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**Review of *Aboriginal Conditions: Research as a Foundation for  
Public Policy* Edited by Jerry P. White, Paul S. Maxim, and Dan  
Beavon**

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**Aboriginal Conditions: Research as a Foundation for Public Policy.**

Edited by Jerry P. White, Paul S. Maxim, and Dan Beavon. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2003. xxvii + 285 pp. Tables, figures, notes, index. \$85.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

Grounded in recent research, this book successfully identifies key issues bearing on the current social challenges Aboriginal people face in Canada. It speaks to policy makers, social scientists, and Aboriginal communities, three constituencies for which greater cooperation is advocated, given that such cooperation is essential for positive social development within Aboriginal communities. Much of the research informing the authors' reflections on current Aboriginal conditions is framed within social and scientific method, yet with special attention to evidence-based policy making. As such, the volume offers sharp insights into socioeconomic and cultural issues, including community dynamics and population outcomes, ethnic mobility and population projections, and language maintenance, as well as issues related to community capacity, while exploring the implications of these matters for public policy.

Using the social cohesion perspective, which enables the authors to analyze social problems by focusing on group dynamics rather than only on

individuals, part 1 addresses social and demographic features such as deprivation, poverty, unemployment, and migration, exploring the impact of these features on population outcomes. Part 2 looks at problems inherent in population projections, with special attention to the implications of loss of entitlement to Indian registration for the demographic and sociopolitical structures of Aboriginal communities. A particularly interesting discussion deals with the impact of Bill C-31 on issues of citizenship, rights, entitlement, and social inclusion. This is particularly relevant to understanding the environment in which Aboriginal people have moved toward self-governance. A significant and related discussion explores shifts in self-reporting of ethnicity with respect to their policy implications.

Part 3 takes up the role and place of language, providing an overview of arguments for and against language maintenance in relation to its potential impacts on socioeconomic development. This section reports on research exploring the relationship between language saturation and such variables as education, labor force status, and income, leading to new areas of inquiry involving specific political and social difficulties language retention raises. Part 4 explores issues of inequality and community capacity. Of particular interest is the examination of income inequality not only between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups within Canada but within Aboriginal groups themselves (referred to as “intra-Aboriginal inequality”). This section ends with a reflection on how we may assess and improve community capacity, leaving the reader with new questions related to the need to build and expand Aboriginal research capacity.

It would be interesting to explore the ethical dimensions inherent in the development of cross-cultural partnerships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people; however, the authors have opened many fronts for research and policy inquiry, which should generate interest in pursuing these issues further. **Nathalie Piquemal**, *Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba*.