

“Our authority is community based”: Funding, power and resistance in community-based organizations

by

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BA, University of Winnipeg, 2004

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the relationship between funding practices and the non-profit sector through a case study of one community-based organization, called Ma Mawi wi Chi Itata Centre, located in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The thesis traces implications of the shift to project funding models and outcomes-based management for the community-based organizations (CBOs). The research draws on Foucault's governmentality analytic to illuminate how funding practices relate to neoliberal discourses and traces the tensions and resistances that are created by funding policy interventions at the point of practice. I argue tensions arise between: competition and collaboration; textual accountability and community need; reporting, learning, and teaching; different problem solving approaches; and individualism and community building practices. CBOs are intimately wrapped up in the project of governing. They are not either, a symbol of citizen engagement or a symptom of a decimated state; rather they are both, part and parcel of a system in which we are both governed and govern.

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DEDICATION: AN INSPIRATION

to love. to be loved.

to never forget your own insignificance.

to never get used to the unspeakable violence and vulgar disparity of life around you.

to seek joy in the saddest places.

to pursue beauty to its lair.

to never simplify what is complicated.

or complicate what is simple.

to respect strength, never power.

above all, to watch.

to try and understand.

to never look away.

and never, never to forget.

-Arundhati Roy

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

[16th century maps of Africa were] misleading in all kinds of ways, but they contained quite a bit of information about the continent's interior—the River Niger, Timbuktu. Two centuries later mapmaking had become much more accurate, but the interior of Africa had become a blank. As standards for what had counted as mappable facts rose, knowledge that didn't meet those standards—secondhand travelers reports, guesses hazarded without compasses or sextants—was discarded and lost. Eventually, the higher standards paid off—by the nineteenth century the maps were filled in again—but for awhile the sharpening of technique caused a loss as well as a gain (MacFarquhar, 2010).

An important part of the social and economic fabric of Canadian life, community-based organisations (CBOs) provide services and supports in most areas of human existence from homelessness to health, social, old age and child care to the environment and natural resource management. Because of their localized conception and delivery, CBOs are seen as particularly effective vehicles to address the needs of diverse and marginalized populations and offer the potential to engage these populations in a form of direct democracy. Indeed, in my own life and work, I am drawn to the power and potential of community-based organisations to create meaningful improvements in people's lives and local conditions. CBOs can be an expression of grassroots efforts by citizens to create social change; this is a hopeful perspective, one that sees their proliferation as symbolic of increased citizen engagement, activism and attention to caring for one another. However, there is another side to this proliferation. From this perspective the growth of the community sector is symptomatic of a retrenchment of the social welfare state as governments increasingly turn to 'the community' to fill the gaps left by the dismantling

of the public social safety net. What is clear from these different and somewhat contending perspectives is that CBOs are intimately wrapped up in the project of governing. They are not either, a symbol of citizen engagement or a symptom of a decimated state; rather they are both, part and parcel of a system in which we are both governed and govern.

To survive and operate most CBOs depend on outside funding from governments, private sector philanthropists, or foundations. Funding is typically provided with an attached set of conditions and assumptions—both explicit and implied—about how and for what reasons CBOs exist and should operate. In this thesis, I examine how funding-based conditions operate to shape the work of CBOs and consider how the normative assumptions and related discourse contained in these funding relationships reflect certain ideals about CBOs, the state, and citizens. Specifically, I consider how the shift away from *core funding* to a *project funding model*¹ driven by outcomes-based management (and the associated concepts of accountability and efficiency contained within) both affects CBOs in specific ways and reflects a changing vision by governments of the sector.

New funding relationships influenced by New Public Management ideals are impacting the work of CBOs (Evans & Shields, 2002). Significant changes to the Canadian welfare state beginning in the 1980s left many CBOs faced with the dilemma of trying to meet increasing need while being forced to do so in an increasingly regulated and restrictive environment (Rice & Prince, 2000). Further, the move away from core funding to a model of project-based funding, has been widely acknowledged for its detrimental impact

¹ These terms will be defined and examined in more detail in Chapter Three of the thesis.

on the sector (Neville, May 2005). Others yet have noted the ways that CBOs are under pressure to adopt values of the private marketplace including “competition, diversification, entrepreneurialism, innovation, [and a] focus on the bottom line” (Scott, 2003, p. 8). Richmond & Shields (2004) comment on the cumulative impact of these changes noting “the contract relationship that is being developed between the state and non-profit organizations is serving to transform the non-profit sector, moving it away from its core mission, commercializing the sector’s operations and compromising its autonomy” (p. 53, see also: Evans & Shields, 2002) and argue that these shifts are guided by a neoliberal policy orientation.

