of such collaboration and was a partnership between Wabaseemoong Independent Nations and forestry and construction professionals from northwestern Ontario. Wincrief Forest Products was initiated in 2004 leading to its formalization in 2009 as a home building and later hydro pole production company based on wood harvesting within the Wabaseemoong Traditional Land Use Area. In April 2014, Wincrief Forest Products ceased operation. This article provides a governance and social frame analysis for the full lifecycle of Wincrief Forest Products and addresses important knowledge gaps around perspectives driving each stage of First Nation – industry partnerships and how such perspectives affect the way that collaboration is initiated, sustained, and potentially collapsed. Fourteen key informants involved in the initiation, governance, and day-to-day operations of Wincrief Forest Products were interviewed. Towards understanding the lifecycle of the collaboration, a frame analysis is applied, which focuses on understanding the different issues, solutions, roles, and responsibilities relating to the Wincrief Forest Products lifecycle. Insights from this research are important for understanding the unique needs and perspectives of First Nations and industry partners involved in governance and the development of best practices for industry – First Nation collaboration.

Key words: forest management, frame analysis, governance lifecycle, partnerships, traditional land use area.

Résumé : De plus en plus, les compagnies forestières et les Premières Nations travaillent ensemble grâce à de nouvelles formes d'ententes de collaboration. Wincrief Forest Products est un exemple d'une telle collaboration puisque ce fut un partenariat entre les Nations indépendantes Wabaseemoong et les professionnels de la foresterie et de la construction du nord-ouest de l'Ontario. Wincrief Forest Products a été inauguré en 2004 et officialisé en 2009 dans le domaine de la construction résidentielle et plus tard comme société de production de poteaux hydroélectriques. L'industrie était basée sur la récolte de bois dans la zone d'utilisation traditionnelle de Wabaseemoong. Wincrief Forest Products a cessé ses opérations en avril 2014. Cet article présente une analyse de la gouvernance et du cadre social qui couvre le cycle de vie complet de Wincrief Forest Products. On y aborde l'important manque de connaissances en lien avec les perspectives qui déterminent chaque étape des partenariats entre les Premières Nations et l'industrie et comment de telles perspectives affectent la manière dont la collaboration a été initiée, s'est maintenue et potentiellement effondrée. Quatorze acteurs clés impliqués dans le lancement, la gouvernance et les opérations quotidiennes au sein de Wincrief Forest Products ont été interviewés. Afin de comprendre le cycle de vie de la collaboration, on a utilisé un cadre d'analyse qui se concentre sur la compréhension des enjeux, des solutions, des rôles et des responsabilités en lien avec le cycle de vie de Wincrief Forest Products. Les conclusions de cette recherche sont importantes pour comprendre les besoins et les perspectives uniques des Premières Nations et des partenaires industriels impliqués dans la gouvernance et l'élaboration de pratiques exemplaires pour la collaboration entre l'industrie et les Premières Nations. [Traduit par la Rédaction]

Mots-clés : aménagement forestier, cadre d'analyse, cycle de vie de la gouvernance, partenariat, zone d'utilisation traditionnelle des terres.

Introduction

In Canada, forestry companies and First Nations are increasingly working together through new forms of collaborative arrangements. Forestry companies see this as a way of developing relationships that secure long-term access to the forest and First Nations see potential entry points to governance and socio-economic benefits for their communities (McGregor 2011; Wyatt 2016). This research focuses on Wincrief Forest Products (abbreviated as “Wincrief” from here on) as a case study of collaborative

governance involving Wabaseemoong Independent Nations (a.k.a. Whitedog First Nation; abbreviated as “Wabaseemoong” from here on) and industry professionals, specializing in forestry and construction, in northwestern Ontario, Canada. Wincrief is a suitable case for understanding the lifecycle of an attempt at collaborative governance involving a First Nation and industry because the research took place from 2011 to 2015 shortly (2 years) after Wincrief was formally incorporated and concluded one year following the collapse of the partnership. Through this case study, the following two objectives were pursued: (i) structurally describe the governance

Received 25 July 2018. Accepted 2 December 2018.

M. Zurba.* Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba, 220-70 Dysart Rd., Winnipeg, MB R3T 2M6, Canada.

Email for correspondence: Melanie.Zurba@dal.ca.

*Present address: School for Resource and Environmental Studies and the College of Sustainability, Dalhousie University, 6100 University Ave., P.O. Box 15000, Halifax, NS B3H 4R2, Canada.

¹This paper is part of the special issue “Indigenous peoples and collaborative forest governance in northern forests: examining changes in policies, institutions, and communities.”

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system in terms of collaboration and (ii) investigate the social frames (issues, solutions, roles and responsibilities) relating to the different stages (initiation, maintenance, and dissolution) of the lifecycle of collaboration.

This paper begins by providing a background on social framing and how it is used towards understanding resource issues involving different parties. A context is then presented for collaborative governance in Canada and northwestern Ontario, more specifically. Data collection and analysis methods are then articulated. Results, based on interviews with key informants are then presented and discussed, and conclusions are provided as lessons learned and insights for future collaborative governance.

