

**INDIGENOUS EDUCATION AND THE POST-
SECONDARY STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAM:
COLONIAL GOVERNANCE, NEO-LIBERAL
IMPERATIVES, AND GENDERED OUTCOMES**

by

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ABSTRACT

The Post-Secondary Student Support Program funds higher education for status Indian and Inuit individuals. Since the 1970's, program administration has devolved from the federal government to the Band level. From 1989, federal changes to the PSSSP have restricted length of funded study, imposed performance measures and a funding cap and implemented block funding mechanisms. This allowed the federal government to curtail costs while seemingly increasing First Nations' autonomy and resources. Faced with funding restrictions, rising numbers of eligible students, increasing tuition and education expenses, First Nations have developed Local Operating Policies to guide student sponsorship decisions since, increasingly, not all students can be funded. Based on an analysis of federal policies, First Nations' LOPs, and key informant interviews, this research uses critical discourse analysis to examine how colonialism, neo-liberalism, and patriarchy structure these processes of resource distribution and employ techniques of governmentality in the constitution of Aboriginal individuals and nations.

Keywords: First Nations; Self-Government; Post-Secondary Education; Education Policy; Governmentality; Indigenous Education

Subject Terms: Indigenous Peoples – Education – Government Policy – Canada; Women – Education – Canada; Indigenous Peoples – Canada; Self-Determination, National – Canada; Indians of North America – Canada – Government Relations; Indians of North America – Canada – Politics & Government

For my niece, Jeanine,
in the hopes that *her* children will not be sent home from school
for having lice,
without lice.

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GLOSSARY

Aboriginal Peoples	“The term Aboriginal Peoples refers to organic political and cultural entities that stem historically from the original people of North America, rather than collections of individuals united by so-called ‘racial’ characteristics. The term includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada” (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2005).
AFN	The Assembly of First Nations emerged from the National Indian Brotherhood. “The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is the national organisation representing First Nations citizens in Canada. The AFN represents all citizens regardless of age, gender or place of residence” (Assembly of First Nations, 2007a).
Band	“A band is an organizational structure defined in the <i>Indian Act</i> which represents a particular group of Indians as defined under the <i>Indian Act</i> ” (Assembly of First Nations, 2007b).
Band Council (or Chief and Council)	“This is the governing body for a band. It usually consists of a chief and councillors who are elected (under the <i>Indian Act</i> or band custom) for two or three-year terms to carry out band business, which may include education, water and sewer, fire services, community buildings, schools, roads, and other community businesses and services” (Assembly of First Nations, 2007b).
CST (Formerly CHST)	Introduced in 1995 under the Budget Implementation Act, the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST, now CST) ended the previously existing half-and-half federal/provincial cost sharing for social services and combined funds for health care, post-secondary education, social assistance and key social services into one block transfer. This ended federal guarantees about the eligibility and quality of key social programs, including health care, post-secondary education, welfare, and other social programs (Brodsky, 4: 2000).
DIAND	Department of Indian and Northern Development (see INAC).
First Nation(s)	“The term First Nations came into common use in the 1970s to replace Indian, which some people found offensive. Many communities have also replaced ‘band’ with ‘First Nation’ in their names. Despite its widespread use, there is no legal definition for this term in Canada” (Assembly of First Nations, 2007b).
INAC	A common acronym for the federal government’s Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada: “INAC’s mandate is complex and its responsibilities encompass a broad range of services. In general, INAC has primary, but not exclusive, responsibility for meeting the federal government’s constitutional, treaty, political and legal responsibilities to First Nations, Inuit and

Northerners” (INAC, 2007).

<i>Indian Act</i>	Canadian legislation allotting jurisdiction over “Indians and lands reserved for Indians” to the federal government. Originally enacted in 1876, the <i>Indian Act</i> has been described as a ‘total institution’ providing legal mechanisms for social control and colonial administration of indigenous populations.
Indigenous	“There is no official definition on Indigenous peoples. In part, indigenous is described as follows: ‘Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them...’ Its meaning is similar to Aboriginal Peoples, Native Peoples or First Peoples. It is often used to refer to Aboriginal people internationally” (Assembly of First Nations, 2007 b).
ΔΔΔ ^c Inuit	A general group of various Indigenous peoples residing in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, the province of Quebec and the northern part of Labrador, as well as the Arctic regions of Greenland and Alaska. “ <i>Inuit</i> are an ‘ <i>Aboriginal People</i> ’, but are not ‘ <i>First Nations</i> ,’ because ‘ <i>First Nations</i> ’ are <i>Indians</i> . <i>Inuit</i> are not <i>Indians</i> ” (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2005, emphasis original).
LOP(s)	Local Operating Policies developed at the Band level to guide PSSSP administration.
Métis	“Métis means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples and is accepted by the Métis Nation... ‘Historic Métis Nation’ means the Aboriginal people then known as Métis or Half-Breeds who resided in Historic Métis Nation Homeland; ‘Historic Métis Nation Homeland’ means the area of land in west central North America used and occupied as the traditional territory of the Métis or Half-Breeds as they were then known; ‘Métis Nation’ means the Aboriginal people descended from the Historic Métis Nation, which is now comprised of all Métis Nation citizens and is one of the ‘aboriginal peoples of Canada’ within s.35 of the Constitution Act of 1982” (Métis Nation, 2002).
Non-Status Indian(s)	“Non-Status Indians are people who consider themselves Indians or members of a First Nation but are not entitled to be registered under the <i>Indian Act</i> . This may be because their ancestors were never registered or because they lost their status under former provisions of the <i>Indian Act</i> . Non-Status Indians are not entitled to the same rights and benefits available to Status Indians” (Assembly of First Nations, 2007b).
Post-Secondary Education	This term is used here interchangeably with ‘higher education’ and refers to, “a program of studies that includes at least one academic year (as defined by the institution), and for which completion of secondary school studies, or its equivalent as recognized by the post-secondary institution, is required,”

(INAC, 2003: 7).

PSSSP	The Post-Secondary Student Support Program is overseen by INAC and administered through First Nations Bands. It can provide funding for First Nations' and Inuit students' tuition, books, and travel expenses associated with post-secondary education.
Reserve	A reserve, "means a tract of land, the legal title to which is vested in Her Majesty, that has been set apart by Her Majesty for the use and benefit of a band" (Department of Justice Canada, 2007).
Status Indian(s)	"Status Indians are people who are entitled to have their names included on the Indian Register, an official list maintained by the federal government. Certain criteria determine who can be registered as a Status Indian. Only Status Indians are recognized as Indians under the <i>Indian Act</i> , which defines an Indian as 'a person who, pursuant to this Act, is registered as an Indian or is entitled to be registered as an Indian.' Status Indians are entitled to certain rights and benefits under the law" (Assembly of First Nations, 2007b).
Third Party Management	INAC may place First Nations Bands under Third Party Management, which involves having a third party hired by INAC approve all Band expenditures.
Tribal Council	"A tribal council is a group made up of several bands and represents the interests of those bands. A tribal council may administer funds or deliver common services to those bands. Membership in a tribal council tends to be organized around geographic, political, treaty, cultural, and/or linguistic lines" (Assembly of First Nations, 2007b).

INTRODUCTION

Education can be a key factor in strategies of resistance, which are in turn bound up in dominant power mechanisms. Education can play a critical role in opening up possibilities for engagement with power, it can enrich the 'tools' through which resistance might be exercised by familiarising individuals with the discursive tactics of dominant power mechanisms in society. Conversely, education provides those dominant power mechanisms with a privileged social location from which to advocate and enforce specific paradigms and 'ways of being'. Despite deep reservations regarding current pedagogical orientations, within Aboriginal communities many elders, activists, and community members articulate,

the need for enhanced recognition of the importance of higher-education rights, and increases to institutional capacity, in order for higher education to truly be the 'new buffalo' that will ensure a strong and prosperous future for First Nations... Today, elders say that education, rather than the bison, needs to be relied upon for survival. (Stonechild, 2006: 1-2)

Historically, education has been a key mechanism for the instillation and expansion of colonial control over and within indigenous nations, communities, and individuals in the borders of what has come to be Canada. At the same time, education has been and is an important component of indigenous resistance to oppressive colonial governance, a site where deeply unequal power relations may be revealed and contested. On one hand, indigenous leaders fought to ensure education rights in the numbered treaties¹ and many now see education as an important tool for cultural and communal revitalisation. On the other, colonial applications of European education systems have had devastating results for Aboriginal peoples, most notoriously through the imposition of the residential school system.²

As a result of these and other political, social and historical factors, Aboriginal peoples' relationship with the European school system in Canada remains ambiguous. In 2001, 40 percent of Aboriginal women and 44 percent of Aboriginal men over the age of twenty-five had not graduated from high school (Statistics Canada, 2006: 196). Although the numbers of Aboriginal post-secondary students has continued to rise, a relative gap with the rest of the non-Aboriginal

¹ Beginning in 1871, colonial authorities negotiated eleven treaties with First Nations. The treaties, largely concentrated within the prairie regions, made guarantees for various rights, entitlements and provisions. Controversy remains over the content of the treaties, the negotiation methods used, and the written versus oral agreements made between negotiators and First Nations representatives (see Stonechild, 2006).

² Residential schools played a significant role in de-stabilizing First Nations' linguistic and cultural heritages and exposed children to physical and sexual abuse, as well as death and disease. Through neglect and malnutrition, mortality rates in residential schools approached 50 percent (Posluns, 2007: 28).

population remains and is increasing (Hull, 2005: 12-13). A recent report estimated that the education gap between First Nations peoples living on reserve and the rest of the Canadian population would take twenty-eight years to close (Office of the Auditor General, 2004).

In a textbook on Aboriginal peoples in Canada, Frideres (1998) recites a popularly held misconception as 'truth': "[a]ll Indians and Inuit who have been accepted in a post-secondary school qualify for financial support that covers tuition, tutorial assistance, books, supplies, and transportation" (161-163). Frideres is referring to the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP), which can provide financial aid to First Nations and Inuit students attending a post-secondary institution. In the three years from 1999-2000 to 2001-2002, the PSSSP funded between 25,300 and 26,500 students (INAC, 2005: 19). However, not all Aboriginal peoples are eligible; many students who are eligible are refused funding; and students who do secure funding receive, on average, only enough to cover 48 percent of the estimated average cost of higher education per year (British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education, 2006: 13). The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) found that 8,475 First Nations students were denied funding in the 2000-2001 school year (R.A. Malatest et al, 2004: 27).³ PSSSP funding is now administered by First Nations Bands or Tribal Councils.

The ostensible goal of the PSSSP is,

to improve the employability of First Nations people and Inuit by providing eligible students with access to education and skill development opportunities at the post-secondary level. This is expected to lead to greater participation of First Nation and Inuit students in post-secondary studies, higher First Nation and Inuit graduation rates from post-secondary programs, and higher employment rates for First Nation people and Inuit. It is expected students funded by this program will have post-secondary educational outcomes comparable to other Canadians with similar educational backgrounds. (INAC, 2003: 4-5)

Researchers, advocates, and federal and provincial governments often forward additional rationales for the program. Poverty is commonly a significant barrier to post-secondary education for Aboriginal students, as seasonal jobs and social assistance are often the main sources of income in First Nations communities. Therefore, most Aboriginal students require funding assistance in order for higher education to be attainable (R.A. Malatest et al, 2004: 21). Strong correlations between financial assistance and the ability to attend and complete post-secondary education have been observed, particularly among women (Wotherspoon, 1991: 22-27; Satzewich et al, 2000: 139; Butterwick, 2006). Furthermore, Canada's economy is increasingly knowledge-based, meaning education levels are an ever-more important determinant of labour market opportunity (Vermaeten, 2004: 209-210; R.A. Malatest et al: 10). At the same time, increasing

³ Figures on how many students applied are unavailable. INAC's (2005) *Evaluation of the Post-Secondary Education Program* estimates that approximately 20-22 percent of applicants are deferred each year (40).

self-government initiatives mean that First Nations need qualified workers to enhance and carry out community development and administration (Wotherspoon, 1991: 6). Education is also advanced as one potential strategy for improving the lives of Aboriginal women.

Aboriginal women tend to have higher rates of participation in education than their male counterparts; according to a 2006 report:

While the overall educational attainment levels of Aboriginal women are relatively low, Aboriginal women are attending school at higher rates than both non-Aboriginal women and Aboriginal men. In 2001, 23% of Aboriginal women 15 years of age and older were attending school on either a full-time or part-time basis, compared with 17% of their non-Aboriginal counterparts. (Statistics Canada, 2006: 197)

However, Aboriginal women are further noted to have high rates of single parenthood and poverty. In 2000, 36 percent of Aboriginal women were below Statistics Canada's low-income cut-offs, compared with 32 percent of Aboriginal men. Aboriginal women are less likely to be employed than their male counterparts or non-Aboriginal women,⁴ are more likely to work part-time or part year and are almost twice as likely as Aboriginal men to work in sales and service positions. Aboriginal women earn, on average, \$3,000 less per year than Aboriginal men and a larger share of their income comes from federal government transfers (27 percent for Aboriginal women versus 16 percent for Aboriginal men and non-Aboriginal women) (Ibid: 196-200). The high correlations drawn between education, employment, and economic stability mean that education is often seen as an important mechanism for improving Aboriginal women's relationships with the paid labour market.

Self-Government and Neo-Liberalism

Colonial liberal theory constructs Aboriginal peoples as irrational children in need of guardianship and protection (Ruhl, 1999: 111; Dean, 2002: 48-49). Today, neo-liberalism emphasizes the need for coherent market structures, i.e., limited, accountable, and viable government. Neo-liberalism uses the language of autonomy as a tool to help structure First Nations governments – specifically the financial aspects – in ways that ensure liberal ideals regarding viable government are adhered to. In the process of bureaucratisation, First Nations governments increasingly come to mirror the structures and organisation of the Euro-Canadian government (Boldt and Long, 1988; Fleras and Elliott, 1992: 39-84). Neo-liberal restructuring and cutbacks have subsequently meant that Bands often do not have the resources to properly

⁴ The report notes that, among Aboriginal women, this discrepancy is most highly pronounced for First Nations individuals; in 2001, 56 percent of Métis women, 48 percent of Inuit women, and 43 percent of First Nations women were employed (Statistics Canada, 2006: 198).

administer programs (such as the PSSSP) that have been devolved from the federal government (Slowey, 2001: 3). In this context, First Nations' theoretical autonomy means they are viewed as responsible for any perceived failures in administration or fiscal accountability. This in turn reinforces colonial perceptions of Aboriginal peoples as childlike and incapable of managing their own affairs. Ironically, neo-liberal practices are reinforcing liberal colonial attitudes.

At the same time, bureaucratisation and devolution have led to responsibility being laced and dispersed throughout the system of government, reinforcing the system itself but fragmenting resistance by failing to provide it with a 'single target' at which it can aim. First Nations Bands and organisations, having finally won a degree of autonomy from the (post) colonial government, have a vested interest in maintaining and enhancing the current relationship – despite the difficulties of inadequate support structures and funding. Radical solutions or new experiments in social and political practices are curtailed as emergent structures of First Nations governance increasingly come under the disciplinary and supervisory gaze of the Canadian government.

Through such processes, federal cutbacks are masked while First Nations governments are subjected to widespread scrutiny of governing practices from within and outside their communities (Flanagan, 2000: 22; Dyck, 1991: 135). As First Nations administrators struggle to deliver government programs with increasingly scarce resources, public and political perceptions of Aboriginal peoples' inability to manage their affairs are reinforced. Those First Nations that *do* manage to implement the program with a relative degree of 'success' are liable to criticism for 'towing the government line', for engaging in overly-exclusionary practices, and/or for negatively impacting First Nations' claims to education as a treaty right (Dyck, 1991: 135; Lanceley, 1991; Lanceley, 1999). This results in the popular and political construction of the federal government as a perhaps-too-generous, perhaps-too-lenient benefactor of wayward and irresponsible First Nations governments and further justifies increasing federal government and INAC surveillance and control of programs such as the PSSSP.

Inasmuch as the PSSSP is directed at a specific 'problem' population – that is, status Indians and Inuit – it is part of an overall trend in which Canada (and other nations) is "rushing into the neo-liberal world of targeted governance – the world of decentralized, networked knowledge/power, a world governed by benchmarks, networked knowledge/performance indicators" (Valverde, 2003: 439). Neo-liberal political practices increasingly emphasize individual over societal responsibility for 'success' in arenas such as social welfare and education. This has led to funding restrictions and means- and performance-based eligibility requirements being introduced to the PSSSP. These changes have effectively sidestepped the issue of 'education as a treaty right' through a neo-liberal emphasis on fiscal accountability and

competition. Funding is increasingly dependent upon students' abilities to carry out responsibilities assigned through PSSSP polices – responsibilities designed to ensure individuals' self-regulating capacities are maximized and aligned with neo-liberal economic objectives.

I begin my analysis from an understanding of the PSSSP as a political tactic for the exercise of power. The general aim of this exercise is the constitution of First Nations and Inuit students into self-disciplining liberal rational actors, and to effect the constitution of First Nations governments within the mould of a liberalist ideal of limited, accountable government.

Project Overview

Aboriginal post-secondary education funding in Canada is a topic that lies at the intersection of a number of potential fields of inquiry; it relates to public policy, post-colonialism, anti-racism, and education, to name a few. Perhaps, then, it is less surprising that I have chosen to address these issues within a Foucauldian framework, questioning not just the processes of resource distribution but the processes of knowledge production and their implication in the formation of new techniques of governmentality as well. My intention is to inquire into the PSSSP policy process to understand how the discourses of neo-liberalism, patriarchy and colonialism play a role in perpetuating unequal power relations. At the same time, I am interested in how those processes open up possibilities for resistance and agency in the creation of alternative ways of being. I am further hoping that an inquiry into the nature, depth and complexities of current policies will demonstrate how seemingly banal 'microprocesses' of power relations can be revealing of much wider and significant social processes, thereby undermining taken for granted beliefs and assumptions (i.e. 'free education for Indians').

My primary methodology in approaching these issues is critical discourse analysis of policy documents, in particular Local Operating Policies (LOPs) developed at the Band level to guide program administration and INAC's (2003) *Post-Secondary Education: National Program Guidelines*. A series of key policy-related documents have been included to augment my analysis, along with a limited number of handpicked interviews. I engaged in a consultation process throughout the project in order to guide and ground the research, to ensure its relevancy to Aboriginal women and their communities and that, if the work is not grounded in indigenous knowledges, it is at least not detrimental to or derogatory of them.

I focus on the power relations that First Nations women negotiate when they attempt to secure funding through the PSSSP and argue that the program, in its current form, has particularly problematic effects for Aboriginal women. In general, women in Canada are more likely to attend post-secondary education than men, with 57 percent of all full-time university students in the

2001/2002 school year being female (Statistics Canada, 2005: 91). Even higher rates of female post-secondary attendance are evident for Aboriginal students: in 2001, 65 percent of Aboriginal post-secondary education students in BC were female (First Nations Education Steering Committee, 2005: 4). However, despite higher attendance and completion rates, current trends are not reducing gendered education and occupational segregation,⁵ and a significant wage gap between women and men persists.⁶ In light of women's lower financial returns on education, higher poverty rates and higher proportion of caregiving labour, financial support for accessing post-secondary education may be seen as one critical aspect in reducing gendered inequality.

I contend that current funding mechanisms disadvantage Aboriginal women, who – largely as a result of colonisation – face specific challenges that Aboriginal men do not necessarily face when it comes to accessing post-secondary education funds. These include issues related to First Nations citizenship, single motherhood, childcare, and sexual violence. However, I would like to be clear: *arguing current education funding programs disadvantage Aboriginal women is different from arguing they privilege Aboriginal men*. I have no doubt that Aboriginal men face unique (and shared) dilemmas in attempting to access post-secondary education funding, and I strongly support the need for research in that area. My intention is not to further divide Aboriginal communities, but to focus on the issues of which I am most aware and that I have the best opportunity of addressing within the scope of this thesis.

Plan of the Thesis

Trying to synthesize this amount of (often confusing and, at times, contradictory) data in a coherent manner, and within the confines of a thesis, has proved a challenging task. The first three chapters provide background on the issue of First Nations post-secondary education funding and clarify my approach and methods in this research project. The three subsequent chapters are meant to walk the reader through the processes of post-secondary education funding allotment. While there is very little academic literature that specifically addresses the issue of First Nations post-secondary education funding, the *Literature Review* is intended to examine human capital

⁵ One study of undergraduate enrolment rates between 1979-2004 in Canada found that gender segregation had decreased only 5 percent. Increases in full-time enrolment for women were found to be primarily due to increases in enrolment in the social sciences and “slight increases in education, the humanities, and agricultural and biological sciences” (Andres and Adamuti-Trache, 2007: 101). Studies have shown that graduates from male-traditional programs (such as business, law, commerce, engineering, mathematics, and the physical sciences) “are likely to obtain the highest economic payoffs” (Ibid: 113).

⁶ On average, women in Canada earn 72 percent of men's average earnings (Andres and Adamuti-Trache, 2007: 94). In 2001, women with a university certificate, diploma or degree earned an average of \$36,716. Men with the equivalent levels of education earned an average of \$60,822 (Hiller, 2006: 91).

approaches to education and provide a brief genealogy of Aboriginal post-secondary education in Canada. The *Theory* chapter outlines the main theoretical concepts and approach I have taken in writing this thesis. It examines major points of Foucauldian analysis and, within this framework, examines liberalism, neo-liberalism, colonialism and gender in the context of First Nations post-secondary education funding in Canada. The *Methodology* chapter provides an overview of my approach, research design, data collection and analysis, as well as addressing ethical issues and the Occidental gaze. In *Situating Subjects*, I examine how policy documents attempt to situate the federal government, First Nations, and indigenous students. *Rational Choice and Rituals of Truth* addresses the processes of determining student funding allocation as outlined by the policies and key policy-related documents and as augmented through the interviews. Finally, *Subjective Realities* examines the implications of current funding mechanisms for students by examining the intersections of policy and reality in the constitution of individuals.

A Note on Terminology

Language use is never a neutral exercise, since words are signifiers that carry with them both technical meaning and associated connotations that are often historically, socially and culturally specific. This awareness is especially important in reference to socially constructed categorisations of people. Policy makers have utilized various legal and non-legal terms to define and administer over and to indigenous peoples in Canada. As a result, terminologies are controversial and subject to ongoing debate (Guno, 1996: 1 n1). I use the term 'First Nation' to refer to a federally recognized Indian Band,⁷ as this term is utilized by the AFN in self-description and indicates respect and recognition of pre-existing and autonomous indigenous nations within the borders of what is now Canada. 'First Nations individual' refers to status Indian peoples. I have attempted to limit the use of the terms 'Indian' and 'native' to those instances when I am referring to the legal categorisation of status Indian peoples or when quoting another source.⁸ This research makes limited reference to Inuit or Métis and I use the term

⁷ Through divisions created and reinforced by the *Indian Act*, many larger indigenous nations in what is now Canada are politically and/or geographically separate Bands: "For example, there is one Gitksan nation but in Gitksan territory there are six Gitksan bands" (Napolean, 2001: 11).

⁸ I restrict the use of the term 'Indian' because it is geographically inaccurate and can carry racist connotations. I restrict the use of the term 'native', despite its arguably more progressive applications, due to its homogenizing connotations and association with racist colonial world views (i.e. 'going native').

‘Aboriginal’ to refer to Inuit, Métis, status and non-status Indian peoples inclusively.⁹ I also use the term ‘indigenous peoples’ inclusively and virtually interchangeably with ‘Aboriginal peoples.’ It is not found in policy documents but has gained currency in international and Canadian academic circles (Stonechild, 2006: 6). Smith (1999) explains:

It is a term that internationalizes the experiences, the issues and the struggles of some of the world’s colonized peoples. The final ‘s’ in ‘indigenous peoples’ has been argued for quite vigorously by indigenous activists because of the right of peoples to self-determination. It is also a way of recognizing that there are real differences between different indigenous peoples. The term has enabled the collective voices of colonized people to be expressed strategically in the international arena... They share experiences as peoples who have been subjected to the colonization of their lands and cultures, and the denial of their sovereignty, by a colonizing society that has come to dominate and determine the shape and quality of their lives. (7)

My use of the amorphous term ‘Aboriginal communities’ should also be addressed. While I cannot place definitive limitations on the term, I am referring to social groups whose members tend to have an Aboriginal heritage, as well as cultural, social, political and/or historical associations and interests in common. This definition is purposefully broad, as it is ultimately up to Aboriginal communities to define their own boundaries.

Limitations of Approach

A potential limitation of this research is that it cannot systematically or exhaustively account for differences between on-paper policies and the reality of their application. While the incorporation of interviews may mitigate this issue, the interview sample is small and participants have not been chosen because of their experience in local policy design and implementation. The issue comes down to what a study of this size can reasonably achieve. Presenting a ‘map’ of current policy and power dynamics in relation to the PSSSP and the potential effects of current policies for Aboriginal women is ambitious – addressing the heterogeneous nature of policy implementation within First Nations communities in BC is simply beyond the scope of this thesis.

De-emphasizing heterogeneity is another potential risk of this research. Currently, federal funding for the PSSSP is transferred to INAC’s regional offices, which re-allocate funds to First Nations. Funding allocation methods from INAC to First Nations vary regionally. BC as a whole constitutes one region and therefore it made sense to limit my analysis to BC First Nations. This focus may be seen to homogenise diverse First Nations while simultaneously

⁹ While the term ‘Aboriginal’ has legal connotations entrenched in the Constitution, it has been criticized by indigenous scholars such as Taiaiake Alfred (2005), who uses the term Onkwehonwe in reference to Canadian indigenous peoples, arguing, “many Onkwehonwe today embrace the label of ‘Aboriginal,’ but this identity is a legal and social construction of the state, and it is disciplined by racialised violence and economic oppression to serve an agenda of silent surrender” (23).

neglecting large portions of Canada's indigenous peoples, such as Inuit, Métis, and non-status Indians. It also is unable to account for the specifics of land claims settlements. My intention is not to overlook local, cultural, and social contexts of policy implementation, but to examine the effects of uniform federal policies applied to these diverse populations.

Furthermore, by examining the PSSSP, I focus more on issues of access to education than on the ways that Canadian education systems can re-create and reinforce colonial power relations. Likewise, by focusing on the practical mechanisms of policy delivery, I generally avoid major debates regarding jurisdiction, which scholars have argued, "is central to First Nations post-secondary education policy..." (Stonechild, 2006: vii). Jurisdictional debates are implicit rather than explicit to my analysis. It might further be argued that I have not given enough space or attention to human agency, particularly resistance. The notion that power is everywhere may seem to carry with it the idea that domination is inescapable. Again, a research project that relied less on written texts would be necessary to more adequately address such issues. Nonetheless, providing a 'map' of current policy dynamics opens the door to further research into how people behave in response to (and therefore are constitutive of) applied techniques of governmentality.

Another potential limitation of my research relates to the question, 'what can someone *do* with it'? For this, I turn to Gordon (1991), who argues that this kind of analysis is:

...not liable or designed to inspire and guide new political movements, transform the current agendas of political debate, or generate new plans for the organization of societies. [Its] claim would be, at most, to help political thought to grasp certain present realities, thus perhaps providing a more informed basis for practical choice and imagination. (46)

Engaging in ethical research within a colonial context entails recognizing the potential of research and a researcher to be implicated in perpetuating colonizing knowledges (Smith, 1999).¹⁰ I will attempt to address the bulk of these issues in the *Methodology* chapter; however, I would like to begin the thesis with a recognition of situated knowledge.

Situated Knowledge

As with every researcher, I do not 'stand outside' of the knowledge I am attempting to create; my own situated knowledge has bearing on the research project. This is especially important to acknowledge in relation to the creation of knowledge within a colonial context where the researcher is at risk of re-creating colonial processes, intentionally or not.

¹⁰ Smith (1999) uses this term to connote European traditions of knowledge emerging from the Enlightenment period and projects of modernity (58-77).

I am a sama7¹¹ woman who was raised in the un-ceded territory of the Lil'wat Nation. I grew up in an impoverished single-parent family with an amazing older brother and a strong mother who, as a Truck Driver and Heavy-Equipment Operator, subverted traditional gender roles. While many of the sama7 townspeople tended to look down upon my mother, her work, and her marital status as a sign that she was to blame for our poverty, members of two local First Nations brought us into their kinship and resource sharing networks. Many of my earliest memories are of gatherings and hunting and fishing camps. Some of the ties I formed then remain among the strongest in my life today, although I think it is safe to say that within both communities I am most commonly remembered as 'Nancy's Daughter'.

It was through education – that is, through the formal school system – that I first remember becoming consciously aware of 'difference' between my friends and I. While not a 'teacher's pet' in my mismatched hand-me-down clothes, I was never subjected to the same back-of-the-class, derisive treatment as I saw consistently applied to Aboriginal students. That treatment continued throughout public education and was all too often reproduced outside of school. These life experiences made me deeply aware of the vast race-based privileges I enjoy. After high school, I saw my friends struggle to negotiate post-secondary education funding policies and was struck by the effects this had on their lives. At the same time, education opened up opportunities for me and revealed the strength and pervasiveness of whitestream¹² understandings of First Nations peoples' 'special treatment' – in particular, the widespread animosity created by 'common knowledge' of 'free education for Indians'. This thesis is an attempt to make sense out of that discord.

¹¹ This is a St'at'imcets term for a person of European/Caucasian ancestry. I use it in keeping with a decolonizing research agenda: "In New Zealand even the more progressive whites use the Maori word *Pakeha*, meaning 'European,' to describe themselves. If Europeans can come to terms with their own origins, they may no longer need to insist upon their purity, i.e., whiteness" (Manuel and Posluns, 1974: 5).

¹² Denis (1997) uses the term 'whitestream' in order to situate 'mainstream' society within its ethnized and socio-political contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW: COLONIALISM, RESISTANCE, AND INDIGENOUS POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN CANADA

The PSSSP helps fund higher education for status Indian and Inuit individuals. It can provide financial support for tuition, living and travel expenses. PSSSP funding has fostered the popular misconception that higher education for Aboriginal peoples in Canada is fully paid for by the federal government. However, a 2004 *Report of the Auditor General* found that the time needed to close the education gap between First Nations peoples living on reserves and the rest of the Canadian population increased while the number of students supported by the PSSSP declined.

In keeping with self-government initiatives, PSSSP funding is now administered at the Band level. Self-government can be understood as a hard-won recognition of First Nations' inherent rights to self-determination. However, federal control of First Nations' finances means that they are compelled to structure their governments to match liberal ideals of limited and accountable government. As First Nations' autonomy and self-determination act as rewards for conforming to liberal societal norms, resistance has the potential to reinforce dominant power mechanisms in Canadian society. Current forms of self-government for First Nations peoples in Canada involve the devolution of services (such as the PSSSP) formerly administered by INAC to First Nations Bands. Devolution transfers power, responsibility, and accountability to First Nations. For many programs, this transfer has masked cutbacks and/or caps on funding even as the federal government escapes critical attention for program failures. Thus devolution has widespread implications for resistance to current methods of program administration, federal support, and recognition of education as a right or treaty right for Aboriginal peoples.

Just as liberal and neo-liberal discourses and political practices structure the emergence of First Nations' self-government, human capital theory emerging from neo-liberal paradigms dominates education policies relating to indigenous post-secondary education in Canada. Many advocates of continued or enhanced education funding for Aboriginal peoples rely on a human capital approach, although this may or may not be explicitly recognised. Research in the human capital vein emphasises the increasing importance of education in today's job market, the lifetime influence of educational attainment, and the (usually individual) economic benefits of

education.¹³ Studies as to the value of education for Aboriginal Canadians tend to focus on the payoffs that education entails for labour-market outcomes (Hull, 2005; Office of the Auditor General, 2004; Vermaeten et al, 2004; Walters et al, 2004; White et al, 2004; White et al, 2003).

Colonial Education: A Genealogy

For centuries, First Nations had their own systems of education that operated effectively for their societies. The objectives of these varied and complex systems were similar or the same as modern ones: they were a means to transmit accumulated societal knowledge and skills as well as acting as a form of cultural reproduction (Matthew, 2001: 3). Education methods were holistic, incorporating social practices and spiritual beliefs into activities designed to fulfil material needs, and not institutionally separated from everyday life (Satzewich and Wotherspoon, 2000: 116). Although a degree of specialized instruction existed, education was the responsibility of the community as a whole and, “education was ‘free’ to individuals” (Matthew 2001: 3). During early periods of European contact, the practical focus of First Nations’ education systems meant Europeans found them of value and, for a time, they remained unaltered (Satzewich et al, 2000: 117).