I explore how these shifts operate discursively through a case study of the funding relationships in one community-based organization. To do so, I draw on the conceptual tools offered by Michel Foucault’s concept of governmentality. Governmentality has two meanings: as a conceptual framework that examines the mentalities of rule, and as a historically specific mode of governing, exemplified in neoliberal societies. As an approach to policy analysis, governmentality yields new insights not apparent through traditional approaches to studying power and organizations. Governmentality is a framework that prioritizes examination of the role of discourse in the policy process. In a Foucauldian sense, discourse refers to the grouping of meanings and representations that function to produce a specific version of events and vision of a particular issue or problem at a historically specific place and time. Discourse not only creates a certain understanding of events, it limits other possibilities and meanings. A significant aspect of Foucault’s understanding of discourse is its attention to power. Foucault drew attention to the imbrications of power and knowledge, referring to this as power/knowledge.

Power/knowledge refers to the networks of power that intimately circulate in knowledge production to socially construct meaning. In the case of CBOs this can be seen, for example, in the construction of people as clients and the re-casting of success in terms of measurable outcomes. Thus, as the opening quote suggests, this thesis is as much concerned with the operation of power/knowledge as it is with the specific funding arrangements that affect CBOs. One theme that surfaces throughout the research is that CBOs have experienced a similar phenomenon of re-mapping, in which certain forms of knowledge have been overwritten with new, more technical ways of knowing. This points our attention to another strength of the governmentality approach in that it encourages us to focus our attention on the seemingly mundane ‘grey arts and sciences’ (for example accounting, performance management) and to see in these practices the functioning of complex networks of power/knowledge that convey certain practices of governing.

The goal of this thesis is to develop a better understanding of the relationship between power and resistance that is manifest in the relationship between community-based organizations (CBOs) and their funders. Research in this area is important as CBOs find themselves operating in an increasingly neoliberal policy environment. This research has three main objectives: to understand and affirm the work of community-based organizations, to better understand the relationship between CBOs and their funders and, most broadly, to provide some insight into the complex relationship between power and resistance.

My interest in this project is manifold. It has developed out of my experience working as an activist, employee, board member and, grant writer with a number of CBOs, experiences in which I often found myself struggling to negotiate a complex funding

environment. I am also motivated by a desire to ‘unpack’ the often-abstracted view of neoliberalism and to understand it instead as number of specific localized practices, ideas and programs that are susceptible to challenge (Walker, Roberts, Jones Iii, & Frohling, 2008).

A recent experience caused me to further reflect on the role funders play in shaping the work of community-based and grassroots organizations. From 2006 to 2009 I served as a steering committee and later board member with a feminist, grassroots organization in Winnipeg that uses popular education to educate women about how to influence public policy and government budget making. We received project funding through Status of Women Canada (SWC), a federal granting body, to support this work. We were in the process of preparing our renewal application for SWC when, with a change of government in Ottawa, the terms of reference for the funding program were significantly altered. Among the changes made was the removal of the ability of funded organizations to engage in “advocacy” and an additional requirement that organizations be legally incorporated (Ratansi, 2007) . As a result of these changes, our proposal was rejected and we were forced to shelve the project for a year while we reconceptualized our proposal to "bring it [the proposal] into better alignment with the Women's Community Fund requirements" (personal communication, Mandy Fraser).

A year later, we were successful in submitting a new application; all that was required was a change in the way we ‘spoke’ about our work. We knew how to ‘play the funding game’ to make our project ‘fit’ with the requirements of the funder. In fact, most people who work in CBOs will tell you that they are also well aware of the ‘the funding game’ and that they often engage in a similar process of reframing their work to qualify for

funding. However, I worry that there may be a broader trade-off resulting from ‘playing the game’. Does this, in fact, shape more than just how we talk about our work by altering the work that the community sector is able to engage in? And, as a result does this change how we think of the role of the community sector as a whole? In short, I am left questioning how we take up and challenge ideas that circulate around us. As such, this thesis also considers the critical role of resistance in CBOs work. Power/knowledge is not unidirectional; rather it operates as a constant back and forth flow between parties. I draw on interviews and documentary evidence to elaborate the sometime contradictory ways that CBOs view their work and relationship to funding programs. Throughout the thesis I argue that a real connection to the local community has been a source of strength to the CBO under study and has, at times enabled them to stay a particular course of action, despite pressure to do otherwise.

