

Representing the Confederation Bridge.

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A Thesis Submitted to
Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts in Atlantic Canada Studies

August 2014, Halifax, Nova Scotia

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Della Stanley for guiding me in the early years of my Canadian Studies career, she helped me become a confident student and person. I would like to acknowledge Dr. Richard Field for introducing me to the world of Atlantic Canadian Studies at Saint Mary's University, the department was a wonderful home. I would like to acknowledge Trudy Sable for including me on her research projects, helping me explore my heritage hands-on, and all the other faculty in the ACS program that make it inviting and inspiring Peter Twohig, John Reid, Alexander McLeod among others. I would like to personally thank and acknowledge Dr. Michael Vance for advising me on my Master's Thesis; his mentoring has shaped this piece of writing into something I can be proud of, and as a result has me a better researcher and writer. Also, I feel it is important to thank all the teachers and professors along the way that facilitate our success in school – I will always remember the first day I went to Mount Saint Vincent University and Dr. Kenneth Dewar, addressed my first year history class having said something to the effect of, "Welcome to your first day of class, in which your life will forever change as an academic. It took a lot for you to make it to this seat you are in now, now flourish". I would like to thank my beautiful mother Lauramae, and very smart father and Gilbert Sewell for always believing in my musings, along with my brother Tim, and sisters Cynthia, Constance, Phyllis, and Anna and their families.

I dedicate this thesis to my wife, Nikki Lovesey.

“One word frees us of all the weight and pain in life. That word is love!”

- Sophocles

ABSTRACT

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On May 31st 1997, the Confederation Bridge opened. Much like an aqueduct, it allowed for the flow of people and goods on an unprecedented scale to Prince Edward Island. The “Bridge”, built and operated as a Public-Private Partnership (P3), was initiated by a 1988 Prince Edward Island plebiscite to allow a “fixed link” to replace the ferry stipulated at the time of the province’s entry into Confederation. By examining the public discourse surrounding the naming, building, and operating of the “Bridge”, this thesis highlights debates concerning ‘Islandness,’ ‘Canadian Identity,’ and the ‘Environment’ while exploring the role of the media in representing the “Bridge.” The thesis is written as a “creative dialogue,” in which the researcher interacts with the sources, discussing topics from his own cultural perspective as a ‘Status Indian.’ Ultimately, the thesis suggests that while much of the public discussion has focused on PEI’s relationship to the “mainland”, the Mi’gmaq perspective has been almost totally disregarded.

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Preface

When I think of the Confederation Bridge I think of convenience. I think about how easy it will be to go to Prince Edward Island, and then inevitably, I think about how much it will cost to get back - this usually helps me make up my mind to go elsewhere on a trip, even though the cost is not steep, it still feels like a gouge, I have a suspicion that some people can relate. Also, aside from the novelty of crossing the Confederation Bridge for the first time, I have a functional image of the toll bridge in mind. In contrast, when I think of Prince Edward Island in the late 80s and early 90s, reflecting on my childhood, I think of road trips in the summer with my parents to cultural gatherings, like powwows, and I think of what the ferry used to be – I remember my father driving aboard the ferry slowly; I remember the bang of the steel loading platform hitting the dock at the terminal. I remember hounding my parents for money to buy overpriced chips and playing video games in the arcade – for which I had an insatiable appetite; the ferry ride was always fun. In retrospect, although it was not convenient (we seemed to always wait for or just make the ferry), it was a pleasant experience, in which a young me gets to go for a ride on a boat, looking overboard at the ocean, listening to his father talk, while his mother holds his hot dog and soda. The Confederation Bridge has replaced that experience for me, however, that is not to say it is not an great experience to cross in its own right, perhaps there is a similar nostalgia developing for children who have not experienced the ferry ride, maybe the Bridge has become that for them, tradition/fun.

Thinking about the Confederation Bridge also made me consider how it may have changed Prince Edward Island and Island culture. From what I have consulted in researching my topic, I know there is a feeling that the Bridge changed Islanders. This makes me think about my experiences as a Mi'gmaq and makes me think about assimilation and acculturation to mainstream Canada, as so it is dubbed. Perhaps there are comparisons that can be drawn - in the sense that a culture is changed by structures, however I am not implying it is anywhere near the extent to which my people came to know it. With change there is a loss of a way of life, and a "time" when things were better, or at least perceived as better. Often I feel we assess the past interjecting romanticism, and we live in the past as though it were better because we forget about little pains and realities along the way.

Early on in my academic career I was interested in many things. In my memories, I am unpacking boxes, settling into my dorm room(s), and meeting all kinds of wonderful people. My main interest has always been Canadian Studies, which I came across at a young age in high school, and settled on as my area of study at university. I am not sure to this day why I like it so much, however, if I were to venture a guess I believe it would have something to do with negotiating my own place in Canadian society. At the heart of Canadian Studies, in my opinion, there is one underlying question and that is "What is Canadian Identity?" a question Dr. Della Stanley asked me in 2004. Thereafter "Canadian Identity" is at the heart of the research I do. I am enthralled in knowing if there is a definition of being Canadian; a common thread of sorts. I am not sure if what I am doing is answering this question, however I believe my perspective can contribute, as others have, to this area of understanding Canada and that is the nature of academic

research. This accounts my interest in the Confederation Bridge - as studying it was a useful way for me to step back and see how Canadian national identity plays out at the local level as well as to see how regional and national identities conflict with other cultural pockets.

One day I believed that federally initiated “connectedness” was part of the answer to “Canadian Identity”, as the country is large and infrastructure is necessary to keep people linked. The following thesis serves both as a platform for my research on the Confederation Bridge, as well as my personal responses to the material I have consulted. Where I am reporting on the source material the thesis uses, conventional academic prose and referencing in “standard type face” will be used, but where I reflect on this information I will continue to use “italics”- as in this preface. In other words, this thesis is written in the form of a “creative dialogue.” In taking this approach, I have been influenced by the writing style of the Native American writer N. Scott Momaday, who in the Road to Rainy Mountain blended folklore and academic writing with his personal reflections, and the literary critic, Daniel Coleman, who in Masculine Migrations interjected his own personal voice into an otherwise academic treatment of his subject. By using the “creative dialogue” form, I am able to include my personal unique perspective as a Mi’gmaq from a New Brunswick reserve, while still retaining accepted non-native forms of academic writing. The purpose is to allow the reader to engage in the research along with me in a meaningful way. The research collected for this thesis is the result of countless hours spent squinting at computer screens and reading through books in the library – tasks I found I like. I have also visited the “Bridge” and neighboring sites

such, as the Gateway Village, in order to have first-hand experiences of the material I have studied.

Introduction - The 1988 Referendum

On January 19th, 1988 a referendum was held in which Prince Edward Islanders were asked to vote on whether or not they wanted a fixed link to the mainland. A writ of plebiscite drafted on December 7th, 1987 dictated the terms of the referendum. According to the Provincial Plebiscite Report that broke down the results of the vote, the question asked was worded as follows, “Are you in favor of a fixed link crossing between Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick?” Participants had the option of voting yes or no. In an introductory letter to the report, the Honorable Edward W. Clark, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Province of PEI, stated that, “In any future plebiscite I would recommend that a province-wide enumeration be carried out thus ensuring an accurate list of electors.” Under the 1974 Plebiscite Act a province wide enumeration had not been necessary; instead people could add themselves to a voting list up to ten days before the vote. Although he did not appear to be responding to any obvious public criticisms, Judge Clark believed that a more representative voter list would be desirable. (Provincial Plebiscite Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of PEI 1988, 1988, p. 2).

In his MA thesis, “The Politics of the Link: An Examination of the Fixed Connection in Prince Edward Island,” Ian G. Johnston makes the point that the plebiscite only mentioned a fixed link and that since there were no plans drawn at the time people were voting they had no idea of what that link “would look like.” As Johnston points out, there was no actual vote on the nature of the link itself (whether it be a bridge, tunnel or combination of both), and he believes that the “Bridge” plan was the preferred option championed by the federal government. (Johnston, 1995, p. 4)

A sense of the climate in PEI before votes were cast can be obtained from the media reports produced at the time of the referendum. The CBC Archives website, in particular, has several reports pertaining to the plebiscite. One that aired on Jan. 8, 1988, shortly before the referendum, begins by going to Bill's Barbershop in Kensington, PEI (located approximately 15 km north-east of Summerside), where the reporter, Kevin Evans, asked for the barber and a male customer's thoughts on the proposed fixed link. In a wood paneled room, with cluttered walls, and clippers buzzing, the barber, cutting hair, stated that if it "benefits younger people" his vote would be yes. The customer in the same scene, sitting in the chair wearing the black haircut cape, contradicts the barber by stating that if "younger people" want things to stay the same they should vote no. The atmosphere was calm and the informants were speaking casually about the topic with no apparent animosity between the gentlemen. The CBC report then shifted to a grocery store at an unidentified location on the island. A clerk pleasantly serving a customer, whom appears nervous to be on film, states that she was keeping her opinion to herself because it can cause "arguments". Near the end of the news clip the reporter interviewed Don Stewart, identifying him as an advocate against the fixed link. Evans then briefly commented on the sensitivity of the issue and a clip was shown from a meeting, December 12th, 1987, in which a conference room was packed with people listening to a panel. In a voice-over narration the reporter stated that the group, "Friends of the Island", was formed at this meeting in order to advocate against a link. The report then returned to Stewart who addressed the camera and stated that "some islanders" feel they might lose tradition if P.E.I. were to be connected to the mainland. In contrast, "Islanders for a Better Tomorrow", the opposing group, are presented answering calls and working busily in an office they have rented out. They are shown physically putting together a newspaper ad to

promote the fixed link that reads in bold font “Vote Yes.” Interviewed for the “yes” side was Derek Key, who pointed out that he graduated high school in a class of 130 of which only five people had the opportunity to stay in P.E.I. implying that the fixed link would create more opportunity of the island. (P.E.I. residents to vote on link to mainland, 1988).

The membership of “Islanders for a Better Tomorrow” organization was drawn from “business, tourism, and labor groups.” Jim Larkin, owner of a “seafood export business”, was the group’s president who served in that capacity for five years. In contrast, the “Friends of the Island” group, was made up of concerned “fishermen, environmentalists and academics.” Among the founding members were Betty Howatt, a school teacher, and Mike McGeoghegan, a fisherman, who had both spent many years opposing the Bridge –Howatt, ten and McGeoghegan, eight. (Bergman, 1997) Other members on the board of directors included academics, such as Dr. Irene Novaczek, a specialist in marine ecology from UPEI (Irene Novaczek) who served from 1991 to 1996. Although the “Friends of the Island” lost the plebiscite they would pursue the issue in court. The case was apparently lost because the group could not fully prove an impact on the lobster fishery. While the group had conducted research on the fishery, the court determined that they had not produced sufficient evidence. (Bergman, 1997)

A debate between representatives of the two groups was broadcast on CBC radio before the referendum on January 15th 1988. Hosted by the celebrated broadcaster Peter Gzowski at the Prince Edward Hotel in Charlottetown, the debate highlighted the tensions apparent in the days before the vote. David Hooley, a Charlottetown lawyer and advocate for the fixed link, opened the discussion by asking if the “tradition” of PEI was so “tenuous” that it will end because someone builds a “little bridge.” Hooley’s

condescending, laissez-faire, tone appeared to suggest that the “no” side is irrational. David Weale, a history professor, an advocate for the “no” side, responded with the results of his own research conducted at the University of Prince Edward Island. Looking at 610 randomly selected households, Weale asked his survey participants; “[w]hat [was] their first choice: bridge, tunnel, or improved ferry service?” The results as revealed on the broadcast were; Tunnel 22%, Bridge 29%, and Ferry 47%. On the basis of these results, Weale made the case that ferry reform was more important to islanders than the Bridge. Comically, Peter Gzowski pointed out the results shows 51% favor for something other than the ferry. (Prince Edward Islanders debate bridge to New Brunswick, 1988) Despite such jibes, the passionate exchange between Hooley and Weale during the broadcast indicated the intensity of the debate among Islanders.

When the votes were finally cast and tallied, the Provincial Plebiscite Report indicated that 60 percent of Islanders had voted in favor of the link. (Provincial Plebiscite Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of PEI 1988, 1988, p. 2) Bruce Wark, a radio reporter for the CBC, interviewed in a local pub Joseph Ghiz, the Premier at the time, who explained that it was the “opinion” of islanders to go forward with the project. (P.E.I. votes to connect to the rest of Canada, 1988) Premier Ghiz did not voice his own view at the time, but according to at least one later source he had voted “no” - although this is not apparent in the CBC interview. (Bergman, 1997) Others who were interviewed for the same radio report were less reluctant to express their personal reactions. One woman at the same local pub, in what appears to be a PEI accent, voiced her disgust with the decision. She informed the reporters that she was “terribly disappointed but it’s not over yet, I mean that with any luck we’ll be able to kick the feds out of office in six months

and this will be all forgotten about.” While this woman was clearly upset, another woman interviewed in the same report is quoted saying “I hope they start building tomorrow.” By selecting these two opinions, the CBC report suggested that Islanders continued to be polarized despite the results of the referendum and reinforced this perception by highlighting the fact that listeners could buy a fixed link “yes” or fixed link “no” pin for only 99¢. (Prince Edward Islanders debate bridge to New Brunswick, 1988)

Island Culture and “Islandness”

One possible explanation for the intensity of the debate over the Bridge, is the fact that being an “islander” is a central element in many people’s identity. Indeed, anecdotal information suggests that many “natives” of the province believed that residents who had “come from away” should not participate in the debate even if they had lived on the island for years and were entitled to vote in the plebiscite. (Neatby, 2012) One concept that is useful for analyzing this particular form of exclusive identity is “Islandness” which has been studied intensively by several scholars working at the University of Prince Edward Island. Godfrey Baldacchino, who holds a Canada Research Chair at UPEI is at the forefront of this research. According to Baldacchino, islands are unique and in order to highlight this fact he draws a biological analogy with the work of Charles Darwin, among others, who have established how the effects a “separation” from the mainland has resulted in the evolution of distinct “species.” (Cosgrove, 2007, p. 133) Baldacchino believes that this insight can be applied to social science as well, but qualifies this by stating that “Islandness” also relies on “boundaries” that need to be crossed. By way of illustration he cites the importance of “markets.” Islands are not entirely self-sufficient and as a consequence places like Prince Edward Island have always been reliant on the

mainland for the resources that they lack. Therefore it is natural that islands have a relationship with the mainland, but according to Baldacchino bridges change the nature of that relationship, not so much because that they facilitate further integration of markets, but because they are permanent structures and, hence, they change the nature of the “boundaries” between islands and the mainland. (Cosgrove, 2007) Rebecca Jackson, in her doctoral thesis that focuses on Tasmania, makes a similar point. According to Jackson, islands have to balance their own “autonomy” with a relationship to the mainland and that ‘Islandness’ can be diminished by increasing accessibility.” (Jackson, 2008, p. 4) Thus, by making it easier for people to come and go from PEI, the Confederation Bridge redefined the nature of PEI’s “Islandness”, both in terms of its “boundaries” and its “autonomy.”

In his work, Philip Conkling has suggested a broader psychological aspect of “Islandness” that can also be applied to PEI. According to Conkling,

Islandness is a metaphysical sensation that derives from the heightened experience that accompanies physical isolation. Islandness is reinforced by boundaries of often frightening and occasionally impassable bodies of water that amplify a sense of a place that is closer to the natural world because you are in closer proximity to your neighbors. Islandness is a sense that is absorbed by islanders through the obstinate and tenacious hold of island communities, but visitors can also experience the sensation as an instantaneous recognition. Islandness thus helps maintain island communities in spite of daunting economic pressures to abandon them. (Conkling, 2007, p. 191)

This type of understanding has been a part of the representation of PEI since at least the nineteenth century when it was marketed to American tourists as the “Healthful Island”, but as Russell Fielding has shown with his examination of the Florida Keys, tourism can also erode “Islandness.” Fielding points out that “Islandness” is an attractive tourist draw by creating fixed links to facilitate tourist travel ironically undermines the very thing that

draws them in the first place. (Fielding, 2007, pp. 139-160) In contrast to scholars such as Baldacchino, Jackson, Conkling and Fielding, Denis Cosgrove argues in his essay “Island Passages” in *Bridging Islands*, a collection of scholarly articles published by the University of Prince Edward Island, that islands are not only places separated by water but can be things such as an “oasis” or “settlement” in the sense that they are separated from the “mainland.” (Cosgrove, 2007, pp. 15-28) In other words, Cosgrove believes that people can experience “Islandness” without the constraints of water.

*In some way I can relate to the “Islandness” concept, at least in the way Cosgrove explains it. Coming from a reservation I see some equivalents. On reserve I always had an awareness of the reserve line. I grew up on the edge of reserve, still owning acreage there, and my father owns a small plot of land off-reserve, which he pays tax on (a concept that is far-off on reserves). I had the experience of standing each side of the line simultaneously, and I understood the implied difference. Growing up I learned the allotment of reserve lands, I was taught the boundaries from old cartographies. Along the edges were the figurative **bold black lines** that separated us from them, were the boundaries were drafted up by foreign entities, we were moved there like species to a wildlife park abandoning sites along the oceans and other watersheds and which supplied us with life and beautiful vistas. Having been raised on reserve by a mother and father who instilled a high importance of things such as culture, tact, and academic success, I was raised secular with a respect for other world views, my family home was packed with books and debate as a youth.*

In regards to the neighboring city of Bathurst, I visited it daily growing up, I spent a great deal of my younger life “going to town”, as there were no stores around, and the then thriving pulp and mining town had many stores, restaurants, and school friends. I remember a feeling that I was the ‘other’ though, a visitor, not because of racial issues (which affected me at times, often mind-numbingly), but more of a sense that I felt more secure on reserve where I thought I belonged inseparably; later I would understand I was imposing a colonial attitude on myself and this was not the case. I remember thinking everybody was against me, and now I see I was in need of what they call “de-colonization”. I think it is difficult for me as a young Mi’gmaq male growing up, because I was first a young male growing up in western society, that had an image of masculinity, the emphasis on the hero, the tough guy and so on; and then, I had to deal with the notions eternally present in western media that casted the roles of the “American Indian” as the brave, the warrior. The point I am making is that at times I felt inadequate, lesser, second-class, feelings that changed when I had a sort of ‘awakening’. I rejected the very notion of “race”, along with other “normative structures”, that I could never fit into, ideas such as the Greek aesthetic, therefore liberating myself and recognizing the beauty of my ethnicity. The on-reserve off-reserve lines meant I was different, I mean neighbors in general put up a fence for privacy or to keep people from walking on the lawn, but they still all belong to the community and a common belief in civility; in my case the reserve lines were drawn up to keep my culture out of their “New World”.

Having left the reserve over a decade ago having traveled and attended different universities in Halifax, pursuing academia, I was able to begin this decompression. I was able to study my cultural roots more hands-on at Saint Mary’s (realizing that my people

had a vibrant beautiful civilization; I humanized myself) and was able to interact with different ethnic groups, some with similar stories to mine having seen oppression (I found comfort in this), I expanded my borders embracing more of a cosmopolite lifestyle. I learned also to embrace my Scottish ancestry, and the agency that this offers, an inheritance from my mother's side. I concealed the fact that I was Scottish fearing ridicule or a loss of authenticity, (despite my mother reminding me), not knowing that it is a huge fraternity in the world, all I can say is dealing with being "mixed race" is tough. In other words, I have experienced and overcome my own "islands."

In understanding the social climate at the time before the Confederation Bridge, one is able to get a sense of the varying emotions present among Prince Edward Islanders. To some it would mean the end of a golden era, as the Bridge was projected to bring in business and change the slow paced way of life. To others the change was accepted as it seemed as though businesses especially embraced the opening of the Island. "Islandness" as a concept then becomes important to scholars as it is a way to study who they are as a collective and explain the thing one gets being an Islander. Whether or not "Islandness" is real is another question; however what one sees is a negotiation of identity and is a way to express what they use to be or hold sacred.

By examining the public discussions that surrounded the naming, building and operating of the Confederation Bridge, this thesis raises topics, in addition to 'Islandness', such as ideas of Canadian nationhood, the importance of Private Public Partnerships (P3) projects, and the role of the media in interpreting the impact of the "Bridge." Chapter

One examines the national relationship to the Confederation Bridge and how the politics of this play out. It is known in Canadian Studies circles that the Bridge is the latest attempt to fulfil an election promise made by John A. Macdonald to connect Canada. The chapter explores the impact of Canadian nationhood and nation building through an analysis of the naming and opening of the Bridge, and how this relates historically to other large transport projects such as the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Saint Lawrence Seaway and, more locally, to the neighboring Canso Causeway. Chapter Two of this thesis focuses on the P3 deal that built the Bridge - a relationship between private business and government. It explores how the partnership constructed and maintains the structure. Chapter Three looks specifically at the media and how the Bridge is presented to the public through news articles and tourism promotion. Overall, these three chapters offer three different broad perspectives on the Confederation Bridge and its legacy.

Chapter One – Naming and Celebrating

In the Northumberland Strait stands the Confederation Bridge, a concrete giant. The structure, more clearly more functional than aesthetic, splits the horizon dividing the sky and sea. It is an addition a long grey stroke of paint across a picturesque coastal landscape. Years after its opening, it towers above the varying blue/grey wake serving as a reminder of what is possible in terms of transportation and human ingenuity. When I first saw it I was struck by its imposing physical presence and it is not difficult to understand how it continues to be used as a symbol of Canadian architecture based on its sheer size.

According to the government of Prince Edward Island's official online site, at the time of the island's entry into Confederation, the Canadian federal government promised that a "continuous means of communication between Prince Edward Island and the mainland would be maintained." The site highlights the difficult early journeys with the following:

On these trips across the Northumberland Strait, Men and boys were charged \$2 and they were required to help push the boat over the ice. Women, elderly and invalids were charged \$4 and were not allowed to pull the boat. All of this pushing and rowing, and rowing and pushing, not to mention occasional patches of inclement weather (yes, sometimes it rains and snows on PEI) tended to be an inconvenience for the travelling public.

These hardships are then contrasted with the Confederation Bridge of which the website claims provides a "...permanent, continuous and efficient means of year-round transportation between PEI" and thus finally "fulfils a promise made long ago" by the Canadian government. (A Legend in the Making, 2011) Since it connects two Canadian Provinces it is not surprising that the themes of Canadian unity, nationhood, nation-building, and identity present themselves when discussing the Bridge. These themes were present in both discussions over the Bridge's naming and at its opening ceremonies in June 1997. This chapter outlines the naming process, beginning with a general analysis of what goes into a name, examines the guidelines followed by the name-the-bridge committee, and finally, discusses the alternative names proposed. It also considers what the term 'Confederation' means to islanders in order to further illustrate the complexities in naming such a prominent landmark. The chapter then focuses on the opening ceremonies of Confederation Bridge, comparing and contrasting its opening to that of other significant Canadian transportation projects - the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Saint Lawrence Seaway and the Canso Causeway. In reviewing the opening ceremonies of the national CPR, the international Saint Lawrence Seaway, and the Canso Causeway between the Nova Scotia mainland and Cape Breton with those of the Confederation Bridge, one is struck by how each of these events were used as a platform for promoting identity.

