

THESIS

EMBEDDEDNESS AND THE MARKET'S EDGE:

LAKOTA ARTISTS AT AN ECONOMIC FRINGE

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this research project is to investigate the liminal space Lakota people occupy between market and traditional economies. Rapid integration into a market-based economy and historical resistance to it has pushed the Lakota to an economic fringe, where cash needs demand that Lakota families engage with a market that does not sufficiently provide for them. On the Pine Ridge Reservation, Lakota people are able to absorb the limitations imposed by the market by engaging in a traditional economy embedded in social relations. In particular, this paper focuses on Lakota artists at this economic fringe, and discusses the decisions they make in order to survive.

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INTRODUCTION

The struggle to earn a living has a constant presence in communities of the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Reservations. Lakota people are subjects of a colonial past that has pushed them towards assimilation, writing the western capitalist system into the very fabric of their lives. On these Reservations today, the workings of the market can be readily observed—cash is exchanged for all types of goods and services in convenient stores, businesses, and restaurants. However, that the market has failed to sufficiently provide for Lakota people is also apparent. Unemployment rates are high, there are few businesses, and market opportunities are scarce. Reliance on the market is a tenuous strategy for survival.

In order to insulate themselves from the limitations of the market, Lakota people engage in what Karl Polanyi describes as a socially embedded economy. On the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Reservations, embeddedness is manifested in an economic organization that is “traditional” to Lakota people, and foreign to outsiders. Lakota art is a natural extension of this economic organization, and has become a vital strategy for Lakota livelihood in the present. It is at this economic fringe between the traditional socially embedded economy and the capitalist market that Lakota artists negotiate their survival.

This research project intends to illuminate the complexity of economic decision making among Native artists in the Northern Plains region. I situate Lakota artists within the socially embedded economies of the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Reservations in South Dakota, and discuss the many implications of their integration into the capitalist market. As entrepreneurs, Lakota artists navigate the market and the socially embedded economy to their advantage, where both market and traditional modes of integration serve to inhibit and create new livelihood possibilities.

I use Polanyi's concept of embeddedness as an interpretive lens to examine the dynamics of reservation economies, and review additional literature to show how socially embedded relationships remain an integral part of peoples' economic decision making in the contemporary world. I provide a history for traditional Lakota economic practices and for Native art in order to frame the discussion in context with reservation life. Art is a natural extension of Lakota culture and economics, and has become a prevalent and innovative strategy for earning income in communities of Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Reservations. The fieldwork data offered in this paper supports that Lakota artists are deeply engaged in socially embedded relations throughout the process of creating and selling their work. Lakota artists are and must be innovative, resourceful, and hard-working. Data also supports that integration to a market system has been economically devastating for Lakota families. Artists contend with a significant lack of infrastructure, which in turn creates challenges of access to materials, markets, education, and financial capital. Many contemporary Lakota artists live in poverty despite the caliber and frequency of their work. To be sure, Lakota economic life has had to be reordered to make use of the chances and opportunities that are available under such circumstances—between the market and tradition.

In the last section I evaluate the work of the non-profit group *First Peoples Fund* to present how a more favorable integration to the market may be created for Lakota artists. *First Peoples Fund* has been able to mitigate issues of access that Native artists contend with while strengthening their connection to local communities. New culturally appropriate pathways to economic success must be formed in future development projects on Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River, and this paper adds to a discussion of the challenges of such work. The need for understanding the complexity of economic choices made by Lakota artists cannot be overstated in this regard. These rural areas have consistently high unemployment rates and are ranked as some of the poorest counties in the United States every year, yet art production remains a widespread strategy for survival. By acknowledging the socially

embedded strategies Lakota people engage in on a daily basis; by meaningfully addressing even one of the many barriers imposed by the market on Lakota families; by supporting Lakota artists appropriate to the context in which they live, the benefit to reservation communities could be substantial.

CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Embeddedness

Embeddedness is a concept that sees all economic relations as being rooted in society.

Introduced by Karl Polanyi in *The Great Transformation* in 1944, embeddedness declares that social relationships govern economic interactions. Polanyi states that

The outstanding discovery of recent historical and anthropological research is that man's economy, as a rule, is submerged in his social relationships. He does not act so as to safeguard his individual interest in the possession of material goods; he acts so as to safeguard his social standing, his social claims, his social assets. (Polanyi 1944: 48)

In terms of economic integration, embeddedness is manifested through the institutions of reciprocity, redistribution, and householding (Polanyi 1944:49-58). Each of these institutions supplies society with a way to organize its production and distribution, but also provides "noneconomic motivation" (Polanyi 1944:50) that is vital to the running of society as a whole. Reciprocity, redistribution, and householding are essentially patterns of behavior that work to balance the allocation of wealth through social principles. Well-being is ensured by an individual's reputation for generosity and the quality of their work (Polanyi 1944:45-58), which transfers to them a social honor or "prestige" (Polanyi 1944, Mauss 1967). For instance, in the Trobriand Islands, the gardener with the greatest amount of surplus crop to be redistributed each harvest is revered by the community (Malinowski 1922). The principle of obligation is also an important component of embeddedness. Mauss explains that the obligation to give and receive "gifts" is a self-interested process that generates social insurance for survival, but also one that is entwined in morality and spirituality. To withhold gifts or to refuse them is to destroy the human bond that a gift confers—to shun friendship and support, and not offer it to others (Mauss 1967). This sense of obligation serves to sanction economic behavior so that "the economic system is, in effect, a mere function of social organization" (Polanyi 1944: 52).

Embeddedness favors group interests over that of the individual. First, the social contract or “accepted code of honor” of generosity and obligation makes it impractical for an individual to pursue their own economic self-interest, as they would be spurned by their community (socially and therefore economically). However, satisfying socially embedded relations within a group is also most beneficial to an individual because they can expect reciprocation in the long run (Polanyi 1944:48). When livelihood is threatened, risks are not endured individually, but are dispersed across a wide network. For example, Scott reports that farmers in Southeast Asia follow a “subsistence ethic,” where they avoid falling below their subsistence needs by banding together in social groups that have a moral obligation to take care of one another (Scott 1976). In many places of the world, a socially embedded economy focused on group interests offers a better strategy for long-term survival.

Up until the end of feudalism and at the dawn of capitalism, all economies were socially embedded (Polanyi 1944). The 19th century, amidst the Industrial Revolution, marked the rise of a “self-regulating market,” where production and distribution of goods was controlled solely by prices (Polanyi 1944: 70-71). Under the market mechanism, economy became “disembedded” from social relations and began to be governed by the laws of the market, which caused a complete transformation of society as a whole. Polanyi states that a disembedded economy “means no less than the running of society as an adjunct to the market. Instead of economy being embedded in social relations, social relations are embedded in the economic system (Polanyi 1944: 60).”

As catalogued by Polanyi in *The Great Transformation*, there have been costly implications to such a disembedded system. In order to operate, the “self-regulating mechanism” of the market requires that political, economic, and social spheres of society be separate. This leads to the destruction of human life through the “fictitious commodities” of land, labor, and money:

Robbed of the protective covering of cultural institutions, human beings would perish from the effects of social exposure; they would die as the victims of acute social dislocation through vice, perversion, crime, and starvation (Polanyi 1944: 76).

The transformation and erosion of socially embedded systems by the market occurs so rapidly that society cannot set up new coping mechanisms fast enough (Polanyi 1944). However, human life cannot exist under the intense conditions the market generates, and people can only endure so much suffering. Polanyi's theory of the "double-movement" states that as society moves too far towards disembodiedness, that it will inevitably attempt to protect itself through a process of re-embedding (Polanyi 1944). According to Polanyi, this re-embedding process, or "protectionist movement" should take the form of regulation if society is to be free of market pressures (Polanyi 1944:265).

The lasting impact of embeddedness is in its application. Polanyi's substantive perspective is useful because it offers an alternative explanation for economic behavior—one that does not assume that "rational" choices are being made to achieve maximum personal gain, as in neoclassical economics. Formalist economic theory may have power in explaining economic exchange taking place in a market system, but falls short when applied to pre-industrial societies (Polanyi 1944). The same situation is true of a formalist interpretation of many societies today—it tends to oversimplify economic behavior. In order to comprehend how economic choices are made in areas removed from the market, such as Pine Ridge Reservation, acknowledging the enmeshed social and economic relations that have existed throughout history is critical. By focusing on how humans make a living under specific environmental and material conditions (Polanyi 1944), substantivism avoids categorizing economic choices as rational or logical, and is not bound to maximization and economic self-interest as per Adam Smith (Smith 1904). In the case of Pine Ridge, it provides space for a more appropriate interpretation of Lakota economic reality.

Although embeddedness cannot be interpreted through modern neoclassical economics, we must escape the pitfall of categorizing socially embedded economies as simple or primitive. Malinowski's description of the Kula Ring in the Trobriand Islands (Malinowski 1922) and Halperin's presentation of the Kentucky Way in rural Appalachia (Halperin 1990) lend support to the intricacy of non-market economies. Polanyi warns us not to dismiss thousands of years of economic history, or to assume that civilization began with advent of the capitalist market—"we cannot continue today on these lines" (Polanyi 1944:47). This paper follows these insights by using embeddedness as a heuristic to add complexity to the economic decision making process of Lakota artists.

Embeddedness in the Contemporary World

Socially embedded economies exist in areas that may be defined as impoverished by market standards, although poverty is not a condition of embeddedness (Polanyi 1968). As discussed above, socially embedded economies are appealing because they offer a better long-term livelihood strategy than the market alone, where risks must be borne individually and gains are short-term. They are also appealing in areas that are geographically rural (Halperin 1990, Scott 1976). In *The Livelihood of Kin*, Halperin discusses how people make a living "The Kentucky Way," through an amalgam of embedded economic strategies. She submits that these strategies are common to many rural areas of the world where social networks help people to meet their material needs (Halperin 1990).

Halperin presents a case study of embedded social relations in Appalachian Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana. "The Kentucky Way" (KW) is "a complex relationship between economy and kinship (Halperin 1990:1)" that requires an attachment to rural tradition, but is adaptive to the changing economic conditions of urbanization. Families are organized into large kinship units, and use "multiple livelihood strategies" to meet their collective needs—maneuvering between agrarian, wage labor, and rotating marketplace systems (Halperin 1990). It is a creative process where people navigate their livelihoods

both inside and outside market relations, using the market for cash and their family as a support system. Halperin distinguishes between the market, where people work for wages, and the marketplace, where goods are distributed through market as well as non-market transactions (Halperin 1990:12).

In order to comprehend how people live the KW, Halperin expands the analysis of small family household units to large familial social networks spread out over a 10 county region. Family is not residential, but is connected by the principles of a “rural lifestyle” and embedded social relationships—obligation, generosity, and reciprocity (Halperin 1990). Family networks absorb social responsibilities like caring for children and the elderly, and provide flexibility in the organization of economic activities (Halperin 1990:46-49). Livelihood decisions can be made to suit the needs of family members at any given time, and under fluctuating economic circumstances.

The KW implies a certain resistance to the market that is wrapped up in the social identity of country life. Halperin confers the KW works as “a system of local knowledge and practice” that involves both practical skills and an understanding of how to engage with the market “without succumbing to it (Halperin 1990:12).” Knowledge is passed down informally through the family—whether it is a trade skill, learning how to operate in the marketplace, or how best to utilize land. By learning several general skills, people decrease the need to become dependent on wage labor, and as a result find a source of pride and autonomy living the KW (Halperin 1990:14). Kentuckians earning their livelihood solely through wage work, who do not participate in the reproduction of practical knowledge, reject the social identity the KW extends and put themselves at risk with no long-term strategy for survival. The KW shows how embeddedness dissolves the boundary between the economic and social. Making economic decisions and living the KW are one in the same.

Embedded Decisions

Embeddedness presents that the social and economic realms of society are interwoven. Likewise, making economic decisions is never solely an economic process, but a social one as well. As stated above, a formalist perspective is insufficient in explaining economic behavior in non-market societies because it fails to acknowledge the social nature of economic interactions (Polanyi 1944). According to Smith, modern economics (used here to describe dominant formalist or neoliberal perspectives) distorts economic behavior in both market and non-market societies alike. Viewing decisions as purely economic obscures the complicated nature of making livelihood choices as human beings (Smith 2000). In order to fully comprehend how and why people make certain decisions, it is necessary to demystify and reevaluate the concept of cost-benefit analysis and the idea of economically rational behavior.

The hegemony of the market system states that the cost-benefit analysis concept is unique to the market. Smith declares that people across time and space have always engaged in “economizing behavior”—weighing costs relative to benefits. The process, however, is not a simple measurement of optimizing self-interest, but a highly integrated and complex interaction of evaluating alternatives (Smith 2000). In carrying out such a cost-benefit analysis, people both consciously and subconsciously consider sociocultural factors as much as economic ones. Preferences for certain goods vary across the human experience, and the idea of value fluctuates with time and circumstance. For example, the necklaces and armbands exchanged in the Kula Ring are imbued with their own social significance, based on history, lore, and the owner of the item (Malinowski 1922). Moreover, decisions are often affected by emotions and an individual’s perception of the world, and not based on logic. Most notably, livelihood choices are constrained by an individual’s historical, social, and cultural milieu (Smith 2000). Since all people do not have the same access to resources, they must employ different strategies and

make different decisions to get what they need or want. Sociocultural knowledge helps frame what resources are available, how they are valued, and how to use them. People are constantly changing their strategies, adapting or discarding information to mitigate risk and uncertainty (Smith 2000). Of course, risk itself varies across the human experience. It restricts the alternatives that are available for people to choose from.

Rationality is another term that is too narrowly defined in economic vernacular. Under a formal economic rubric, every livelihood choice a person makes can be understood to be in their own self-interest (Smith 2000), because people make self-interested decisions based on rationality and logic (Pearson 1968:236-239). This iterative explanation is unhelpful in understanding economic choices because it does not attempt to learn how, why, and under what circumstances choices are made. Acting in one's own self-interest may be a universal characteristic of being human (Mauss 1967), but the absence of altruism across human interaction only adds complexity to the decision making process, and a greater need to comprehend the context for such decisions. People can be self-interested without being rational in the formal economic sense, and the decisions they make can be simultaneously economic and social. Moreover, rationality is a culture-laden term. What is rational in rural Vietnam may be irrational in an urban metropolis like Chicago. Smith asserts that economically rational behavior "consists of actions, activities, or choices selected by groups or individuals using the means available to them that are appropriate to the ends desired (Smith 2000:6)." This definition is better suited to understand livelihood choices from the particular context in which they are made—as a weighing of alternatives constrained by society, culture, environment, and access to resources.

