

# The Influence of Traditions on Motivated Collective Actions: A Focus on Native Land Reclamation

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The current study examined the influence of traditional cultural beliefs on participation in actions aimed at fending off a threat to a sociocultural group. Specifically, the study ( $N = 157$ ) focused on actions aimed to reclaim land taken from Native communities. Results revealed that support for traditional beliefs was associated with an increase in the perceived value of the outcomes of collective actions, which in turn was associated with a more favourable attitude toward these actions and intentions to engage in them. The influence of traditional beliefs was independent of the degree of group identification. The study also drew on an indigenous approach, using the Native symbol of the medicine wheel to explore how individuals saw themselves in relation to the land claim. The theoretical implications of the results for research on collective action, along with their implications for the study of Native identity and for the social issue of land reclamation, are discussed.

*Keywords:* tradition, social identity, collective action, Native, land reclamation

*Without my land and my people I am not alive. I am simply flesh waiting to die.* —Okanagan teacher Jeannette Armstrong (Anderson, 2003, p. 127).

There are many situations of social conflicts in which members of a social group engage in actions with potentially harmful outcomes to their safety and that of others in order to face a shared grievance threatening their group (e.g., King, Noor, & Taylor, 2011). Understanding the motivations of individuals to participate collectively in acts aimed at responding to a threat to their group is thus of significant interest, because their involvement has the potential to alter their well-being and the well-being of other group members (Lalonde & Cameron, 1994).

Fundamental to the existence of sociocultural groups are their traditions and beliefs, which distinguish them from other groups. These traditions and beliefs guide group members in their understanding of the world around them. For example, Native<sup>1</sup> communities in North America often have the belief that land is a living being with which they share a spiritual connection. This belief contrasts with the mainstream tradition of viewing land as an

object one can own. The role of these traditional beliefs may be particularly important in shaping the motivation of group members to engage in collective actions by guiding their assessment of what constitutes a valuable outcome worth uniting against. The current study examined support of traditional beliefs as a psychological mechanism underlying the motivation of group members to participate in collective acts aimed at fending off threats to their group, in the context of a land reclamation by a Native community. Land reclamation is a process by which Native communities reclaim ancestral land that had been acquired from them through disputable treaties (Neu & Therrien, 2003).

## Collective Action, Identity, and Traditions

Collective actions comprise:

Efforts by large numbers of people, who define themselves and are also often defined by others as a group, to solve collectively a problem they feel they have in common, and which is perceived to arise from their relations with other groups (Tajfel, 1981, p. 244).

This quote highlights two key elements of the motivation to engage in collective actions. First, a sense of shared identity. The concept of collective identity in relation to collective actions was brought to the fore in Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social identity theory. Decades of research emerging from this perspective have consistently found that stronger identification with a disadvantaged group is associated with a greater will to participate in a variety of actions aimed at protecting or enhancing the group (see

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<sup>1</sup> The choice of the term to describe the target population of the study was not an easy one. The term Indian is often perceived as derogatory. The terms First Nations, Aboriginal people, and Native people are often used interchangeably by both academic and nonacademic authors (see Retzlaff, 2005). The term Native was chosen for its unique link to land, referring to people who are Native to the land.

Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008; Wright, Aron, & Tropp, 2002; Wright & Tropp, 2002). Wohl, Giguère, Branscombe, and McVicar (2011), for example, observed that when faced with a threat to the future vitality of their group, French Canadians (Québécois) who more strongly identified with their group were more willing to engage in protective actions.

Second, the quote also highlights the importance of perceiving a shared problem. The traditional beliefs shared by group members may bring them to collectively recognise an event as threatening and worth uniting against. *Traditional beliefs* can be defined as beliefs regarding the importance of tradition and customs of the group. The content and meaning of a group membership captured by these beliefs can be a very important component of the experience of being a group member (see Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). As the individuals of interest in this study came from Native communities, traditional beliefs focussed on Native ancestral worldviews. An example of such a belief is that Native identity is inevitably connected to the land, or mother earth, and that this connection guides one's life (e.g., McClellan, 1987; Wilson, 2003; Wilson & Peters, 2005). Although there is much diversity in the specific traditional practices of Native communities, some broader themes emerge across most First Nations (e.g., Wilson & Peters, 2005; see Dickason, 2001). For example, Native communities have relied on oral histories, show appreciation for the role of elders, and use traditional forms of medicine for healing, such as sweat lodges.<sup>2</sup> Traditional Native beliefs also reflect a theme of interconnection between spirits, animals, and humans (e.g., Wilson, 2003; Wilson & Peters, 2005; see Dickason, 2001). Greater support for traditional Native ideological beliefs among Native people will likely be associated with a greater emphasis on Native traditions in one's lifestyle choices and social interactions.