Naming

According to Katja Guenther (Guenther, 2009, p. 412) naming is an "act of power" whether by parents naming children or groups naming land and organizations. In addition, Guenther argues that naming also serves to create a "shared meaning." After

something is named, it is then interpreted by its public, hence becoming part of the collective understanding or “shared meaning.” Guenther’s theory suggests that if something is named incorrectly, and the public does not incorporate the name into their everyday or shared understanding, then an alternative name will be coined. In order to avoid other interests calling it by another name, the builders of the fixed link to PEI had to choose an esteemed name. This was not a simple matter of randomly choosing a name, but a deliberate process.

The name “Confederation” used for the Bridge is also present in many other Prince Edward Island names such as the Confederation Center of the Arts in Charlottetown. Nevertheless, the naming of the Confederation Bridge was a more complex process. A committee was formed May 1st, 1996 that included Prince Edward Islanders and New Brunswickers, the Strait Crossing Development Incorporated, and the federal government of Canada. (McLaughlin, 1996) The committee was responsible for establishing the requirements for a successful application in their “name-the-bridge” call for submissions. The first criterion on a list of four requirements for the naming of the Bridge was that the name should reflect historically significant sites or events. The second requirement was that the name should be significant for the local region or for the rest of the country. The third criteria stated that if the Bridge was to be named in the honor of a Canadian, the person had to be deceased. The final criterion set by the name-the-bridge committee was that human concepts such as peace and friendship would be welcomed in name proposals. (McLaughlin, 1996) A short list of three names from 2,200 entries was eventually selected by the committee, chaired by Alex Campbell - a former Premier of PEI. Apparently, the committee members had favored a different name on the short-list, but Diane Marleau, then the federal Minister of Public Works and Governments Services,

announced on Sept 27 that she had chosen Confederation Bridge. (Macdonald, Bridging the Strait: The Story of the Confederation Bridge Project, 1997, pp. 106-107)

Reflecting on these guidelines, that led the name-the-bridge committee to recommend and Minister Marleau to ultimately decide upon Confederation Bridge, it appears to me that it was important for the committee to choose a name that would have historical significance and relate to an overall narrative of Canada. In the neighboring United States there are narratives of Independence and Liberty that define what it is to be American, and I believe in Canada people look to Confederation to define the beginning of Canada and Canadian-ness; whether it is the defining moment however is debatable, but nonetheless there is that narrative that exists. This, in my opinion, was advantageous opportunity for the engineering project to tie Prince Edward Island into Canadian Identity; and for the name-the-bridge committee to include a criterion, that the name should have historical significance, almost leads immediately to Confederation, hence shifting the dynamic from the region to the federation.

The second criterion as outlined by the committee also points to Confederation. I say this because it calls for a name that is significant for the local region or for the rest of the country, i.e. Confederation, as Prince Edward Island is known as the birthplace or “cradle of Confederation”; which is significant to the province and the country. Confederation here is the commonality between the two as Confederation is important to Canada and Prince Edward Island hosted the original gathering to discuss what would

become the BNA act, having not joined at the time does not matter so much as it was the location in which the initial discourse began.

The third criterion perhaps was in place in case the committee decided to name the Bridge after the Fathers of Confederation or a Prime Minister. In reflection, I believe that had the Confederation Bridge been named after a historical person, this would have been a controversial choice especially given recent re-evaluations of Canadian history by historians.

In reflecting on the fourth and final criterion, I believe that this criterion was made to round out the list. I do not believe that they would have given such a significant Canadian engineering marvel a name that had little to do with the Canadian story, e.g. the Peace Bridge.

Overall, when I look at the criterion I cannot say for sure that the Name the Bridge Committee had the name Confederation Bridge in mind when they began the process. It would appear to me, however, that this might have been the case. I say this because two of the four guidelines seem to point to Confederation and the third criterion points to naming it after a historical figure, like John A MacDonal, with the fourth criterion being ideal but not relevant to the importance of the name.

While the name-the-bridge committee eventually determined that “Confederation Bridge” met all their criteria, other potential names were considered. One suggestion, “Abegweit Crossing,” which was the name bestowed by the Mi’gmaq, also appeared to satisfy all the stated criteria. As the writer and broadcaster, Bill Casselman, explained in

an article for the *Canadian Geographic*, the name “Abegweit”, meaning “cradled on the waves,” is important to the Mi’gmaq peoples as it is the name they originally gave to Prince Edward Island where they traditionally travelled. Casselman believed that “Abegweit” was a natural name for the Bridge and he was appalled by the eventual choice.

What a corny, frumpish name! Confederation Bridge. Another bureaucratic bit of toponymic tedium from Ottawa. Another yawn of a Canadian name to dull the cartographical expanses of Canadian mappery, bland as some of it already is with boring place names. (Casselman, 97)

Reflecting on the name “Abegweit”, I believe it would have been a great choice, however I understand that I am partial – all for the renaming of the land. I am also aware that the Bridge has become a symbol in the narrative of Canada, if only as an infrastructure project. I can understand by naming it Confederation Bridge the Government of Canada probably felt it would be representative of the general population attributing itself to national pride in this way. “Abegweit” in this context would only be representative of the Mi’gmaq and although it would show reverence to the past it probably not reflect the current population which is made up mostly of non-native. Also, in naming the Bridge “Abegweit” the government may have had to be careful as it could imply Mi’gmaq ownership over the island.

Upon further reflection I have also noted the differences between traditional Mi’gmaq place names and the current ones that replaced them. It is also important to note that some names to this day have survived, often they are mispronunciations; when I tell people that the name is Mi’gmaq they are surprised. An example of this is Chebucto, the street name in Halifax and the original Mi’gmaq name of the city’s location. The

area where I am from in New Brunswick is known to me as “Oinpegitjoig” this translates to “roughly flowing water” in English indicative of the rapids and currents on the river. I can remember as a youth being told to respect the river, seeing my father give offerings of tobacco so that the water spirit would not take our life. The sentiment in the name Oinpegitjoig describes the river being animate and “angry” and, therefore, I know from the name to approach heedfully. [The Mi’gmaq have a different sense of animate and inanimate. For example, it is said, if you craft something that craft takes on a spirit, or a glass with water in it becomes animate; also things can lose their animation when they break or drain.] Another example of a place name back home is “Nepisiguit”, which is said to mean, you are floating down the stream you duck under the branches. This is the name for the Bathurst area; Bathurst being named in honor of Henry Bathurst, Britain’s first Colonial Secretary, which is far less descriptive. [There is also a chain of sandbars in the Bathurst Basin known as “sipisgwatganjig” meaning “three little chains” two observable from the shore and the third on the full moon tide.] I was told by my father that before the establishment of the “Indian Reserve” in 1809, registered in 1838, we lived along the shores of the Bathurst Basin, on Indian Island and that place, where we used to congregate in large numbers, is now a golf course – Gowan Brae. I remember being little and watching evidence of our earlier occupation - having seen archeologists dig up artifacts at nearby Youghall Beach (Young’s Hall). I remember that there were extensive excavations of this area because items such as arrowheads that were found there. This for me proved the connection. Anytime I am able to experience a site with pre-contact evidence, I feel a connection and validity that I am real and attached to my homeland. Branching out a little ways from Bathurst there are other place names that have survived in modern day such as “Tabusintac” which means the “the two of them are

buried there” in reference to a battle on the beach between the Mi’gmaq and the Mohawk. The reason I am mentioning the old names is that the place names are descriptive and interlaced with cultural stories; either they attach caution or history to places, instead of simply being honorary titles unrelated to the land. For me this is a difference between the groups in which the Mi’gmaq lived and thrived within the land and the early outsiders tended to alter and tame the land. I noticed on the east coast when I travel there are other Halifax’s, Bedford’s, New Brunswick’s and so on which shows me a lack of creativity in place naming- names do repeat however in Mi’gmaq like “Tla’gati” which means “encampment”. When considering what is in a name I tend to think that the Mi’gmaq describe the area because when you are travelling it is useful to know what is around you. Some places have been named after people, however, such as Membertou.

Bill Casselman’s point that the “natural” choice for the Bridge was a Mi’gmaq name is amplified by the work of Trudy Sable and Bernie Francis. In *The Language of this Land, Mi’kma’ki*, Sable and Francis examine the mechanisms and sophistication of the Mi’gmaq language and carefully explain how the language functioned within the landscape. As they note,

Mi’kmaw place names, along with legends and oral histories, attest to approximately 11,000 years of Mi’kmaw ancestral presence in Eastern North America...Mi’kmaw legends and place names illustrate the extensive knowledge Mi’kmaq had of the diverse resources found throughout Mi’kma’ki... (Sable, 2012, p. 19)

The longevity of Mi’gmaq occupation of the region in part accounts for the complexity of their relationship to the land, but as Sable and Francis point out the nature of the language itself supports a nuanced way to discuss the environment. As they state,

...The Mi'kmaw language is highly descriptive, creative and playful, and can encapsulate multiple layers of meaning within one word. Through the language, we perceive the world as a web of relationships, including with "objects" that many in the Western world might term inanimate or non-sentient. An island or rock becomes Kluskap's canoe, an inanimate stick becomes part of an animated bow. The flexibility of the language allows these semantic shifts to occur. (Sable, 2012, pp. 29,41)

The reference to Glooscap's canoe resonated with me because when I asked my sister what she knew about Prince Edward Island, concerning the Mi'gmaq, she quickly informed me it was Glooscap's pillow. As a Mi'gmaq reading about the intricacies of the language I felt proud because I feel there is a misconception out there by some that the language is primitive or a novelty. Sable and Francis remedy this - to understand that the language is alive and energetic helps me understand why place names are named the way that they are. Sable and Francis also point out that, "...Mi'kmaw, has no word for time... they often tell stories in the present tense, as though something that happened long ago is happening now... (Sable, 2012, p. 37) I feel it is essential to know the Mi'gmaq concept of time in order to understand the language. For the Mi'gmaq time is circular and as Sable and Francis state, "Time was reckoned by natural cycles of birth and death, the waxing and waning of the moon, animal migrations and the seasons. Survival, it seems, depended on understanding these natural rhythms." (Sable, 2012, p. 38) I feel the ultimate difference or lack of a word for "time" reflects a conflict with the conventional Western understandings of time. It is evident that circularity was paramount to the Mi'gmaq people.

When I asked my father, respected community elder, Gilbert Sewell, about the name "Abegweit" he told me it meant, loosely in English, that Prince Edward Island was

floating on the water much like a leaf or something partly submerged. When one thinks about how the Island looks they can see this unique Mi'gmaq perspective and may even understand the subtleties of the language used in explaining it. When I think about the Confederation Bridge naming committee and the outline they had for what would be a good name; I think about "Abegweit". Admittedly again I am partial to this name because of my heritage however, aside from an affinity for familiar things, it perfectly describes the Island and in some way the Bridge. Prior to the shift in power this name was used to describe the geology, after contact the Island becomes Saint John's Island and then Prince Edward Island. It is my feeling that the naming of places by colonial powers is used to assert ownership as opposed to Mi'gmaq names that define what the land looks like for a more general practical purpose, or include historical events. For me the name chosen by Minister Marleau, "Confederation Bridge", is political and is an act of nation building. The overall feeling I have is that in not choosing an alternative like the Mi'gmaq name; or something more descriptive, not necessarily Mi'gmaq, the selection has continued colonization.

While the name "Abegweit" has deep cultural significance for indigenous people other more playful suggestions received by the name-the-bridge committee suggested other local identities. In his article 1996 in the *Halifax Daily News*, Graeme Hamilton identified other suggestions, such as "Span of Green Gables or the Spudway" that were put forward as possible names. Whereas "Abegweit" represented the historical significance of the Mi'gmaq, "Span of Green Gables" and "Spudway", while reflecting a light hearted attitude, nevertheless represented other island identities – the identification

with the fictional creation of Lucy Maud Montgomery and the island's staple crop. Whether or not these names were actually considered is beside the point, what they reflect is PEI's representation as a fun, laid back place, perhaps even a tourism fabrication. More seriously, Hamilton suggested that "Confederation" was a term forced on Islanders. He quotes a member of the public in order to support this claim.

"I guess it will grow on you," Judy Gallant, head cashier at the Oyster Bed General Store in Oyster Bed Bridge, said. "The fathers of Confederation met here and everything, but it just gets stuffed down your throat, I think we have a little more imagination." (Hamilton, 1996)

Bill Casselman further believed that the rejection of "Abegweit" in preference for "Confederation" was a direct consequence of interference from Ottawa.

So why has some glum mugwump in Ottawa named this structure Confederation Bridge? Are federal bullyboys reminding Islanders of how much they owe to Confederation, a reminder all the more piquant to Ottawa politicians in this year of a possible federal election? You betcha! (Casselman, 97)

"Confederation" for both Gallant and Casselman was an entirely negative choice, but, one can speculate that the name, "Confederation Bridge," was a safe selection since it represents a well-known moment in Canadian history and is readily understood to residents from the rest of Canada. Elsewhere in his article, Hamilton noted the opinion of a Mr. Cumberland who stated, "In the end, the name probably won't get much use except on signposts and roadmaps, they predicted 'People will just call it the Bridge.' They'll say, 'Let's go across the Bridge.'" (Hamilton, 1996)

In my experience, this is what has actually happened and "the Bridge" has now been incorporated in the lexicon of east coasters. Perhaps people may not be adding

“Confederation” because it is lengthy or perhaps people like Casselman and Gallant are doing this as a small protest, an exercise in resistance. I believe the name is too long.

Confederation

One can argue that sensitivity to the word “Confederation” dates back to 1873 when PEI joined the newly created Dominion of Canada. Francis William Bolger, a former chair of the University of Prince Edward Island’s History Department, noted in his 1961 essay “Prince Edward Island & Confederation 1863-1873” that “[t]he Islanders had a profound respect for local self-government. They enjoyed their political independence, particularly after the attainment of responsible government in 1851, and did not wish to see a reduction in the significance of their local institutions.” (Bolger, 1961) It is understandable that their newly found local autonomy would have meant a lot to the colonial elite and that many argued that it was not in islanders’ best interest to surrender that autonomy to another governing body. Bolger also noted that many politicians were opposed in principle to the centralization of power. While Bolger itemized in detail the concessions that Canada made to entice PEI into Confederation, he concluded that, “On July 1, 1873 sheer economic forces had compelled the Island to abandon this policy of exclusiveness and to enter into union with the Dominion of Canada.” (Bolger, 1961) Out of these circumstances the idea developed that PEI was “compelled” to enter “Confederation” and that for many islanders it was an unwelcome change. Despite this belief, there is little acknowledgement that the changing of the name from “Abegweit” to

Prince Edward Island may not have been favored by the indigenous people who travelled there long before it was a colony.

Bolger's depiction of islanders being steered toward Confederation by the pressures exerted by the crown and the Canadian Dominion government has been challenged in more recent scholarship. Historian Philip A. Buckner, a University of New Brunswick Professor Emeritus, in an essay entitled "1870 Political Integration," in E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise's volume *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*, summarized this research. According to Buckner, a culture of "exceptionalism" developed on Prince Edward Island that saw islanders' experience as different from the rest of the Maritimes. Buckner, however, challenges this idea by pointing out that Pre-Confederation PEI was under control of Canadian Governor General, used the same coinage, and observed the Dominion in-shore fishery policy. In other words, the island like other Maritime colonies was under British control and its inhabitants were subjects of the crown. Buckner notes in particular that PEI was not able to negotiate a separate trade agreement with the United States further undermining the argument that the island enjoyed greater independence. More importantly, Buckner points out that an "ambitious" program of railway building caused the island to rack up an unsustainable debt in the years leading up to Confederation. It was this debt that led the colony to reconsider Confederation, and in 1872 the island entered Confederation with more or less the provisions they wanted including the assumption of the railway debt by the Dominion and a commitment to providing a ferry connection to the mainland at the Dominion's expense. (Buckner, 1993, pp. 49-54) The fact that the PEI government, both before and after Confederation, was so focused on transport infrastructure illustrates the longevity of these concerns for Prince

Edward Island. That constant communication in the form of ferry service was added to the terms of incorporation, further demonstrates how the link to the mainland was associated with Confederation from the start.

The complicated relationship with “Confederation” can also be seen in the centennials that have been celebrated and planned on the island. In 1964 the Government of Canada celebrated the Charlottetown Conference that led to Confederation by funding of the Confederation Center of the Arts as a monument to the Fathers of Confederation. This was followed in 1967 with the Canadian national celebration and in 1973 with the centennial of Prince Edward Island’s entry into Confederation. Plans are currently underway for celebrations in 2014 marking the hundred and fifty year anniversary of the Charlottetown conference. Starting first with the Confederation Centre of the Arts, one finds on their website a brief history of the center. (Our History, 2011) According to the site, the center was opened by Prime Minister L.B. Pearson, in October of 1964, one hundred years after the Fathers of Confederation began drafting “what is now Canada.” In a write up for the *Héritage Magazine* by Geneviève Charrois, Prime Minister Pearson is quoted saying that,

[The Fathers of Confederation Memorial Building] is a tribute to those famous men who founded our Confederation. But it is also dedicated to the fostering of those things that enrich the mind and delight the heart, those intangible but precious things that give meaning to a society and help create from it a civilization and a culture.

The write-up also highlights that when opened on October 6th of that year the center hosted Queen Elizabeth II as well as aforementioned Pearson. The same report, as well as the center’s website, also highlight that it was the contributions from all of the provinces and territories that had allowed the project to go ahead. (Charrois, 2005)

The Confederation Centre is funded by the federal government, and its ability to attract large numbers of patrons has resulted in an award from the Tourism Association of Canada, nevertheless since the year after it opened the center has put on the musical “Anne of Green Gables” based on Lucy Maud Montgomery’s international best-selling nineteenth century novel that romanticized island life. (Wulfs & Church, 2012) The use of a nationally funded stage to highlight unique island life, fictional or real, reflected in the Confederation Centre for the Arts performances of Anne of Green Gables is also apparent in the other Confederation centennial celebrations in the province. The island government ensured that they would influence the type of projects undertaken to celebrate Confederation by forming their own provincial centennial commissions in 1964, again in 1967, in order to coincide with national celebrations, and once more in 1973, to commemorate PEI’s entry into Confederation. In 1967 the PEI Centennial Commission ensured that communities across the island would benefit by funneling funds into infrastructure development such as “the construction of ice hockey rinks, playgrounds, and community halls as well as improvements to schools and other public buildings.” (Archives Council Of Prince Edward Island) The 1973 Centennial Commission, however, shifted the focus from community projects to supporting island culture.

As was the case in 1964, the hundredth anniversary of PEI’s entry into “Confederation” was marked in 1973 by a Royal Visit from Queen Elizabeth II. A fact highlighted on the federal government’s Canadian Heritage website. (Royal visits to Canada, 2010) As part of the celebrations, the Canadian Mint pressed a special PEI dollar coin with the dates 1873 and 1973 stamped on it and the province’s name in both official languages. The island’s Legislature was on one face and the Queen was on the

other. (Type Set Coin Collecting, 2012) Another commemorative collectable was a 1973 stamp with an Oak representing England, which is on PEI's Coat of Arms, along with three smaller oaks representing the island's counties. The obvious symbolism is that England took root in the new land. (Postal History Corner Blog, 2011) But despite these Royal associations, the island's 1973 Centennial Committee ensured that PEI's cultural heritage was also celebrated. As part of the Centennial celebrations a Literary Committee was formed and they sponsored a wide range of publications. History was represented by *Canada's Smallest Province: a History of PEI* edited by Francis Bolger, a *History of Clinton, Prince Edward Island, 1770-1973* and a reprint of the J.H. Meacham's 1880 *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Prince Edward Island*. Literary publications included *Island Prose and Poetry: An Anthology* edited by Allan Graham, and *Variations on a Gulf Breeze* edited by Florence Roper and William Grant, along with *Home Place* by Marion Schurman McLellan. Lucy Maud Montgomery was also represented in 1973 when an adaption, for a "mixed-voice-choir", of her poem *The Island Hymn* (1908) was commissioned by the Centennial Committee. *Island Hymn* was subsequently adopted as the provincial anthem in 2010 and translated into French by Raymond J. Arsenault of Abram-Village. (The Island Hymn, 2010)

The acknowledgement of PEI's Acadian heritage, reflected in the translation of Montgomery's poem, was anticipated by the 1973 Centennial Committee. As part of the commemorations the Acadian Festival, then in its third year, was sponsored by the Committee to celebrate Acadian heritage and early island farming. (Exposition Festival) . The Lieutenant Governor was an Acadian, Joseph Aubin Doiron, and his membership on the Centennial Committee could account for this particular focus. (Office of Lieutenant

Governor) Nevertheless, 1973 was also the year in which Port-La-Joye (Fort Amherst) was acquired by the Historic Sites and Monument Board of Canada to pay homage to Prince Edward Island's colonial past (Port-la-Joye–Fort Amherst national historic site of Canada Management Plan, 2003, p. 1). More generally, it appears that the Committee was anxious to highlight “post contact” island culture. The Literary Committee also published *Folksongs from Prince Edward Island* edited by Randall and Dorothy Dibblee while Fred Hyndman, who is noted by the University of PEI website as being a promoter of “community heritage,” was a commissioner for the 1973 Centennial and chair of the sub-committee that acquired and restored, “as the headquarters of the Prince Edward Island Heritage Foundation,” the grand nineteenth century Beaconsfield House in Charlottetown, built by the leading ship builder and merchant James Peake Jr. (Members of UPEI family appointed to the Order of Canada).