Background

Social framing

Accounting for how people understand issues, solutions, roles, and responsibilities is integral to any environmental governance system and is especially important when considering governance systems that are inclusive of Indigenous peoples (Cornassel 2012; Miller and Davidson-Hunt 2013; Bullock and Zurba 2017). Social framing has been effectively used as a lens for making sense of complex political discourse relating to different and shifting perspectives around natural resources (Van Herzele and Aarts 2013; Bullock and Zurba 2017; Plummer et al. 2018), as well as how shared and divergent meanings are produced and sustained (Schön and Rein 1994; Gray 2003). Frame analysis has proven to be particularly useful for understanding collaboration and multi-stakeholder decision-making processes (e.g., Ashton et al. 2007), including decision-making processes involving First Nations in Canada (e.g., Ballamingie 2009; Bullock 2011). For example, Bullock (2013) used social framing to identify how different public, private, and civic actors viewed themselves and other in relation to a major economic downturn in the forest sector in northern Ontario, and through these frames, they explored the implications for the development of new identities and community–industry relationships on local forest governance.

Specifically, diagnostic frames define the issues and personal reasoning for issues, and prognostic frames outline potential solutions and the roles and responsibilities involved in implementing solutions (Gray 2003). Through frame analysis, it is possible to understand how actions that are the products of new relationships between parties emerge, including how individuals in such parties begin to learn together and build trust and other foundations for moving past conflict, towards collaboration. However, like other types of research grounded in perspective, social framings can be affected by personal biases and objectives (Creed et al. 2002). For this reason, it is important to consider a diversity of perspectives when conducting a social framing analysis of any collaborative governance scenario (Bullock 2013; Plummer et al. 2018).

Collaborative forest governance in Canada

Governance is defined by Kooiman (2003, p. 4) as “the totality of interactions, in which public as well as private actors participate, aimed at solving societal problems or creating societal opportunities.” Structurally, Kooiman (2003) describes first-order governance as problem solving and the creation of opportunities, which is often the very catalyst behind different forms of governance, including collaboration. Second-order governance, according to Kooiman (2003), is found in the individual characteristics and maintenance of institutions. Third-order governance or “meta-governance” accounts for the interactive and social-political framework, which is ultimately driven by the norms, values, and principles intrinsic to a governance system (Kooiman and Jentoft 2009). Understanding governance according to Kooiman’s orders makes it possible to account for the different phases and drivers at play within the different points of a lifecycle of collaboration (Zurba et al. 2016).

This broad definition of governance is also useful for understanding institutions beyond more formally enshrined notions (i.e., government), wherein a community group involved in collective action can also be considered to be an institution. Institutions are understood here as the structures, rules, norms, and shared strategies affecting human actions and physical conditions (Crawford and Ostrom 1995).

Collaborative land and resource governance efforts involving First Nations and industry are relatively new (beginning in the 1970s) and have generally been defined by government agencies through different kinds of memoranda of understanding and co-management arrangements (Wyatt et al. 2013). Such arrangements have typically been led by government agencies or have been pursued through legal action by communities, often resulting in small shifts in power towards communities (McGregor 2011). There, however, have also been highly valued instances in Canada in the past decade where collaboration has been driven by advisory groups and guiding frameworks produced by advisory groups such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Government agencies and resource industry proponents that follow advisory frameworks in support of collaboration have begun to acknowledge that collaboration is not only desirable for dealing with the complexity of “real world” issues, but also linked to social justice and supporting human and Indigenous rights (Dale 2013).

Several different typologies have been constructed to structurally describe the complex forms of Indigenous participation in forestry and forest management in Canada (Wyatt 2008). In 2008, Wyatt (p. 171) described as a “spectrum” ranging from “forestry with First Nations” including First Nations participation in different forms of forest agreements to “forestry by First Nations” where First Nations are the primary decision-makers. Wyatt subsequently used this spectrum to establish a typology of institutional arrangements and desired outcomes (Wyatt et al. 2013). This typology includes the following: (i) treaties, agreements, memorandums of understanding (MOUs); (ii) management and planning; (iii) influence on decision-making; (iv) forest tenures; and (v) economic roles. Sharing features with examples on the collaborative end of Wyatt’s (2008) “spectrum” (i.e., where First Nations are involved in collaborative arrangements with other parties), several types of community forestry plans — some involving First Nations — have been developing in Canada since the 1990s towards mitigating conflict among communities, forestry companies, and governments (Bullock et al. 2017). Such policy mechanisms have had mixed outcomes in terms of sharing benefits and costs from forest management and are still considered to be experimental (Bullock et al. 2017).