Missionaries accompanied the earliest traders and explorers, and as settlement and resource development became priorities, relationships between First Nations and Europeans shifted. In keeping with their religious objectives, missionaries set up the original forms of European-style schooling for First Nations students (Matthew, 3: 2001). While Indigenous leaders actively sought access to, “the cunning of the white man” and fought for education rights to be included in the numbered treaties, they also resisted the imposition of European systems of education, which increased alongside colonial nation-building efforts (Wotherspoon, 1991: 257-258). Conversely, the colonial government and Christian missionaries suppressed access to education for indigenous peoples or used it to facilitate assimilationist objectives. In 1876, the federal government created the *Indian Act*, a document that sought to regulate virtually every aspect of indigenous life. An amendment to the *Indian Act* meant that individuals could be forced to give up Indian status if they received post-secondary education (R.A. Malatest et al, 2004: 17). Status Indians are afforded certain entitlements under the *Indian Act*, including: tax exemption on reserve land, the right to live and be buried on-reserve, and certain health and education benefits (Napoleon, 2001: 3). Historically, these benefits have been differentially available to women and men (Lawrence, 2003: 11).

¹³ See, for example, Vermaeten et al, 2004; Ministry of Advanced Education, 2006; R.A. Malatest, 2004.

Wotherspoon (1991) maintains that after 1910 and into the 1940's, authorities focused on the marginalisation and segregation of First Nations peoples in education and other aspects of their lives (261). He and Satzewich (2000) argue that "chief advantages of the school system, particularly through the residential schools, lay in its ability to contain costs and maximize control over the Indian population" (117). Early in this period, the *Indian Act* was amended to increase mandatory school attendance requirements. Residential schools were set up across Canada, peaking in number in 1931 and deeply damaging First Nations societies and kinship relations (Comeau and Santin, 1990: 96-97, Manuel and Posluns, 1974; R.A. Malatest et al, 2004: 17, Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996: 9-97, 435). Guno (2000) explains, "academic excellence was not a priority of Indian educational policy" (26). In 1930, only three in one hundred Aboriginal pupils advanced beyond grade six and three quarters were in grades one to three (Dickason, 2002: 317). After World War II, the law changed to allow First Nation peoples to attend higher education (Matthew, 2001: 8). In the 1950's, INAC began funding First Nation students' post-secondary education on a case-by-case basis. Nonetheless, First Nation peoples' education levels remained comparatively low. The 1966 *Hawthorne Report* placed Aboriginal high-school dropout rates at 94 percent (Dickason, 2002: 376).

In 1969, the federal government released its *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy 1969*, commonly referred to as the *1969 White Paper*. It claimed that in reducing Aboriginal dependence on the government, equality of opportunity, responsibility, and status would result. The paper recommended the removal of all legal distinctions between Indians and other Canadians, including dismantling the *Indian Act* and INAC (Government of Canada, 1969; Hiller, 2006: 211). The framework for implementation was set at five years (Government of Canada, 1969). In the face of widespread protest, the *White Paper* was withdrawn prior to implementation. However, its publication - with its sweeping dismissal of First Nations' expressed interests - is widely seen as a galvanizing moment in the history of First Nations' policy (Boldt, 1993: 270; Dickason, 2002: 377-379; Fiske, 1993: 21; Frideres, 1998: 65; Leslie, 2004; Matthew, 2001: 9). It provided a 'focal point' around which First Nations' organisations and advocates could rally (Leslie, 2004).

In 1972, largely in response to the *1969 White Paper*, the National Indian Brotherhood¹⁴ presented their policy paper, *Indian Control of Indian Education*, to the federal government (Hiller, 2006: 211). It re-asserted the federal government's legal responsibility for First Nations' education and demanded immediate reforms in the areas of responsibility, programs, teachers, facilities, and local control. In 1973, INAC adopted the principles of *Indian Control of Indian*

¹⁴ Precursor to the Assembly of First Nations.

Education and subsequently introduced a mega-policy focused on participation with First Nations and devolution of resources and program administration to the Band level (Matthew, 2001: 73; Frideres, 1998: 224-225). Administrative control of post-secondary education funding programs has since been gradually devolved to First Nations.

In current contexts, devolution of powers from the federal government to First Nations is constructed as self-government. Devolutionary processes and block-funding strategies (promoted as allowing First Nations the ‘flexibility’ to respond to local priorities) taking place under the rubric of self-government mirror other financial allocation processes through which the federal government is attempting to carry out its overall objective of promoting fiscal restraint.¹⁵ Speaking of decentralisation in general, Brodie (2002) contends that decentralisation in Canada has effectively resulted in “a scurry of fiscal off-loading onto newly-designated ‘shock absorbers’” (103). In devolutionary processes tied to self-government initiatives such as the PSSSP, it is frequently noted that the cost, in addition to the control over, service delivery is downloaded to the regional level (Slowey, 2001: 3). Comeau and Santin (1990) argue that in these processes, the federal government gives “Indian people bits and pieces of control, some of it in response to native demands, but most of it as a way of satisfying its own agenda of reducing its financial and constitutional responsibilities while ensuring that the division of power remains intact” (quoted in Pompana, 1997: 56).

Lanceley (1991) contends that through PSSSP devolution, INAC’s intent has always been to reduce its fiscal expenditures on Aboriginal education (245). Block-funding arrangements have reduced government costs through funding regulation mechanisms whereby fiscal transfers are no longer tied to specific programs or the population eligible for program funding. The federal government saves on administration and staffing costs for programs such as the PSSSP while funding restrictions result in the increasing regulation of program accessibility – further resulting in longer student waiting lists (Lanceley, 1999: 21). In this and other areas, First Nations struggle to maintain the current levels of service provision and often cannot match that which was previously provided through the government (Slowey, 2001: 3).

In this way, the decentralisation of services from INAC to First Nations curtails rising federal government costs while seeming to provide First Nations with generous resources and increased autonomy (Lanceley, 1999: 14; Slowey, 2001: 3). The appearance of generous support is augmented through INAC’s block-funding mechanisms, such as Fiscal Transfer Arrangements

¹⁵ Perhaps the most notable example of this is the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), instituted in 1995 under the Chrétian government. The CHST drastically reduced the total amount of federal block transfers to the provinces and ended federal guarantees on the eligibility and quality of key social programs (Brodsky, 2000: 1-4).

and Alternative Funding mechanisms. However, to qualify for this form of block funding, “a band or tribal council must have participatory and governing procedures that are satisfactory to DIAND¹⁶, and the band and tribal council must also agree to submit a yearly audit of its financial affairs” (Satzewich and Wotherspoon, 2000: 235). Additionally, block funding can add to public perceptions of First Nations governments receiving vast amounts of federal dollars. Lanceley reflects that, “[i]n 1988, PSSSP began with an announcement to increase dollars spent on First Nations education” (Lanceley, 1999: 14).¹⁷ The rhetorical impact of large numbers hides the fact that, once divided among all First Nation communities and all programs, fiscal transfers may not be enough to adequately administer individual initiatives such as the PSSSP. This is especially true since PSSSP funds are incorporated into ‘core’ funds, allowing the money to be reallocated according to local priorities. Thus, INAC’s monitoring of First Nations’ financial affairs does not translate into program-specific requirements. Satzewich and Wotherspoon (2000) observe that,

Funds directed to specific purposes such as education are often diverted to more pressing community requirements for local administration and infrastructural services, often with the tacit consent of the Indian Affairs Department, which seeks little or no financial information or monitoring of programs delivered at the band level. (143-144)

Many First Nation communities are coping with pressing issues such as a lack of clean water, desperate housing shortages, extremely poor housing conditions, and a multitude of other communal and infrastructural challenges. When issues of funding prioritisation are negotiated at the Band level, the re-allocation of post-secondary funds may seem a necessary evil.¹⁸ INAC is protected from scrutiny while First Nations are locally, politically, and publicly held ‘at fault’ for programs’ administrative inadequacies. Meanwhile, in an environment of neo-liberal cutbacks and fiscal restraint, public resentment may be fostered over First Nation peoples’ perceived ‘financial advantage’ regarding post-secondary funding and other social programs, as it occurs at a time when non-Aboriginals are being required to ‘tighten the belt’. Such sentiments are evident in Flanagan’s (2000) argument that Aboriginal peoples,

have little sense of the real-world trade-offs because everything their governments do for them is paid for by other people. They never have to give up anything in order to get additional government programs. If they had to make the same choices that other Canadians routinely make, they would, I predict, take the axe to many of the government programs proliferating luxuriantly in their communities. (Flanagan, 2000: 197-198)¹⁹

¹⁶ DIAND is an alternative acronym for the Department of Indian and Northern Development.

¹⁷ Lanceley (1999) further asserts that First Nations’ claims to state-funded education as a right is undermined as Bands themselves place restrictions on student access to educational funding (22).

¹⁸ As discussed later, this decision may be made *for* a First Nation.

¹⁹ Thomas Flanagan is a political scientist, senior fellow at the Fraser Institute, and senior advisor to Prime Minister Steven Harper.

In politics, such views are usually less vocally supported, arguably because more 'politically correct' discourses advocating autonomy, self-reliance, and freedom (through self-government as envisioned and structured by the federal government) are more effective in permeating First Nations communities and individuals with techniques of governmentality. 'Politically correct' governance techniques are, certainly, harder for resistance to 'aim' at in the way that focus and fury was directed at the *1969 White Paper*.

The devolution of programs also has widespread implications for resistance to current methods of program administration and federal support. In 1988/1989, Aboriginal students across Canada engaged in widespread resistance to government attempts to alter post-secondary funding arrangements in a way that would see funding capped, access limited, and benefits slashed:

During the 1988-89 academic year, the voice of Indian students struck the Canadian public with intense force. Collectively, many students across the country fasted, demonstrated, and participated in peaceful sit-ins at [INAC] offices and were subsequently arrested.

(Lanceley, 1991: 235)

Although the students did win some important concessions,²⁰ major areas of contention – such as the funding cap – remained in place (Lanceley, 1999; Satzewich and Wotherspoon, 2000: 140). Devolution of funding and administrative functions to individual First Nations means that student resistance to the imposition of disciplinary, actuarial, and surveillance techniques of power²¹ through the program has been fragmented.²² Considering that the proportion of the population actually eligible for the program is relatively small,²³ and that there are over 600 INAC recognized First Nations in Canada (in turn spread over a wide geographic area), the consequences of fragmentation for concerted or unified resistance are substantial.

At the same time, an increasing prevalence of human capital approaches to education in Canada is currently structuring First Nations' post-secondary education policy regimes, marginalizing alternative understandings of the role of education in society.

²⁰ Concessions included loosening the amount and length of assistance provided (see Lanceley, 1991).

²¹ As exercised through restrictions on student funding, eligibility, benefits, invasive measurement of student performance, necessity of repeated funding applications even after approval, ascription of counselling services, imposition of academically determined measures of 'success', and more.

²² Similarly, the implementation of the CHST meant protest groups could no longer focus on the federal government, and were faced with lobbying 9 provincial governments, 3 territorial governments, and local community boards (Brodsky, 2000: 7).

²³ Reserve-based status Indians make up less than one half of the Aboriginal population in Canada – which is approximately 3.2 percent of the overall population. Factoring in the actual number of those who are likely to be pursuing or attempting to pursue post-secondary education at any given time, the consequences of this fragmentation of resistance are more evident.

Human Capital

The human capital approach to education emerges from liberalism and is inherently optimistic and economic; it stresses correlations between, “success at school and success at work” and, therefore, emphasizes the economic rewards of individual and societal investment in education (Brym, 2001: 325). Education systems provide human resources, which drive economic productivity, and, “those with the most human capital will be the most attractive to employers, and will be paid the highest wages, indicating the greater contribution they make to the economy” (Ibid: 325). Therefore, human capital theory views the economic and social successes or failures of social groups as indicative of group members’ abilities to, “adapt to prevailing social norms and to compete on an equal basis with other individuals” (Satzewich and Wotherspoon, 2000: 114).²⁴

Perhaps the most influential Canadian work on social stratification related to education was John Porter’s (1965) *The Vertical Mosaic*. He examines the role of education in the hierarchical stratification of ethnic groups in Canadian society. Porter relies on human capital conceptualisations of education in the associations he draws between ethnic-group advance, egalitarian measures, and meritocracy:

I attach great importance to equality of opportunity on both ethical and practical grounds...I believe strongly, too, in the creative role of politics and in the importance of political institutions as the means through which the major goals of society can be achieved.

(quoted in Erwin and MacLennan, 1994: 4)

Porter understood a lack of mobility in Canadian society to be rooted in a societal failure in the arena of education. The blame for this ‘mobility deprivation’ was laid squarely upon Canada’s corporate and political elites (Erwin and MacLennan, 1994: 4). Rather than engaging in educational reform, Canada imported needed professionals through preferred-immigration regulations. This focus on the need for education systems to reflect the changing needs of society contains strong echoes of Durkheim, Parsons, and structural functionalist thought.²⁵ Although Porter’s analysis took place in the early 1960’s just as major educational reforms began in Canada, his work is valuable for revealing the relationships between educational accessibility and other social forces (Hiller, 2006: 110-111).

In the decades after Porter’s report, Canadian governments began to focus on improving the accessibility of advanced education. Increasingly, it was recognized that in an (international)

²⁴ This approach is consistent with pluralist and Chicago school models of race and ethnic relations (Satzewich and Wotherspoon, 114).

²⁵ Porter relied on Parsons’ framework of the role of education in society. Reynolds (2001) argues, “we are currently seeing a return to such Parsonian views of schools justified by reference to current economic restraints in increasingly competitive global markets” (250).

advanced democratic environment, it is necessary to insure a trained, educated, and productive workforce to maintain and increase society's ability to compete and advance developmentally (Wotherspoon, 2004: 24-25). Hiller (2006) explains that,

[g]overnments poured large sums of money into educational endeavors so as to build human capital, which would then have a positive effect on employment and the Gross National Product. Thus education, by creating equality of opportunity so that upward mobility could take place, was to be the means of equalizing the effects of the existing social structure. (111)

Human capital approaches also look to education as a means to address women's inequality, although it is generally acknowledged that women do not experience the same degree of economic and personal benefits from education as men (Bellamy and Guppy, 1991: 164).

In 2001, Canadian women with less than a high school diploma earned, on average, \$9,299 less than men with equivalent education levels. The same year, women with a university certificate, diploma, or degree made \$24,106 less than men with equivalent levels of education (Hiller, 2006: 91).²⁶ Still, education is viewed as a means for promoting women's upward mobility; the *Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada* argues that,

education opens the door to almost every life goal. Wherever women are denied equal access to education they cannot be said to have equality. Since schooling does play the most important role in determining a person's occupational destiny and income, access to education is fundamentally important. (quoted in Bellamy and Guppy, 1991: 187)

Authors note that although women earn less than men, women's income increases sharply with education, and therefore access to education is seen as a key site of struggle (Ibid, 1991: 164).

Human capital as related to Aboriginal peoples is generally framed in terms of individual and mutual empowerment, participation, and community development. Education and training are advanced as the means through which Aboriginal peoples can facilitate economic development within their communities, personal advancement, and productive individual civic engagement (British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education, 2006; Satzewich and Wotherspoon, 2000: 112-113). Related to this, human capital theory clearly understands the role of education systems to be the facilitation and insurance of individuals' capacities to fulfil labour force requirements. Indigenous peoples' socio-economic inequality in Canada is therefore understood to result from "cultural barriers to their economic success" (Satzewich and Wotherspoon, 2000: 114).

Wotherspoon (2004) explains the "influence of human capital theory remains very much alive through contemporary reforms and ideologies that emphasize competitiveness, human resource development, and the need to match skills with jobs" (24-25). The BC Ministry of

²⁶ In 2001, women with less than high school earned 61 percent of their male counterparts. Women with a university certificate, diploma or degree earned 60 percent of their male counterparts (Hiller, 2006: 91).

Advanced Education (2006) advocates for new programs to “close the gap” in education between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal individuals on the basis that,

[i]n 2007, the Aboriginal workforce will be just shy of one million people in Canada, with young men and women under the age of 35 representing the bulk of that number. These are all significant statistics when considering British Columbia’s future labour pool...Unemployment rates for Aboriginal people are also significantly higher than for the non-Aboriginal population; however, when employment rates are compared between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people with the same levels of education, many of the differences in labour market outcomes disappear. (3)

Canada, along with many other advanced industrial nations, has used research on educational attainment as the basis and justification for labour-market development strategies (Brym, 2001: 235; Wotherspoon, 2004: 26). Education is conceptualized as a mechanism for ensuring individual autonomy and life-enhancement, as well as being beneficial for Canadian society as a whole (Bellamy and Guppy, 1991: 164; Brym, 2001: 235; Hiller, 2006: 111). Education, then, is “a route to autonomy and thus power over one’s life” (Bellamy and Guppy, 1991: 164).

Chapter Summary: Devolution of Services, Devolution of Blame

In releasing administrative control of the PSSSP to Bands and Tribal Councils, the federal government has restricted funding and imposed national guidelines. The Union of BC Indian Chiefs has argued that funding preferences and incentives for students enrolled in courses favoured by the federal government are meant to, “create Indians in the image of federal bureaucrats who can take over many of the functions and values of the Department of Indian Affairs” (quoted in *Saskatchewan Indian*, 1989). Funding caps have been imposed as tuition fees have skyrocketed²⁷ and the number of eligible students is increasing rapidly – meaning that decisions as to resource allocation – that is, how to fund an increasing number of students²⁸ with a decreasing²⁹ amount of money – must be negotiated at the Band level (Rounce, 2004: 4; Scheultze and Day, 2001: 8; Satzewich and Wotherspoon, 2000: 143). New funding mechanisms and block funding arrangements allow for a curtailing of escalating government costs while

²⁷ Between 1990 and 2000, tuition fees at universities increased by as much as 125 percent (Rounce, 2004: 4). As a result, student debt has risen by an estimated 277 percent (Scheultze and Day, 2001: 8).

²⁸ From 1960-1961 to the early 1990’s, the number of Aboriginal students completing high school rose from 3.4 to 47 percent (Satzewich and Wotherspoon, 2000: 131). Aboriginal youth are the fastest growing segment of Canada’s population – half of all Aboriginal people are under the age of 25 (Frances, 2004: 17). The Aboriginal population had a growth rate of 22 percent between 1996 and 2001, around 70 percent higher than that of non-Aboriginal Canadians (Frances, 2004: 6; R.A. Malatest et al, 2004: 12).

²⁹ Relative to inflation, accounting for the increasing Aboriginal population, and somewhat dependant on individual First Nations’ decisions regarding funding.

seeming to provide First Nations with generous resources and increased autonomy (Lanceley, 1999: 14; Slowey, 2001: 3).³⁰

Decentralisation and funding mechanisms have served as key mechanisms in constituting Aboriginal governments as municipality-like structures. One benefit of this arrangement for the federal government lies in reducing costs and fiscal transfers while maintaining overall control of budgets and program administration. At the same time, individual First Nations are subject to critical attention for their (overly zealous and/or inadequate) application of exclusionary measures from the Canadian government, the non-Aboriginal population of Canada, and their own communities.

In light of the very real poverty and oppression faced by many Aboriginal peoples in Canada, it is extremely difficult not to advocate for funding and programs on the basis of a human capital approach, which focuses on the (individual) economic ‘payoffs’ of ‘investments’ in education. Yet this perspective fails to problematise the potentially powerfully assimilative nature of higher education itself, or to fundamentally question inequality and liberal governance. Hierarchy and meritocracy are accepted, and equality of opportunity – and *only* opportunity – becomes the end goal. Further, we must ask: what are these attempts at equalisation prompting us to embrace? Does the sole value in education lie in its facilitation of the labour market? If education were not economically viable, would it be worth supporting?

Education can also be understood as a means to alter the very power-knowledge relations that structure and determine the realms of possibility for Aboriginal peoples in Canada. An article in *RedWire* centres the importance of resistance in education for Aboriginal students:

The 2005/2006 school year is starting, so young Native brothers and sisters be prepared for another round of challenging indoctrination. Question your teachers: make them nervous and indecisive. Challenge the courses they teach you and ask just how relevant that information really is to you, your family and your people. (Johnson, 2005: 3)

Understandings such as these resonate with Foucauldian conceptualisations of power as relational and productive. Foucault rejects what he terms the ‘repressive hypothesis,’ which depicts power as inherently negative: “it is a power that only has the force of the negative on its side, a power to say no; in no condition to produce, capable only of posting limits, it is basically anti-energy” (Foucault, 1978: 85). In contrast, he focuses on power’s productive nature, undermining the notion that power as manifested in our society is typically characterized by repression. Foucault

³⁰ Funding is determined by the “First Nation’s proportion of total population compared to the total band population in BC” (Matthew, 2001: 58). Thus, larger Bands are likely to be in a stronger position to fund students. The Auditor General (2004) expressed concern over the funding strategy because it did not ensure equitable access; it meant some First Nations may receive more or less funding than was actually needed; and it masked whether or not current funding levels were adequate to support all eligible students.

reveals that in failing to recognize the productive manifestations of power we further fail to comprehend power's historical functioning. Adapted to post or anti-colonial analysis, this understanding allows us to see education as something more than a site of absolute assimilation or a mechanism for the creation of productive citizens. Rather, education opens the realm of possibilities; it creates and allows for myriad 'ways of being'. Education provides a space and opportunity for individuals to engage with dominant discourses and to articulate their worldviews in a way that may have a better chance at being 'heard' in wider society. In limiting access to education, we limit the realm of societal and individual possibility.

THEORY: FROM FOUCAULT TO FEMINISM

Liberal governance places importance on individual liberty and – in part as a means to ensure that liberty – limited and accountable government (Dean, 2002: 28). The need for limited governance further requires that individuals as citizens are capable of being self-disciplining and making rational choices on the basis of a cost/benefit analysis. In order to accomplish this, liberal governance employs a variety of mechanisms through which the creation of, “individuals who do not need to be governed by others, but will govern themselves” is effected (Rose, 1996; quoted in Dean, 2002: 38). As techniques of sovereign power³¹ are slowly receding from Aboriginal communities – and reserve-based communities in particular – the influx of liberal and neo-liberal modes of governance requires the deployment of techniques of power which seek “to transform the population by routine labour, supervision, sanction, punishment and deterrence” (Dean, 2002: 52). From the perspective of contemporary governance regimes, the historical construction of Aboriginal peoples as childlike, irrational, and incapable of autonomy, adds a certain level of imperative to the deployment of these alternative techniques of power.

Since before confederation, the very existence of First Nations populations within what came to be Canada has been defined as a problem. Currently, neo-liberal justifications for expenditures in First Nations education are often explicitly or implicitly justified in terms of the ‘problem’ of increasing Aboriginal populations: in research and policy documents, Aboriginal peoples’ high rates of unemployment and/or “welfare dependency” are often mentioned in the same or adjacent sections to discussions of their ‘burgeoning population’ (Canadian Policy Research Networks, 2004; British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education, 2006). In this context, disciplinary and actuarial regimes are particularly evident. In current First Nations post-secondary education funding allocation, an individual First Nation student is discursively constructed as being responsible for any failure to meet performance-based measures of funding eligibility. Such responsabilisation is problematic because it makes the individual responsible for a wide range of factors, “even for things... which are social in their scope” (Ruhl, 1999: 102).

³¹ Sovereign power is authoritarian, implies relations of force and conceptualizes law as an extension of the sovereign’s body to be imposed upon the body of the subject. Adapted to colonial contexts, the very existence of indigenous populations represents a threat to the ‘body’ of colonial society; therefore, the physical bodies of indigenous peoples have been directly targeted (through targeted sterilisations, confinement to reservations, pass laws, etc.).

Liberalism, Governance and Post-Secondary Education

Liberalism is a classic political philosophical doctrine that came to prominence in Europe in the 1700's (Brym 2001: 249). Liberalism remains the dominant regime of governance in Canadian society and can be defined as a "system of ideas," a "principled political philosophy," a "political rationality" and/or an "art of government" (Smith, 1999: 59; Dean, 2002: 28, Lacombe, 1996: 347). Liberalism views society as a collection of individuals with individual rights and freedoms, with the role of government being to protect those rights and freedoms. In recent decades, a variant of liberalism, neo-liberalism, has gained influence and a large body of literature examines the increasing prevalence of neo-liberal thought in Canada (Hiller, 2006: 127; Brym, 2001: 249-250). Neo-liberalism retains a liberalist focus on individual liberty but further disdains state interference. Neo-liberalism is associated with the rise of the 'New Right', neo-conservatism, fiscal restraint, government restructuring, and emphasis on the free-market and monetarism. Also known as economic liberalism or the Washington consensus, neo-liberalism is a guiding force in many Western industrial nations and trans- and multi-national corporations (Brym, 2001: 249).

Liberal governance has been called 'governance through freedom', for, as Dean (1995) posits, "[a]t least in contemporary industrial democracies, the object of government is the conduct of the 'free subject,' a term that...should be appreciated in its full irony and ambiguity" (561). Liberal ideals emphasize the centrality of individual liberty, while liberal practices of governance focus on regulating the conduct of the 'free' individual. Foucault utilizes the concept of governmentality to explain these processes. Governmentality is the 'conduct of conduct', or more specifically, "the relation between government and conduct" (Dean, 1995: 560). According to Foucault, techniques of governmentality arose out of a concern with the problems of population (Foucault, 1991b). Governmentality refers to the complex array of mechanisms through which the government of populations is linked to self-government, or the means by which individuals work on the constitution of their own subjectivity (Garland, 1997: 174).

Bio-politics and bio-power are linked to governmentality and address themselves to the regulation of populations and the maximisation of those populations' productive capacities. Although bio-power takes a population as a whole as its 'object', it also specifically targets individuals, aspiring to a government of 'all and each' (Foucault, 1981). Foucault argues that bio-power is a central factor in segregation and social hierarchisation, helping to guarantee, "relations of domination and effects of hegemony" (Foucault, 1978: 141). Bio-power relies on disciplinary regimes, since a power focused on the control of life must have a complimentary series of corrective and regulatory mechanisms that facilitate its ability to normalize society (Ibid: 144).

Foucault (1977) defines discipline as, “a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a ‘physics’ or an ‘anatomy’ of power, a technology” (215). Discipline seeks to inculcate specific behaviour patterns in the individual. Foucault (1991b) contends,

discipline was never more important or more valorized than at the moment when it became important to manage a population; the managing of a population not only concerns the collective mass of phenomena, the level of its aggregate effects, it also implies the management of population in its depths and its details. (102)

While the existence and expansion of regulatory mechanisms may seem antithetical to a liberal insistence on individual liberty, liberal governance in fact necessitates them:

The liberal arts of government specify the content of individual freedom, give it a particular form and turn it to various goals. They employ techniques ranging from earlier disciplines found in institutional settings to contemporary practices of individual and mutual empowerment, participation, self-help and community development and care. (Dean, 2002:38)

Liberal ideals and governmentality rely heavily on a particular conceptualisation of what an individual citizen is and should be. The ideal liberal individual is independent and capable of rational thought. According to Ruhl (1999), model liberal citizens are self-disciplining and responsible, refraining from activities that would, “impart a burden on others” (110). Liberal technologies of power facilitate governance through the constitution of individuals – they attempt to ‘create’ citizens in the image of the ideal liberal rational actor. The autonomous liberal actor is free in the sense that they possess the capacity of choice; at the same time, they are subjectified inasmuch as their, “subjugation works through the promotion and calculated regulation of spaces in which choice is exercised” (Dean, 1995: 562). In part, this is accomplished through utilizing knowledge to both totalize and individualize populations. Miller and Rose (1990) explain,

‘Knowing’ an object in such a way that it can be governed is more than a purely speculative activity: it requires the invention of procedures of notation, ways of collecting and presenting statistics, the transportation of these to centres where calculations and judgments can be made and so forth. It is through such procedures of inscription that the diverse domains of ‘governmentality’ are made up, that ‘objects’ such as the economy, the enterprise, the social field and the family are rendered in a particular conceptual form and made amenable to intervention and regulation. (5)

Surveillance is linked to discipline and constitutes a technique of power, as it confers power onto the observer while disempowering the observed through their visibility. Surveillance in the form of detailed observation ‘feeds’ bio-power – it helps create knowledge, knowledge that in turn facilitates governance.

Foucault (1977) challenges the idea that knowledge exists outside of power and that an expansion of knowledge requires an abandonment of power; rather, “power produces knowledge...power and knowledge directly imply one another...there is no power relation

without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (27). Power and knowledge are joined through the mechanism of discourse. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2000) explain:

For Foucault, a discourse is a strongly bounded area of social knowledge, a system of statements within which the world can be known. The key feature of this is that the world is not simply ‘there’ to be talked about, rather, it is through discourse itself that the world is brought into being. It is also in such a discourse that speakers and hearers, writers and readers come to an understanding about themselves, their relationship to each other and their place in the world (the construction of subjectivity). (71)

Neither discourse nor the effects of discursive engagement are ‘true’ or ‘false’. Rather, they are social constructions. However, as social constructions with the capacity to shape reality, Foucault is interested in how discourses, “can be objects of a political practice, and in what system of dependence they can exist in relation to it” (Foucault, 1991c: 69). Discourses define what may be said to be ‘true’ within a specific set of socio-historical conditions; Foucault understands this ‘will to truth’ to be a crucial feature of modernity. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2000) explain that Foucault’s notion of, “the ‘will to truth’ is linked to the ‘will to power’...[t]he will of European nations to exercise dominant control over the world, which led to the growth of empires, was accompanied by European notions of utility, rationality, discipline as truth” (73).

In current neo-liberal contexts, discourses relating to accountability have come to influence and structure power relations. In relation to this, a number of scholars argue that Western industrialized nations are becoming ‘risk societies’.³² Accountability relations and actuarial practices are central aspects of this shift, as actuarial practices entail assessments of risk, assessments that are often utilized to make and justify administrative decisions. Numerically based predictions of risk function as a type of insurance for authorities. Actuarial practices categorize individuals – categorisations that are used to justify governmental action (or inaction) – thus, actuarial regimes are embedded with disciplinary mechanisms. In neo-liberal political environments emphasizing accountability, risk management is tied to conceptions of fiscal responsibility and, as governing authorities come under critical attention, they increasingly retreat to the ‘safe’ objectivity of numbers. The supposed ‘objectivity’ of numerical measures themselves is rarely questioned – although the lack of or ineffective nature of such measures may come into question through political practices emphasizing a need for accountability.

The theoretical objectivity of numbers masks the fact that creating categories and determining risk factors requires making subjective decisions. Categorisations reflect the subjective (and often moral) evaluation of an assessor and/or subjective judgment(s) by a scale’s

³² See, for example, Rose, 1998; Simon, 1998; Castel, 1991; Ruhl, 1999.

designer(s). Numerical measurements cast a veneer of objectivity over subjective decisions and diminish any sense of responsibility for accounting practices on the part of their authors. Contesting judgments becomes more difficult as individuals' (and groups') capacities to articulate their own truths may be lost in the clamour of professionals and assessors who compete to define their 'true' nature. At the same time, actuarial practices place responsibility (for behaviour, achievement, or failure) squarely upon the individual, as they are understood as having chosen to behave in a certain manner. Ruhl (1999) argues that,

[t]he actuarial model of government...has a clear political lineage. In its use of an ahistorical, de-contextualized 'rational actor' as a model of behavior, it draws on a model of the citizen that is emblematic of liberal regimes. In its emphasis on risk, which is after all based on the rational assessment of costs versus benefits, it echoes the utilitarianism that is again a hallmark of liberalism. Finally...it puts forth a world view in which individuals, not society, take responsibility for not just their actions, but for their environments as well. (110)

Discourses emphasizing accountability rely on conceptualisations of the liberal rational actor and facilitate an individualisation of responsibility. Accordingly,

[r]esponsibility is equated with the capacity to behave rationally; the term presupposes a calculation of expected benefits and risks, and a decision to follow the path with the greatest possibility of benefit with the least risk. In this sense, responsibility talk within liberal regimes is also morality talk; behaving responsibly is a moral act. (Ibid: 96)

Accountability talk and individual responsabilisation can facilitate the proliferation of liberal technologies of power (such as discipline, surveillance, and actuarialism).

What we tend to witness with the evolution and fluctuation of liberal technologies of power is *precisely* that: growth and change that occurs over time, rather than the sudden schism or separation between one mode of power and another. Under liberalism, the use and effects of technologies of power are under constant negotiation. According to Foucault, possibilities for resistance permeate society, existing in many and multiple points: "[w]here there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault, 1978: 95). He insists that forces of resistance rely on the same fundamental tenets upon which current power relations are built (Ibid: 145). According to Lacombe (1996), as power and resistance are bound together and power is relational, "inherent in power relations is a 'strategic reversibility': power-knowledge strategies function both as instruments to control and as points of resistance" (342). She further argues that, "Foucault's concept of power is not only inscribed in practices of normalisation, but, most importantly, in practices of liberation" (Ibid: 332).

In accordance with liberal philosophy, "the practices of freedom develop polymorphically [sic] in relation to claims of unfreedom" (Weir, 1996: 373). These 'claims of unfreedom' refer generally to claims of oppressive and/or repressive governance, such as Aboriginal claims of

unfreedom under a colonial paternalistic state. Through its continual engagement with and conflict over claims of unfreedom, liberalism acts to deflect and preclude calls for more fundamental change in governance itself (i.e. a re-vamping or abandonment of liberalism). Liberalism's allowance for claims of unfreedom substantiates and justifies its dominance by re-asserting an intrinsic link between liberalism and practices of freedom (Ibid: 374). Counter-discourses – having as they do a vested interest in preserving spaces that allow for challenge to the status quo of power relations – are therefore likely to be reluctant to engage in work that might undermine liberalism itself.