Revival of the idea to create a fixed link with the mainland, however, also brought protest in 1973 when the Brothers and Sisters of Cornelius Howatt group were formed. Cornelius Howatt, a member of PEI's colonial assembly, had questioned the wisdom of entering Confederation and the group named after him staged a series of humorous protests during the centennial year. These protests culminated with the Brothers and Sisters “returning” a wheel barrow load of clay to Charlottetown, the reverse action of that done by college students in 1963 who had “symbolically” brought the clay to Borden while researching the feasibility of building a causeway. The clay was subsequently canned and then auctioned off. (Macdonald, *Can the Causeway*, 1997) Plans to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Charlottetown conference in 2014 have also recently sparked criticisms, but these are not directed at the Confederation Bridge. An

article entitled “Birthplace Squabble” by the blog publisher Paul MacNeill, notes that Robert Ghiz, the Premier of Prince Edward Island, hopes to host a celebration commemorating the Fathers of Confederation Charlottetown Conference while at the same time decentralizing Charlottetown’s role and making it a whole island commemoration. This has angered many in the province’s capital who argue that their city and not the province is the true “birthplace” of Confederation. (MacNeill) MacNeill suspects that the distribution of the 100 million dollar budget proposed by the provincial government is the true source of the controversy. The CBC reported on May 15, 2012 that 75 million dollars would come from the government of Canada, and the remainder would be funded by the province. This prompted PEI’s opposition party’s finance critic, Steven Myers, to challenge the whole proposal. “I do have to question the province agreeing to spend \$30 million in a time that they describe themselves as tough economic times.” According to the CBC report, “The draft plan would start with a spectacular New Year’s event. Existing festivals would be enhanced; there would be mega-concerts, and a visit from the tall ships and Cirque du Soleil. A celebration site would offer free nightly entertainment and daily food tasting.” The mayor of Charlottetown, Clifford Lee, echoed Myers comments by stating that the city had nothing like the 7.5 million required from them in the provincial proposal. (2014 celebration plans out of whack with finances, 2012)

In order to advertise the 2014 celebrations the provincial government released a twelve page brochure promoting the event that is almost a collage of previous celebrations. The first page has a beach backdrop [Greenwich, PEI] with a playful Father’s of Confederation likeness of two young men in dress up, and a picture of what

appears to be the Charlottetown Conference is presented along with the Prince Edward Island/Île du Prince Édouard 2014 logo that has a half of a red maple leaf hanging from the zero (the 150 year celebration logo). Shifting through the brochure, one finds homage to Jacques Cartier as well as numerous pages outlining significant facts and history about PEI, including the Confederation Bridge. The Bridge is shown in a seamless image that also includes the Northumberland Ferry that crosses to Caribou, Nova Scotia and a wind farm on the North Cape – suggesting an unproblematic relationship between all three. In one image of a ploughed field of characteristically red PEI soil, the Confederation Bridge faintly marks the horizon completing its naturalization into the PEI landscape. Along with images of farms, tartans, and lobsters, Lucy Maude Montgomery and the Green Gables House National Historic Site, round out the pages with images of the Royals Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge also being prominently displayed. The brochure cover also reproduces an archive picture of Mi'gmaq people making baskets and alludes to their name for the island - Abegweit. Indigenous peoples did not feature in earlier centenary celebrations, but the brochure also contains an image of fancy dancers at a Pamure Island Powwow. Their inclusion, along with images of Acadian and Scottish celebrations, appear to suggest harmonious relations between settlers and the island's original inhabitants but how this all relates to the 1864 Charlottetown conference is hard to detect. (Prince Edward Island Land Cradeled On The Waves, 2012)

The national and provincial celebrations of Confederation held in PEI appear designed to benefit the island's infrastructure and tourism. But with the benefits being extended to groups like the Acadians, I wonder why the Mi'gmaq were seemingly left out

of these events? I realized it is probably because Confederation, colonization, and nation building in North America would have meant the end of Mi'gmaq autonomy; and why would they celebrate that? In my opinion, I think the government, as well, would not like to highlight their part in ending the Mi'gmaq traditional lifestyle. This makes me reflect on how I feel about Canada and America and my place in all of it. Personally, I see country, state and provincial borders differently, having a concentration of family in Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Maine, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Washington State, and even Kentucky. I do not see the borders the same and as rigid as they are today. (This is perhaps attributed to the relative ease I have crossing into the United States, where my status card is welcomed and acknowledged - only to come back to Canada and be hassled on occasion by border patrol, taken into a room and sequestered because my sneakers look "too new.") I open my conceptualization of the region at least north to Gaspé and south to the bottom of New England, the Carolinas maybe further down ancient trade routes. I believe like this is the homeland so it is difficult to consider that this in modern day terms of two countries provincial and state lines. This is not to say that I believe there were no tribal divisions.

In terms of the 2014 celebrations, I did notice on the brochure that there was representation of Mi'gmaq, however, I feel as though this was a marketing ploy. In considering recent celebrations such as the Membertou gathering in Halifax, Nova Scotia, I have noticed that in the Mi'gmaq community, there were some who felt as though we should not celebrate this event because it was associated with Christianity, however, others were happy to share the culture at an event that had a commercial aspect. One could argue this event was good public relations between communities.

Having attended the event with my family, I was proud to share my culture with the Halifax community and eat overpriced Indian tacos. The point I am making is that there is a sense that the regalia in the advertisements draws in tourists, however I do not feel that these interactions are necessarily harmful as long as one knows what you are getting is a pop culture version of the culture. In my travels to Hawaii I have also seen this in a flyer that said “interact with the natives” showing a family with real island natives, although it is not as overt I feel that it is in a sense the same as the “Indian merchandise” that later followed the railway marketing. By in large, I believe that if Confederation has negative connotations to islanders you can be sure it does to some Mi’gmaq who, if they knew the history, would understand what it has meant to us. Also, if there is representation in the events I believe that they are part of a drive to be politically correct and inclusive and probably, ironically, go against the intention by reproducing stereotypical versions of the culture.

Opening

Anyone who has travelled or seen a map of the country would know Canada is vast with many different landscapes. These landscapes in fact were so important to the country’s identity that the Group of Seven and Tom Thompson became famous for their early paintings of the different natural wonders. Since Confederation it has been argued that Canada needed to connect citizens to each other over these vast landscapes in order to create common interest and to avoid intense regionalism. (Glazebrook, 1968) This desire for “connectedness” has been particularly apparent in the opening ceremonies attached to various national transportation projects including the Confederation Bridge.

The following review will start with the Canadian Pacific Railway, discussing its opening and what that meant to a Canadian connectedness, followed by the Saint Lawrence Seaway and how its opening is an example of Canada in the larger international community, before discussing the opening ceremonies of both the Canso Causeway and the Confederation Bridge. All of these projects were completed with public money and private partnerships but were also billed as “nation building” exercises.

The completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway was necessary to link eastern and western parts of the new Dominion of Canada and was thus as important to John A. Macdonald as connecting with PEI. (Lamb, *History of the Canadian Pacific Railway*, 1977, p. 9) On November 9, 1885 Toronto's *Globe* briefly reported on “The Last Spike” ceremony. The article highlighted the presence of prominent Canadian and American investors as well CPR company officials and emphasized the establishment of the link to the west coast by noting that, “After congratulations had been exchanged on the completion of the great work, the...special train passed over the connecting link, and departed for Port Moody, the present terminus of the road, where they will take a special steamer to Victoria.” The significance of the event at Craigallachie, British Columbia was indicated by the fact that “Chips from the last tie were carried away as mementoes by those present.” (The Last Spike, 1885) Still, the front page where the “Last Spike” article appeared devoted much greater space to the trial of Louis Riel. A lengthy article discussed Riel's impending death and the issue of whether or not he was sane. (Riel's Case, 1885) For contemporaries the tensions between British North Americans and Metis /Indians as reflected in Riel's trial and Canada's westward expansion was apparently more important than the completion of the railway. This tends to support Jennifer Reid's

recent claim that Louis Riel's career is more significant for Canadian history than has been generally recognized. (Reid, 2008)

When I consider the significance of Louis Riel, in a discussion of Canadian identity, it is clear to me that he represents a connection between Métis and Indians. I also know that the Metis have a strong French connection. Since the Red River Rebellion was fought against the British Crown, I understand why he would have been downplayed at the time. Had there not been a strong association with Britain, however, I believe he could have been held in a higher regard - like a "George Washington-esque" type of historical figure – meaning he could have been a rebel lending himself to National identity. I tend to agree with Jennifer Reid that Riel could better represent Canadian identity since he was a mix of different identities that make up the nation.

In contrast to the *Globe's* contemporary account, later historians elevated the importance of the "Last Spike" ceremony. William Kaye Lamb in his *History of the Canadian Pacific Railway*, part of a series on "Railroads of America," described the same event in more glowing terms,

Although ceremony was reduced to a minimum, the moment when the last spike was driven was dramatic and moving one... The immensity of the achievement the last spike symbolized, and its significance, were in all minds in varying degrees. Then cheers broke out, the official party climbed aboard the cars that were meant to carry them to the Pacific, and after their departure the men had a last spike ceremony of their own. (Lamb, *History of the Canadian Pacific Railway*, 1977, p. 133)

In addition, *The Globe* had reported the actual driving home of the last spike with a matter-of-fact description, “Hon. Donald A. Smith took the maul in hand to drive the last spike, and after missing it a few times he drove it home amid cheers from all present.” Pierre Berton in his popular history of the CPR, *The Last Spike*, described the photograph of the event in far more romantic terms.

The men in the picture are like old friends, even though their names may not be familiar. There they stand in their dark and shapeless clothing, frozen for all time by the camera’s shutter, the flat light of wet November morning illuminating an obvious sense of occasion as they lean forward to watch a white-bearded old gentleman hammer home an iron railroad spike. (Berton, 1971, p. 1)

Even though Berton was analyzing the photograph out of context, his description has helped to elevate Alexander Ross’s image to an iconic status in representations of Canada’s past. (Ross A. , 1885) By highlighting the moment the last spike was driven, this image has been useful to those seeking to represent the completion of CPR as a key moment in Canada’s nation building even though at the time *The Globe* did not describe it in these terms.

Reflecting on the opening of the Canadian Pacific Railway; it appears to me as though it was an understated event at the time. To learn that it was essentially a gathering of tycoon types and was not attended by government figures; suggests to me that the event’s significance was embellished by authors such as Pierre Berton after the fact. It is my suspicion that this happened in an attempt to promote a version of national identity based on infrastructure development - represented as a common effort to build the railway and settle the west while ignoring the dispossession and plight of the Métis.

Comparable to this in my opinion, are the promotions by the current Federal Conservative government to play up the War of 1812 as a source of Canadian pride. As people may be familiar, the War of 1812 was celebrated in 2012 through various media campaigns highlighting the supporting secondary roles of Laura Secord and Tecumseh in a “Canadian” victory over the United States. In my opinion, this seems pointless because “Canada” was part of the British Empire at this time and this was a war between the British Empire and America. If one looks to the iconic “Last Spike” photo I think it was drawn from the past and a story was created outside of context to promote unity in a similar way. I remember during the Tall-ship festival of 2012 on the Halifax waterfront - the end near the casino had giant red numbers that read 1812 overtly trying to instill pride in these numbers, celebrating the time we really showed the Americans, and I felt as though it was distasteful to have at an international event, it showed a lack of diplomacy and tact, I actually found it embarrassing.

In contrast to the CPR, the official opening of the Saint Lawrence Seaway, almost a century later in 1959, had extensive coverage - particularly in the new medium of television. CBC archival news footage shows President Eisenhower and Queen Elizabeth II in attendance in Lambert, Quebec. The coverage also showed the progress of the Royal vessel *Britannia* into the seaway locks as excited crowds witnessed the event. (Queen Elizabeth opens the St. Lawrence Seaway, 1959) Newspapers also extensively covered the opening of the mid-twentieth century’s most ambitious transportation project that linked the Saint Lawrence River to the Great Lakes. A report in the *Toronto Daily Star* for April 25, the day the Seaway opened, highlighted the achievement of the 2000 mile

link, while a report in the *Globe & Mail*, a large front page article, prominently displayed a picture of the Queen in the top left hand corner. As with the earlier report on the “last spike,” the context for these stories is also revealing. In the *Globe* the story on the seaway shared space with reports on an impending CNR strike and the persistence of polio. (Saint Lawrence Seaway Opens, 1959) The *Star*’s front page also reported on the CNR labor dispute, the death penalty and an American Cold War experiment with Radio “death rays” – in which scientists killed monkeys by aiming high frequency radio waves at their heads. (2,000 Mile Seaway Opens, 1959).” A Cold War story also appeared in middle of the *Globe* front page, where a short article noted that people were being fined for not participating in air raid drills in New York. The protest against air raid precautions was apparently designed to show the Soviet Union that Americans were not “warmongers.” (Saint Lawrence Seaway Opens, 1959) The “death rays” and “air raid drill” articles highlight the fact that the joint construction of the seaway by Canada and the United States occurred in the midst of the rising tensions with the Soviet Union.

This international context was readily apparent in the opening ceremonies themselves. The visit and opening by Queen Elizabeth, the Canadian head of state, and President Eisenhower, her American counterpart, affirms the important international aspect of the story. George Bryant’s front page article in the June 26th 1959 issue of the *Star* was headlined “Thousands See Queen and Ike Launch Seaway” and Bryant described the event as a “proud page in Canadian history.” (Bryant, 1959) The Queen’s presence seemed to have trumped that of the Prime Minister, John Diefenbaker. There was little to no mention of Diefenbaker in the CBC news coverage or the newspaper articles. Diefenbaker comes up, however, in an article by the *Star* columnist June

Callwood, who wrote that in terms of “protocol” it was odd that the limousine carrying Diefenbaker led ahead of Eisenhower and the Queen, suggesting that the Prime Minister should have taken a less prominent position. (Callwood, 1959, p. 3) That the ceremony was planned as a meeting of “heads of state” at the outset, is evident in the correspondence preserved in the Eisenhower archive which does not identify the prime minister as a key participant. (Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum)

In reflecting on the opening of the Saint Lawrence Seaway and the role of the Prime Minister, it was apparent to me is that it was a meeting between Eisenhower and the Queen, head of state to head of state, and I also consider maybe it was the last of an era in which the Prime Minister took a back seat to the Queen. In consulting my sources and looking at the material, I found it comedic to see Prime Minister Diefenbaker in the background. As a child of the 90s, I am used to seeing the Prime Minister as the strongest public figure. In fact, I was surprised to find out in my formative years that the head of state was the Queen.

Also apparently missing from the opening ceremonies was any acknowledgement of the indigenous peoples who lived along the Seaway. According to Daniel Macfarlane, in his thorough study *Negotiating a River*, about six and a half thousand people were dispossessed from villages lining the Seaway on both sides of the border due to the flooding caused by the project. Included among this group were residents of the St. Regis and Kahnawake Reserves. According to Macfarlane, there was some sympathy for the

indigenous people along the Saint Lawrence, with “McGill professors” offering their help formulate arguments aimed at halting the “flooding.” Others also suggested that there would be harmful health and environmental consequences if the project went forward. Ultimately, the government ignored these concerns. (Macfarlane, 2014, pp. 49,124,126,128,135,306)

According to Macfarlane, the name Kahnawake means “on the rapid” which is no longer applicable since the river has changed since the flooding and this cultural landscape no longer exists. I could not help but think about industrialization and places back home that have suffered the same fate. There is a falls near my home whose name “gegaopsgog” meant ‘where the seals sat on-top the rocks’ it is known in the area that the seals were affected by logging and hunted by fishermen who viewed them as competition. It was revealing to me that some forty years before the opening of the Confederation Bridge, Canada was already building transportation super-projects that ignored people’s claims to the land and were over-riding health and environment concerns; accepting these as calculated risks.

The earlier opening, in 1955, of the Canso Causeway connecting Cape Breton Island to mainland Nova Scotia provides a contrasting example of a Canadian transportation project commemorated with highly local rather than international images. Meaghan Beaton and Del Muiise in their recent article, “The Canso Causeway: Tartan Tourism, Industrial Development, and the Promise of Progress for Cape Breton,”

published in the scholarly journal *Acadiensis*, point out that in the opening ceremony “100 pipers” crossed the new land bridge playing “Road to the Isles”. For Beaton and Muise, this expressed the vision of Nova Scotian premier Angus L. Macdonald who was instrumental in branding Cape Breton as a “Celtic” land. In addition, the authors point out that the opening ceremony of the Canso Causeway represented a shift from a predominantly “industrial” Cape Breton to a “tourism” driven Cape Breton. (Beaton & Muise, 2008, p. 41) As would be the case with the Confederation Bridge, the Causeway itself became an attraction to tourists whom traveled to admire the project. (Beaton & Muise, 2008, p. 59).

Beaton and Muise, however, also point out that the causeway’s construction was the realization of a “vision” to “link” Cape Breton to Canada. (Beaton & Muise, 2008, p. 41) The idea was promoted at least “50 years” before the causeway was built and its completion was, like the Confederation Bridge, hailed as a replacement for a reportedly “inefficient” ferry service. As with the Confederation Bridge, the Canadian government took an active role in promoting the project prompting David Monaghan, in his 1997 MA thesis “Canada's new main street: the Trans-Canada Highway as idea and reality, 1912-1956,” to also identify the project as a “nation building” exercise. (Beaton & Muise, 2008, pp. 21, 64)

To my knowledge I do not believe Mi'gmaq were represented at the opening of the Canso Causeway - I cannot find any indication of this in the sources. From what I can gather this was more of a Scottish event celebrating their culture, the pipers being an example. This was similar to what I saw in the CBC news story about the opening of the

Confederation Bridge in which I saw step-dancers, fiddlers etc... and no clear indication that Mi'gmaq people were represented.

The combination of national celebration with local tourist imagery, reflected in the Canso Causeway opening ceremony was also apparent in the celebration of the completion of the Confederation Bridge more than forty years later on May 30, 1997. CBC television opened their report with the following:

With the Snowbirds flying above and the *Bluenose* sailing below, the Confederation Bridge is officially opened today, right on schedule. Crowds have gathered to watch the ribbon-cutting ceremony and take part in some of the traditional music and dancing festivities. Motorists have lined up to test-drive the 13-kilometre link... (The Confederation Bridge officially opens, 1997)

The Snowbirds, the Canadian Air Force demonstration team, is a symbol of national unity while the *Bluenose*, which appears on the Canadian dime, serves to both represent Canada, Nova Scotia and the Maritimes. *Maclean's Magazine* highlighted the positive responses to the new link with the rest of the nation but noted in passing that not all islanders were pleased.

About 20,000 people walked or ran across Confederation Bridge to inaugurate the 13-km link... While some Islanders mourned their lost sense of isolation, others who made the trek celebrated "I feel we're truly connected now," Said 73 year old Elmer Phillips of Charlottetown "I met people from Montreal and I knew they were French and I was awful happy to talk to them. We're all together now-one happy family. (Bridging the gap., 1997)

The emphasis on national unity was also apparent in the reporting of CTV News. In delivering their report, news anchor Lloyd Robertson stated that it was,

...A historic day for Canada and Canadian unity. A federal promise made 124 years ago has finally been honored pulling all of us a little closer together tonight. Confederation Bridge was opened this morning linking Prince Edward Island to

the rest of Canada. A surging crowd of 20,000 packed the bridge. They'd come from all across the country to take part in this special moment. Some raced their way across the 13 kilometer span. It was their way of celebrating this special day. The bridge is expected to bring a million tourists annually to Canada's smallest province. While that would certainly boost the local economy, many islanders couldn't help but feel a little bit sad today. With the bridge open PEI now feels a little less like an island. (PEI Marches To The Mainland, 1997)

Even the *New York Times* reporter, Anthony DePalma, focused on Canadian unity when he quoted a former prime minister in his account of the Bridge.

CANADA is big, the second biggest country in the world after Russia. Holding together such a vast territory has always been a problem, so much so that William Mackenzie King, a prime minister of Canada, once said, "If some countries have too much history, we have too much geography.' (DePalma, 1997)

The newspapers reports appearing on the same day as the opening of the Bridge give an indication as to why this “national” emphasis would have been welcome by the Federal government. James Rusk and Ijeoma Ross reported in the *Globe & Mail* that the Canadian government was trying to reduce the risk of a strike in Ontario by “civic, school, and hospital workers” (Ross & Rusk, 1997), while the majority of the articles in the *Toronto Star* focused on the federal election of 1997. The *Star*'s main headline was for a report noting that the Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, needed to cancel an election rally because protesters were “jousting” with liberals. (Vienneau, 1997)

When I examined the Canso Causeway opening, I felt as though it was another example of a project that focused on connectedness and branding because, like the railway and the fixed link, the focus shifts from the physical concrete project to the greater Canadian narrative. The Confederation Bridge ceremony is a prime example in

which the government promoted national narratives hence suppressing local interests because they don't support the overall federation. Returning to my undergrad experience when I was asked "What is Canadian identity?" it now appears to me as though it is essential for the government to develop narratives because of the size of the country. I find "Canadian Identity" then hard to define because the size and differences of every region make it difficult to create a single narrative without leaving out distinct cultural pockets, and this is where there is resistance.

Perhaps the Confederation Bridge name, in trying to hold the country together, fell short? Maybe Abegweit or some other name, conceivably non- Mi'gmaq, could have a certain appeal that would create a broader base for Canadian identity. With city names like Vancouver or provincial names like Alberta or Prince Edward Island, considering their British origins, there is an obvious dominance or claiming of the land, in contrast to cities and provinces with indigenous names like Toronto, Ottawa or Quebec and Manitoba which are descriptive and entice people interested in etymology to find out more about the landscape and where they live. I do not want people to think I am advocating simply that the Bridge should have a Mi'gmaq name - all that I am implying is that maybe something more creative and less "obvious" should have been chosen. More effort should have been made to come up with something more original.

Chapter Two - Building and Maintaining

When I started to look for material related to the construction and operation of the Confederation Bridge, I found there was a lot of attention paid to the Public Private Partnership (P3); that is the on-going partnership is between SCDI and the Canadian government. A common thing I noticed in the research was a great deal of self-congratulatory industry accounts, referencing technical accomplishment; and on the surface, when I would look at these sources I would think, "What a great success" however afterword I would see they were written by the companies themselves. This caused me to question whether or not third party evaluations need to be established for checks and balance. I also noticed that the discussion of the daily operations from the industry perspective highlighted the efficiency of the Bridge and minimized criticisms such as service interruption. Overall, I was left with the impression, from reading government and industry sources, that the Bridge has been a huge success or, more so, I was told it was a success. I believe that this ultimately opens the door for scrutiny from organizations such as CUPE, however it is also my personal opinion that sometimes their perspectives are also self-serving.

The public/private partnership, or P3, negotiated in 1993 between the Government of Canada and Strait Crossing Development Inc., SCDI, to build and maintain the Confederation Bridge is the focus of this chapter. In order to evaluate the claims made about the importance of partnership in media reports and SCDI publications, this chapter

briefly explores the federal government representation of Canadian public/private partnerships before turning to the details of the specific P3 agreement to build the Confederation Bridge. The chapter then explores the partnership's accounts of the Bridge's construction. Finally, the chapter concludes with an examination of the partnership's role in maintaining the Bridge and the technical discussions of the Bridge's performance published primarily in the *Canadian Journal of Civil Engineering*.

The P3 Agreement

According to E. R. Yescombe, in *Public-Private Partnerships: principles of policy and finance*, infrastructure projects, like the Confederation Bridge: “are necessary for the functioning of the economy and society.” For Yescombe, a former international banker and independent consultant on project finance, public/private partnerships are “a way for the government to build such infrastructure quickly and effectively.” (Yescombe, 2007, p. 1) This view is endorsed by the Government of Canada on the Infrastructure Canada webpage. That federal department states that P3s are collaborations between governments and private businesses that facilitate the building of infrastructure and benefit each respective party, and suggests, such partnerships are essential as they allow the government to draw both financial and technical resources from the private sector, allowing for faster completion of projects. (Infrastructure Canada, 2012, p. 1). The federal government claims to be an international leader in infrastructure partnership and has used the approach to fund current projects such as housing revamp in East Vancouver that through a P3 agreement will see homeless people provided with a “safe” place to

stay. Other projects like the Southeast Stoney Trail project in Calgary, Alberta and the Chief Peguis Trail Extension in Winnipeg, Manitoba are being built to help traffic congestion. The federal government is so committed to the approach that 1.2 billion dollars is allocated annually for P3 projects. (Infrastructure Canada, 2012, p. 5)

The Confederation Bridge is perhaps the most ambitious of the P3 projects funded by the Canadian Government and press reports have highlighted its significance. Charles McMillan, a business Professor at York University, hailed the Confederation Bridge as “Canada’s most successful public-private partnership” in an article for the *Globe and Mail*, and reinforced his claim by pointing out that the project had received a gold award in 2009 from the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships. (McMillan, Confederation Bridge Canada's Most Successful Public Partnership, 2009) Perhaps some humor in this is that the CCPPP is itself an organization comprised only of industry and government members; it would appear that Professor McMillan was relying on the self-assessment of those keen on promoting P3 partnerships for his own positive evaluation. (Canadian Council for Public Private Partnerships)

The actual legislation, the Northumberland Strait Crossing Act of 1993, provides a detailed understanding of what the P3 entailed. The act laid out the rules for the partnership handling the agreement of funding, as well as tolls and is the legal document that outlines terms. (Department of Justice, 1993) With the drawing up of this Act, the terms of business were understood by both parties and the Confederation Bridge Project could go forward. The 1993 act was drafted after a review of the existing ferry service between PEI and New Brunswick conducted by Transport Canada. According to that federal department’s website, the review concluded that it would be cheaper to install the

Bridge as a means of fulfilling the Canadian government's constitutional obligation to provide a connection to PEI. The site explains further that the government of Canada, in light of this obligation, formed a public-private partnership with Strait Crossing Development Incorporated [SCDI] whose end of the deal was to design and build the structure. (Transport Canada, 2009)

Reading over the sources above, what I believe I have found is a circular argument, in which the Government of Canada and private companies agree that P3s are the best way to build infrastructure. With this consensus I further believe they work together to present P3s as the only viable alternative in their respective literature - creating this circularity. I am not advocating the P3 approach is not a worthwhile, but I am pointing out that they are possibly promoted with a degree of exaggeration. After reading the sources and considering my stance, all I know is that P3s are a good thing because government and private interests say they are good. Overall, although it may be that P3s are the best solution, examples of "circular arguments" are present in the literature and it is somewhat humorous to look at these examples and think wow they are tooting their own horn to speak and quoting these awards like they are distributed by non-partisans [there appears to be a gold medal for everything.]. With this knowledge I find myself questioning what I am consuming as a reader.