An important point is that in terms of making livelihood decisions, the theoretical line between embedded social relations and the outside market is artificial. They are not mutually exclusive categories of explaining economic behavior, but represent modes of integration that when taken up fluidly may be

employed as a livelihood strategy. Smith offers that to understand the context for and complexity of livelihood decisions, rationality and logic should be idiosyncratically defined, and the equally economic and social aspects of cost-benefit analysis must be recognized. Lakota artists, like all people, will make the choices that are best for them at any given time—between the economic and the social, embedded and disembedded, rural and urban, traditional and contemporary.

Entrepreneurism

As discussed above, sociocultural knowledge defines what resources are useful. As knowledge is distinct between different groups of people, so are the forms of capital needed to procure resources and reproduce knowledge (Smith 2000). The root of production in a socially embedded economy is the social capital created by individual relationships and social networks. However, culture is constantly changing to meet new demands, and so innovation forms an important part of society's production (Smith 2000:62-67). It is generally agreed that entrepreneurs are people who seek to innovate and create new possibilities in the production of resources (Smith 2000). Entrepreneurism is another concept that has been confined solely to the market process despite its universality (Smith 2000).

Entrepreneurism has been discussed little in economic literature (Devine 2002; Naude 2011). Nevertheless, there are several definitions for what an entrepreneur might be. Devine 2002 offers Kirzner's economic description of entrepreneur as "the prime mover of the market process (442)," where the entrepreneur discovers opportunities within the market to exploit. Along the same lines, entrepreneurs are people who "drive economic change (Naude 2011: 7)." As reviewed in Devine 2002, Baumol states that entrepreneurs have a spirit that is never satisfied, and as a result shift the economy between states of equilibrium and disequilibrium in their quest for (442-445). From an "occupational" standpoint, Naude 2011 defines an entrepreneur as one who is self-employed (5). Many economists agree that risk-taking is central to the entrepreneurial role (Drabenstott, Novak & Abraham 2003; Naude

2011). For Knight, entrepreneurs profit from “successful entrepreneurial judgment in conditions of uncertainty (Devine 2002:442).” Certainly the picture of a risk-taking, opportunity-exploiting, individual innovator who motivates changes in the economy seems hard to reconcile with the themes of embeddedness put forth above. Although these definitions developed by economists have restricted entrepreneurship to an economic realm, they are not necessarily antagonistic to understanding how an entrepreneur might operate within a socially embedded system.

According to Smith, entrepreneurship is another idea existing throughout history that has unnecessarily become tethered to the market. All societies have individuals who take chances, go against established norms, and incite change. In her words,

Entrepreneurs are innovators who depart from precedence, may risk fortune and reputation, and seek to reweave the social web in order to introduce changes that increase resources for themselves and, usually, some others as well (Smith 2000:77).

First, entrepreneurial risk and profit are primarily social and not monetary (Smith 2000). By acting against the status quo, entrepreneurs stand to gain or lose social prestige, social reputation. Schumpeter and Baumol state that entrepreneurship is not a capitalist venture, but achievement-based (Devine 2002:441-444). Generosity—a principle integral to embeddedness—plays a big role in achieving power and influence. Giving away resources attracts people to an entrepreneur’s cause, and strengthens belief in their innovation (Smith 2000:80). Second, innovation undertaken by the entrepreneur does not have to be major, but can occur over time. Change may be the result of many small innovations that make acquiring resources easier (Smith 2000). In this light, an entrepreneur is someone willing to risk being opposed by their community in order to test a new livelihood alternative. They develop opportunities that may be added to or discarded in the process of making livelihood decisions—“weighing alternatives” (Smith 2000).

There is a connection between sociocultural knowledge and entrepreneurship. As sociocultural knowledge informs the livelihood decisions people make, so does it affect what type of innovation a society may find beneficial. Devine contends that

A value system that emphasizes the importance for the quality of life of viable local communities, social stability and considerations of equity, may similarly assess different types of entrepreneurial activity and innovation very differently from a value system emphasizing simply additions to net output (Devine 2002:448)."

Entrepreneurism can be seen to reflect a society's economic and social structure, and respond to the needs, desires, and preferences of its people. Indeed, entrepreneurship is embedded within society.

Entrepreneurism & Market Integration

Entrepreneurism is overwhelmingly the current manifestation of market integration. In a conference concerning rural entrepreneurship in the 21st century, Sampson noted that small entrepreneurial companies have been responsible for two thirds of all new jobs in the last twenty years (Drabenstott, Novack & Abraham 2003:74). The Small Business Administration reports that in the 1990's, 500 thousand new entrepreneurial firms started up in the United States, with small firms being responsible for seventy-five percent of all new jobs created in that decade (Henderson 2002:47). Self-employment is a trend that has continued to develop, especially in rural areas. The Department of Commerce states that in the 1990's, self-employment in rural areas was higher than their urban counterparts—a departure from the 1970's and 1980's where urban self-employment was almost double that of rural (Henderson 2002:50). Self-employed rural entrepreneurs made between \$3000-\$6000US more than rural inhabitants who were not self-employed. Additionally, small entrepreneurial firms seem to be much more prevalent than large firms. In 2001, eighty-five percent of all entrepreneurial firms consisted of less than ten people. The wealth distribution still favors urban entrepreneurs, however, who earned forty-two percent more income than rural entrepreneurs in that same year (Henderson 2000).

Despite the movement towards small, rural, entrepreneurial firms, there are significant problems rural entrepreneurs must overcome. Infrastructural concerns like transportation (as conflated by size and distance of the rural area) and institutional support, issues of access to resources, capital, business training and education, and lack of business networks all serve to inhibit entrepreneurial activity (Drabenstott, Novack & Abraham 2003; Henderson 2002). In terms of economic development, Henderson declares that more high-growth rural entrepreneurial firms need to be supported if these barriers are to be overcome. Smaller “lifestyle” entrepreneurs contribute to local economy, but make decisions based on quality of life over growth, and therefore lack the power to make large-scale economic change (Henderson 2002). The fundamental problem with Henderson’s claim is that it exclusively assumes the market will provide the best path to economic development without recognizing the embedded nature of economy. For that matter, it assumes that local communities and entrepreneurs *want* the kind of economic change Henderson discusses.

Discussion

In summary, embeddedness is a concept that explains that economy is entrenched in social relations and influenced by culture. A socially embedded economy is regulated through obligation and generosity, and its primary modes of integration are reciprocity, redistribution, and householding. As socially and culturally integrated systems, socially embedded economies provide participants with a way of life and a code of ethics to live by, and thus take part in shaping identities. Embeddedness as a concept may be powerful in interpreting rural areas where access to materials and resources by market means is limited. Engaging in embedded social relations offsets the risk and distress associated with market integration, and offers a degree of resistance to it. However, socially embedded economies work with the market, not against it.

Making livelihood decisions is a social process as much as it is an economic one; a fact that has been obscured by the current paradigm of neoclassical economics. All people engage in a form of cost-benefit analysis by weighing one choice against another, but the process is not defined by economically rational behavior, and its result is not defined by financial gain as a market framework purports. People consider a wide range of factors in their decision making, and choices are informed by needs, desires, and sociocultural knowledge. It is because it recognizes the complexity of economic choices that embeddedness is better suited to understand the specific historical, social, and cultural context in which livelihood decisions are made. As will be discussed in the following chapters, Lakota artists weigh their economic alternatives between the socially embedded economy of Pine Ridge and the outside market, and their choices reflect that both are important to their survival.

We tend to frame entrepreneurs as businesspeople who push the capitalist market to new limits by exploiting opportunities and undertaking financial risk. However, market integration did not originate the entrepreneurial role—entrepreneurs have pushed limits and exploited opportunities inside other economic systems throughout history. They navigate risk and uncertainty to procure more resources for themselves, their families, and their businesses. They act mainly for social benefit. Their innovations attempt to make getting resources easier, and can occur over time. Sociocultural knowledge defines what types of resources they want and the innovations they create to get them.

Lakota artists are entrepreneurs who constantly operate under conditions of uncertainty. The most useful innovations, as defined by Lakota society, may be the ones that allow them to survive—managing social relationships and social networks to their advantage. Also, the innovations Lakota people find most attractive will reflect Lakota culture and history; in this case, their forced assimilation and integration into the market system. In this sense, the best innovations for Lakota entrepreneurs are the ones that enable them to manipulate the market while remaining grounded as a Lakota in a socially

embedded economy—the sociocultural knowledge that allows engagement with the market “without succumbing to it” (Halperin 1990:12). In the following chapters, I hope to show that for Lakota artists, livelihood choices and “successful entrepreneurial judgment” (Devine 2002:442) are structured by a Lakota culture that is continually adapting.

Last, the discussion of entrepreneurship is relevant to this paper in that Lakota artists, as rural entrepreneurs, align with the current trend of market integration. In development projects, understanding how best to support Lakota art entrepreneurs within the structure of their own economy could produce results that would stimulate economic growth in culturally consistent ways.

CHAPTER TWO: NATIVE ART AND THE LAKOTA CONTEXT

The History of Native Art

Art is and has always been incorporated into American Indian life. It is an extension of Native American culture, ideology, and tradition. Indeed, many contemporary Native artists view their work as “a connection to ancient beliefs and long-held values” (Hirschfelder & Montano 1993:146).

One theme in North American Indian art portrays the holistic connection of Native art and culture—the bond between people and nature. Animals and natural scenes are depicted in a variety of mediums, and frequently art pieces are constructed from natural material—wood carvings, paint on animal hide, and jewelry created from horsehair and porcupine quills are some examples (observation from field study). Lakota art converges with spirituality and worldview, and represents this deep bond with nature. The Lakota expression *mitakuye oyasin*—“we are all related” (Hirschfelder & Montano 1993) embodies the fundamental relationship of humans and the natural world, and extends the idea that people are morally bound to take care of it.

That art is an extension of Native American culture is supported by the numerous practical items Indians have created for use. Pottery vessels, pipes, teepees, clothing, weapons, baskets, and blankets were all historically produced and utilized by Indian groups. Prior to European contact, Native art could be considered “a by-product of workmanship” (Wade 1986: 119).

It is significant to note that North American Indian cultures had been mixing long before the colonial era, both biologically (Churchill 1999) and culturally (Hirschfelder & Montano 1993). This process of change and adaptation is chronicled by the diffusion of artistic work among Native groups, where new ideas could be adopted and incorporated uniquely into tribal life. It is not surprising then, that Indians began to adapt their work to take advantage of new trading opportunities with the arrival of white Europeans. Easel-painting is an example of Native art being influenced by western culture: Artists could supply white buyers with novel work, but in a customary and comfortable medium (Ewers

1981; McCoy 1992; Neuman 2006; Wade 1986). A rise in interest for these painted depictions of “primitive” life began at the turn of the 20th century, and a burgeoning market for Native American art developed.

In light of this history, “traditional” Native art is dually defined. From a western perspective, traditional Indian art refers to the flat, two-dimensional paintings done on canvas and buffalo hide (Ewers 1981; Neuman 1986), Plains ledger drawings (Neuman 2006; Rushing III 1995; Wade 1986), or art resulting directly from European contact (Hirschfelder & Montano 1993) that arose from the market demand created by white Europeans. What is considered traditional from an Indian standpoint may include various forms of art that have different degrees of antiquity. For instance, quillwork is an ancient and sacred work among Lakota people, where porcupine quills are dyed and then stitched or wrapped in different patterns. Early in the 19th century, Native artists spurned the glass beads brought over by European traders because they were not “alive” like porcupine quills (Hirschfelder & Montano 1993). However, on the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Reservations today, beadwork is widely considered by artists to be a Lakota tradition. Like Lakota society as a whole, Lakota artists have integrated changes into their cultural system, adapting their traditions over time.

It is noteworthy that Indian artists did not take individual ownership of their work by signing it until white collectors wanted to know (Caldwell 1999; Ewers 1981; McCoy 1992; Neuman 2006; Wade 1986). This fact is representative of the sense of community so integral to Lakota life, and to a socially embedded economy. That many Lakota artists sign their work today epitomizes their relationship with the market: They have had to adopt new values in order to have a chance at providing for themselves. Individualism exemplifies the shift Lakota people have had to make towards disembedding their economic relations in favor of survival.

The designations for what constitutes traditional and non-traditional Native art in the present day are highly contested among Native peoples. Native art has become increasingly more innovative, using different mediums, techniques, and subject matter. Some Native artists believe contemporary work is tantamount to a loss of tradition. Other artists contend that new representations and expressions of Native art are equally connected to a traditional past, and that contemporary work is valid and culturally responsible. To be sure, “Native American art is as diverse and as up-to-date as the artists who produce it (Hirschfelder & Montano 1993:144).” Of course, Lakota artists have multiple, intertwining identities—as family and tribal members, as leaders, as elders, as entrepreneurs. Acknowledging the multiple dimensions of identity is vital to understanding the complex nature of economic decision making. Likewise, it is important to situate Lakota artists within the context of Pine Ridge, where livelihood decisions are made.

Embeddedness on Pine Ridge

On Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, embeddedness is manifested in “traditional” Lakota practices. “Traditional” in this sense is not semantic, but meant to describe the practices Lakota people engage in that have a past. Indeed, what is traditional illustrates dual economic histories: the record of Lakota practices in a time before the encroaching capitalist market, and the record of Lakota practices in response to it.

Hunting and Gathering

Lakota people are historically hunters and gatherers, and the buffalo has always been an integral part of Lakota life. It has been proffered that communal buffalo hunting is the most widespread subsistence practice of the Plains Indians, involving a large number of hunters to be successful and generating large amounts of meat (Verbicky-Todd 1984). As an economic subsistence strategy, communal buffalo hunting provided groups of Indians with amounts of food, clothing, and materials

that only became possible as hunters worked together in planned, collective hunts. Communal hunting was also a central feature of Indian social organization. In order to coordinate hunts and share buffalo, Indians had to live in close proximity to one another. These larger communities offered protection against enemies and a constant source of livelihood for Indian families (Verbicky-Todd 1984). Although the practice of communal hunting has waned under colonization, the same sense of community organization remains strong among Lakota people living on the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Reservations today. Livelihoods are sought collectively and work is mobilized in large community units called *tiospayes* (Pickering 2000a), as well as in immediate family units participating in household economic activities (Sherman 1988). Art is one such household activity in which several family members may participate. However, there are also Lakota artists that carry out art as an individual enterprise. Artists may have the ability to choose between either alternative, or they may not.