An orientation to the thesis

This thesis is made up of six chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter Two locates this inquiry in the context of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism describes a number of different policy directions, programs and actions by governments and private actors that reflect a belief in the primacy of market-based solutions to a host of social, economic, and political problems. For most people, neoliberalism is exemplified by the governments of the 1980s and 1990s, those of the conservative administrations of Ronald Reagan in the United States and of Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain and their immediate successors. These were governments that sought to drastically shrink the size and role of the state in citizens’ lives and that forced us to re-think what we, as citizens, could expect from our governments. Also at this time was the re-casting of advocacy based on

common experience or identity as ‘interest groups’. As Thatcher famously proclaimed at the time “there is no society only individuals and families,” clearly the message was that citizens were to fend for themselves leaving all, but particularly the most marginalized populations vulnerable. While we may have gone from the “no society” ideal of Thatcher to the “big society” ideal of the current British government, many of the key ideas and tenets of neoliberalism remain in force today, albeit often cloaked in new terminology. In this chapter I explore the concept of neoliberalism from two theoretical positions- the political economy tradition and the analytics of governmentality - to more fully understand the impact that neoliberalism has had on the state, the non-profit sector and citizens. Each provides unique insights into the complex phenomenon of neoliberalism.

Chapter Three considers how neoliberalism has been taken up with respect to the non-profit sector by exploring how the mechanisms used to fund the sector have changed to better align with neoliberal discourse. This has had a significant impact and destabilizing effect on the functioning of the non-profit sector and the organisations that make it up. In particular, I consider how the shift to diminished and more targeted funding (in the form of project funding); the new focus on risk aversion and an increased reliance on outcomes-based management are reshaping the sector. Changes to funding mechanisms, I argue, have had a broader impact than on just the organizational capacity of the sector; they also reflect and contribute to a changed vision of the role for the non-profit sector and a new ideal of citizenship, in which the normative value of social citizenship has been replaced with a market ideal.

Chapter Four outlines the design of the research and key research methodologies on which I draw. I draw insight from the seemingly disparate traditions of Foucauldian

discourse analysis, feminist research methods, and community-based research methodologies. Each of these perspectives has provided unique insight and an important values base from I have been able to develop this research. The combination of these methodological perspectives has not always been a comfortable one but ultimately, I believe the ability to work in these places of tension makes for a deeper and more interesting analysis. In this chapter I also introduce the reader to my research site, the Ma Mawi Chi Itata Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Chapter Five presents the key analyses of this thesis. Drawing on data from two funding programs and from interviews with key respondents, I consider the role of neoliberal discourse in the work of community-based organisations at the point of intersection between policy and practice. First, I consider the way that various elements of the funding process operate discursively to structure the work of CBOs through two processes ‘textual accountability’ and social construction. Textual accountability refers to the reorganization of community work to meet the documentary demands of funders; while social construction refers to the discourses through which ideas about the targets of funding programs (in this case Aboriginal youth) and the role of community-based organisations are constructed and conveyed through funding programs. Together these processes tightly delimit the role and work of CBOs. Secondly, I explore several areas of contradiction and tension between the views and aims of funding programs and those of CBOs themselves. I pay particular attention to the “opportunities for critique, resistance and intervention” (Keevers, Treleaven, & Sykes, 2008, p. 461) created in these areas of tension and look more closely at how Ma Mawi addresses the challenges set up by funding programs. I note, in particular, how Ma Mawi draws on the discourse of

‘community’ as a source of strength that allows them to challenge the limitations of the project funding model and neoliberal discourse. In this section I also argue that Ma Mawi sees a role for themselves in educating funders about the limitations of the current funding model. These practices point to the need for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between CBOs and the state.

Chapter Six provides concluding thoughts and reflections on the implications of this research for the non-profit sector and funders, and for the body of work on governmentality. Finally, it is worth noting that changes continue to occur in the non-profit sector and its relationship to the state, and in terms of our conceptualisation of citizenship in Canada. We may be moving into a new era of relationship between the non-profit sector, the state and citizens that draws on key ideas from the past and mixes them with new ones from today.