This relationship between the dominant discourse of liberalism and that of counter-discourses is problematic inasmuch as certain tenets of liberalism can be understood to be repressive. Furthermore, although counter-discourses may better achieve their short-term goals through the utilisation of the dominant discourse, they also subscribe to some or all of its underlying rationales in the process. Nonetheless, the existence of reflexivity within liberalism opens up an important space for resistance:

...reflexivity...refers to a mechanism of self-critique, and self-limitation, inherent in liberalism...People resist the conditions under which they live, they make claims for or against the state, because they have been submitted to government. In other words, the political technologies that seek to render us governable as a population (bio-power and bio-politics) simultaneously make possible the critique of those same technologies. (Lacombe, 1996: 347-348)

The willingness to engage with claims of unfreedom can be linked to liberalism's idealisation of limited and accountable government. Liberal conceptions of the state mandate, "a rational rule of law which regulates a public sphere of life, but which allows individuals to pursue their economic self-interest" (Smith, 1999: 59). Government interventions (in the private sphere, or – more centrally under neo-liberalism – the market) are permissible only as they protect individual rights and freedoms and insure that there is a sufficient level of equality, "to allow individuals to achieve their own objectives" (Schissel and Wotherspoon, 2003: 17-21; Hiller, 2006: 127). The *limited* aspect of government is a central aspect of liberal understandings of the state. There is an assumption that, "one always governs too much" (Dean, 2002: 41). That fear, however, is specific to *state* governance; liberalism in fact anticipates that individuals will govern themselves in a rational way according to individual cost/benefit analyses and the dictates of the market (Dean, 2002: 42; Ruhl, 1999; 109-110).

Capitalism enjoys a privileged place under liberalism and neo-liberalism and is strongly associated with freedom. Liberal philosophy endorses modelling government on mechanisms, agencies, and regulations found in civil society. As a result, a common solution to perceived threats of government over-bureaucratisation and redundancy is to model state administration on

the market (Dean, 2002). Neo-liberalism understands the welfare state to be, “costly, inefficient, and culpable in the creation of economic dependences”; therefore, a central focus of neo-liberal politics has been welfare-state reform (Hiller, 2006: 127). This genre of reform moves away from social guarantees against poverty for citizens towards an ‘empowerment to work’ model that stresses equality of opportunity rather than outcome.

Globalisation is central to these processes, as it provides a framework for national government policy in which competitiveness and economic efficiency are paramount goals: “all other activities of government, such as those of the welfare state, higher education or migration, must be assessed first in terms of the availability of resources, and second as to whether they contribute to or inhibit economic efficiency” (Dean, 2002: 41, 54). Relating these formulations specifically to education, neo-liberal understandings of education are linked with human capital theory, which argues for a highly educated workforce in an increasingly globalised society and associates education with economic autonomy in the marketplace. Mudge (2003) notes that,

The emerging welfare state agenda in many countries now emphasizes active participation in labour markets rather than passive receipt of benefits, individual citizen responsibilities rather than group rights, more targeted benefits to segmented groups, and empowerment to work (via education, training, and employment services) rather than entitlement to a certain living standard.
(4)³³

According to this formulation, individual autonomy is further understood to reduce (real or potential) government (fiscal) responsibility for citizens.³⁴

In current liberal and neo-liberal Canadian contexts, education is understood as a mechanism for creating ideal liberal citizens (i.e. productive workers and consumers) (British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education, 2006; Satzewich and Wotherspoon, 2000: 112). This formulation effectively equates education with freedom while leaving the nature and processes of education unproblematised. Freedom is defined as the attainment of economic autonomy – economic autonomy which may be achieved through (the right kind and amount of) education.³⁵

³³ Mudge (2003) critiques human capital theory on the basis that welfare-state policies premised on the protection of individuals are being eroded in favour of approaches that focus on education and training.

³⁴ This is accomplished through incorporating them into the marketplace, and therefore into a web of power relations – relations marked in particular by the strong presence of ‘micropenalities’.

³⁵ Neo-liberal conceptualisations of education may justify a dismantling of the welfare state. Mudge (2003) finds, “[t]he ‘payoff’ to education investment depends on the balance of services and equality-promoting social transfers a welfare state offers. Without state intervention in the form of progressive transfers and services, a heavily educational welfare emphasis can bring highly stratifying consequences” (1).

Colonialism

Colonialism refers to a specific form of exploitation that developed with the expansion of Europe (Ashcroft et al, 2000: 45). Colonial practices carried out by liberal societies reveal that, despite an emphasis on limited government, authoritarian exercises of power are not antithetical to liberal governance. As Dean (2002) points out, colonial liberal governance has a long history of authoritarianism: in “*Considerations on Representative Government*, Mill argues for the necessity of a ‘good despot’, provided under the benign dominion of a ‘more civilized people’, for those nations incapable of ‘spontaneous improvement’ [of] themselves” (47). Colonialism, “is the implanting of settlements on distant territory” and is almost always the consequence of imperialism, or, “the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory” (Ashcroft et al, 2000: 45).

Smith (1999) argues that European notions of modernity and accompanying assumptions of human progress emerging from the Enlightenment are credited with stimulating the Industrial Revolution, liberal philosophy, the development of the disciplines and public education; however, this view of history ignores that imperialism and imperialistic practices were central to such developments (58). She further contends, “[w]hilst imperialism is often thought of as a system which drew everything back into the centre, it was also a system which distributed materials and ideas outwards...knowledge was also there to be discovered, extracted, appropriated and distributed” (Ibid: 58). In Canada, colonisation, “occurred in simultaneous, overlapping, spatially distinct waves of different European imperial regimes” and had both heterogenous and shared implications for the territory’s diverse indigenous populations (Stevenson, 1999: 50).

Colonialism and Education

Notions of modernity emerging from the Enlightenment period and liberal thought are rooted in the idea of progress, assuming an ever-more civilized European society. As imperialist and empire-building projects were carried out, conceptions of modernity were utilized in colonial discourses to define large segments of humanity – indigenous peoples in particular – as ‘uncivilized’ and therefore either not human or ‘less’ human and in need of ‘civilizing’. The necessity of ‘civilizing’ Aboriginal peoples in Canada was explicitly addressed in 1920 by Duncan Campbell Scott, one of Canada’s ‘Confederation Poets’ and then Deputy Minister of the Indian Department:

I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that this country ought to continually protect a class of people who are able...to take their position as British citizens or as Canadian citizens, to support themselves, and stand alone. That has been the whole purpose of

Indian education and advancement since earliest times...Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department. (Scott, 1920; quoted in Napoleon, 2001:3)³⁶

From the early stages of the Canadian colonial project, colonial authorities saw education as a functional mechanism for the creation of liberal citizens out of the “weird and waning race”³⁷ of First Nations peoples in Canada (Scott, 1898: 93). Such discourses justified the implementation of residential schools and the imposition of colonial education systems.³⁸ An Aboriginal who had been successfully educated was considered by most Euro-Canadians to be an Aboriginal who had been successfully absorbed into larger Canadian society (Guno, 2001: 16).

Canadian colonial education systems also helped further assimilative processes through the creation of elite, educated Aboriginal individuals. These elites were intended to be doctors, missionaries, etc who would minister to their own societies and thereby facilitate colonial processes and assimilation (Smith, 1999: 64; Stonechild, 2006). Although the relative successes of such attempts are generally debatable, since educated Aboriginal individuals had a habit of lobbying for increasing rights and freedoms for their communities, the endeavours themselves have influenced the current relationship that Aboriginal peoples have with the colonial education system (Stonechild, 2006: 27; Satezewich and Wotherspoon, 2000). Smith (1999) explains,

The role of intellectuals, teachers, artists and writers in relation to indigenous communities is still problematic, and the rhetoric of liberalism still forms part of indigenous discourses. Indigenous communities continue to view education in its Western, modern, sense as being critical to development and self-determination. While criticizing indigenous people who have been educated at universities, on one hand, many indigenous communities will struggle and save to send their children to university on the other. There is a very real ambivalence in indigenous communities towards the role of Western education and those who have been educated in universities. (71)

Despite the long history of assimilationist objectives applied against First Nation families through the education system, there is also a strong theme within Aboriginal communities promoting

³⁶ In 1914, Scott linked the regulation of education and reproduction to absolute assimilation: “The happiest future for the Indian Race is absorption into the general population, and this is the object of the policy of our government. The great forces of intermarriage and education will finally overcome the lingering traces of native custom and tradition” (Scott, 1914; quoted in Neu and Therrien, 2003: 102).

³⁷ This phrase is derived from Scott’s (1898) “Onandaga Madonna”, a poem relying heavily on colonial conceptions of indigenous women: “She stands full-throated and with careless pose, / This woman of a weird and waning race / The tragic savage lurking in her face, / Where all her pagan passion burns and glows / Her blood is mingled with her ancient foes, / And thrills with war and wildness in her veins...(93).

³⁸ In *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999), Smith powerfully reveals the linkages between imperialism, colonialism, and the constitution of individuals and communities in relation to indigenous education and research. She further re-visits the concept of discipline as related to schooling, applying this analysis to a specifically Canadian context: “Native children in Canada were sent to residential schools at an age designed to systematically destroy their language and memories of home... These forms of discipline were supported by paternalistic and racist policies and legislation; they were accepted by white communities as necessary conditions which had to be met if indigenous people wanted to become citizens (of their own lands). These forms of discipline...were designed to destroy every last remnant of alternative ways of knowing and living, to obliterate collective identities and memories and to impose a new order” (69).

education (Guno, 2001: 44). Education is seen as a way of improving the life of not only the individual scholar, but of the community as a whole, as well as a way of resisting First Nations' oppression by wider Canadian society (Stonechild, 2006). At the same time, discourses advocating improving access to education for indigenous peoples are negotiated in relation to (neo) liberal colonial conceptualisations of indigenous peoples.

(Neo) Liberal Colonial Conceptualisations of Indigenous Peoples

Colonial liberal theory views indigenous peoples as irrational children in need of guardianship and protection (Ruhl, 1999: 111; Dean, 2002: 48-49; Posluns, 2007:10). It discursively constructs Aboriginal peoples as (somewhat paradoxically) childlike,³⁹ irrational, incapable of autonomy, and ominously threatening to the social order (Ruhl, 1999: 111; Dean, 2002: 48-49). In Canada, these understandings have formed the basis for a wide array of state interventions into First Nations societies, often with devastating results. The de-valuing and/or demonizing of Aboriginal individuals, societies, and cultures functionally served colonialism by casting them as an impediment to the 'natural' processes of economy and civilisation. The 'burden' that Aboriginal culture placed on the Canadian economy was seen as clear justification for its annihilation. In the 1940's, the Secretary for the Indian Affairs Branch explained:

The *Indian Act* prohibits the appearance of Indians in native costume without consent at pageants, and also dances or ceremonies involving mutilation of the body. It may seem arbitrary on our part to interfere with native culture. The position of the Department, however, may be understood, when it is pointed out that Indians will spend a fortnight preparing for the Sun Dance, another fortnight engaging in it, and another fortnight to get over it. Obviously this plays havoc with summer plowing. (quoted in Satzewich and Wotherspoon, 2000: 222)

Colonial liberal conceptualisations of Aboriginal peoples as childlike, irrational, and dependent are antithetical to the ideal liberal rational actor, making them particular targets in neo-liberal campaigns for dependency reduction. Smith (1999) argues that,

Once indigenous peoples had been rounded up and put on reserves the 'indigenous problem' became embedded as a policy discourse which reached out across all aspects of government's attempt to control the natives... The natives were, according to this view, to blame for not accepting the terms of their colonisation. In time social policies – for example, in health and education – were also viewed as remedies for the 'indigenous problem'. By the 1960's this approach had been theorized repeatedly around notions of cultural deprivation or cultural deficit which laid the blame for indigenous poverty and marginalisation even more securely on the people themselves. (91)

The discursive construction of Aboriginal peoples as culturally incapable of 'spontaneous improvement' is alive and well in current neo-liberal political practices, which view First

³⁹ First Nations peoples' childlike status is also a legal categorisation, as 'wards of the state' under the *Indian Act*.

Nations' historically enforced dependency on the state as worrisome at best and, at worst, as a marker of inherently flawed peoples and societies. Aboriginal peoples' lower levels of participation in the economy, high use of social assistance, limited tax exemption and receipt of funding from programs such as the PSSSP are all taken as markers of a 'culture of dependency' that must be replaced by independence and industry.

At the same time, as First Nations status has come to be attached with rights and entitlements different than those of other Canadian citizens, liberal and neo-liberal frameworks increasingly view Indian status as representing an unfair advantage 'enjoyed' by First Nations peoples. Such trends are implied in Lawrence's (2004) reference to, "the amount of work it takes to actually claim treaty rights because of the tremendous racism that is generated when individuals pull out their Indian card for tax exemption" (222). Hiller (2006) explains that,

since settlement of land claims involves financial compensation, and in recent years there has been an ideological shift towards curtailing government expenditures, the economic underpinnings or practical side of the Canadian public's desire to see justice done for the Native people may be more elusive. (214)

Such views are also explicitly linked to liberal governance, as Flanagan (2000) argues that the existence of First Nations' distinct social rights,

is anomalous in a liberal democracy because it contradicts a fundamental aspect of the rule of law – treating people for what they do rather than for who they are. Indians do not do anything to achieve their status except be born, and no one else can do anything to join them in that status because no action can affect one's ancestry. (22)

Alongside, and often intertwined with, (neo) liberal discourses are discourses of liberation and resistance for indigenous peoples in Canada. These discourses frequently rely on themes of self-determination, autonomy, and nationhood.

Colonialism and Discourses of Freedom

Miller and Rose (1990) argue that, in political programmes ranging from neo-liberalism to, "the centre and the left of the political field as well as from radical critics of the present, the language of freedom and autonomy has come to regulate arguments over the legitimate means and ends of political power" (24). Linguistic themes emphasizing freedom, autonomy, and self-determination are strongly evident in political discourses addressing Aboriginal governance and education. While indigenous peoples in what came to be Canada have defended their rights to self-determination and autonomy since the onset of imperialism and colonialism, government consolidation of public services in the 1970's coincided with the rise of strong First Nations' organisations to create a political environment conducive to greater First Nations input over programs and services that impact their communities (Satzewich and Wotherspoon, 2000: 131).

Through wide-ranging political practices and discursive strategies, indigenous resistance movements have highlighted Canada's authoritarian and oppressive relationship with indigenous peoples. The incongruity of these governing practices with liberal ideals of individual freedom has led to a gradual shift away from overtly paternalistic and authoritarian modes of governance within and upon Aboriginal communities, perhaps most notably through self-government initiatives allowing for local control over education and education program administration.

For Aboriginal peoples in Canada, self-government represents freedom from a long history of oppressive colonial governance: "[e]ver since they were forcibly deprived of self-government by colonial powers, Indians have hoped to reclaim it. An offer of self-government is one they can hardly resist" (Boldt and Long, 1988: 47). The counterfoil, or disciplinary tactic, underlying this particular mode of governance-through-freedom is the threat of the loss or further limitation of what hard-won autonomy First Nations have been 'awarded'. This threat is particularly salient in the current neo-liberal fiscal environment, in which the view that, "Aboriginal self-governments will never be held accountable by their own people as long as the money they spend comes from the outside" is increasingly evident (Flanagan, 2000: 197).

Self-government in its current forms is amenable to neo-liberal goals of off-loading federal government programs and services, predicated as it is on the devolution of programs and administration from the federal government. However, the provision of resources for these programs clashes with neo-liberal fiscal ideals, particularly because First Nation individuals have limited and conditional tax-exemption and, according to a neo-liberal colonial framework, such funds are paid with 'taxpayer's dollars.' Therefore, government control of the purse strings upon which First Nations communities rely becomes a central mechanism for disciplinary practices. In order to avoid the disciplinary 'whip', First Nations are compelled to structure their governments in a manner that re-creates liberal ideals of limited and accountable government. Boldt and Long (1988) contend that,

Over the past two decades the federal government has shifted its policy from cultural assimilation to institutional assimilation. Today the primary attention and energies of government are focused on the elimination of administrative, political, legal, and economic arrangements that set Indians apart from other Canadians. (43)⁴⁰

Inasmuch as Aboriginal autonomy and self-determination act as a reward for conforming to liberal societal norms, resistance once more has the potential of reinforcing dominant power

⁴⁰ They further argue institutional assimilation, "virtually destroyed indigenous institutions and replaced them with Euro-Canadian-type structures; and it trained Indians to function within the Canadian system, thereby facilitating full assimilation into Canadian structures. Experience with parallel structures greatly eased the assimilation of Indians into provincial health care, education, and welfare institutions" (44).

mechanisms in Canadian society (Foucault, 1978: 94-96).⁴¹ Some members of Aboriginal communities are directly articulating such concerns:

We are led to believe that we are prepared to exercise self-determination because we are now able to begin to compete with the non-Indian world for funds, resources and rights. But we must ask ourselves, where is the self-determination? What is it that we as selves and communities are determining? We will find that we are basically agreeing to model our lives, values, and experiences along non-Indian lines. (Deloria, 1991; quoted in Marker, 2000: 5)

Liberal reflexivity's allowance for claims of unfreedom facilitates these processes through its tendency to create sharp distinctions between past methods of governance – which are condemned for their abusive nature – and the practices of current governments – which are portrayed as 'knowing better' (Weir, 1996: 384). In Canada, this allows current governments to divorce themselves and the techniques of power they employ from the paternalist colonial practices of the past. This discursive construction does not allow for an examination of how past practices are being re-created today and finding their justification in potent words such as 'nation' 'autonomy,' 'freedom' and 'empowerment'. Furthermore, because the current government is, in this construction, considered fundamentally different from the 'old' government (which was 'actually' responsible for the 'bad behaviour'), current governments can avoid the ascription of responsibility.⁴² Therefore, when calls for compensatory action are made, what actions the government does take can be understood as benevolent charity (as opposed to duty, obligation, or responsibility), since it was not 'responsible' for the original 'unfortunate' wrongdoing.

By extolling the virtues of community-development initiatives in the language of autonomy and empowerment, neo-liberalist discourses are providing justifications for the increasing imposition of disciplinary and actuarial regimes of governance. These discourses function to enhance, maintain, justify and mask, "the quasi-imperial rule of the dominant groups within post-colonial federations. The character of such rule is often thought paradoxically to exhibit a commitment to non-western values" (Dean, 2002: 48). Colonialism, meanwhile, involves the imposition of particular norms and standards of behaviour within indigenous populations. In Canada, as in other colonial societies, the implantation and expansion of patriarchal worldviews and practices has been a central aspect of colonial processes.

⁴¹ This has led scholars to argue that the assimilationist goals outlined in the federal government's 1969 *White Paper* remain the goals of those in power. See Boldt and Long, 1988; Pompana, 1997; Satzewich and Wotherspoon, 2000.

⁴² In popular understanding if not legal interpretation.

Colonialism, Patriarchy, Neo-Liberalism and Education

Liberalist discourses, particularly those pertaining to individual rights, have played a central role in structuring the gendered nature of power relations within Canada. For an extended period of time, women were denied rights afforded men within liberal democracies on the basis that they were incapable of rational thought and dependent by nature. However, liberalist democratic discourses regarding individual rights and freedoms, “provided a language through which women could articulate demands for change without challenging the dominant political principles” (Bryson, 1999: 10). Feminists have critiqued the liberal formulation of a public / private divide, arguing liberal thought does not recognize the ways in which state power rests upon the division between public and private life, or the ways in which this ideological divide negatively impacts women (Ibid: 90).⁴³ Additionally, liberalism is seen as having failed to accord full personhood to women, a situation exacerbated for Aboriginal women in Canada.

The ideological division of people’s lives into public and private spheres persists today, although it was arguably most pronounced during the nineteenth century when it was strongly reinforced by *laissez-faire* capitalist ideology (Boyd, 1997: 8). The divide differentiates between private economic activity (or the market) and governmental activity (or state regulation). Liberal philosophy supports this divide and asserts that markets function best with the least governmental interference, and that any (social or material) inequalities resulting from market activity are, “natural and inevitable” (Ibid: 8). Liberal thought also, “sees the public sphere as one in which the particularities and personal differences of private life can be transcended, and in which all adults are treated as equal citizens under the law, irrespective of their sex, skin colour, physical strength, or economic resources” (Bryson, 1999: 91).

Feminists have argued that the public and private spheres exist in a complementary and interconnected manner rather than a detached and separate one. The methods through which the public market functions tend to assume that workers have a ‘wife’ or body at home who is taking care of domestic upkeep and child-care responsibilities (Boyd, 1997: 13). Hours of public labour rarely lend themselves to raising children: for example, regular (full time) shift work almost never coincides with the school hours. In this way, liberal proclivities eschewing regulation accept, reinforce, and reproduce the patriarchal male norm as ‘natural,’ to the detriment of the ‘other.’ Boyd argues that, “[t]he practical consequences of non-regulation is the consolidation of the *status quo*: the *de facto* support of pre-existing power relations within and distribution of goods

⁴³ O’Conner, Orloff and Shaver (1999) point out that while feminist critiques of the public / private divide have not been applied to liberalism alone, they have been sharpest in this regard (61).

within the 'private' sphere" (Ibid: 3). She further points out that women's issues have generally been relegated to the 'ungovernable' arena of the private sphere:

The ideology of the public/private dichotomy allows government to clean its hands of any responsibility for the state of the 'private' world and *depoliticizes* the disadvantages which inevitably spill over the alleged divide by affecting the position of the 'privately' disadvantaged in the 'public' world. (Ibid: 3)

Since the divide defines the boundaries between the state and the community, the market and the family, and the state and the family, it can have a significant impact upon the everyday lives of women (Ibid: 4). There is a great deal of feminist theory that "views the family as a unit of male dominance, the location of male dominance, and hence the primary site of women's oppression" (Koshan, 1997: 92). Feminist writing often emphasizes the links between women's oppression in the family and their unequal status in the marketplace (Boyd, 1997: 11). Women's unequal share of domestic labour is known to hinder their marketplace participation, as do their childbearing and child-rearing responsibilities. Furthermore, a great deal of the violence against women occurs in the family, and therefore (depending on where the dividing line is drawn) falls within the private sphere and out of state jurisdiction.

Liberal ideals relating to the public / private divide are directly linked to liberal conceptualisations of the ideal citizen. Some scholars argue that, "the liberal citizen is modeled on the behavior of white male elites, measuring all citizens against a standard defined by particular race, gender and class characteristics" (O'Conner et al, 1999: 61). Liberal ideals of citizenship are formulated around notions of masculine independence; conceptions of women as inherently and biologically dependent rendered women's citizenship "defective" (Ibid: 61-62). Indigenous and post-colonial feminist scholars seek to reveal how liberal European conceptualisations of the ideal woman play a central role in the oppression of "othered" women. For liberal colonial understandings rooted in modernity, the, "status and condition of European women represented the pinnacle of civilisation, the result of a 'long and painful evolutionary struggle away from nature'...and a 'victory of self-discipline over instinct'" (Stevenson, 1999: 55). The ideal woman is characterized as selfless, nurturing, domestic, submissive, pure and pious (Ibid: 55). Aboriginal women have been cast as antithetical to this ideal:

Where European women were fragile and weak, Aboriginal women were hard-working and strong; where European women were confined to affairs of the household, Aboriginal women were economically independent and actively involved in the public sphere; where European women were chaste and dependent on men, Aboriginal women had considerable personal autonomy and independence...The cumulative affect of all this was that Aboriginal women were understood and represented in ambiguous and contradictory terms – the 'noble savagess' (Princess) or the 'ignoble savagess' (Squaw Drudge). The former is the archetypal Indian Princess...beautiful, helper and mate to European men, and inclined to civilisation and Christian

conversion. Her antithesis, the Squaw Drudge, is...sexually licentious, ugly, beast of burden, and slave to men. (Ibid: 56-57)

Such discursive constructions of women combined with distinctly different situated knowledges have led to debates within feminism over the possibility of reconciling feminist and post-colonial/anti-racist analysis.

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2000) argue that patriarchy and imperialism, “can be seen to exert analogous forms of domination...[h]ence the experiences of women in patriarchy and those of colonized subjects can be paralleled in a number of respects, and both feminist and post-colonial politics oppose such dominance” (101). Nonetheless, relationships between feminisms and indigenous/anti-colonial scholars are not unproblematic. Mohanty (1988) explains that, as a political and discursive practice, feminisms can be understood as a method of intervening into dominant discourses and are thereby, “inscribed in relations of power – relations which they counter, resist, or even perhaps implicitly support” (53). Western feminisms⁴⁴ have been implicated in the discursive colonisation of Othered women, of a failure to acknowledge their own privilege and of forwarding a homogenous conception of ‘The’ third world woman (Ibid: 53). On the other hand, there has been a concern in post-colonial analysis with the negation of gendered experience through the construction of the singular category of the ‘colonized’ and the need to advance gendered analyses of colonial processes that further account for heterogeneity in terms of social, cultural, and historical contexts (Ashcroft et al, 2000: 104).⁴⁵

In recent years, such debates have led to an increasing recognition that liberal governance does not affect all women in the same way. For example, while women whose families fall into the ‘normal’ category of the private sphere (i.e. White, heterosexual, patriarchal) may feel that the state has done too little to protect them in their private lives, ‘Other’ women may see things differently. Given Canada’s colonial history of state regulation of First Nations families (for example, the vastly disproportionate numbers of First Nation children in Ministerial care) indigenous women may feel that the state has gone much too far in intervening with and regulating their family lives: “[t]he extent of state regulation of the family has often depended on factors such as race, class, and sexual orientation, with those who challenged the normative model of the family being more heavily regulated” (Koshan, 1997: 94, 90).

While liberal discourses have provided tools for women, indigenous women and indigenous peoples’ in their claims-making against the colonial government, liberal reflexivity and the rise of neo-liberalist approaches to individual and social welfare may limit the degree to

⁴⁴ In relation to her critique of ‘Western’ feminism, Mohanty (1988) specifies: “the critiques I offer pertain to third world scholars writing about their own cultures, which employ identical analytical strategies” (52).

⁴⁵ See, for example, Spivak, 1985 (a) and (b); Mohanty, 1984; and Suleri, 1992.

which such discursive strategies can substantively improve their respective positions within contemporary Canadian society. Kingfisher (2002) argues that, “neo-liberal understandings and prescriptions regarding the market, the proper role of the state, and the nature of personhood are not only ethnocentric, but also androcentric” (13). Feminists have pointed out that women are different from men and are thereby made unequal by a system based on assumptions of the unproblematic male norm. Therefore, neo-liberal claims of complete neutrality on the basis of individual characteristics can perpetuate inequality (O’Conner et al, 1999: 53). Breitzkreuz (2005) contends that, under neo-liberalism, “gender equality is equated with gender neutrality, and dependency upon the state is understood as a shortcoming of individuals rather than a structural problem of society” (156).

She further contends that neo-liberal conceptualisations of market citizenship fail to recognize the realities of the labour market for low-income women or the caring work that mothers do (Ibid: 148). The term ‘market citizenship’ refers to a shift away from social citizenship models, “where all citizens are entitled to a base level of benefits, to a model of market citizenship, where citizenship entitlement is contingent upon a person’s attachment to the labour market” (Ibid: 148). This may be exacerbated by neo-liberalism’s opposition to welfare state support based on gendered disadvantage (O’Conner et al, 1999: 54). Since the existence of poverty can be understood to challenge liberal ideals of individual autonomy and self-sufficiency, “...the feminized poor, by their very existence, serve to define the boundaries of ordered society” (Kingfisher, 2002: 15). Neo-liberal individualisation of dependency permits society to, “abdicate responsibility for social issues” while blaming, “impoverished individuals for the failings of the market economy” (Breitzkreuz, 2005: 153).

Neo-liberal frameworks understand education funding as one prong of an overall empowerment-to-work strategy that encourages individual attachment to the labour market. This means the ‘benefits’ of such programs are ambiguous for women, given their disproportionate share of care-giving labour and the impact this has upon their relationship with the labour market. This ambiguity may be especially poignant for Aboriginal women, considering education’s historical role in the assimilation and oppression of First Nations’ societies and Aboriginal women’s increased rates of poverty and exclusion from the labour market. As funding programs increasingly move towards means-tested eligibility criteria, the propensity for ‘gender neutral’ education funding policies to have detrimental or unequal outcomes for women are likewise increased.

Chapter Summary: Theories of Governance

Foucault's concepts of power and governmentality provide a strong basis from which to begin an analysis of current policy regimes relating to First Nations post-secondary education funding. Techniques of sovereign and bio-power are evident in the history of colonial governance of indigenous populations in Canada. The gradual recession of techniques of sovereign power from Aboriginal communities has corresponded with the expansion of various technologies of bio-power within those same communities. Governmentality is exercised through a heterogeneous array of technologies designed to instil self-discipline and the capacity to act in accordance with regulated autonomy. The use and expansion of disciplinary, surveillance, and actuarial technologies of power through programs such as the PSSSP is facilitated and justified through neo-liberal discourses of accountability.

(Neo) liberalist understandings conceptualize education as a mechanism for the creation of individual rational actors. This formulation is particularly problematic within a colonial society where education has been and is utilized as a mechanism to assimilate indigenous peoples into the general structures and processes of a colonial European society. Liberal colonial conceptualisations of indigenous peoples as dependant and childlike provide further imperative to neo-liberal campaigns of dependency reduction that focus on increasing Aboriginal peoples levels of post-secondary education. Discourses advocating autonomy and self-determination for First Nation peoples can be understood to facilitate these processes since colonial governments require indigenous peoples to demonstrate a capacity to act rationally in order to justify their claims of a right to self-determination. In part, such rationality is proven through subscribing to liberal colonial norms of accountable governance and individualized responsibility. Colonial patriarchal conceptualisations of women and society may mean that these processes have particularly detrimental effects for indigenous women, however, linking feminist and post (or anti) colonial analysis is not unproblematic.

Political practices are capable of transforming or controlling a discourse's conditions of emergence, insertion and functioning; they can transform *the mode of existence* of a particular discourse (Foucault, 1991c: 67). This understanding allows for an examination of how colonial, neo-liberal, and patriarchal political practices create and structure the conditions of emergence for the discourse of Aboriginal self-government in Canada. These discursive interactions in turn directly structure the ways in which self-government is actualized. Finally, the conditions of self-government structure power relations as they are exercised through administration of the PSSSP.

METHODOLOGY

My principle methodological approach is critical discourse analysis informed by Foucauldian conceptions of power relations. Fairclough (2002) explains,

in so far as the restructuring and re-scaling of capitalism is knowledge led, it is also discourse led, for knowledges are produced, circulated and consumed as discourses... Moreover, discourses are dialectically materialized... in the 'hardware' and 'software' of organisations, enacted as ways of acting and interacting, and inculcated (through a variety of processes including, e.g. 'skills training') as ways of being, as identities. New ways of acting and interacting include new linguistic (and more broadly semiotic) forms – new genres; and new ways of being are partly semiotic... transformations of organisations (workplaces, universities, local government, etc.) under the pressure of restructuring and re-scaling are partly, and significantly, semiotic and linguistic transformations. (164)

Discourse refers to practices of writing and talking, which can be materially constituted in a multiplicity of forms. The material manifestations of discourse (whether through speech, pictures, written words, symbols, etc.) are defined as texts (Phillips and Hardy, 2002: 4). Discourse analysis involves the systematic study of texts and bodies of texts as well as an examination of their social and historical contexts to understand their role in structuring societal power relations.

Olssen (2004) argues, "Foucault is interested in advancing a polymorphous conception of determination in order to reveal the 'play of dependencies' in the social and historical processes" (18). This allowance for complexity is important here due to the complicated social context in which Aboriginal education and funding policies are embedded. A critical analytic perspective can unmask, "privileges inherent in particular discourses and emphasize[s] its constraining effects," with a focus on, "how grand or 'mega' discourses shape social reality and constrain actors" (Phillips and Hardy, 2002: 21). Critical discourse analysis emerging from critical theory and influenced by Foucauldian analysis is amenable to decolonizing research due to its recognition of socio-historical context and unequal and contested power relations. Mega discourses propagate taken for granted beliefs about reality even as they justify and mask the maintenance or expansion of unequal power relations. Currently, discourses infused with colonial, neo-liberal, and patriarchal understandings guide and influence the creation and negotiation of Aboriginal post-secondary education funding policy.

A main focus of this thesis is the processes involved in the constitution of subject positions and their construction, de-construction, and re-imagining through knowledge production, through objectification, and through human agency in relation to the PSSSP. Phillips and Hardy (2002) argue that critical discourse analysis examining identity production,

suggests how dominating and emerging discourses in organisations and societies provide a repertoire of concepts, which can be used strategically by members of the community to influence the social construction of identities and to support the institutionalisation of practices and patterns of resource distribution. (32)

Examining microprocesses of power can reveal how disciplinary practices incorporate individuals into systems of social regulation and control (Olssen et al, 2004: 24). Exercises of power are not inherently negative and tend to utilize normalizing and regulatory techniques to produce outcomes and facilitate potentials considered positive for the public good (Ibid: 32).