Looking broadly across natural resource governance, the benefits of engaging in collaboration include increasing the knowledge-base for solutions, engaging critical community participation, and contributing to local sustainability (Wiber et al. 2009). However, such benefits are not a guaranteed outcome of collaboration, and when seeking to understand existing participation in different governance fora, it is important to understand potential barriers to meaningful participation that can exist at a given time. It is also important to understand the potential barriers to participation such as personal pressures, process exhaustion, process deficiencies (e.g., lack of funding for participants), alienating and (or) dominant discourses, and limited institutional capacity (Coombes et al. 2012). These barriers need to be acknowledged and mitigated where possible when participation in deliberation is the desired outcome. Furthermore, despite some structural shifts towards collaborative forest governance, Indigenous forms of governance or knowledge systems are often only marginally included in the operational structures emerging from collaboration. Reasons for this include, but are not limited to, the fact that collaborative regimes are often dependent on state policy and are structurally grounded in the governance vestiges

(norms, values, and principles) that were established between industry and the state prior to the inclusion of Indigenous parties (Fortier et al. 2013; Zurba et al. 2016). To understand the root of these restrictions, it is important to understand how institutions transform to accommodate new forms of participation, decision-making, and structural change.

Regional context

Forests have been the center of industry in northwestern Ontario and have shaped the economy, allocation of lands, and the relationships between Indigenous peoples and settler populations since colonization (Davidson-Hunt 2003; Willow 2012). The forestry industry formally began in the late 1870s to early 1880s with the building of the Keewaitin sawmills, which facilitated the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway in Kenora in 1882 (Davidson-Hunt 2003). In more recent times, shifts in economy, as well as demographic variations and inequalities, are noticeable in regional employment statistics in northwestern Ontario. Overall employment rates in primary industries remained the same between 2001 and 2006; however, during this period, the percentage of Indigenous people employed in primary industries decreased (Southcott 2009). According to the 2016 census, the overall unemployment rate for Kenora is 11.6% (Statistics Canada 2016b). Employment rates for Indigenous peoples in northwestern Ontario to this date remain low, only 39% for First Nations and 47.5% for Métis according to the most recent National Household Survey in 2011, and few Indigenous people are involved in high-paying professional or business-oriented occupations (Statistics Canada 2016c). This type of socioeconomic disparity is viewed by some as a form of oppression rooted in policies of discrimination (e.g., the *Indian Act*), which have created severe limitations to opportunities for local Indigenous peoples (Fillion 2010). In 2015, 475 of the 592 people that were 15 years of age and older and living in the Wabaseemoong community (total population of 827 people) were “without employment income” (Statistics Canada 2016a).

In northwestern Ontario, there is also an important context and history of conflict relating to forestry, which has taken shape as direct confrontations such as blockades (Willow 2012). Grassy Narrows First Nation, 88 km northeast of Kenora in Treaty #3 territory in northwestern Ontario, was involved in the longest standing (2002 – ongoing) anti-forestry protest in Canadian history (Willow 2012). Grassy Narrows’ protest is against the mercury contamination and poisoning from pulp and paper production in Dryden, which was affecting their water quality (Willow 2012). The protest has involved direct conflict, including physical conflict, between Grassy Narrows band members, forestry professionals and workers, and Ontario police (Willow 2012). In northwestern Ontario, “peace in the woods” is a term that is used by people in forestry to describe the movement towards the end of direct forms of conflict and the building of new forms of collaboration (Smith 2013, p. 98). “Common ground” has also been adopted as a common term for the ethic and movement that attempts to generate new forms of relationships between First Nations, settlers, and land (Robson et al. 2013).

Method

Data collection

This research used a qualitative social sciences approach and a case study research strategy. The research involved document review and interviews with key informants with knowledge of Wincrief. Informants included 10 people directly involved in Wincrief (e.g., board members, managers, and forestry workers), 3 people from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR; now the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry), and 1 person from the Grand Council of Treaty #3 (GCT#3). Data collection took place between spring 2011 and winter 2015. Five of the informants from Wincrief were from Wabaseemoong and five of the infor-

ants were from the settler community. The primary tool used in the field was semi-structured interviews. The initial interview schedule was divided into four parts, which included questions relating to the literature on governance and social framing: (i) questions about the governance structure of the collaboration, (ii) questions about issues encountered through the different stages of collaboration, (iii) questions about solutions relating to issues, and (iv) questions about roles and responsibilities regarding issues and solutions. The initial interview schedule was used for all participants, and a follow-up interview using a similar interview structure was conducted with two key informants (one board member from Wabaseemoong and one board member from Wincrief) following the dissolution of Wincrief (other participants had disbanded at this time).

As is the case with semi-structured interviews, the questions were adapted based on the responses, and probes were used to elicit responses in cases where the respondents gave short non-descriptive responses (Cresswell and Poth 2018). Interviews lasted from 30 to 90 mins, with most interviews taking approximately 1 h. All informants consented to having their interviews recorded with a digital voice recorder except for the two key informants who were interviewed following Wincrief’s dissolution. Through the informed consent process, informants could choose to be directly quoted or to have their contributions synthesized and reported in a fashion that did not identify them. Member checking was used throughout all interviews to iterate the interviewer’s understandings of what the informant was saying (Castleden et al. 2008). This also gave the informants extra opportunity to elaborate on points they felt needed further clarification. The contact information from each informant was recorded at the time of the interview, and informants were contacted to verify and authorize direct quotes.