The buffalo is still significant to Lakota people today, linking traditional Lakota economic practices to the present. Historically, the buffalo supplied Plains Indians with clothing, housing, storage containers, ceremonial objects, bows and arrows, and tools; products made from the hide, hoofs, horns, hair, tail, sinew, internal organs, bones, and teeth of the buffalo (Verbicky-Todd 1984). Although there may be less practical use for these types of items today, buffalo and other natural materials are still widely utilized by Lakota artists. Sculptures are shaped from buffalo jaw bones and elk antlers; drums, moccasins, and ceremonial dress are created from animal hides; and animal sinew is a resourceful substitute for thread. Quillwork is an ancient Lakota tradition (Hirschfelder & Montano 1993) where porcupine quills are harvested, processed and colored. In this sense, artists help keep an ever-adapting Lakota culture connected to the past.

It is noteworthy that many of the above materials are not available for purchase, but are found locally and shared by the community. Artists often rely on the reciprocal exchange of items and

materials in order to get what they need to complete art pieces and make sales. In this way, Lakota art is representative of a truly integrated Lakota culture: it is the confluence of Lakota spirituality, social structure, embedded economy, and tradition. One observation from fieldwork supports this claim. During an interview in a Pine Ridge community, an artist brought me to his backyard where a buffalo hide was being stretched. He had shown his generosity by giving away most of the meat to other families, and planned to do the same with the hide once the sun had dried it out. He could not use it himself, but hoped that something Lakota could be created from it.

Gift-giving & Giveaways

The embedded institutions of redistribution and reciprocity have a long history on Pine Ridge, and take the form of gift-giving. Gift-giving has been observed by outsiders as early as the 1890's, and is "a fundamental principle in Lakota life" (Grobsmith 1979:124). In gift-giving, reciprocal obligations are formed through exchange, and a long-term social insurance is created. Historically, exchanges took place between non-kin (Grobsmith 1979), as wider networks of social relationships could better assure that Lakota families survive a catastrophe, or expect reciprocation in times of economic duress. The contemporary expression of gift-giving on Pine Ridge is a "giveaway," which takes place at communal events like memorials, pow-wows, and graduations (Pickering 2000a). Hosting a giveaway can be very costly, but the social prestige earned in the socially embedded economy can be great. Pickering 2000a reports that it may take two years to accrue the type of wealth necessary for a giveaway, which is something not all Lakota can do (58). Costs were so high for Lakota people in the late nineteenth century that any individual giving away most of their possessions had to be "reincorporated into the community by being given the bare necessities to begin to exist once again" (Grobsmith 1979:128). Generosity is a cultural more that allows Lakota people to engage in the embedded economy, and a value that was readily observable throughout fieldwork. Often over the course of an interview, a gift

would be made of some personal possession—a piece of art work or jewelry, a painting, sweetgrass, a shirt. Lakota generosity exists in the face of poverty. One sculptor gave me the carving knife he was using, despite the fact that he had no front door.

Householding

Householding is a traditional Lakota practice that remains an important feature of a socially embedded economy today. Sherman 1988 reports that in a study of traditional micro-enterprise activities in Pine Ridge, 83% of Lakota families were involved in some form of home-based activity. Approximately a third of those families received more than half of their income from these micro-enterprises, which include traditional, service, and sales activities (Sherman 1988). Sherman categorizes home-based production as a part of the informal sector; an economic realm providing various opportunities for self-employment that has derived from a traditional hunting and gathering lifestyle (Sherman 1988). Families participate collectively in the production of goods that supplement household incomes (Pickering 2000a), offering flexibility from the pressures of an open market. A benefit of the informal sector is that different family members may engage in several diverse activities at various times, which offers an “optimal use of available human resources” (Sherman 1988:7). For Lakota in the informal sector, home-based activities and multiple livelihood strategies are synonymous.

Householding requires the collective participation of family members in order to be successful. Several interviewed artists stated that when they had to fill a large order, their family would work together to complete the job. Household production may also help organize a division of labor that is beneficial to providing for a family unit. During interviews, I met artists who expressed a discomfort with pitching their work to the public. Some of these artists had family members who would travel door-to-door to sell for them, so that the artist could concentrate on the creation of art pieces. Household family

units have the ability to absorb more work, be more efficient with time, and play to the strengths of its members.

One benefit of organizing work through the household is that the production of goods for sale occurs simultaneously with other important household jobs. Caring for children or grandchildren is one such job shared by family members. Family units on Pine Ridge provide flexibility in the care of children so that mothers and fathers do not have to bear the cost of raising them alone (Pickering 2000a:11-12). As a result, many artists struggle finding time to do their art. Working through the night is not uncommon on Pine Ridge. As one woman from Allen explained, the only time she had to work was after everyone else was asleep. Another artist admitted that since his grandchildren were getting old enough to care for themselves, he could spend more time creating new beadwork designs and traveling to art shows. Householding is characteristic of a socially embedded economy, as it offers tangible examples of how costs can be deferred and benefits can be shared by groups of people.

As a part of a socially embedded economy, householding is linked with Lakota consumer choices. On Pine Ridge, goods and services are exchanged regularly instead of cash (Pickering 2000a:67). In a 2003 study, Isenhour found that the items Lakota people give value to and trade for mirrors the social relationships most important to them. As well, it is significant that the connection between consumer choices and a socially embedded economy continues to exist for Lakota people who do not live on Pine Ridge (Isenhour 2003).

The traditional practices of the Lakota reflect their organization in a socially embedded economy which is still prevalent today. Although hunting and gathering is no longer observed, the communal nature of subsisting remains integrated into Lakota culture. Reciprocity, redistribution, and householding remain the primary modes of Lakota economic integration in the contemporary world where the market system is pervasive and dominant.

Lakota Integration into the Capitalist Market

Polanyi describes the market as a dominant force that has rapidly bent society to its will, denigrating human life in the process (Polanyi 1944). Lakota people have also endured “social costs” associated with market integration. Not surprisingly, the process of acculturation forced upon Lakota people by the United States government chronicles their integration into the market system. By creating “fictitious commodities” (Polanyi 1944) of land and people, the government has served to disembed Lakota economic relations. The Lakota have endured a weakened sense of self-determination, which has been stifled by dependency on federal aid. One result of forced integration into the market is that Shannon County consistently ranks as one of the poorest counties in the United States (Pickering 2000; Sherman 1988; U.S. Census Bureau 2009).

Land as a Fictitious Commodity: Federal Land Policy

Historically, federal land policy disconnected the Lakota from their sacred lands and encouraged Lakota dependency on federal aid. Implementation of a reservation system in the late 19th century made traditional subsistence practices challenging for Indian people to engage in. As large tracts of the Great Sioux Nation and then the Pine Ridge Reservation were annexed by the federal government, the spiritual Lakota relationship with land became more fragile. Shrinking terrain made hunting migratory buffalo increasingly difficult, and in effect severed Lakota people from a fundamental aspect of their economic, spiritual, and social livelihood. The Dawes Act of 1887 privatized ownership of tribal lands by dividing them into individual parcels, and selling the “unused” surplus to white ranchers (Carlson 1981). This fragmentation sought to replace the Lakota concept of communally shared land with the western notion of property, making land a commodity (Pickering 2000a:64). One objective of the Dawes Act was to introduce agriculture as a subsistence practice and convert Lakota people into farmers, but this project failed miserably (Carlson 1981). The imposition of a western concept of land and how to use it

resulted in the Lakota becoming further alienated from their means of subsistence, and in need of help from the government.

People as Fictitious Commodities: Wage Work

Dependency was also created through the introduction of wage work, which made commodities of Lakota people. On the Rosebud Reservation in the 19th century, an Indian employment program run by the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) presented Lakota people with a significant amount of job opportunities. The program was meant to end Lakota dependency on government aid by encouraging “labor discipline in Indian men” (Biolsi 1992:27). When jobs dwindled due to inadequate federal funding, unemployed Lakota people were once again forced to rely on meager government rations (Biolsi 1992: 25-29).

Development policies may also work to reproduce a state of dependency and force Lakota people into dissonant economic roles. The contemporary welfare program TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) implemented in Pine Ridge assumes that wage jobs are the answer to ending dependency and alleviating poverty (Pickering 2000b). However, the western concept of work that wage jobs entail does not acknowledge the strategies of a socially embedded economy that Lakota people employ to survive. Coupled with the scarcity of wage work in Pine Ridge communities, TANF can only damage reservation economies (Pickering 2000b). Furthermore, tribal tax laws and social services may “create incentives to avoid the formal economy” (Roche 2000:2). As a Lakota engages more in wage work and becomes further integrated into the market, the social services they are eligible to receive are reduced (Roche 2000). Polanyi describes a similar situation. During the Industrial Revolution, the Speenhamland law attempted to provide incentives for lower class British to work, but proved to accomplish the opposite when they were cut off from government aid (Polanyi 1944).

Indian boarding schools also helped drive wage work into Lakota life. Instead of an academic education, Indians attending boarding schools were given vocational training and pressed into activities that “subsidized” the cost of running the school (Pickering 2000a:24). With no access to education, Lakota girls and boys were not prepared to be competitive in the market for jobs (Pickering 2000a: 223-25), confirming their unstable position on the periphery of the market. This is evidenced by unemployment being such a persistent issue on Pine Ridge. Data from the U.S. Census of 1990 put the unemployment rate on Pine Ridge at 32.7% (Pickering 2000a:15), a statistic that increased to 51.6% in 2009 (U.S. Census Bureau 2009). However, U.S. Census figures suffer from underreporting (Pickering 2008) and may be inaccurate. Numbers from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in 1989 state Lakota unemployment was closer to 73% (Pickering 2000a:15). Sherman posits that in 1988, unemployment rates could have fluctuated as high as 96% (Sherman 1988:18). Underemployment is also a consistent problem on Pine Ridge. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the majority of the 67% of Lakota considered employed in 1990 only worked for half of the year (Pickering 2000a:16).

Adherence to wage work has implied that the western conception of time be imposed upon the Lakota. From a Lakota perspective, time tends to reflect the “task-oriented” economy associated with various traditional subsistence practices. The western conception of time is deeply rooted in discipline and morality, and demands complete obedience to the clock (Pickering 2004). This foreign concept of time imposed upon Lakota people has made their integration into the market a challenging process. Many wage-working Lakota feel a lack of control over their livelihoods associated with the strict work times of the market (Pickering 2000a:20-21), despite the fact that wage work experience is common among Lakota people (Pickering 2004). This exposes the necessity of market relations for Lakota people, as wages fulfill cash demands. Yet, time is also an area where the Lakota resist market integration. Household production provides an excellent example: It is an ongoing activity in which Lakota people

manage their own work at their own pace. On Pine Ridge, how people use their time reflects the socially embedded economy (Pickering 2000a; 2004).

Culture as Fictitious Commodity: Native Art

Commodification of Lakota culture has also been a cost of market integration. With traditional subsistence practices under strain and Lakota epistemologies being assimilated by western culture, there were few economic options for Lakota people at the turn of the 20th century. As the Native art market proliferated, producing art became a strategy for Indians to earn a living in their swiftly transforming lives (Ewers 1981; Neuman 2006; Rushing III 1995; Wade 1986). A contradiction arose: Native art became a bastion of Indian heritage in a time of assimilation, but this heritage had to be made available for sale. Through the sale of art, Lakota culture came to be a “fictitious commodity” like Lakota land and people. Nevertheless, art production is a very important part of a wider survival strategy for inhabitants of Pine Ridge today. As stated above, it is a micro-enterprise (Pickering 2000a; Sherman 1988) that prevents Lakota families from being consumed by poverty. This tension between commodification of culture and the need to earn money has played out in other places of the world where art production is vital to survival—Chiapas, Mexico (Nash 1993; Stephen 1993). The implications of selling items so deposited in the Lakota way of life continue to be revealed in Pine Ridge communities. This paper does not attempt to address this issue, but does recognize the importance of doing so. Nevertheless, taking advantage of opportunities is necessary if Lakota artists are to continually provide for themselves.

United States policy has complicated art production and distribution on Pine Ridge (and on Indian reservations in general), and has made the erosion of social relations another cost of market integration for Lakota. In order to restrict the misrepresentation of Indian-made arts and crafts in the U.S. and protect the financial interests of Native artists, the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 (IACA)

was implemented. The act carries severe penalties for the sale of foreign-made Native art knock-offs—false artists may be fined up to \$1 million or serve up to 15 years in prison. In a multi-million dollar industry, these foreign imitations of Indian goods are a significant problem, accounting for twenty percent of all Native American art sold (Parsley 1993:487-489). IACA requires that Indians producing art for sale be able to prove their Native heritage by blood quantum or by tribal membership (Hirschfelder & Kreipe de Montano 1993; Osborne 2000; Parsley 1993). Instead of supporting Indian sovereignty, IACA has done more to damage it. Proving Indian ancestry is an exclusionary contentious process, and one rife with inconsistencies: There are still tribes unrecognized by the federal government due to Termination Era policy; tribal blood quantum requirements vary between tribes; the Dawes act rolls are still used as a criteria for Indian eligibility, but discount those Indians who refused to or could not sign (Parsley 1993). IACA has had negligible results. Native artists unable to prove ancestry have been put out of business, as shops will not sell their work. Artists who can prove heritage are also suffering, as museums and galleries have been slowed by the process of establishing an artist's legitimacy, which has decreased sales. Last, there are loopholes in the act that make it difficult to enforce. For instance, by changing the name of the items sold to "Indian-style," foreign producers can still legally sell them (Parsley 1993). As well, forcing artists to legitimize their identity to each other has created factionalism in Indian communities where scarce resources and rights must be fought for. This factionalism within a socially embedded economy destabilizes the social relationships that it needs to function.

The erosion of social relationships integral to a Lakota embedded economy is not a new process, however. Pickering asserts that the Indian Reorganization Act of the 1930's may have been a precursor to ethnic distinctions among present-day Lakota. Following the biological determinism popular in academics at the time, the federal government urged Indian tribes to define themselves genetically through blood quantum. The criterion for tribal enrollment was one quarter Indian blood. Among the

Lakota, this biological distinction helped perpetuate ethnic stereotypes of “full-blood” and “mixed-blood,” which have had a considerable impact on tribal politics (Pickering 2000a: 82-83).

Yet, “mixed-blood and full-blood issues almost invariably turn on economic distinctions” (Pickering 2000a:85). On Pine Ridge, it may not be genetics but a person’s economic behavior that is ultimately seen as the measure of their Indian blood: A Lakota embodying the values of a socially embedded economy is considered more full-blood than one who engages more frequently with the market. Indeed, there is a perception that mixed blood Lakota receive the majority of wage employment opportunities on Pine Ridge, and control the bulk of the wealth. Nepotism is also seen as an issue (Pickering 2000a:82-86). Culturally created ethnic distinctions of blood degree could occasionally be observed during fieldwork. Some of my informants would warn me about certain artists—“careful, he/she is traditional; he/she is full-blood.” The impression was that I would receive more resistance interviewing these artists. Indeed, some artists were more resistant to conversing with me. This may also have to do with the legacy of research on Pine Ridge, where trust is tenuous between Natives and the white people who have come and gone for two centuries.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

The data presented in this paper was reported in the Northern Plains Artist Market Study (2012). The Northern Plains Artist Market Study (NPAMS) was a joint effort between First Peoples Fund (FPF), a non-profit working with Native artists in business entrepreneurship, ArtSpace, a non-profit specializing in creating affordable space for artists, and Colorado State University. The purpose of the study was to learn about the infrastructural barriers and limitations that reservation artists contend with, and to give a voice to the experiences of Native artists.