According to the Northumberland Strait Crossing Act, it will be the responsibility of SCDI, the private company, to operate and maintain the Bridge for 35 years. During

this time the revenue from the tolls are to be used by SCDI, for things like repairs. The agreement also stipulates that any unused revenue would be taken as profit by SCDI for its investors. As the Transport Canada website explains, after 35 years, SCDI would return the Bridge to the government of Canada to operate and maintain. SCDI's involvement would end and the company will have satisfied their responsibilities under the agreement. (Transport Canada, 2009).

SCDI was originally a consortium of three companies – Strait Crossing Incorporated [SCI], a Canadian owned company formed from the Calgary-based Stephenson Construction International to bid on the project; GTMI, a subsidiary of the French firm GTM Entrepose which built, with its Canadian subsidiary JANIN, the Pierre LaPorte Bridge in Quebec City; and Northern Construction Company, a Canadian subsidiary of Morrison-Knudsen based in Boise, Idaho that had built the Sunshine Skyway over the Tampa Bay in Florida. (Macdonald, *Bridging the Strait: The Story of the Confederation Bridge Project*, 1997, pp. 55-57)

Northern Construction later pulled out of the SCDI consortium, and was replaced by a new partner, Ballast Nedam Construction Inc. - a Canadian subsidiary of a Dutch bridge building firm. (Miller, 2000, p. 266) None of these partnerships are identified in *Bloomberg BusinessWeek*, an online resource for investors, which merely notes that SCDI is a corporation responsible for the “design, building, financing and operations” of the Confederation Bridge based in Canada and that it is headed by Mr. Jean-Yves Tassini. (Bloomberg Businessweek, 2011) While SCDI was responsible for the design and construction of the Bridge, the operations are managed by another organization known as Strait Crossing Bridge Limited (SCBL). In a recent report of the company on the Manta

website for small business it is stated that SCBL has revenues of \$13,823,600 annually and is responsible for 40 jobs (Manta, 2011).

The type of arrangement put in place by the 1993 Act between the Government of Canada and SCDI has been described by Sidney M. Levy, an independent construction industry consultant in Baltimore, Maryland as a “Build, Operate, Transfer” project. According to Levy, SCDI were chosen to build the Confederation Bridge based on their expertise in building bridges but the financing for the project came from both public and private investment. (Levy, 1996, pp. 196-197) The Government of Canada’s investment in the Bridge would be 41.9 million dollars in annual bond issues for 35 years. In order to insure that the money is handled correctly the Strait Crossing Finance Inc., a crown owned corporation, was formed. (Boardman, Poschmann, & Vining, 2005, p. 181) The government’s watchdog responsibility was further supported by an office of the Auditor General, established in PEI at the time of construction, that ensured the money allotted was spent correctly onsite. The 1995 Auditor General’s report indicated that the office not only ensured that the government would monitor SCDI’s - operations, but that they would also assess their impact on the environment - although how this would be achieved was not spelled out. (Auditor General of Canada, 1995, pp. 15.84 – 15.85) The Federal government also assumed responsibility for approving how much money SCDI can make off of the tolls ostensibly to ensure that the prices are fair to those using the Bridge. (OMERS, 2009)

In order to entice private investment in the project, the federal government guaranteed 13.9 million dollars annually to SCDI investors. According to Anthony Boardman, the Van Dusen Professor of Business Administration at the University of

British Columbia, and his collaborators, this arrangement was part of the concessions in the agreement between SCDI and the government and as a result Canadian, Dutch, French, and American investors were attracted to the project. Nevertheless, shares can be sold and private investors can leave the project at any time, as occurred in 1996 when the American conglomerate Morris Knudson withdrew from the deal. (Boardman, Poschmann, & Vining, 2005) Aside from Morris Knudson, specific investors are difficult to pinpoint, however the leading consortiums are identified on the website run by OMERS (Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System), one of Canada's leading pension funds and itself an investor in the Confederation Bridge. (OMERS, 2011) According to the information provided by OMERS, the original three shareholders in SCDI were Strait Crossing Incorporated, Ballast Nedam Canada Incorporated, and Vinci Concessions Canada Incorporated. (OMERS, 2009) Vinci Concessions owns a 19 percent share in SCDI and the French parent company's website claims they are "Europe's largest operator of transport infrastructure concessions" and that they are partners in projects all over the world such as the Fredericton Moncton Motorway and the Stade De France. (VINCI Concessions) In 2007 VINCI Construction, "France's largest construction company" had been formed from an amalgamation of the original SCDI partner GTM Entrepose and another French firm, Sogea Construction, giving VINCI their interest in the Confederation Bridge. (GTM Batiment) The Dutch firm, Ballast Nedam, who were involved in what they call "prefab" construction of the Confederation Bridge, still hold shares in SCDI. (Ballast Nedam) Nevertheless, shares in all three firms are constantly traded and in 2003, OMERS, through their subsidiary, BPC Maritime Corporation, acquired a 34 percent share in SCDI from Ballast Nedam - leaving the Dutch company with 1.1 percent share in the company. (OMERS, 2009).

Going over this material on Public Private Partnerships including the private interests involved and considering the amount of companies that make up other companies paired with shareholders, I began to wonder what was so “public” about this deal. It appears that the “public” aspect actually refers to government. In the idyllic model elected officials are advocating our concerns - as a member of the electorate, however, I am not under any illusions and do not fully trust this to be carried out. I feel on some level these partnerships give concessions to private enterprise and, moreover, I believe P3’s offer hiding places for accountability that the public sector cannot do under the Freedom of Information Act. My point is that the perceived need for P3’s might be exaggerated because governments see them as simpler; I also feel that people in general are being presented a P3 business card, of sorts, in terms of what is out there and that come election time larger politician defined “public issues” like education and healthcare take the lead. There is a similar problem with defining “public” as government on reserves as well. Traditionally we were governed by something like consensus, but we are now governed by the Indian Act’s “chief and council” which is an extension of the federal government rather than representing our own “public” interests.

OMERS’s investment in the Confederation Bridge is intriguing since one of the harshest criticisms of the P3 project came from a report produced by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) in 1999. The CUPE report, authored by Salim Loxley, a consultant who studied economics at the University of Manitoba and London School of Economics, claimed that SCDI was 85% foreign owned despite claims of being 100% Canadian. Loxley highlighted the Dutch and French origin of the principal investors.

Since OMERS acquisition, direct Canadian ownership has risen from 15% to 49%, but as Loxley observed the majority of shares still remain with foreign companies. In addition, Loxley also suggested that the government and private business kept too many financial details hidden - stating that the agreement was not transparent enough and that, despite the oversight provided by the Auditor General's office, money may in fact have been spent carelessly. (Loxley S. J., 1999, p. 14) As part of the proposal to build the Confederation Bridge, Loxley highlights the Government of Canada's claim that it would not be paid for with taxpayers dollars, however CUPE believes this is not the case and that tax payers will have to shoulder \$45 million in extra costs. Loxley points out that,

...[i]n the words of the Auditor General, at the time of the issue of the fully indexed amortizing bonds, Canada's marketable real rate bonds were being traded on a 4.10 percent yield basis- 40 basis points below the yield available on the Strait Crossing Finance Inc. bonds. This represents about \$38 million in additional costs. Furthermore, regular commissions on marketable issues of the Government of Canada's real rate bond issues were 0.6 percent compared with the 1.75 percent paid for the Strait Crossing Finance Inc. issue, with the incremental commission cost approximating \$7 million. (Loxley S. J., 1999, p. 33).

The report also suggested that it is unclear who will be liable, the builder or the government, for any costs resulting from design problems that only become apparent after the agreement has expired and the Bridge suffers many more years of the Northumberland Strait's "fierce conditions." (Loxley S. J., 1999, p. 36) Finally, the report criticized the operators for closing the Bridge in light of weather conditions. (Loxley S. J., 1999, p. 42) Loxley noted the government's obligation to provide year round service to Prince Edward Island perhaps implying that the former ferry operator and their employees had in fact provided better service without all of the pitfalls of a P3 agreement.

Loxley's criticisms are further developed in a co-authored analysis with University of Manitoba Professor Emeritus, John Loxley, entitled *Public Service Private Profits: The Political Economy of Public-Private Partnerships in Canada*. The authors make important points explaining for instance that P3's indeed are "Commodifying Public Services"; what the authors mean by this is that "...the private sector is given access to budgets, services or facilities that were previously in the public domain and profits from this." (Loxley & Loxley, 2010, pp. 15-6) Continuing their argument the authors also note, "All too often, P3s are put forward as package deals and not enough attention is paid to "decomposing" or "unbundling" their individual elements, some of which, if not all, might be performed more cheaply by the public sector." (Loxley & Loxley, 2010, p. 38) In terms of P3s and the Confederation Bridge, the point is reiterated that the Bridge was said to be "100% Canadian" however, as the authors point out this is done through the creation of "subsidiaries" i.e. Ballast Nedam, a Dutch company, forms Ballast Nedam Canada. (Loxley S. J., 1999, p. 120) The authors list off the public interests as "(federal) Transport Canada, Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Human Resources Development Canada and Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, (provincially)...the New Brunswick established Straight Crossing Finance Inc." (Loxley & Loxley, 2010, p. 121) The authors explain the role of all these was to "regulate." In their review of the Bridge, the authors further claim that there is a lack of transparency explaining that "SCDI, as a private entity, is under no obligation to release information about its business dealings." (Loxley & Loxley, 2010, p. 122) Another point they make is that "...the government could have accepted private sector bids to design and construct the Bridge without entering into a partnership to have the Bridge privately operated as well." (Loxley & Loxley, 2010, pp. 122-3) In conclusion the authors indicate:

...In some respects, the Confederation Bridge P3 can thus far be seen as a positive experience when compared with other Canadian P3s...the government was able to successfully transfer a significant amount of the up-front risk involved onto the private partner...However, any up-front risk...has to be measured against the guarantees that the government gave the operators...The agreement also has a no-competition clause...This project will likely cost tax payers considerably more money than it would have without going the P3 route...An extra \$45 million was paid (in present value terms) to keep debt off the books...the lack of transparency regarding the financial aspects of the project in anti-democratic.” (Loxley & Loxley, 2010, p. 128)

Further criticisms of P3 agreements can be found in *The Challenge of Public-private Partnerships* edited by Graeme A. Hodge, the Director of the Monash Centre for Regulatory Studies in Australia, and Carsten Greve, of the Copenhagen Business School. In that book, the authors Ken Coghill and Dennis F. Woodward, of Monash University, establish that there is a potential, in a worst case scenario, for these projects to have financial problems; as they note sometimes governments need to borrow money from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank to repay these debts. (Coghill & Woodward, 2005, p. 86) The idea is that if the government is to break the partnership then they may be liable to pay the private investors. As P3s are partnerships that last for long term, like the Confederation Bridge, the Loxleys further point out that in the future the public will not be able to enact any changes since the agreement is binding. The final criticism the authors make is similar to that of the CUPE report - the agreement does not ensure that finances will not be mishandled. (Coghill & Woodward, 2005, pp. 89-90)

From what I could gather in researching Public Private Partnerships, it appears obvious to me that they are marketed to the public as a great solution for ever growing infrastructure short comings. Basically they are portrayed as a win/win for governments,

businesses, and citizens. I get the sense from the corporate sources that the overall benefits of the P3 approach serve the public interest, but a fear of corporate greed made non-profit agencies like union sources highly skeptical of P3s. In the case of the information provided by the Confederation Bridge itself, I detect an emphasis from their media department on how the project would benefit the local economy by hiring locals to build it. However, I believe that the people building the Bridge were, for the most part, just doing the grunt work, while the expertise and I suspect high paying positions were outsourced. Defenders of P3 partnerships that combine expertise with government funds always seem to make the claim that tax-payers are getting the best company for their money; however, I could find very little budget information since it seems that the private companies do not require transparency. I have no way of verifying the claims. My impression, after trying to obtain information on the relationship between the government and private investors, is that any broken promises could result in litigation that would ultimately be settled with tax payer money - maybe the public should have a larger say and not just trust the government and business to spend their money? I also believe that investors, whether from retirement funds or elsewhere, should not have a guarantee of return - it is as if the market in its current state is too nervous to invest without guarantees like these that force the public to pick up the slack if things fail.

Building the Bridge

The SCDI website explains that the design of the Confederation Bridge was the result of two companies working together - J. Muller International and Stantec. (Strait

Crossing Development Limited, 2008). The late Jean M. Muller of J. Muller International worked on the design team and the span is part of his bridge drafting legacy. Daniel M. Tassin, president of International Bridge Technologies, San Diego, California, in an article on Muller in the *PCI* [Precast/Prestressed Concrete Insitutute] *Journal*, reveals that the French engineer had worked on many bridge projects of varying sizes throughout his career. (Tassin, 2006). Most of Muller's projects were large scale and included the H3 Windward Viaduct in Hawaii which is a divided highway in mountainous terrain on the island of Oahu. (Tassin, 2006, p. 12) Also, one observes that most of his projects were using concrete as a building material, as the project in Oahu for instance has similarities to the PEI Link.

I have traveled to Hawaii twice and seen this highway on one of my excursions. I remember asking someone about this highway, on a public bus ride, and they told me it was cursed because it went through a sacred place with burial grounds. The islander continued to tell me it was a strategic highway built by the government to move the army quickly if needed. This reminded me of the stories I have heard about the Mi'gmaq cursing the Angus L MacDonald Bridge to fall, which has become an urban legend of sorts. This made me think about how infrastructure projects can sometime trump culturally significant places.

In the description of his career, Tassin fully credits Muller for his pioneering work with precast concrete. (Tassin, 2006, p. 2) Tassin's article also illustrates Muller's

contribution through numerous photographs that show pre-casts being built and then assembled later on location. One picture, in particular, shows pieces of the Confederation Bridge laid out much like a puzzle ready to be assembled. The yard in PEI has each piece of the Bridge laid in a specific, organized manner, presumably so the project could be efficiently assembled. (Tassin, 2006, p. 15)

The other contributor to the design of the Bridge, Stantec claims on their website that the company, in operation since the 1950s, specializes in the design of infrastructure and that they work with both public and private groups. (Stantec Inc, 2010) The company is also proud to report that they have been listed twice in the top ten infrastructure projects in the last 75 years, of which the Confederation Bridge is one of them, by the International Right of Way Association. (Stantec Shines on Top Ten List of North American Infrastructure Projects, 2010). These awards would suggest widely recognized competence since the IRWA is a professional organization with branches in both Canada and the United States whose membership is made up of “Acquisition Agents, Appraisers, Environment Professionals Engineers, Lawyers , Property Managers, Relocation Assistance Agents, Surveyors , Title Experts” (IRWA, 2013)

Another award! It appears that the construction industry, too, from what I can gather, is like the music industry with their Grammys - where everyone comes together to celebrate self-selected achievements. Sometimes I feel that people are unaware of who chooses to give out awards and for what reason. When I first studied the Confederation

Bridge I thought it must have been a success because of all the awards it won, it was only later I realized they were handed out by the people who had an interest in the link.

In turning to the specific details of the Confederation Bridge's construction, the SCDI website simply states that the Bridge is what is known as a multi span box girder. This means, more or less, that it is a roadway on top of piers. In looking at the design it appears straightforward. There is, however, a curve that was incorporated into the design in order to keep drivers focused on the road. (Strait Crossing Development Limited, 2008). According to an article in the National Research Council publication, the *Canadian Geotechnical Journal*, the Bridge was constructed in another location and then the pieces were transported to the site. Since the project crosses a seaway, it was easier to pre-assemble sections of the Bridge in the area of Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick and then put into place instead of building it on site. According to the authors of the article, this is a typical "cross pier" construction. (Dennis, Burwash, Montgomery, & Liu, 1998) Other scholarly articles have focused on the building materials used in construction. P.C. Aïtcin, an Engineering Professor at the Université de Sherbrooke, in an article in the journal *Cement & Concrete Composites* noted that the Confederation Bridge was built using High Performance Concrete. *Cement & Concrete Composites* aims to "to foster a better understanding of construction materials, provide a forum for unusual and unconventional materials, encourage the development of low cost energy saving materials and bridge the gap between materials science, engineering performance, environmental effects, in situ behavior, design/service life and construction." (Elsevier) Aïtcin's article addresses these objectives by pointing out that HPC is more durable than the regular

mixes since HPC is mixed with fewer pores allowing it to last longer and hold up to conditions such as ice as experienced in the North Sea or the Northumberland Strait. The lower water to concrete mixture in HPC is, according to Aïtcin's findings, is of importance here because a higher water ratio in other forms of concrete is responsible for causing weakness in structures. (Aïtcin, 2003, pp. 410, 416).

According to P3 agreement the Bridge will need to last 100 years and according to Aïtcin the HPC mixture would allow for that. (Aïtcin, 2003, p. 416) As early as 2007, journalists were praising the HPC durability. In an article in the *Daily Commercial News*, Pat Brennan quoted Dr. Wilbert Langley, owner of W.S. Langley Concrete and Materials Technology of Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia, who claimed that the Bridge was looking “younger” than it should. The article explains that ten years after completion a group of structural engineers sent out to ensure things were going well was surprised and had expected it to deteriorate more than it had. Brennan also reported that the Bridge is built on piers that are not fixed to the ground they are rather held in place by the weight of the road on top and that the Bridge builders used fly ash, a material collected from coal power plants that when mixed with concrete that is used to keep water out of the mix, essentially slowing the decay of the concrete over time. (Brennan, 2007).

In his article for the *Daily Commercial News*, Pat Brennan also claimed that that “about 5000 people”, mostly from the Atlantic region, worked on building the Bridge. These claims were also made during construction in a 1995 television news report drawn from the CBC archives which stated that a crew of six thousand people as well as a floating crane was needed to building the Confederation Bridge. The report, which shows a construction zone in Borden, PEI in which workers are building solid concrete

components, praises the project for “revitalizing” the area financially. (The link rises, 1995)

The construction details provided about the project suggest to me that when the environment is considered, it is from a technical standpoint. I learned that the piers for the Bridge, upon which it sits, are essentially just resting in the mud of the Strait. Incorporating a curve in the road way for safety certainly showed ingenuity and the information provided about concrete mixing technique, along with other technical aspects, provided the impression that the private company had the capabilities and resources to do the job. Still, I have little understanding of what it would have been like to work on the project or the background of any of 5000 workers from the “Atlantic region.” I don’t know anyone who worked on the Bridge.

Among other technical challenges in the Bridge construction reported by the media was the threat of rising sea levels. Wayne Thibodeau, in an article for the Charlottetown paper, *The Guardian*, quoted the PEI Premier Robert Ghiz’s observations on climate change. According to Ghiz, rising sea levels are a constant threat to PEI and the Confederation Bridge was raised one meter higher in order to allow for the sea to rise. (Thibodeau, Rising sea levels will have major impact on P.E.I., Ghiz tells leaders, 2008). While Thibodeau’s newspaper article focused on the consequences of global warming, the technical papers from civil engineers have focussed on the impact of sea ice on the Bridge, largely because this was flagged as a concern in a 1990 environmental report that

recommended against the fixed link because of its potential to influence ice formation. (Auditor General of Canada, 1995, p. 15.83) According to a 2001 article in the *Canadian Journal of Civil Engineering* by Tom G. Brown, a professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Calgary, and his colleagues, Northumberland Strait ice can be defined as “first year pack ice,” which is ice that forms and thaws each season. As for the thickness of the ice in this area, the article states that the ice in the Strait is typically 1 meter deep although it can be other depths and that the ice is rigid because of the water conditions and is in fact jagged in places because of the currents. The Northumberland Strait freezes over for four out of twelve months, and the authors claimed that dealing with ice conditions were a central element in the design of the Bridge. (Brown, Jordaan, & Croasdale, 2001, p. 563)

At the Annual Conference of the Canadian Society for Civil Engineering in 2000, Ivana Kubat, of the Canadian Hydraulics Centre at the National Research Council Canada in Ottawa, and her colleagues, explained in detail the impact of sea ice on the Bridge. According to the authors, the ice in the Northumberland Strait pushes against the sides of the Confederation Bridge, because of the currents and tides, and this ice breaks and stacks up on the concrete piers with the result naturally being stress on the structure. The same article also notes that the Confederation Bridge causes problems with the flow of ice as the movement of ice is impeded by the Bridge, the problem being the movement of ice out of the Strait. (Kubat, Frederking, & Hayakawa, 2000). The main concern with ice, as noted by Kubat *et.al.*, is that it poses two problems. First there is the force that the ice puts on the structure and second is it can cause problems for travel on the water, since the

Northumberland Strait the ice is always in motion and is constantly meeting up with the Bridge. (Kubat, Frederking, & Hayakawa, 2000)

The authors of both papers stressed the importance of on-going monitoring of ice impact on the Bridge. An explanation as to what is in place in terms of monitoring can be found in a paper presented by University of Calgary Professor of Civil Engineering, Tom G. Brown, at the Annual Conference of the Transportation Association of Canada in Charlottetown in 2006. He states that a monitoring program was in place as soon as the Bridge was built and that cones were put on the piers to break up the ice as a result of information collected from sensors that monitored the ice interaction. (Brown T. , 2006, p. 1) Ivana Kubat and her colleagues indicate that the ice is monitored by helicopters and two other instruments that look at thickness of the ice and speed in which it travels. (Kubat, Frederking, & Hayakawa, 2000) Researchers at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, further reported that the speed was monitored by technology known as Acoustic Doppler Current Profilers ADCP, as well as, Ice Profiling Sonar (IPS). The first is used to measure speed of both the water and ice by use of acoustic beams. The other technology is listed as “very accurate” sonar that can determine pressure. (Belliveau, Hayden, & Prisenberg, 2001). The authors conclude that:

The combined IPS and ADCP sensors provide a working system for measuring ice motion through the narrows of the Northumberland Strait. The data set shows that the bridge piers slow the ice velocity on the upstream side and cause pieces of ice to be displaced deep beneath the surface. Although they monitored different ice properties, in different areas of the pack ice near the Bridge, the IPS ice draft data and helicopter sensor ice thickness data from the Bridge area are similar.