CHAPTER 2: UNDERSTANDING NEOLIBERALISM

Neoliberal discourse and policy refer to a number of different directions, strategies, programs and actions by governments and private actors that support the primacy of market-based solutions to a host of social, economic, and political problems.

Neoliberalism and the policies and practices stemming from it have had a significant impact on the non-profit sector. The influence of neoliberalism has shifted the perception and role of the sector and the funding mechanisms that provide support to it. I draw insights from two theoretical positions- the political economy tradition and the analytics of governmentality, a framework first articulated by Foucault - to more fully understand neoliberalism's impact on the state, the non-profit sector and citizens. I find these approaches complementary as each provides unique insights into this complex phenomenon.

Insights from the political economy approach

From the perspective of political economists neoliberalism is a primarily political and economic configuration. Harvey (2005) describes neoliberalism “a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can be best advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within a institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade” (p. 2).

Fundamentally, neoliberalism reflects a belief in market-based approaches to dealing political, social and economic issues; an emphasis on ‘small government’ and expanded private sector and; a renewed emphasis on the individual. In practice, this has resulted in a significantly circumscribed role for the state, the privatization of many public services,

the removal of the universality standard from social policy initiatives, the slashing of taxes, increased foreign investment, weakened labour and environmental protections, the increased deregulation of the private sector and the downloading of responsibility for social provisioning onto community organizations (Evans & Shields, 2002; Goode & Maskovsky, 2001; Harvey, 2005; Rice & Prince, 2000).

As an economic theory neoliberalism draws from the neoclassical tradition that reflects a belief that the best way to ensure the functioning of the market is through limited government intervention in either the market or the lives of the population. In the post-war period, many began to fear a return to the events of the Great Depression and argued the need for a more interventionist state. The result was a more social form of liberalism in the 20th century that sought to ensure the smooth functioning of the market through increased government regulation and intervention in new areas of social policy (Mahon, 2008; Rice & Prince, 2000). These ideas are generally associated with the work of John Maynard Keynes and the resulting political and economic configuration that is often known as the Keynesian Welfare State. In Canada, universal social programs also played an important role in fostering a sense of national unity and were designed to instil in citizens a common set of values and loyalty to the society as a whole.

However, the Keynesian welfare state that emerged from this set of beliefs came under fire in the latter quarter of the 20th century as the economic prosperity that characterized the post-war era began to level off and the cost of providing social programs was increasingly questioned. In its place a new theory of the role of the state emerged that advocated the liberation of the economy from the control of the state. This theory was advocated by economists such as Milton Friedman and Frederich Von Hayek and was

consolidated in the political realm by the governments of Reagan and Thatcher. By the 1980s a growing consensus had been reached that advocated smaller government and favoured private and market-based solutions to a host of issues.

Neoliberalism is much more than an economic theory, it is also a 'political project' designed to restore the class power of a small number of elites (Harvey, 2005). Thus, despite a professed interest in small government, neoliberal advocates encourage an expanded or interventionist role for government when it is in the interests of defending private property or business rights. Peck and Tickell (2002) distinguish between 'roll-back' and 'roll-out' neoliberalism. Roll-back neoliberalism focuses on shrinking the state through projects of "marketization and deregulation" with a goal of dismantling the institutions that make up the Keynesian welfare state. In contrast, roll-out neoliberalism seeks to expand the reach of the state into new areas of social policy and is concerned with the "aggressive reregulation, disciplining and containment of those marginalized or dispossessed by the neo-liberalization of the 1980s" (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 389). Education, social services, welfare, health and family policies are all mobilized in the interest of neoliberal agendas. This is a 'deeply interventionist' form of neoliberalism, through which "new technologies of government are ... designed and rolled out, new discourses of reform are ... constructed (often around new policy objectives such as 'welfare dependency'), new institutions and models of delivery are ... fashioned and new subjectivities are ... fostered" (Peck and Tickell, p. 389). Roll-out neoliberalism, as a deeply social and constructivist phenomenon highlights the need to complement the insights from political economy with a conceptual and theoretical framework that is attentive to the social aspects of the complexities of neoliberalism.

