



# Newsletter

## What Policy? Aboriginal People by Doug McArthur

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The condition of aboriginal people in Canada is widely recognized as unacceptable. The British Columbia Government's New Relationship of 2004, and the Kelowna Accord of November 2005, agreed to by the Prime Minister, Premiers and Territorial Leaders and Aboriginal Leaders, were hoped by many to be expressions of new and innovative aboriginal policy that would finally lead to real action.

The first concentrates on socio-economic measures, while the second focuses on aboriginal rights and title and control over resources.

Today both have foundered, leaving many to question whether anything new and different is really possible. The short history of these two initiatives illustrates how difficult it is to make progress on either approach to the degree necessary to yield meaningful change. The first is largely criticized as too costly, while the second is said to represent an impractical focus on rights.

Most policy scholars agree that both approaches must be included in the policy mix. It is less clear how governments should implement such approaches to yield substantial improvement in aboriginal conditions. Long term commitments to both agendas and the political will to overcome the resistance to substantial change are both needed.

Some progress is being made. The Federal Government recently announced substantial new commitments to aboriginal housing, one of the priorities of the Kelowna Accord. In British Columbia, three new treaties have been negotiated, although one was recently rejected in a membership ratification vote. The question is how this progress can be built upon to yield meaningful results on both the socio-economic and rights and title fronts.

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## From research to expert testimony by Jon Kesselman

Mandatory retirement has been banished in most of Canada, most recently in Ontario, and the BC government is committed to doing the same. Yet Air Canada pilots are forced to retire at age 60, regardless of their competence or fitness to continue flying. All the other main airlines in Canada—including Air Canada's own Jazz subsidiary—allow their pilots to fly to age 65.

Airlines' labour practices are governed by the Canadian Human Rights Act and therefore do not enjoy protection against age discrimination in the Charter or provincial codes. A group of Air Canada pilots have challenged their forced retirement and taken their case to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. Their case is being supported by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, which asked me to provide expert testimony.

My evidence drew upon my research that challenged the conventional economic analysis of mandatory retirement. Many of those traditional arguments for mandatory retirement are being advanced by Air Canada and its pilots' association in their defence. It is rewarding to have an opportunity to bring my scholarly research into the practical policy domain.



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## The Cuban Paradox by Olena Hankivsky

My trip to Cuba in December to examine the gendered aspects of health and the health care system is part of my work on two separate projects. The first is led by Jerry Spiegel, Director of the Liu Centre at UBC, and seeks to understand the 'Cuban Paradox' – that is the fact that even though Cuba produces excellent health indices at relatively low cost, little is known about how this has been achieved. The fundamental question underpinning this research is "how has this poor country managed to become and stay so healthy?" An integral part of the Cuban Paradox project is a gender analysis of the population and its health. This relates directly to my recently funded Social

Sciences and Humanities Research Council research project to examine gender mainstreaming in health internationally. The case studies for this project include Canada, Australia, Sweden, Ukraine, the UK and Cuba.

Little did I expect, however, that while studying the determinants of Cuban health and examining the gendered aspects of health policies that I would experience first hand the Cuban health care system. A week after my arrival in Havana, I developed vertigo and found myself being treated at one of Cuba's best medical hospitals. After paying the requisite \$25 fee for entry, I was examined by a team of the country's best and brightest. This

experience as well as my many informal conversations with the people I encountered provided me with an alternative perspective – that perhaps the health care system was



## Special Guest Lecture Daphne Bramham by John Richards

Daphne Bramham, senior Vancouver Sun columnist, is a member of the MPP's advisory committee. This term, she led a lively seminar at Harbour Centre on the policy dilemmas posed by the radical Mormon community of Bountiful, in eastern British Columbia.

Joseph Smith's revelations legitimized men taking many wives, and enjoined women to find fulfillment as "sister wives" raising children. This patriarchal community cannot offer multiple wives to all men. In order for some to enjoy multiple partners, Bountiful and the other radical Mormon communities in the western states expel many young men from the community. The social problems of these "lost boys" are another dimension of the social situation in Bountiful.

Rather obviously, Bountiful is a community practising polygamy. And polygamy is a crime according to the Canadian criminal code.

Why then has the provincial government not prosecuted?

There is no simple answer to that question, and Daphne is currently writing a book to address the many issues related to polygamy in British Columbia and find some answers. As long ago as 1990, the RCMP investigated and

Daphne Bramham has written extensively on this subject in recent years and an online summary of her analyses of polygamy at Bountiful is available from:

<http://www.inroadsjournal.ca/archives/inroads17/toc17.htm>

**Polygamy is a crime according to the Canadian criminal code. Why then has the provincial government not prosecuted?**

recommended prosecution. Lawyers in the Attorney General's department advised against prosecution, arguing it would not survive a Charter challenge based on freedom of religion. From then to now, provincial Attorneys General have accepted this advice.