They add, however, that “further analysis is required to determine how these observations can be best compared and related.” (Belliveau, Hayden, & Prisenberg, 2001, p. 9)

What I noticed in the engineering research is that there is a great deal of focus on the structure, but little on its impact on the environment around it. Once again it seems as though the science is “self-referential”- with all parties seeming to agree that their research shows that more research is needed. In the material I consulted, I found the scope was narrowed to the impact of the environment on Bridge itself, but I was left wanting to know more about the consequences for the wider environment. When I think of the environment, I think about how the Confederation Bridge will affect it as a whole, and not in a Bridge-centric way. The suffix, “centric” indicating that there is too much focus on the bridge area itself and not outward into the surroundings. I also think about “us” being part of nature because my people have traveled and lived on the land, this is known. For me, nature has always been a collective of everything in it. It is more like an understanding – no mysticism, but an interaction of species – more scientific, ecosystems cohabitants – I feel we understood our place in the bigger picture, this is reflected in the traditional respect we have for the natural world. For me, the origin of the Mi’gmaq word for heron, “tmgwatignej,” meaning “the one with the broken neck” demonstrates that we were observant and had a classification system of our own based on descriptive meanings – a taxonomy of sorts. This wider understanding is missing from all the technical studies of the “Bridge” environment.

Maintaining

It is the responsibility of Strait Crossing Development Inc. to manage day to day operations of the Confederation Bridge. As their website explains, the parent corporation formed Strait Crossing Bridge Limited to operate the Bridge until 2032, at which time the P3 will end and the Federal Government of Canada will take over and will assume care of the Bridge. (Strait Crossing Development Inc, 2008). The branch of the federal government that reviews the operations of the Bridge is Transport Canada. A 2009 internal audit of Transport Canada explained that the Bridge was transferred in 1999 to their portfolio from Public Works. The focus of the internal audit was to look at Transport Canada in order to assure they were handling their job as overseers correctly. The report explains that it is Transport Canada's job to make sure SBCL takes care of "maintenance, financial, and environmental provisions" as well as "operational requirements." (Transport Canada, 2009) In other words, Transport Canada is responsible for ensuring that the Bridge is maintained to standards set in the P3 agreement, for ensuring that finances are spent accordingly, and for ensuring that the Confederation Bridge does not hurt the environment - subject to the predetermined terms of the arrangement. The report also examined Transport Canada's performance in watching over tolls, as well as, other financial considerations. As for the findings of the audit, it is stated that the government agency developed a successful "framework" for overseeing the operations of SBCL, but noted that the "framework" is constantly evolving through a dialogue between the SCDI and the Federal government. The audit also found that greater clarity was needed on how P3 agreement affected the issues of security, potential risk, and responsibility to share-

holders, but to date there has not been a follow-up report published on the department website. (Transport Canada, 2009)

While the 2009 audit noted Transport Canada's responsibility for approving increases in Bridge tolls, it did not single these out for particular comment. In addition to ensuring that the Bridge remains profitable under the terms of the P3 agreement, tolls are also used to offset the cost of maintaining the safety of the fixed link. For example, according to the SBCL website, wind speeds are monitored all the time to make sure the crossing is safe. If the weather is fair then traffic is allowed to cross, but if the winds are above 70km/h then high vehicles, motorcycles and cars towing trailers are not permitted on the Bridge. (Strait Crossing Development Inc, 2008). The enforcement of these restrictions as well as other highway regulations is managed, however, by a Bridge police directly funded by the federal government. A 2007 Transport Canada report examined whether or not the policing of the Confederation Bridge was adequate in order to ensure that the funding provided by the Federal Government of Canada to ensure road safety in PEI was properly applied. (Transport Canada, 2007) The report found that in general goals were met in terms of policing, but that some areas of operation such as the handling of dangerous cargo on the Bridge required more in depth review in order to improve public safety. (Transport Canada, 2007, p. 5) In terms of specific policing of the Bridge, the report found that there were always two cars patrolling the Bridge at a given time and that video cameras were constantly monitored to ensure that traffic ran smoothly. (Transport Canada, 2007, p. 21)

Once again, it appears to me that while SCDI was supposed to pay for all aspects of operating the Bridge, but the Federal government has to fund the Bridge police. I found that in Halifax, Nova Scotia, it is the apparently the toll bridge operator who pays for the “Bridge Patrol” who are designated as “special status constables.” (Law Enforcement Agencies in Nova Scotia)

Scientists also monitor the Bridge on a regular basis and have published their findings in academic journals in addition to sharing the information with the federal government. One of the key areas of research discussed in several articles is the effects of vibrations on the structure. Scientists here are concerned with the determining the implications of stresses such as wind, traffic, ice, storms, and other elements that contribute to the Confederation Bridge vibrating. In a co-authored article in the *Canadian Journal of Civil Engineering* by Dr. Nove Naumoski, a civil engineer with Public Works and adjunct professor at the University of Ottawa, it is pointed out that 76 accelerometers, on Piers 30-33, keep track of the vibrations that occur on the Bridge. (Naumoski, Cheung, & Foo, Dynamic characteristics of the Confederation Bridge, 2002) Accelerometers are instruments that measure vibrations in the concrete structure and the data collected from the Bridge piers is transmitted directly to a computer at Public Works Canada. The stress of the observed vibrations on the concrete are compared to the allowances for vibrations incorporated in the Bridge design itself. The scientists claimed in their 2002 study that the “natural” vibrations of the Confederation Bridge were higher than what was anticipated in the design. (Naumoski, Cheung, & Foo, Dynamic characteristics of the Confederation Bridge, 2002, p. 458) At the time, Dr. Naumoski and his colleagues

recommended that more research was required in order to determine what the excess vibration would mean for the durability of the Bridge.

Two years later Professor Naumoski and his colleagues examined the performance of the Confederation Bridge under the stresses of traffic, wind, and ice. Once again similar instrumentation was used to collect data (the accelerators mentioned above). In various experiments the scientists used trucks to conduct scenarios and storm data. They concluded that increased speed, and trucks travelling side by side, led to increased vibration on the Bridge. Two trucks were sent across a section of Bridge at 80 km per hour in each lane, and this caused the Bridge to increase vibration, and the scientists also found that there was a greater vibration on the bridge joints when vehicles travelled over them. Along with other findings with similar results the scientists noted that storms also increased vibrations. (Naumoski, Cheung, & Foo, 2004) Similar studies using a three dimensional model of stresses, conducted by the Ottawa-Carleton Bridge Research Institute at Carleton University, also found increased vibrations and the team recommended that barriers or other items be installed on the Bridge to reduce vibrations. (Lau, Brown, Cheung, & Li, 2004).

More recently scientists have extended their investigations to include seismicity in the location of the Bridge. Seismic issues were the focus of a study published in 2010 by Ottawa University Civil Engineering Professor, Lan Lin, and his colleagues. This research examined how the Bridge would respond to the stress from ground vibrations by testing a model meant to be representative of the Bridge. Using this technique, the scientists claimed that they were able to determine that the Bridge had a response greater than designed for and that the structure could tolerate 20% more ground vibration than

originally planned. (Lin, Naumoski, Saatcioglu, & Foo, 2010, p. 832). “Thermal loads,” or temperature changes and how they interact with the high performance concrete, have also been studied in three areas of the Bridge - all of different sizes. The temperatures were recorded at each of these locations and the data was analyzed. Using this method, Dongning Li, and his colleagues at the University of Calgary’s department of Civil Engineering, claimed that in deep areas the concrete had more stress than in lower areas. They argued that where the bridge sections lie in colder, deeper water there is more stress on the concrete. According to Li and his colleagues, these stresses combined with other factors, such as wind or traffic, cause the concrete to crack. They concluded that in future “for complex cases and important bridges, specific studies be carried out using modern temperature simulation techniques with the actual geometrical, climatic, and geographical conditions and material properties of the Bridge under design.” (Li, Maes, & Dilger, 2004, p. 824)

Again, I found that the common assertion amongst scientists is that there needs to be a continuation of research on the Confederation Bridge. Nevertheless, I believe that some additional research is necessary since, as I learned, the scientists are uncovering variables that were not considered in the planning of the Bridge. It appears that since they review each other’s work and publish in peer-review journals, the “objective” research serves as a good check and balance to the information provided by the Bridge operators.

Starting research on this chapter, I thought it would be the most difficult, as I am not used to engineering jargon, but in writing this chapter and researching all the players, I had the chance to learn a lot about different groups and assess their purposes. As I gathered the governments, private corporations, scientists, and others associated with the project tend to have self-serving motivations for what they do and this in turn made me realize that they seem to conspire. At the same time, however, this is necessary as each party relies on the success of the other to accumulate capital. It appears to me that it is in the interest of the government to have a Bridge, the private corporations to have profits, and the scientists to have things to research.

When I first began to look at this, I was perusing through sources trying to form an understanding for the reader about the technical aspects of the Bridge. The overwhelming idea I had in the back of my mind was that the Bridge was an all-around win, almost a layup, a no brainer; it was better, faster, stronger etc... but when I asked who was writing this literature, I noticed that the government, as well as the other actors, were almost advertising themselves to me in their literature. The overall thing I took away from this research is that organizations like to give themselves credit. What I found missing in the available research, and possibly a topic that one could research further, is the affects beyond the structure itself. Through the course of my research I did not come across much by way of the impact of the fixed link on the surrounding environment.

Is there another narrative? Who are the people actually placing the sensors for the monitoring – what are their experiences of “maintaining” the Bridge? At least one ferry worker displaced by the construction did not obtain work as promised on the Bridge and as a consequence took her case to the Human Rights Commission. (McAvinn versus

Strait Crossing Bridge Ltd, 2001) *Perhaps the absence of stories from construction workers, maintenance workers, or toll collectors, can account for one “urban legend” I have heard. When discussing the Bridge with different people over the years, a story usually comes up that a worker fell into the concrete mixture while it was being poured resulting in that worker being buried in the Bridge. According to this story, there was nothing they could do to get him out and had to leave him in a concrete grave – knowing, however, that the Confederation Bridge piers were poured off-site I am not sure if the locale even fits the story. Still, the story at least suggests that people other than investors and government representatives were responsible for actually building and maintaining the Bridge.*

Chapter Three – Media and the Bridge

Recently with my family, on a summer day trip to Charlottetown, I crossed the Confederation Bridge and felt overwhelmed at the size of what I have been studying for so long. As the Bridge stood in my rear-view mirror I was greeted on the PEI side by a variety of stores called the Gateway Village. My first impression of the village was that it was somewhat representative of the nightmares imagined by those who romanticize a “simple island way of life”; the idea being that the island and islanders would see their way of life change because of the Bridge, opening it up to a focus on commercialism. As a tourist and not a local, however, I felt as though I was in any other tourist area and appreciated the consistency of familiar franchises like Subway Restaurant. On a smaller scale it was like the waterfront in Boston, Massachusetts with its street musicians and guided tours, or L.L. Bean in Freeport, Maine, with Ben & Jerry’s and sunburned shoulders on a summer day. The Gateway Village had all things necessary to make a tourist comfortable or uncomfortable after their drive depending on your position on overcrowded commercial areas. There were shops with trinkets catering to different tastes and budgets; there were restaurants, as well as over-crowded take-out type lobster shacks that had the “island charm” you’d expect; all the things were there to keep you spending while you stretch your legs after a long drive from New York State or Ontario etc... In one of these shops amid the mugs, PEI mud shirts, and Raspberry soda pops with Anne of Green Gables on the label, there is the Confederation Bridge DVD playing on constant loop for all passers-by to see. Seemingly this video is irrelevant and just another item for sale in a tourist shop, however, upon careful consideration I think this DVD is

meaningful. It is the first exposure one has to the Confederation Bridge in terms of media when entering the province via the Bridge and it also has a large audience.

Upon exiting the Island there is an interpretation style building on the New Brunswick landing. On this side of the Bridge I stopped and was able to take a picture next to the concrete behemoth. [This spot is recommended to tourists] Passing by friendly like-minded tourists I walked out to a muddy perch and was able to get a nice picture in a sort of about the author style pose. Walking into the tourist structure, a long parking lot away, I found a store and roadside museum type place with a small shop of “now or never” souvenirs; here I debated decking myself out in Bridge merchandise however the prices were sobering. Compared to the PEI side there are no franchises or shops to keep you entertained and there was nowhere near the volumes traffic.

This chapter examines media representations of the Confederation Bridge in film, tourist promotion, and various news reports. While not claiming to be representative, the media sampled here indicates the range of representations that have been circulated from the opening of the Bridge to the present.

Film

The film currently on an endless loop at Gateway Village was made in 1997. According to the cover text, the DVD playing at Gateway Village and entitled “Confederation Bridge/ Pont de la Confederation” is “a comprehensive look at the planning, construction, and operation of the Confederation Bridge.” The front cover of the DVD has a picture of the Bridge stretching into the sunset giving one the sense that it

stretches on forever. Inside the case there is a diagram depicting blueprints of one of the bridge posts. (Moses, Confederation Bridge/ Pont de la Confederation, 1997) The filmmaker David Moses is president of Moses Media. According to the firm's website, the company specializes in "commercial" advertising and has produced films promoting the Confederation Court Mall and the Confederation Center of the Arts. (Moses, Moses Media)

Peeling off the shrink-wrap of the Confederation Bridge DVD, and loading it into the player, the first thing one sees is a simple title menu that allows the viewer to choose between narration in English or French; suited to represent Canada's official languages. Choosing English the video opens up with old photos of people crossing in row boats and sailboats, much like explorers conquering a new land. These images are followed by images of a ferryboat and cruise ship culminating in a shot of the Confederation Bridge connecting the island to the mainland with triumphant note strikes in the soundtrack suggesting that this is a climactic event in history. After this montage there is narration that explains the need for the Bridge and the public-private partnership that emerged out of this need. This section of the film essentially lays out the rules of the relationship (those available in detail in the Northumberland Crossing Act) and discusses the bargain between the Federal Government of Canada and Strait Crossing Development Inc. The DVD then briefly considers how the environment was important to the developers. It explains that they took the necessary steps to ensure the environment was safe before the project went forward. At the same time they discuss the environment the visual clips show birds mixed with other nature shots of nature.

Watching this scene I was led believe that on some level that the Bridge was not intrusive. Looking at the birds while the narrator spoke on the environment suggested a restored harmony with nature and that nature had accepted the Bridge.

The focus of the video then shifted to the construction of the Bridge. This section focuses on the technical aspects of construction, as it explains what materials were used and how the pieces were assembled and moved from site to site. There are scenes of people pouring concrete, people welding, and other tasks. The film claims that the majority of the workers came from the region, and identifies the project leaders such as Paul Giannelia, developer and CEO of Strait Crossing Limited (Wilfrid Laurier University) and Gilles de Maublanc, the construction manager. (Macdonald, Bridging the Strait: The Story of the Confederation Bridge Project, 1997, p. 97) The narrator states that the project provided good experience for the workers and instilled a sense of local pride in industry. The voice-over claims that workers gained valuable skills on this project and that the builders are thankful to the workforce for “a job well done.” The DVD provides many of the facts, discussed in chapter two of this thesis, about the specific construction materials and methods used to put things in place. For example, the film highlights the fact that the Bridge pier bases stand at different heights because of the requirements of their placing in the water and the different depths.

Also, in this section of the film, specialized machines are highlighted such as the floating swan crane - one of several used to build the Bridge. The floating crane is shown carrying extremely large pieces of concrete and putting them in place. The DVD

acknowledges the difficulty presented by ice in the straight during the winter and shows the technology used to keep ice off the base during construction. A shield at the base of the Bridge pushes the ice upward breaking it into smaller pieces. As the DVD progresses, in what appears to be a public relations exercise, individuals board the “swan” crane and enjoy exploring the machinery in apparent amazement as several comment on the size of the machine. This segment implies that people were excited about the project in PEI and marveled at the efforts of those building the Bridge. After this section, one is presented with more construction details leading up to scenes reflecting the naming and opening of the Bridge.

In order to represent the naming of the Bridge, the scene shifts to a press room where members of the naming committee and a representative from the federal government, announce the name, Confederation Bridge, followed by a round of applause. This scene suggests that the name was not controversial. Although the voice-over acknowledges that it was a hard decision, with many alternatives being suggested, but Confederation Bridge “was the resounding favorite.” After the naming, the film moves to the building of the toll booths on the PEI side. This is followed by a vivid display of fireworks celebrating the completion of the last section of the Bridge when the provinces, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, were finally joined by the massive Confederation Bridge. Workers are shown celebrating with champagne and dancing to “Twist and Shout” by the Beatles, and this is followed by scenes illustrating the finishing work of the Bridge with the placement of traffic signs, cameras, pavement, and monitoring sensors.

Near the end of the DVD, another apparent public relations shot shows the Bridge builders and project managers celebrating with a family barbecue. Everyone is smiling and drinking Pepsi Cola in these shots, eating hot dogs, and looking relieved that the project is over and done. There is also an unveiling of a monument that names all of those responsible for the building of the Bridge. The DVD shows the “Bridge Fest” in which the public walks and runs across the Bridge in the excitement of opening day. There is a shot of live music with Jimmy Rankin and others performing a concert in honor of the opening. These scenes are followed by the inaugural drive across the Bridge mixed with scenes of the RCAF “Snowbirds” flying over and the premieres of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island enjoying the festivities. (Moses, Confederation Bridge/ Pont de la Confederation, 1997)

As the credits rolled, I believe the film demonstrated that Confederation Bridge is proof positive that if people work together no goal is out of reach. I also believe that it was the intention of the film-makers that I see it this way. What was presented was people banded together to join the Island to the Mainland, conquering the Northumberland Strait, and finally uniting PEI to the rest of Canada. I believe that unity was an underlying theme at the heart of this DVD. It is clearly a great promotional piece for the P3 partnership, and aside from being outdated, serves the purpose of being a “popular” take on the history of how the Bridge came to be. From the standpoint of one who has studied the Confederation Bridge in depth, the film only describes the building of the Bridge and only discussed other important issues briefly-such as the environment and the naming. In knowing the considerable opposition to the Bridge, and having discussed it

with people who were there around the time of the debate, this was a more contentious issue than this DVD acknowledges it to have been. So in this instance it is not what this DVD included that is important but what it left out. The fact that it is this video that is being constantly shown at Gateway Village, means that only a limited understanding of the Bridge is being offered to the public.

Another film detailing the construction of the Bridge is the National Film Board of Canada documentary “Abegweit” from 1998, by retired philosophy professor Serge Morin of Université de Moncton. (Morin, 1998) Morin is also known for his film “De l’autre cote de la glace” which, as the NFB synopsis states, uses hockey as a metaphor for the experience of Acadians in Canada. (De l'autre côté de la glace) “Abegweit” is in stark contrast to the Confederation Bridge film made by David Moses for SCDI. Where David Moses transitions are smooth, Morin’s are quick and shaky, making them appear untrained. Moses’s film plays like commercial, while Morin’s production plays like an advocacy film.

In the first scene of “Abegweit” provides a lingering shot of the moon with the narrator declaring that the film was done for the fishermen, Marine Atlantic employees, and families affected by the Bridge. This is the plot of the documentary - to stand up for those affected by the Bridge. The only mention of Mi’gmaq is found under the title Abegweit which said “the Micmac name for PEI”. The opening score plays a folk song about the Bridge, and shows the ferry as well as the link amid the sunset, transitioning to footage of the opening ceremony. There is a speech given by a ferry captain telling

passengers and crew “thanks for the patronage” (commenting on the closing). The overall impression is of a joyful celebration for people attending the opening and of a solemn day for the ferry workers.

Once this opening is established, there is a discussion of Confederation in the provincial legislature that emphasizes what the project means in terms of PEI’s place in Canada. It is said by the narrator that the Bridge project changed the Constitution by amending it by stating PEI will be connected by fixed link instead of ferry. The former premier, Joe Ghiz, then discusses the intense lobbying effort conducted by the federal government for the project. He explains that pressure compelled the provincial government to conduct a plebiscite. The former premier points out that since a majority of islanders were in favor of a fixed link his government believed that they had go forward regardless of their own beliefs on the matter. Despite Ghiz’s observations, Morin appears to have provided this background in order to portray the federal government as intrusive.

The focus then shifts to local fishermen and ferry workers. The narrator set up the footage with a critical comment on P3 agreements with private business. An unnamed fisherman then states that “the winner is the company the people of the area are the big losers”. An unidentified woman on the final ferry ride (who appears to have worked on the ferries) suggests that SCDI “should’ve had the opening on another day.” She indicates that by having the ceremonies on the same day as the final ferry journey, the opening appeared to “celebrate our sorrow.” The film then cuts together two competing views. An unidentified developer states that the Bridge is an innovative Canadian achievement, while a local artist follows this statement with the claim that this is a “foreign idea to us.” She then stresses the simplicity of islanders and “Islandness.” This is followed with

apparently unrehearsed footage of people racing across the Bridge for the first time, including an Acadian running team, and people in song playing a ukulele and guitar singing “we are walking across.” Premiere Ghiz is then shown signing the deal for the Bridge and the film then quickly cuts to a woman, speaking in French, stating that "the beauty of the island is that it's an island." Next, two unidentified men discuss the environmental impact in front of a Dunkin' Donuts. (*This refreshed my memory about going to Dunkin Donuts as a youth before Tim Horton's became so integral to being Canadian.*) One of the men states that "it would be good to have a job for 4 years" suggesting that he was or would become part of the construction team.

The scene shifts to a town hall meeting in an unidentified location where an unnamed woman stands up and declares that the assessment document provided by Environment Canada was a "failure." At the same meeting, another individual, speaking in French, states that "he worries the Bridge will affect ice, like a dam." The focus shifts back to a group of fishermen who comment on how they thought the Bridge will affect their lives. By adding intense anxiety through the use of symphonic music at this point in the film, it appears that Morin is attempting to encourage the viewer to take an anti-government and anti-business position. This slant is also apparent in the next scene which shows a man, who later in the film identifies himself as George Reid, who lived next to the building site. The film shows the project worksite towering over his humble home as the dramatic music continues. Morin clearly intends the viewer to sympathize with Reid, but while he seems a little vexed he is composed. Later in the film he declares that "he really don't mind it" but Morin's focus on the loud banging in background is insinuating otherwise.

A similar sequencing of images and sound accompanies the section of the film that focuses on the compensation plan for fishermen. One fisherman interviewed said profits were down. Another speaker claims that there was a 10 million dollar trust established for fisherman and the following scenes show fisherman and company officials arguing over the terms of the trust. One speaker claimed that only 5 million dollars was paid out over 3 years. This followed with a scene showing the developer Paul Giannelia (who is not identified by Morin) leaving for work early in the morning hearing the news coming over the radio that "another life was claimed" on the project. The film then cuts to an unknown woman who states that "in her 23 years of service on the ferry she met all kinds of people, and seen romances form 'it was like a family at sea.'" The film cuts again to an unidentified worker working on the Bridge who claims that "he has no choice it's the only job around" as though he is reluctant to do the work. The sequence ends with a women from the 'Friends of the Island' who claims that it came down to money; promoting an idea that they lost their challenge to the project, because it was not a level playing field, and implying that the fisherman and workers were also victims of the P3 agreement.