### Motivation and Collective Action

The motivation of group members to engage in collective acts is shaped by the perceived value placed on the outcome (e.g., Giguère & Lalonde, 2010; Louis, Taylor, & Neil, 2004; Simon et al., 1998; Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990; see Bandura, 1995, 1997; Folger, 1986; Van Zomeren et al., 2008). When individuals perceive a valued outcome to result from collective actions, they are more likely to have a favourable attitude toward them and be willing to participate in them. Membership in social groups shapes how people assess the value of the object and people with whom they interact (see Drury & Reicher, 1999, 2005). This shaping can be inextricably tied to the traditions and beliefs of an individual's group, which in turn are crucial when evaluating whether collective actions hold instrumental value. It was proposed in the current study that support of traditions would inform the thoughts and actions of group members with respect to collective acts aimed at protecting the group. The notion of land among First Nations is different from the concept of ownership prevalent among Western cultures. The belief that ancestral land is alive with spirits is commonly found among First Nations (e.g., Wilson, 2003). For example, Wilson and Peters (2005) report that returning home to ancestral land provides some First Nations peoples with a connection to the land that they cannot experience in cities. Moreover, land is involved in many traditions, such as sweat lodges, and as a living entity, it affords a social relationship akin to a relationship with other individuals. In addition, the land provides a place for people to connect to each other and a space for culture to be

practised and preserved. Hence, the loss of land is tied to the loss of identity. Accordingly, support of traditional beliefs was hypothesised to increase the perceived instrumental value of collective acts of land reclamation, thereby increasing the motivation of individuals to partake in these actions, which in turn increases participation in action.

Collective identity is also an important determinant of rational decision-making processes underlying the perceived instrumental value of action (e.g., Louis et al., 2004). The influence of identification on instrumental value is assumed to operate on how a person views him or herself (self-related processes). For example, Giguère and Lalonde (2010) report that greater identification may increase the extent to which individuals define themselves as functions of other members, which increase the instrumental value of collective actions aimed at protecting their fellow group members. Both the degree of identification and the degree of traditional beliefs may increase the perceived instrumental value of collective actions. Their influences, however, are assumed to occur through different channels, self-related processes, on the one hand, and content and meaning about the world on the other. We thus expected that the influences of identification and beliefs would be independent of each other.

Although they serve different functions guided by different processes, identification and ideological beliefs share a common underlying group membership. As such, it was expected that they would be positively correlated. Individuals who identify more strongly as group members are more likely to embrace traditional beliefs.

### Integrating an Indigenous Perspective: The Medicine Wheel

We took a second approach to gauge Native traditions by using a more indigenous perspective. Indigenous approaches provide unique methodological and conceptual insights (see Kim, 2000; Moghaddam, 1987). This indigenous view was taken by integrating the medicine wheel into our study. The medicine wheel is a traditional symbol with deep spiritual meaning that represents the harmonious relationship between nature and all living things. This wheel rests on the belief that everything is connected and equal. Although variations exist in the details of such teachings, the central concepts seem to be similar across many indigenous groups in North America (Meadows, 1990). The wheel provides a holistic framework for understanding the self, the environment, and their interaction through its four inner elements: (a) a physical aspect, which centres on the relationship between the self and the environment providing energy; (b) a mental aspect, which seeks knowledge and understanding; (c) a spiritual aspect, which captures wisdom and a sense of unity among all things; and (d) an emotional aspect, which is characterised by a fluid emotional state of communion with all things (e.g., Wilson, 2003; see Meadows, 1990; Montour, 1996). In this study, the medicine wheel was used

<sup>2</sup> Sweat lodges are usually made of saplings tied together to construct a dome-like structure. In the middle of the sweat lodge is a fire pit in which rocks, which often symbolize grandfathers, are placed. During a sweat lodge ceremony, water is sprinkled on the rocks, which creates heat. Sweat lodges have multiple functions, such as praying and healing (Waldram et al., 1995).

as a lens for Native individuals to understand and interpret their identity and the issue of land reclamation.

Although all aspects of the wheel tie Native individuals back to their ancestral land, each quadrant holds different implications that distinguish it from others when it comes to collective actions for land reclamation. The physical quadrant of the wheel centres on the relationship between the self and the environment providing energy and emphasising demonstrations of courage, particularly through physical prowess. This aspect of the wheel is likely to be associated with a greater emphasis of the perceived instrumental value of collective action, a more favourable attitude toward the actions and greater intentions to partake in them. The spiritual quadrant, emphasising the spiritual interconnection between all things, a hallmark of Native traditions, would be more likely to be associated with support of traditions relative to the other quadrant. Finally, no specific hypotheses were generated for the mental and emotional quadrants. Their emphasis being on intrapersonal processes, such as knowledge gaining and emotional experiences, it was not expected they would play a role in the context of overt behaviours linked to collective actions.