A survey tool mixing qualitative and quantitative questions was developed collaboratively, and used as the basis for one-on-one interviews. Implementation of the survey occurred in two phases. First, interviews were conducted in June and July 2011 on the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Reservations in South Dakota. Second, slightly revised surveys were completed by artists over the phone or by email. Out of 143 respondents, 57% were female and 43% were male, and the average age was 45. Sixty-eight percent were from the Pine Ridge Reservation, and 7% were from the Cheyenne River Reservation. All respondents were Native American. Additionally, all respondents were paid a \$20 stipend for their time and effort.

A further goal of NPAMS was to evaluate the effectiveness of FPF programming. To this end, the sample of 143 artists was divided into two datasets for comparison: emerging artists (71%) and FPF participants (29%). The division between the two groups was contingent on whether or not an artist had completed at least one program offered by FPF. Generally speaking, emerging artist surveys were completed in face-to-face interviews, and FPF participant surveys were completed over the phone or via email. This distinction is in part due to the inaccessibility of FPF participants, who live in fifteen different states (AK, AZ, CA, CO, CT, KS, ME, MI, MT, NM, OK, OR, SD, WA, WI) both on and off reservations. All

emerging artists were accessible by car, either living in reservation communities (97%), or just outside (3%).

NPAMS aligns with a post-colonial methodology, as outlined by Smith 1999 and Friere 1970, and utilizes a participatory framework (Bopp & Bopp 2006; Chambers 2002; Kretzmann & McKnight 1993) for learning about the Native art community. Too often, research projects create relationships of exploitation and domination between outsiders and indigenous communities, where indigenous people are treated as research subjects, and knowledge is appropriated by scientists and not shared (Smith 1999). These relationships of oppression are reproduced over time within the western knowledge system (Friere 1970). The project design of NPAMS involved several choices meant to avoid these issues of domination in research. First, there was a commitment to create the necessary space for artists to speak about what was most important to them within the structure of the survey. Balancing qualitative and quantitative questions allowed data to be contextualized by the various experiences of the respondents, and let artists guide conversation. Second, a grassroots approach to fieldwork was an essential choice for involving artists in the participatory process. Face-to-face interviews helped further contextualize information, and were an important part of sharing knowledge as a “long-term commitment” (Smith 1999:16). FPF has been working with Native artist communities since 1995, and is located in Rapid City, South Dakota, adjacent to Pine Ridge Reservation. Developing relationships on the ground created space for Lakota artists to share information meaningful to them. This information will be used to improve FPF business programs as well as outreach and marketing strategies in ways that are appropriate to Native communities. The information was also used to leverage more resources so that FPF can continue to provide services to emerging Native artists.

A focus on process instead of outcome also contributed to a participatory approach. As communities are “defined and imagined in multiple ways” (Smith 1999:125), it is important that

research allows communities to define themselves. NPAMS project design—open-ended survey questions, face-to-face interviews, and a snowball sampling method—relinquished control over the learning process and provided space for the various definitions of the Native art community to emerge.

The diversity of work among interviewed artists is remarkable. They use various styles and engage in different mediums, including but not limited to beadwork, quillwork, leatherwork, silversmithing, painting, drawing, sculpting, ledger art, quilting, and bone and antler carving. These Lakota artists demonstrate both a constant connection to Lakota culture and a high level of innovation. Traditional items like drums, walking sticks, and medicine pouches, traditional clothing such as roaches (*wapasha*) and moccasins, various forms of jewelry, music, figures carved from bone, and contemporary, historical, and traditional paintings are all produced. As well, artists create non-traditional products like decorated pot holders, beaded guitar straps, and covers for pens and pencils. Defining personal style and uncovering new ways to make sales help artists engage with the buying public. Innovating may be an essential process in an artist’s success at the periphery of the market, where inventing opportunity adds to available livelihood alternatives.

| Emerging Artists | | FPF Participants |
|------------------|--|------------------|
| 94% | Percentage of artists who work every week on their art | 97% |
| 80% | Percentage of artists who work 20 hours per week or more | 76% |
| 26% | Percentage of artists who work 50 hours per week or more | 24% |
| 34 | Average amount of hours worked per week on art | 36 |
| 74% | Percentage of artists that sell year-round | 90% |

Figure 1

The time artists spend doing art related activities is a powerful indicator that art production on Pine Ridge offers a route to economic growth. As indicated in figure 1, both emerging artists and FPF participants average a full work week as art entrepreneurs. One quarter of the sample works 50 hours a week. Over three quarters of interviewed artists work 20 hours a week or more. The commitment they show to their craft is even more impressive when considering the many obstacles artists face on a daily basis.

However, emerging artists in particular have a considerable need for economic growth. Sixty-one percent of the emerging artist sample reports an annual household income of less than \$10,000US, and an average household size of 6. Art is an important piece of their livelihood strategy, as 30% of all emerging artists earn half of their income solely from their art business. Somehow, artists continue to earn a living against odds and amidst conditions of poverty. By appropriately supporting artists on Pine Ridge, future projects could economically boost Reservation communities while affording Lakota people a sense of self-sufficiency that is often overlooked in economic development.

CHAPTER FOUR-LAKOTA ARTISTS AND EMBEDDEDNESS

The livelihood decisions Lakota artists make are certainly shaped by a strained and obligatory relationship with the market. Economic choices on Pine Ridge also turn on their commitment to a socially embedded economy. The embedded economy insulates Lakota artists from market pressures, and also serves as a connection to a Lakota culture of the past that reverberates into the present. There are several ways in which embeddedness is represented in Pine Ridge.

Informal Knowledge Transmission

How art knowledge is transmitted and reproduced on Pine Ridge supports a socially embedded economy. Artists were asked to identify where they had received business training, if any, concerning their art business. Yes or no responses were recorded from a list of sources, and grouped into categories of formal and informal. Formal sources of knowledge include K-12 schooling, higher education, local non-profits, banks and financial institutions, and businesses. Informal sources of knowledge include friends and family, other artists, elders, and apprenticeships. Analysis found that 28% of emerging artists had obtained knowledge of their art business through formal sources, while 47% said they had learned through informal sources. "Friends and family" was the most popular response given by emerging artists. The informal sourcing of art knowledge on Pine Ridge follows that of rural Kentucky, where information most useful to survival is spread through family networks (Halperin 1990). Art production on Pine Ridge is cultural and practical knowledge spanning several generations. An artist from Pine Ridge claims "It's a natural way of life for most. Art with my family is a family tradition." Another from Kyle states "I do paintings, sculpting and other Indian crafts. My kids also do weaving and beading." Many artists participate in teaching children what they know. When asked "Where do you interact or meet with other artists?" a woman from Porcupine said "Predominantly at home. My kid's friends come over and I teach them how to do different types of beading and other art." Grandparents are important

sources of knowledge for artists, as exemplified by one respondent from Oglala: “My grandmother traveled to big pow-wows and taught me how to do quilling--Red Cloud Quill Work.” Another artist declares that it was her grandparents that taught her how to be an artist.

The same trend of knowledge transmission also exists for FPF participants. Forty-six percent of the FPF group declared their knowledge came from informal sources. This is a notable point. In market terms, FPF participants are much more prosperous than emerging artists (as outlined in Chapter 6) yet social relationships remain integral to their success. For FPF participants, increased capital does not seem to affect the way knowledge is accessed and transmitted. For emerging artists, however, having more money does impact how they learn. When set against the emerging artist sample as a whole, emerging artists earning over \$25,000US have less informal knowledge (they report 11% less knowledge from friends and family, and 12% less knowledge from elders) and more formal knowledge (30% more knowledge from non-profits, and 13% more knowledge from businesses). Financial stability may provide better footing for market interactions, so as artists earn more money, they may rely less on social relationships. Conversely, artists with less capital must be more dependent on social relationships. FPF participants—with increased financial capital, more established art businesses, and social networks of information—have more freedom to engage or dismiss economic interactions as it benefits them. There are a great many factors to making livelihood decisions, so it is important not to assume that more engagement with the market automatically results in an artist becoming disconnected from the socially embedded economy—although as Pickering explains, that may be the perception on Pine Ridge (Pickering 2000a:82-86).

A testament to the socially embedded economy is that younger artists have received more informal knowledge than artists over 40 (40 and under=59%, over 40=39%, emerging artists; 40 and under=65%, over 40=43%, FPF participants). This suggests that embedded relations among Lakota are

flourishing rather than on the decline. New generations of artists are seeking the knowledge and information most useful to them inside their social networks.

The Informal Art Community

Artists differ in the way they perceive the art community on Pine Ridge. Only half of emerging artists declare that a local art community is present on their reservation (47%=yes, 54%=no). Despite this statistic, a sense of the informal emerges in the ways artists choose to describe it.

The 47% of artists who affirmed the presence of an art community were asked the follow-up question “How would you define the art community on your reservation? Who is included? Is it formal or informal? What makes it a community?” Qualitative responses were coded. Forty-eight percent of these artists describe the art community as informal, 13% describe it as formal, and 8% describe it as both. Fifteen artist responses were not coded either way. Although artists offer multiple explanations, the art community is largely defined in terms of social relationships. The three most popular themes in defining the art community are that it consists of artists supporting each other (1st) as well as friends and family (2nd), and that there is a familiarity among artists (2nd). Artists also describe the art community in terms of selling their work, through pow-wows and local events, through tourism/buyers, and through formal/institutional support. It is noteworthy that family is a prevalent theme for describing the art community, as it is also the primary source of art knowledge on Pine Ridge. Informal perceptions of the art community offered by artists often transect. A man from Allen posits that the art community is “Informal--artists know each other. They come together; they know when something is happening and hang out. Artists are family. Being an artist is part of life.” Another from Pine Ridge declares “It is a tight group of friends. We help sell each other’s art, we find buyers. It's very informal, but it is there.”

That emerging artists define art communities in terms of support portrays the importance of social relationships to art businesses on the reservation. Where artists meet also reveals the informal

support systems they employ in operating their businesses. When asked “Where do you interact with or meet other artists?” the three responses offered most by emerging artists were around town (1st), at home (2nd), and at local events and pow-wows (3rd). Home provides a place for family and members of a social network to strategize about designs, what items are popular, or share inside information about places that are currently buying art. Local events and pow-wows afford artists time to reconnect with friends they may not see on a regular basis, widening their social network. Familiarity may spring from the practical reality of being an artist on Pine Ridge: Artists primarily meet “around town” because they are trying to sell their work at the same places. Big Bats convenience store, the Red Cloud Heritage Center, “the shade” at Wounded Knee and the Remember church group on Pine Ridge, the Cultural Center and hotel in Cheyenne River, and businesses, markets, tourist sites, and trading posts are all places where artists may interact while trying to make a sale. As one man from Kyle explains, “I see a lot of them on the streets, other artists are everywhere. I see them on the road and know what types of art they make. It is an informal community; we are all trying to make it.” Utilizing social networks supports an artist in this fundamental way—it was not uncommon to find artists selling for one another, or offering information on where they might have the best chance of doing so.

The informal nature of art on Pine Ridge is supported by the fact that art is seen as an extension of being Lakota. One artist from Kyle explains “Everyone is an artist in some way. Artists of all types.” Another artist states “The entire reservation is an art community. It is informal--meeting with each other. There are no set dates or times. We exchange ideas, barter. It spreads through word of mouth.” Art on Pine Ridge is literally embedded in Lakota life.

Perceptions of the art community and how artists identify themselves with reference to it intersect with the way they learn. Artists who believe there is an art community on their reservation and

who see themselves as part of it are more likely to have knowledge about how to operate in a socially embedded economy. Figure 2 represents multiple layers of data. Of the 47% of emerging artists who

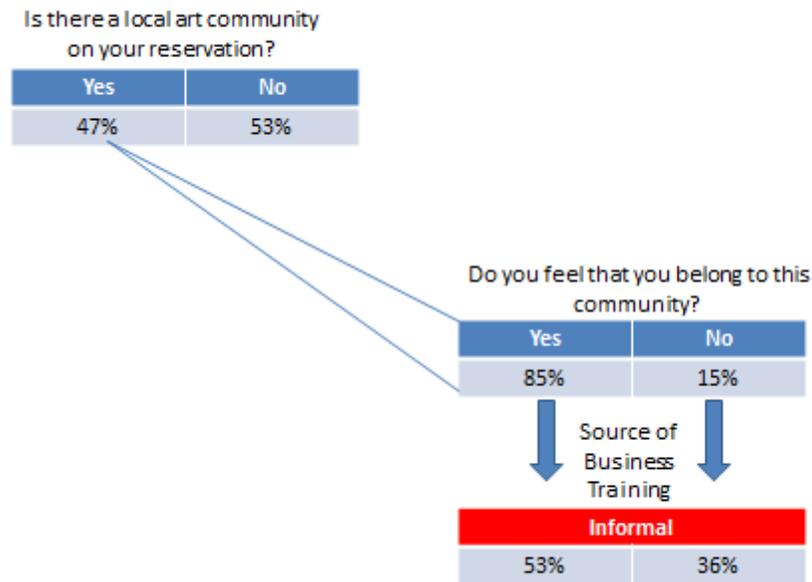


Figure 2

said there was an art community on their reservation, 85% said they were part of it. These artists have acquired 17% more informal knowledge than artists who do not have a sense of belonging to an art community. The practical knowledge of running an art business on Pine Ridge springs from the relationships of support an artist has within a socially embedded economy.

Informal Support

The kinds of support artists on Pine Ridge are likely to receive extend from informal networks. When asked “In what ways are you supported as an artist on your reservation?” qualitative responses were again coded into formal and informal sources (formal=local institutions, financial institutions, the tribe; informal=outside support, reservation support, friends/family, and other artists). Forty-four percent of emerging artists report informal support, 16% provide examples of formal support, and 6%

assert both formal and informal support. It is significant that emerging artists are twice as likely to receive support from friends/family and the reservation as any other source.