"Abegweit" ends with the workers celebrating the completion of the Bridge with fireworks. The workers monument bearing the names of those who built the Bridge engraved on bricks, is also shown, while the narrator states that the project will go down in history for changing the terms of Confederation while one of the project leaders talks of three deaths that occurred during construction. The credits roll while a folk song about the last ferry ride is heard. The final shots are of the Bridge with people walking on it. (Morin, 1998)

When I learned about the film “Abegweit”, I hoped that it would provide an alternative to Moses’ corporate film. However after processing what was presented I felt extremely let down. I believe the documentary led the plot too much by controlling the overall feeling through the use of soundtrack. It seemed as though Serge Morin attempted to create a villain out of the Paul Giannelia, however, I believe the man himself combated this just by being an average guy who was quite relatable. The film seemed highly disorganized and jumped around from topic to topic and group to group, this was too much for me and it was tough to watch. The fact that Morin did not identify everyone in his documentary makes it less credible in my eyes. It is also relevant to note that in researching this film it did appear once under the title “Unis Pour La Vie” (Véronneau, 2009, p. 34) however after looking extensively through film catalogues this title does not appear.

In comparing it to the David Moses DVD it is obvious that the two films represent both ends of the spectrum. Where Moses’s film played like a polished advertisement for the Bridge, the film by Morin was shot with a shaky “realist documentary” camera approach, and ultimately failed to keep my attention. It is obvious that the Moses DVD was so far the other-way from the Morin film that it left out the detail that someone died in the building of the Confederation Bridge.

Most importantly in watching this film “Abegweit” I logically assumed that it would have something to do with Mi’gmaq people, but this was not the case. Although I am unsure of why the name was appropriated, I have a suspicion that this was a

marketing tool that someone at the National Film Board would have distastefully chosen – not paying attention to the Mi'gmaq, instead looking for a title that would entice people to watch not having anything to do with the people who named it. I say this because the other name mentioned seems ambiguous. Given that apparently the original working title was in French, reflecting Morin's Acadian background, it would seem as though using the somewhat "hip" Abegweit title for the film was an attempt to align it with the marginalized. But not giving first nations a venue to discuss their views inadvertently causes the film to add to their oppression. This is my main concern with the film. To use the Mi'gmaq name in this way is unacceptable and shows a lack of tact. To me it seems by naming it "Abegweit" the filmmaker has trivialized the Mi'gmaq. This is what a title like this said to me when it does not even consider the Mi'gmaq relationship with the Bridge. What Morin appears to be saying is: "We lost our way of life, our jobs, and fisheries; we are like the Mi'gmaq now, poor us.", at least this is the impression I get looking at it from my viewpoint. The title of the film is important because people see it and make impressions about the narrative. In naming it as such it misled people.

More recently, Northumberland Ferries Limited (NFL) has been running an advertisement entitled "Find Your Ferry Tale" that capitalizes on the nostalgic feeling for the seasonal ferry crossing between Wood Island, PEI and Caribou, Nova Scotia created by the building of the fixed link. Going to the NFL website one can find this reel on the lead page. Clicking on the YouTube embedded video link, a pop up presentation occurs which plays the thirty two second clip. This clip shows tight pick up shots of a ferry cutting through the water changing to shots of sunshine cutting through various areas on

the vessel. A voice-over is cued overtop of a soundtrack consisting of piano and other instruments making sentimental sounds in which the narrator is heard claiming that “Once upon a time, riding on a ferry boat made any trip to the Maritimes unforgettable...it still does.” (Find Your Ferry Tale, 2013) The viewer subsequently sees an empty vessel which then comes to life with cars boarding and passengers on deck. The slogans, “Embark. Discover. Remember” appear across the screen as the clip ends.

I first saw this clip on television and, in my opinion; it is a successful ad campaign for the NFL. It attracts a market for nostalgic local travelers and perhaps those from abroad who remember taking the ferry in the 90s. The choice of nostalgic music and the soothing voice of the narrator play out like a sweet memory. What this proves to me is that although the ferry crossing to Borden has ended, ferry service from Caribou is still very much alive and in season provides another way to cross. This ad made me reconsider the representations of the “death” of the ferry in PEI.

Tourism Websites

Despite NFL’s creative ad campaign, most travelers and tourists still arrive on the island at Borden via fixed link. This means that the looping Moses Media DVD about the Confederation Bridge, playing at the Gateway Village, is the most often seen visual account of the Bridge. Knowing this, it is necessary to discuss the venue in which it plays. Tourism PEI website bills the Gateway Village, at the Borden crossing, as an introduction to island culture. (PEI Gateway Village, 2013) As indicated above, the village is a place

where people can stop and rest before heading to destinations such as the provincial capital, Charlottetown, and tourism statistics indicate that it is well frequented. (See Appendix A)

Having traveled to Gateway Village I know that, aside from a monument and some history blurbs on plaques, there is little about “Island culture.” I remember having a meal and browsing the souvenir shops. There was a bench with a big lobster for a photo op. During my visit there were also some people dancing to a fiddle soundtrack. I, like many, others filtered in and out of the shops. I walked in to one of the shops that I cannot remember the name of having not paid attention, and I remember seeing the DVD playing atop a rack. I watched it for a couple seconds and my glance moved to Bridge merchandise that I felt was too expensive. I believe as though this experience was the average interaction with the DVD and the whole time I was there I cannot remember anyone watching its entirety. I am sure, however, that like myself, someone would purchase it there and watch it in the comfort of their home. I am realistic in this sense that the shop is not conducive with watching a DVD and the people in the shops are somewhat hurried. For better or worse this is the audience.

In addition to the possibility of viewing the Moses film at Gateway Village, tourists might also encounter representations of the Confederation Bridge on tourism websites. Two sites in particular provide “official” representations. The Tourism PEI website offers a perspective from the provincial government and the Tourism

Charlottetown site integrates the Bridge into a local context. As noted by Roberta Jolliffe and Lee MacDonald in their academic article “Cultural Rural Tourism: Evidence from Canada,” Prince Edward Island, like other provinces in the Maritimes, needs to focus on tourism to ensure that revenue is brought into the province. Jolliffe and MacDonald point out that tourism is important to the Island in rural areas where other local industry is shutting down and that the Bridge has made travel to the province easier. (Jolliffe & MacDonald, 2003, p. 313) Websites are an important part of the infrastructure created to entice tourists.

On the provincial website images of the Confederation Bridge are absent from the main page. Instead beaches, food, and artwork are promoted. There are links to local attractions such as National and Provincial Beaches, Golf Courses, the Anne of Green Gables National Historic Site and other “Authentic Island Experiences.” The “Travel and Maps” section of the website provides information on the Bridge under the heading “Getting Here from There.” The text describes the Confederation Bridge as “dramatic” and as an “engineering marvel” The text also indicates that it merely takes 10 minutes to drive across the Bridge. (Getting to PEI, 2013). A link in this section takes the viewer to an image of the Bridge that when clicked takes you to another page which opens with an image of the Bridge hanging in a sunset. The page reads “Driving to PEI: look both ways before crossing the strait, arrive by Bridge leave by ferry (or vice versa).” Thus the Tourism PEI website acknowledges the attraction of nostalgia for the ferry and seizes on the opportunity to market both as alternatives for travelers. The site is designed for a wide audience as it provides information on the distance from PEI to Toronto, Montreal, Boston and New York City along with driving directions from Halifax, Moncton,

Quebec, and Montreal. (Driving to Prince Edward Island, 2013) What this implies is that these are the places where tourists are expected to come from and this appears to be corroborated by recent tourism statistics. The Tourism Charlottetown site also only mentions the Confederation Bridge in their section with the heading “Getting Here by Car.” As with the Tourism PEI’s site the text indicates that the Bridge is a “marvel” but also provides a toll free number for current bridge conditions. (2013 Charlottetown Activity Guide, 2013).

A random internet search in 2011 using the keywords “Confederation Bridge” and “Tourism” resulted in a number of private retail websites that offered further information and Bridge representations to tourists. One company, Cavendish Figurines, has a store in the Gateway Village that sells souvenirs and offer a number Bridge related items for sale. Prints are available in small white cardboard frames that show the Bridge over the water, back-dropped by a cloudy sky. The shop also stocks David Williams, twenty-eight page, *Confederation Bridge Pictorial Review* (Charlottetown: Allied Sales Ltd., 1997) as well as Harry Thurston’s popular account, *Building the Bridge to PEI* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing 1998). Included in their stock list are two mugs which have cartoonish drawings of the Bridge on them. Other items for sale with Bridge images on the Cavendish Figurine website, and in their store, are playing cards and commemorative spoons, as well as the Moses DVD. Other Bridge items, previously available in the company’s older web posts, are pins, key chains, magnets, memo pads. (Cavendish Figurines) All of the items available in the store present the Bridge as a notable part of PEI history in one way or another. An older website, no longer available, entitled PEI Emporium that promoted Island-made products to tourists, described the Bridge replacing

the ferry as another “chapter” in island history. (PEI Emporium, 2000-01) The text also used the term “marvel” to describe the Bridge and appeared to link its own products made by PEI artisans with the engineering achievement.

The material I saw at the Gateway Village was similar to other merchandise in other tourist markets. It seems the goal is to provide a variety of items for people to buy of varying prices. The items on these sites and others seen in shops all promote Bridge through their merchandise probably because it is commonly understood to be a marvel. During the writing of this thesis I had time to look over my sources more than once and I noticed some changes in between. The PEI Emporium website, that offered high end island made tourist merchandise no longer exists, perhaps the shop itself is still there, what this could indicate is that the bottom fell out of Bridge merchandise or simply it is too expensive for the current economics, both ideas are my speculation as to why. The bridge being marketed in this way showed that it is a symbol that can be a money maker. I have a Confederation Bridge t-shirt because it is what I chose to study for so long. I feel that when people travel, in general, they want to bring something home for their collection of tourism items. I have experienced this growing up on the reserve where my father ran an outfitter business of sorts in which he, a professional guide, took Germans and groups interested out on the land for an authentic Mi'gmaq experience and then returned to our house for an explanation of traditions. I can remember my family preparing trinkets and mementos that offered the tourists a little something to take home to their country and share.

More recently the Confederation Bridge appears to be less prominently featured in tourism web sites. For example, the federal tourism website for the Canadian Tourism Commission only mentions the link in a traveller's blog that reported going to see the "expanse of the Confederation Bridge." (Prince Edward Island - Day One) Nevertheless, the *Canadian Business Journal*, in a report on their website, quotes Michel Le Chasseur, General Manager of the Confederation Bridge, as stating that 15 years after its construction the Bridge management has "increased support" for local tourism agencies and that "it is very natural for [the Bridge] to support the tourism industry that drives traffic into the region." (Confederation Bridge 15th anniversary, 2014)

Print and Television News Media

Print and television news media are other mediums where the Confederation Bridge is frequently represented. The common themes reflected in this material are organized under the sub-headings below.

The 10th Anniversary

The year 2007 marked the tenth anniversary of bridge operations, and several stories in online/print news media reviewed the impact of the Confederation Bridge. On the front page of the *Guardian*, author Dave Stewart wrote that "whether people like the Bridge," it had been good for the economy. He backed this claim with Statistics Canada numbers that suggested that over 1 billion dollars in sales among PEI retailers in 1997

were linked to the opening of the Bridge. These increased sales had allowed for more “big box” stores to open and by 2006 sales in the island’s retail sector had reached 1.48 billion - representing an increase of about 500 million dollars per year over the decade. Stewart quoted, Valerie Roy, CEO of the Greater Moncton Chamber of Commerce, who suggested that Bridge had not hurt their economy and had actually increased the presence of PEI shoppers visiting the town. Stewart also cited UPEI’s Island Studies professor, Dr. Godfrey Baldacchino, who had suggested that the island had lost some of its uniqueness because the Bridge made it possible to travel readily back and forth making the trip to PEI less “exotic.” (Stewart, *Island's wonder of world began 10 years ago*, 2007)

Another article from Brent Mazerolle of the *Moncton Times & Transcript* offered more on the Confederation Bridge 10 years later. Mazerolle’s article asked “has the Bridge been a boom?” In particular, he examined the impact of the Bridge on areas such as, the fisheries in PEI, the local economy, and tourism, since there had been fears that the Bridge would impact these areas in a negative way. Mazerolle reported that the fisheries had been impacted, however he sourced Mark Lanteigne, a marine biologist, who stated that other factors needed to be considered, among them the development of a more efficient fishery since the Bridge had been built. Lanteigne claimed that the lobster fishery had been on the decline since 1985, but that with other commercial catches the overall “biomass” of the ecosystem had been sustained and that for some species populations flourished. Mazerolle’s article, however, suggested that the Bridge had negatively affected local business with the opening of big box stores, but argued that this would have happened with or without the Bridge. Commenting on tourism, Mazerolle noted that the Bridge had made it easier to get to the island and, overall, the Bridge had

made a positive impact despite the loss of 600 ferry jobs, citing that farming and other business has become efficient. (Mazerolle, 2007)

On the tenth anniversary, Jim Brown, in an article for the local Summerside, PEI, paper, the *Journal Pioneer*, reported on the Tour de PEI. An event organized by the operators of the Confederation Bridge and the World Cup Cycling Organization that included time trails on the Bridge itself. Brown's main source for his report was Marsha Dorion, the director of marketing and community affairs for the Confederation Bridge. According to Dorion, the Bridge operators and the World Cup Cycling association had joined together to develop the international event that would run for three years. Dorion focused on the challenging nature of the event, but it is clear from the article that the project was designed to promote a positive image of the Bridge as well. (Brown J. , 2007) This was reinforced by the logo for the event which features the Bridge and can still be found on the Tour de PEI webpage. (Tour de PEI, 2009)

In their 10th anniversary reporting on the Confederation Bridge's legacy, the CBC interviewed Don Cudmore, executive director of the Tourism Industry Association of P.E.I., who said there was a 40% increase "in island visits" since 1997. The CBC report qualified this with commentary from Don Groom, a local restaurant owner, who stated that he had noticed that the length of tourist stays had lessened in the 10 years since the fixed link had opened. Drawing from his own experience, Groom claimed people used to stay for "a week or two" and further speculated that the shorter stays could also be the result of cheaper travel opportunities to Caribbean destinations. The CBC substantiated this idea by interviewing Stephen Poloz, chief economist with Export Development Canada, who stated that the higher value of the Canadian dollar that year could be

responsible for that trend toward foreign destinations. The report culminated by coming back to Cudmore and quoted him saying that, “I don't know that we can credit or discredit the Bridge for declining lengths of stay,...If we're declining at all, we'd rather it decline from 1.2 or 1.3 [million] than the 750,000 that we had pre-bridge, so it's a good news story.” (10 years of bridge bring mixed tourism results, 2007)

In Charlottetown, the *Guardian* reported in 2007 on a 10th anniversary “dinner meeting” celebration that was held as part of the Confederation Bridge Symposium, and in attendance were civil-engineers as well as Peter MacKay, then Minister of Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency [ACOA], who was a key speaker. MacKay touted the project as a great example of a P3 partnership and also suggested that public input had been important. According to MacKay “60 public meetings” had been conducted when the Bridge was being conceptualized, but he conceded that the “greatest challenge was emotional.” “A number of Islanders... questioned whether the construction of the Bridge would change the identity of the Island.” MacKay maintained that this did not happen and claimed that “the Island is still the Island.” He further deemed the project an “environmental means of transport.” Also in attendance were Premier Robert Ghiz and Paul Giannelia CEO of SCDI. Giannelia also addressed the 10th anniversary dinner as part of the Symposium and stated that his company had, “...faced four major challenges in building the Bridge: improving the quality of life of the people; respecting environmental concerns; improving access for people travelling to and from P.E.I.; and improving the environment.” Echoing MacKay, Giannelia said that “...he was most proud of the fact the Bridge’s construction had reduced harmful emissions into the air to the tune of 50,000

tonnes a year.” (MacKay praises Confederation Bridge as one of greatest engineering feats, 2007)

It appears to me that the 10th year anniversary articles, for the most part, highlighted the economic benefits of the Bridge, and the celebrations were mostly self-congratulatory - as witnessed in Chapter Two. I can't help but wonder what would have happened if the room in which Peter MacKay spoke to the choir, was filled with fishermen, activists and Island Studies people? Understandably, those who put the project in place are not going to criticise it. In a way I felt that the discussion of the economic benefits tended to silence cultural objections. For me, this reinforces the adage “money talks.” Unlike the hosts of the celebration dinner, most cultural organizations do not have the resources to mount such high profile events.

Environment

As the *Guardian* report on the 10th anniversary “dinner meeting” indicates, the environment is also a concern that presented itself in news media. MacKay and Giannelia’s comments were in fact part of a co-ordinated effort by SCDI to support their bid for the Transportation Association of Canada’s (TAC) Environmental Achievement Award in 2007. On the 10th anniversary of the Bridge, the operators wanted to be considered for this award because, in the words of their engineering consultants, Jacques Whitford, traffic consumed “1/10th” of the gas that ferries would have and that this had

lowered “greenhouse gas emissions.” Although the company failed to win the industry-based award, it went instead to the Kicking Horse Canyon Project in British Columbia, the argument they presented, that in terms of gas consumption and the emission of carbon dioxide the Bridge may be considered good for the environment, did find its way into the *Guardian* news report. (SCDI, 2007)

In contrast to the *Guardian* report, a year earlier Charles Mandel, in an article in the *Telegraph Journal*, had suggested that the Bridge was having an entirely negative impact on the environment and that “[t]he Northumberland Strait may be dying.” Citing a 2006 Department of Fisheries and Ocean’s report, Mandel’s article suggested that the Confederation Bridge’s piers were causing erosion in the Northumberland Strait. Fishermen were attributing their low catches to this development and, according to Mandel, had called for a federal government bailout of \$200,000 per fisherman to offset their losses. (Mandel, 2006) As Caitlin Johnson has pointed out in her recent MA thesis, there has not been any follow up study from DFO to assess the continuing impact of the Bridge on both the shell and ground fish stocks in the Northumberland Strait. (Johnson, 2013)

The news media also failed to follow up on the claims of 2006 report, but did report extensively when the credibility of one “expert” associated with assessing the environmental impact of the Bridge was called into question. On September 27, 2013, the *Guardian* reported that, Louis LaPierre a retired professor from University of Moncton, had misrepresented his credentials and that Transport Canada had therefore been forced to look into his contribution to the original environmental assessment of the fixed link’s impact. The report stated that LaPierre had claimed a PhD in ecology from the University

of Maine, when his actual PhD was in education from Walden University in Minnesota. Nevertheless, the *Guardian* article stated that Transport Canada still believed that the science in the environmental assessment was “sound.” (Wright, Confederation Bridge scientist resigns in disgrace, 2013) A subsequent *CBC News* report further claimed that LaPierre had not been part of the actual work of the Environmental Review Committee. (Louis LaPierre had no role in P.E.I. bridge studies, say feds, 2013) Nevertheless, the CBC’s initial report on the scandal did indicate that Christian Brun, the Executive Secretary of Maritime Fishing Union, had supported an inquiry into LaPeirre’s role since he doubted the credibility of the environmental assessment - pointing out that, “the area of the Northumberland Strait around and near the Bridge is the only place in Atlantic Canada that hasn't seen exponential lobster catches since the Bridge opened.” (Transport Canada probes LaPierre's work on P.E.I. bridge, 2013) Subsequent news stories failed to follow up on this claim, focusing instead on LaPeirre’s fraud.

*From what I see in these reports, the discussions of the Bridge’s impact on the environment are all in past terms. Nothing indicates to me that the checks on the state of the environment around the Bridge are ongoing, and I believe that the occasional assessments in the history of the project are not enough. The Bridge is more fluid and effects can’t be measured on a timeline. I am not a scientist, but I know more research on the Northumberland Strait post-Bridge is needed. The media has failed in this respect. I say this because the breaking news story was on La Pierre’s falsified credentials, and the media failed to report on the bigger picture - which is the environmental status of the Strait **now**. Reading Johnson’s thesis made me realize that there has been no report that*

focuses on the environment by the government since 2006 - the same report that noted that the effects of the Bridge were harmful. In light of this, my impression is that the oversight has gone wrong - in the sense that shareholders and profits appear paramount and the environment has come second. I believe that an eight year gap, from 2006 to 2014, is too long a wait for further environmental research. As I pointed out in Chapter Two concerning the environment, I believe that it is necessary to zoom out from the bridge and look at the surrounding areas. I know the bridge itself is being studied to see how it is holding up in terms of material and overall structure, however, we should not overlook how the wider environment is holding up. It seems to me that they only considered the environment before they “broke ground” on the project and everything since has been poorly researched.