### Exploring Land Claims and the Conflict in Caledonia, Ontario

Throughout Canada's history, various attempts have been made by governments to remove land from Native people through treaties (Neu & Therrien, 2003). The present study focuses on a land-based conflict in the vicinity of Caledonia, a small town located in southern Ontario that is close to the Six Nations of Grand River reserve. A portion of approximately 40 hectares of land has led to ongoing disputes between a housing developer and the Native community, both of whom claim ownership of the land. On February 28th, 2006, members of the Native community protested against the developer's attempt to begin construction while the land was still being legally disputed. The majority of confrontations between the two parties took place during early 2006 and centred on the erection of a road blockade by the Six Nations community. These confrontations were at times quite violent, resulting in destruction of property, fistfights and near-riots involving both Natives and non-Natives. The current study was conducted during this tumultuous period in the months of December 2006 to February 2007.

### Overview of the Present Study

The present study examined the influence of traditions in the motivation to participate in collective actions (aimed at land reclamation) using a two-pronged approach: a mainstream approach and an indigenous one. The mainstream approach focused on the role of support of traditional beliefs and degree of group identification on the willingness of individuals to participate in collective acts aimed at protecting their group. Traditional beliefs emphasise the interconnection between all things, animate and inanimate, including ancestral land. The intimate link between self and the land is central to Native traditions. Thus, it was hypothesised that: (a) Support of traditional beliefs would be associated with greater perceived instrumental value of collective actions for ancestral land reclamation; (b) in turn, greater perceived instrumental value would be associated with a more favourable attitude toward these

actions and greater intentions to engage in them; and, (c) the effect of traditional beliefs on attitude and intentions would be mediated by perceived instrumental value. This process was expected to be independent of the influence of group identification because identity and beliefs are tied to different functions and processes when it comes to collective actions. To extend the results with actual behavioural data, we further compared individuals who had been present at the land-claim site during the period of collective actions (i.e., de facto protestors) to individuals who did not go to the site. In order to follow an indigenous approach to research the issue of land reclamation, the medicine wheel was used to distinguish the motivational predictors of collective action participation in the context of land reclamation.

## Method

### Participants

A total of 157 self-identified Native individuals living in Canada completed a questionnaire (116 women, 39 men, and two unspecified; four participants were removed because of missing data; responses from 153 participants were analysed). The mean age of the remaining participants was 36 years ( $SD = 11.33$ ), and the majority were registered as Status Indians (84%) and living off-reserve (61%). These data are comparable to 2006 Canadian census data, which reported that 81% of Native people are registered as Status Indians, and 60% of all Native people were living off-reserve (Statistics Canada, 2008).

### Procedure

Participants were recruited through convenience and snowball sampling using e-mail invitations sent to Native organisations and academic departments by the third author, who is from the Oneida and Delaware First Nations. Participants were offered to enter a draw with a chance of winning \$100. After obtaining their informed consent, participants were presented with the research survey, which took about 15 minutes to complete. The survey was conducted in an electronic format. All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1, *strongly disagree* to 5, *strongly agree*, with 3 being a neutral point). After having completed the survey, the participants were provided with written debriefing information and given an opportunity to comment on the current survey and the hypotheses of the researchers. They were also provided with contact information for the researchers should they have questions or comments.

### Measures

**Collective identification.** Identification as a Native person was assessed using 12 items adapted from the Cameron (2004) measure of identification (e.g., "In general, being Native is an important part of my self-image;"  $\alpha = .83$ , 95% CI = 0.78–0.87). Responses to these items were averaged to create a measure of identification for which higher scores indicated a greater degree of identification.

**Traditional beliefs.** Ten items that targeted traditional Native beliefs were developed for this study and were rated in the context of a larger measure of group beliefs ( $\alpha = .75$ , 95% CI = 0.69–0.80). All the items are presented in the appendix (e.g., "Native people benefit from applying principles of the medicine wheel to all aspects of life"). Item responses were averaged to create a

measure of support of traditional beliefs where higher values denote greater support of traditional beliefs.

**Instrumental value.** Four items were derived from Klandermans (1984) to assess the perceived instrumental value of land-reclamation actions (e.g., “The benefits of Native social actions at Caledonia outweigh their costs;”  $\alpha = .79$ , 95% CI = 0.70–0.86; see Stürmer & Simon, 2004, who reviewed the work of Klandermans on instrumental value of collective actions). These items were averaged to create a measure of instrumental value. Higher scores denote greater perceived instrumental value.

**Attitude.** Four items were adapted from Klandermans and Oegema (1987) to assess views concerning different aspects of actions related to the land claim (e.g., “I support the Native land claim near Caledonia;”  $\alpha = .76$ , 95% CI = 0.69–0.82). These items were averaged to create a measure of attitudes toward the Caledonia land claim, with higher scores indicating a more favourable view of land-claim actions.

