

# research snapshot

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## First Nations and Self-determination Is Tied to Resource Development

### What is this research about?

Globalization has minimized the importance of state governments because of neoliberalism. This has resulted in a strong emphasis of making global capital mobile. With this, Canada's government has seen internal changes to these global forces, in order to promote the free market. For First Nations, these changes play into state and First Nation relations. Globalization plays a relevant role between the two parties. It also varies the way self-determination is sought after by First Nations.

### What did the researcher do?

The researcher looked at changes within state and First Nations relations in Canada. The role of neoliberalism was considered. The researcher used two communities with differing experiences in hydro development projects. These were the James Bay Cree in northern Quebec, and the Cross Lake Cree of Manitoba. The examples were used to conclude how self-determination is established by First Nations today.

### What did the researcher find?

The researcher found that Canada's relationship with First Nations was vital for economic growth. It gives both parties the opportunity to participate

### What you need to know:

Resource development has been a part of First Nations' participation in the global economy. Many communities negotiate the way these projects fit into their own values, practices and goal for self-determination.

in the global economy through resource development.

For Canada, its relationship with First Nation communities is in the process of being restructured. While it satisfies the state's neoliberal intents and need for material resources, it has also opened the doors for other agreements. This includes the settlement of outstanding land claims and addressing grievances with First Nations.

For First Nations, participating in the global economy has supported their efforts to establish economic and political regimes that meet their own needs. However, many communities vary according to how resource development fits into their efforts for self-determination. These efforts also vary according to the province where their community is situated. For example, the James Bay Cree have worked in partnership with Quebec in developing hydroelectric sites. This

has seen more employment opportunities and profit to support the health and well-being of their community. However, the Cross Lake Cree have resisted resource development. As the state sought to change the terms of the Northern Flood Agreement, the Cross Lake Cree felt they were not treated as equal partners in the negotiation process. There were also concerns on the impact of hydro projects on their self-government and access to their lands. For all First Nations, figuring out the way neoliberal policies and resource development fit into their communities (if at all) is a complex and divisive process at times.

### How can you use this research?

This research may be used by policy makers, especially in the areas of First Nation relations and resource development. It sheds important insights on the complexity of such projects, and the priorities, intentions and consequences experienced by affected communities.

### About the Researcher

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### Citation

Slowey, G.A. (2008). The state, the marketplace, and First Nations: Theorizing First Nation self-determination in an era of globalization. In T. Martin & S.M. Hoffman (Eds.) *Power struggles: Hydro-development and First Nations in Manitoba and Quebec* (39-54). Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.

Partially available online at <http://bit.ly/1jYJMnF>

### Keywords

Poverty eradication, First Nations, Resource development, Canada, Self-determination

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