Addressing the Occidental Gaze and Other 'Outside' Ethical Issues

Critical discourse analysis allows for an examination of social dynamics that recognizes the researcher's location *within* societal and individual power relations. Phillips and Hardy (2002) elaborate: "[a]cademic discourse also constitutes a particular reality, and we are continuously challenged to retain a sensitivity to our role in the constitution of categories and frames that produce a reality of a particular sort" (3). Indigenous scholars have challenged academia by revealing how research and researchers are implicated in perpetuating colonial world-views and sublimating alternative knowledges and ways of being.⁴⁶ Smith (1999) argues that the privileging of Western forms of knowledge and research has led to the suppression and invalidation of indigenous ways of knowing. She makes a powerful argument for the creation of research methodologies that re-privilege indigenous knowledges;

methodological debates are ones concerned with the broader politics and strategic goals of indigenous research. It is at this level that researchers have to clarify and justify their intentions. Ethics become the means and procedures through which the central problems of the research are addressed. (Ibid: 143)

I have tried to incorporate research strategies that ensure the relevancy of this project to indigenous women, their communities and nations. Nonetheless, as a sama7 woman, my positionality has bearing on the research, its design, and implications. Smith (1999) explains, "research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions" (5).

Despite questions as to insider/outsider research models being a problematic extension of binary thinking, as a sama7 woman with a university degree at stake I am clearly in a position to perpetuate the occidental gaze. My use and inscription of meaning upon data sources collected from indigenous peoples can be seen as a colonizing exercise, raising legitimate questions as to

⁴⁶ See Schnarch, 2004; Ormiston, 2002; Pidgeon and Hardy-Cox, 2002; Pompana, 1997; G. Smith, 1997; Smith, 1999.

my right to conduct this research. In response to such criticisms, I can only say that I think it would be far worse to accept the race-based privileges I enjoy unquestioned than to try and alter the power dynamics that foster it. As for what I can *do* to address these issues, I have tried to develop an ethical, reflexive and principled methodology. Within a colonial context, being actively reflexive must be a central component of an ethical research framework. In being reflexive, I mean I have continually reviewed my methods, approach and conclusions to try and determine whether they are based in or propagate colonial worldviews and assumptions. I have tried to engage in critical self-scrutiny of my own actions and role in the research process (Mason, 2002: 8). I have also tried to incorporate culturally appropriate research methodologies.

Linda Smith (1999) outlines four research models developed by Graham Smith through which non-indigenous researchers can undertake culturally appropriate research. While I might argue that I have used a power-sharing model, whereby I sought meaningful input and assistance from community members to support research development, such power-sharing has been limited and I believe my work is more reflective of the 'empowering outcomes model'. With this model, researchers address questions relevant to the specific indigenous peoples the research involves and the research itself has beneficial outcomes (Ibid: 177). It is my intention that this knowledge-production exercise should be relevant and beneficial to Aboriginal practices of liberation and decolonisation. If knowledge is central to power relations, then knowledge has the capacity to be empowering. While the knowledge produced here could be utilized in unintended and negative ways, the creation of a research framework designed to account for some of those colonizing or negative potentials is intended to mitigate any potential detrimental effects of my research.

Addressing research ethics according to local context (rather than colonial/indigenous relations broadly) is also central to the creation of an ethical methodology focused on trying to preclude harmful effects of research (including avoiding the creation of colonizing knowledges). This is problematic because my research addresses issues that affect indigenous peoples from an array of cultures within BC and there is limited academic work addressing the implementation of decolonizing research methodologies in Canada. Despite widespread academic interest in developing an ethical framework for research with Aboriginal peoples, no particular model seems to have gained widespread acceptance (Kenny, 2004: 34).⁴⁷ The work that is available on conducting ethical research with Aboriginal peoples consistently focuses on themes of control, collaboration, respect and relevance. Kenny (2004) explains:

⁴⁷ The First Nations Information Governance Committee (2004) presented "Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession" (OCAP), which provides strong guidance in certain areas, although it is silent of others (such as gendered analysis). See also McNaughton and Rock, 2003; O'Reily-Scanlon et al, 2004; Ormiston, 2002; Pidgeon and Hardy-Cox, 2002.

The shift in the cultural discourse, particularly when it comes to ethics, guarantees that stories belong to the people who tell them. This implies a co-operative partnership between Aboriginal participants who are telling their stories and researchers who are listening. This principle reflects Aboriginal values and a strong message that post-colonial research practice has arrived. This protocol of mutual exchange is very far from the attitude of the past, which was based entirely on the “purchase” of stories by researchers, as if a person’s life story could ever belong to someone else. The very idea that stories can be bought is antithetical to Aboriginal world view and values.

(36)

Utilizing collaborative research strategies, maintaining participants’ control over their voices and stories, ensuring my research is relevant to indigenous peoples and communities, and granting respect to and attempting to re-privilege indigenous understandings and world-views are therefore central aspects of what I define as an ethical and principled research framework. Since acting ethically is also about preventing or reducing potentially harmful impacts of the research, creating an ethical methodology has also meant addressing issues of confidentiality, appropriation of voice, and situated knowledge.

In acknowledging my place within the power dynamics of this research project, I also need to account for potential personal bias. This includes being reflective of my positionality as a same7 woman and of my own personal history. Having lifelong connections to two BC First Nations communities has clearly influenced my analysis and interpretations. I understand these connections as having been an invaluable asset in trying to make sense of the processes I am studying. Without them, I would likely be completely unaware that First Nation students and governments are negotiating these matrices of power relations. My personal connections have also influenced the research process in a more concrete way by influencing who participated in the consultation process (described below). However, my central data sources come from a wide range of First Nations Bands, organisations, and government departments, mitigating the degree to which my analysis relies on information generated through my personal connections.

Research Overview: Data Sources and Rationale

My research design is intended to address four key questions: How is power exercised through the PSSSP under contemporary liberalist and neo-liberalist forms of governance? How are Aboriginal women constituted by techniques of power administered through the PSSSP? How are specific techniques of power and governance – such as discipline, actuarialism, and surveillance – applied through the PSSSP? How are these techniques of power constituted, justified, and hidden in dominant discursive practices and techniques of governance?

My primary data source for answering these questions is the LOPs that guide program administration at the Band level. LOPs are subject to INAC approval and must be able to pass a

compliance review process (First Nations Education Steering Committee, 2005b). They may increase eligibility requirements and/or decrease maximum per-student funding allowances set by the *National Program Guidelines*, but are not permitted to lower the eligibility requirements or to increase the maximum funding permitted per student. Such policies must meet certain criteria set by INAC. Where no LOP exists, *National Program Guidelines* apply.⁴⁸ LOPs are important units of analysis because they seek to create practices of governmentality for application upon Aboriginal students by emergent forms of First Nations governments. Through the discourses and policy measures they employ, they are indicative of First Nations' adoption, co-option, and resistance to the mega-discourses of neo-liberalism, colonialism and patriarchy. The degree to which federal government policies and funding measures structure the processes of LOP creation can be understood as a case study in colonial neo-liberal governmentality applied in Canada upon First Nations communities and peoples.

Information from the LOPs is supplemented by 12 key policy-related documents collected since they have a direct relationship to the production of LOPs and/or they shed light on the processes of creation, negotiation, and distribution of those texts. Some documents were found early and others were sought out as a result of further research or the consultation process.⁴⁹ Documents are from academic journals, First Nations organisations, government and online databases and cover topics such as national program guidelines, First Nations under third-party management, funding mechanisms, and outlines of LOPs (see Appendix A).

In textually based policy analysis, it is important to maintain a critical awareness that there can be vast differences between policies as they exist 'on paper' and the reality of their implementation. I understand the policies as significant in and of themselves because they are a particular point of intersection of specific power relations and can reveal potential evolutions in current trends of governmentality as applied on, within, and by BC First Nations. However, if the policies are not being implemented at all, then an analysis of them would have a difficult – if not impossible – task in trying to make a claim of transferable understandings regarding wider social processes. A number of research strategies have been adopted to address this issue. One strategy is to incorporate key policy-related documents addressing issues of LOP implementation. Another strategy is to conduct a limited number of key informant interviews.

Interview participants were selected primarily to provide insight on how LOPs operate in practice. Interviews provide a kind of validity check to applications of governmentality apparent

⁴⁸ As specified in the *National Program Guidelines*, although one document states that First Nations are required to develop Local Operating Policies (First Nations Education Steering Committee, 2005 b: 56).

⁴⁹ In one case, documents were sought after a request for information from INAC resulted in a flood of bureaucratic stonewalls and 'accidentally' lost calls (at one point, 17 times in one day).

in the LOPs and key policy-related documents. They indicate whether disciplinary techniques embedded in current policies are being applied and provide insight into the use, co-option, and/or resistance to the dominant discursive themes I am examining. A further rationale for incorporating interviews lay in the need to highlight individual agency and resistance. Relying strictly on textual data may imply that processes of governmentality are exercised upon the completely inert individual as object. Although questions of resistance and agency are not a central focus of this research, ignoring them completely risks creating a totalizing view of power and domination. These problems are more immediate when contextualized within colonialism, which has often relied heavily on the myths (or discursive constructions) of the *inevitable* and *inescapable* nature of colonial processes, as well as the supposed passivity of the colonized Other.

Finally, throughout the research process I engaged in informal consultations with Aboriginal women and individuals associated with Aboriginal post-secondary education. Many individuals who engaged in these discussions came from my informal networks, through which I sought introductions to people interested and willing to participate. A number of consultations occurred with people I had no informal connections with, but whom I sought out because of their knowledge of or association with Aboriginal post-secondary education. Some consultations were one-time affairs while others continued throughout the research process. Conversations were intended to guide and ground the research and to facilitate its relevancy to Aboriginal women and their communities (Smith, 1999). It is hoped that through continued, reflexive engagement, the formation of something close to a 'decolonizing methodology' has been achieved. Practically, consultations have given me a 'heads up' to policy and power dynamics not immediately evident in such a complex and overlapping policy environment.

While consultations have played a role in my decisions as to data sources and interpretation of policy-related materials, individuals engaged in this process are not research participants. I consider them experts whose situated knowledge gives them a unique and centrally significant perspective upon the issues I am addressing. Knowledge provided by these individuals is 'off the record' unless they agreed to a formal interview, in which case only information gathered from the interview has been included in the research findings. While I attempted to engage in reciprocal practices⁵⁰ with these individuals, I cannot help but feel that the knowledge and insight I have gained from the consultations outweighs anything I may have offered in return. I can only hope this project in some way repays the vibrant individuals kind enough to share their knowledge and time with me. I am in their debt.

⁵⁰ Such practices included buying coffee or lunch, having dinner in my home, sharing my laundry machine, drafting work-related letters, and exchanging knowledge and information about the PSSSP.

Data Collection and Analysis

Local Operating Policies

BC is home to 198 of 615 federally recognized First Nations. I have obtained fifteen LOPs representing twenty-eight First Nations in BC,⁵¹ or roughly 14.1 percent of the population (First Nations within BC) from which my sample is drawn. Currently, there is no available data on the proportion of BC First Nations and/or Tribal Councils utilizing LOPs and how many rely only on the *National Program Guidelines*. Anecdotal evidence suggests there is a continuum in the scope, existence and public availability of LOPs. LOPs were generally accompanied by various additional documents, which have been incorporated into the sample as a whole.⁵² The policies have been assigned reference numbers of 1-15 in order to make it clear when one policy has been used more than others. References are located at the end of each sentence in brackets. For example: One policy states the PSSSP, “is designed to assist registered Band members to acquire university and professional qualifications” (LOP: 7).

First Nations whose policies have been included are from nine of twenty-nine larger indigenous cultural and linguistic groups in BC.⁵³ Geographically, no LOPs came from the Rockies region of BC, two (13 percent) came from the Cariboo Chilcotin, one (7 percent) came from the Coast and Mountains, five (33 percent) came from the Thompson Okanagan, four (27 percent) came from Northern BC and three (20 percent) came from the Islands (see appendix B).⁵⁴ The Registered Indian population of BC is 120,044 and the total population of all Bands from which I located LOPs is 24,710, or roughly 20.6 percent of the BC total (see table 2.1).⁵⁵ The fact that 59.9 percent of members registered to the First Nations included in the research sample live off reserve (versus the 51 percent BC average) is notable, since living off reserve *may* negatively impact access to funding.

I located fewer policies for larger First Nations than for smaller and/or more remote communities, which is reflective of the larger proportion of demographically smaller First

⁵¹ Some policies represent Tribal Councils. I have not elaborated on the number or size of Tribal Councils whose LOPs are in the sample in an effort to prevent their identification.

⁵² Such forms include, but are not limited to, student funding contracts, application forms, information release forms, student budgets, academic planners, appeals forms, and progress reports.

⁵³ BC indigenous peoples can be distinguished into twenty-nine cultural and linguistic groups, differentiated from First Nations. See the BC Ministry of Education website: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/map.htm>.

⁵⁴ Northern BC is home to about 17 percent of First Nations in BC; the Cariboo Chilcotin to about 15 percent; the Islands to about 25 percent; the Coast and Mountains to about 26 percent; the Thompson Okanagan to about 14 percent; and the Rockies to about 2 percent.

⁵⁵ This rises to over 23 percent if data from key policy-related documents is included. Information in these documents relates to details on First Nations' LOP's, including some primary but mainly secondary data.

Nations within BC (see Table 1).⁵⁶ About 60 percent of First Nations in BC have populations below 500, while 12 percent have populations between 1000 and 2000 and fewer than 2 percent have populations in excess of 3000 people. The smaller populations and higher proportion of off-reserve members of the First Nations whose LOPs are in my sample may reflect a higher outflow of individuals from smaller communities. Additionally, under current per-capita funding allocation mechanisms, smaller First Nations are more likely to experience funding shortages, which in turn is likely to necessitate the creation of a LOP.

Table 1: Regional Population⁵⁷ Breakdown of First Nations in BC

First Nation Population	1) Northern BC	2) Cariboo Chilcotin	3) Islands	4) Coast and Mountains	5) Thompson Okanagan	6) Rockies	Total
Under 500	10	19	30	40	16	3	118
500 – 1000	8	9	15	6	10	1	49
1000 – 2000	12	2	4	4	2		24
2000 – 3000	3		1				4
3000 +	1		1	1			3
Total	34	30	51	51	28	4	198

Designing and implementing LOP collection methods required addressing significant ethical issues. While copies of policies were offered to me by Aboriginal students and former students, I was concerned that the use of such policies might differentially expose individual First Nations to risk of public, political, and/or economic criticism or sanction, as well as potentially breaching ethics guidelines. According to these guidelines, any LOPs I located within the ‘public record’ are fine for me to use and reference. National guidelines stipulate that LOPs must be publicly accessible. However, the fact that the colonial government has mandated that indigenous governments must make these documents publicly available increases, rather than eliminates, ethical concerns regarding their use in a research project. Furthermore, policy and policy-related documents reveal ambiguity over the nature of the ‘public’ to whom the policies must be available (i.e. whether they must be available to those First Nation and Inuit individuals to whom the policies apply or to the Canadian public generally). Denis (1997) points out problems with,

the very notion of *the* public record, a notion that is predicated on the existence of a ‘general public’: there is no such thing... individuals who find themselves in one or another publicly

⁵⁶ No demographic breakdown of the First Nations whose LOPs I have obtained has been provided in order to help obscure the identities of those First Nations.

⁵⁷ Population information according to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 2006.

available record may not have wanted to be there...Should I pay attention to this, and simply follow the rule that if a piece of information is somehow 'public,' I can use it? (37)

This issue is key because by 'naming' a First Nation in association with specific policy measures, I expose them to risk of political and public criticism and sanction. At the same time, I was aware that gaining permission from a wide range of First Nations for the use of their LOP would be extremely difficult. Indigenous peoples in Canada (as elsewhere) have been heavily researched, often to the detriment of their communities and interests, and therefore may be deeply reluctant to participate in 'another' research project (Smith, 1999: 1; Guno, 1996: 54-59). First Nation peoples tend to be highly cognizant of disciplinary and surveillance measures exercised against their communities, and of derogatory applications of accountability discourses, and are likely to be reluctant to expose their communities and governments to further scrutiny and possible sanction. However, I simply do not have the financial or temporal resources to travel to and/or collaborate with each of the 198 First Nations in BC in order to fully address such legitimate concerns. Therefore, it is necessary to address my rationale and methods for LOP collection and analysis.

Foucault (1978) asserts that, "power is tolerable only on the condition it mask a substantial part of itself" (86). Thus, just as the colonial government has a vested interest in masking the precise techniques of power it employs in the constitution of First Nations governments and peoples, so too can First Nations governments have a vested interest in masking the techniques of power they utilize in the constitution of themselves and their citizens. This is not to imply that the motives and agendas of the colonial and First Nations governments are the same, or that individuals and groups within those governments do not strive for 'open and accountable' governance. Rather, it is to point out that currently, the authoritative exercise of political power in relevant political and governance regimes generally entails a degree of ignorance on the part of the governed as to *how*, precisely, such governance is effected.

The ability to mitigate scrutiny of governing practices is a privilege enjoyed more by governments with a wider range of political authority (i.e. the Canadian colonial government). Governments who have thus far achieved a lesser degree of political authority are subjected to an increased, even pervasive, degree of scrutiny and – as with the colonial government – are likely to engage in knowledge-control exercises in order to mitigate surveillance. However, such understandable defensive disclosure measures can mask the effects of current techniques of governance and thereby reinforce unequal power relations. More specifically, First Nations are left to shoulder the blame for all governance shortcomings even when those processes are constructed through the actions of the colonial government. The reality that First Nation students

and governments face in their attempts to access and allocate education funding is masked as dominant colonial understandings regarding 'free education for Indians' and the incompetence of First Nations' governments are reinforced.

These reasons provided my rationale for proceeding with the collection of LOPs. In keeping with ethics guidelines, the LOPs I obtained were 'publicly accessible,' in the sense that they were available to the wider Canadian public. However, in light of the uninvited nature of my scrutiny of governing practices, I have tried to take all measures possible to conceal the identities of the First Nations and Tribal Councils whose policies are utilized in this research. Therefore, no First Nation is 'named' in association with their policy and I am purposefully omitting an elaboration of my LOP collection methods. This decision has not been taken lightly, since it precludes a discussion of method-specific ethical issues and the potential implications of data collection methods on the research sample. This clearly limits the auditability of my research. O'Leary (2004) explains that auditability, "points to full explication of methods so that others can trace the research process...Readers should not be left in the dark in relation to any aspect of the research process" (63). Nonetheless, I feel that the ethical considerations of making such a disclosure outweigh potential benefits to this project.

Despite my best efforts to obscure the identities of those Nations and Tribal Councils whose LOPs have been included in my sample, it is conceivable that someone *could* utilize the information in this project to identify and critique specific First Nations' or Tribal Councils' LOPs. Furthermore, the identification of a specific Nation or Council may be unnecessary for the knowledge created here to be used to critique self-government initiatives or the funding of Aboriginal post-secondary education. However, given that the LOPs I have collected would be likewise available to someone determined to locate them, it is my hope that the arguments made here might preclude, mitigate, or persuade any such detrimental analyses.

In regards to data analysis, throughout the thesis, I maintain a consistent concern with Foucault's conceptualisations of governmentality. According to Garland (1997),

Foucault asks a series of questions: How do practices of governing others link up with the practices by which individuals govern themselves? How have governing authorities understood their powers and the problems they address? What rationalities of governing are implicit in their practices? How did they come to produce a knowledge of the fields in which they sought to programme? Through what technologies and...specific assemblages of actors, knowledges, practices and techniques are programmes and rationalities translated into real effects? (176)

Such questions relate directly to the microprocesses of power relations analyzed here. Since discourse is a mechanism for the expression of particular political rationalities, LOPs have been examined for discursive themes related to the political rationalities of neo-liberalism, colonialism and patriarchy. In particular, the major discursive themes of autonomy, accountability, and

responsibility have been identified and related to social and historical contexts to reveal how power relations are structured in the processes of post-secondary education funding allocation.

LOPS are intended to guide and constrain social interactions related to resource allocation. Therefore, they cannot be meaningful without addressing the social and historical dynamics in which they are enmeshed. In regards to policy dynamics, Olssen (2004) argues,

the discursive formations they contain constitute a highly politicized form of public rhetoric...the meaning of discourses embedded in these texts await decoding so as to reveal the real relations that this specifically cultural form of official discourse helps to construct, reconstruct and conceal.

(2)

Accordingly, examining both the discursive themes within the texts and their relationship to wider social structures has been my method of analysis for the LOPs and key policy-related documents. Particular attention is paid to how seemingly neutral policy pronouncements interact with the realities Aboriginal women may negotiate in their everyday lives as well as 'silences' within the policy field (i.e. where an absence of formal policy may leave space for negotiation with and resistance to dominant power mechanisms).

Interviews

Four in-depth semi-structured interviews were carried out with Aboriginal women, each of whom had a unique relationship with the PSSSP.⁵⁸ Women interviewed came from diverse Aboriginal heritages from various Nations and Tribal Councils in BC. When interviews were tape recorded, verbal permission from the participants was obtained prior to doing so. After the interviews, participants were given transcriptions and invited to add, omit, or alter the transcripts as they saw fit. This was done with the understanding that, just as policies undergo review and alterations prior to implementation, participants should have the opportunity to 'polish' their own discursive meaning inscriptions and maintain control over their stories and voices. While I believe such collaborative processes are of central importance, in practice it required a further dedication of time on the part of the participants and the changes made were minor or non-existent. Tracking down these very busy women in order to gain approval proved, at times, a difficult task and I generally felt that I was inconveniencing individuals who had already been very generous with their time and knowledge. In one case, I was unable to re-contact a participant and the interview was subsequently omitted from the research.⁵⁹ While participants were invited to choose a pseudonym for me to use in reference to them as I wrote up the research results, all

⁵⁸ All interview participants were Aboriginal women and all were or had been post-secondary students.

⁵⁹ The interview may have been lost anyway due to questions over the participants' categorisation vis-à-vis SFU's REB policy regarding employees.

declined to do so. Therefore, I have attached a letter designation to each interview in order to differentiate between them.

While I initially planned to interview Education Coordinators, I turned to individuals who work with Aboriginal students in post-secondary institutions in order to mitigate issues of access⁶⁰ and of differentially subjecting individual Bands to criticism over their post-secondary education funding policies.⁶¹ The two women I interviewed in this capacity work with Aboriginal students covered by a wide range of LOPs. This is key, since current structures of finance allotment mean that Band population impacts funding levels; therefore, the experiences of people from smaller Bands attempting to access funding may be very different than from members of larger Bands. These two participants are familiar with issues that Aboriginal students negotiate regarding education funding since they at times help students access or maintain post-secondary education funding. Their interviews have been given the letter designations (A) and (B).

Simon Fraser University's Research Ethics Policy R20.01, section 1.7, allows for certain people to be interviewed without Research Ethics Board (REB) Approval or the use of informed consent.⁶² While these two participants did not require the SFU REB approval I received prior to conducting the interviews, both women were given a copy of the informed consent form, both provided me with a signed copy, and both were given the chance to ask me any questions they had about my research prior to the interview. They, along with the other participants, approved their interview transcripts for use in the research. In essence, they were treated as though they were subject to the REB review.

Two more interviews were conducted with students formerly funded through the PSSSP; these interviews have been designated (C) and (D). Both women received and signed informed consent forms. These participants were located through the consultations and were asked to

⁶⁰ I believed access to Education Coordinators would be constrained for reasons similar to LOP accessibility issues.

⁶¹ As I would require permission from an Education Coordinator's Chief and Council to interview them, the likelihood that an individual participant or First Nation could be identified would have been increased.

⁶² "Research on public policy issues, public institutions, and other matters that in a free and democratic society can properly be considered as part of the public domain is not required to undergo ethics review, even when interviews with individuals occupying positions connected to such matters are involved. Public Policy is defined as follows: a. Research protocols that require contact with human participants as part of the study and whose regular occupational duties involve communicating with the public on behalf of their organizations (such as Public Relations Officers, Official Spokespersons, Diplomatic Officials, Freedom of Information Officers, Archivists, etc., or the Chief Executive of an Organization) do not require Ethics Review, to the degree that answering questions posed by the public is within the ordinary duties of the participant and are within the acceptable limits of disclosure defined by the participant's employers; b. Research protocols in which inquiries are referred to other members of an organization by a public-relations officer, official spokesperson, etc., of the organization, do not require ethics review, to the degree that their inquiries are in keeping with the initial protocol and the substance of the interview are attributable" (<http://www.sfu.ca/policies/research/r20-01.htm>).

participate as they had had problematic experiences obtaining funding in ways specifically applicable to gendered analysis.⁶³ They are from different First Nations and their interviews are not intended to be representative of Aboriginal women's experiences with PSSSP funding. They provide insight into how LOPs may be implemented and the potential outcomes of LOPs as applied techniques of governmentality that interact with Aboriginal women's lived experiences. All interviews have also been analyzed to shed light on how individuals resist the categorisations of selfhood inherent in the mega-discourses of colonialism, neo-liberalism, and patriarchy.

Summing Up the Research Process

I have employed reflexive strategies intended to ensure a decolonizing methodology that seeks to reveal the unequal power relations underlying processes of Aboriginal post-secondary education funding allotment. Utilizing critical discourse analysis has allowed me to analyze and contextualize my primary data source, the LOPs, within their wider socio-historical contexts while examining how the mega-discourses of colonialism, patriarchy and neo-liberalism infuse, structure, and constrain these processes of resource distribution. Key policy-related documents are included to augment this analysis. A consultation process informed my data collection and is intended to ensure the relevance of the research to Aboriginal women and their communities. Finally, a limited number of key informant interviews were included to demonstrate policy implementation, its potential effects and the potential for individual agency and resistance.

Developing and implementing a critically reflexive research methodology has been a challenging and rewarding experience. I hope that the knowledge produced through this exercise is beneficial to understanding the current power relations in which indigenous students are enmeshed, thereby repaying in some small measure all of the individuals who have contributed to the creation of this thesis. Meeting and sharing understandings with individuals through the interviews and consultation process has been a highlight of this experience and I am deeply grateful to all those who have contributed.

⁶³ These issues include childcare, single parenthood, and sexualized violence.

SITUATING SUBJECTS: POSITIONING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, FIRST NATIONS AND INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

Foucault argues, “it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together... a multiplicity of discursive elements... can come into play in various strategies. It is this distribution that we must reconstruct” (Foucault, 1978: 100). Reconstructing the discursive distributions involved in the negotiation and constitution of Aboriginal post-secondary education funding in Canada requires a recognition that power and resistance do not exist in “a position of exteriority” from each other (Ibid: 95). This allows for an examination of how resistance-based discourses supporting increasing the accessibility of higher education for Aboriginal students increasingly use neo-liberal economic arguments to justify programs such as the PSSSP. These discursive interactions are reflective of Foucault’s (1978) argument that,

[t]here is not, on one side, a discourse of power, and opposite it, another discourse that runs counter to it. Discourses are tactical elements or blocks operating in their field of force relations; there can exist different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy. (101-102)

The policy documents I have examined situate the federal government, First Nations, and Aboriginal students in different and sometimes contradictory ways. *National Program Guidelines* created by the federal government to guide PSSSP administration negotiate the discursive space between the appearance of oppressive paternalistic governance practices and the need to engender neo-liberal standards of ‘good’ (i.e. limited and accountable) governance. LOPs created by First Nations often do not directly acknowledge the federal government; when they do, it tends to be in a distinctly negative light. These discursive constructions are one mechanism for First Nations to address the fact that they are liable to critical attention for program shortcomings under current policy regimes. *National Program Guidelines* and LOPs situate Aboriginal students according to their citizenship status and ‘right’ to post-secondary education. A trend towards individualized responsibility – and towards market-based citizenship – is strongly evident in these processes.

Situating the Colonial Government

Neo-liberalism provides a framework of discursive strategies and techniques of governance through which the federal government can negate widespread condemnation for oppressive and paternalistic practices against First Nations peoples while simultaneously avoiding

being branded as promoting or permitting wasteful, corrupt and inefficient spending. The federal government negotiates the discursive space between colonial depictions of First Nations peoples as lazy, irrational, immoral and dependent and discourses advocating indigenous liberation from a colonial state that is, at best, paternalistic and, at worst, genocidal. Strongly differing conceptualisations of the federal government's and Aboriginal peoples' positionalities are evident in these discursive interactions. Neu (2000) contends that,

[b]oth the popular press and extremist political parties have been largely unsympathetic to the struggles of indigenous peoples, decrying the "special deal" being received by indigenous peoples, the apparent amount of charity being provided to indigenous peoples, and the apparent corruption amongst indigenous leaders. (269)

Meanwhile, Flanagan (2000) argues that, "proponents of the new aboriginal orthodoxy" have had, "success in influencing both public opinion and the decisions of the federal government. They are among the most talented players in the contemporary game of politics" (10).

Accountability talk backed by accounting practices has provided the federal government with an effective mechanism for negotiating these issues. The use of discourses of accountability and accounting practices can, in this context, be understood as actuarial in the sense that they are intended to negate both the risk of political sanction and the perceived threats to Canadian society posed by Aboriginal peoples and liberation movements. Accounting is one of a series of techniques of governance, "directed toward the population of indigenous peoples" which has sought, "to inculcate westernized patterns of behavior" (Neu and Graham, 2004: 13). Neu (2000) argues, "[t]racing the linkages between accounting techniques and the pattern of government activities directed toward indigenous peoples, makes visible the roles played by accounting in the (re)production of colonialism" (269). Through social policy, the imposition of accountability regimes can be a key mechanism for the expansion of techniques of governmentality. With regard to the PSSSP, accountability issues came into sharp political focus in 2004, when the Auditor General conducted an audit that found, "significant weaknesses concerning the Post-Secondary Student Support Program's management and accountability framework" (1).

Accountability talk is particularly effective in relation to the PSSSP because it allows governing authorities to retreat behind the presumed objectivity of numbers. It also distances decisions made at the political and policy level from the individuals 'on the ground' whose lives can be significantly affected by such decisions: "[d]ehumanisation starts at the point when, thanks to the distantisation, the objects at which the bureaucratic operation is aimed at can, and are, reduced to a set of quantitative measures" (Bauman, 1989; quoted in Neu, 2000: 4). In the context of neo-liberal discourses that emphasize entrepreneurialism and decry a 'culture of dependency',

accounting technologies have the added benefit of disciplining First Nations governments and individuals into acting in accordance with neo-liberal notions of fiscal rationality.

Through such processes, the federal government can be seen to promote First Nations' well-being through means amenable to neo-liberal ideologies; ideologies which currently view education as playing a key role in dependency reduction. Neo-liberal frameworks link the need for dependency reduction among Aboriginal peoples to the 'problem' of First Nations populations: "[g]overnment should help the reserves to run as honestly and efficiently as possible, but should not flood them with even more money, which would encourage further unsustainable growth in the numbers of residents" (Flanagan, 2000: 111). Satzewich and Wotherspoon (2000) argue the, "growing attentiveness to the problems associated with native education is deeply rooted in the search by business and political leaders for readily available supplies of appropriately qualified workers amidst the restructuring of Canada's labour force" (112). Accordingly, political support for funding First Nations post-secondary education is likely to remain – so long as it conforms to the market-based orientations of neo-liberal philosophy, and in doing so adequately 'schools' First Nations governments, communities, and students; 'making them up'⁶⁴ into accountable, rational, and productive members of Canadian society.

As important, if not more so, as the effects of accountability discourses and accounting techniques upon First Nations is the way such talk situates federal political parties and governing practices in accordance with (neo) liberal ideals. Neo-liberal governments strive to both foster and engender the ideals inherent in an 'enterprise culture'. According to Peters (2001), an enterprise culture is everything a culture of dependency is not: it is rational, it emphasizes self-reliance, and it is active. Accounting technologies establish governmental rationality through the assumed objectivity of numbers. Self-reliance can be promoted through a range of policies, and neo-liberal governments are shown to be 'active' as they implement measures to combat inefficiency and government waste.

The federal Government's (2003) *Post-Secondary Education: National Program Guidelines* presents a framework for policy implementation for the PSSSP, the University College Entrance Program (UCEP) and Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP).⁶⁵ The purpose of the PSSSP is defined as being, "to improve the employability of First Nations and Inuit by providing eligible students with access to education and skill development opportunities at the post-secondary level" (INAC, 2003: 4-5). In accordance with human capital approaches,

⁶⁴ This concept is borrowed from Ian Hacking, from the 1986 article "Making up people."

⁶⁵ UCEP supports to First Nation and Inuit students enrolled in university and college entrance preparation programs. The ISSP supports the development and delivery of college and university level courses for First Nation and Inuit students.

emphasis is placed on the economic rewards of individual and societal investment in education (Brym, 2001: 325). Policy discourse in the *National Program Guidelines* constructs the colonial government as active and responsible in its attempts to utilize program funding to foster, “greater participation of First Nation and Inuit students in post-secondary studies, higher First Nation and Inuit graduation rates from post-secondary programs, and higher employment rates for First Nation people and Inuit” (INAC, 2003: 5). In contrast, First Nations, Tribal Councils, and administering organisations are referred to as ‘recipients’ and thereby constructed as passively receiving funding.