**Intentions.** Four items adapted from Klandermans (1984) assessed intentions to participate in collective actions (e.g., “I would want to get involved in group-based social actions that may disrupt social order to support the Caledonia land claim, such as participating in an illegal demonstration;” “I would want to get involved in group-based social actions that do not disrupt social order to support the land claim, such as participating in a legal demonstration;”  $\alpha = .75$ , 95% CI = 0.65–0.82). Two items targeted actions that disrupted social order and two items targeted actions that did not disrupt social order (see Taylor, Moghaddam, Gamble, & Zellerer, 1987 for the normative vs. antinormative distinction). A similar pattern of result was observed for each type. They were thus collapsed for the analyses. Responses were averaged to create a measure of intentions to participate in land-claim actions. Higher scores were indicative of greater intent to participate in collective actions.

**Medicine wheel.** Participants were presented with a pictorial representation of the medicine wheel (see Figure 1) and to describe themselves in relation to the land claim from either a physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual point of view by choosing one of the four quadrants (i.e., “What aspect of yourself becomes more engaged when you think about the Caledonia land claim?”) and to

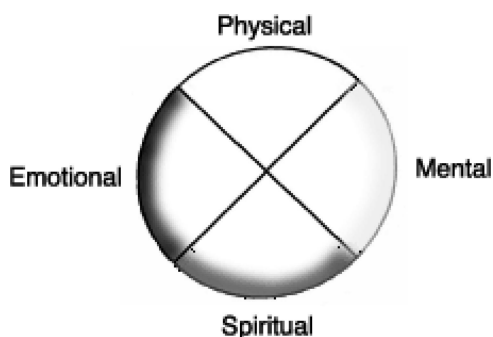


Figure 1. Medicine wheel. Note. Physical, often viewed as emphasising the relationship between the self and the environment; mental, often associated with knowledge and understanding seeking; spiritual, typically linked to wisdom and a sense of unity among all things; and emotional, often characterised by a fluid emotional state of communion with all things (e.g., Wilson, 2003; see Meadows, 1990; Montour, 1996).

discuss their choice in an open-ended format. Participants could only select one quadrant.

**Presence at the reclamation site.** One question asked whether the respondent had been at the land-claim site during the period when collective actions were being held (yes or no). Due to ethical constraints, it was not possible to inquire about participation in detail because some of the actions could potentially lead to criminal charges. Given that the land-claim site was rather remote, however, it can be argued that presence at the site constitutes a de facto measure of collective action.

Also included in the survey were general demographic questions (e.g., age and gender) as well as Native-specific items (e.g., Indian Status).

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

For statistical completeness, Table 1 presents descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations for support of traditional beliefs and identification, along with the outcome variables (i.e., instrumental value, attitude, and intentions).

### Overview of Analyses

It was expected that support of traditional beliefs would be associated with greater perceived instrumental value of collective actions, which in turn would increase favourable attitudes toward land-reclamation actions and greater behavioural intentions to engage in them. In addition, it was expected that the influence of traditional beliefs would be independent from the influence of ingroup identification. To investigate these hypotheses, path modelling was conducted using the structural equation Models R package (see Fox, 2006; R Development Core Team, 2011). A path model was generated by estimating directional paths predicting: (a) instrumental value, attitude, and intentions from both traditional beliefs and identification; and (b) intentions and attitude from instrumental value. Bidirectional paths between traditional beliefs and identification and between attitude and intentions also were generated. The model was not saturated initially. Figure 2 summarises the model.<sup>3</sup>

The  $\chi^2$  test, the nonnormed fit index (NNFI; Tucker & Lewis, 1973) and the comparative fit index (CFI; Bentler, 1990), as well as the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; see Browne & Cudeck, 1993), were included to assess the fit of the model (see McDonald & Ho, 2002). Values above .90 on the NNFI and CFI (see Hu & Bentler, 1995), and equal or below .05 for the

<sup>3</sup> The effect of traditional beliefs could have been moderated by group identification. To examine this possibility, an alternate model was explored. In this model, a vector of the interaction between support of traditional beliefs and degree of group identification was added, and directional paths to attitude, instrumental value, and intentions from this vector were estimated. Overall, this model had a poorer fit than the hypothesised one,  $\chi^2(2) = 6.34$ ,  $p = .084$ ; CFI = .92; NNFI = .90; RMSEA = .083. More important, in this alternate model, the interaction of support of traditional beliefs and degree of group identification was not significantly related to instrumental value ( $\beta = .15$ ,  $p > .10$ ), attitude ( $\beta = .12$ ,  $p > .10$ ), and intentions ( $\beta = .01$ ,  $p > .10$ ).