Insights from governmentality

The literature on 'governmentality' provides another element of the theoretical framework for my project. Governmentality is an approach to the study of social policy that has gained in popularity among analysts because of the new insights it can illuminate (McKee, 2009; Smith & Orsini, 2007). Foucault first introduced the concept of governmentality in a series of lectures in the 1970s (Foucault, 1977-78/2007). In these lectures Foucault considered the 'problem' of government in liberal democratic society. Importantly, Foucault employed the term 'government' in a much broader sense than offered by traditional approaches to the study of government. For Foucault, government refers to all activities undertaken to conduct human behaviour. With this expanded notion of government in mind Foucault then outlined the concept of governmentality as way of understanding the unique form of power and rule in liberal society.

Specifically, Foucault made a distinction between sovereign, disciplinary and governmental modes of government, arguing that in liberal society rulers were forced to confront the problem of governing populations who had a new degree of freedom and autonomy to act and desire as they choose. The 'problem' of government became one of how to govern people through their freedom and autonomy. Thus, new techniques of government were required that focused more on the management of the population than on territory. As such we see a new interest in, and deployment of, programmes of public health, education, and employment and corresponding elevation of 'experts' in these areas (e.g. public health officials, social scientists, economists etc). The focus of government shifted to creating subjects that desire and act accordance with the aims of government- this is accomplished through programs of government and systems of

thought that inculcate in the public certain ideas and behaviours². The point is that we are not compelled to act, we want to.

However, McKee (2009) notes that beyond Foucault's historically specific explanation of governmentality (as a mode of governing evolving from the decline of feudal society) a broader usage of the concept has emerged that employs governmentality as a tool to understand the 'how' of governing. The central characteristic of this form of rule is that government occurs 'at a distance'. Thus, governmentality considers the "wide range of programmes and rationalities that have been designed to manage the conduct of diverse human capacities, groups, and populations" (Ilcan & Basok, 2004, p. 131). These 'programmes and rationalities' operate by aligning the desires and actions of a population with the health and wellbeing of the nation as a whole. This is accomplished through the reformulation of "objects, instruments and tasks of rule" toward ensuring that the domains of the market, civil society, and the citizenry function in accordance with the interests of the population as a whole while still respecting the 'autonomy' of these domains (Rose, Barry, & Osborne, 1996, pp. 43-44).

Support to the growing community sector is one mechanism through which this is operationalized; governments are able to affect the behaviour of the population while simultaneously minimizing their direct role in providing for the population and continuing to exert influence over the shape and outcomes of this work. This dynamic has particular resonance in neoliberal societies as it also helps to 'buffer' the state from direct

² A contemporary example can be seen in attitudes towards smoking, for example. Governments have not out-and-out banned smoking, instead they engage in public education campaigns, they tax cigarettes, they limit the spatial environments in which you are permitted to smoke, at the same time as smoking comes to be seen more and more as a moral and ethical issue (for example, not smoking around children). Until smoking comes to be seen as sufficiently undesirable that we choose, of our own will, not to smoke.

criticism from citizens by positioning the community sector as the provider of social health and welfare. The community sector then is a part of a newly configured relationship between the state and citizens and is an actively involved in the project of governing.

While governmentality extends the notion of government beyond the power of the state, to include a complex assemblage of “institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex, power” (Foucault, 1977-78/2007, p. 108), it also seeks to understand the regulating relationship between government and citizens (Rose et al., 1996; Schofield, 2002). This is done by considering the ways that this form of government is present *in the state*- something Foucault referred to as the ‘governmentalisation of the state’ (Dean, 1999; McKee, 2009). Thus, a governmentality analytic continues to afford the state an important, albeit reconfigured role. McKee (2009) argues that despite its increased reliance on an expanded network of actors in the project of governing, the state remains a “pivotal actor in shaping both the conceptualization of the ‘problem’ and the proposed solution” (p. 470). Rose & Miller (1992) highlight the key function of financial and economic resources in the process of establishing and maintaining the state as a ‘centre’ in these expansive networks of power. They write “financial and economic controls established by central government set key dimensions of the environment in which private enterprises must calculate. ... Hence the threat of withholding of funds can be a powerful inducement to other actors to maintain themselves within the network” (p. 189). Funding provided to CBOs is an important example of this dynamic at work and serves to illuminate how this particular form of government operates.