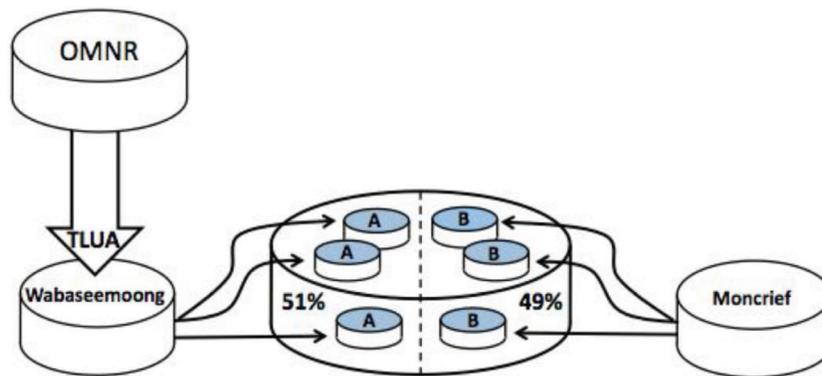
Data analysis

Institutional mapping was used as an analytical tool to provide a visual representation of the parties involved in governance. The technique involves mapping (i.e., diagrammatically representing) roles, connections, and power dynamics to clarify institutional relationships (Chilla et al. 2012; Zurba et al. 2016). The technique is also effective for describing attributes such as communication and power, which can be visually represented through graphic elements (i.e., different sizes and directions drawn in the maps). The data for the analysis was drawn from interview transcripts with key informants directly involved in the case study and from key informants knowledgeable of, but outside of the case (i.e., OMNR and GCT#3 managers). Axial and selective coding was used to help explore relationships within the data (Cresswell and Poth 2018). *Atlas.ti*, a computer aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) package, was used to store the interview transcripts, facilitate ease of data retrieval, and help establish connections amongst the data (Woods et al. 2016). *Atlas.ti* made data retrieval more systematic, which contributed to the reliability of the analysis by ensuring that data were being considered equally in relation to each theme. Coding was conducted thematically to organize the data according to social framing categories (issues, solutions, roles and responsibilities) and into several sub-themes to bring detail to the reporting of results and the discussion.

Results

Wincrief’s governance structure involves two interlinked and yet relatively independent institutions, coming together to establish a new collaborative entity with formalized rules (Fig. 1). This governance framework includes the administrative and regulatory jurisdiction of the OMNR, which has the overall authority to change tenure and licensing in Ontario. Wincrief is built around an almost equal corporate partnership that is 49% owned by the three partners (and brothers) of Moncrief Construction Limited and 51% owned by Wabaseemoong Independent Nations (hence

Fig. 1. Institutional map showing the governance structure for Wincrief Forest Products. The large disk with several smaller disks (labelled A and B) indicates the board level where decision-making happens. [Colour online.]



the origin of the name: WIN + crief). Greg Moncrief explained that the slightly higher portion of First Nations ownership of the corporation was established to facilitate access to sources of government funding allocated to First Nations. Moncrief Construction Limited, formed in 1967, is a family-owned business. Moncrief as a corporate entity is not a partner in Wincrief. Wabaseemoong Independent Nations has one elected Chief and encompasses One Man Lake, Swan Lake, and Whitedog communities. The three communities became amalgamated as one band following flooding from hydroelectric development in the 1950s. Wincrief has a Board of Directors and decisions are made through majority voting. The Board at any one time includes three members of Wabaseemoong and three members from the Moncrief family (i.e., not as a formal entity). Wincrief has a CEO who makes decisions about day to day activities and a president of the board who is a forestry professional from Wabaseemoong.

Prior to entering into partnership with Wabaseemoong, Moncrief Construction Limited was harvesting within the First Nation's traditional lands through forestry licenses administered by the OMNR. This was the origin of the relationship between the key actors in the collaboration. When Wabaseemoong first started working with Moncrief Construction Limited, they had recently established their Traditional Land Use Area (TLUA), which is Da'kii'naan in Anishinaabemodaa, and TLUA committee (Wabaseemoong TLUA 2018). The Wabaseemoong TLUA is 6720 km² (Wabaseemoong TLUA 2018), covering three-quarters of the Kenora Forest and portions of the Whiskey Jack Forest. The exact boundaries of the TLUA are not available as public information. The TLUA is defined by the OMNR as "a polygon feature that identifies an area commonly used for both current and past human activities that are deemed worthy of special consideration" (OMNR 2012, p. 2). To the OMNR (2012), TLUAs are based on location rather than on formal recognition (i.e., a designation that includes terms legally binding). Through the TLUA, Wabaseemoong has been collecting traditional ecological knowledge and mapping significant areas with GIS technology for the purposes of building capacity and engaging in planning and management with the Ontario government (Wabaseemoong TLUA 2018).