Table 1  
*Pearson Correlations and Descriptive Statistics for Support of Traditional Beliefs and Identification Along With the Outcome Variables (i.e., Instrumental Value, Attitude, and Intentions)*

	Beliefs	Identification	Value	Attitude	Intentions
Traditional beliefs	—	.47***	.36***	.33***	.21**
Identification		—	.32***	.31***	.19*
Value			—	.48***	.53***
Attitude				—	.28***
Intentions					—
Means (SD)	4.02 (.68)	4.41 (.46)	3.46 (.90)	4.61 (.82)	2.42 (1.21)

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

RMSEA (see Browne & Cudeck, 1993) are typically interpreted as indicating an acceptable fit. The hypothesised model demonstrated acceptable fit of the observations yielding a nonsignificant chi-square value,  $\chi^2(3) = 3.78, p = .57$ , Cramer’s V = .01, and other fit indices suggested an acceptable fit as well (CFI = .97; NNFI = .97; RMSEA = .054). Nonsignificant paths were retained in the model.

As can be observed in Figure 2, greater support of traditional beliefs was associated with greater perceived instrumental value independently of identification, which was also associated with greater perceived instrumental value. Instrumental value was associated with an increase in both attitude and intentions. Finally it can also be observed in Figure 2 that support of traditional beliefs was correlated with identification, and that attitude was correlated with intentions.

**Mediation**

It was expected that perceived instrumental value would mediate the influence of support of traditional beliefs on attitude and intentions. A test of mediation (see Sobel, 1982) revealed that instrumental value mediated the effect of traditional beliefs on attitude and intentions (respectively,  $z = 2.06, p < .05$ ;  $z = 2.91, p < .005$ ). It can be observed in Figure 2, however, that traditional beliefs had a significant influence on attitudes unaccounted for by instrumental value, suggesting partial mediation for attitudes.

**Medicine Wheel**

The number of participants who selected each wheel quadrant did not vary across quadrants (physical  $n = 30$ ; mental  $n = 48$ ;

spiritual  $n = 37$ ; emotional  $n = 35$ ;  $\chi^2(3) = 4.61, p > .10$ ). The choice of quadrant on the wheel reflects an aspect of self solicited by the land claim. It was explored as a moderator of the motivational sources to partake in reclamation action.

Scores on all measures for respondents from each of the four quadrants were compared using univariate  $F$  tests and these results are reported in Table 2. Individuals who selected the physical or spiritual quadrant of the medicine wheel had stronger traditional beliefs than did individuals who chose the mental or emotional quadrant. In addition, it can be seen in Table 2 that compared with the other three groups, participants who chose the physical quadrant perceived greater instrumental value, held more favourable attitudes toward the land claim, and had greater intentions of participating in collective land-reclamation action.

**Presence at the Land-Claim Site**

Individuals who had been to the land-claim site ( $n = 26$ ) were compared on each of the primary measures using a series of univariate  $F$  tests. As can be observed in Table 3, presence on the land-claim site was associated with greater intentions to participate in land reclamation actions. Moreover, participants who had been to the land-claim site reported greater degrees of identification with the group and perceived greater instrumental value in the land-claim actions. Participants present at the land-claim site also held more favourable attitudes toward the land claim, however, this difference failed to reach significance, as did the difference in support of traditional beliefs.

In addition, a chi-square test indicated a significant relationship between presence at the site and choice on the medicine wheel,

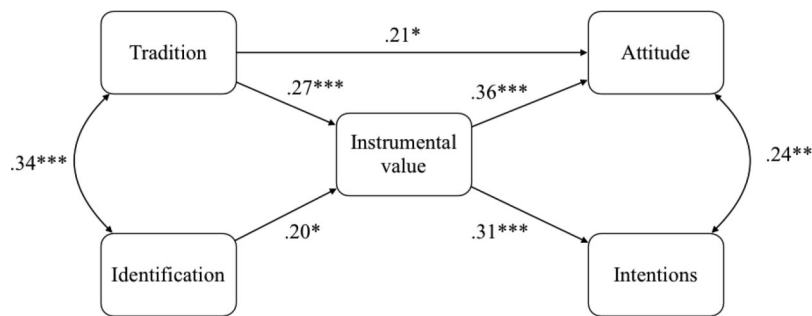


Figure 2. Standardised coefficients from the path model estimated. Note. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; For visual ease only the significant paths are depicted.