Rose (1996) argues that governmentality is both a *political rationality*, characterized by a particular style of reasoning, moral and, epistemological assumptions and a diverse set of *technologies of government* that regulate the behaviour of individuals and communities. Similarly McKee (2009) notes that a governmental analytic focuses on both the “discursive field in which the exercise of power is rationalized- that is the space in which the problem of government is identified and solutions proposed; and the actual interventionist practices as manifest in specific programmes and techniques” (p. 466). Political rationalities are ideas about the appropriate limit of politics, the division responsibility among the family, church, and government, the appropriate function of the economy and ways of caring for citizens, to name a few. In short, political rationalities of government represent a normative vision and hegemonic ideal about the functioning of society. Technologies of government are the “specific programs, practices, and procedures” that support these rationalities (Teghtsoonian, 2009, p. 29). Technologies of government mean that this form of rule is an active and interventionist one.

Li (2007) draws our attention to the activities that are required to make governmental action possible. She identifies two key practices that support intervention into the lives of populations; the practices she identifies are those of ‘problematization’ and ‘rendering technical’. Problematization is the process by which phenomena are identified as “deficiencies that need to be rectified” (p. 7), allowing subsequent intervention into the newly defined ‘problem’. With respect to the non-profit sector, shifts in the model and approach to the funding of the sector are reflective of a changing conception of its role, in which its role as a site of advocacy and for the activation of citizenship has been identified as a problem to be addressed. Rendering technical is identified as a range of

practices that employ knowledge about the ‘problem’ to define its boundaries, identify actions and appropriate interventions into the problem. Rendering technical is also a process of de-politicization through which political debates are repositioned as technical problems to be addressed through the intervention of experts (Li, 2007). Thus, for example, questions of poverty and discrimination, and the unjust distribution of resources among the rich and poor, are rendered non-political by focusing on the skills, abilities and access to opportunity of the poor rather than on the historical processes through which some groups come to be poor while others do not. The processes of problematization and rendering technical are interrelated. As Li notes “the identification of the problem is intimately linked to the availability of a solution” (p. 7). In the case of community-based organisations, we can identify these processes at a number of levels: the community to be intervened in, the individuals who make up this community, and the organization itself. In the current discourse, for example, the issue of marginalized and racialized communities is cast not as an issue of social and historical injustice, but as a problem of inner-city blight that effects the population as a whole through increased crime rates and ‘burden’ on the social welfare system. Cruikshank (1999) identifies, for example, the way the problem of the poor has been identified as one of disempowerment, the solutions to which involve engaging the participation of the poor in a wide range of programs that work through their agency and empowerment to encourage them to participate in conventional ways in the mainstream economy.

Governmentality and ‘Advanced Liberal’ Society

Those working the governmentality tradition use the term ‘advanced liberal’ to specify a political, economic, and social configuration that parallels the economic theory and

policy orientations of neoliberalism. Government in ‘advanced liberal’ societies is characterized by three key shifts from previous forms of government, these are: a new way of understanding the subject of rule, an elevation of new forms of expertise, and a renewed focus on community as the locus of government (Dean, 1999; Miller & Rose, 2008). Similarly, Dean (1999) refers to these as: a new ‘prudentialism’, the deployment of ‘technologies of agency and performance’, and a ‘contemporary form of pluralism’ (p. 166). These shifts do not represent a clean break from previous forms of government; rather they draw on and re-shape them, working together to support a broader ideal of a certain form of society. In the following I elaborate on what is meant by these shifts in government.

First, government in advanced liberal society relies on a new subject of government—the free and active individual who “seeks... to ‘enterprise themselves’, to maximize their quality of life through acts of choice” (Rose et al., 1996, p. 57). Dean (1999) traces the rise of prominence of this subject as tied to critiques of the welfare state from across the political spectrum, with advocates from all sides arguing in their own way that the welfare state presented limits to one’s freedom. From the political right it was argued that the market and not the state was the best arbiter of social health and welfare, while from the political left there were concerns that the welfare state was a tool of social control and was ineffective in alleviating inequality and poverty. Dean (1999) notes that over time the critiques from the left were “re-mapped onto the critiques of excessive government of neoliberal thought” (p. 155) and further that “where the political and cultural movements sought a utopian vision of the emancipated self... the neo-liberal critiques of the welfare

state sought to redeploy the ‘free subject’ as a technical instrument in the achievement of governmental purposes and objectives” (Dean, 1999, p. 155).