In 2004, a relationship-building period began between Greg Moncrief, the TLUA committee, and Chief Fisher of Wabaseemoong in response to the need to develop employment opportunities for Wabaseemoong community members on their traditional lands. In 2007, the new OMNR regional manager encouraged and financially supported a trip for the Wincrief partners (Greg Moncrief and the Wabaseemoong Chief and Council) to Saskatchewan to observe a First Nations – industry partnership working on ready-to-move housing supplied to local First Nations. The regional manager saw this initiative as a strong partnership model for creating new economic opportunities between industry and First Nations in the region.

"We ended up bringing them out to Saskatchewan to have a look at how it's being done there, and the model that's done there has been done for 30 years. They talked to the First Nation there and saw what was going on and was able to touch and feel what was there." — Al Willcocks; OMNR Northwest Regional Director, Thunder Bay

After this visit, Greg Moncrief and Chief Fisher decided that ready-to-move housing was an appropriate direction for the partnership to adopt, and the Wincrief Homes company vision was established. Wincrief Forest Products as a corporate entity was formalized in July 2009, with the first Wincrief homes being delivered to Wabaseemoong in September 2009 (Thompson 2009). Wincrief's operations included a 15 000 ft² shop in Kenora, specializing in the construction of modular homes, and a further expansion of a hydro pole peeling plant in 2012 (Thompson 2012). Wincrief aimed to provide a solution to unemployment in Wabaseemoong and, during the early stages of the partnership, had as many as 20 workers from Wabaseemoong working at one time. However, during the time of the fieldwork, Wincrief only had two full-time workers from the community. When asked about this change in 2012, the informants attributed the low employment of Wabaseemoong community members to lowered production rates and speculated about other tensions existing within the community that may be contributing to reduced employment levels (quotes not consented to by informants 007, 009, and 011).

Once Wincrief was operational, several issues ensued early on in the collaboration, including the engagement of community board members, community politics, and building trust and cross-cultural understanding. A Wincrief informant described how initially there was equal representation on the board, but how the board also had issues relating to tokenism and unbalanced participation. The informant explained the structure of the Wincrief board and how engagement time and learning was important for overcoming these issues that came early on in the collaboration.

"It's gone from not really getting an answer, getting a glazed and dazed look to now where council is saying, "We want to have a meeting, we want to talk about this, can you put this on the agenda?" That's really good and it's just starting now! The structure is set up that there's two reps on our board from each of the share holders and then we have an independent chairman of the board. The two independents from Wabaseemoong, they couldn't be Chief or council. There had to be an arms length because you don't want the politics of the community to enter into the business, but as they learn more about business they're learning to separate themselves from that and put what's in the best interest of the community and bring it to the business without the political part of it." — Informant 011

The informant's statement also indicates that community politics was perceived as a potential issue for governance and how the

board was set up to keep community politics at an arm's length as much as possible. As a way of mitigating politics within the business, the board members unanimously decided that it would be appropriate for the Wabaseemoong board members to choose the independent chairperson. The following informant from the industry side of Wincrief praised the chairperson's experience and ability.

"He was a really good fit...He assisted us with the governmental aspects of the board as well as the structural aspects because of the number of boards he's been on and he'd chaired quite a few of them so he brought a level of comfort so that we knew we were doing things properly." — Informant 008

Reports from other Wabaseemoong board members, however, were not consistent with regards to the independent chairperson. One board member from Wabaseemoong commented on how the independent chairperson was absent due to a lack of funding, as well as how the board lacked strategic planning.

"The last board meeting we had we should have had a facilitator [referring to independent chairperson] there, but we don't have the funds. There hasn't been [an independent chairperson] from day one. I told them, "Let's get the plan made out." There's no plan that I'm aware of. At least we've got to have a plan. A year plan or a five-year plan, but there's nothing. It wasn't set out in the beginning." — Informant 007

Building trust was an issue experienced by Wincrief leadership (board members and managers). At times, cross-cultural misunderstandings were also barriers to building meaningful collaboration, for example what constituted time off from work (e.g., death in the community) resulted in workplace conflict, and several of the informants in management positions at Wincrief cited difficulties in understanding protocols relating to workers from Wabaseemoong (informants 005, 006, and 011). One informant explained that management put into place policies and protocols that were specifically geared towards fostering cross-cultural understanding and communication with regards to bereavement leaves and special holidays.

"Lets face it, in a community everyone is related. Whereas you and I may get time off for a mother, sister, brother, parent, they want time off for everyone. So we said, "Ok, what is acceptable, how close a relative is it before you are entitled to bereavement because we have some people that would never ever be here because of the size of their family." We started there, and we started by recognizing holidays. Treaty Day is not typically a holiday. It's not a recognized stat or civic so how do you write that in? You're a First Nation business so trying to find that happy balance is an on-going thing and we go back quite frequently and view the policies we have and try to change them and modify them." — Informant 011

Other managers talked about how they had to develop an understanding of the importance of relationships to Wabaseemoong community members and how they needed to change their approaches to business towards being more relationship centered.