Table 2  
Means and Standard Deviations (in Parentheses) for Support of Traditional Beliefs, Degree of Identification, Instrumental Value, Attitude, and Intentions To Participate in the Land Claim by Choice on the Medicine Wheel

	Physical	Mental	Spiritual	Emotional	<i>F</i> (3, 149)	$\eta^2$
Traditional beliefs	4.53 <sup>a</sup> (.48)	4.24 <sup>b</sup> (.53)	4.60 <sup>a</sup> (.36)	4.05 <sup>b</sup> (.52)	10.13 <sup>***</sup>	.17
Identification	4.14 <sup>a</sup> (.79)	4.01 <sup>a</sup> (.71)	4.11 <sup>a</sup> (.68)	3.94 <sup>a</sup> (.81)	1.23	.02
Value	3.90 <sup>a</sup> (.75)	3.32 <sup>b</sup> (.96)	3.37 <sup>b</sup> (.87)	3.44 <sup>b</sup> (.90)	3.11 <sup>**</sup>	.07
Attitude	4.10 <sup>a</sup> (.64)	3.41 <sup>b</sup> (.79)	3.54 <sup>b</sup> (.74)	3.59 <sup>b</sup> (.81)	5.74 <sup>***</sup>	.10
Intentions	3.57 <sup>a</sup> (1.27)	2.10 <sup>b</sup> (1.02)	2.24 <sup>b</sup> (1.08)	2.16 <sup>b</sup> (.96)	13.85 <sup>***</sup>	.22

Note. Means with differing superscript within each row are significantly different at  $p < .05$ .  
\*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

$\chi^2(3) = 14.07, p < .01$ . Inspection of frequencies showed that of the 26 people present at the site, 12 had selected physical, four had selected mental, five had selected spiritual, and five had selected emotional quadrants on the medicine wheel.

### Discussion

The present study examined the role of beliefs that capture the traditions of sociocultural groups on the motivation of group members to participate in collective actions aimed at protecting their group from a threat. A two-pronged approach was used, adopting a mainstream perspective, on the one hand, and an indigenous one on the other. The mainstream approach focused on support of traditional beliefs. Results revealed that, as expected, increased support of traditional beliefs was associated with greater motivation to engage in collective action. Specifically, it was observed that support of traditional beliefs was associated with an increase in holding favourable attitudes toward collective actions and intentions to engage in these actions. These increases were mediated by the perceived instrumental value of collective action outcomes. Moreover, this motivational influence of traditional beliefs was independent of degree of identification with the group, which was also observed to contribute to motivation for collective action participation.

The perception of valued outcomes is a central component of the motivation of group members to engage in collective actions, such as participating in demonstrations (see Bandura, 1995, 1997; Folger, 1986; Van Zomeren et al., 2008). When individuals per-

ceive that valued outcomes will result from collective actions, they are more likely to have a favourable attitude toward them and be willing to participate in them. The perception of what constitutes a valued outcome can be inextricably tied to the traditions and beliefs of the sociocultural groups to which individuals belong. It is by altering the perceived instrumental value of collective acts that traditional beliefs shape the motivation of individuals to engage in them. The results of the current study indicated that Native individuals who embraced traditional beliefs were more likely to perceive greater instrumental value from collective actions aimed to reclaim ancestral land. This increased perceived value, in turn, was associated with more favourable attitudes toward and greater willingness to participate in land claim actions.

A traditional worldview among First Nations typically places ancestral land, often referred to as Mother Earth, at the centre of the daily life of its members, fostering balance and health. This role stems from a conceptualisation of land very different than the Western notion, which typically focuses on space and ownership. Commonly, among First Nations, land is viewed as a living entity, which provides daily support, fostering health and healing (see Waldram, Herring, & Young, 1995). Wilson (2003), for example, observed that the Anishinabek believe that all things on earth are alive and contain spirits. As such, she argues, the land represents a site within which Anishinabek can relate to other animate beings in their everyday lives. Moreover, land is involved in many traditions, such as the sweat lodge, and as a living entity, it affords kinship (e.g., Wilson, 2003; Wilson & Peters, 2005). Therefore, as observed in the current study, greater support of traditional beliefs by Native individuals is associated with an increase in the value of collective acts aimed at land reclamation.

The notion of traditional beliefs complements the emphasis on the role of collective identity observed in most of the major approaches in the field of intergroup relations. Overall, these approaches focus on the impact of membership in social groups on how a person views him or herself as a driving force behind collective action participation (see Van Zomeren et al., 2008; Wright et al., 2002). The influence of collective identification on participation has been observed to occur through a direct influence, often associated with reflexive or affective responses, and through intervening variables associated with rational decision-making processes (see Van Zomeren et al., 2008). For example, Giguère and Lalonde (2010) observed that collective identification by striking students had an indirect influence on collective action participation by increasing the perceived instrumental value of the

Table 3  
Means and Standard Deviations (in Parentheses) for Support of Traditional Beliefs, Degree of Identification, Instrumental Value, Attitude, and Intentions To Participate in the Land Claim by Attendance at the Site

	Present	Not present	<i>F</i> (3, 149)	$\eta^2$
Traditional beliefs	4.45 (.36)	4.39 (.49)	.77	.01
Identification	4.32 (.49)	3.92 (.72)	8.68 <sup>**</sup>	.06
Instrumental value	4.02 (.72)	3.30 (.89)	18.17 <sup>***</sup>	.11
Attitude	4.82 (.73)	4.54 (.85)	2.77	.02
Intentions	3.06 (1.20)	2.25 (1.16)	12.28 <sup>***</sup>	.08

Note. Pairwise comparisons were conducted using Bonferroni corrections to control for error inflation.  
\*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

actions, as well as a direct, affectively laden motivational influence. A direct motivational influence is particularly likely to be observed for politicised forms of collective identity, such as those tied to social movement organisations (see Van Zomeren et al., 2008). In the present study only an indirect influence of collective identity was observed. This may reflect that the collective identity targeted was not a politicised one.