The free and active citizen is the ‘responsibilized’ subject who properly manages the range of ‘risk’ factors in one’s life: ill health, family breakdown, loss of employment, rape and other forms of violence are just some of the areas we are meant to protect against. This new subject is appropriate to the logic of advanced liberalism as it draws on the rhetoric of individual choice as the best means by which we can insure against such risk factors. This is troublesome because, as Kershaw (2004) notes, “the language of choice facilitates the articulation of neoliberal principles within a rhetorical framework that conveys a sense of political neutrality and individualizes responsibility for social inequalities” (p. 928). Whether we exercise or not, eat ‘right’, smoke, where we send our children to school, the type of health care we receive; these are increasingly positioned as matters of choice through which we are responsible for minimizing the risk to ourselves and society.

The active citizen is juxtaposed against ‘targeted populations’ who are the subject of a range of interventions designed to re-create them as active subjects. Dean (1999) argues that this represents a ‘re-coding’ of “stratification, disadvantage and marginalization” as issues to be addressed by modifying the life choices of the marginalized rather than as issues of social justice and inequity to be addressed through structural or societal reform (p. 167). The specification of a new subject in such a way circumscribes the solutions to the problem we see as available. Indeed, targeting and reform of high-risk populations, rather than redressing inequities and injustices, is a common focus of many funders.

The newly responsabilized subject reflects a broader conception of society as one based on risk. Beck (1992) and others have discussed the rise of the 'risk society' that has replaced older models of social care. The focus on risk is seen in new forms of social and health insurance schemes, which as much as they are meant to safeguard against illness or loss of work, are a way of shielding society against the risks associated with these events. The preoccupation with risk is also seen in the rise to prominence of those professions aimed at calculating and mitigating risk: auditors, evaluators, and project managers to name a few.

Secondly, advanced liberal government is characterized by a 'new pluralism'; people are encouraged to identify not through a common identification with society but through smaller and small units of identification: local communities, workplace teams, student cohorts, social identities, and leisure groups. As Rose et al. (1996) argue this represents a new relationship "between the responsible individual and their self-governing community that has come to substitute for that between social citizen and common society" (p. 56). Ilcan & Basok (2004) refer to this as "governing through community" or "community government" and note "making citizens responsible for service provision to their own clients and communities is a phenomenon of advanced liberal forms of government" (p. 137). Evidence of this shift is seen most clearly in the proliferation of community-based organizations that are increasingly responsible for finding solutions to a host of social problems and provisioning for targeted populations.

Rose (1999) suggests that the new emphasis placed on community represents a compromise for neoliberalism's most virulent proponents (see also Brodie, 2002). Market-based solutions to social problems have not been fully adopted, instead a 'third

way' of government has developed, in which individuals are responsible for each other in relation to their own community and self-interest. Rose (1999) argues efforts among neoliberals to appeal to traditional sources of authority (the church, school, politicians and public figures) were unsuccessful because the authority of these institutions had been undermined by the existence of the social welfare state that had elevated new professional forms of expertise (social work, public health, and so on). As a result, 'community' emerged as the locus of government in the current era. The result is a state no longer responsible to provide for the citizenry as members of a collective society, this task falls instead to a range of community 'partners' who become responsible, not only for service provision, but are also brought into the project of governing citizens (Cruikshank, 1999; Hyatt, Goode, & Maskovsky, 2001; Ilcan & Basok, 2004; Rose, 1999).

The developing community (or third) sector is of interest to me as it provides insight into a hybridized form of power that exists between the traditional sovereign power of the state and the liberal notion of the wills and desires of individuals, now intertwined in the name of the "public good" (Rose, 1999, p. 171). Ilcan & Basok (2004) argue that the voluntary sector is an ideal site for the exercise of this form of power because there is a "resonance between advanced liberal commitments to responsabilizing citizens and the sentiments of the citizens on their responsibilities vis-à-vis the community" (p. 140). However, rather than shrink the size of government as some have argued, these programs actually increase it, requiring the marginalized to interact with programs of government in a multitude of local sites (Cruikshank, 1999).

