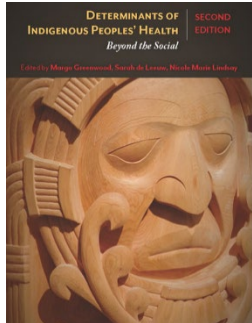




## Beyond the Social: Author Interviews



Welcome to [Beyond the Social: Author Interviews](#), a video series produced by the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health. The NCCIH focuses on innovative research and community-based initiatives promoting the health and well-being of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Canada. All of the contributors interviewed in this video series, from the highly-acclaimed book [Determinants of Indigenous Peoples' Health in Canada: Beyond the Social](#), share a common concern with improving the health of Indigenous peoples in Canada and beyond. In sharing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit traditional knowledge alongside Western academic and medical knowledge, the authors demonstrate the potential gains of walking in two worlds, integrating the best of both Indigenous and Western knowledge, and honouring and respecting the diverse healing and medical practices available to us today.

## Video - Chapter 9: Activating Place: Geography as a Determinant of Indigenous Peoples' Health and Well-being, with Sarah de Leeuw



Dr. de Leeuw, a Research Associate with the NCCAH, adds the concept of geography to the discussion of the social determinants of Indigenous peoples' health framework. The geographical toolbox is a way of understanding health inequities experienced by Indigenous peoples through their dispossession from traditional territories and the ongoing environmental devastation to their landscapes. She argues that reterritorialization is imperative to improving the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples.

### Transcript

My name is Sarah de Leeuw and I am an Associate Professor with the Northern Medicine Program at the University of Northern British Columbia, and that's a distributed arm of the University of British Columbia's Faculty of Medicine. I've also been a Research Associate with the National Collaborating Center for Aboriginal Health and I've worked for them for ten years at.

The book "Determinants of Indigenous Health: Beyond the Social" was really an effort to critically engage with the ascendance of the concept of social determinants of health – social determinants being a framework and methodological conceptual tool for understanding Aboriginal Peoples' health, principally Aboriginal health disparities, in Canada and beyond. But the social has some very specific arenas and limitations. It speaks almost entirely to human produced phenomena. The geographic, on the other hand, includes both human and non-human production. It includes ecological, physical, territorial, and terrestrial components of the world. So, to understand Indigenous Peoples or the determinants of Indigenous Peoples' health through a geographic framework, through a geographic conceptual toolbox, is, in part, to attempt to theorize the place of Indigenous inequity in this country by understanding it as a link to geographic phenomena – things like land dispossession, things like deterritorialization of Indigenous communities, things like the systematic erosion of ecological land bases upon which Indigenous People have always staked claim and identity. So, it is to add to a social determinants of health framework, concepts like ecology, concepts like physical geography, territory, I mean right down to non-human phenomena – things like soil, bugs, mountains, and water – things that are not of human production, things that are not social. I would argue this is a very important component of the recipe by which we have to understand the ongoing marginalization of Indigenous people in current/contemporary colonial times.

To improve the health of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and globally, it requires reterritorialization. It requires colonial power to step back from things like resource extraction on unceded Indigenous lands. It requires understanding that ecological disruption is in fact disruption of Indigenous Peoples' unceded longstanding sovereign rights to land and physical geography in this country. My sincerest belief is that the only way that we will move forward in terms of equalizing the massive disparities that are an outcome of colonial power in this country is in fact to ground the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. It is in fact to stop things like pipelines. It is in fact to historically understand that nuclear waste has been dumped on Indigenous territories. It is in fact to understand that systematic corralling of Indigenous peoples on devastated or impoverished land bases is exactly why we have Indigenous People today who are not offered and invited into the Canadian landscape as equal and sovereign people.

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