A provision within the *National Program Guidelines* allowing for the development of LOPs is one mechanism through which the colonial government appears to avoid paternalistic practices and allow for enhanced First Nations self-governance at the local level. LOPs, however, are required to outline selection priority and contingency funding criteria. *National Program Guidelines* mandate all eligible expenditures⁶⁶ and LOPs are required to incorporate an appeals process amenable to the formula laid out by the *National Program Guidelines*.⁶⁷ By specifying that, “students may not appeal to INAC”, the federal government avoids blatantly paternalistic practices and simultaneously transfers students’ potential criticisms of the program onto their First Nation (INAC, 2003: 23). In the interviews, one former student who experienced difficulty re-accessing funding explained,

I phoned Indian and Northern Affairs...He said there was no procedures that the government gives bands beyond that it has to be for post-secondary education. Oh, and the amount is determined by population, by band population. He said it only had to be on post-secondary education, Indian and Northern Affairs had no control over band funding...who was funded. (C)

While the statement that the government gives ‘no procedures’ to Bands conflicts with the existence of the (1989) *PSSSP Terms and Conditions* and the (2003) *National Program Guidelines*, such discursive strategies allow the government to appear supportive of autonomous and self-governing First Nations, to avoid ‘blame’ for program shortcomings and to maintain a degree of control over the structure and functioning of Band-level administrative processes.

Local Operating Policies and the Federal Government

Generally speaking, the federal government is discursively situated much differently in the LOPs than in the *National Program Guidelines*. Some First Nations use LOPs as a forum for

⁶⁶ Such expenses include, “tuition and other compulsory fees, books, and supplies required by the funded student; travel and living allowances for funded students and their dependents...funding may also be used to provide tutorial, guidance and counselling services for eligible students” (INAC, 2003: 16).

⁶⁷ This formula includes making a formal statement and public distribution of procedures, an appeals board, provision of costs for the student and board members to attend the hearing, and specific time frames.

distributing knowledge regarding federal restrictions on the PSSSP, thereby partially reflecting critical attention for program shortcomings back onto the federal government.⁶⁸ In some cases, the federal government's authority over the program's budget is highlighted. Such discursive strategies draw attention to the fact that it is the federal government, rather than an individual First Nation, that is limiting the number of students able to attend post-secondary education through the program: "The post-secondary budget is what determines the amount of students funded each year. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada regulates the budget" (LOP: 4). Another LOP explains that, "[a]lthough we make every effort to assist all students with sponsorship, funding is extremely limited. Students are selected based on the quality of applications, deadlines and priority criteria..." (LOP: 12). Two LOPs reference INAC's 1994/1995 funding amendments in a distinctly negative light (LOPs: 9, 10). These per-capita funding allocation amendments untied PSSSP funding from the actual number of eligible students, as the BC regional budget distributes funds on the basis of Band membership as a proportion of the total Band population of BC (Matthew, 2001: 58).⁶⁹ The new funding mechanisms save on INAC expenditures while putting some Bands in a much better position to fund their students than others.

LOPs that address the shift in funding allocation mechanisms draw attention to the implications for individual students and their particular First Nation: "As a result of these unilateral funding amendments, a number of students did not receive any INAC funding and were forced to finance the remainder of their year on their own" (LOP: 10). The terms 'unilateral' and 'forced' emphasize the federal government's refusal to acknowledge the Nation's autonomous capabilities and directly link it to negative consequences for Band members. The federal government is discursively constructed as undermining First Nations' attempts at exercising autonomy; one LOP points out that, as a result of the per-capita formula,

because of our Band size we have limited Post Secondary Education funds. Therefore, the number of students that the band can sponsor will be limited by the *Department of Indian and Northern Affairs funding allocation*. As a Band, we strive to support as many Band members as possible and to develop a policy that is fair and equitable." (LOP: 14, emphasis added)

Contrary to the *National Program Guidelines*' depiction of First Nations as passive recipients of benefits, here the Nation is constructed as actively striving for 'good' governance, as per liberal ideals of fairness and equity, *in spite of* federal government actions that constrain the Band's ability to realize 'fair and equitable' program administration. Similarly, an interview participant observed, "INAC sets the tone for the money. Because ultimately it comes out of their pockets. So they set the tone for the money [...] Sometimes they are setting that tone to the Bands and it,

⁶⁸ For example, one LOP includes *National Program Guidelines* with their LOP and application forms (5).

⁶⁹ Bands can use up to 7 percent of funds for program administration (Matthew, 2001: 58).

its huge on power and control...” (B). Here, it is the colonial government’s funding restrictions that necessitate the temperance of equal access with merit-based funding determinations.

Interestingly, a number of the LOPs do not outline policy aspects defined as mandatory LOP criteria by the federal government in the *National Program Guidelines*. Three LOPs do not provide information on appeals processes, two did not outline selection priority criteria, and eight did not address contingency funding. Withholding knowledge about the potential availability of contingency funding may be one way for First Nations to limit their fiscal expenditures. The difference may also be reflective of the shifting nature of PSSSP policies. The (2003) *National Program Guidelines* supplement the *1989 PSSSP Terms and Conditions*. In 2004, the Auditor General’s Report criticized the current policy framework and INAC undertook an evaluation of the program. Currently, INAC is engaging in a consultation process to determine a new framework for PSSSP delivery, with implementation scheduled for 2008. Therefore, First Nations may be waiting for the outcome of current policy negotiations prior to altering their current LOPs.

On the other hand, such ‘silences’ may also reflect generalized confusion over administrative jurisdiction. The Auditor General’s 2004 report on the PSSSP found,

considerable uncertainty in the Department in the interpretation of the nature and extent of First Nations’ flexibility in managing the program. Some officials told us that the Department only has a funding role and that First Nations have complete freedom in determining who is eligible to receive funding and the amount of the funding. Others believe that there are minimum program requirements that First Nations must meet, such as ensuring that post-secondary institutions or programs of study are eligible under the program and that funding to each student is within the limits set in the program. (19)

The incongruity between the *National Program Guidelines* and LOPs should not be ignored since such silences may provide First Nations a degree of freedom to adapt program administration.

Situating the Band

First Nations are uniquely situated to receive critical attention for PSSSP administration. The thrust of INAC’s 1976 mega-policy was participation with First Nations and the devolution of resources and program administration to the Band level (Frideres, 1998: 224-225). Frideres (1998) notes that devolution served the marked function of transferring critical attention from INAC and the federal government onto Band governments and administrators. At the same time, the benefits that many non-First Nations groups and organisations (such as educational institutions) receive from such programs are generally overlooked or ignored (223-226). With the transfer of fiscal responsibility and program administration, the federal government is no longer understood as being ‘at fault’ for program shortcomings at the Band level – whether those shortcomings are a result of fiscal mismanagement, a lack of resources, improperly trained staff,

the desperately inadequate housing and infrastructural situation found on many reserves, and/or past or present government policies. Fleras and Elliott (1992) point out that, “from the federal perspective, there is much to be gained by displacing public displeasure and transferring aboriginal dissatisfaction from Ottawa to the provinces and local communities” (49).

Ironically, First Nations are increasingly subject to such criticisms although they may have little or no control over program administration. Despite devolutionary processes, many First Nations do not have control over federal transfer payments to their Band. This is reflected in the *National Program Guidelines*, which explain that its policies apply to all ‘administering organisations’, or First Nations and Tribal Councils who administer the program as well as to public or private organisations, “engaged by or on behalf of Indian Bands or Inuit communities to administer PSE programs (e.g. private firms or organizations retained as co-managers or third-party managers)” (6). The terminology ‘by or on behalf of’ is important because First Nations placed under third party management by INAC have no say in which organisation administers the program ‘on their behalf’. Close to 10 percent of First Nations in Canada are in co-management or Third Party management as a result of serious or chronic fiscal imbalances:

Under co-management, a third party, acceptable to both the First Nation and Indian and Northern Affairs, must approve all expenditures along with the First Nation. Third party management occurs in more serious cases and involves a third party contractor, hired by Indian and Northern Affairs, approving all expenditures. (Graham, 2000:1)

As third party managers are not agents of the federal government, the government is not ‘responsible’ for their actions and First Nations remain in the spotlight for receipt of critical attention. This disempowers First Nations while masking the federal government’s role and the degree to which paternalistic colonial governance has been re-created through policy measures.

Regarding federal government fiscal and accountability measures for First Nations, Lawrence (2004) argues, “Native resistance to these ongoing attacks is seriously weakened by the various ways in which we are divided *by* the Indian Act and other legislation” (244, original emphasis). This is to say nothing of the division and fragmentation that the politics of post-secondary education funding allotment create at the individual Band level.⁷⁰ In this light, it is hard not to get the sense that First Nations are being ‘set up for failure’ by government handling of certain self-government initiatives. Such ‘failures’ in turn reinforce (negative)⁷¹ discursive

⁷⁰ Divisions may also be created by higher-level negotiations, such as between the federal government and the Assembly of First Nations. Some argue that, as Canadian governments and First Nations organisations become interdependent, First Nations organisations become less supportive of radicalized action for fear of losing ground in various negotiating processes and/or the hope of receiving special consideration for their ‘diplomatic’ handling of the situation (Satzewich and Wotherspoon, 2000: 236-240).

⁷¹ As opposed to ‘positive’ discursive construction of Aboriginal peoples, including and as evolving from notions of the ‘noble savage’.

constructions of indigenous peoples, their lives, their communities, and their capabilities – a disciplinary act of the clearest kind.

In *Indian Control of Indian Education*, the National Indian Brotherhood (1972) clearly outlines the need for administrative training to ensure the success of self-governing endeavours:

Training must be made available to those reserves desiring local control of education. This training must include every aspect of educational administration. It is important that Bands moving towards local control have the opportunity to prepare themselves for the move...continuing guidance during the operational phase is equally important and necessary. (7)

Although INAC adopted the National Indian Brotherhood's proposals in 1973, training for Band administrative staff never materialized (Comeau and Santin, 1990; British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education, 2006). This has led Comeau and Santin (1990) to argue, “[d]evolution thus created a cadre of untrained band officials who found themselves unable to do any more than carry out government orders on reserve. Budget deficits and service delays became routine” (55). The role that the federal government has played in these processes is overlooked and ignored as neo-liberal discourses increasingly call for ‘open and accountable’ governance in reserve communities. *National Program Guidelines* emphasize the centrality of accountability, stipulating that funding recipients are obliged to complete a review of, “accountability and management processes and systems...based on appropriate accountability and management control frameworks” (9).

Accounting practices accompanying the spread of neo-liberal discourses have resulted in an, “increase in policing and surveillance by the state through the development of new information systems to reduce benefit fraud” (Peters, 2001:61). The federal government requires heavy surveillance of First Nations through a variety of bureaucratic mechanisms. In addressing PSSSP accountability issues, INAC (2005) explains,

Accountability has assumed a much broader significance than mere fiscal accountability. Post-secondary administering organizations are seen as entering into a social contract with government and civil society and must demonstrate that they are fulfilling their mandate. (39)

Heavy reporting burdens require a significant amount of time and energy at the Band level: “In 2002... we estimated that four federal organisations required at least 168 reports from First Nations communities – many with fewer than 500 residents. We found that many of these reports were unnecessary and, moreover, were not used by the federal government” (Auditor General, 2006: 163). The disciplinary nature of accountability frameworks has not gone unnoticed; in a study by Verjee (2003), an Aboriginal faculty member at a BC university observed,

I think too often the need to report measurements is a need that is a request coming from those who have the power to distribute resources. Those resources, from our perspective, were originally taken from aboriginal people, so it's an odd request to hear the government and

corporate entities that want to distribute a small portion of what was taken; to hear them say, “Well, if you give us the right narrative and the right quantitative data, then we will give you some economic support, some resources and this here’s how we expect the data to be reported. (26)

First Nations can also be subjected to a range of criticisms from within their communities for PSSSP administration and the application of exclusionary measures. Examining the effects of a failed self-government educational initiative, Dyck (1991) recounts,

[i]n the scheme of government finances, the overall expenditures undertaken on the reserve during these years were quite unremarkable. The more serious blows were to the pride, confidence, and unity of the band. Every project mounted on a reserve or on behalf of Indians is subjected to intense scrutiny by local non-Indians. Just as too great a degree of success in such projects could be expected to encounter criticism from those who contend that Indians are being given too much by government, so too is any indication of failure seized upon by some non-Indians as evidence of the supposed inherent deficiencies of Indians as a people. (135)

Such issues may be further complicated due to the fact that some First Nation individuals may see Chief and Council structures of governance as impositions of colonial rule rather than representative bodies accountable to their membership (Napoleon, 2001: 11). Therefore, First Nations governments are called upon to justify their authority and governing strategies to the colonial government and their own constituents. Neo-liberal discursive tactics and accounting techniques provide potent mechanisms for accomplishing these goals.

Sections of the LOPs outlining ‘Roles and Responsibilities’ provide strong examples of First Nations’ co-option of neo-liberal discursive tactics. The roles vary but tend to emphasize themes such as accountability, fiscal management, strategic planning, and equitable program delivery. Under the title “**ACCOUNTABILITY**,” one LOP explains that the Education Committee’s⁷² role is to,

Develop policy and guidelines for the programs [;] Monitor and maintain an effective financial plan [;] Monitor and review the Education Department administrative staff and programs on an on-going basis to ensure that quality and effective services prevail [; t]o make policy and guideline amendments as required to ensure that the Education Administrator can maintain effective control over the daily business operations of administering programs and services.

(LOP: 8, bolding and underlining original)

Such discursive strategies construct the Band as active, rational, and engaging in ‘good governance’ – constructions that dovetail neatly with neo-liberal ideals and challenge liberal colonial understandings of Aboriginal peoples as passive, irrational, and incapable of autonomy.

In a colonial neo-liberal environment that emphasizes increasing educational levels as a part of an overall campaign for ‘dependency reduction’, First Nations peoples and communities become particular targets for ‘empowerment’ programs – especially since they are frequently noted to have high levels of reliance on government transfer payments (Flanagan, 2000: 174-189;

⁷² Several First Nations in the sample had allocated the day-to-day administration of the Post-Secondary Education funds to an Education Committee or Department.

INAC, 2005; Hiller, 2006: 214; British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education, 2006).

Discourses emphasizing the economic and labour market payoffs to educational ‘investment’ are clearly evident in the LOPs. Implicitly or explicitly, many LOPs make the argument that, through education, “individuals will become economically self-sufficient and realize their individual potentials for contribution to the [...] Band, to other First Nations, and to society at large” (LOP: 2).

It is important to recognize, however, that within the LOPs, alongside the cooption of neo-liberal themes are resistance-based discourses emphasizing the importance of culture, spirituality, and language preservation. Individual empowerment through education is constructed as a mechanism for facilitating individual and cultural revitalisation. The goals of administrators are to, “implement a strong educational program, one which is essential in assisting the success of our...membership” and to, “promote empowerment of our people through educational endeavors” (8). In a version of their vision statement presumably derived from shared policy resources, two LOPs explain that administrators, “seek to provide quality education that will enable our students to: a) Attain balance in their intellectual and spiritual beings; b) Understand and appreciate our culture, and; c) Acquire the knowledge, attitude and skills to be lifelong learners” (LOPs: 7, 9).⁷³

As a means to escape the quasi-imperial rule of the Canadian liberal government, First Nations are compelled to, “develop the institutional framework and human capital on which a well-developed market economy depends” (Dean 2002: 48). In LOPs, First Nations utilize a variety of discursive strategies to establish their governmental authority and rationality. This includes situating the Nation as a pastoral authority in relation to the student, acting as a ‘sponsor’ to students’ educational endeavours. Miller and Rose (1990) argue that,

It is in the name of our governed existence as individual living beings, in the name of our health, of the development of our capabilities, of our membership of particular communities, of our ethnicity, of our gender, of our forms of insertion into social and economic life, of our age, of our environment, of particular risks we may face and so on, that we both revile and invoke the power of the state. (145)

As subjects of governance and resistance, Aboriginal students in Canada are at a particular nexus of power relations. Ultimately, the legitimacy of both the colonial and First Nations governments is tested by their ability to administer these distinctly categorized populations.

⁷³ A template of this vision statement is provided in the (2005) *First Nations Post-Secondary Handbook for the BC Region* (First Nations Education Steering Committee). The reference to lifelong learners is emblematic of tensions between neo-liberal and decolonizing discourses. Lifelong learning is associated with human capital approaches; individuals are expected to engage in the, “systematic acquisition, renewal, upgrading, and completion of knowledge skills and attitudes, as become necessary in response to the constantly changing conditions of modern life” (Tight, 1998: 253). Emphasis is on the need to adapt in an increasingly competitive world. Tight (1998) contends that with lifelong learning there is “a strong sense of expectation, even compulsion, with emphasis given to vocational forms of study and participation” (251).

Situating the Student

In a political environment constituted by an increasing movement towards neo-liberal economics and right-wing policy endeavours, calls for governments to enforce obligations on those receiving social services (such as welfare and education benefits) are growing;⁷⁴ “[i]n practice, this means governing substantial minorities...in a way that emphasizes increased surveillance, detailed administration and sanction” (Dean, 2002: 55). Similar developments are evident in programs and services (often administered at the Band level) available in indigenous communities. Transforming Aboriginal individuals into educated and competitive labour-force participants is constructed as being good for themselves, their communities, and the federal bottom line. Interview participants also saw education as a key mechanism for improving material and economic realities for Aboriginal peoples; one participant remarked: “I think its really important that Aboriginal students, Aboriginal people, get out and get some form of education to become part of the larger economy and also to be able to support the smaller economies at home” (B). Even on a provincial level, initiatives are underway to facilitate Aboriginal peoples’ participation in post-secondary education (British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education, 2006).⁷⁵

In these processes, new programs and new methods of administering individuals are created in specific ways, ways that include the increasing use of techniques of surveillance, discipline, and control. An underlying objective in current policies is to facilitate a ‘responsibilising of the self’ by First Nation students, “in this novel form of governance, responsibilised individuals are called upon to apply certain management, economic, and actuarial techniques to themselves as subjects” (Peters, 2001: 60). Burchell (1991) argues that liberal rationalities of governance peg, “the rationality of government, of the exercise of political power, to the freedom and interested rationality of the governed themselves” (139). Aboriginal students attempting to access PSSSP funding find themselves enmeshed in a complex web of ‘educational’ techniques of governance.

Treaty Right/Jurisdiction Issues

In accessing the PSSSP, the categorisation you fall into (or out of) determines your eligibility for funding; according to national guidelines, Inuit and status Indians are eligible for

⁷⁴ Dean (2002) notes Mead 1997; Giddens 1998, Latham 1998; and Lund, 1999 as examples of this trend.

⁷⁵ This is remarkable in that provinces and Aboriginal organisations have long argued that “Indians and Lands Reserved for Indians” should remain the sole jurisdiction of the federal government (Frideres, 1998; Indian Chiefs of Alberta, 1980; Excell, 1988; National Indian Brotherhood, 1972).

funding, Métis and non-status Indians are not. Indian status is a key mechanism in the claims making of Aboriginal governments and individuals. Discursive practices that construct and reinforce inherent differences between status Indians and the 'rest' of Canadian society – or the rest of Aboriginal communities, for that matter – are, “functionally linked to claims for special treatment” (Cairns, 2000: 97). Regarding post-secondary education, First Nations organisations have argued that free access to education is a treaty right, basing their arguments on provisions included in the numbered treaties and oral traditions that maintain treaty negotiations promised First Nations who signed the treaties far more than was contained in written versions (Stonechild, 2006: 7-29). Legal arguments based on provisions in the *Indian Act* and moral arguments related to the impacts of colonialism extend the argument for free provision of post-secondary education to all status Indian peoples (National Indian Brotherhood: 5; Stonechild: 2006).⁷⁶ According to the AFN (2000), “education at all levels is an inherent Aboriginal and treaty right that is recognized in the Canadian Constitution [and] the federal government has a fiduciary responsibility to uphold the rights of all First Nations” (quoted in INAC, 2005: 34).

The federal government, meanwhile, maintains that, “education is a privilege and not a right” (Lanceley, 1999: 4). In its (2005) evaluation of the PSSSP, INAC re-positions this argument in terms of neo-liberal understandings of citizenship and education:

Generally speaking, western governments have moved to the concept of a cost-shared approach in which the recipients of advanced education, who tend to reap lifelong benefits by way of an enhanced economic status, are expected to bear a significant portion of the costs of their own post-secondary education...PSSSP has in the past decade evolved from a program intended to provide complete support for eligible students into a cost-shared program, although this policy has never been explicitly declared. (iv-v)

While the report acknowledges that the shift, “occurred without the benefit of debate and fiscal, rather than policy, considerations were responsible for the change,” it attempts to legitimise the move by implying that First Nations are supportive, or at least understanding of it (Ibid: 35). The study included interviews with Aboriginal students, First Nations post-secondary institutions, First Nations administering organisations and INAC managers. While acknowledging that First Nations assert that education is a treaty right, the report nonetheless concludes that, “a general consensus has emerged to the effect that the state can no longer be the sole provider of PSE and exclusive reliance on public funding is no longer tenable” (Ibid: 34).

Most of the LOPs do not explicitly address these debates. When they are addressed, it is usually in the preamble or vision statement/goals sections and they generally support the understanding of education as a right for all First Nations peoples. However, as First Nations

⁷⁶ Rather than only those covered under the numbered treaties.

exercise governance through decidedly colonial structures while negotiating funding shortages, there are apparent attempts to 'shape' members' self-knowledge regarding their rights to education. In part, this may occur because, through the LOPs, the Band is engaging exclusionary mechanisms that may deny some individuals their apparent 'right'. One First Nation negotiates this tension through an incorporation of individualistic and rights-based discourses:

It is the belief of the [First Nation] that members have the right to receive aid in pursuing post-secondary and vocational education. However, it is also believed that for an individual to be successful in acquiring an education, individuals must take responsibility for setting and achieving their educational goals. (LOP: 8)

Lanceley (1999) explains that tensions between Aboriginal rights and First Nations policies result from "the contradiction in how devolution of post-secondary education resulted in First Nations administering a program that does not recognize treaty right to education" (4). As a result, "First Nations struggle to honor the perceived right to education while being forced to create a policy that limits the number of students who may enter universities" (Ibid, 24). Devolutionary processes thus directly undermine First Nations' claims to free post-secondary education as a right. This erosion is dramatically demonstrated in one LOP, which requires students who attempt to access PSSSP funding to sign the following:

I...fully understand my obligation to myself in pursuing my career goal(s), and to the community...in providing funding for my education, *which is a privilege, not a right*, and I will conduct myself accordingly to not bring disrespect upon myself or my community. (LOP: 13, emphasis added)

The use of colonial government discourses regarding education as a privilege appears to have been adopted in order to facilitate this First Nation's governance of their own community.

Returning to the issue of Indian status, many First Nations and First Nations peoples have accepted the government's status categorisation because of its utilitarian value. It has subsequently become a potent symbol of resistance and survival (Indian Chiefs of Alberta, 1970: 5). This simultaneously destructive and productive process has created people in very real ways. The act of naming Indians in Canada is bound up in the exercise and deployment of power within and by Aboriginal communities. The techniques of power deployed have depended primarily upon their social and historical context. Nonetheless, the exercise of power through the mechanism of status has remained a constant since the legal creation of the term – despite that the degree to which it was effectively utilized was always subject to negotiation and resistance.

Citizenship, Self-Determination, and Women

Citizenship control is often viewed as a fundamental aspect of self-determination; therefore, emergent structures of First Nations governance assert their right to determine and

impose citizenship criteria (Green, 2001: 727). The category of status Indian, meanwhile, was deliberately created as a means and a mechanism for the governance of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Through the *Indian Act*, the Canadian state employed its own criteria to define who was – and who was not – Indian through the ascription of the binary legal identities of ‘status’ and ‘non-status’ (Napoleon, 2001: 2). Lawrence (2004) argues that this tactic of individualisation sidestepped the issue of sovereignty, “by replacing ‘the nation’ with ‘the Indian’” (229). As the colonial governments’ authority to define Indigenous identity was reinforced through legal, social, and political channels, First Nations’ understandings and criteria for citizenship were overwritten.⁷⁷ Reclamation of the right to self-definition and self-governance – in part through control over First Nations citizenship – is seen as an inherent part of resistance to the colonial state. Since the practical administration of rights and entitlements has been devolved to the Band level, First Nations citizenship is often conflated with Band membership. Band membership, meanwhile, was uncoupled from Indian status through Bill C-31, which allowed First Nations to determine their own membership codes – codes that may or may not be different from the government’s status criteria. As a result, in certain instances some status Indian women have been denied Band membership, and the concomitant rights and entitlements that go along with it.⁷⁸

Over time, the rights and entitlements status entails have come to produce real differences between individuals (and communities) with status and those without (Fiske, 1993: 22; Lawrence, 2004).⁷⁹ Bill C-31 has consistently been framed as a women’s issue, primarily since it was mainly Aboriginal women who lost status prior to the Bill’s implementation. Bill C-31 shifted concerns over loss of status from women onto their children and grandchildren by introducing stacking provisions whereby a child who has two status Indian parents has status under Section C (1) of the *Indian Act* and a child who has one status Indian parent has status under Section C (2) of the *Indian Act*. If a C (1) person has a child with a non-status person, their child has C (2) Indian status.⁸⁰ If a C (2) person has a child with a non-status person, their child does not receive Indian status. Thus, Indian status as determined by the federal government purports to be based on a blood-quantum system that in reality amounts to defining and constructing individuals on the

⁷⁷ Napoleon (2001) points out that limiting the numbers of ‘legitimate’ Indians facilitated the colonial project involving the appropriation and restriction of Indigenous land, resources, and later, benefits (8-9).

⁷⁸ Such processes are characterized by heterogeneity: “Different rights and entitlements are attached to whether or not persons have legal status, whether or not a person is eligible and accepted for band membership, whether band members are living on or off reserve, and whether or not they are members of First Nations that signed treaties or claims agreements with the British Crown or Canadian government” (Schissel and Wotherspoon, 2003: 8).

⁷⁹ Lawrence (2004) argues that currently, Aboriginal understandings about status are attached to conceptions of gender and appearance.

⁸⁰ If a C (1) person has a child with a C (2) person, their child is categorized as C (1).

basis of the government's own pre-set bureaucratic categorisations and their legal interpretations.⁸¹ Blood-quantum measures are applied over historically inconsistently applied status categorisations, meaning current categorisations cannot be assumed to reflect the 'reality' of an individuals' indigenous biological heritage.⁸² Napoleon (2001) argues that these categorisations amount to "extinction by number." While Bands can set their own membership codes, by far the majority rely on some form of blood-quantum citizenship determination (Napoleon, 2001: 6).

In these processes, First Nation's citizenship is moving towards what can be termed – to borrow a phrase from Foucault – a new 'symbolics of blood' (Foucault, 1978: 148).⁸³ Blood takes its place in an "order of signs" and becomes all the more precious because it is "too readily mixed, capable of being quickly corrupted" (Ibid: 147). The connections drawn between Indian status, Band membership and indigenous nationhood in Canada may be particularly dangerous for women "since they are seen as bearers of the imagined pure nation" (Sunseri, 2000: 142). Bill C-31 also directly regulates the sexuality of First Nation women when it comes to paternity. If, for any reason, a mother does not wish to list the father of her child on the birth certificate, Bill C-31 requires that Indian Affairs assume the father is non-status, meaning the child either receives no status or the 'lesser' status afforded by Section 6(2) (Gabriel et al, 2005: 16). Either way, a woman's choice of partner (or choice to keep that partner's identity to herself) is regulated and constrained by provisions which have the potential to limit the ability of her children to access the rights and entitlements associated with Indian status – including access to PSSSP funding.

The complex web of power relations structured by these legal categorisations of peoples is reflected in the LOPs. All the LOPs in my sample administered by First Nations (rather than Tribal Councils) stipulated that, to be eligible, individuals must be Band members in addition to having Indian status.⁸⁴ Two policies require students to identify whether they re-gained status through Bill C-31 (LOPs: 4; 1). A 2004 report on Aboriginal post-secondary education found,

Bill C-31 Indians...have problems obtaining Student Support Program funding. Few of them have strong ties to bands, so while they are theoretically entitled to band funding, they are seldom

⁸¹ I would like to thank Dr. Boelscher Ignace for pointing out this difference to me.

⁸² Individual status categorisations have been applied in varied ways historically and subject to individual and local contexts. In addition to 'enfranchisement,' many individuals were convinced to give up Indian status for certain rights (such as the right to vote or drink alcohol) and others were not present at the time of registration for their Band and area and therefore never received status in the first place (Smith, 2000).

⁸³ For Foucault (1978), western societies were regulated by a symbolics of blood before shifting towards an analytics of sex. Blood is associated with "law, death, transgression, the symbolic and sovereignty... sexuality was on the side of the norm, knowledge, life, meaning, the disciplines, and regulations (148).

⁸⁴ One such policy also states that new Band members must wait 2 years to receive funding unless the Band from which they transferred agrees to provide the funds for sponsorship under the PSSSP (LOP: 15).

selected. Those who are selected often have an uneasy relationship to their benefactors.
(R.A. Malatest et al, 2004: 21)

When asked about such trends, one interview participant replied:

It has been a problem. Especially Aboriginal people that come away from their reserve and have, they don't have the connections of home, reserve life like people on the reserve. They're seen almost like outsiders. And that's where it's really key to say to that student 'You see these people?...They're your people. You go and you say hello' [...] And usually, usually, Chiefs and Councils are receptive to their membership and realize that the outside membership are members as well. (B)

The utilisation of categories constructed and still intimately constrained by the state entails an acceptance of fundamental limitations on 'ways of being' for Aboriginal peoples, societies, and nations – even as it opens new possibilities for resistance to broader colonial society.

Napoleon (2001) argues that restrictive federal funding of programs may discourage First Nations' from engaging in inclusive membership models and create support for restrictive criteria for Band membership (23-24). The situation of non-status Indians is emblematic of this tension. In her (unsuccessful) application for Band membership in an Algonquin Nation, indigenous scholar Lynn Gehl recounts, "I expected to be denied, as I am aware that funds provided to bands are based on the number of registered Indians" (Gehl, 2004: 68). Gehl's connection to the community itself, her own self-identity, and the perspectives of the community as to her suitability for membership are all overwritten or ignored on the basis of the federal government's fiscal allocation process. The exclusionary tactics used in the dissemination of post-secondary funding may be part of an important resistance that seeks to re-create and rebuild Aboriginal communities,⁸⁵ but it can also be understood to be reinforcing, or at least leaving unchallenged, the federal government's authority to define who is and is not "Indian."

Responsibility/Accountability

LOPs present a clear example of 'governance through freedom': individuals may choose to agree to the policy provisions and their concomitant responsibilities and (potentially) receive education funding, or they may choose not to receive funding. Miller and Rose (1998) argue that the self-regulating capacities of subjects, "have become vital resources and allies for the 'government' of economic life, especially insofar as they have come to be understood and regulated in terms of the notions of autonomy and self-fulfilment" (2). Examining social security and income support reforms in Australia, Dean (1995) explains,

⁸⁵ Through the application of (limited) autonomy through self-government and an attempt to build a more well-educated populace.

by entering into agreements and undertaking obligations imposed by the activity test, the client is to be made into the subject of his or her own destiny, responsible for undertaking the type of activity determining that destiny. In so far as active subjects are obliged to agree to these practices of self-formation, it is difficult to distinguish them from the neo-liberal figure of the 'enterprising self.'
(576)

Each of the LOPs outline an array of student responsibilities; they also outline surveillance mechanisms intended to discern the 'truth' of an individuals' fulfilment of those responsibilities. All but three of the LOPs incorporate a Student Funding Agreement (or contract) that students must sign for their application to be considered: "With this funding come responsibilities and requirements that you, the student must agree to before funding can be approved" (LOP: 11).⁸⁶

Fiscal responsibilities are a core component of students' responsibilities as outlined in the LOPs, reflecting both First Nations' restricted budgets and a belief that the, "proper structuring of financial transactions [will] encourage changed habits and patterns of behavior" (Neu and Graham, 2004: 3). It is emphasized that, "budgeting is the student's responsibility" (LOP: 8). LOPs tend to emphasize the 'assistance' nature of the education funds and financial responsibility in Student Funding Contracts: "**I do realize that any sponsorship received is primarily for financial assistance only; I will manage the education funds to the best of my ability throughout sponsorship**" (LOP: 8, bolding original); "I will not abuse the training allowance I receive on a monthly basis" (LOP: 1). One policy specifies, "[s]ponsored Band members are responsible and accountable to themselves and the [...] Band for doing everything possible to ensure that their education needs are being met in a positive and effective manner" (LOP: 3). Collectively, the policies explicitly outline 17 responsibilities for Chief and Councils, 30 responsibilities for administrators and boards, and 125 responsibilities for students.⁸⁷ Students' failure to meet their responsibilities is subject to an array of disciplinary measures, measures chiefly predicated on the withdrawal of some or all funding. Surveillance, "thus becomes a decisive economic operator both as an internal part of the production machinery and as a specific mechanism in the disciplinary power" (Foucault, 1977: 175). A network of surveillance measures is in place in the LOPs to render students' (ir)responsible behaviour 'visible' to policy administrators.