**Daphne Bramham is a member of the MPP Advisory Council. She is a senior Vancouver Sun columnist and National Newspaper Award winner. She has written extensively on the ethical and legal issues surrounding the Mormon sect in Bountiful B.C. and is currently writing a book on the subject.**

## Career in Public Policy by Tamara Trotman

Working for the federal government is not what I expected this despite a summer co-op placement in the same department a year prior. The environment in which I work is fast-paced, ever changing, and challenging.

Day-to-day work often begins with the drafting of Question Period cards (the long sheets of paper you see ministers holding as they respond to opposition members in the House of Commons), followed by managing a range of files. These files

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contain requests to draft correspondence; prepare briefing notes, memoranda to cabinet and background summaries; and prepare submissions for international organizations.

I also participate in interdepartmental working groups and stakeholder consultations; conduct research; deliver oral briefings to executives and MPs; and work on legislation and jurisdictional issues.

## Coop: Research on HIV/AIDS by Kora DeBeck (MPP cohort 2005)

Having developed an interest in public health and drug policy during my first year of policy studies at SFU, I pursued a summer coop placement at the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS (CfE).

As part of my placement, I undertook a resource analysis of Canada's federal drug strategy. Through freedom of information requests and consultations with a number of policy researchers at three levels of government I was able to identify and locate relevant expenditure documents. I then developed a comprehensive in-

ventory of federal drug strategy expenditures.

**From Co-op**

**To Publication!**

This analysis provided the basis for an evidence-based review of Canada's federal drug strategy which I co-authored with CfE researchers and published in the most recent issue of the *HIV/AIDS Law and Policy Review*. The paper has received considerable nation-wide media attention as it

shows that Canada's federal government is not leading an evidence-based drug strategy and is failing to effectively respond to challenges posed by HIV/AIDS.

I plan to continue to work towards the development of informed and accountable public policy.

Also, having received support from the MPP program, I look forward to presenting this work at the upcoming International Conference on

## Congratulations

- ◆ Prof. Olena Hankivsky on the publication of her new book: **Women's Health in Canada: Critical Perspectives on Theory and Policy** co-authored with Marina Morrow and Colleen Varcoe. University of Toronto Press. Toronto.
- ◆ Jennifer Hove, MPP cohort 2005, whose excellent capstone, **Barriers to Girls' Secondary School Participation in Rural Bangladesh**, was accepted without revision by the Committee.

## Up-coming

- ◆ Watch for six up-coming op-eds in the Vancouver Sun by MPP students, cohort 2005: Mike Barnes on **Adapting to the end of mandatory retirement in BC**, Jessica Ellison on **Health care for the homeless a BC priority**, Kristy Feres on **Improving BC's Income Assistance for workers with disabilities**, Shelagh Hayes on **City of Vancouver can purchase social benefits**, Sonya Konzak on **Assessing new tax revenue sources for BC's cities**, and, Lara Peters on **Public education faces a competitor in BC: Private education**.

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## Graduate Public Policy Program

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The Master's in Public Policy is a two-year innovative new graduate program that emphasizes the development of techniques to **undertake** and **manage** public **policy analysis** and planning.

The mandate of the program is to provide a Professional graduate education that yields public policy analysts and managers who can **scrutinize** a problem, **interpret** and **analyze** relevant data, then **evaluate** alternative paths of action.

Graduates find employment in federal, provincial, and municipal governments, non-governmental organizations, crown corporations, and private-sector firms. The program offers expertise in labour markets, environment, social policy, trade policy, immigration, Canadian and international policy, First Nations research, land use, communications, and more.

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## Public Policy at the SFU library by Heather DeForest

The SFU Library offers a host of services and resources to support research and learning in the Public Policy program. We're a small library with a permanent staff of six, which means that we can provide you with personalized service and a high librarian to patron ratio, while still offering the services of a large research library. Many of our resources are electronically accessible from the comfort of your own home; books, journal articles, and media items housed at our Burnaby location or further afield can be ordered for convenient pickup at Belzberg.

As the liaison librarian for Public Policy, I'm your go-to person for research help and book requests. I'm also your designated instructional librarian. The focus for me is on information and research fluency – grad students need to

go beyond "library skills" and develop strategies to tackle complex and ongoing research problems and faculty.

In the past 6 months, I've offered two drop-in workshops specifically designed for Public Policy students. The first was an introduction to RefWorks, a citation management software that makes handling reference lists for major research projects a snap; the second was an exploration of databases for international statistics. Possible forthcoming sessions include using RSS feeds and setting up topical alerts from policy-related journals.

MPP Students can keep up-to-date about library news, strategies, and resources through the *Library News for Urban Studies and Public Policy*, i.e., the URPP News blog:

<http://blogs.lib.sfu.ca/index.php/urpp>. They can also schedule a consultation with me to chat about your projects and strategies for finding the right information.