The indirect influence of identification, observed in the present study, was independent of the motivational influence of traditional beliefs. Although both beliefs and identification can impact the perceived instrumental value of collective actions, their influences may rely on distinct processes. Traditional beliefs provide content and meaning that group members use to guide their assessment of the value of collective actions. Identification, on the other hand, operates by influencing how individuals define themselves.

In line with previous cultural psychology work, we also observed that identification was related to support of traditional beliefs. Individuals who reported greater degree of identification with the group were more likely to support Native traditional beliefs. These results may reflect the link to the socio-cultural group of these beliefs and the identity derived from the group membership. As with most disadvantaged groups, many Native-heritage cultural practices and languages are facing extinction (see Taylor, 1997). Thus, individuals who embrace traditional aspects of their heritage culture are more likely to have a strong Native identity.

The current approach to traditional beliefs of sociocultural groups distinguishes itself from a commonly observed focus on beliefs about sociopolitical ideologies in the field of intergroup relations. Ideological beliefs are central to many current major models of intergroup relations (e.g., social dominance theory, Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; system justification theory, Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). For example, Cameron and Nickerson (2009) observed that decreased support of social dominance orientation, which reflects an opposition to social hierarchies with advantaged groups at the top and disadvantaged groups at the bottom, increased motivation to engage in antiglobalization collective actions. Research into ideological beliefs typically focuses on beliefs about how to conduct intergroup relations, particularly focusing on issues of discrimination and prejudice (e.g., Cameron, 2001). The present study distinguishes itself from this focus and offers a novel perspective by examining how beliefs tied to culture and tradition are associated with motivation to engage in collective actions. By capturing core traditions and customs associated with sociocultural groups, the examination of traditional beliefs among Native groups and other disadvantaged groups offers a wealth of opportunity to better understand interactions within and between groups. Common themes around culture and spiritual traditions appear to emerge across disadvantaged groups, particularly those based on ethnicity (cf., Ashmore et al., 2004). For example, Wilson and Peters (2005) note the importance of ancestral land among diverse indigenous groups in their exploration of urban migration. These common themes may provide unique insights about the processes through which the societal status quo is sometimes maintained and at other times challenged by disadvantaged group members. Understanding these processes is of significant interest because of the impact of social movements on the well-being of disadvantaged individuals (e.g., De la

Sablonnière, Auger, Sadykova, & Taylor, 2010), and their success can result in important changes to social and political structures (see Lalonde & Cameron, 1994).

### Indigenous Psychology and the Medicine Wheel

Our examination of Native traditions involved a second facet. Using an indigenous approach, we applied the medicine wheel as an indigenous psychological tool within the context of the land reclamation. The medicine wheel is a symbol found among many Native cultures, which can be used to examine the psychological self (e.g., Wilson, 2003; see Montour, 1996). The adapted measure afforded participants the opportunity to select which of the four quadrants from the medicine wheel (physical, mental, spiritual, emotional) best described the aspect of themselves that was affected by the process of land reclamation. Individuals who picked the physical quadrant were generally more likely than others to perceive instrumental value from land reclamation actions, to support actions for land reclamation, and more willing to participate in them. The choice of the physical quadrant also distinguished individuals who had been present at the land-claim site. Although all aspects of the wheel tie Native individuals back to their ancestral land, the physical aspects seem to pertain most closely to action, courage, and strength.

It was also found that selection of the spiritual quadrant was associated with greater support for traditional beliefs than the other two quadrants. This result is concordant with the notion that these beliefs highlighted a general support for the spiritual experience of being a Native person and, more specifically, the connection between person and land associated with the Native worldview. Finally, choosing the physical quadrant was also associated with greater support of traditionalist beliefs, possibly reflecting greater concerns for ingroup protection held by these individuals.

The mental and emotional quadrants were not associated with determinants of collective actions in the present study. The emphasis of these quadrants on intrapersonal processes would suggest that they might impact other aspects of the life of persons involved in collective action. In particular, future work may wish to examine how these quadrants relate to determinants of psychological well-being (e.g., emotional distress) of individuals involved in similar intergroup conflicts.

Results also revealed that the degree of identification of individuals did not vary as a function of the quadrant they chose on the wheel. This result provides important support to the notion that traditions of sociocultural groups and degree of identification to the group may operate independently to shape a person's motivation to engage in collective actions.

