

Why So Little Progress Among Canada's First Nations? Dysfunctional Governance

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The gap between the average Community Well-Being Index (CWB) for First Nation communities and the average for non-Aboriginal communities widened between the 1996 and 2006 censuses. This paper contends that a principal cause for lack of progress in First Nation community well-being is a dysfunctional governance system. The paper elaborates 11 elements of this system that, when combined, produce a degree of dysfunction in governance unmatched in any other jurisdiction in Canada. Looking to the federal government alone to 'fix' this dysfunctional system will have little impact. Rather, First Nation communities themselves must undertake major changes if sustainable development is to occur.