The complete range of these surveillance techniques do not come into full play until the student has received funding and begins attending a post-secondary institution. However, in the

⁸⁶ LOPs 15, 14, and 2 did not include student contracts. No application forms accompanied LOP 2.

⁸⁷ These responsibilities were either explicitly outlined in a 'Responsibilities' section of the policies, or were derived from the funding contract. In no cases were responsibilities from the funding agreement and a 'Responsibilities' section counted twice, and these numbers refer only to explicitly specified responsibilities (i.e. I did not count generalized responsibilities outlined through the bodies of the LOPs).

application they are generally required to submit one or more Information Release Form(s).

Signing the release form is a condition of approval, as some LOPs take pains to point out:

The waiver portion of the application form is necessary to permit staff access to student records. It is important for funding purposes and on occasion the Education Manager has a need to verify that all students are actually attending classes. If this document is not signed, your application will not be approved. NO EXCEPTIONS. (LOP: 10)

The information requested by the release forms varies, but can include:

- “...transcripts, schedules and any other pertinent information related [to] my education” (LOP: 10).
- “...all aspects of my education. Please provide the [Band] with all requested material and information” (LOP: 4).
- “...student information regarding my academic status from the above named institution. This includes inquiries regarding attendance, fees, academic planning and any other pertinent student information” (LOP: 12).
- “...information regarding my attendance, effort, progress, and marks” (LOP: 6).
- “...my course load, costs, and grades” (LOP: 1).
- “...any academic information [...] from [the] program instructor” (LOP: 8).
- “...the Admissions/Registrar’s and the First Nations Office...to release information about courses, grades, tuition, student fees and anything other” (LOP: 8).

In some cases, students are required to submit release forms pertaining to institutions and government bodies other than their post-secondary institution. LOPs may require students to sign an authorisation form allowing the release of information from the Ministry of Social Services and Economic Security, Human Resources and Development Canada, BC Family Benefits, the Workers Compensation Board and/or “any other place of business” (LOP: 8).

Some LOPs not only require students to sign an information release form; they are further required to acknowledge that such surveillance techniques are for their benefit: “[t]he obtained information will be kept confidential and will be used to make sound decisions for my benefit” (LOP: 10). This constructs the Band as a pastoral figure, but it also places responsibility on the Band regarding its decisions in terms of benefit to the student. Similarly, two LOPs require the Education Coordinator to sign an, “Oath of Confidentiality” in which they “swear that all information received about the above student will be kept in the strictest confidence” (LOPs: 6, 9). Governance is thereby facilitated through discursively constructing a relationship with students whereby, “their problems or goals are intrinsically linked...their interests are consonant...each can solve their difficulties or achieve their ends by joining forces or working along the same lines” (Miller and Rose, 1990: 10). Miller and Rose (1990) contend that these alliance formations are often fundamental to the actualisation of ‘government at a distance’.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Miller and Rose (1990) discuss ‘government at a distance’ in terms of “the complex mechanisms through which it becomes possible to link calculations at one place with action at another, not through the direct imposition of a form of conduct by force, but through a delicate affiliation of a loose assemblage of agents and agencies into a functioning network” (9-10).

Such approaches can also be conceptualized as trust-building mechanisms intended to facilitate a sense of community and shared vision.

Chapter Summary: Accountability, Citizenship, and Nationhood

Foucault tells us that discourse, as a mechanism of power, is productive. An examination of discursive strategies relating to the PSSSP reveals continual negotiation in the production and constitution of subject positions, most notably in the positionalities of the colonial government, First Nations, and First Nation individuals who attempt to access PSSSP funding. Currently, a central theme in funding and policy implementation at all levels is the *need for accountability* (Parliament of Canada 2004; INAC 2003; Report of the Auditor General 2004). As First Nations groups struggle to gain recognition of their autonomous capabilities (recognition which seems to be a pre-requisite to their self-determination), establishing their rationality becomes imperative. In order to combat the notion that First Nations peoples are incapable of rationality, they must conform their actions to those of the ideal liberal citizen, and indeed, the ideal liberal community. First Nations communities combat not only discrimination and social disenfranchisement in their attempts to re-build their communities; they must also combat prevalent social understandings of Aboriginal communities as significant burdens to the rest of society (Ruhl 1999: 110).

As federal restrictions on funding have limited Band's abilities to provide funding to all those eligible, First Nations' use of exclusionary measures to guide program administration can be seen to undermine claims to education as a treaty right. Categories through which individuals are defined directly impact our 'degrees of possibility' in respect to ways of being. Throughout the colonial process, Aboriginal citizenship has been de-constructed, re-constituted, and re-created in ways that serve to limit and, arguably and more recently, to enhance their access to realms of possibility. Constructions of citizenship relate directly to the PSSSP not only in the way that they regulate access, but also in the administrative processes that entail the employment of disciplinary tactics designed to 'create' students in the image of the ideal productive liberal/neo-liberal citizen. This includes using a market-based approach to regulating and disciplining human behaviour that forces individuals to calculate their actions on a cost/benefit analysis. Upon application to the program, individuals cease to be self-referential and are enmeshed in a web of authority relations replete with all the techniques of surveillance and discipline that this implies (Dean, 2002: 50-51). The application itself entails providing an array of information through which the subject comes, "into view as an object of knowledge and a target of intervention, as an individual to be assessed, evaluated and differentiated from others, to be governed in terms of individual differences" (Miller and Rose, 1990: 20).

RATIONAL CHOICE AND RITUALS OF TRUTH: DETERMINING STUDENT FUNDING ALLOCATION

Where LOPs are in place, students must meet a series of qualifications before receiving funding and may be placed in competition with each other for funding. ‘Rituals of truth’ relying on knowledges about students help to, “make and justify administrative decisions about individuals that are inescapably determinist in their consequences” (Rose, 1998: 181). The application process is an exercise in knowledge generation that allows decision-making to take place and regulates the flow of individuals through the system. Actuarial practices taking place at the Band level facilitate these processes. Fundamentally, these decisions involve deciding which students to fund on the basis of risk. What is the risk of academic failure? What is the risk of wasted funding? What, in turn, is the risk to the Band in terms of fiscal loss and/or public and political criticism for program delivery? These cost-benefit or utilitarian analyses are hallmarks of actuarial regimes and liberal governance, whereby, “all governments seek to maximize their effectiveness at a minimum of political and economic cost” (Burchell, 1991: 138). In such regimes, risk and morality are linked, the moral good being predicated on the minimisation of risk (Ruhl, 1999: 100). Risk levels, in this case, are inversely related to a students’ perceived capacities for responsibility: the more responsible the student, the less risk to the Band in funding them. Students applying for PSSSP funding may be defined in terms of risk before they ever enter a post-secondary institution.

These processes are actuarial, but in an environment where neo-liberal political rationalities are dominant and government restructuring is rampant, they also serve an insurance function for the First Nations. Like actuarialism, insurance is predicated on the notion of risk; Ewald (1991) contends, “to calculate risk is to master time, to discipline the future” (199). The implementation of insurance as a technology of governance requires, “two key factors...the *technique* of probabilistic calculation which ensures the certainty of the institution’s operations, disciplining the future and ensuring that their combinations are more than a mere lottery” (Ibid: 208-209, emphasis original).⁸⁹ The use of such insurential and actuarial practices can be held up as proof of rational governance carried out at the Band level, linking Band administration of individuals to political objectives (Miller and Rose, 1990: 1-2).

⁸⁹ The second factor Ewald outlines is the juridical form of the insurance contract, discussed later.

Rational Choices

...if your academic records indicate that you have a history of not completing programs or failing courses, your application will not be considered until all other applications have been reviewed and then only if funds are available in the current fiscal year. If approval is granted, you will be under probation. Your grades and attendance will be closely monitored. (LOP: 6)

If you have failing marks, any courses that are incomplete, or if you did not write a final exam, you may not be considered for funding. It is the responsibility of the student to make up those courses... (LOP: 7)

LOPs commonly use past measures of academic achievement in order to determine which students will be funded. These measurements may include previous training and education, the highest grade students have achieved, grades from all schools that students have attended, whether students have received scholarships,⁹⁰ whether students have completed programs in which they were previously enrolled, and/or whether they have ever been placed on academic probation. In one case, new students are required to submit a copy of an English assessment and, if it is a program prerequisite, a Math assessment (LOP: 11). Using past academic achievements to predict future ability constructs a particular image of the student, facilitating governance while downplaying personal context. Making judgments on this basis entails an assumption of equality and meritocracy; each student is understood to have had the same opportunities and their accomplishments are 'proof' of their capacities for rational, responsible behaviour. The student is simultaneously individualized and decontextualized through these processes.

Porter's statement is highly applicable in this case:

Professionals turn to the use of numbers, not when they are strong, but when they are weak. Strong professionals, who are invested with public trust, have no need to justify their judgments in the supposed objectivity of numbers. (Porter, quoted in Rose, 1998: 187)

Band Education Administrators often have to battle to achieve and maintain the trust of their communities, the colonial government, and the general Canadian public (Postl, 2005: 40). Sensationalized accounts of wasteful Band spending can result in public backlash against the funding of First Nations programs and/or increased surveillance and regulation of Band initiatives (Beltrame, 2003: 37-39). Slowey notes, "the standards for financial mismanagement for First Nations are far more rigorous than those faced by any municipality in Canada" (243). Allegations of mismanagement and waste thereby threaten the credibility of First Nations' attempts to move away from the paternalistic control of the federal government and towards self-determination. Demonstration of 'good governance' through the use of theoretically objective measures, meanwhile, may facilitate First Nations' practical capacities for self-determination even as it entails the adoption of liberal governance strategies and discourses.

⁹⁰ This may also be taken as an indicator of students' likelihood of economic independence from the Band.

Colonial and neo-liberal discourses advocating for the instillation of accountability regimes require that Bands are capable of justifying every expenditure. Students' capacities for financial, as well as academic, responsibility thus become another mechanism for determining which students are the 'right' students to fund. A student's past use of education funds comes under review in decision-making processes. Students may be required to identify whether they have received funding in the past, what program funding was for, whether they completed said program, and/or if and why the Band has ever placed them on sponsorship probation. Where policies stipulate that students may be required to re-pay education funds, students are generally barred from sponsorship until repayment or arrangement for repayment is made: "If you owe the [...] Education Department money for previous or present education sponsorship, you will be required to pay this debt off before being considered for further funding" (LOP: 9).

Professionals

Professionals occupy a privileged role in liberal governance: Miller and Rose argue,

'governmentality' has come to depend in crucial respects upon the intellectual technologies, practical activities and social authority associated with expertise...the social authority ascribed to particular agents and forms of judgment on the basis of their claims to possess specialized truths and rare powers. (1990: 1-2)

In many LOPs, willingness to consult with and submit to professional knowledge is taken as an indication of a student's level of responsibility, and therefore worthiness for receipt of funds. The role of such professionals is pastoral, as they assess and guide the progression of students through the education system (Dean, 1995: 575). Some applications require students to have sought career counselling prior to applying for funding. Students may be required to have met with a counsellor at the institution they hope to attend, with a Band Education official, and/or to submit (a) letter(s) of recommendation from instructors or employers. Students with permanent disabilities that may affect their ability to maintain a certain course load may be required to submit a document in which a professional verifies the existence, nature, treatment, and impact of that disability. First Nation students are objectified through such processes; that is to say, they are constituted through "the interplay of a disciplinary technology and a normative science" (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 143). Liberal citizens are expected to, "turn to experts for advice in the decisions, both large and small, that are entailed in the conduct and enterprise of one's life" (Ruhl, 1999: 101). Knowledge of the individual becomes a central mechanism in power-knowledge relations that seek to mould and constitute the First Nation student's subjective self.

LOPs and *National Program Guidelines* highlight the relationship between responsibility, education and increased employment opportunities: "The students have sought career

counselling, thoroughly researched the job market, and have based their selection of post-secondary programs on the availability of employment at the conclusion of their studies” (LOPs: 7, 2); applicants must submit a “job search demonstrating opportunities for employment upon completion of post secondary studies, if applicable” (LOP: 7). Relating these provisions to Aboriginal women, it is important to note cross-disciplinary differences between education and employment trends. Studies have noted that significant gender segregation between disciplines persists, that graduates from male dominated fields tend to experience higher wage returns than graduates from female dominated fields, and that throughout the 1990s only male-dominated disciplines saw improvements in average earnings (Andrus and Adamuti-Trache, 2007; Frenette and Coulombe, 2007). Field-specific gender segregation has persisted despite scholarships aimed at increasing women’s participation in male-dominated disciplines, indicating that basing funding decisions on the perceived potential economic benefits of a program of study may disadvantage women (rather than encouraging them to enter into male-dominated disciplines) (Frenette and Coulombe, 2007: 7).

The assurance of students’ future employability reduces the risk that they will be financially dependent upon their First Nation and, through the provision of transfer payments, the federal government. In addition to disciplining students into choosing their programs on the basis of an economic cost-benefit analysis, these application procedures discourage students from choosing programs which, according to colonial and neo-liberal understandings, are unlikely to result in high economic payoffs. They may therefore limit potential ways of being for indigenous students. Since colonialism and neo-liberalism structure current capitalist markets and the enterprises they deem of value, this aspect of the LOPs may facilitate neo-colonialism, whereby First Nations communities moving from dependency on the government to dependence on corporations. In such processes, “...expertise plays a vital translating role, promising to align general politico-ethical principles, the goals of industry and the self-regulatory activities of individuals” (Miller and Rose, 1990: 20).

Foucault (1977) argues that, “power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production” (194). In addition to an increasing reliance on surveillance and disciplinary techniques, a host of jobs – from administrators to counsellors to clerical staff and more – have been created through the PSSSP. Furthermore, the creation of self-disciplining liberal citizens is facilitated, perhaps signified most clearly by the willingness to turn to professionals in order to facilitate the governance of self.

Rational Plans

“Autobiographical Sketch: Please describe yourself: family background / ancestral lineage, personality, interests, experience, strengths, weaknesses, and goals. How do these relate to your pursuit of an education? What are your plans once you have completed program?” (LOP: 12)

According to Ruhl (1999), “the model of a liberal citizen is the embodiment of prudence, always thinking ahead, putting money aside for future calamity, responsibly planning...” (110). It is not surprising, then, that capacities for responsible planning and behaviour provide further ‘measures’ of students’ relative suitability for funding. However, a mechanism for *gathering* that information from the pool of applicants must be put in place to facilitate administrative decision-making. Foucault argues that discipline, “operates four great techniques: it draws up tables; it prescribes movements; it imposes exercises; lastly, in order to obtain the combination of forces, it arranges ‘tactics’” (Foucault, 1977: 167). All four of these techniques are present in the portions of the LOPs that require students to demonstrate their educational planning and preparedness. Such exercises oblige students to render their lives into discourse, ‘creating’ them as knowable objects in the process (Pasquino, 1991: 113).

Sections of the applications tend to take a programmatic approach to generating this knowledge. Students may be required to fill in tables and charts to supply the more generic portions of the information. Such forms may include lists of programs, courses, and prerequisites; names and contact information for counsellors and/or First Nations Education Coordinators, and/or lists of any special equipment that may be required (LOP: 15). In one case, students have to provide a table of all of their courses for the duration of their program (including completion dates for each course) and a per-semester student timetable detailing their schedules from 8:00 am to 10:30 pm Monday-Friday (LOP: 14). The LOPs’ focus on the relationship between education and labour market outcomes is evident in these ‘proof of planning’ sections, where disciplinary tactics are strongly evident:

Education path required to reach Career objective: This section will be used to monitor your progress towards your career goal(s), and will be the basis for the funding contract with the [...] Band... Your funding may be terminated if you do not meet the progress towards your career goals(s), or if you take alternate courses, which have not been approved by the [...] Band. **IT IS EVERY APPLICANTS RESPONSIBILITY TO INFORM THE BAND’S EDUCATION COORDINATOR, IN WRITING, OF ANY ANTICIPATED CHANGES TO THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION.** (LOP: 13, bolding original)

When asked to describe their, “long term goal for the future,” one LOP advises students to include specific education and employment goals since, “vague answers such as I want to go to school make it difficult to determine if you are eligible for funding” (LOP: 11).

A focus on students' fiscal management skills is also evident. Many policies require students to provide a detailed budget. LOPs providing a rationale for this form do so on the basis of (neo) liberal conceptions of the ideal, responsible, independent rational actor: "By filling out this form, students will get a better idea of how finances must be handled during the school year" (LOP: 15); "the students fully understand the concept of 'living within your means'" (LOP: 7). Application budget sheets are an exercise in chronicling the minutia of financial expenses. They may include a description of eligible expenses, including rent, food, utilities, telephone, transportation, course material costs, child care expenses, loans, credit card payments, car loan payments, and other expenses; and/or a description of income, including Band funding, bursaries, scholarships, student loans, government financial aid, and all other sources of income (LOP: 3). Many of the LOPs require students to apply for scholarships and bursaries; one LOP specifies that if, "proof of application to a minimum of three (3) bursaries and/or scholarships, within any one (1) year is not provided to the [...] Band, a ten percent (10%) deduction shall be made to any training allowance(s) approved for the year" (LOP: 13).

Long-term and detailed planning by students is a clear focus of many LOPs. One LOP requires students to, "plan their career path at least one year in advance of applying for post secondary assistance" (LOP: 7). Two LOPs ask students to identify which of the following measures they have taken to prepare for post-secondary studies, including: researching the program (school, structure, dates, fees, location, etc.); applying to the program; speaking to Education/Academic Advisors; completing an academic plan; completing the education application; completing pre-requisite courses; partial completion of the program; completing an associated program; or other (LOPs: 7, 12). In addition to being able to demonstrate long-term, detailed planning through tables, graphs, and the prescription of methods for accomplishing goals, students must be able to articulate their goals and plans in forms amenable to the administrators. Generally, this is facilitated by a letter of intent, although some policies require (instead or additionally) an autobiographical sketch or detailed answers to descriptive questions. The letter of intent demonstrates potential students', "commitment to clear educational goals" (LOP: 3). In the letter, students must link their career, educational, and life plans – in other words, they must attempt to describe themselves according to liberal ideals of the enterprising self. The option of utilizing alternative discourses is open, however, the language and structure of the LOPs imply that doing so is likely to incur disciplinary action (through the potential denial of education funds). Such policies may limit potential ways of being for First Nations students even as they create opportunities for students to resist neo-liberal conceptions of education and selfhood.

Prioritisation of Students

National Program Guidelines mandate that LOPs outline student funding prioritisation criteria. Prioritising students and offering financial incentives for students entering specific programs is one mechanism through which the program seeks to constitute First Nation students as valuable and productive citizens. Some LOP's prioritisations are unspecific or relatively underdeveloped while others are elaborate and detailed. Ten of the fifteen LOPs provided a numerical list of student prioritisation (see appendix 6.1).

Age

LOPs generally give highest priority to full-time continuing post-secondary students and students graduating from grade twelve, while lower prioritisation is given to returning, late returning and part-time students. Mature students, along with graduate students, are generally in the mid to last levels of prioritisation. These trends are reflective of political practices aimed at improving First Nations educational levels and decreasing their levels of 'dependency'. In its (2005) *Evaluation of the Post-Secondary Education Program*, INAC notes that,

[d]ependency on government transfers also decreases as individuals become more employable...the most dramatic difference is recorded amongst the youngest age group – the dependency ratio for Registered Indians aged 15 to 24 years old drops from roughly 50 percent to 20 percent as educational achievement increases from less than high school to university levels of post-secondary education. (24-25)

Numerical measures such as these provide strong justification for funding younger students, in particular through lifelong learning strategies that emphasize the importance of school-to-school transitions. An interview participant explained, “[y]ou see a lot more younger people that are better sponsored before, you know, ones that are older” (A). She also explained,

[s]ometimes if they've gone back to school right out of high school and they were not knowing what they want to do and they, they go back to school and they're not successful, for whatever reason...so, if they flunk out, you know, the one year, and then, say maybe five or ten years later they want to go back to school. They... Some bands, they won't take into consideration that they were younger – all they see is they wasted that, so you're shuffled to the bottom of the list. You know, and its just that they're ready at a different period in their life...me being one of them. I didn't want to go to school! (Laughter) I managed to make it through, but I didn't – wasn't that successful as I probably should have been. You know, then now, how many years later, I'm going back to school – you're putting everything into it. You know, they don't really think of it that way. They just kind of look at dollars and cents... (A)

Although the majority of Aboriginal post-secondary students currently are mature women,⁹¹ increasing student prioritisations may limit opportunities for mature women, and especially mature single mothers, to access post-secondary education. Aboriginal students are more likely to have children and more than three times as likely as non-Aboriginal students to be single parents.⁹² One participant recounted,

I got my diploma in [program] [year] [...] In [year] I worked for the Band Office and was told I would have priority for funds...you know, to upgrade my education. I was pregnant and the choice – to go back to school – wasn't made, wasn't really there until [the baby] was in the hospital and we had to move to [the city]. [...] It was multiple operations, it took six months in the hospital. I applied to the Band. But there was a new Funding Officer and she said procedure clearly prioritised high school students. I argued with her, because I was an employee and should have prioritisation, but the Funding Officer clearly stated that only high school students were prioritised. I was put on the wait list and told that I would most likely get funding in the January term. I went back in mid December to ask about the January funding and was told that since I hadn't filled out a new application for January I would be on the waiting list again [...] Of course, they don't tell you that in September. (C)

Given that upper-level employment positions in reserve communities tend to be male-dominated, improving education levels may seem like a 'natural' choice for women who want to increase their social mobility and provide for their families. High poverty levels on reserve and among Aboriginal women mean that financial resources play a more significant role in determining these women's abilities to access post-secondary education. As a result, funding strategies designed to assist young and graduating students in their transition to post-secondary may have stratifying consequences for Aboriginal women, especially mature women with children.

Furthermore, prioritizing youth over age is in itself a moral exercise. It has often been pointed out that many Aboriginal cultures place a high value on the experience and wisdom that come with age. Prioritisations such as these imply that younger individuals have more potential and more to offer than older and more experienced members. One participant spoke about the value of older students to the overall educational experience:

And it feels good, you know...some of my students – I have one who is here at the same time as her daughter! Its so good to see that. 'I'm going to study with my daughter' she says...And seniors (laughs). There was one woman near her 70's. We get a few seniors [...] And its so neat to see the wisdom they bring. She even showed up a few students! 'You got no excuse – I'm 70 and I can do it!'. (A)

⁹¹ In 2001, 65 percent of Aboriginal post-secondary education students in BC were female, with a median age of twenty-nine (Verses twenty-five for the non-Aboriginal population) (First Nations Education Steering Committee, 2005: 4).

⁹² In 2001, 6 percent of non-Aboriginal students were single parents, compared to 21 percent for Aboriginal students (First Nations Education Steering Committee, 2005: 4).

Incorporating neo-liberal prioritisations into Aboriginal post-secondary education funding strategies may marginalize indigenous understandings and approaches to education. Likewise, privileging youth over age may limit individual, communal and social educational experiences.

Economics

Two LOPs give third priority to ‘motivated students’, or students who forfeit their living allowance and only receive funding for tuition and books, and one gives it to contributing students, or students who have started to pay for their education.⁹³ A number of other LOPs include similar criteria for consideration (i.e. as a method of further prioritizing categories or when no numerically ranked prioritisation is given). In part, these trends reflect the budget constraints many First Nations operate under. One interview participant observed,

Some bands, because the money hasn’t been growing from INAC, the money is getting smaller with the cost of living. Then what happens is the band has to be ever-more stringent about how they divvy this money up. Do they sponsor a lot of students with a little money? Do they sponsor a smaller number of students that they can support fully? You know, how do they do that? (B)

The more that a student can contribute to their education, the more funding that theoretically remains to fund other students (including students who are unable to financially contribute).

Such decisions, however, amount to a, “grafting of morality on to economics” in a way that constructs both individual subjectivity and societal power relations (Miller and Rose, 1990: 158). Language is reflective of the moral nature of the judgments made – students willing and able to forfeit a portion of their funding are ‘motivated’; that is, active and enterprising actors. Embedded in this are notions of the worthy and unworthy poor; again, a good liberal citizen is one who takes responsibility for their lives and engages in self-discipline in order to ensure that they do not, “impart a burden on others” (Ruhl, 1999: 110). An individual’s ability to be at least partially financially autonomous and ‘responsible’ for their education is met with practical and productive encouragement. Individuals who cannot match this level of autonomy are disciplined and given a lower prioritisation. In this formulation, individuals with the highest need for funding may be shuffled to the bottom of the list. The assumption of equality between students can be understood to perpetuate inequality. INAC (2005) found that, “anecdotal evidence heard in the course of conducting the evaluation also indicated that some individuals at the local band level do not apply because they believe their chances of being funded are minimal” (33).

⁹³ The LOP also specifies that funds already paid by the student for their education are non-reimbursable.

Such reluctance may reflect increasingly stringent prioritisation criteria and increasingly restrictive education budgets. The LOPs outline an array of criteria for further prioritizing funding, either in addition to numerical prioritisations or in their absence, including:

- First consideration given to applicants living on-reserve
- Priority given to students who pay part of their education (tuition or living allowance)
- Priority given to students with high academic standing, with full-time students prioritized over part-time students
- Priority given to the economic or social benefit of the student's chosen program to the community
- Priority based on the location of the post-secondary institution (by proximity to the community)
- Priority given to students with partial funding confirmed
- Priority based on High School GPA
- Additional factors for consideration: past academic record, commitment to program of study, attendance record, past completion of courses

Particularly interesting are the provisos regarding the perceived benefit of students' chosen field to the community. One interview observed,

...I would say there is a preference for programs. There is a very preferential thing happening for different programs. I know that there are high numbers of Aboriginal students in, say, the business program. And sometimes, at the band level, they want somebody there that can help with business and economic development, to better that – whichever Band or community's mandate – along. So sometimes Bands themselves say, 'You go into business we'll sponsor you.' With the hopes that the student, once they get their degree or diploma or certificate, they'll go back to the Band and work for the Band and make it a better place. (B)⁹⁴

Two Bands link funding prioritisation criteria and social obligations for labour: “[s]tudents will be expected to commit to working for the band for two years after graduating from their program provided the opportunity for employment exists” (LOP: 7).

Hacking (2002) argues there is dynamic interaction between classifications and individuals so classified, whereby people, “may change in part because they are aware of how they are classified” (10). Classificatory systems such as those outlined here aim at governing freedom inasmuch as they seek to govern individuals' choices regarding their education. It is important to note, however, that prioritisations are influenced by the *National Program Guidelines*, which include provisions for ‘incentives’ in the form of scholarships to students who, “engage in studies that directly contribute to First Nations achieving self-government and economic self-reliance” (11). The scholarships can be up to \$3,500 annually and are called “Strategic Studies Scholarships” (Ibid: 11).⁹⁵ These incentives discipline First Nation students into rationalizing the choices they make while encouraging them to adopt a framework for analysis that emphasizes economics above all else. The eligible programs are reflective of

⁹⁴ The participant noted health receives a significant degree of prioritisation: “There's a huge push, there's a *national mandate*, to get Aboriginal health-care workers into the system and get them working.”

⁹⁵ Students enrolled in a ‘Level 3’ program – advanced or professional degree programs, Masters, or Doctoral programs – may only receive \$1,500 if they are enrolled full-time. They are restricted to receiving the incentive one time only, in either the second year of their program or upon completion (INAC, 2003).

current market prioritisations, particularly as they apply to the needs of First Nations to engage in economic development programs. They include commerce, public or business administration, physical science, mathematics, computer sciences, forestry and engineering.

Student Loans?

Two themes are strongly evident through the key policy-related documents, associated literature, and interviews: a) most First Nation students would be unable to attend post-secondary without PSSSP funding, and b) student loans are not a good solution to First Nations post-secondary education. In INAC's (2005) *Evaluation of the Post-Secondary Education Program*, 77.4 percent of students interviewed (or 304 out of 394 students) asserted they would not have attended post-secondary if it were not for PSSSP funding. The report also found that most First Nation and Inuit communities did not have a large enough economic base to ensure that students who had completed their studies would be able to repay their loans. One respondent in the INAC study felt, "eventual student loans of \$20,000 to \$30,000 would cripple the prospects of our students" (35). Interview participants for my study were very clear as to how important they felt post-secondary funding was for Aboriginal students accessing higher education:

Very important. Very important. Aboriginal people quite often move from outside the area to go to school. So, if there is not financial security there, sometimes it can never happen at all. You need that financial security so that you're not worried, so that you're not stressed out, so that you know that things will fall into place, that cheque is in the mail, that's going to be there. Because quite often there isn't the things that are available at the community level back home if they come from a rural place...So funding is huge, huge, huge. (B)

Another participant observed,

People don't understand...There's a real lack of awareness that the challenges of First Nations people are stemming from the past. Its just like you said, with this misconception of free education for Indians. If they had to be on student loans and have a job, a lot of them would not make it. They just would not make it. You know, this is the first generation...My family, I'm the first – so its not inbred, its not there yet. But maybe down the road, you know, my child will look at me and say, well, she went to school, I can do it...it will be an option for them. This is not really...Its not a handout! This is not money being thrown to waste! (A)

R.A. Malatest et al (2004) note that student loans are often inadequate for Aboriginal students who face higher travel and living expenses. One of their interview participants observed, "[f]or white families, student loans are a supplement; for natives they are the entire income. Loans are designed for white 18-year-olds who don't have to travel or support families" (20). Generally, if the LOPs mention student loans, they do so in order to advise students that the Band is not liable for debts that a student incurs from such loans. However, one Band takes a very different approach – students applying to the Band are *required* to apply for Canadian and BC student loans before they will be considered for funding (LOP: 7). The LOP lists eight conditions

that students must meet in order for the Band to consider re-paying the loan on the student's behalf, including that the maximum amount of the student loan does not exceed the policy's limits under categories and levels of aid. Students who do not meet the conditions do not qualify for Band reimbursement, although students refused through the student loans programs are able to apply to the Band for funding. The interviews indicated that such policies are being applied:

I was telling [a coworker] the other day there was this one, I can't remember the name of the band but the student said that she had to, she applied for student loans, and then at the end of the school year, if she passed all her courses, the band then paid out her student loan. And I was like, 'Wow'!
(A)

Despite reports as to the risks that student loans have for First Nation students, grant and no-interest provisions in the student loans program make it an attractive option for ensuring the Band is able to fund as many students as possible. However, the small economic bases and high rates of poverty in many First Nations communities may strongly impact indigenous students' capacities to repay the loans if they come due and repayment by the Band is not forthcoming. This situation may be exacerbated for First Nation women, who, compared to Aboriginal men, shoulder greater family responsibilities as well as higher poverty rates. In 2000, 36 percent of Aboriginal women lived below Statistics Canada's low income cut-offs (compared with 32 percent of Aboriginal men); Aboriginal women on average made \$3,000 less per year than their male counterparts, and 27 percent of their income came from government transfers, compared to 16 percent for non-Aboriginal women and Aboriginal men (Statistics Canada, 2006: 199-200).

Chapter Summary: Governing Choice

Contrary to popular Canadian beliefs about 'free education for Indians', First Nation students trying to access funding negotiate a complex web of structured relations. Accounting and insurential techniques are used to make administrative judgments of individuals' suitability for funding. Neo-liberal discourses and political practices inform these processes, potentially privileging non-indigenous and colonial ways of being and world views and maintaining or enhancing gendered social stratification. Mudge (2003) suggests that in a meritocratic system, educational spending may reinforce constructions of the 'worthy' and 'unworthy' poor, since the impoverished are perceived to have had 'every opportunity' to improve their situation.

Miller and Rose (1990) contend that,

[g]overning operates through subjects...Government to that extent is a 'personal' matter, and many programmes have sought the key to their effectiveness in enrolling individuals as allies in the pursuit of political, economic and social objectives. To the extent that authoritative norms, calculative technologies and forms of evaluations can be translated into the values, decisions and judgments of citizens in their professional and personal capacities, they can function as part of the

'self-steering' mechanisms of individuals. Hence 'free' individuals and 'private' spaces can be 'ruled' without breaching their formal autonomy. (18)

Constructions of subjectivity occurring through the PSSSP are enhanced for students who receive funding, as a full range of disciplinary and surveillance techniques come into play. As Ewald (1991) reminds us, insurance techniques have a contractual element (208-209). In this case, the contract is based on *mutual obligation*; the Band is obligated to provide funding to the student and the student is obligated to fulfil specific roles and responsibilities – responsibilities designed to insure students' self-regulating capacities are maximized and aligned with neo-liberal economic objectives.