A second layer of coding reveals the ways artists may be supported. Encouragement, recognition, marketing, and education help emerging artists, but the overwhelming way artists are supported on Pine Ridge comes in the form of sales/orders. There are several factors that hinder an emerging artist's ability to sell their work explicated in the following chapter, and it is substantial that artists identify making sales as the primary way they are supported. As one artist from Kyle says of support, "Other than people buying work there isn't a way." It is difficult to operate and maintain an art business on Pine Ridge, as one man from Allen explains what keeps him going: "Compliments and encouragement. People ask for more. It means something to be able to sell my art in a poverty stricken area." Networks of family and friends help artists with things like obtaining materials, finding buyers and selling work, and developing new ideas and staying inspired, as well as offering help with education, work space, and finances. The value of close social networks to emerging artists is summarized by a woman from Wounded Knee: "Well, I ain't really supported unless it's by my family that support me 100%."

It is meaningful that 29% of emerging artists, when asked to describe how they are supported, mention that they are not. To be sure, whether an artist feels supported or not supported is not mutually exclusive. When asked "In what ways do you not feel supported as an artist on your reservation?" 65% of emerging artists identified areas or sources where support is lacking. The biggest sources of non-support for emerging artists are the tribe (1st) and reservation infrastructure (2nd). Other categories of non-support include retailers, the community, other artists, and suppliers. The predominant areas where support is lacking for emerging artists center around selling (coded as supply and demand/competition, 1st) and promotion and marketing (2nd). Additional areas where support is

missing are transportation, encouragement, materials, and education. That artists perceive tribal government as a chief source of non-support is consistent with their engagement in a socially embedded economy—informal networks of embedded relationships help artists stay afloat, and more formal institutions may represent the frustrations artists have with market integration. “They could probably do more—promoting, providing websites, promoting artist shows and events, marketing, and management stuff. The tribe could step up. The state of South Dakota could step up.” says one artist from Allen. Another artist from Porcupine encapsulates the feeling of being let down: “They don't have any programs—no people to help you—a business. From my experience I don't have trust in anybody—I don't want their help—they lied. Rather be on my own.” Direct mention of frustrations with federal and state governments or organizations was almost non-existent in artist interviews. This is more than likely due to my outsider status.

The ultimate importance of selling work is exhibited by the fact that making sales is both the greatest area of support as well as non-support for emerging artists. Selling to local institutions puts artists at the mercy of market exchange. A woman from Oglala: “They (the Chamber, Red Cloud) say they have galleries that buy art—but when I go over there they say they aren't interested.” Selling work is also exacerbated by the scarcity of infrastructure on Pine Ridge. There are only a handful of businesses on the reservation, fewer outlets for artwork, and less formal representation of artists. A woman from Allen describes the problem: “We need to centralize a location where artists could be advertised, set up artists there, gas money and funds divided by district could be better. A lot of artists are unknown.” The embedded nature of art to Lakota life does not translate to financial success in a reservation setting. Since art production is so prevalent, it may not receive the support it deserves: “Artists are not supported here because of the idea that all Natives can produce artwork or craft items. Artists do not hold a special spot in the communities.” says an Eagle Butte woman. A man from Dupree expresses one reason why tribal government does not support artists better: “. . . they don't seem to

recognize that artists are an integral part of the economic base.” Within the confines of Pine Ridge, the informal support of socially embedded relations can only protect artists from market relations to a certain point. One artist comments on an overlying issue for reservation residents: “I feel not supported financially but they are all so financially strapped themselves.”

Filling the Gap: Creating, Selling, and Embeddedness

Lakota artists rely on socially embedded relationships for support that make it possible to maintain an art business on Pine Ridge. Running a business requires an artist to constantly weigh alternatives in the process of making business decisions—decisions that are not *only* economic but social as well, Smith reminds us (Smith 2000). Market exchange does provide livelihood options, but artists use a socially embedded economy to fill the gaps left by engagement with the outside market.

Embeddedness is expressed within the physical art process—creating work and selling it.

Acquiring the supplies to create art is a continuous practice for emerging artists. They identify that having access to materials and resources would be the single biggest help in creating their work. Emerging artists may purchase materials from trading posts or department stores, which requires traveling “locally” an average of 51 miles. They also have the option to barter for the materials they need. Artists were asked “How often do you barter and/or trade your art?” and given the option to choose one answer from the list: never, rarely, sometimes, often, and all the time. Just 18% of emerging artists declare that they never participate in bartering, while 82% barter at various frequencies. Most emerging artists barter sometimes (37%), while over half (54%) barter sometimes, often, or all the time. An open-ended follow-up question was posed: “If you barter, why (to benefit your art business, trading with other artists, to support family, etc.)?” Overwhelmingly, emerging artists report that they barter for supplies—they are more than twice as likely to do so than for any other reason. Additional reasons for bartering include trading for art (the second most popular answer), to support themselves or their

families, for cultural reasons, and for marketing purposes. Social relationships help fill the gaps left by the market by providing a non-cash alternative for obtaining materials. One artist from Wounded Knee barterers “To get more materials, because sometimes I don't have the money to buy it.” Bartering also illustrates the benefit of reciprocity in a socially embedded economy: “I barter with other artists in order to help each other out, get supplies from one another when we need it.” says a woman from Pine Ridge. “I need a variety of materials, and special things that I can get through trading. Also, bartering is a help—an advantage for them and me in a roundabout way. My work is seen by other people and they get something they want.” pronounces another from Kyle. Artists barter in order to receive help, but also to give it, which in turn supports healthy relationships in a socially embedded economy. The idea of embedded informal exchange is best summarized by one FPF participant who says

It is really our old way of doing things. And usually it's not a arranged deal, just do something for some who say is gonna have a baby and they need a basket so I make them one. They might give me something later like fish or elk meat or maybe hide, something like that.

In making livelihood decisions, emerging artists consider both the economic—maintenance of their business, as well as the social—maintenance of their social network.

The statistics for bartering are similar among FPF participants, 85% of who barter at some level, and 57% of who barter sometimes, often, or all of the time. Although they share common themes with emerging artists, the majority of FPF participants do not barter for supplies. Sixty-three percent of FPF participants say they barter to trade art with other artists. Trading artwork is also indicative of a socially embedded economy, in that it helps build relationships: “Trading with other artists to build a cohort; sometimes I trade for something I know a family member would like to have. I support family or other artists.” Trading art is also a way to support other artists and to be supported, as two more participants explain: “I like other people's art—fantastic art—and want to support other artists.” “I like to trade with other artists, it is an honor to have your art appreciated by other artists.” Last, exchange of artwork can be a long-term strategy in an unstable economic climate: “I barter to collect art that I might not be able

to otherwise afford. So in that manner it is an investment, which will be passed onto my daughter, and grandchildren, which can help support them in the future should they need to sell some.”

The differences between what FPF participants and what emerging artists barter for may be a result of FPF participants having more established art businesses. More capital, more business training, and ostensibly larger social networks created over time make procuring materials easier. Emerging artists must be creative to obtain materials within the confines of a reservation infrastructure, and bartering is one innovative strategy that accomplishes this task. It is significant that the number one reason emerging artists give for their interest in FPF programs is so that they can acquire more supplies to make more art.

Selling also requires creativity, and where artists sell their work underlines the multiple strategies they must use to earn a livelihood. Artists were asked “Where do you sell most of your art?” and invited to rank their top 3 choices from a list: From your home - buyers-individuals come to you; Door-to-door and/or direct to buyers-individuals; Pow-Wows and/or local cultural events and activities; Retail - galleries, tourist shops, etc.; Internet; Other (please specify). Other than the internet, all methods of selling are employed regularly by emerging artists. Artists put home (45%), door-to-door (51%), pow-wows and cultural events (45%), retail (41%), and other (35%) in their top 3 sales methods. It is telling that emerging artists identify that “having access to physical markets” would provide them the most help in selling their work (71 out of 102 respondents declared this). Coupled with the fact that the greatest area of non-support for emerging artists is selling, the fluidity of where they choose to sell reinforces the creativity and innovation needed to earn a living on Pine Ridge.

Figure 3 shows the weighted responses for the same question (3 points were given to 1st place answers, 2 points were given to 2nd place answers, and 1 point was given to 3rd place answers). Although a higher percentage of emerging artists engage in door-to-door sales (51%), selling from home is their

| | Where do you sell most of your art? | Where are you most comfortable selling your art? | What methods of selling are the most challenging? |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| From your home-buyers/individuals come to you | 118 | 110 | 35 |
| Door-to-door and/or direct to buyers/individuals | 117 | 92 | 119 |
| Pow-wows and/or local cultural events and activities | 94 | 101 | 67 |
| Retail-galleries, tourist shops, etc. | 85 | 75 | 98 |
| Internet | 12 | 12 | 59 |
| Other | 82 | 78 | 38 |

Figure 3

first most preferred choice (more artists chose selling from home as their number one sales method). It is possible to infer that when sales need to be made, emerging artists favor accessing their social relationships before they attempt to sell outside of them. The guarantee of making a sale at home, where exchange occurs inside a social network, is greater than it is on the street. Nonetheless, this data suggests that selling directly to people is a necessary activity for all emerging artists on Pine Ridge—it is one important piece of a livelihood strategy.

As well, how artists feel about where they sell is indicative of the economic space they occupy—embedded in social relations at the periphery of the market. Figure 2 shows the weighted responses for two additional questions: “Where are you most comfortable selling your art?” and “What methods of selling are the most challenging?” In general, emerging artists are most comfortable selling from their homes and at pow-wows/local cultural events, and find selling door-to-door and retail challenging. This suggests that emerging artists are more at ease operating within a socially embedded economy than they are with the outside market. Selling from home is an extension of household art production, and includes the same benefits—artist offered being able to spend time with their families, to manage their own time, and to receive immediate cash as reasons. A woman from Porcupine: “From my home is

comfortable because all my supplies and materials are there, as well as my family—we all work together.” A man from Pine Ridge: “Being able to do it at home and on my own time.” Another woman from Porcupine: “From my home people come to me and it’s a sure sale.”

Whatever sales method they employ, emerging artists stress social relationships and talk about making connections with people. A woman from Kyle states “Selling door-to-door is more productive, you make a connection with the buyer.” Another artist from Kyle says of selling directly: “I can talk to people, give information about what I do and what they are made of (my work).” At home, emerging artists may utilize existing social relationships to sell their work, but selling door-to-door may also offer opportunities to generate new ones. The practice of developing relationships with others is built-in to the process of selling, and something that occurs naturally for many Lakota artists. A man from Porcupine simplifies the propensity Lakota artists have towards embedded relations: “I like talking to people, conversation. That's how we get to know each other.”

The importance of forming social relationships cannot be overstated on Pine Ridge. By widening social networks of support, emerging artists create alternatives and increase the benefit they receive from the socially embedded economy. The entrepreneurial spirit required for making direct sales is anchored in tradition. As one Porcupine artist illustrates, “It's always been like this—we go to other people to make sales.” Emerging artists, as entrepreneurs operating inside a socially embedded economy, innovate through the successful management of social ties.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE LIMITS OF MARKET INTEGRATION

As posited above, emerging artists consider the social aspects of their livelihood when weighing alternatives. As well, they consider when, where, and how to interact with the outside market. Creatively maneuvering between dual economies increases the livelihood options artists have to choose from. However, market interactions are complicated on Pine Ridge by Reservation infrastructure—limited access to markets, materials, transportation, financial capital and education. Moreover, artists are obliged to engage in market exchange to meet the cash requirements imposed by integration into the market system. Lakota artists are simultaneously bound to the market and resist it.

It is important to understand the complexity of what market integration entails for artists on Pine Ridge, because it is within this thorny context that livelihood decisions are made. Issues of access hinge on and are affected by one another. An absence of credit and capital derives from a lack of business training as well as an extreme shortage of financial institutions on the Reservation. The problem of access to materials turns on artists not being able to get credit to buy them, the remoteness of Pine Ridge to art shops, and the difficulties of travel. Selling art becomes problematic in a rural infrastructure without a sufficient way to market work, without reliable transportation to outside markets, and without the financial capital necessary to do either. This chapter is about the ways that the capitalist market limits artists' engagement with it.

Financial Barriers

In the market, businesses require cash to operate. On Pine Ridge, access to financial capital is scant. When emerging artists were asked “Have you ever applied for a business loan for your work as an artist at a bank or a lending institution?” 81% answered no. The remaining 19% were asked where they had applied for a loan, and all but 2 artists reported that they had done so at a local Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). On Pine Ridge, there is *Lakota Funds*, and on Cheyenne River

there is *Four Bands Community Fund*. That nearly the entire sample of emerging artists has never had an interaction with a bank is surely a detriment to operating a business within the market. The cause of this trend may be attributed to Lakota mistrust of the government, or of development projects offering monetary aid that have failed them in the past. As one man from Wounded Knee told me, “I like doing things on my own. That way I don't have to pay anyone back. White man lies.” Avoiding debt is a value instilled by Lakota culture (Pickering 2000a:71), and artists may not want to commit to repaying loans. The trend to steer clear of banks may also be attributed to a lack of financial education on Pine Ridge (Pickering 2000a:74). In general, formal art business knowledge among artists is low—28% of emerging artists and 30% of FPF participants declare formal learning (K-12 school, higher education, local non-profits, banks and financial institutions, and businesses). Just 11% of emerging artists and 7% of FPF participants report they have received knowledge from a bank.

The unavailability of credit means that operating costs for art businesses must be borne by the artists themselves. However, incomes on Pine Ridge cannot support business growth within the outside market—artists struggle to maintain their businesses. Expenses like materials and supplies, gas, and the price of traveling significant distances to make sales must be rolled into the cost of providing for a family. For the 61% of emerging artists who make less than \$10,000 annually, this leaves little room for business costs.

Barriers to Creating Art

There are a multitude of obstacles Lakota artists must deal with throughout the creation process. The most formidable is getting the materials and supplies they need to create. Limited access to credit, sparse Reservation infrastructure, and the general inaccessibility of transportation on Pine Ridge all add to the difficulty of accessing materials and resources.