P3 debate

A year after the 10th anniversary stories appeared in the media, criticism of the Confederation Bridge from labour unions reappeared. In an open letter to Rodney Macdonald (then Premier of Nova Scotia) published as an opinion piece in the *New Glasgow Evening News*, Danny Cavanagh, Regional Vice-President of CUPE, once again criticised the P3 partnership. According to Cavanagh, the partnership was clearly not a success. He argued, based on the Auditor General’s 1995 report, that it would have been cheaper for government to have constructed the Bridge since the P3 agreement had cost taxpayers an extra “45 million dollars.” In addition the “financial risk” had been borne by the federal government and not SCDI, which, according to Cavanagh was 85% “foreign

owned.” Cavanagh also suggested that the costs of subsidizing the ferry had been inflated in order to make the P3 agreement look more cost effective. (Danny Cavanagh, 2008)

In contrast, Professor Charles J. McMillan, of the Schulich School of Business at York University, wrote a letter-to-the-editor published in the *Guardian* which further praised the partnership, three years after he had celebrated the industry award for best P3 project in Canada in the *Globe & Mail* (see Chp. Two above). In his letter, McMillan described the Bridge as “majestic” and like a “Roman aqueduct.” According to Professor McMillan, the Bridge serves as a prime example of a successful P3 and that the government of Canada should use it as a model for building infrastructure in the future. (McMillan, 'Hailing an engineering marvel ... at last', 2009) This provoked a follow-up op-ed response in the *Guardian* from James Rodd, leader of the Island New Democrats. Rodd critiqued the P3 partnership by pointing out that Prince Edward Islanders already paid tax for the Trans-Canada highway but were further taxed by the Confederation Bridge tolls. (Rodd, 2009)

Echoing Danny Cavanagh, Rodd also argued that the government could have built the Bridge privately and collected toll money instead of a private business, but suggested that if this were the case there would probably have been more pressure to remove the tolls. Essentially, Rodd challenged McMillan’s assessment by suggesting that the cost savings were illusory and that it was in the public interest to have infrastructure projects like the Confederation Bridge in the hands of government. Nevertheless, his partisanship was apparent in his attack on the Conservative party’s approach, asking if “...Mr. McMillan or another [Prime Minister Brian] Mulroney defender - if one exists - could explain why they believe Mulroney's 3-P model is superior to one in which our

elected officials are directly accountable to the public for decisions related to the construction, financing, operation and ownership of public assets.” (Rodd, 2009)

Bridge Tolls

As the media discussions of the P3 partnership reflect, the tolls on the Confederation Bridge frequently feature in new stories about the fixed link. As early as 1999, CBC ran a television news story that referred to the bridge tolls in the context of controversial toll road sections of the TransCanada Highway in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The story featured an interview with the Nova Scotian Conservative MP Bill Casey, who was opposed to the new toll roads because they represented a private enterprise taxing users which was not the case on any other sections of the road in Canada. When the interviewer asked why he did not object to tolls on the Confederation Bridge, which also benefited a private company, Casey responded that the charge was justifiable because the fixed link crosses the Northumberland Strait and that across Canada users had “traditionally” paid tolls to cross water by either bridge or ferry. Casey, however, expressed his belief that “ideally” tolls should not apply to any section of the TransCanada Highway including the Bridge. (Tolls on the Trans-Canada, 1999)

Despite Casey’s analysis, news reports since the opening of the Bridge reveal that tolls continue to be a concern. For example, on December 16, 2010, CBC News reported that the tolls were to increase 75 cents to \$43.25 provoking a hostile response from several drivers, including Sheila Winn who believed that it was “not right for islanders.” Speaking on behalf of the Bridge operator, Michel Le Chasseur, pointed out that SCDI’s contract with the federal government allowed them to increase tolls at “75 per cent of the

rate of inflation.” According to Le Chasseur, the company was “not even keeping pace with the cost of things, which goes up 100 per cent [of] the rate of inflation” and that the toll had only “gone up a total of under \$8 since the bridge opened in 1997.” The reported noted that this amounted to a 24% increase over fourteen years and that the price of gas and ferry travel had “gone up more.” The story ended with a quote from PEI premier Robert Ghiz stating that ending the toll would be expensive, but that “perhaps the federal government could explore [it] at some point down the road.” (Confederation Bridge tolls to rise Jan. 1, 2010)

The print media also reported on the same issue and in 2011 when toll rates for two-axle vehicles increased again to \$44.25; Teresa Wright reporting for the *Guardian* claimed that it was the largest since the Bridge had opened. (Wright, Confederation Bridge toll rates going up, 2011) In the Saint John *Times and Transcript*, James Foster also reported on the rising tolls, but stated that since the company built the Bridge it was entitled to raise the tolls in order to manage its operations. (Foster, 2011) The issue provoked Lindsey Best, an island resident and first year student at UPEI, to write a letter to the editor of the Summerside *Journal Pioneer* reflecting on the cost of the toll. Best suggested that the fees were hurting individual “islanders” as well as the trucking business upon which “islanders” depend and that the toll should be no more than “\$20 per two-axle vehicle to cross daily.” Best understood that the cost of building the Bridge was expensive, but believed that the cost should decline overtime and not increase, since the debt incurred during construction would be paid back. The student also suggested that the PEI government should give residents a “free pass to cross once a year” and ended the letter with an emotional appeal to island solidarity. “I pay my taxes; I work hard, and feel

as if I am not being a respected citizen for choosing to live my life in P.E.I. I feel as if I am speaking, what most Islanders are thinking, and my voice should at least be considered.” (Best, 2011)

Best’s opinions appeared to be confirmed in the fall of 2013 when a petition to end the tolls was circulated on Prince Edward Island which encouraged Ted Andrews, a resident of Kensington, to send his own letter to the editor of the *Guardian*. Andrews believed that the federal government was obligated to provide access to the mainland and that through government grants taxpayers were “already paying enough.” Using similar language to Best, Andrews stated that he was “not opposed to paying a fee,” but that he did not believe that “Island residents should be held hostage.” Andrews also advocated a fixed fee of \$20 “for Island residents” that could be facilitated by “a simple sticker... provided to licensed drivers by presenting their Island driver licences to bridge authorities.” (Andrews, 2013)

In addition to the rising cost, the actual collection of tolls has also recently become an issue in the local news media. On April 10, 2014 several new outlets, including the *Guardian* and the online *Nova News NOW.COM*, published a public relations piece produced by the Quebec firm Transcontinental Media that announced SCDI’s plan to study the viability of a self-service collection system in the overnight hours to cut costs. The TC Media article extensively quoted the bridge manager, Michel Le Chassuer, who tried to reassure readers by stating that “[r]ight now, all we have is the authorization to do the study. Nothing else has been done.” He also recognized that the Bridge tollbooth workers often act as tourist guides to visitors,” and, as a consequence, the study may recommend against automated collections since, “... [w]e need to maintain

our services to the public.” (TC Media, 2014) Nevertheless, Le Chassuer did indicate that the operator needed to be concerned with “sustainability and being a cost efficient business” and this coupled with the mere suggestions of a feasibility study provoked a response from the union that represents the bridge employees. On May 2, 2014 the PEI Union of Public Sector Employees issued a press release with the headline “Confederation Bridge Planning Cuts and Reduced Service.” (PEI Union of Public Sector Employees, 2014) In his article on the story, reproduced in both the *Journal Pioneer* and the *Guardian*, Mike Carson quote extensively from the union’s statement and highlighted the union president, Debbie Bovyer’s claim that employee safety was the excuse given for the potential change. Bovyer stated that Bridge officials believed that toll booth operators working at night were “more likely” to be robbed, but disputed this claim by pointing out that there had been no robberies at night since the Bridge opened and that “[s]ecurity measures are also in place to ensure that there aren’t large sums of money in the toll booths.” The union president suggested that the actual motive for investigating the self-service option was to cut labour costs and that going to a self-service only option at night could mean that “unionized workers could lose 23 hours of work per week.” She reinforced her argument by pointing out that booth operators can provide assistance to customers that self-service machine are unable to offer and that when the machines fail they have cause accidents when drivers attempt to reverse out of the lane. Although Carson largely reproduced the UPSE’s news release for his story, he did bracket their claims with quote from Le Chasseur who indicated that the union were “getting ahead of themselves” and the company was only proposing a pilot study and if the project did not meet its goals it would be “revamped or scrapped.” (Carson, Union raises concern over Confederation Bridge toll booths, 2014)

I was not surprised to see all the conflict people have with Bridge tolls. Prior to understanding the P3 agreement I wondered why we had to pay them - highway tolls also. I know a lot of people I have talked to, even about the tolls on the Halifax bridges, where I live, wonder when the dollars they pay, continuously, will be enough to pay off the debt of building the bridge. In my experience people have a common understanding that though they should only pay until the cost of building the bridge is recovered. As for the discussion of who should cross for free, I believe Mi'gmaq should be included if there is a list, because we have went back and forth to the island traditionally and that has to count for something. Ideas of entitlement seem to emerge, getting back to Canadian identity even as they play out in how people respond to the bridge tolls. There is a sense that being an Islander makes you something different than being Canadian, and concessions should be made because you are distinct. It appears that there is always a negotiation of power with the government, this is seen in Quebec with their distinct society status or First Nations with their treaties and rights – sometimes I believe it is a feature of being Canadian to want to negotiate special rights or distinction for your cultural group. What I worry about, however, is that this type of thinking creates second class citizens within Canada. When I think about my rights as a “Status Indian” I can't help but think about looking down at my peach colored, homemade looking status card, with its cheap laminate and cut out size that doesn't fit well in standard wallets. Under my picture, along the bottom the text reads, “is an Indian within the meaning of the Indian Act, chapter 27, Statutes of Canada (1985) – it is in this moment I realize “I have a race card.” I often heard jokes about someone pulling the figurative race card when they feel

they lost out because of their ethnicity or they want to manipulate the system - I actually have a “race card” - that in itself is an unsettling feeling, to me it means I am of another class. The cheapness of the methods in which the card is made also makes me feel lesser, compared to my driver’s licence with its high tech holograms. (I should however let the reader know that I once had a more high tech status card that I picked up while in Ottawa, however once I lost that one it was back to the 60’s peach one.)

Bridge Closures

While tolls frequently feature in news reports, bridge closures are the most commonly covered stories in news media. Whether caused by extreme weather, special events, or accidents, reports highlighting the disruption of bridge traffic often explore the specific impact on Prince Edward Island life and tend to examine the consequences for both private and commercial users. For example, in a December 22, 2010 article in the *Guardian*, Wayne Thibodeau reported that a winter storm had closed the Confederation Bridge resulting in “[d]ozens and dozens of trucks lined up on the New Brunswick side” of the fixed link. The trucks were unable to cross because of high winds that at times reached 100km-h. Thibodeau highlighted the fact that the closure had occurred three days before Christmas, a busy time for island stores who depend on shipments from the mainland. The article supported this statement with a quote from an apparently nervous Rhonda Victor of the Co-op Food Market, who claimed that “...baking supplies [were] being hit the hardest.” Thibodeau also quoted Tyson Kelly from the company Bulk Carriers that had several trucks left waiting on the roadside, stating that “it’s unfortunate it had to be this week... [but] it’s still better than when the ferry service was the only link

to the Island.” Kelly’s reasoning for this claim was that, instead of waiting to load onto a ferry after service resumes, when the Bridge reopens traffic can flow across easily. (Thibodeau, Bridge Closure Creates Shortages at Island Stores, 2010)

When the CBC news reported on the same closure, they indicated that Bridge had closed to commercial trucks about 50 times a year, and once again highlighted the impact on the island economy. Then PEI Transport Minister, Ron MacKinley, was particularly concerned about the impact of closures on the island potato industry and indicated that he would “like to see the potato board and [MP] Gail Shea from the federal department, somebody from the Bridge [,] and people from my dept[.], sit down” to work out a solution. One suggestion was to consider allowing full trucks to cross as an exception to the high-sided vehicle restriction during high winds, because their loads made them stable. He said the check for this weight could be done on scales and they could be “certified” in order to cross. A sub-heading in the report, “\$2 million impact”, indicated the estimated cost to the industry. In support, the report quoted local PEI farmer Alvin Keenan’s claim that “[w]e’re affected every time [the Bridge] closes.” According to Keenan, 600 trucks were tied up during the 33hr closure in December 2010 and that each trucker lost about \$200 an hour while standing still. For Keenan “[t]hat adds up to \$2 million hit to the economy.” (Bridge closures hitting potato exports, 2011) Despite these calls for a new approach to commercial traffic, almost a year later, on December 8, 2011, Dave Stewart reported in the *Guardian* that for a time “P.E.I. was cut off from the mainland” as a result of a closure due to “extremely strong winds.” The report, that also highlighted power outages on the island, noted that the Bridge had reopened the same day but remained closed to high-sided vehicles, motorbikes and vehicles towing trailers,

because the winds ranged, at times, between 110 and 137km-h. The report noted incidentally that the high winds had also “tied up” the ferries from P.E.I. and Caribou, Nova Scotia for the day. (Stewart, Confederation Bridge open to passenger vehicles, 2011)

While the concerns over commercial traffic often dominates reports of restrictions due to high winds, at times the weather events themselves have made Maritime and national news headlines for their unusual or extreme character. For example, Cindy Day in the Halifax *Daily News* reported on August 4th 2004, that a waterspout, a term given to tornados over water, had formed form forcing the Bridge’s closure. According to the report, this unusual weather event had also occurred in 1997. (Day, 2004) Severe winter storms that forced the Bridge to shut down can also make news far from PEI. On March 3, the *Brantford Expositor* in Ontario reported that “a driver’s nightmare” of “snow and wind” had resulted in an overnight closure to all traffic but suggested that such “full closures” were relatively rare. (Winter storm closes Confederation Bridge, 2008) Some stories are picked up from the new service, Canadian Press, such as the Global News report of a temporary closure on October 31st, 2012. (Canadian Press, 2012) A winter storm closure in late March 2014, was reported in both PEI and across Canada via Canadian Press. The Summerside *Journal Pioneer* reported that the RCMP had advised all islanders to stay off the roads and bridges due to the extreme conditions (Blizzard shuts down bridges, 2014), while the Regina *Leader Post* reprinted a Canadian Press story that the drifting snow had forced the closure of the Confederation Bridge, but coupled this with an account of a how the blizzard had hampered firefighters efforts to quell a house fire in New Glasgow, P.E.I.. (Canadian Press, 2014)

From what I can gather Prince Edward Island is often represented in the media as exotic compared to the rest of Canada. I say this because we find these stories of the small island province making headlines nationally. I also find there is a reoccurring theme of being cut-off from the mainland, which I find funny because it is not very far geographically. In my personal opinion, I feel that mainlanders tend to trivialize actual island life, if based solely on what the fiction of Lucy Maude Montgomery has become. I can personally relate. When I think about my experiences coming from a reserve, I believe some people casted a mold for what I was. On some level I believe people sometimes even act accordingly. People are often surprised to know Mi'gmaq are fans of popular music, eat hot dogs, and drive Chevy's like everyone else. Also, I think some people are surprised that we have adopted European housing and do not live in hide huts. "Cultural islands" may be what exists in areas annexed from mainland society, hence the mainland is as foreign a concept as Islandness and each needs the other to coexist. Mainland may simply mean convention. I believe on some level the exoticism or novelty of my ethnicity begins at a young age when people are taught by the education system that we were here historically, and are given examples of a couple role models but little is told of our experience now, taking away from our humanness.

Weather, however, is not the only reason the Confederation Bridge has closed. At times the Bridge has been intentionally shut down to allow for special events, such as the Tour de PEI mentioned above. (Brown J. , 2007) A cause of some contention represented in the media was the planned closure of the Bridge for the 30th anniversary Terry Fox Run in September 2010. Wayne Thibodeau's article on the event in the *Guardian* stated that

that Bridge had closed on seven occasions for special events and indicated that this particular closure would be for seven hours. The article also noted that some drivers had complained during the previous Terry Fox Run on the Bridge in 2005, which had seen “30 vehicles waiting” by the side of the road. Nevertheless, Michel Le Chasseur stated that the Bridge operator respected Fox’s legacy, while deflecting responsibility by noting that all such closures needed to be approved by the Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick provincial governments as well as Transport Canada. Still, Le Chasseur did not consider the closure for the run a problem and, indeed, stated that it was a “minor inconvenience.” He further explained that the Bridge would have a lane open for emergency vehicles. Although one island reader commented on the paper’s web page that he hoped “...this isn't the same Sunday as the CFL game in Moncton. That would certainly complicate things for any Islanders wanting to go to the game.” (Thibodeau, 2009) Perhaps in response to perceived concerns, the Summerside *Journal Pioneer* ran in August an article that quoted Laurel Lea, the “coordinator of marketing and community affairs” for the Bridge, who stated that in order to participate runners had to register, “no registration forms, no getting on the Bridge.” According to Lea, this condition was essential because with the schedule of shutdown there was a limited amount of time to shuttle people to the start line and, in her words, it could not be a “free-for-all event.” The article then highlighted the success of the 2005 event, citing the Terry Fox website’s numbers that estimated that “14,000 people took part and [that the run] raised \$375, 000 for the Terry Fox Foundation and cancer research” making it their most successful run to date. (Registration required for the Terry Fox bridge run, 2010) The generally positive press coverage was also reflected in a nationally circulated *Canadian Press* follow-up report that claimed that “10,000 walkers and runners [had] crossed the Confederation

Bridge” and quoted Terry Fox’s brother, Fred Fox, who said that “[t]he money has been used to make important breakthroughs in the fight against cancer” and culminated in telling the story of Terry Fox and his legacy. (MacDonald M. , 2010)

In the October of 2010 CBC News reported on another closure that had a far less altruistic goal, but received relatively little attention in other media. The report explained that the Confederation Bridge had been shut down momentarily to allow Red Bull, the energy drink company, to film a commercial. In the ad Dion Phaneuf, the Toronto Maple Leafs captain, who owns a home on the island, drinks a Red Bull, and then runs from PEI to Toronto. According to the report, the Bridge general manager, Michel Le Chasseur, Red Bull had “called on a Friday in August to ask for permission. Le Chasseur [had] told the Red Bull people they'd have to get approval from Transport Canada to fly low over the Bridge with the helicopter but other than that, it was OK with him.” In explaining his accommodating attitude, Le Chasseur indicated that the shutdown was only for a few minutes and appeared to suggest that it would be good publicity. "People in the downtown core of Toronto will say — or whoever is a Maple Leafs fan, I guess, will say — well, look at that.... To say the guy's famous, maybe he is, but we know one thing, he's a leader in the community and he's a respected person and why not?" All the same, the CBC report did indicate that the Bridge operator “get thousands of proposals every year from people who want to do something on the bridge, but Phaneuf is the only person who has been allowed to run on the bridge all by himself.” (Confederation Bridge Closed For Red Bull Ad, 2010)

The positive public relations potential of Bridge closures, reflected in the operator’s participation in the Red Bull ad, is also evident with their support of other

“private” events. Although not strictly speaking a closure, the *Journal Pioneer* reported in 2013 on the Atlantic Motorcycle Festival, that for six years running had included an event called the Confederation Bridge Cruise on the Canada Day weekend when bikers ride across *en masse*. According to the chairman of Atlanticade, Dale Hicks, “the bridge cruise was extremely popular with the bikers... Everywhere we go the first thing people talk about is the Confederation Bridge run.” Despite its popularity, however, the report noted that the “cap” for bikes the next time the event takes place would be “1300.” Hick’s stated that the caps was in place so that the organizers could be prepared on the event grounds for the influx of bikers and ensure that the event would “run smoothly.” (Carson, Atlanticade looks to top 2012 record this year, 2013) According to Atlanticade’s website, the Confederation Bridge has become a “Full Throttle Sponsor” of the event, and even included it as part of the 15 year Bridge celebrations. (Atlanticade, 2012)

I believe it is in the interest of the Confederation Bridge, as a company, to collaborate with other companies especially ones that will give them huge exposure. It was no surprise to me that Red Bull would be allowed to close the Bridge to film a commercial. Red Bull from my experience has become a world brand in the sense that it attaches itself to many things. I have an interest in extreme sports and everyone’s board and helmets are covered by Red Bull stickers, also insignias are found on jerseys and other apparel. Being such a large brand, I believe that having images of the Confederation Bridge displayed in the Red Bull adverts would definitely give the Bridge operators publicity. Another franchise that needs to be mentioned in this regard is the Toronto Maple Leafs - since hockey fans are also a large audience.

While motorcycle enthusiasts have welcomed the opportunity to have the Bridge to themselves, at least one national media report has indicated that not all travellers are comfortable with the crossing. On May 15, 2012 the *Globe & Mail* published Lisa Cochrane's personal account of overcoming her fear of crossing the Bridge. The resident of Blandford, Nova Scotia, discovered that she was not the only person that bridge operators have encountered who was afraid to drive across the Bridge and that there "a dozen or so a month" who needed Bridge personnel to drive the vehicles for them. Cochrane's fear stemmed from a collision with a deer on the New Brunswick side of the Bridge, but accidents on the Bridge itself that result in its closure frequently feature in media reports. (Cochrane, 2012) For example, on July 14, 2013 CBC News reported that the Confederation Bridge was shut down due to leak from a truck carrying natural gas. The report noted the leak was discovered at the Bridge's "Hazardous Scale" on the New Brunswick side. The CBC further reported that it took two hours to contain the leak while the police established a "1 km perimeter" around the truck for safety. (Confederation Bridge shut down for natural gas leak, 2013) The *Guardian's* report of the incident with the tanker transporting natural gas from Maine to Souris noted that it was the first time since the Bridge had opened that it had been closed for reasons other than severe weather or a special event, prompting several island readers to weigh in on the paper's web page. According to one anonymous reader, 'Island boy', "... on an Island with no major sea port and ONE means of connection for the trafficking of goods we should not be so stupid as to allow the transportation of things like natural gas in truck tankers!!!" When several others suggested that the delay was no worse than those experienced with the ferry, and

that attacking the Bridge once again was against “progress”, “Island boy” responded with a more detailed proposal to use ferries for dangerous cargos coupled with a critique of the provincial government.

Either we use a separate ferry or we make crossings at "down times" (late at night for example like we used to do at Borden)... there is a need to develop a second, major goods transportation system via a sea port. The old "bridge" construction site could be developed for example but it is somewhat remote from the main population areas and this would increase road truck traffic so it probably would be best to develop a sea port capability closer to Charlottetown. What is 'scary' is the fact that no one is even thinking about the concept of alternative supply capability and probably will not until the worst happens. Island governments seem to be more interested in investing in lotteries than maintaining the Island's population, much like the lack of future thought and investment in water resources or sewage disposal. Think about it. (Island-Boy, 2013)

An island dimension was also apparent in the coverage of a nine vehicle “pile-up” on the Bridge during a winter snow storm on February 16, 2014. While CBC News merely quoted Sgt. Andrew Blackadar of the RCMP stating that the Bridge had been closed from 11:00am to 2:00pm to clear up the accident caused by “near whiteout conditions” (Confederation Bridge closed after 9 vehicle pileup, 2014), reporters for the *Sackville Tribune-Post* highlighted that the vehicles were from “off-island” and had been carrying passengers who were attending the North River Sweetheart Hockey Tournament. The article discussed the islander’s efforts to house the stranded individuals and noted that Borden-Carleton “[f]irefighters provided the families with coffee and donuts, while some locals also made sandwiches.” (Tribune-Post Staff, 2014)

While drivers were not held responsible for either the “gas leak” or “white out” closures, some media reports suggested that inattention on the Bridge was of increased concern. Two days before the nine vehicle collision, CBC News reported that cell phone use was responsible for an increase in the number of incidents. The report quoted Michel

Le Chasseur, who told the CBC that “[i]n the past year and a half, we’ve seen five accidents on the Bridge that have a common denominator, which is driver inattention” adding that the bridge operator was “not going to wait for a fatality. We have to do something now.” Le Chasseur stated that workers on the Bridge had been instructed to use surveillance cameras on drivers that speed or “swerve” to see if they are on their phones. Steve MacDonnell of the RCMP was also quoted stating that the police force was “...probably dedicating at least three to four hours a day solely on cell phone enforcement.” The report also noted that the increased enforcement and monitoring of bridge surveillance cameras was, in part, a response to an incident in January 2014 when “a tractor trailer truck slammed into the back of a sweeper truck, sending two people to hospital and shutting the bridge down for hours.” The RCMP revealed that the driver had been using a cell phone. (Cellphones causing accidents on Confederation Bridge, 2014) Although one anonymous island resident who commented on the CBC report of that incident on their web page noted that it was ““a N.S. driver [who had] been ticketed for driving without due care and attention’.....there’s a shocker.” (CanDog, 2014)

The Charlottetown *Guardian*’s report on the same incident quoted Le Chasseur further, indicating that the accident could have been much worse if the driver had hit another type of vehicle. According to the Strait Crossing manager “[w]hat saved our man was the fact that the sweep truck, the bin was full. That added quite a lot of weight to the truck and that provided the cushion so that things didn’t end up being worse than they were.” He further added that in addition to the temporary closure of the Bridge, the concrete barrier also needed to be inspected for damage. In the *Guardian* report, Le Chasseur suggested that the increased number of accidents, largely due to inattention, had

highlighted the vulnerability of islanders. He recalled that “... a couple of Christmases ago the Bridge was closed to trucks for 50 hours and all of a sudden there was no more bread, no more flour, no more this, that and the other thing at the stores...[t]hat makes you think that [if] there is no more bread on P.E.I. after 50 hours....[what]... about petrol products, pharmaceutical products, you name it.” Le Chasseur implied that the success of the Bridge had made islanders more complacent and less able to deal with delays than when the ferry was running. In particular he noted that “with the advances in transportation to and from the province there are no inventories of goods on P.E.I. anymore.” As a consequence, he suggested that it was appropriate to revisit the Bridge closure contingency plan drafted by the federal government and Strait Crossing Limited in 1997. As part of any reassessment, Le Chasseur indicated that, in addition to using the island airports during any prolonged bridge closure, there should be plans for increased ferry service on the seasonal Caribou route and even a re-instatement of the Borden/ Carleton crossing if needed. (Carson, Confederation Bridge manager concerned about number of accidents, 2014)

I remember once reading something that said Islands are unique because they are surrounded on all sides by nature. I definitely felt this when I arrived late at night in Oahu, having flown from Vancouver over the Pacific Ocean I landed at the airport, waited for my luggage, and caught a shuttle to Waikiki. Checking in, dropping my back, tired and discombobulated by my surroundings I walked the torch lit streets to a dinner, I remember feeling the pressure, almost a feeling of doom, realizing that I was in the Midway State far from the mainland. As time passed I became comfortable when I

explored the coast and inland jungles seeing all the lush offerings the Island had such as boar and pineapple. What I am saying is I too had this fear of being surrounded on all sides by nature, especially the boisterous sea. The fear for me dissolved, however, when I saw the abundance of life Oahu could sustain. I think there is a fear of being stranded when it comes to islands, however, in the case of Prince Edward Island, I do not believe it should be that pronounced because they are only about 10 kilometers from the mainland, separated by a strait as opposed to an ocean and in the event islanders needed to get to the mainland. I believe that it is more than possible to devise a way with such a short distance; the fear for me would be to be cut-off from the mainland on an island that is truly remote.