SUBJECTIVE REALITIES: THE ROLE OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING POLICIES IN THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIVIDUAL REALITIES

LOP implementation is an exercise of power capable of constituting a reality of a particular sort. However, as Miller and Rose (1990) point out:

'Reality' always escapes the theories that inform programmes and the ambitions that underpin them; it is too unruly to be captured by any perfect knowledge. Technologies produce unexpected problems, are utilized for their own ends by those who are supposed to merely operate them, are hampered by underfunding, professional rivalries, and the impossibility of producing the technical conditions that would make them work. (11)

Ironically, techniques of governance employed by the LOPs may significantly impede students' abilities to replicate the behaviour patterns they are designed to promote. Heavy course load requirements, overall funding restrictions and low living allowances add to the 'normal' stresses indigenous students encounter when attending post-secondary education within a colonial society. Students moving to urban areas from more remote communities may wrestle with cultural adjustment and a lack of support networks. Women in particular may need to deal with issues of childcare and sexual violence. On top of this, LOPs generally require students to dedicate a significant degree of time and energy to the production of knowledge about themselves. Failure to carry out such knowledge-production activities often carries the potential for loss of funding. These and other techniques of governance in the LOPs enlist students as the primary agents responsible for their 'successful' educational experiences. One participant observed,

It's...it's kind of a bad way of putting it but sometimes its almost like giving a dog a treat. You know, and the dog's trying to do everything to get the treat. And that's sometimes the feeling I get. Students get so disheartened. Having that, that challenge of a conflict with their funding source and also trying to go to school at the same time...I've seen some really bad cases of that. (A)

LOPs set out clear distinctions between acceptable and unacceptable conduct for a 'good' student. This idealized behavioural model relies heavily on the subtext of the dangerous 'other' – the irresponsible, dependent, lazy and unenterprising individual who is a burden to their Nation and society as a whole. This 'shadow figure' bares remarkable similarity to colonial depictions of indigenous peoples and may be understood as a potential indication of self-colonisation.⁹⁶ When

⁹⁶ This term is used by Napoleon (2001), and connotes a colonisation of the self (or, in Foucault's terms, the soul) as well as a reproduction of colonizing processes and ways of being as a result of European colonial strategies intended to disrupt, alter and destroy indigenous world views and ways of being.

reinforced through surveillance and disciplinary regimes, these depictions may create divisions within First Nations and between administrators and students. One participant commented:

It's nice when students get a sponsorship letter saying that they're funded for the full school year, from September to August. Then students don't have the stress of 'Oh, I have to get this in, get that in...' It's really nice when bands can trust the students. [...] Because students are not being wasteful. It's so hard when it's just this semester, and depends on grades for the next one... On the other hand, I have seen a few students who abuse the system. You don't really see too much of that, though... Students really appreciate the funds. They're aware of the cutbacks, the lists, that others haven't gotten funding, that they need an education to get a job. (A)

Surveillance

"The exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see and induce the effects of power. (Foucault, 1977: 170-171).

For disciplinary measures embedded in the PSSSP to have full effect, techniques of surveillance designed to facilitate 'governance at a distance' are necessary. In this case, the development of surveillance techniques is facilitated by the specific location of the governed, that is, within colonial educational institutions, "[a] relation of surveillance, defined and regulated, is inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching, not as an additional or adjacent part, but as a mechanism that is inherent to it and which increases its efficiency" (Ibid: 176). In congruence with those of higher education and the PSSSP, the goals of surveillance are productive: the "aim is to strengthen social forces – to increase production, to develop the economy, spread education, raise the level of public morality..." (Ibid: 208).

Surveillance constitutes students as objects inasmuch as it produces knowledge of the individual, who is acted upon in accordance with the knowledge generated. However, it also plays a role in the constitution of subjectivity, as people alter their behaviour in response to being 'watched'. Monitoring grades as a mechanism for encouraging individuals to maintain specific grade levels is one of the most prevalent surveillance mechanisms in the LOPs. This is generally effected through the submission of transcripts at the end of each term or upon (re) application to the program: "I will provide the [...] Band with a copy of my transcripts within four weeks of completion of each semester. Living allowance will be withheld if transcripts are not received" (LOP: 9). All the LOPs in my sample specify that students must submit transcripts.

National Program Guidelines stipulate that, to be eligible for PSSSP funding, students must, "maintain continued satisfactory academic standing within that institution" (8). They also require funding be stopped for students placed on academic probation or otherwise restricted

from continuing in their program of study (LOP: 5).⁹⁷ Bands may require students to meet additional grade-based performance measures in order to receive funding; most LOPs in my sample specify a minimum C average, or 2.0 GPA, to maintain funding; one specifies a 2.6 GPA in 4 courses per semester (LOP: 6). Failure to meet such standards is often linked to disciplinary action, namely probation or termination of funding. Many LOPs specify that Bands will not pay for courses students need to re-take due to low or failing grades. One LOP explains that, if students get grades above a fail but below the LOP's C average requirement, they will be placed on probation, however, if students audit or fail any courses they must repay expenses to the Band. If current trends continue, raising GPA requirements may seem inevitable – especially in a neo-liberal policy environment requiring standardized, quantifiable measures of educational success.

Such performance measures are meant to ensure that individuals are not 'riding the system' and thereby failing to fulfil their social obligations. Foucault contends that, "distribution according to ranks or grade has a double role: it marks the gaps, hierarchises qualities, skills and aptitudes; but it also punishes and rewards...rank in itself serves as a reward or punishment..." (Foucault, 1977: 181). Through such measures, academic standing becomes the primary indicator of individual 'success' and the primary determinant of whether one is worthy of aid. 'Doing well' is equated with meeting certain standards, standards that serve wider society. Alternative measures or understandings of success are lost even as conceptualisations of the worthy and unworthy poor are reinforced.

These processes are all the more disconcerting since they are being applied to indigenous students within a colonial education system. Verjee (2003) contends,

[s]tandardized tests...have been used to classify large proportions of aboriginal students as 'learning disabled' or unteachable, and to stream these students into non-academic and vocationally limited programs. The small amount of psychological and educational literature reveals aboriginal learners as right-brained, having aberrant learning styles, suffering from fetal alcohol effects, learning disabled, and in general less intelligent than almost everyone else. Most of these conclusions have been reached through the misuse of tests. (13)

Verjee also argues that measurement practices can facilitate racism through the perpetuation of stereotypes (Ibid: 15). Accountability regimes that force First Nations to justify methods of program administration combined with restrictive PSSSP budgets mean that Aboriginal students must meet colonial standards of 'success' to justify their access to post-secondary funds.

Another surveillance mechanism built into the LOPs is the requirement to submit progress reports. Twelve of the fifteen LOPs in the sample require students to submit a progress report of some kind. Failure to submit a report, or to submit it before a specified date, is linked

⁹⁷ This disciplinary tactic could be considered actuarial or insurential inasmuch as it predicts student's future likelihood of success or achievement based on current or past academic standing.

with disciplinary action; often living allowance cheques will be withheld until the reports are received. An interview participant noted the increased reporting requirements:

...a lot more education coordinators are requiring transcripts of grades, progress reports, umm, the students, upon...before, before they'll fax a sponsorship letter – the band – the student has to sign a form agreeing to release information and to provide information on their progress. If that, if its not received, then their funding is cut, will be cut off. So that's...that wasn't so much when I started – there was a little bit more freedom, there wasn't much checking or anything, but now its...pretty much every student has that...to submit grades, and progress reports. (A)

Progress reports may mean students come under the gaze of their professors as well as their Band.

While some LOPs ask for written reports prepared by the student, a number require students to obtain reports from their professors. Professors may need to report on students' attendance (days possible, days attended, lates, left early) and/or provide comments on students' progress. In one case, the form is set up so that a professor can read previous professor's entries (LOP: 8). In a colonial society where racist characterisations of Aboriginal peoples as dependent are common and non-Aboriginal individuals often express animosity towards First Nations 'special treatment' (in their receipt of education funds, and/or other 'benefits'), the exercise of obtaining progress reports from professors to ensure funding can be understood as disciplinary. This may be exacerbated in the 'ivory tower' of academia, which has been implicated in perpetuating systemic racism and alienating indigenous perspectives (Guno, 2001; Association of Canadian Community Colleges, 2005; Fisher et al, 2005; R.A. Malatest et al, 2004: 13-14; Schick, 2002; Smith, 1999). Requiring students to request 'extra' work from professors when it reveals their 'dependent' status and 'special treatment' disciplines students regardless of whether a particular student has a positive relationship with a particular professor. Progress reports can thereby continually reinforce negative associations between First Nation students and their 'dependent' status.

Surveillance measures are functionally linked to the production of knowledge about Aboriginal students, knowledge that structures the field of power relations in and through which PSSSP funding is administered. The production of knowledge about Aboriginal students accessing the PSSSP is likely to increase, as the need for more information about students' education and performance in order to facilitate program administration is a consistent theme in the policy-related documents and literature pertaining to Aboriginal post-secondary education. For some First Nations, the production of knowledge is well underway. One LOP specifies that,

All records, documents, information, and data contained in the student files are classified as personal and confidential. Upon consent of the student, records will only be released to: 1. Chartered banks or credit unions for the purpose of arranging disbursements to the student. 2. Post-secondary institutions for administrative purposes. 3. Social service agencies, as required by statute or regulation. 4. Native or non-native social housing agencies, as required by an application

for subsidized rental housing, and 5. Internal researchers, providing that the student's name does not appear in any research reports or documents, and providing that the student's confidentiality is protected at all times. (LOP: 15)

As the experiences and subjectivities of Aboriginal students are defined and delimited through knowledge production, 'ways of being' are subject to increasing regulation even as the potential for new discursive strategies relating to Aboriginal post-secondary education are opened up: "power relations...make it possible to extract and constitute knowledge...knowledge that is transformed into political investment (Foucault, 1977: 185).

Discipline

According to Foucault, discipline has a complex social function, it is a political tactic made possible through the exercise of power (Foucault, 1977: 23). The most fundamental role of discipline lies in the constitution of individuals: "discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise" (Foucault, 1979: 179). The ability to exercise authority over their lives, communities, and citizens is a central goal of First Nations seeking self-determination. At the same time, their ability to increase and solidify that political authority depends in large part on their ability to demonstrate their functional capacities for 'responsible' governance to their citizens, the colonial government, and wider Canadian society. In the context of self-government, devolution and the PSSSP, Aboriginal students become both objects and instruments of power. Foucault (1977) claims that, in discipline, punishment becomes, "an economy of suspended rights" (11). LOP provisions regarding suspension, probation, and termination of funding are disciplinary, especially in light of arguments that First Nations' education is a right or treaty right.

Students funded through the PSSSP who withdraw become particular targets for disciplinary action, since students who withdraw from a course or program of study after a certain date are generally not reimbursed for tuition and fees paid. Ten of the sample LOPs mandate the termination of funding if a student withdraws from a course or program of studies.⁹⁸ One LOP specifies that students who withdraw will have funding terminated and, if the student fails to notify the institution of their withdrawal, they must pay all costs (LOP: 13). Other LOPs do not make repayment contingent on notification (LOPs: 5, 3, 8, 2) and one stipulates repayment must be made within one calendar year of the date of withdrawal (LOP: 3). One LOP specifies, "[a] student must be carrying a full program load to receive a living allowance. If a student withdraws from a course during a term, the living allowance will be prorated for the remainder of the term.

⁹⁸ All LOPs require that students maintain a full course load in order to receive a living allowance.

Sponsorship will be withdrawn at the end of the term” (LOP: 2). Some LOPs disallow future funding until students reimburse the Band for tuition and associated fees for courses from which they withdraw. For several LOPs, repayment may be unnecessary if students provide a valid reason for withdrawal (LOPs: 7, 2, 6, 9).⁹⁹ Such reasons may include illness, death in the immediate family, accident, or serious emotional problems, and generally require documentation in the form of a letter from the student, their doctor, their professors, and/or the dean. Many LOPs require students facing personal crises to notify their Education Coordinator and encourage them to seek counselling (LOPs: 7, 2, 6, 10, 9). Failure to provide notification can result in disciplinary action as it may, “seriously effect future educational-funding requests” (LOP: 9).

A number of actions (or inactions) can result in funding suspensions or sponsorship probation. Probation, where outlined in the LOPs, may entail students receiving only one half of the first semester’s tuition fees (LOPs: 2, 9) and/or a requirement to participate in a study skills course (LOPs: 2, 3). One LOP elaborately outlines funding suspension provisions :

A student may be placed on probation if his/her GPA [is] below 2.0. As a condition of probation, the band may request the student to provide the following: a monthly progress report from each instructor; attendance reports; an interim report, part way through the term...Funding may be sent on a month-to-month basis until the GPA has improved to 2.0. Failure to provide the above documentation and comply with the Band requests while on probation may result in funding being suspended. Probation may be from four to eight months (depending on improvement). If a student’s GPA does not improve sufficiently while on probation, funding will be suspended. If a student fails 3 or more courses in a term, funding will be suspended immediately. If a student fails two or more courses in a term, funding will be reviewed and may lead to suspension of funding or the student may be placed on probation. Students whose funding has been suspended in the past, may re-apply by way of an appeal to the Chief and council...Before they re-apply, students are encouraged to examine why they were not successful and to deal with the reasons. The students, when re-applying will be expected in writing, along with the application to provide specific reasons why they will be more successful in their studies. (LOP: 14)

Suspensions of funding outlined in the LOPs can last from one semester to five calendar years, whereupon students may be placed on sponsorship probation for a semester (LOPs: 7, 8).

LOPs outline an array of additional behaviours that may result in the termination of sponsorship, including: dishonesty, failure to notify the Band of a change in student status (full/part time), misuse of education funds, harassment, intoxication or substance abuse affecting student achievement, termination by a post-secondary institution, failure to notify the Band of a change in living allowance eligibility, violation of the express or implied conditions of the policy or the program of studies amounting to insubordination or wilful disobedience, breach of contract, poor attendance, failure to submit required documentation, collecting post-secondary funding after withdrawing from studies, and/or deliberate misrepresentation of financial or academic position. In the event of funding termination, students may be required to repay all or

⁹⁹ Bands may make repayment contingent on withdrawal without academic penalty (LOPs 2, 6, 3, 9).

part of education funds allocated to them under the program. Two Bands also specify that if it is believed that students have used education funds in ways not in accordance with the policies, they may be reported to the RCMP for suspicion of fraud (LOPs: 10, 4).

Tuition Amounts and Living Allowance Rates

National Program Guidelines outline maximum amounts payable to students through the PSSSP. First Nations may lower, but not raise, the maximum amounts payable and are discouraged by the guidelines from paying students the full amounts:

PLEASE NOTE: This is a maximum allowable payment per student. Every student is NOT entitled to this amount. The maximum amount was established to ensure that the most extreme circumstances could be funded as necessary. The actual amount of funding available to a student will depend on the overall amount of funding available in the program.

(20, bolding and emphasis original)

National Program Guidelines (2003) categorize permissible assistance amounts into three levels: Level 1: community college and CEGEP¹⁰⁰ diploma or certificate programs; Level 2: undergraduate university programs; and Level 3: advanced or professional degree programs (10). Full-time students may receive funding for tuition fees, compulsory student fees, and books. Students attending a post-secondary institution outside of Canada may receive tuition and fees at the same rate as the closest Canadian institution offering a comparable program. If no such program is offered in Canada, the actual rate of tuition and fees may be available (16).

Many LOPs do not give maximum tuition amounts; some provide maximum amounts by university and college level, and others give specific rates for specific institutions. When specified, amounts for tuition and fees for college were \$2000 - \$2500 per academic year.¹⁰¹ For university, amounts ranged from \$2400 - \$4800. One LOP granted exceptions to the maximum tuition amounts for Doctor, Lawyer, and Nursing programs (LOP: 13). In comparison, Statistics Canada estimated the average Canadian undergraduate tuition fee in 2002 at \$3768. Students may also encounter problems with getting their tuition and fees paid on time; a (2004) study by R.A. Malatest et al found that, “students frequently get into trouble because their band funding is submitted late, causing stress at the beginning of a program, when students are often already dealing with the stress of being new to the institution” (22)

Upon application to the program, LOPs generally require a substantial amount of personal information from students. Students may need to provide information on their income, their spouse’s income, severance and holiday pay, pensions received, workers compensation,

¹⁰⁰ Collège d’enseignement general et professionnel.

¹⁰¹ One LOP allowed \$1000 for college tuition and fees, but didn’t specify per semester or per year.

unemployment insurance, education or training allowances, and/or any recent lump sum payments or settlements. Marital status has direct bearing on living allowance rates, as living allowances are generally adjusted according to students' marital and parental statuses. This can lead to confusion and conflicts between students and Band administrators. Discussing the influence of marital status on funding, one participant observed,

I think if they live, if they live on-reserve where they are kind of privy to that information, then I have had instances where they have said, well, we're not going to give you everything you ask 'cause you're spouse makes all of this money, or you know, like a common-law spouse. Or sometimes if they're non-native, like if, mostly if a native/First Nations woman is living with a non-native male, there is a bit of discrimination there. (A)

A former student also recounted,

I applied again in September 2005. I was just back with [my husband]...it was still really tentative. I had a discussion with my funding officer about my marital status. Family knew that we were back together but nobody else did. [The funding officer] was family, so she knew we were back together. I hadn't filled out...hadn't checked anything about my marital status on the application. She insisted that I had to check something, and I told her I didn't know what to check. [The funding officer] told me to check that I was a single parent to make it easier for me to get funding and so I could get more. (C)

Federal funding restrictions mean First Nations are, "forced to choose between funding many students at a low level of assistance, or a few students at a higher level of assistance" (INAC, 2005: 31). According to INAC (2005):

Statistics Canada includes expenditures for institutional operations...as well as financial assistance to students to determine what it costs to educate post-secondary students in Canada. The 1997 national average calculated by Statistics Canada was roughly \$12,000 per student, compared to \$10,000 for the PSE Program in 1997-1998 and \$11,000 in 2000-2001. (34)

However, it must be noted that this apparent increase *per student* has been caused by a decrease in the number of enrolled students receiving INAC funding combined with incremental budget increases of approximately two percent per year...The 20 to 44 age cohort (chosen because it represents the potential for PSSSP demand) has risen by almost seven percent during the same period that the number of PSE-funded students has fallen by five percent...the limited resources available through the PSE Program may be assumed to exert a downward pressure on enrolment numbers...77.4 percent of the students surveyed in Phase 2 of the evaluation said they would not have attended PSE institutions without PSSSP funding. (33, emphasis original)

In this context, 'responsible budgeting' and 'living within their means' may require students to attempt to live off of funding amounts that are too small to meet their basic needs.

The *National Program Guidelines* (2003) specify that the *maximum* living 'allowance' permitted is that established by the (annually updated) Canada Student Loan Program (CSLP) (20). However, due to funding restrictions, many First Nations use the guidelines set out in the INAC's *PSSSP Terms and Conditions*. In its (2005) evaluation of the PSSSP, INAC notes that these, "'rates for resourcing monthly allowances' were introduced in 1989 and have never been changed, notwithstanding that the consumer price index has risen 30 percent over the past 14

years” (31). Eight of the fifteen LOPs in my sample give maximum living allowances for students (see Appendix D). Most of the LOPs exceed the maximum amounts payable under the *Terms and Conditions* in most categories, although in some cases the funding rates are the same or lower. In all but one category for one LOP, the amounts laid out are below those of the CSLP for the BC Region.¹⁰² A few of the LOPs specified increases in the living allowance for high-rent areas, however, the student either needs to apply for the increase with supporting documentation and/or they must be within a specific category.¹⁰³ Generally, the high rent increase does not exceed \$100.00 per month. Beyond the small high-rent increase, regional variations in living expenses are unrecognized by the LOPs and the national guidelines. Bands may be reluctant to use the higher living allowance rates outlined by the CSLP because doing so would further restrict their budgets.

Such findings are in line with INAC’s (2005) report’s conclusions, whereby,

guidelines for PSSSP student living allowances are 14 years out of date...PSSSP students are, on average, receiving between \$500 and \$4000 less per academic year than they are paying in living expenses; and...current per student allowances are below the national average established under the Canada student loan program five years ago. (IV)

The report notes that, in BC, “the average living expenses over 8 months is estimated at about \$9300, whereas the average funding for students who do receive PSSSP living allowance is \$7514” (30).¹⁰⁴

Current policies are unable to account for, “additional expenses and burdens that are imposed on Aboriginal students when they move to expensive, urban communities and away from the support of family and friends” (R.A. Malatest et al, 2004: 14). One participant observed,

Their living allowance I know varies from band to band. Some of them, I remember when I first was going to college, back in '89, and the living allowance (laughing) *is the same...* as it was then, and I'm like, 'how do they live?' Alas, poor student, you know?" (A)

Former students interviewed for this study emphasized the difficulties of making ends meet on Band funding: “It was really living from living allowance to living allowance. It was always a stretch, stretching” (D); “I had to work. HAD to. I was always scraping” (C). Low funding levels also do not adequately account for students’ family and childcare responsibilities.

According to one study, “many Aboriginal students have family responsibilities and need additional financial support to carry them through the time it takes to attend college” (R.A.

Malatest et al, 2004: 14). One of the participants in my study poignantly attested to this point:

¹⁰² One LOP has a \$600.00 increase over the base amount for a single student with one dependent, but since the LOP’s base rate is much lower than the CSLP, the actual amount payable remained lower in the LOP.

¹⁰³ i.e. a parent or single parent.

¹⁰⁴ INAC’s (2005) report explains these trends are exacerbated for more remote bands, as students’ high travel costs leave little in the post-secondary budget (31).

Something that just popped into my mind, two students last semester, with their families, in from outside... *two families* – and I, and it just sickens me... They came to town, they had *nowhere* else to live but [in an area of the city]... they lived on [a certain street] – huge drug area. Lowest rent, but huge drug area, right? So, those kids got introduced to crystal meth. So, the Mom's are coming to school, Dad's are grubbing around for work, the teenagers are now introduced to crystal meth. One family was here for *four weeks*. Packed them up and went home. So...that...and then, one of those families was having problems...like, they figured out a way for the Mom to come back to school, but she couldn't get her money back. She couldn't finish the program, she couldn't get her money back, and the band was left paying the bill for nothing, except that it was a false start. We can do it again, you know? And this was a woman that wanted to become a teacher... That comes right down of housing, and money... I mean, if she had lots of money, they could have rented a home in a safer neighborhood and those children would have had safer people to be with. But those families – *both of them* – were in that area.

Interviewer: Were they able to get the funds, [to go] back to school?

Participant: No. Neither one of them. Nope. (Pause) It would be good to actually track the students, and actually track the problems and difficulties they encounter while they're going to school. (B)

In this case, PSSSP funding levels played a substantial role in creating a specific reality for two families, albeit not the version of reality intended by policy-makers. By specifying the 'good' that could come through tracking the problems that students encounter in post-secondary education, the participant clearly recognizes that the creation of knowledges about students may play a role in creating new potentials for Aboriginal students, their families and communities.

Funding Time/Level Limits

National Program Guidelines stipulate that the duration of students' assistance will accord with the length of their program as defined by their post-secondary institution. Students in community college, CGEP diploma or certificate programs and Undergraduate University programs can be funded up to an additional year provided, "an extension is approved in writing by the institution's dean or the head of the department" (INAC, 2003: 11). An additional year is also available for students in advanced, professional, Masters, or Doctoral programs for medical or personal reasons. If students complete a portion of their studies without funding, time already spent in their program will count against the overall funding time limit. One interview participant saw a correlation between funding restrictions and an emphasis on labour-market outcomes:

I find that they do have a preference over like a program or a certificate or a diploma, that's less education and a job... That's what I find a lot of, you know, where its not something long-term. When they have to commit to like a five year program, then that's kind of when they start... 'ohh'... (A)

Funding restrictions act on First Nations governments and individuals, emphasizing the value of time management and efficiency. Time is to be administered and made as useful and productive as possible, "[t]emporal dispersal is brought together to produce a profit, thus mastering a

duration that would otherwise elude one's grasp. Power is articulated directly onto time; it assures its control and guarantees its use" (Foucault, 1977: 160).

Complex, differing formulas and non-specific language preclude a clear-cut comparative analysis between the sample LOPs or between the LOPs and the *National Program Guidelines* regarding funding time limits. However, time limits outlined in the LOPs are generally in accord with the *National Program Guidelines* and may include restrictions on switching programs. One LOP states that students must demonstrate, "health or other valid reasons" in order to exceed thirty-two months in an undergraduate degree and encourages students to take full time courses in the summer (LOP: 10). Under the same LOP, Masters and Doctoral students are only eligible for a total of 8 months of funding in their qualifying year. Another LOP requires students to work for two years after receiving a BA to qualify for funding at the Masters level (LOP: 4). In contrast, some LOPs allow students forty months for a Masters Degree and forty-eight months for a Doctoral Degree.

Restrictions on length of funding are accompanied by course load requirements. *National Program Guidelines* stipulate that, in order to receive a living allowance, students must maintain a full course load. Most LOPs require students to carry a course load of four three-credit courses (or twelve credits) per semester (LOPs: 6; 9; 2; 11; 4; 2a; 7; 8; 3). Some stipulate students must maintain full-time status as determined by their post-secondary institution (LOPs: 1; 7; 12; 2). Some LOPs allow students a lower course load (between three and five courses) in their first semester or year and then require higher course loads (LOPs: 11; 7; 13; 3). One LOP differentiates between full-time (five courses/fifteen credits per semester) and semi-full-time status (four courses/twelve credits per semester), with the latter receiving a lesser living allowance (LOPs: 10). Two LOPs require students to be registered in classes for no less than fifteen hours per week, four days a week (LOPs: 7, 2). Some LOPs require first-year students to complete study skills, time management, and/or orientations if they are offered (LOPs: 1; 12; 7).

A central reason for course load requirements and time limits is to reduce funds paid in living allowances. One participant commented on the effects of course-load requirements:

There is some of them, they're just unrealistic expectations or, umm, what they try to do is over a four, five year program they want the student to take four courses per semester so that they don't have to pay as much living allowance. Yeah, and especially some of the first year students, or somebody that's been out for awhile, or just – I couldn't imagine just going back to university and having expectations of full courses – its just like a set up for failure, you know. We see that. A minimum of four courses before they get funded. The majority are three. But you come across a few that are four. (A)

Another participant explained that Bands are looking for ways to negotiate funding shortages:

So, one way of doing that is by upping the number of courses that the students have to take in order to get funded. And its just a measure of trying to make sure that the money goes to

where...you know, it fits. But it's a pretty tight fit. It doesn't allow for any mistakes. And it doesn't allow...and in that tightness, in that not allowing for any mistakes, if you *do* make a mistake, sometimes the band withholds it on the next cheque. So then that's...it's a downward spiral. Once they start withholding a little bit of money out of a little bit of money anyway, and you start going without this and without that, then it is truly a downward financial cycle. And the student finally ends up leaving school because, yes, they're been funded, but they haven't had enough to carry them through. (B)

Requirements for full course loads may be especially difficult for women to negotiate. Women are the majority of part-time students at both graduate and undergraduate levels and may have care giving responsibilities that preclude them taking full-time courses. In 2001/2002, 61 percent of undergraduate and 58 percent of graduate students taking studies part-time were women. In total, 31 percent of women attending post-secondary that year did so part-time, compared to 27 percent of men (Statistics Canada, 2006: 93). These trends may be exacerbated for Aboriginal women, who are noted to have more children and larger families than non-Aboriginal women. They are also more likely to be lone parents and to live with family members than Aboriginal men or non-Aboriginal women, increasing the likelihood of higher care giving responsibilities (Ibid: 189).¹⁰⁵ A 2004 report lists lack of support for women with children as a major barrier to post-secondary 'success' for Aboriginal students (R.A. Malatest et al).

The attempt to instil values related to the productive use of time is also evident LOPs' attendance provisions. Such provisions discipline students' use of time by connecting absences and even lateness with the potential suspension or loss of funding. One LOP requires students to provide a medical note for any missed classes, another specifies that, "unexplained absences of over three (3) days will result in automatic termination of educational assistance" (LOP: 3).

Another includes the following clause in the funding contract:

I UNDERSTAND THAT I MUST ATTEND CLASSES REGULARLY AND BE ON TIME. IN THE EVENT OF ABSCENCES, A PHONE CALL WILL BE MADE TO THE INSTITUTE. TRAINING ALLOWANCES WILL BE SUSPENDED IF ABSENTEEISM OCCURS WITHOUT A VALID EXCUSE. THE STUDENT IN QUESTION HAS TO PROVE TO THE BAND THAT HE/SHE IS IMPROVING ON ATTENDING SCHOOL REGULARLY BEFORE THEY CAN CONTINUE THE TRAINING ALLOWANCE.

(LOP: 13, bolding original)

Another LOP stipulates that, "failure to make up lost time due to tardiness may result in the termination of funding" (LOP: 1). These regulations invoke an image of the untrustworthy student in need of supervision. Also, as women are more likely to be the primary caregiver of

¹⁰⁵ In 2001, 19 percent of Aboriginal women 15 and over were lone parents, compared with 8 percent of non-Aboriginal women. Status Indians were the most likely of Aboriginal women to be lone parents, at 21 percent. Lone-parent families headed by Aboriginal women tend to be larger than those of their non-Aboriginal counterparts: "[i]n 2001, 22% of Aboriginal female lone parents had three or more children, more than twice the figure for their non-Aboriginal counterparts, just 10% of whom had three or more children" (Statistics Canada, 2006: 189). Also in 2001, 87 percent of Aboriginal women 15 and over lived with family members, compared with 83 percent of non-Aboriginal women and Aboriginal men (Ibid:189).

young children, heavy course loads, timed completion, and disciplinary measures tied to absence and lateness may have a stronger impact on their access to PSSSP funding. One participant noted,

Especially if they have children it can be a challenge – if they don't have a spouse – to find, childcare, for when they're in school. Females, we'll see that – all good intentions of coming back to school and their significant other looking after the children and so that part is taken care of. But then, as time goes on, the relationship breaks down. I don't know whether, because the spouse feels threatened by the woman going back to school or they feel neglected, or...I'm just guessing at some of the reasons, but the relationship breaks down and then they part and then they're stuck for childcare. We've had some students actually bring children to class. Because they, they just haven't been able to...Or they don't have any family in town... (A)

Women and Sexual Violence

Neo-liberal processes of individualisation have been noted to be particularly detrimental to women, and there is reason to suspect that Aboriginal women may be especially disadvantaged by disciplinary and accountability regimes embedded in the PSSSP. One reason for this is that Aboriginal women are more likely to have to negotiate issues of care giving than their male counterparts. In 2001, 34 percent of Aboriginal women between twenty-four and forty-four who had started but not completed a post-secondary program reported leaving because of family responsibilities versus 11 percent of Aboriginal men who reported leaving for the same reasons (Statistics Canada, 2006: 196).¹⁰⁶ Aboriginal women are two times as likely to be single mothers as non-Aboriginal women, and this is especially true of First Nation women (as distinguished from Inuit or Métis women) (Ibid: 189). Additionally, Aboriginal women may be more likely to experience gendered violence than non-Aboriginal women. In 2004, 24 percent of Aboriginal women reported that they had been victims of spousal violence in the past five years, compared with 7 percent of non-Aboriginal women. The violence they experienced was also far more likely to be 'serious' according to Statistics Canada's categorisations (Ibid: 195). Sexual violence is an issue that came up in both my interviews with previously funded students.

In one case, the woman withdrew from her program without penalty after experiencing a sexual assault. At the time, she received assurances from her Education Coordinator that she would be able to receive funding for the following term. However, when she re-applied, she was denied funding on the basis of her withdrawal. She protested the decision, but was nonetheless unable to access funding. While she still wanted to return to school, she explained, "[t]here was no way I could afford to. The one year I did try, working and going to school, I wound up on Social Assistance for the first time in my life. I couldn't afford the basics..." (D).

¹⁰⁶ According to the same report, 21 percent of Aboriginal women and 24 percent of Aboriginal men reported leaving a post-secondary program for financial reasons (Statistics Canada, 2006: 196). Overall withdrawal rates were not available.

In the other case, the woman also withdrew and wrote a letter to her Funding Officer explaining what had happened. She received funding the following term, returned to school and achieved the diploma she had been working towards. However, when she later attempted to access funding for upgrading, things had changed: “My funding officer took a bunch of notes and saw the letter from [before] and asked if it was a problem for me to continue school with all the emotional stresses I had. I said I was fine and asked about funding for next term. She said I would have to write a letter to the committee regarding my withdrawal...” (C).¹⁰⁷

While these women’s stories are unique and cannot be generalised to all Aboriginal women, the difficulties they encountered in re-accessing funding indicate how gender neutral policies may reinforce unequal power relations. They also reveal the LOPs capacities for constituting individuals and reality in unanticipated ways. Termination of funding does not necessitate an ‘end’ to the effects of power as exercised through these policies. As individuals are objectively categorized, they react to the categorisation in a subjective way – literally and figuratively changing as a result of the categorisation. These changes and their consequences are actualized in unanticipated ways (Hacking, 2002: 10). In the context of PSSSP funding determination, individuals who are deemed ‘unworthy’ of funding may react to that categorisation in myriad ways. In a colonial society rife with negative depictions of indigenous peoples, the likelihood of students’ internalisation of the category of ‘failure’ is increased. According to policy-related documents and the interviews, the internalisation of identities of failure may occur regardless of the reasons behind loss of funding or withdrawal from studies.¹⁰⁸ The participant who could not re-access funding after withdrawing due to being sexually assaulted recounts:

And I should say, too...It was *really crushing* to have *failed so badly* at something that...my Mom had ingrained in me, like its so vital that you get more than a high school education, because of the way that the working, the labour force is now, if you just have a high school education you won’t get very far. (D)

Discipline, Decolonisation, and Resistance

The legacy of colonialism and its impact on Aboriginal societies, including the devaluing of Aboriginal ways of being and the culturally and personally decimating imposition of the colonial education system, is a major factor in shaping First Nation students’ relationships to post-secondary institutions. A 2004 study examining Aboriginal post-secondary education found,

¹⁰⁷ I would like to again thank these courageous women for sharing their stories with me. I understand that these were painful experiences to re-visit and deeply appreciate their strength, candour and trust.