Sheer distance is a factor in procuring materials. Outside engaging in a socially embedded economy, artists can visit the few places on Pine Ridge that sell supplies, or must travel off the Reservation to get what they need. The question “Are there resources available to you locally to create your art?” was posed to artists. Sixty-one percent of emerging artists said there were. A follow-up question was asked of this group: “How far do you have to travel to access these resources to create your art?” Figure 4 displays the data. Sixty-eight percent of emerging artists either do not have access to

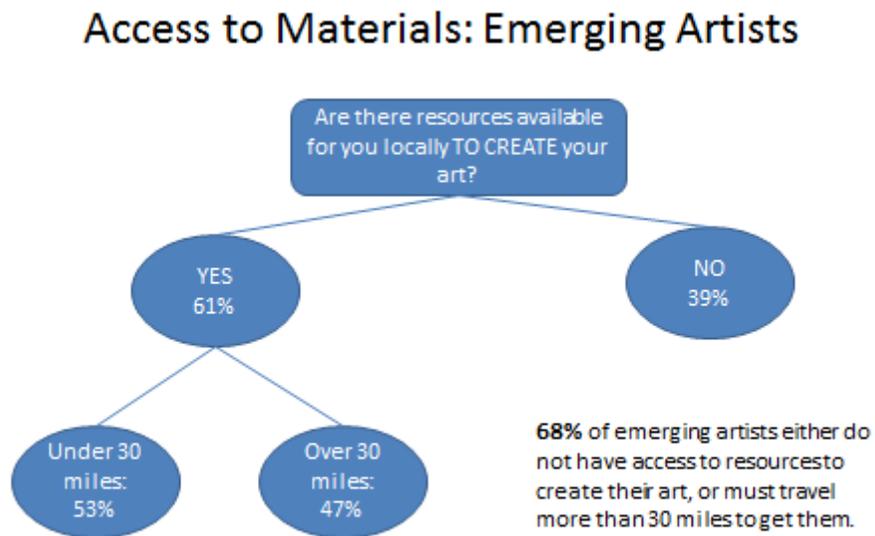


Figure 4

supplies, or must travel over 30 miles to get them. Thirty miles was chosen as a marker to represent the average distance between reservation villages. The average distance emerging artists travel to obtain materials is 51 miles, which means that they are traveling several towns away to gather supplies. Certainly “local” must be understood as a relative term in the context of Pine Ridge, which has the same land area as the state of Connecticut. Some emerging artists list Singing Horse Trading Post as a local place to buy materials: “Singing Horse is the only place. It is 27 miles away.” Several others list Rapid City or Chadron, Nebraska as local resources, even though the closest town to Chadron—Pine Ridge—is 50

miles away, and Kyle (the approximate middle of Pine Ridge) is 90 miles from Rapid City. No matter if emerging artists say they can or cannot obtain materials locally, in general they must travel—most of them great distances—to do so. One example is a man from Eagle Butte, who declares “I have to travel 50-200 miles round trip to buy raw hide, thread, and other art materials and supplies.”

A third follow-up question was posed to the artists who agreed there were local resources: “If yes, what resources are available to create your art?” Emerging artists offered a multitude of local materials, balanced between natural items: hides, porcupines, feather, antlers, bones, sinew, sage, clay, sweetgrass, and various woods; and non-natural items: beads, specialty colored quills, needles, thread, hooks, paint, canvases, and batting and fabric. The same balance does not exist in the kinds of materials that artists categorize as non-local. All emerging artists were asked “What resources do you need to create your art that are not available locally?” Although 35 artists list natural items like the ones above, 65 artists say they need more non-natural items, and the majority of artists report that they travel to stores outside the Reservation to get them. With only a few supply shops, infrastructure on Pine Ridge is simply not significant enough to support so many artists. The fact that more artists have trouble getting enough non-natural items makes sense, as they must be purchased (even if they are traded or given away afterwards) where natural items do not. The process of acquiring materials demonstrates the difficult relationship a Lakota artist has with market exchange.

Greater financial capital does affect the ease with which emerging artists obtain materials and supplies. Artists who have an annual income of \$25,000US or more differ from the total sample of emerging artists in that more of them can get art supplies closer to home. Using the same parameters as above, only 53% of artists making \$25,000US or more do not have access to materials or must travel over 30 miles to get them, which is 15% less than emerging artists as a whole. This suggests that cash is able to counterbalance the issue emerging artists have with getting what they need to create their art.

Whether or not having more money on Pine Ridge results in larger social networks for artists to obtain materials is unknown.

One point may not be statistically significant, but shows a relationship between income and art production. One fifth (20%) of artists in the \$25,000US bracket earn more than half of their income solely from art, as compared to 1/3 (33%) of all emerging artists. To be sure, having multiple income strategies may be universal on Pine Ridge. However, this data suggests that although art production as a livelihood choice is popular, more engagement with it does not necessarily translate into cash. Artists earning more money may use art production as a smaller portion of their overall strategy if they have other more productive sources of income available to them.

Having to travel far for materials is complicated by the constraints of transportation. Artists were asked the question: "What are the barriers to creating your art?" Open-ended responses were coded. After materials (1st), emerging artists identified that transportation (2nd), time (2nd), and finances (2nd) posed the biggest problems to the creative process. Other acknowledged barriers include workspace, family obligations, motivation and encouragement, and health. For emerging artists, the constant struggle for materials is bound to their ability or inability to travel. A woman from Pine Ridge asserts her largest issue: "Transportation. I don't have a car and getting new materials is difficult." As well, a selection of items not available on the Reservation may be found in outside shops and stores, but the cost of travel may be prohibitive. Distance, travel, time, and money converge to create a formidable barrier to be overcome. Artists from Kyle, Oglala, and Pine Ridge offer their sentiments about what most gets in the way of creating their art. Kyle: "Not having enough gas money to go sell or sit some place. Material availability." Oglala: "Time! I have to split time between selling and creating and traveling for buying more materials." Pine Ridge: "Space and time: Being a mother, financial help, having items ready to sell but not having the gas money there to sell items."

The benefits of householding in a socially embedded economy do not translate into benefits in market exchange. Household art production may defer the cost of raising children and offer flexibility with time, but in a market economy, an artist needs items to sell. Working from home means that family obligations come before art production: “I have too many grandkids. It’s hard to find time alone or space.” Moreover, creating and selling are inescapably linked for low-income emerging artists, because sales provide the cash to buy new materials and provide for families. One artist explains the problem: “Not having the materials, sometimes buyers only purchase on certain days. If I miss buying days this is a bad thing.”

FPF participants report many of the same barriers to creating art—materials, transportation, time, money, space, family obligations, and health. In fact, both artist samples identify the same 3 things would help them in the creation process: materials, space, and financial assistance. Figure 5 graphs the responses both emerging artists and FPF participants offered to the closed question

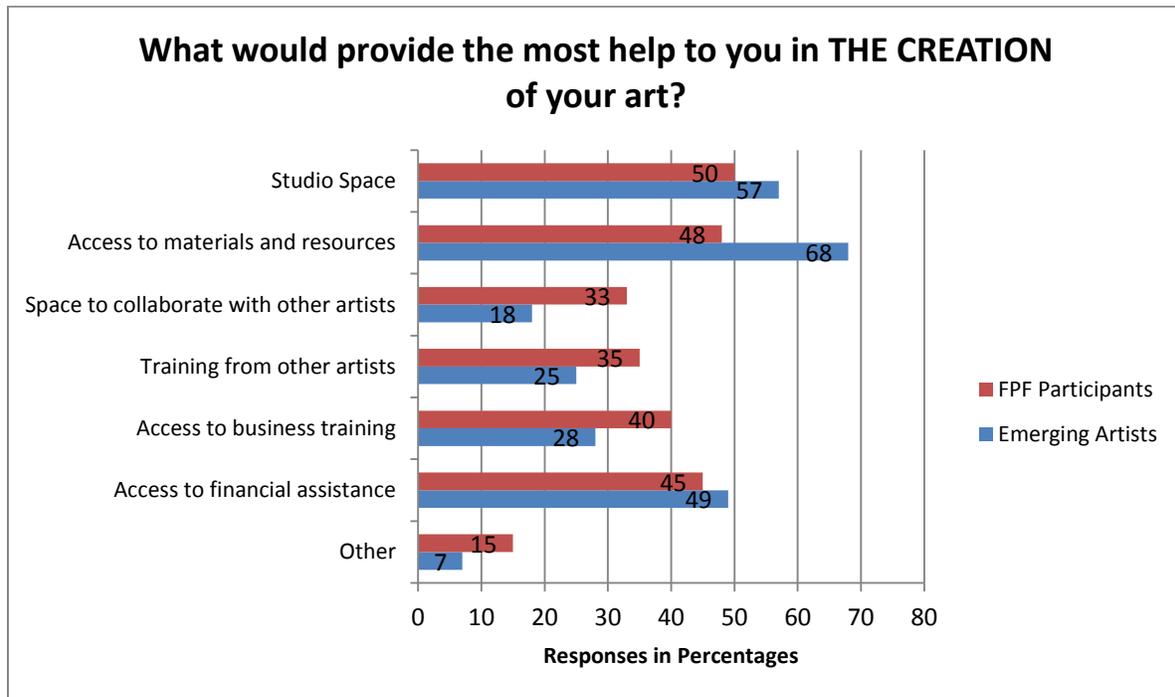


Figure 5

“What would provide the most help to you in the creation of your art?” That FPF participants want the same kinds of help as emerging artists is significant, but also relative. Even with more established businesses, better financial stability, and a longer time spent making connections in the market, artists find the same things difficult. However, being more established does affect what artists think about. FPF participants report that studio space would be the biggest help to the creation of their art, and for emerging artists it is having access to materials and resources. It may be that emerging artists spend more time fulfilling their basic needs, and FPF participants, who are able to mitigate supply issues because they are more established, are free to think about other things. Thirty-seven percent of FPF participants have studio space outside their home. As an emerging artist, this number drops to 13%.

Barriers to Selling Art

The most significant barriers for Lakota artists surround selling their work. Artists can make sales on the Reservation, which often fetch less money than they do in market exchange. Too many artists and a paucity of buyers create an adverse relationship between supply and demand, and coupled with the need for cash on Pine Ridge, this situation forces Lakota artists to access outside markets to sell their work. Market interactions are complicated by the same limitations discussed above: sparse infrastructure, inaccessibility of travel, and lack of financial capital. Artists are constantly weighing alternatives—as Smith says, “the good and the bad news” (Smith 2000) in the process of making sales. The strains of the market system are felt more acutely at its periphery, and the decisions artists make can be all the more impactful.

Having access to markets to sell their work is a fundamental problem for all artists. Respondents were given a list of possible choices and asked to identify their top 3 answers to “What would help you in the distribution of your art?” Figure 6 shows the results. Both emerging artists and FPF participants

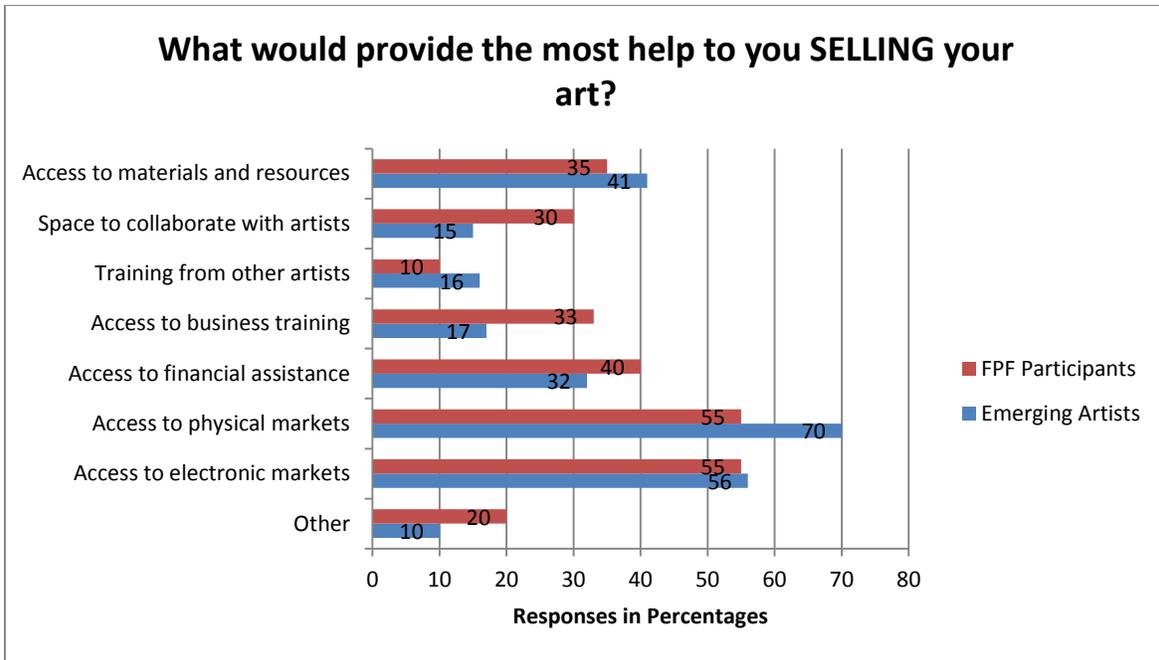


Figure 6

declare that access to physical and electronic markets would be the biggest help in selling their work. The internet is not a tool regularly used by artists (6% of emerging artists and 23% of FPF participants report the internet as a method of selling), and in the case of emerging artists, this may turn on the fact that many have no access or training with it. A woman from Pine Ridge: “The internet is difficult because I don’t know how to use it, but want to learn how.” “Hardly anyone has a computer” says another man from Porcupine. That emerging artists want electronic markets proves that they acknowledge the internet as an underutilized approach to selling, if only they could improve their access to it. That the greatest single help to distributing their art is “access to physical markets” reflects the struggles emerging artists have with overcoming distance, travel, and financial capital while living in the remote setting of Pine Ridge.

Selling work inside Pine Ridge is rife with obstacles. A large amount of artists circulate to the same businesses to sell their art—Red Cloud Heritage Center and Big Bats convenience store in Pine

Ridge, Singing Horse Trading Post in Manderson, the area off of Highway 27 in Wounded Knee, Lakota Funds and the Chamber of Commerce in Kyle, and the tribal offices and hospital are places where artists visit (although this list is far from exhaustive). Emerging artists most frequently mention Red Cloud Heritage Center (RCHC) as the formal local resource where they can sell work. While I was there in 2011, RCHC had implemented a system of “buying days,” to curb the amount of art it would purchase. Whether or not an artist would make a sale depended on the quality of work (it was evaluated by a staff member) as well as store inventory (they would not buy star quilts, for instance, if they already had some in stock). This supposes the artist was able to make the trip there in the first place. One woman vents her aggravation: “Retailers like the Red Cloud Heritage Center don't always buy if they don't ‘need’ what you have or their stock is full. It's frustrating because you might have to spend money on gas to get there and then can't make any money.”

Competition among artists is a reality generated by such limited infrastructure. Nineteen emerging artists directly mention competition as a challenge to making sales, as one man from Kyle asserts: “So much competition—everyone’s got basically the same thing and drawing people in is tough.” As well, competition seems to be a problem regardless of the method of sales in which an emerging artist decides to engage. Pow-wows may be places where artists feel comfortable, but they are also challenging. One man from Pine Ridge declares “Pow-Wows are difficult because of the competition; there is always someone that has better art.” An artist from Eagle Butte adds, “Never have very good luck at Pow-Wows.” Artists also encounter trouble selling their art directly, because so many other artists are doing the same thing. I was approached by artists selling their work on several occasions outside Lakota Funds, Common Cents grocery store, and each trip I made to Big Bats convenient store.

