

Doctoral Dissertation Review

May 25, 2018

Candidate: **Anna Krausova**

Thesis: **Rebuilding the White Earth Nation: Tracing the Long-Term Process of Constitutional Reform**

Reviewer:

Jill Doerfler, Professor of American Indian Studies, University of Minnesota Duluth, US

Report:

This is an interesting and well-researched thesis. The candidate has completed significant archival research and thoroughly examined the internal and external factors which contribute to the current constitutional stalemate at the White Earth Nation. The thesis is well organized and makes an important contribution to the field

As noted by the candidate, the concepts and practice of Native nation building are largely neglected by mainstream political science. As a result, there are serious gaps in the study of political structures of Native nations. This thesis uniquely combines political theory with the historic development and formation of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT), changes to the MCT Constitution, and the present impasse of constitutional reform at the White Earth Nation.

The candidate effectively utilizes a combination of archival research and theory to answer three primary questions:

- 1) What were the dynamics that influenced the development of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and White Earth government in the early twentieth century?
- 2) How has that form of government both been maintained and transformed during the mid-late twentieth century.
- 3) How and why did White Earth embark on constitutional reform in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries and why did those efforts result in the present stalemate?

While I am largely unfamiliar with the theory utilized in this thesis, I found that that theory did assist in providing an effective structural frame for the thesis and lens of analysis. I agree with the candidate's finding that the current White Earth constitutional reform impasse is the result of a combination of both "path-dependent dynamics and a deep internalization of outwardly

imposed governing structure.” The inclusion of political theory is important as it works toward connecting the fields of American Indian/Indigenous studies and political science. I’m interested in why the candidate elected not to utilize the theoretical work of White Earth scholar, Gerald Vizenor. I think a stronger inclusion of some of his concepts would have offered important insights.

The candidate’s inclusion of a chapter on the termination era is important. She uncovers important archival information that has never been published which adds important insights into the function (and non-function) of the MCT during this era.

There are some issues that need to be addressed by the candidate. The most significant of these is the candidate’s use of the terms “mixed-blood” and “full-blood.” The candidate uses quotes around the terms at some points and not others. I encourage the candidate to use these terms minimally and to take a careful look at Meyer’s use of these terms as well as her use of conservative and progressive. In addition, David Beaulieu’s “Curly Hair and Big Feet: Physical Anthropology and Implementation of Land Allotment on the White Earth Chippewa Reservation.” *American Indian Quarterly* (Fall 1984), 181-314, would also be useful.

In addition, I find the candidate’s inclusion of economic and subsistence activities innovative. Overall, this is an important inclusion but the candidate utilizes the terms full-blood and mixed-blood in subsistence harvesting discussions and needs to complicate those terms in relation to that discussion as well.

There are also a few issues with consistency that should be remedied. For example, the candidate uses bimaadiziwin (pg. 19) and later mino-bimaadiziwin. I understand that the authors and sources might be using both terms but I think it would be useful for the candidate to use one and perhaps footnote when the other is used by another author/source.

I think that additional citations, especially of secondary works, in chapters 4 to 7 would help to demonstrate engagement with the field. Some examples are:

Page 43: where are the Anishinaabe language terms from?

Page 72: I’m not sure that the candidate’s assertion: “Tribes in these states were deprived of a substantial part of their remaining sovereignty.” Is correct. An additional review of the secondary literature on public law 280 would be helpful.

Page 103: cite/engage with my book *Those Who Belong*

As I have stated, this is a well-researched thesis that makes an important contribution both to political science and to American Indian/Indigenous studies.