¹⁰⁸ R.A. Malatest et al (2004) note that many Aboriginal students, “actually leave due to other responsibilities” (11)

[p]oor self-concept and motivation were central themes of the literature review and stakeholder interviews. They were manifested in a sense of powerlessness, apathy, poor mental and physical health, anger and frustration. They can in turn lead to alcohol and substance abuse, petty thievery, physical and sexual abuse, even incarceration and a further cycle of despair. These manifestations impact on many Aboriginal students. Their home communities may also have insufficient family or institutional support to assist them in the development of a healthy mind and body.

(R.A. Malatest et al, 2004: 16)

The individualisation of responsibility evident in the LOPs neglects the societal context of indigenous education in Canada even as it absolves society as a whole from responsibility for creating positive, decolonizing educational experiences for indigenous students.

Miller and Rose (1998) warn that, “the ‘failure’ of one policy or set of policies is always linked to attempts to devise or propose programmes that would work better, that would deliver economic growth, productivity, low inflation, full employment or the like” (Miller and Rose, 1998: 4).¹⁰⁹ A recognition of how current policy environments maintain unequal power relations and marginalize alternative approaches and ways of being opens up discursive space wherein current power dynamics can be contested and altered. Even the act of disciplining individuals and assigning categories to them opens up new potential for resistance and re-creation. Post-secondary education is more than a mechanism for the creation of productive workers; it provides a forum through which competing discourses, alternative world-views, and unequal power relations can be acknowledged, addressed, and negotiated. This potential for change and cross-cultural understanding was strongly articulated by interview participants:

Participant: We don't have the bus. So that's hard. The bus doesn't come here – it stopped about five years ago. Its okay in the summer but its really bad in the winter...

Interviewer: Why did they stop the bus service?

Participant: They said it wasn't making enough revenue. (Laughs) When I think about revenue, and some of the places the [city] bus goes...(looks at her hands)...but you don't, you don't want to think that its 'cause, 'cause its on the reservation...(long pause). The more people are educated about First Nations people the more they understand. People don't know. [...] They aren't aware. They don't know about genocide, prime land being taken...and then once they learn, there's a feeling of embarrassment. They start to understand, to understand First Nations people...(long pause).
(A)

Another participant explained,

...people are starting to realize that – and the visionaries knew this a hundred years ago [...] And that is that complete western thought in universities and schools is in itself a form of racism and colonialism. And so they are starting to embrace other ways of thinking and other ways of looking at the world and incorporating some more of the Other – which is the Aboriginal, and

¹⁰⁹ Indeed, INAC is currently working on new policies for implementation in 2008. Despite my continued attempts to gain access to some of the proposals for implementation, I was unable to do so. Anecdotal evidence suggests they may involve a substantial one-time percentage-based increase in education funding to each Band, based on the previous years' education budget. If this is the case, it may prove problematic for Bands whose education budgets have been severely cut back in recent years as a result of budget shortfalls in other areas and/or third party management schemes.

Aboriginalizing curriculums and introducing more. And, again, we're not where we should be for our time and place...Like, we're landing people on other planets – or on the moon, I should say. So we're still not where we should be. But I think there's that idea, and I think we're getting better. And I think that people are starting to realize that this is a nation that has been smashed, and this is a culture of people that has been smashed and hammered for so long, and are still getting hammered, and that there's a movement to try to nurture and bring about change...and kind of try to fix what went wrong, fix what went wrong and recognize that there's value there, that we can learn from each other. Its not just one way, but it's the other way. You know, its also us gently teaching them. You know, there's that exchange of who we are instead of having it separated and divided. (B)

Chapter Summary: Disciplined Realities

Disciplinary measures embedded in the PSSSP rest largely on assumptions of the liberal rational actor whereby individuals' private selves are divorced from their public identities; people whose private lives are in disarray should be more disciplined and able to 'cope'. The measures outlined here have the propensity to differentially impact Aboriginal women's access to funding, since they are more likely to have caring responsibilities than their male counterparts and may have to negotiate issues of sexual violence during their course of study.

At the same time, such processes can be divisive at the Band level and/or 'create' individuals in unintended ways. This situation is more complex within the context of self-government. Aboriginal students unhappy with the 'status quo' may now be seen as criticizing their own governments and thereby undermining the degrees of hard-won autonomy that First Nations have re-gained. When students encounter difficulty negotiating funding dilemmas at the Band level, their belief in First Nations' capacities for exercising autonomy may be directly undermined; one former student commented, "[t]he current Education Coordinator is...non-Native. And she seems a little more impartial to family ties, family disputes and what goes on, and more interested in getting people the education they're looking for..." (D).

After the applying, submitting transcripts, attending interviews,¹¹⁰ accepting funding, negotiating fees, submitting progress reports on time, applying for bursaries and scholarships, maintaining a frugal budget, succeeding in all their courses and maintaining a full course load, among other responsibilities, students are faced with one more step: reapplication. Each of the LOPs in my sample that address reapplication processes specify that students must re-apply for funding each year, generally nearing the close of the winter semester.

¹¹⁰ One LOP requires students to complete an interview with the Director of Education each year prior to returning to full-time studies.

CONCLUSION

In utilizing the limited tools selectively made available to them by the colonial government, First Nations are attempting to rebuild their communities and societies on the foundations of an educated citizenry. The creation of well-educated indigenous populations is understood as key in facilitating not only First Nations' autonomy and self-determination, but the decolonization of the education system as well. In order to do so as effectively as possible and in consideration of the limited funds available, disciplining students in their use of those resources becomes a priority. Indigenous students are now being asked to take on all of the attributes of the ideal liberal rational actor, a conceptualisation based on the attributes of elite white males. Criteria for probation, suspension and termination of funding clearly demarcate between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for Aboriginal students receiving PSSSP funding. The measures outlined here have the propensity to differentially impact Aboriginal women's access to funding, since they are more likely to have caring responsibilities than their male or non-indigenous counterparts and also may have to negotiate issues of sexual violence during their course of study. Gender neutral policies can thereby be interpreted as discursive silences that serve to mask, justify and perpetuate current unequal power relations.

Through responsabilisation, Aboriginal students are cast as the fundamental agents in creating positive educational outcomes for themselves. Recognizing the capabilities and agency of Aboriginal individuals has been a core component of the Indigenous (or Fourth World) movement in Canada and internationally. However, this shift must also be contextualized within a neo-liberal move towards market citizenship where social problems are individualized; that is to say, the responsibility for overcoming social barriers is laid on the individual rather than society as a whole. Neo-liberal discourses play a somewhat ambiguous role in these processes. On one hand, such discourses justify and mask the increasing deployment of disciplinary and surveillance mechanisms within and by First Nations communities. Through a critique of First Nations' governing structures, capabilities and levels of dependency, they can reinforce or reinvolve colonial discourses regarding the inferiority of Aboriginal peoples, cultures, and societies. There is also evidence that First Nations governments utilize neo-liberal discourses to maintain and enhance their governing authority, potentially to the detriment of claims for Aboriginal peoples' specific rights and entitlements, such as to post-secondary education. At the same time, these

discourses may provide potent tools for resisting colonial depictions of indigenous peoples and substantively improving the lives of Aboriginal individuals and communities.

Limited funding has produced limited choices for First Nations – and limiting possibilities for Aboriginal students. The irony is that in the ‘success’ of such endeavours, Aboriginal peoples are told that their very freedom is at stake; engaging in ‘rational’ governance practices and capacity-building exercises is considered a pre-requisite to enhancing First Nations’ institutional capacities for self-determination.¹¹¹ Rather than recognizing Aboriginal peoples’ inherent rights to self-determination, self-government in the current neo-liberal environment looks suspiciously like contracting-out federal obligations and downloading responsibility for colonialism and patriarchy onto individual First Nation students.

Disciplinary measures in the LOPs are designed to facilitate the creation of responsible, self-regulating, economically autonomous individuals. Foucault explains that,

[i]n discipline, punishment is only one element of a double system: gratification-punishment ...Through this micro-economy of a perpetual penalty operates a differentiation that is not one of acts, but of individuals themselves, of their nature, their potentialities, their level or their value. By assessing acts with precision, discipline judges individuals ‘in truth’; the penalty that it implements is integrated into the cycle of knowledge about individuals. (Ibid: 180-181)

Current policies use a market-based approach to regulating and disciplining human behaviour to force individuals to calculate their actions on a cost/benefit analysis. The program enmeshes students within a web of authority relations; a system of individualization, standardized measurement, supervision, and personal accountability for fulfilment of obligation completes the process. Performance-measurement and evaluation are key; Ormiston (2002) explains,

[i]n the case of reward, there is promoted a pride of self, a pleasure in one’s performance recognized as meritorious. Similarly punishments are directed at provoking feelings of shame and dissatisfaction with self. One strives to be “deserving” of the privileges one sees granted to one’s peers...one reacts *against one’s own self*. One strives to become that which is recognized and rewarded in a positive way. (8; emphasis original)

The use of such rationalities in the constitution of Aboriginal students through the PSSSP is clear. What is perhaps most disturbing about the applicability of this analysis, however, is that Ormiston is in fact referencing teaching strategies applied by the Oblate Fathers of Canada in residential schools during the 1950’s. Although the terminology may have changed – from Indian to Aboriginal, from assimilation to autonomy – the ‘making up’ of Aboriginal peoples in Canada is far from over.

¹¹¹ Foucault (1978) makes a similar observation regarding the deployment of sexuality: “The irony of this deployment is in having us believe our ‘liberation’ is in the balance” (159).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: List and Summary of Key Policy- Related Documents Incorporated into this Research

British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education. 2002. "British Columbia First Nations Coordinators Handbook: A Guide for Serving Aboriginal Students in the Public Post-Secondary System in British Columbia." BC: Ministry of Advanced Education. Retrieved December 3 2005. Available:
http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/aboriginal/bcfnhb/advisors_role/welcome.htm

This text provides an overview of the processes of funding First Nations student's post-secondary education. It goes on to provide detailed information on the roles of First Nations Advisors and Coordinators within post-secondary institutions. It outlines some of the systemic problems in Aboriginal post-secondary education and funding administration and examines how the complex positionalities of Aboriginal students may further problematise these processes.

British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education. 2006. Proposed Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education *Strategy: Discussion Draft*. (March). British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education: Colleges and University Colleges Branch.

This paper outlines some key challenges regarding Aboriginal post-secondary education in BC and proposes a strategy to address these challenges. It was composed by the BC Ministry of Advanced Education in accordance with Aboriginal education initiatives and the Transformative Change Accord signed in Kelowna. It provides rationales for changing current policies and programs while highlighting achievements thus far. It gives an overview of past consultations and goes on to outline a proposed strategy that includes guiding principles and an action plan.

Department of Indian and Northern Development. November 2005. Comprehensive Funding Arrangement National Model For Use With First Nations and Tribal Councils For 2006/2007. November 2005.

This contract template of Comprehensive Funding Arrangements between First Nations and Tribal Councils outlines the terms and conditions for First Nations' and Tribal Councils' receipt of federal funds. It outlines the procedures through which a First Nation or Tribal Council may be obliged to default and be subject to remedial management. It also sets out delivery and reporting requirements for various programs and services, including post-secondary education funds. It further stipulates the necessary accountability frameworks for First Nations' and Tribal Councils' administration of funds, programs, and resources under such an agreement.

Department of Indian and Northern Development. November 2005. Canada/First Nations Funding Agreement; National Model for Use With First Nations and Tribal Councils for 2006/2007. November 2005.

This document is a contract template for funding agreements between Canada and First Nations and Tribal Councils. It provides general terms of agreement and lays out Canada and a Council's respective responsibilities under such an agreement. It outlines default procedures, accountability and dispute resolution procedures. An overview is given of block-funded services and delivery standards provided by a Council, including those for post-secondary education funds. It further outlines targeted programs to be provided by Council as well as delivery standards, reporting requirements, and adjustment provisions.

First Nations Education Steering Committee. 2005. The Continued Gap: An Analysis of the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Post-Secondary Education Guidelines in Regards to Transitions to Post-Secondary Opportunities. First Nations Education Steering Committee: September 9, 2005. Available: [http://www.fnesc.bc.ca/about/Gap%20Paper%20-%20September%209,%202005%20\(1\).doc](http://www.fnesc.bc.ca/about/Gap%20Paper%20-%20September%209,%202005%20(1).doc)

This report responds to the federal government's (2003) introduction of the *Post Secondary Education: National Program Guidelines*. It gives background on First Nations post-secondary education funding and examines barriers to First Nations students' academic success. It makes several recommendations for improving post-secondary funding and administration, highlighting diminishing support for First Nations' transitional programs; the need for equitable support of students from remote communities, and the elimination of fiscal support for trades training.

First Nations Education Steering Committee. 2005. First Nations Post-Secondary Education Handbook for the BC Region With Reference to the National Post-Secondary Education Program Guidelines. Vancouver, BC: First Nations Education Steering Committee. Available: [http://www.fnesc.ca/Attachments/Publications/PDF%27s/pdf/old/Post-Sec%20handbook%20-%20Feb%208%202005M%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.fnesc.ca/Attachments/Publications/PDF%27s/pdf/old/Post-Sec%20handbook%20-%20Feb%208%202005M%20(1).pdf)

This document was created by the First Nations Education Steering Committee and INAC to help guide post-secondary funding administration at the Band level. It provides an overview of the PSSSP and UCEP, which are incorporated under the Post-Secondary Education Program. It clarifies the National Program Guidelines and outlines documentation that may be required for a First Nation to pass a compliance review. It offers suggestions for local program administration and gives checklists of necessary components for student files and appeals processes. It includes an appendix with a variety of sample LOPs shared by First Nations throughout BC.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. 2003. *Post-Secondary Education National Program Guidelines*. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. November 2003.

The Post-Secondary Education *National Program Guidelines* came into effect September 1, 2004. They outline maximum funding amounts and time limits for post-secondary support of First Nations and Inuit students. They further outline minimum eligibility requirements for programs of study, institutions, and students. They require LOPs to reflect the national guidelines and to include an appeals process, emergency contingency funding, and selection criteria.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. June 2005. *Evaluation of the Post-Secondary Education Program*. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Corporate Services: Department Audit and Evaluation Branch. Assisted by Hanson/McLeod Institute.

This report reviews the findings from INAC's first formal review since 1989. It assesses the program to determine whether policy changes are necessary. The report provides an overview of the program before addressing evaluation issues, scope, and methodology and finally moving into analysis. The review was conducted in 2 phases: Phase 1 looked at the ISSP and Phase 2 reviewed the PSSSP in 7 regions (Atlantic Canada, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and BC). Literature, documentary, and statistical reviews combined with surveys, interviews and workshops provided the various data sources for the review.

Office of the Auditor General. May, 2006. Report of the Auditor General of Canada – May 2006 Chapter 5: *Management of Programs for First Nations*. Canada: Office of the Auditor General.

This chapter is part of the Auditor General's (2006) annual Status Report and examines the government's progress on implementing 37 past recommendations relating to First Nations' program management made by the Auditor General's Office. While the audit finds that progress is satisfactory in 22 of the 37 recommendations, it rates government progress overall as unsatisfactory because successful areas tended to be administrative and less significant to improving the lives of First Nations peoples. Unsatisfactory progress was found regarding mould in housing, prescription drug use, comprehensive land claims agreements, the elimination of unnecessary reporting, and addressing problems with third party management.

Office of the Auditor General of Canada. 2004. "Report of the Auditor General: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada – Education Program and Post-Secondary Student Support." Ottawa, ON: Auditor General of Canada, Retrieved November 2005. Available: <http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/domino/reports.nsf/html/20041105ce.html>

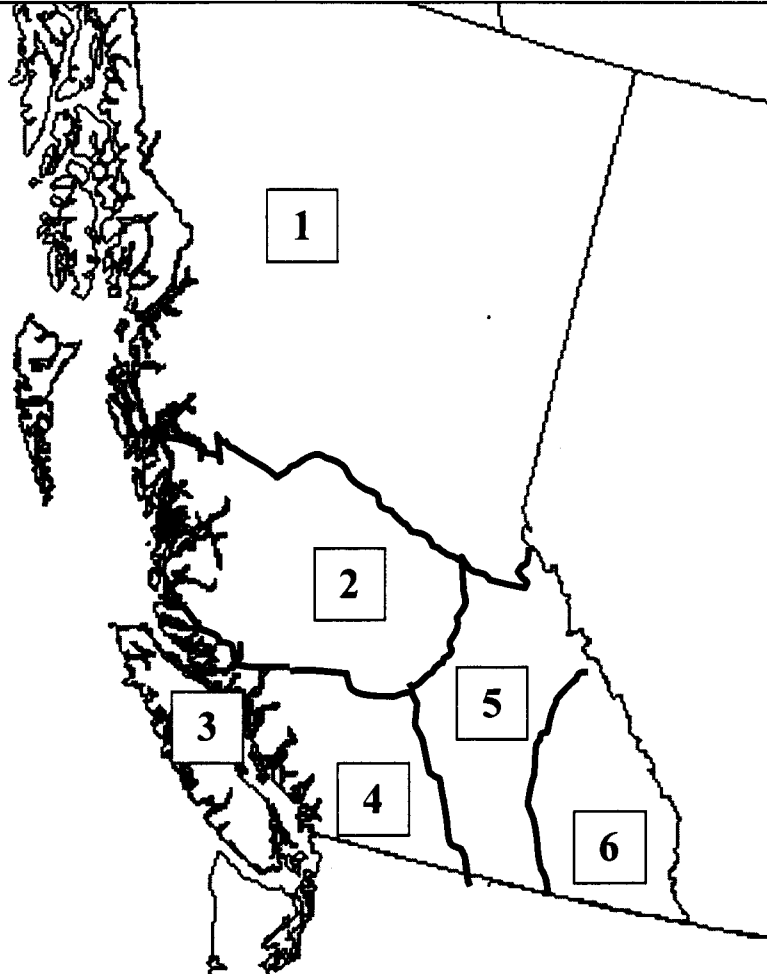
This audit finds that INAC has made little progress in addressing issues and recommendations regarding education programs made by the Auditor General's Office in its (2000) Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. It expresses concern over the PSSSP's management and Accountability framework. Problems with reporting processes are also noted. The report mentions that INAC was carrying out a comprehensive review at the time of the audit.

R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. 2004. "Aboriginal Peoples and Post-Secondary Education: What Educators Have Learned." Montreal, QC: Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation. Available: http://www.millenniumscholarships.ca/images/Publications/aboriginal_en.pdf

This is a qualitative study of Aboriginal post-secondary education in Canada examining barriers to Aboriginal participation in post-secondary education. It outlines various current initiatives for making such education more affordable for Aboriginal peoples. It goes on to analyze access programs, community delivery of education programs, Aboriginal control of Aboriginal education, and partnerships between Aboriginal communities and educational institutions.

Appendix B: Demographic and Geographic Distribution of Local Operating Policies Obtained for this Research¹¹²

1. Northern British Columbia 17% of First Nations in BC 27% Local Operating Policies	2. Cariboo Chilcotin 15% of First Nations in BC 13% Local Operating Policies	3. Islands 25% of First Nations in BC 20% Local Operating Policies
4. Coast and Mountains 26% of First Nations in BC 7% Local Operating Policies	5. Thompson Okanagan 14% of First Nations in BC 33% Local Operating Policies	6. Rockies 2% of First Nations in BC 0 Local Operating Policies



¹¹² Geographic distributions of First Nations covered by obtained Local Operating Policies have not been shown in to try and preclude the probable or actual identification of a First Nation or Tribal Council.

Appendix C: Prioritisation of Students in the Sample Local Operating Policies

Priority	Number of LOPs	Student Categorisation
1	6	Continuing Students – Students who have attended school on a full time basis and have successfully completed all courses of their program
	3	Continuing Students – Students who have attended school on a full time basis and subject to proviso regarding academic standing
	1	Graduating Students – Students Graduating from Grade 12
2	3	Graduating Secondary School Students – i. Students who graduated with a dogwood certificate in the current year, ii. Students with twelve years of public school education eligible to attend a post-secondary, and iii. Students with Grade 12 equivalent (i.e. GED). ¹¹³
	2	Graduating Students – Students with a dogwood certificate or equivalent training or education (i.e. GED).
	1	Graduating Students – Students with a dogwood certificate.
	1	New Students – Students with Grade 12 and who have not received funding.
	1	Full-Time Graduating Students – Students graduating from Grade 12, entering a post-secondary institution, and enrolling in a post-secondary full-time.
	1	Continuing Students – continuing post-secondary students;
	1	Waitlisted Students – Re-applying students whose applications were waitlisted in the previous year due to lack of funds.
3	1	New Applicants
	1	Full-Time Graduating Students – Students graduating from Grade 12, entering a post-secondary institution, and enrolling in post-secondary full-time.
	1	Graduating New Students – Students graduating from Grade 12 and entering post-secondary full-time; Students with 12 who have not received funding.
	2 ¹¹⁴	Mature Students – students are at least 21 years of age.
	1	Adult New Students
	1	Progressing Students – Students who have completed an undergraduate degree and are continuing without a break in their studies.
	1	Contributing Students – Students who have started to pay for their own education.
	2	Motivated Students ¹¹⁵ - Students that forfeit their living allowance

¹¹³ One of these LOPs further specifies that “second priority will be given to students from the following categories based on two criteria: the chief and council have received a complete application package; the second criteria is based on the date the completed application is received in the band office.”

¹¹⁴ Each of these policies includes different specifications regarding mature students. One policy gives third priority to “students who have not completed high school, are at least 21 years of age and who wish to return to full-time studies”; while the other specifies students who are at least “21 years of age and have been out of secondary school for four years.”

¹¹⁵ This was the terminology utilized in both policies.

4	1	Mature Students – Students who have been out of school for one full year or more.
	1	Late Returning & Mature Students – Including students who have had to interrupt their education for academic or personal reasons.
	1	New and Mature Students – Students with grade 12 equivalents who have not previously received funding; Mature students entering post-secondary for the first time
	2	Waitlisted Students – Students whose applications for financial assistance were previously deferred and who are reapplying.
	1	Community Members – People who have been living in the community for 6 months who haven't been funded previously.
	1	Late Returning Students – Students who have had to interrupt their education for academic or personal reasons.
	2	All Other Applications
5	1	Vocational Students – Technical / Trades students who have not been previously funded and contingent upon available funds.
	1	Part-Time and Vocational Students
	1	Community Members – Community members who have been funded in the past.
	1	Mature Students – Students over 21 years of age, who may or may not have completed high school and who are returning to full-time studies.
	1	Part-Time Students
6	1	Graduate Students – qualifying year only.
	1	Returning Students – Students who have received funding, still qualify, and have successfully completed their program of studies will be considered if the budget permits.
	1	New Students – Students with grade 12 equivalents who have not previously received funding.
	1	All Other Applications
7	1	Graduate / Post Graduate Students – Students who are not continuing students, have been previously sponsored, have good academic standing, are re-applying for sponsorship, contingent upon available funds.
	1	Previously Funded Students – Students who have received funding but did not complete their programs, dependent on circumstances.
	1	New Students – Students with grade 12 who have not been previously funded.
	1	Vocational Students
8	1	Part-Time Students – Contingent on funds.
	1	Previously Funded Students – Students who have received funding but did not complete their programs, dependent on circumstances.
9	1	Previously Funded Students – Students who have received funding but did not complete their programs, dependent on circumstances.
	1	Returning Students – Previously funded students who completed a certificate or degree program and are applying for further education in the same field.
10	1	Returning Students – Students who completed a certificate or degree program and are applying for a different program.

Appendix D: Living Allowance Breakdown by National PSSSP Terms and Conditions, LOPs, and BC CSLP¹¹⁶

Student Status	National PSSSP Terms and Conditions \$	Sample LOPs \$ Range	2001-2002 CSLP BC Region \$
Single Student Living with Employed Parent	290	320 – 825	386
Single Student Living Away From Home	675	675 – 950	935
Single Parent with One Dependent (a)	1045		
Single Parent with No Dependents			1192
Married Student with Employed Spouse (b)	675	675 – 950	1865
Married Student with Dependent Spouse (c)	895	850- 1420	
Each Dependent			
First	(a) 0	(a) 200 – 600 Average: 343	498
	(b) 175	(b) 50-175 Average: 102	
	(c) 150	(c) 50 – 320 Average: 167	
Second	(a) 160	(a) 50 – 200 Average: 133	498
	(b) 180	(b) 50 – 180 Average: 125	
	(c) 160	(c) 50 – 200 Average: 128	
Third	(a) 150	(a) 50 – 200 Average: 125	498
	(b) 175	(b) 50 – 325 Average: 119	
	(c) 150	(c) 50 – 325 Average: 141	
Each Additional	50	(a) 50 – 200 Average: 69	498
		(b) 50 – 100 Average: 56	
		(c) 50	

(Adapted from INAC, 2005: 32)

¹¹⁶ (a), (b), and (c) indicate (a) single parent with one dependent; (b) married student with employed spouse; and (c) married student with a dependent spouse.

Appendix E: Written Informed Consent to be Interviewed¹¹⁷

I am a graduate student at Simon Fraser University pursuing a degree in Sociology. I am currently carrying out research into post-secondary education funding policies for Aboriginal students in British Columbia. The title of my research project is *The Legend of the Post-Secondary Student Support Program Featuring: "Free Education for Indians" (and other Euro-Canadian Myths)*. I am hoping you will agree to a confidential interview for the study.

The study is intended to highlight the need to increase funding and improve funding mechanisms for Aboriginal post-secondary education students. In doing so, I examine how First Nations' autonomy over education funding and program administration is constrained by wider political and social contexts. Further to this, I am concerned with the ways in which current post-secondary education funding policies may impede Aboriginal women's capacities to access and complete post-secondary education.

In the study's discussion of administrative policies dealing with post-secondary education, no individual policy or procedure will be identified as belonging to a particular band. Your name, identifying characteristics, and associations with particular First Nations will be kept confidential to the full extent provided by law. Knowledge of your identity will be known by myself and my thesis supervisors, but will not be reported in any research findings or made public in any other way. Materials will be maintained in a secure location.

Following paragraph to be used only in cases where employer permission for employee's participation has been sought and obtained:

As you are being interviewed primarily due to your employment position, your [employer/band] has given written consent for your participation in this study. [employer/band] will not be informed as to whether or not you decide to participate.

It is important to point out the potential risks of engaging in this study. I argue for greater resources and attention to be paid to The Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP). Research results will not link discussion of Local Operating Policies to the specific First Nation with which they are associated. Even so, it is possible that the study results may be used by others to critique PSSSP policies.

Your confidentiality will be protected by removing identifying characteristics from interview transcripts; in addition, you will be able to approve the interview transcripts that I will use for writing up the research results. In the unlikely event that a research participant is identified, this may result in psychological stress, social, economic, or political sanction for the participant concerned.

¹¹⁷ Please note that the title in the informed consent forms differed from the final title for the thesis. My intention with the original title was to clearly identify a central narrative in colonial (and often racist) discourses regarding Aboriginal post-secondary education in Canada. I thereby hoped to locate this discursive construction as the central 'problem' with which the thesis was concerned, purposefully subverting an identification of the 'problem' as being located within Aboriginal communities and peoples. Upon consultation, it was decided that the heavy use of irony and literary references were inappropriate. Furthermore, my use of the term 'Indian' might be understood to perpetuate the colonial and racist discourses I intended to undermine and subvert.

Should you agree to an interview, you may withdraw your participation at any time. Should you wish to obtain information about your rights as a participant in research, or about researcher responsibilities, or if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the manner in which you were treated in this study, please contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics by email at hweinber@sfu.ca or phone at 604-268-6593.

Director, Office of Research Ethics
8888 University Drive
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, British Columbia
Canada V5A 1S6
+1 604 291 3447
email: dore@sfu.ca

Participant Signature (indicating written consent)

Date

Appendix F: Verbal Informed Consent to Be Interviewed

Principle Investigator Script

I am a graduate student at Simon Fraser University pursuing a degree in Sociology. I am currently carrying out research into post-secondary education funding policies for Aboriginal students in British Columbia. The title of my research project is *The Legend of the Post-Secondary Student Support Program Featuring: "Free Education for Indians" (and other Euro-Canadian Myths)*. I am hoping you will agree to a confidential interview for the study.

The study is intended to highlight the need to increase funding and improve funding mechanisms for Aboriginal post-secondary education students. In doing so, I examine how First Nations' autonomy over education funding and program administration is constrained by wider political and social contexts. Further to this, I am concerned with the ways in which current post-secondary education funding policies may impede Aboriginal women's capacities to access and complete post-secondary education.

In the study's discussion of administrative policies dealing with post-secondary education, no individual policy or procedure will be identified as belonging to a particular band. Your name, identifying characteristics, and associations with particular First Nations will be kept confidential to the full extent provided by law. Knowledge of your identity will be known by myself and my thesis supervisors, but will not be reported in any research findings or made public in any other way. Materials will be maintained in a secure location.

Following paragraph to be used only in cases where employer permission for employee's participation has been sought and obtained:

As you are being interviewed primarily due to your employment position, your [employer/band] has given written consent for your participation in this study. [employer/band] will not be informed as to whether or not you decide to participate.

It is important to point out the potential risks of engaging in this study. I argue for greater resources and attention to be paid to The Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP). Research results will not link discussion of Local Operating Policies to the specific First Nation with which they are associated. Even so, it is possible that the study results may be used by others to critique PSSSP policies.

Your confidentiality will be protected by removing identifying characteristics from interview transcripts; in addition, you will be able to approve the interview transcripts that I will use for writing up the research results. In the unlikely event that a research participant is identified, this may result in psychological stress, social, economic, or political sanction for the participant concerned.

Should you agree to an interview, you may withdraw your participation at any time. Should you wish to obtain information about your rights as a participant in research, or about researcher responsibilities, or if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the manner in which you were treated in this study, please contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics by email at hweinber@sfu.ca or phone at 604-268-6593.

At this time, potential interview participants will be provided with the following written information:

Director, Office of Research Ethics
8888 University Drive
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, British Columbia
Canada V5A 1S6
+1 604 291 3447
email: dore@sfu.ca

If you provide your verbal consent to participate in this research, I shall sign the form on your behalf. This indicates that you verbally agree to be interviewed and have received a copy of this signed consent form for your records.

Interviewer Signature (indicating verbal consent) Date

Do you have any questions or concerns regarding the study or your participation?

Appendix G: Verbal Informed Consent for Consultation in a Research Study

Principle Investigator Script

I am a graduate student at Simon Fraser University pursuing a degree in Sociology. I am currently carrying out research into post-secondary education funding policies for Aboriginal students in British Columbia. The title of my research project is *The Legend of the Post-Secondary Student Support Program Featuring: "Free Education for Indians" (and other Euro-Canadian Myths)*.

The study is intended to highlight the need to increase funding and improve funding mechanisms for Aboriginal post-secondary education students. In doing so, I examine how First Nations' autonomy over education funding and program administration is constrained by wider political and social contexts. Further to this, I am concerned with the ways in which current post-secondary education funding policies may impede Aboriginal women's capacities to access and complete post-secondary education.

Throughout the research process, I am engaging in consultations with the Aboriginal community and individuals who have knowledge and experience in dealing with Aboriginal post-secondary education funding in Canada. Consultations will take the form of informal in-person and/or telephone conversations about Aboriginal post-secondary education funding. These consultations are intended to open new avenues for exploration and/or analysis; to guide the research; to facilitate its relevancy to Aboriginal women and their communities; and, as much as possible, to insure the work is grounded in Indigenous knowledges. They may also inform my decisions as to textual data sources which will make up my primary data source. I hope you will consider engaging in the consultation process.

It must be noted that there are potential risks in engaging in this research. The study argues for greater resources and attention to be paid to The Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP). One of the potential benefits of the study is that there will be more awareness of PSSSP funding issues among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations. At the same time, heightened attention to the issue may generate critique from some sectors. This is always a risk when profiling pressing public policy issues. In order to protect individual First Nations from such criticism, please be assured that research results will not link discussion of Local Operating Policies to the specific First Nation with which they are associated.

If you should choose to participate in the consultation process, your identity will be kept confidential to the full extent permitted by law. Knowledge of your identity will be known by myself and my thesis supervisors, but will not be reported in any research findings or made public in any other way. You will not be required to write your name on any research materials and research materials will be kept at a secure location. You will not be directly quoted in the final thesis and you can withdraw your participation at any time. You are welcome to a final copy of the thesis in appreciation for your help. Please feel free to ask any questions you might have about the study.