Despite the opposition curbing artists' ability to sell their work, there is an intrinsic value to selling on the Reservation that coincides with the importance Lakota people put in their relationships. Artists from Pine Ridge and Oglala explain why they are comfortable selling from home and door-to-door. Pine Ridge: "I know the people and the area." Oglala: "Because things you sell are to people you know." Another FPF participant says: "My work stays in my community." Nonetheless, there is a tension between how emerging artists feel about selling outside Pine Ridge, and how they feel about trying to make sales in a stifled Reservation economy. One older artist born and raised in Wounded Knee portrays this emotional conflict: "I don't want to go anywhere else—(but) there is too much competition at Wounded Knee."

Competition is bound to another issue artists have when selling on Pine Ridge—pricing. Several artists mention getting a fair price for their work as a barrier to their art distribution. A limited amount of cash circulating through Reservation villages and an unbalanced supply/demand ratio pose a problem for artists wanting to set the price for work. An artist from Wounded Knee summarizes the dilemma: "Changing prices—other people . . . selling a similar item will sell it for cheaper." Even more established FPF participants mention having two separate rates—one for outside markets and one for local sales: "I lower my prices at home because of the local economy. Determining my price is most difficult. My family, friends or other artists tell me to ask for more but I have a hard time raising my price even though I believe my art is worth it. I have local & out of area prices." Issues of supply and demand and the real need for cash can sometimes force emerging artists into less than favorable exchange. A man from Pine Ridge articulates, "When you're hard up you gotta let things go for much cheaper."

Getting fair prices can also be a difficulty in transactions with the outside market. As one artist from Pine Ridge declares, "Retail shops don't give me fair prices. (If I have to sell to them I will but I don't like to)." Splitting commissions with galleries and retailers for art sold is a familiar occurrence

among artists. Retail shops act as a middleman between artists and prospective buyers, which can be frustrating. Many artists comment that their art is undervalued by retailers: “You have to talk to them, tell them how long it takes you, how much stuff you used on it and they don't give you the price you want.” says a man from Porcupine. It may be that as consumers, outside retailers lack the education needed to fully appreciate what they are buying. However, retail sales are also subject to the forces of market exchange, which can be fickle. An emerging artist: “A lot of people are not familiar with art or art history, and most don't want to spend their money on art, the average person has more important needs for their income.” The common rate of retail exchange reported by artists is 50/50.

How artists feel about selling in outside markets is far from unanimous, however. The price reduction imposed by galleries and retailers may be worthwhile, as several artists attest to: “A museum or gallery space can handle my work with professional quality, and I get a wider viewing audience.” says a man from Pine Ridge. “Selling to retail and tourist outlets is cost effective. Once I establish sales I can usually get repeat sale.” proclaims another from Dupree. Besides self-marketing and efficient sales, another benefit of selling through retailers and galleries is that an artist can continue to focus on creating. “The retailer deals with the selling. I like to get an order, fill it, and be done. I don't like to deal with the selling part.” declares one man. Distaste for the sales side of the art business is a regular theme among emerging artists. Sales do not get any easier with more established businesses either. Ten FPF participants mention their discomfort with the sales process, summarized here by one man responding to what he feels is his biggest challenge: “Trying to be a salesman when you are actually an artist.”

Perceptions of pricing are relative. The cut price tags in retail sales may be higher than price tags on Pine Ridge. One female emerging artist says of retail: “The prices double when sold. I set my prices on items, and know what I will get for them.” When making decisions about where and when to sell, Lakota artists weigh their available options both on and off the Reservation. In a purely economic sense,

the price structure on Pine Ridge lessens what artists can charge for their work, but is logistically easier. Sales made off the Reservation may offer better prices, but can be offset by the cost of travel and time.

Data supports that artists do struggle finding market options locally. The question “Are there resources available to you locally to distribute or sell your art?” was posed to artists (results in figure 7). Fifty-three percent of emerging artists said yes and 47% said no. A follow-up question was asked to artists who responded yes: “How far do you have to travel to access these resources to distribute or sell your art?” Nineteen more emerging artists reported that they had to travel over 30 miles. This means that in total, 72% of all emerging artists do not have access to resources to sell their art, or must travel over 30 miles to get them. That nearly three-quarters of emerging artists cannot find consistent ways to sell their art on Pine Ridge further exposes the limited options of Reservation infrastructure. Responding to what local resources there are, a man from Kyle conveys, “Businesses and that’s about it.” Another from Porcupine says there are “Four or five places to sell art, like Wounded Knee, Red Cloud, and the College Center.”

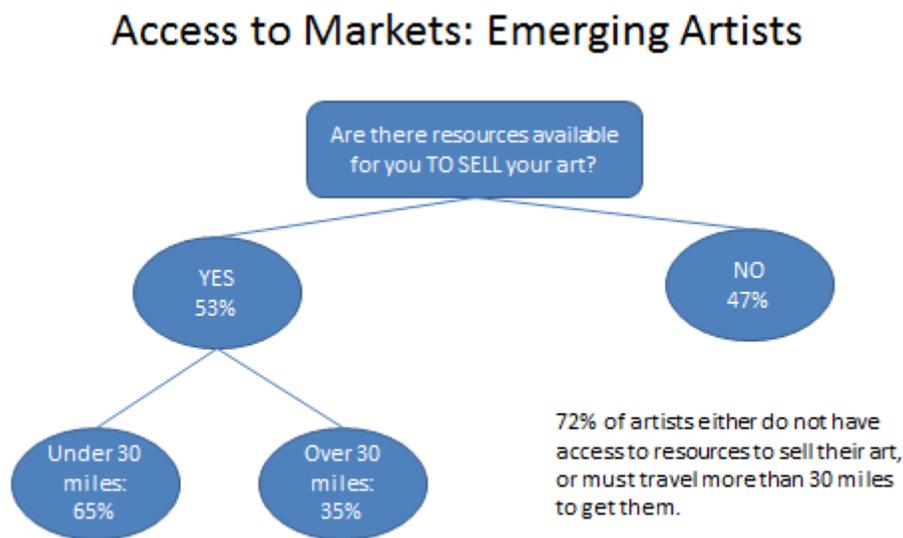


Figure 7

It is noteworthy that the average distance an artist travels to access a local resource to sell—24 miles—is considerably less than the average distance an artist travels to obtain materials—51 miles. Taking 30 miles again as the measure of distance between villages on the Reservation, this means that artists are traveling just one town away to sell their work. One implication of this disparity is that an artist relies more heavily on the socially embedded economy to sell their art. Another implication is that artists simply make do with the minimal market options available to them. In fact, it is likely that both are true. A livelihood strategy for an artist on Pine Ridge enlists all the alternatives available to them. One man from Oglala expounds on the local resources he uses to sell: “It's about who you know—a network. Also, door-to-door, office-to-office.”

Lakota artists are creative with their strategies for selling work. However, their ability to sell is certainly constricted by their ability to travel. When asked “What resources do you need to distribute or sell your art that are not available locally?” emerging artists acknowledged that physical markets (1st), materials (2nd), and transportation (3rd) were the three most important assets they don't have when it comes to making sales. Having more places to sell on the Reservation is sorely lacking, as the greatest amount of artists attest to. Many artists also mention that having a car and/or gas money is a priority. Reliable transportation is a commodity on Pine Ridge, where many Lakota cannot afford to buy a car, or fix one that has broken down. The number one reason Lakota people apply for a loan on Pine Ridge is to buy a car (Pickering 2000a:69). That emerging artists describe materials as a needed local resource to sell underlines their importance. Selling work is contingent on making it.

Emerging artists overwhelmingly distinguish transportation as the largest barrier to selling their art. Open-ended responses to the question “What are the barriers to marketing or distributing your art?” were coded, and transportation was mentioned by artists more than twice as much as any other issue. A lack of transportation affects an artist's ability to sell both on and off the Reservation. In villages

of Pine Ridge, artists visit local businesses and travel door-to-door, some on foot. A woman from Pine Ridge asserts, “I have to walk into town to sell my items.” However, owning a car does not necessarily translate into sales success, as a woman from Wounded Knee explains: “Vehicles and gas money are constant barriers.” The money artists have to spend on gas intensifies with mileage. In accessing outside markets, they must gauge whether the opportunity to make a sale will offset the cost of travel. A man from Wanblee verbalizes his biggest barrier: “Transportation. The market is so far away. I can make something like \$125, but it takes \$75 to get there.” A few artists even recounted stories about getting stranded in Rapid City after failing to make a sale. The reduced capacity to travel to outside markets thwarts sales opportunities for emerging artists. Two artists articulate what they feel interferes with their sales process: “Transportation. Not being able to leave the rez.” says a man from Allen. “My car not working, I can't go off the reservation, it's hard to get to more touristy places and I have a baby so I stay around here.” asserts a Wounded Knee resident.

Having no means of transportation, little money for gas, and far to travel are surely factors that shape what markets an artist can access. However, emerging artists somehow find a way to get where they want to be. The question “How far do you typically travel to sell your art?” was presented. Respondents were given five options and asked to choose all answers that applied to them: 0 to 5 miles, 6-20 miles, 21-50 miles, 51-100 miles, and over 100 miles. Although for the most part the distances emerging artists travel are evenly spread, the most popular answer is over 100 miles (30% of emerging artists report). Furthermore, the frequency with which they travel great distances reinforces that emerging artists—in spite of all the limitations put upon them—can overcome barriers when they want to. Of the 31 artists who said they travel over 100 miles to sell, 7 travel once or twice a year, 6 travel several times a year, 4 travel a few times a month, 9 travel once a week, and 5 travel several times a week. The range of frequency with which an artist sells in outside markets reflects the range of artists that exist on Pine Ridge; some artists can mitigate the barriers to their success more efficiently than

others. To be sure, that emerging artists find a way to access outside markets in the face of such tremendous obstacles demonstrates that market engagement is an important part of their livelihood strategy.

Obstacles remain a constant challenge, however. Most emerging artists declare that they travel several times a week to sell their work. These artists are the least likely to travel over 100 miles to do so—only 13% of them. In fact, there is an inverse relationship between frequency and distance when it comes to emerging artists selling their work: as the frequency an artist travels decreases, the more likely they are to travel farther. Eighty-eight percent of artists who travel once or twice a year say they travel over 100 miles to sell work. This may constitute that artists on Pine Ridge are at different points in their business. An artist traveling infrequently to sell may spend time creating and stockpiling inventory so that a seasonal art show may be lucrative. Another artist may not have the materials to stockpile work nor the financial stability to sell intermittently, so they remain closer to home where sales are used for more immediate needs. It is noteworthy that the percentage range of artists traveling 0 to 5 miles is consistent across the frequency with which they sell (14%-25% of artists selling at any frequency sell within 5 miles of their home). All artists can access local markets or buyers, but access to outside markets is differential.

Discussion

At the economic fringe amidst market and socially embedded economy, Lakota artists have created a hybrid strategy for survival. Social relationships and networks on the Reservation help fill gaps left by market interactions, and provide artists a sense of economic stability. Sales inside market exchange help artists maintain their businesses, and fulfill the cash demands of a market culture thrust upon them. Engaging in both economic systems generates livelihood opportunities for Lakota artists, but also inevitably shapes the choices they make between them. Decisions are neither forced, nor

voluntary, but both; they are not strictly economic or social, but a combination of the two. After all, choices are made under fluctuating circumstances and for a variety of reasons. Opportunities become available and disappear; barriers are abated or intensified; Lakota families need and want different things at different times. Regardless of the means employed by Lakota artists, the ends must be met. As entrepreneurs, Lakota artists have found ways through risk and uncertainty to provide for themselves and their families.

CHAPTER SIX: IMPACT OF FIRST PEOPLES FUND

An economy based in social relations continues to be the primary structure for economics on Pine Ridge. Chapter 4 presents the ways Lakota artists participate in a socially embedded economy as a means of earning a livelihood. Market interactions remain an important part of an emerging artist's economic strategy, but are made problematic by persistent access issues. Chapter 5 discusses the implications of their integration into the market. In chapter 6 I examine the effects of FPF programs among Native artists, and contend that FPF offers a culturally appropriate and meaningful path to economic growth for Lakota artists. Unlike other economic development programs, FPF works within the systems of knowledge transmission that exist among Native people, and recognizes the complex nature of economics on reservations.

First Peoples Fund

First Peoples Fund (FPF) has been developing and training Native artists since 1995, offering education in arts entrepreneurship, marketing, and business planning. FPF strives “to honor and support the creative community-centered First Peoples artists; and nurture the collective spirit® that allows them to sustain their peoples” (www.firstpeoplesfund.org). In addition, FPF goals are to build awareness of Native arts and culture, and provide support to Native artists who give back to their communities by passing on knowledge and inspiring other artists:

Our vision is to communicate to the world the roots and philosophy of Indigenous artistic expression and its relationship to the collective spirit of First Peoples. We will strive to provide support and voice to the creative Indigenous artists who share their inspiration, wisdom, knowledge and gifts with their communities (www.firstpeoplesfund.org).

FPF has several programs designed to establish artists as entrepreneurs, community leaders, and culture bearers: Community Spirit Award (CSA); Artists in Business Leadership (ABL); Cultural Capital (CC); Alumni Mentoring; Success Coach Training and Education; and Foundation and Arts Networking. The Community Spirit Award acknowledges Native artists who have had long-standing impact on the

development of Native arts in their local communities through sharing of their traditional knowledge. The Artist in Business Leadership fellowship provides artists with a working capital grant, training and professional development in order to promote Native art entrepreneurs to the small business level (defined by FPF as “consistent and reliable income” (www.firstpeoplesfund.org)). The Cultural Capital fellowship is an extension of the CSA, where artists further their work in local communities with the help of a cultural capital grant. CC centers on improving the transmission and documentation of cultural artistic knowledge by supporting established community artists in their quest to leverage more resources for their projects. Within the context of this paper, ABL is poised to expand artist’s access to markets, and CC is well equipped to strengthen the existing informal framework of knowledge transmission on Pine Ridge. FPF programs help situate artists within their communities as conduits of artistic, cultural, and traditional knowledge. In sum, it is the combination of improving market access and maintaining cultural values and traditions that create a more favorable integration into the market.

Working within Informal Systems

It is important that economic development on Pine Ridge reflect the structure of the socially embedded economy in which artists operate. Maintaining cultural values and building on assets that are already available are vital to the community building process (Bopp&Bopp 2006; Kretzmann&McKnight 1993). FPF participants continue to engage in social relations and use informal networks as part of their business.