"Lately I've been calling out to reserves to see what kind of housing needs they have and it seems like the people that I've talked to have a real respect for the people that are straightforward. It's interesting that they build relationships based on people rather than product. I have a love of Toyota trucks. Well I'm basing that love on a thing. They seem to place that value on people." — Informant 006

Wincrief board members from the Moncrief family and Wincrief staff also talked about how it was important for them to learn about culture within the workplace but how informal settings where especially meaningful for making communication more open. One board member explained how settings and activities that were directed by Wabaseemoong board members were

especially important for building relationships and how such activities also included government managers.

"You've got to get away from that [workplace] environment to learn [about culture and each other]. We used to go to an outpost camp, with Chief and council, several Elders, and we'd be invited as members from Wincrief, and there would be other government people there." — Informant 009

Wincrief expanded their business to include a hydro pole peeling plant in November 2012 to try to increase revenue at a time when their housing market was not strong. However, this expansion was not enough to save the business, and on 1 April 2014, Wincrief closed their doors and all operations ceased. By the end of April, the local news was reporting that the company was facing bankruptcy (Hale 2014a). This was followed by a period of several months of speculation about the business' future (Hale 2014b). During this time, the office phone was disconnected, the website dismantled, and it was not possible to reach Wincrief employees. Eventually, two informants from the research were reached and agreed to participate in follow-up interviews. One informant was from Moncrief Construction Limited and the other informant was from Wabaseemoong, and they offered their perspectives on why the business had failed.

The informant from Moncrief Construction Limited explained that the recently established hydro pole peeling portion of the business was going well with sales across North America but that the housing portion of the business had gone drastically downhill. According to this informant, this could mainly be attributed to one Wabaseemoong councilor, whom started refusing to buy homes from Wincrief. The Moncrief Construction Limited informant explained that Wabaseemoong instead started using other housing suppliers and that Wabaseemoong not buying homes from its own home business reflected badly on the business and made doing business difficult with other communities because they no longer trusted the company. The Moncrief Construction Limited informant did not have any other direct insights as to what was behind the decision to stop buying homes from Wincrief. They were upset that this had happened and stated that there could have been a number of other reasons for the decision, some relating directly to the Wincrief's operations and some not (e.g., unknown community politics).

The informant from Moncrief Construction Limited also gave a second reason for the failure of the business. He explained that the Band Council had passed a resolution during the winter of 2013 to no longer allow harvesting within the Wabaseemoong TLUA. With winter being the peak harvest season, Wincrief lost a large portion of its wood supply and was unable to recover from its losses. The Moncrief Construction Limited informant continued to explain that efforts were made to save the business including a two million dollar investment from the Moncrief Construction Limited side of the business, as well as a bridge loan from Weyerhaeuser (large forestry company operating in the region). The informant from Moncrief Construction Limited concluded by stating that the politics of working with a community were too much for a small business to bear and, if the business had remained apolitical (was guided solely by business principles), that it would have survived and perhaps even thrived. In summary, the Moncrief Construction Limited informant expressed that most of the issues that led to the collapse of the business were due to decisions occurring at the Council level and that it was important to understand the values across the community to determine if forestry and a business partnership is a desirable goal for the community.

The key informant from Wabaseemoong had a similar account of how Wincrief began to break down. However, this informant explained that there was a lack of confidence in the business, which could be attributed to more than one councilor. The Wabaseemoong informant explained that the lack of desire of the Wabaseemoong Band Council to continue doing business with

Table 1. Summary of social frames for the lifecycle of Wincrief Forest Products.

Stage in the Wincrief lifecycle	Issues	Solutions	Roles and responsibilities
Initiating collaboration (first-order governance)	Building of a long-term and mutually beneficial business partnership, which includes employment for Wabaseemoong community members	Engage and obtain the support of local government (i.e., OMNR)	Individuals from each side of the partnership playing a leadership role in initiating collaboration
		Explore collaborative business models and derive objectives for collaboration Formalize collaboration through a business entity	Government support for exploring how collaboration might take shape
During collaboration (second- and third-order governance)	Community board member engagement Community politics	Process engagement and learning within the board	Equal partnership and decision-making through the board
		Independent facilitation of the board Selection of board members that were arm's length (as much as possible) from community politics	Following the direction of the independent chairperson of the board Shared board-level decision-making
	Building trust and cross-cultural understanding	Culturally sensitive company policies (e.g., bereavement)	Wincrief managers made efforts to build trust and relationships with Wabaseemoong partners
		Understanding the importance and centrality of relationships for Wabaseemoong community Relationship building through workplace and informal activities (e.g., retreats)	Wabaseemoong community partners and employees shared what was important for them Wabaseemoong partners shared about their culture Moncrief partners and Wincrief managers listened
The collapse (dissolution of governance)	Loss of revenue	Expansion to other industry (i.e., hydro pole peeling)	Shared expansion of the business endeavour
	Loss of revenue	Attempted solution: personal investment and loans No solution explored	Moncrief partner personal investment Wincrief request for loan Potential solution: increased dialogue and participatory processes engaging Council and Wabaseemoong community members
	Lack of confidence in Wincrief by Wabaseemoong Council due to forestry practices (i.e., areas that were too intensively harvested)		
	Political shifts within Wabaseemoong	Desired solution from Moncrief: that business be apolitical	Potential solution: development of governance norms that explain the relationship between community politics and business
	Differences within Wabaseemoong community and leadership as to what was appropriate and sustainable harvesting of the forest	Understanding the different values within the community and if forestry business is appropriate and desired by the community	Potential solution: increased dialogue and participatory processes engaging Council and Wabaseemoong community members