Re-evaluating the Bridge

As a follow up to the *Guardian* report, the CBC on January 15th 2014 posted on their website a copy of the 2012 *Confederation Bridge Contingency Plan and Procedures* obtained through the Access to Information Act. The document, authored by Transport Canada, appears to be the re-evaluation alluded to by Le Chasseur since he is named in its distribution list. A statement on the title page indicates that the plan was developed in order to “assist Transport Canada officials in meeting the Government of Canada’s obligation of maintaining a continuous link between Prince Edward Island and the mainland.” According to the Foreword, it was developed in consultation with the relevant Federal Government Departments, Provincial Emergency Measures Organizations, PEI’s Department of Transportation, Northumberland Ferries Limited and Strait Crossing

Development Incorporated. While the report makes it clear that the Government of Canada is responsible for maintaining a connection to the island, under the terms of the P3 agreement it is the responsibility of SCDI to cover additional costs in “most circumstances.” The report outlines the possible use of air transport should the Bridge be closed for any length of time and also lists shipping companies that could be hired to move goods on and off the island. Nevertheless, the plan highlights the need for a “Replacement Ferry Service” in the event that the Bridge is closed for more than “24 hours.” The report provides a timeline that ties the level of ferry service required to the length of Bridge closure:

Short Term (1-18 days) -- Complete an assessment of the Bridge and determine the estimated length of time it will be closed. This assessment will involve SCDI, the Independent Engineer and acting on behalf of TC. At the same time TC will arrange for and begin operating, as necessary, a temporary "Replacement Ferry Service" utilizing marine-vessels and aircraft as well as port/airport facilities to support their operations on an emergency basis until such time as a longer term "Replacement Ferry Service" can be established if one is required.

Transition Period (18-90 days) - Arrangements for a permanent "Replacement Ferry Service" including an operator will be finalized and service will begin.

Long Term (90 days plus) - This time period covers the ongoing operation/provision of a "Replacement Ferry Service". The operation would be such that there would be minimal inconvenience to the traveling public and businesses of PEI. (Transport Canada, 2012, p. 7)

Shortly after these plans for alternative routes to the island were being considered, the *Guardian* reported that the Prince Edward Island government would no longer use the image of the Confederation Bridge on the province's license plates. According to the *Guardian*, the plates in use, which had representations of the Bridge, Anne of Green Gables and a “windmill,” had become a “safety concern for law enforcement” because they were no longer sufficiently reflective. The government had

decided to produce new plates with a single image, a likeness of Province House accompanied by the motto “Birthplace of Confederation.” (Province scraps Anne of Green Gables, Confederation Bridge licence plates, 2013) This generated several responses on the paper’s web page. “Captain Canuck” loved the design “mostly because it doesn’t have The Bridge, a Web address, or Anne. It is just PEI.” For “Mr. Right” “Anne, Confederation Bridge, and the other one that has the little piece of mud on it, [was] getting way to[o] old.” For “Jerry” the ideal licence plate would have “No flags. No map. No falling leaves. No buildings. No mud patches. No fictional characters (Anne of Green Gables nor [disgraced island senator] Mike Duffy)” and “No bridges.”

As a follow up the *Guardian* published an article in February, 2014, indicating that the United States-based Automobile License Plate Collector’s Association had nominated the new plate for their Best Plate Award. PEI’s Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal Minister Robert Vessey was quoted as saying that his government was “pleased that our new licence plate has been well received, both by Islanders and by licence plate collectors.” According to Vessey “[o]ne of the criteria for the Best Plate award is legibility, which was the main factor we considered when introducing the new plate to replace our five existing designs.” (Prince Edward Island licence plate in running for Best Plate Award, 2014) This prompted George Coles to post the following comment on the paper’s web page:

The only other time a PEI license plate has won an award or even been nominated (it did win) was the 1973 plate. Remember it? "Prince Edward Island - The place to be in '73." With a clownish father of confederation on the left side. Personally, I find every single one of PEI's plate designs absolutely butt ugly.

In the end, the award was given to Michigan's plate that displays an image of the Mackinac Bridge. (ALPCA)

I laughed when I looked at who won the Best Plate Award because the winner was the Michigan Mackinac plate. The irony was that PEI had removed the Confederation Bridge from the plate and that a plate showing a Bridge with a Native American name won the contest. I understand that PEI claims that they made the change for safety reasons, but I am sure that the judges did not consider motivation in plate design and it was humorous to see the contest results considering what I have been researching.

At the same time that the press was commenting on the removal of the Confederation Bridge's image from vehicle plates, Mitch MacDonald published a *Guardian* article in August 2013 that noted an overall decline in Bridge traffic. MacDonald quoted Don Cudmore of the Tourism Industry Association of P.E.I., who expressed concern that there was "an 11.6 per cent decline in Bridge traffic for the month of June" continuing a trend that had "plagued the Bridge every month in 2013." (MacDonald M. , 2013) The figures released by Tourism PEI, cited in the article, do indeed indicate a decline in Bridge use. The provincial government's published "Tourism Indicator" figures show a 3.0% overall drop in 2013 (Tourism Indicators 2013) which followed a 0.6% decline in 2012 (Tourism Indicators 2012) and a 6.7 % drop in 2011. (Tourism Indicators 2011) In fact, the last year the Bridge saw an increase in off-island vehicles was in 2009 (Tourism Indicators 2009), but the number of visits to the island

has continued to climb as a consequence of increased motor coach arrivals, up 26.9% in 2013, and cruise ship visits, up 35.7% in 2013. (Tourism Indicators 2013) As a consequence, Don Maxfield, a co-owner of Cavendish Figurines in Gateway Village, had not “noticed the [Bridge] traffic decline” and told MacDonald that “[i]t’s the motor coaches from the cruise ships (that brings business)...[not]...the rubber tire traffic off the bridge.” (MacDonald M. , 2013)

In contrast to the Confederation Bridge, provincial government “Tourism Indicator” figures for ferry traffic are uneven, with a 2.9% increase in 2010 and a 2.0 % jump in 2012, but a 2.9% decline in 2013. Nevertheless, on balance, ferry traffic is up which can account for the attention that was paid by the press to the funding of Northumberland Ferries Limited when their federal subsidy was about to expire. Dave Stewart interviewed several island and national politicians for a *Guardian* article that highlighted the March 2014 expiry date for federal funding. (Stewart, Politicians looking for new deal for Prince Edward Island ferry service, 2013) Politicians of all parties agreed on the importance of maintaining the service, but island representatives highlighted both the longevity of the service, “in operation since 1941” according to Belfast-Murray River MLA Charlie McGeoghegan, and its economic importance. Indeed, island Transport minister, Robert Vessey, claimed that “[w]e all know the importance of the ferry to the tourism industry in eastern P.E.I.” A follow up CBC News report, that announced the renewal of funding for the ferry for two more years in the 2014 federal budget, quoted the Liberal MP for Cardigan, Lawrence MacAulay, as stating that, in fact, it was “ Islanders [who had] helped convince the federal government to keep funding the service.” (Ferries funded, job grant a concern in federal budget, 2014)

While these stories of emergency closure measures, licence plate rebranding, declining Bridge traffic, and ferry funding were circulating in Prince Edward Island, the marine link to the island was itself the focus of a nostalgic report in the *Guardian* on June 8, 2013. Mary MacKay reported that 100-plus people had met at Summerside's Eptek Art and Cultural Centre "to share stories and reminisce about bygone ferry days 16 years after the last crossing between Borden-Carleton and Cape Tormentine, N.B." Individuals who had worked on various vessels that made the crossing shared their experiences prompting MacKay to write that "[a]fter 70 years, the ferry service came to an end when the Confederation Bridge opened on June 1, 1997, but the memories of those times still live on." In support, she quoted one of the event organizers George Dalton, the past president of the Summerside and Area Historical Society, who claimed that the ferry "was a way of life for us as islanders." (MacKay, 2013) This prompted one reader, Bill Pice, to weigh in with his own observation on the paper's web page:

The *Abegweit* [1947] is now moored in Chicago as the Colombia Yacht Club "mother ship." Their staff were kind enough to let me buy my brother Paul (M.D., from Meadow Bank Road, Cornwall, PEI) dinner there, and to give us a tour, including the (still functional) engines and steering gear on the bridge. If the ice ever takes out Confederation Bridge, she could sail again! (Pice, 2013)

As my thesis research concluded, I believe I was witnessing the removal of the Confederation Bridge as a symbol of PEI. This was obvious to me when it was taken off the license plate. I can only imagine the publicity this would have attracted had Nova Scotia removed the Bluenose from their plate. Maybe the general lack of controversy, from what I see, suggests that the Bridge may not have been the symbol of the island it was intended to be. I also witnessed discussion of the ferry in the media that I did not

expect to see post-Bridge. When Le Chasseur discussed taking another look at the contingency plan and the possible viability of a ferry, I could not help but think about the life of the P3 agreement and the fact that the "Friends of the Island" may one day see their island return to the vision they had for it - the sentiment appears to be that although the structure is concrete, physically and metaphorically, it is not actually permanent in either sense. The discussion of the ferry, along with the CBC report on the contingency plan, showed me that ferries are not obsolete technology, because in the event that the Bridge closes, ferries would save the day. I believe that what I have witnessed in my research on the fixed link since the 1988 referendum is that ferries were initially branded as obsolete in order to make way for the P3 partnership, but that no longer appears to be the case. The current decline in Bridge traffic, however relative, suggests to me that it may be that it is the Bridge that is losing its popularity.

Epilogue

I remember a couple summers past, loading my canoe on the back of my truck, and driving to the mouth of the Nepisiguit River, which is a short distance from my house – I was heading out on the Bathurst basin for the day with my father. I grew up near the river, and water has been a constant in my life; my father had many stories that related to the water. From stories of the sea; in which Putup the whale, steals Glooscap's pipe and causes playful mischief, to the water monster Jipijgam a giant snakelike creature who troubles the inland rivers and lakes, water and legends seem to go hand in hand. [I also seen this creature drawn on a wall as a mural in Poughkeepsie NY, and immediately knew what it was, it must have been a common story among L'nu (L'nu being a word we use to describe ourselves, as indigenous peoples)] Having parked on the wharf and launched from the nearby sandy beach, we headed out for a short paddle to "Indian Island" which I believe was once a reserve land. That is the unofficial name of the small island in the Bathurst Bay I believe at one time it had been called St. Peter's Island, but it has been named Indian Island because Mi'gmaq have lived on the island dating back quite some time in history. There was once a "name the island" contest held in Bathurst by one group or another, and my father made his point known that the island had a name and it was called Indian Island. Even though a name like this would seem antiquated it was still important to the Mi'gmaq in Bathurst because it was a reference to us being there. So with this challenge, my father was successful in keeping the name as it is - referencing our use.

Landing on the island one finds sandy shores and forest. Walking up hill to the middle of the island one finds the remnants of small buildings. I walked around with my dad and he told me about the burial sites being in the area of the island where thorns trees grow. It has been known that Mi'gmaq would come down from Prince Edward Island to summer on this island and all these years later we were still two Mi'gmaq on the island. Where the Gowan Brae golf course is, I have been told, was a traditional settlement and significant site. It was no mystery that before being placed on reservations we lived on the shore our cultural diets consist of seafood like sturgeon [they were fished at the mouth of rivers where the rivers met the ocean, like Red Bank], crab, salmon etc... I had a similar experience when I traveled to Indian Point and the Miscou Island, in Saint Margaret's Bay, Nova Scotia where I was able to explore the island with an archeologist who showed me the burial mounds on the island in which chiefs were buried. Having traveled on my own there years later on the land bridge that forms at low tide, I was able to feel connected to my heritage. Looking out at the surrounding bay I saw that it was a peaceful place, with beautiful vistas and I could understand why it was used as a funerary site.

Back to the Indian Island journey - on the ocean in a small canoe there is always an eerie feeling that accompanies the traveler. With the edges of the craft low to the water there is always the sense that something is lurking in the deep. My father told me that traditionally the Mi'gmaq would travel with fir tree bows all around their birch bark canoes to simulate an island. It is said that the whales would leave the canoes alone in fear of becoming beached. This ancient technique proved to me that the Mi'gmaq were crafty and seafaring. When one looks at the history there is much about the sea. I can

remember hearing of some Mi'gmaq being attacked by sharks in their canoe off mainland Nova Scotia.

There is also a song that my father would sing called the “whale song” in reference to this. The song was sung while rapping on a piece of rolled up birch bark. Like a metronome, the rapping keeps the timing as the song progressively speeds up in tempo. The lyrics are - Nataqamasian, jaji ga si tes (I paddle across the water), (I walk along the shore), Nataqamasian, jaji ga si tes Hei! hei! hei! When my father sings it he continues until the tongue twister can no longer be accomplished – it is a fun song that always brings him joy to share. Going through nineteenth-century sources I found something interesting - if only anecdotal. In the Sporting Review from 1841, M.H. Perley writes, on the Mi'gmaq and the sea:

...The Micmacs are still scattered along the eastern coast in very considerable numbers; they are people much attached to the sea-side, seldom wandering from it; whence the Milicetes, who delight in penetrating into the depths of the forest, and roaming among the lakes and streams of the interior of the Province, call them “salt-water Indians,” always speaking of them with great contempt, from their want of skill in hunting, and their disregard for the mysteries of wood-craft, upon so much the Milicetes so much pride themselves. (Perley, 1841, p. 101)

I laughed when I read this because Perley captures the ongoing competition instilled between the tribes – but also because, even as an outsider, he understood the Mi'gmaq relationship to the sea. This understanding has been lost by many since the creation of our in-land reservations.

When faced with the task of reflecting on my thesis as a whole, and all the years leading up to its completion - all the roads down which research took me, what I have noticed is that there are constant competing identities. Even in chapter two it almost appears as if corporate and government agencies collude in representing P3s as

inevitable - even if the bridge conflicted with local identities. In Chapter three it appears to me that island identity is always present not matter what topic is being discussed in the media. In chapter one I focused on presenting research about nation building and the attempt by Canada to find a sense of national identity through connectedness, instead of Roots Sweaters and Tim Horton's which have been successful marketing campaigns capitalizing on the apparent lack of identity. For Islanders this meant that the pocket of identity they created for themselves from 1720 onward was going "extinct" because of the fixed link. For me, this self-perception almost reflects Darwin's theories about adaptation of animal populations to island environments – such as his famous Galapagos finches. I believe that there is a general public consensus that on some level the human inhabitants of islands are somehow distinct or different, like the finches, hence leading to a concept of a distinctive Islandness. There is a sense to me that Islanders believe they are different and you could never understand the feeling of Islandness unless you were born there, to me this is an attempt to create inscrutability about the culture and make it an exclusive club. I am well aware of this as it happens in my own culture. There is often a sense of you would never understand unless you were one of us. There is a lot of otherness in my culture and people claiming to have a "sacred knowledge" making us spiritual at the cost of losing humanity and becoming the other. My point is that there is no better way to defend a concept than to tell people that they have to be born into it and they would never understand.

I thought about "identity or cultural pockets", as I like to call them, the epiphany I had is that "Abegweit" [PEI] would have always been connected in a sense, that the Mi'gmaq may have not seen the Northumberland Strait as a barrier like settlers did,

because they moved with the seasons and used the land practically. When I worked for Dr. Trudy Sable's indigenous names mapping project "Pjila'si Mi'kma'ki: Mi'kmaw Place Names Digital Atlas and Website" with Bernie Francis and other researchers, Ruth Whitehead came in to teach interns about the areas archeological history, and the Northumberland Strait may not have always been submerged, meaning the island may have been mainland at one time before melting glaciers. Either way I believe deep down that the Bridge would be welcomed simply as a means to cross because I am Mi'gmaq and I am practical. In a sense "Islandness", as currently studied on Prince Edward Island, is irrelevant to me since the concept is synonymous with a continuation of colonization. Why would I want to romanticise and hold on to narratives of a colonial island past? The Mi'gmaq way of life is not being protected; the interests apparently only lie in preserving symbols of the colonial past. I don't want to discredit all "Islandness" scholarship, I simply want to ask what we are preserving and is there room for a Mi'gmaq perspective? It appears to me that we don't worry about "Islandness" since the Mi'gmaq are always connected to the land and move through it more traditionally with circularity instead of linearity. Is it not xenophobic to advocate "Islandness" in a Prince Edward Island context? The island was settled by Acadians in 1720 - how long were there Mi'gmaq there before that? Does a historical tie even prove ownership? How is it that the Mi'gmaq "way of life" is not fought for with the same intensity by those who are opposed to the changes brought to the island by the construction of the Confederation Bridge?

Appendix A: Tourism Statistics

The media has made much of celebrity visits to the island such as the “royal” visit of Prince William and Duchess Kate Middleton from the United Kingdom, and the taping of usually New York-based television show “Live with Regis and Kelly” in 2011. These high profile visits undoubtedly advertised the Island to the world, but records maintained and published by the Department of PEI Tourism and Culture and the Tourism Research Centre at the University of Prince Edward Island, between 1999 and 2008, provided more detailed information on the visitors arriving at in PEI from all different regions.

The methodology for the collection of this information is outlined in the Department of Tourism’s 1999 Economic Impact report. This report indicated that data was collected and estimates were made based on “exit point intercepts” conducted by surveyors “stationed at the ferry, bridge, and airport” who asked questions of willing participants as they left the province. Further data was also collected from “follow up telephone interviews” and through the use of surveys given to motor-coach groups and Japanese tour groups. The results of these surveys were linked to “traffic counts provided by Strait Crossing Bridge Ltd., Northumberland Ferries Ltd., Charlottetown Airport Authority Inc., motor coach and Japanese tour operators and motor coach and Japanese accommodation operators.” (Department of Tourism, 1999, pp. 1, 6) The 2004 report from the department used the same methodology and further developed “average party size” statistics which helped the Department of Tourism estimate overall numbers. (Department of Tourism, 2004, p. 4) In 2007, the Tourism Research Center (TRC) at

UPEI appears to have taken on the task of presenting tourism statistics. Although the group uses a similar method of data collection, their statistics are based on a travel survey over a “12 month period” while previous reports had only covered the summer months. In their 2007-2008 Exit Survey report, the TRC claimed that their estimates, based on 4,539 completed surveys, were “95%” accurate. (Tourism Research Center, 2008, p. Appendix D) In 2008, the TRC also asked selected visitors to participate in an on-line panel and complete a questionnaire electronically. The 973 respondents were then analyzed in terms of such factors as gender, income, education and regional origin. (Tourism Research Center, 2009, pp. 23-25)

The statistics compiled in these reports provide an overall understanding of the regional backgrounds of tourists to PEI and, by extension, the visitors likely to stop at the Gateway Village. The 1999 Department of Tourism report estimated that 1.2 million people visited the island between “May 15 and October 31st 1999”. (Department of Tourism, 1999, p. 1) The report produced a pie chart reflecting the findings over two years that illustrated the regional origins of visitors. The majority of people were from the Maritimes [34% (1998) and 30.9 % (1999)]. (Department of Tourism, 1999, pp. 2-3) The second largest group in this time-frame were tourists from Ontario [26.2% (1999), 23.6% (1998)] followed by Quebec [8.6%, 16.5%]. US travelers, outside of New England, were the next largest group [9.9%, 5.2%] followed by New England itself [7.5%, 5.6%], and then by the remaining Canadian provinces [6.9%, 5.1%]. The report also indicated that on average 92% of the visitors arrived by private motor vehicle (PMV) or by air, but did not indicate the percentage of each group separately. Motor coach travel rose over the two years from 2.8 to 3.1 percent of all visitors and it is likely that the majority of these would

have stopped at the Gateway Village. (Department of Tourism, 1999, pp. 5, 8, 25)

Nevertheless, the subsequent, more detailed reports are useful for understanding the likely scale of traffic through the Gateway Village and the potential viewers the Moses Media DVD.

In 2004 it was estimated that 998,866 people visited the Island from “May to October” of that year. (Department of Tourism, 2004, p. 7) PMVs and air travel in this year accounted for 87% of visitors. (Department of Tourism, 2004, p. 7) In terms of who was visiting the top four areas geographically were [Ontario 24%, Nova Scotia 20%, New Brunswick 18%, and New England/Quebec 9% being tied for fourth]. (Department of Tourism, 2004, p. 10) Of the people who took day trips to the Island the Gateway Village was listed in the report as a destination for an estimated 274,002 and other tables showed as high as 323,931 people in 2004. (Department of Tourism, 2004, pp. 9, 16)

Results found by the TRC in 2007-8 suggest 1,045,000 people visited the Island that year from “July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008.” (Tourism Research Center, 2008, p. 1) “By Origin” - the majority of travelers in 2007 came from [New Brunswick 28.1%, Nova Scotia 35.5%, Quebec 9.2%, and Ontario 12.6%] (Tourism Research Center, 2008, p. 6) Although there was no mention of the Gateway Village in this preliminary report, the final report produced by the TRC focused specifically on transportation and explained that among their survey respondents,

Most travel parties get to PEI in their own vehicles (72%). The majority entered PEI by the Confederation Bridge (81%) and most of these travel parties (89%) also left by bridge. On the other hand, about 64 percent of those who had entered by ferry left by bridge. This suggests that a significant number of travel parties entering by ferry make PEI part of a wider travel itinerary. Most (79%) of Canadian and American bridge users had previously used the bridge and the

majority of ferry users (78%) had previously been on the ferry to Wood Islands [sic]. However, over half of Americans (54%) had not used the ferry previously. Stopping at Gateway Village in Borden was more common (67%) than stopping at the Visitor Information Centre area in Wood Islands [sic] (44%).” (Tourism Research Center, 2009, p. 2)

The Tourism Research Centre’s final report further explained that 67% of the Canadian survey respondents acknowledged stopping at Gateway Village, while 59% of those from other regions reported doing the same.” (Tourism Research Center, 2009, p. 17)

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