Like emerging artists, FPF participants learn what they know about art and art business informally. Figure 8 shows the results for both emerging artists and FPF participants to the question

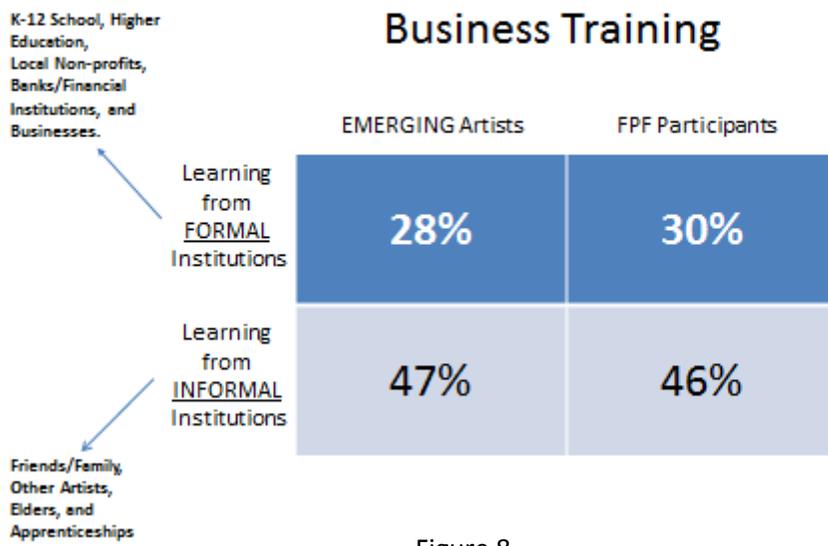


Figure 8

“Have you had any business training (formal or informal) from the following resources or places?” For both emerging artists and FPF participants, informal sources of knowledge are most important to their livelihoods. Because they are more established, FPF participants are informal sources of knowledge themselves. Family remains important, as one FPF participant describes: “Personally, within my family I can currently think of 10 people that have picked up an art form from watching my work.” When speaking about how he has inspired other artists, another FPF participant reports that he did a year apprenticeship with his nephew. Being more established artists also means FPF participants are more established community members, and take a lead role in teaching others and reconnecting them with their culture. How one woman feels about her position in the community encapsulates how the reproduction of knowledge occurs across generations: “As an elder in my community I have a responsibility to the youth to role model cultural knowledge and information; this was modeled to me as a child.” FPF participants offer knowledge and expertise of the art business to other artists in their

communities. Collectively, just 41 FPF participants report they have inspired and supported over 700 artists in the last 3 years.

FPF programs have also impacted the reproduction of knowledge within the household. After just one fellowship year with FPF, the average number of household members helping with art production increased from 1.2 to 1.4 members per household. Additionally, after one year, the percentage of household members under age 18 helping with art production and sales increased from 23% to 35%.

Generosity is central to the functioning of a socially embedded economy, and an integral part of being Lakota. Among ABL fellows, 55% proclaim that their understanding of generosity changed by working with FPF. One participant articulates, “I think that my willingness to share and mentor other aspiring young artists has increased with the new knowledge.” Ideas of reciprocity are strengthened through artists’ engagement with FPF. One artist comments on social networks: “I have believed in giving away things of value through support and donations. I feel you get back what you give a hundredfold. I believe my fellowship has reinforced this value/belief. So many positive relationships have strengthened or been renewed through this fellowship.” Another participant exhibits the kind of informal support artists need: “I bought art supplies, and beading supplies for two local artists, I try to encourage them to create. Yes, because since receiving the grant I want to help someone else, I feel it’s important to let them know that some else believes in them.” One man expresses a fundamental adjustment in his thinking: “I always felt that generosity only had to do with my giving. Accepting the generosity of others was never on my radar screen. That has changed. Sometimes I still wonder if I am worthy of all the goodies Creator sends my way.”

Support for FPF artists is certainly formal, coming in the form of financial capital and business education. However, informal support is also very important to FPF artists, especially being supported

by each other. When asked to choose one answer (very, somewhat, not at all) to the question “How important to your work is interaction with other artists?” 68% of FPF participants said other artists were very important. Relationships with other artists are chief sources of support for FPF participants in a multitude of ways. Sharing ideas, giving encouragement, and creating personal connections are mentioned by FPF artists. One woman articulates

I believe that support comes in many ways, and the type of support that I thrive on is not monetary. When another artist gives appreciation to my work is support to me. When another artist encourages me to continue to practice my art this is support to me. When another artist offers their expertise and experience to me this is support for me.

The support an FPF artist receives is also a part of how they experience reciprocity, exemplified by one FPF participant.

There have been many Native artists that I have become close to over the past years that have always been there to help me with advice about art shows or critiquing work. Because of this generosity they have showed me, I myself try to help other artists out with advice and knowledge about arts.”

Like emerging artists, the support an FPF participant desires is about having a social network, as one participant explains: “No one has all the answers and everyone together makes a bigger impact.”

Where FPF participants sell and are comfortable selling their work portrays the importance of social relationships to their livelihood. Although they generally run more developed businesses, their success still emanates from the social networks they have widened over time. As a comparison, Figure 9 shows the distribution of sales methods for both emerging artists and FPF participants. Sixty-three percent of FPF participants sell from home, which is 18% more than emerging artists. Like emerging artists, FPF participants are also very comfortable making sales from home, and find it the least challenging. That FPF participants have achieved a higher level of business has not weakened the social connections they use to earn a living, but as data suggests, it has strengthened them. The consistent use

of social relationships as a livelihood strategy among all Native artists makes clear that a fundamental approach to providing them support should include a plan to promote and sustain social networks.

| | Where do you sell most of your art? | | Where are you <u>most comfortable</u> selling your art? | | What methods of selling your art are the <u>most challenging</u> ? | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----|---|-----|--|-----|
| | Emerging | FPF | Emerging | FPF | Emerging | FPF |
| From your home - buyers-individuals come to you | 45% | 63% | 42% | 51% | 15% | 12% |
| Door-to-door and/or direct to buyers-individuals | 51% | 24% | 40% | 27% | 46% | 39% |
| Pow-Wows and/or local cultural events and activities | 45% | 46% | 42% | 39% | 26% | 39% |
| Retail - galleries, tourist shops, etc. | 41% | 56% | 34% | 51% | 37% | 32% |
| Internet | 6% | 22% | 6% | 27% | 25% | 41% |
| Other | 35% | 46% | 30% | 49% | 14% | 29% |

Figure 9

In fact, FPF participants show some of the same trends as emerging artists when it comes to which sales methods they use and feel comfortable with, and which they find challenging. Both groups sell their work at pow-wows, and feel comfortable doing so. Both are challenged by door-to-door sales. Both report creative other methods of selling their art. The trends diverge as sales methods move from the local and embedded towards the outside market.

A More Favorable Market Integration

After home, the most popular sales method for FPF participants is retail (as reported in figure 9). Fifteen percent more FPF participants sell their work through retail outlets than do emerging artists. Emerging artists sell their work through retail as well—41% of them—but they find it considerably less comfortable than FPF participants (emerging artists: 34%; FPF participants: 51%). Moreover, over one fifth of FPF participants report the internet as a sales method, and only one twentieth of emerging

artists report the same. FPF participants sell 27% less through door-to-door/direct sales, 15% more through retail, and 16% more through internet sales than do emerging artists. This intimates that FPF participants are less affected by the access issues of selling that trouble emerging artists. The entrepreneurial development, business training, and financial capital that FPF offers are the difference when it comes to alleviating these issues.

In large part, it is the better financial stability of FPF participants that enables them to lessen barriers of access. As compared to 61% of emerging artists who have an annual income of less than \$10,000US, only 10% of FPF participants fall into the same category. As well, more FPF artists (41%) earn more of their income from their art business than emerging artists (30%). The cycle of benefits arising from an improved financial situation is palpable. With more money, FPF artists have the flexibility to spend more time working in their art business, are better equipped to access outside markets, and have the flexibility to take more risks. Taking more risks and expanding sales opportunities results in a higher financial return. As market entrepreneurs, money does help.

Access to electronic markets is almost non-existent on Pine Ridge, where computers and internet connections are rare. Using the internet to an artist's advantage also requires the knowledge of how to set up and maintain a website, the confidence to use it, and internet marketing strategies. In the South Dakota region, 7% of artists have websites. At the end of a fellowship year, 64% of FPF participants had websites.

An outcome of FPF participants having better financial stability and business education is that they are able to demand and receive higher prices for their work. By expanding their access into different markets outside reservation communities, FPF artists increase their sales opportunities and can therefore more frequently avoid the reservation price structure detailed above. Tabulating the responses to "What is the price of the least expensive item you sold in the last year?" and "What is the

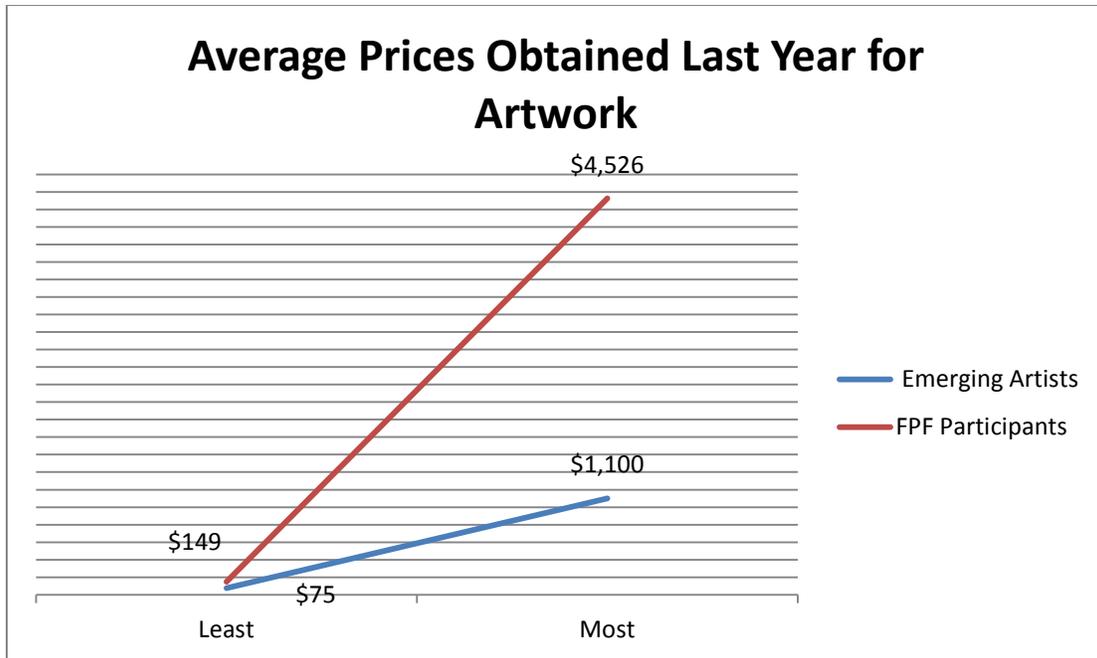


Figure 10

price of the most expensive item you sold in the last year?" it is clear that FPF participants have better access to markets than emerging artists. Figure 10 plots the average prices emerging artists and FPF participants were able to fetch for their least and most expensive items in the last year. FPF participants are able to earn \$74 more per least expensive item and \$3426 more per most expensive item. Taking the mean of these differences in pricing means on average, FPF participants earn \$1750 more per item than do emerging artists. Considering the low incomes among emerging artists, even modest increases in pricing would result in substantial impacts for them. A single item sold at this midpoint would increase the annual income of the 61% of emerging artists making under \$10,000 by 20%. Improving access to outside markets and different buyers has been instrumental in the success of FPF participants.

FPF participants quite literally have access to a wider radius of opportunities than emerging artists. In acquiring the materials they need to create their art, emerging artists travel an average of 51 miles. FPF participants travel an average of 189 miles. The ability to absorb the cost of travel in gathering supplies allows FPF artists to consistently get what they need, and to have greater control over their art production. The same is also true of how far artists travel to sell. Emerging artists, on

average, cover distances of 24 miles to sell their work. The average distance FPF participants trek is 121 miles. Financial stability, knowledge of marketing, and the capacity for inventory all help FPF artists access markets further away. Both the physical ability to reach far away markets and the psychological ability to have more control over the choices they make are enhanced.

FPF has not reached its full potential in marketing their services to Native artists in the emergent category. Only three-quarters of the emerging artists sample have ever heard of FPF. However, 91% of emerging artists also declare that they would be interested in FPF programs. The three most popular reasons given for their interest are to get more materials (1st), to expand business (2nd), and to relieve financial constraints (3rd). The success FPF has had with developing artists in culturally appropriate ways suggests that if they were to reach more of them, that reservation economies would benefit.

CONCLUSION

In order to affect sustainable, culturally significant, economic change on Pine Ridge, development needs to reflect that a socially embedded economy is not some relic institution of the past, but the current and chosen economic organization of Lakota people. By assuming that integration into the market is a panacea for poverty, development projects risk engaging in a new form of colonialism; they impose foreign structures, delegitimize Lakota knowledge, and decrease the opportunity for Lakota people to be self-sufficient. The effects of economic development of this kind have been devastating in other parts of the world. For instance, Structural Adjustment Programs and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers created by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund make funding contingent on the adoption of neoliberal principles by the borrower (Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers 2003; for a reading of Structural Adjustment Programs in Africa, see Noorbakhsh & Paloni 1999; Abdoulaye 1989). Working within the economic structure already established on Pine Ridge would allow development to build on existing assets and give Lakota people control over their own livelihoods.

Lakota art is an asset that has the ability to be a tool for economic growth. The universality of art in Lakota culture and the prominence of art production as a micro-enterprise on Pine Ridge support that art could provide a culturally consistent path to growing Reservation economies. Recognizing and identifying the ways in which Lakota artists use the socially embedded economy as a livelihood strategy is vital to understanding how best to support them. In chapter 4, I present some of the ways artists participate in informal networks to access practical sociocultural knowledge and to gain support for their businesses. Likewise, combatting the major barriers to their success as art entrepreneurs would have a significant economic impact on Lakota artists. In chapter 5 I describe that access to materials, markets, transportation, education, and financial capital are issues that limit artists' opportunities both on and off the Reservation. As Polanyi recounts its history, market integration has been devastating for society. To

be sure, Lakota people have endured their share of social costs at the hands of the market, but it also forms a part of their livelihood strategy in the present. In chapter 6, I explain how FPF creates a more favorable market integration for Native artists; one that allows them to retain their cultural values and beliefs while improving their access to resources.

On the periphery of a globalized economy, livelihood strategies must be adaptive and innovative in order to be sustaining. Lakota artist entrepreneurs exemplify this adaptive capacity as they navigate through the alternatives offered by the socially embedded economy and the outside market. This economic fringe structures the choices Lakota artists make, and is also a space to contest those structures. The complex decision making process they go through on a daily basis reveals the ways in which Lakota artists exert agency over their economic lives.

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