Wincrief was because the councilors were concerned about a forest clear cut that had been found on a member's trap line. The informant also placed this in a historical context, describing other instances of community members finding clear cuts on Wabaseemoong trap lines. He gave a personal example of a forestry company destroying one of his trap lines in the 1970s.

The informant from Wabaseemoong also expressed disappointment that Wincrief had failed and explained how he felt that business ventures are the right direction for the community. He stated that he hoped that future business ventures could be made but did not speak of future collaboration. The Wabaseemoong informant listed all of the disadvantages to the community that had come from the dismantling of the relationship with Wincrief and the Moncrief family. He talked about how the community was now no longer benefiting from the infrastructure that came with being a part of Wincrief, namely a bridge that was going to be constructed that would have eased travel around a hydro dam on the way to the community, as well as the road maintenance that Wincrief once provided. He explained that Wincrief maintained a good portion of the road leading up to the community and that

the road had become overgrown and potentially dangerous. He worried about tourists being hurt or killed on that road, as well as the legal repercussions that could come along with any accidents. The economic factors of Wincrief's collapse were also discussed in terms of Wabaseemoong now being in debt and how there is now expensive machinery that is just rusting away on the reserve. In summary, the informant from Wabaseemoong expressed that most of the issues that led to the collapse of the Wincrief were due to poor communication around issues between the community, the company, and the actors involved in the forest industry as a whole.

Discussion and conclusions

Table 1 summarizes the issues, solutions, roles, and responsibilities relating to each stage of Wincrief's governance lifecycle. The table and frame analysis is organized according to Kooiman's orders, so that the drivers at play (issues, solutions, roles and responsibilities) within the different points of a lifecycle (initiation, formalized collaboration, and collapse) of collaboration can

be easily discerned. Wabaseemoong entered into collaborative governance (i.e., first-order governance) by choice as a way of bringing benefits to their community through infrastructure, employment, and other economic opportunities. Wincrief's board was composed of a decision-making structure that included equal board-level representation from industry and First Nations. Parties relied on independent modes of decision-making, as well as norms developed through the partnership. This type of governance structure represents actual decision-making where Indigenous parties have authority over the direction of the partnership (can vote and have power within the board), instead of tokenism, which is common when Indigenous communities are engaged in partnerships with industry (Maclean and The Bana Yarralji Bubú Inc. 2015).

Solutions to issues arising through collaboration (i.e., second- and third-order governance) were found through an independent chairperson, the development of culturally and community-sensitive policies, the development of new understandings about relationships, and forums outside the workplace where relationship building and learning about culture could occur. Partners took on different and often shared roles and responsibilities relating to these solutions. For example, members of the board from Wabaseemoong were involved in providing cultural education through retreats. Such allocation and sharing of roles and responsibilities has been found to be essential for maintaining productive and mutually beneficial governance structures (Johnson et al. 2016).

The dismantling of Wincrief indicates that economically based regional collaboration has an intrinsic vulnerability to shifts in buyers, community politics, and land use conflicts. The business model of Wincrief perhaps was not equipped to deal with the amount of vulnerability related to community-business communications, community politics, and fluctuating economic conditions. Having a business model that can react to these types of vulnerabilities, as well as others, is critical to successful collaboration in business (Banerjee 2018). Furthermore, the two accounts after the collapse of Wincrief indicate that its dismantling was due primarily to a political response related to concerns within the community over harvesting practices within the Wabaseemoong TLUA. The objection of the councilor(s) and contention around harvesting was mentioned from members of both sides of the business. Communities are intrinsically political, and it can be reasonably asserted that business ventures with Indigenous communities will always have a certain amount of vulnerability to changes in community politics (Castleden et al. 2008). However, in the case of Wincrief, it appears as though there was a possible breakdown in communication around what was acceptable in terms of harvesting within the TLUA. Increased dialogue and participatory processes for engagement are offered here as possible "solutions" for ventures facing similar challenges and needing to explore community values and what is potentially acceptable harvest of forest on traditional territory (de Leeuw et al. 2012; Hill et al. 2012; Coombes et al. 2012).