Although our use of the medicine wheel represents a successful application of an indigenous approach to psychological research (see Kim, 2000), it should be noted that our approach did not assess one of the aspects of the wheel: the extent to which there is balance between the quadrants (see Bopp, Bopp, Lane, & Brown, 1985). Operationalization of this aspect of the wheel presents an important challenge from a methodological standpoint. This dynamic aspect of the wheel, however, offers an innovative approach to conceptualising the self as a state of balance between different drives. It should also be noted that the medicine wheel does not necessarily belong to the traditions

of all Native people. For example, for the Oneida people, who encompass the Six Nations, the use of the medicine wheel is not a central aspect of their traditions. They do, however, have knowledge of the wheel. The knowledge of the wheel shared by many Native peoples may provide it with the ability to serve as a “pan-Indian” tool to which many Native individuals can relate. As such, the use of the medicine wheel warrants further investigation because it holds important meaning for many Native people, and it has proven to be an effective tool within the current study.

### Presence at the Site

Known-groups validity for our measures was evidenced through the comparisons of participants who had been to the land-claim site with those who had not. Although ethical constraints limited our ability to inquire about the nature of their actions at the protest site, it is reasonable to infer that individuals’ who were at the front lines support collective actions, since they had to go out of their way to get there. Presence at the Caledonia land-claim site was associated with greater perceived instrumental value and greater intentions to participate in land-reclamation actions. Although presence was associated with more favourable attitudes toward the land-claim actions, this difference failed to reach significance. It was also observed that presence at the claim site was associated with greater identification, but not with support of traditional beliefs. Presence at the site may have increased individuals’ identification with group through increased contact with members. Support for traditional beliefs was expected to alter the value of action, which in turn affected participation. It is thus concordant with our approach that support of these beliefs was not associated directly with presence at the site.

### Limitations

The current study had a number of limitations that should be acknowledged. Foremost, the correlational nature of this field study limits statements of directional causality. This issue was partly addressed through the use of statistical modelling techniques involving mediational analyses. Such mediational approaches provide opportunities to strengthen the internal validity of nonexperimental research designs by allowing an investigation of the psychological processes that are hypothesised to underlie an effect (Kenny, Kashy, & Bolger, 1998). The generalizability of the findings to other disadvantaged indigenous groups would also need to be established; it remains to be seen if traditional beliefs are as important in other social contexts.

### Conclusion

By demonstrating the motivational influence of traditional beliefs on motivation to engage in collective acts aimed at fending off a group threat, the current study provides a novel approach to examine the cultural bases of collective actions. It is important to note, the motivational influence of beliefs was more central than the influence of collective identification, which has been previously identified as the key factor in motivating collective action participation (Van Zomeren et al., 2008). The current study also offers important social implica-

tions. Collective action in this context has the power to improve the vitality of Native communities (see Taylor, 1997), as well as to change the societal status quo (Lalonde & Cameron, 1994). Finally, the current study offers an example of how an indigenous psychological approach can be applied and customized to a specific population.

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### Resumé

Cette étude examine l’influence des croyances culturelles traditionnelles sur la participation à des actions visant à repousser une menace à l’égard d’un groupe socioculturel. Plus particulièrement, l’étude ( $N = 157$ ) s’attardait sur les mesures visant à réclamer les terres prises aux communautés autochtones. Les résultats ont révélé qu’un appui aux croyances traditionnelles était associé à une hausse de la valeur perçue des répercussions des actions collectives, ce qui en retour était associé à une attitude plus favorable à l’égard de ces actions et à l’intention d’y prendre part. L’influence des croyances traditionnelles était indépendante du niveau d’identification au groupe. L’étude s’est aussi basée sur une approche autochtone et s’est servie du symbole de la roue médicinale pour explorer de quelle façon les personnes se percevaient par rapport à la revendication territoriale. Les auteurs présentent les implications théoriques des résultats pour la recherche sur les actions collectives ainsi que celles pour l’étude de l’identité autochtone et la question sociale de la mise en valeur des terres.

*Mots-clés* : tradition, identité, action collective, autochtone, mise en valeur des terres.

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## Appendix

### Items Used to Assess Traditional Beliefs

It is important for Native people to surround their children with Native art, music, traditions and teachings.

It is important that Native youth meet and interact with Native elders.

It is important for Native people to attend ceremonies for their spiritual health (e.g., feasts, sweat lodge ceremonies).

Smudging with medicines should be a central part of a Native person's life.

Native people should learn their traditional language when possible.

Native people benefit from applying principles of the medicine wheel to all aspects of life.

Having a traditional spirit name is an important part of Native identity.

Learning traditional arts and crafts is important in Native identity development.

Appreciating the interconnection between all things (such as spirits, animals, humans) is important to the well-being of Native people.

Traditional healing methods are just as important as the mainstream approach to health.

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