Forums for building understanding that were guided by Wabaseemoong were important for enhancing communication outcomes in the early days of collaboration (first-order governance). Had such processes been continued throughout the each stage of collaboration (second- and third-order governance), there might have been greater potential for governance parties to deal with problems and barriers as they emerged. For example, the enhanced communication strategy that was geared towards learning about Anishinaabe culture in the early days of collaboration (i.e., the retreats) resulted in a greater openness and deeper appreciation of community values and requirements around maintaining employment (e.g., bereavement leave). Extending this or a similar reoccurring practice and principle for guiding collaboration (attribute of third-order governance) led by Wabaseemoong partners may have created further and ongoing opportunities to

learn about community needs and concerns. Informal and (or) culturally driven forums hold great potential for voicing perspectives, sharing knowledge, and expressing culture and can also create powerful opportunities for building trust and learning about issues and barriers as they emerge (Bowie 2013; Zurba et al. 2016).

Engaging Wabaseemoong community representatives within the Wincrief board produced outcomes that are frequently observed within collaborative governance systems such as a deeper and more nuanced understanding of community values and aspirations for decision-making affecting traditional territory (Zurba and Berkes 2014), enhanced knowledge sharing (Hill et al. 2012), and building respect and reciprocity (Tobias et al. 2013; Coombes et al. 2012). However, Indigenous-business relations for forestry in Canada continue to be guided by structures that are embedded and entirely shaped by state-determined tenure regimes. Some flexibility and reforms have emerged in recent times, for example through the recent introduction of tenure modernization and Enhanced Sustainable Forestry Licences (ESFLs) in Ontario, which are meant to guide collaboration between industry and First Nations towards establishing ESFL companies that share forest tenure (OMNR 2018). However, although ESFLs represent a significant policy shift, it remains uncertain how entering into such collaboration could impact First Nation rights and long-term ability to govern forests (Palmer 2017). Despite the best efforts and intent of those involved in establishing Wincrief (i.e., first-order governance), settler structures dominated the collaboration and processes of the Wincrief board and operations. In addition to divestments of power from the state, further considerations will be needed on how to decolonize natural resource governance systems if collaborations are to be built and maintained in a way that is meaningful to First Nations (Cornthassel 2012; Zimmerer 2015).

Despite an emerging context for participatory engagement in forestry in Canada, what is possible for collaboration ties directly into the Treaty relationship and government control of Crown lands, and Indigenous scholars argue that much remains to be achieved with regards to Indigenous sovereignty and authority over traditional territories (Cornthassel 2012). The historical and ongoing dispossession of land from Indigenous peoples, as well as the conflicts and different values around "natural resources" (a term emergent from the Western worldview), create the broader context for the research. Power structures are intimately connected through collaborative governance systems involving First Nations and settler-dominated governments and industry. Within such collaborative organizations, it is therefore important to reflect on how structures are maintained through state-legislated ways of managing resources.

The social frames from the Wincrief lifecycle demonstrate that collaboration provided an opportunity for enhanced decision-making for Wabaseemoong rather than a full assertion of Wabaseemoong's position with regards to the land. The social frames that correspond to the different parts of Wincrief's governance lifecycle indicate that there are key lessons to be learned: (i) leadership and community support is important for the development of an equal partnership; (ii) process engagement and learning is required for moving beyond tokenism towards meaningful decision-making processes; (iii) cross-cultural understanding is an ongoing and dialectic process within organizations that are geared towards economic and social outcomes; and, (iv) understanding community politics and the diversity of values and aspirations within a community is essential for the long-term sustainability of community-partnered business endeavours.

Limitations

Conducting a lifecycle analysis of a business can be challenging for many reasons and can have several intrinsic limitations. Firstly, although the business is running, informants may not

want to speak about the perceived problems because they might be hopeful that such challenges may be overcome (Pope and Burnes 2013). Secondly, post-processual retrospectives can come with several challenges and uncertainties (Chia and MacKay 2007), and once a business does complete its lifecycle and ceases operation, it may be challenging to retrospectively determine “what went wrong”. In the Wincrief case, it was possible to gain access to key people involved in the leadership to gain some insights about the lifecycle of the business; however, many questions remain about what could have been done differently and why certain things were not communicated between parties. Rather than speculate, it is important to take the lessons from the Wincrief case at face value so as not to cause undue harm to the parties who were involved.

Acknowledgements

I thank the participants of this study for being so generous with their time and for sharing their perspectives and reflections on collaboration. I extend special gratitude to Daniel Wemigwans for connecting me with key informants and providing guidance on cultural protocols. I am also grateful for my doctoral advisors, Drs. John Sinclair and Alan Diduck. I also thank the reviewers for their constructive feedback. This research was supported by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC 833-2008-1007) Community – University Research Alliance grant to establish the Common Ground Research Forum. The research was also supported by a SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship.

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