The focus on the active individual and community as the preferred subjects and objects of government are intimately tied to technologies of ‘agency’ and ‘performance’. These technologies of government represent a ‘double movement’ of autonomization and responsabilization that work in tandem to support a key hallmark of advanced liberal society, the process of governing ‘at a distance’ (Rose et al., 1996). Technologies of agency encourage the devolution of responsibility to more and more local entities, while technologies of performance are employed to monitor and shape these sites. Dean (1999) argues that technologies of agency are visible at two key levels: the individual and in the form of the ‘contract’ (p. 169). At the individual level technologies of agency work by employing what Cruikshank (1999) refers to as the ‘will to empower.’ The ‘will to empower’ is evident in the plethora of activities that seek to work on the agency and self-esteem of the poor or marginalized. These technologies are evident in the multitude of activities that work by “soliciting the active participation of the poor in dozens of programs on the local level, [in] programs that aim at the transformation of the poor into self-sufficient, active, productive and participatory citizens” (Cruikshank, 1999, p. 69).

Programs of neighbourhood and community development, outreach and education, health promotion, to increase voting and civic participation all work through technologies of agency and empowerment. Technologies of agency work to reconfigure the relationship between citizens, communities, and the state. In this newly configured relationship the primary job of the state is to “empower the poor, and other citizens as well, to provide for themselves and their communities own needs” (Hyatt et al., 2001) p. 207) rather than to have the state provide for citizens directly. At the organizational level,

technologies of agency rely on contracts with CBOs and other tools to ‘empower’ communities to provide for their members.

Technologies of performance and calculation are employed to monitor the work of newly empowered individuals and organisations. This particular technology has displaced the forms of expertise that were prominent under the welfare state formation (that of the social worker, the clergy, those in the ‘psych’ professions) with new forms of expertise based on calculative regimes of performance. “Contracts, targets, indicators, performance measures, monitoring and evaluation” make up this particular technology (Rose et al., 1996, p. 57) and are the “technical means for locking the moral and political requirements of the shaping of conduct into the optimization of performance” (p. 169). They are particularly effective in governing the conduct of CBOs “according them a certain autonomy of decision power and responsibility for their actions” (Rose et al., 1996, p. 57). Clarke & Newman (1997) refer to these shifts as part of a broader ‘managerialist discourse’ that “offers particular representations of the relationships between social problems and solutions. It is ... concerned with goals and plans rather than with intentions and judgment...[and] offers a technicist discourse which strips debate of its political underpinnings, so that debate about means supplants debates about ends...bracketing wider questions about social and public purpose” (p. 148).

The logic models increasingly employed by funders are a good example of this mode of government at work. A logic model is “a graphic display or ‘map’ of the relationship between a program’s resources, activities, and intended results, which also identifies the program’s underlying theory and assumptions” (Kaplan & Garrett, 2005, p. 167). The program logic model employed by the United Way of Winnipeg, for example, breaks

down an organization's work into 'inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes' and tracks progress toward outcomes based on a number of 'indicators', quantified according to set 'measurement tools' (United Way of Winnipeg, 2007). These models encourage organizations to think of their work in terms of measurable and discrete items and focus on the 'ends' rather than the means, overlooking the role of process and values in the work of CBOs.

Cruikshank (1999) argues that this particular technology "make[s] political and governmental action on that issue possible. Government by numbers... indicates an extension of the reach of power rather than its concealment" (p. 117). Dean (1999) argues that while these technologies present themselves as ways of re-establishing trust in institutions, they actually presume a "culture of mistrust" (p. 169). These new forms of knowledge, expertise and trust subsume older ones. This dynamic was particularly evident throughout my interviews as many participants discussed the ways that the 'audit' has come to replace person-to-person relations of trust and verification.

A number of authors have noted that these technologies have a productive capacity as well. As Cruikshank (1999) notes not only do numbers track the work that organizations engage in, they actively shape it as well. Similarly Power (1999) discusses the ways the technology of the audit operates to make organisations auditable. These and other authors all support the contention that mechanisms such as funding contracts, evaluation methods, and accountability requirements alter the behaviour of CBOs. Scott (2003) refers to this as 'contracting in' - a process by which contract terms are used to alter and standardize formerly autonomous organisations to the specifications of government. Richmond & Shields (2004) express a similar concern commenting that "the contract

relationship that is being developed between the state and non-profit organizations is serving to transform the non-profit sector, moving it away from its core mission, commercializing the sector's operations and compromising its autonomy" (p. 53, see also: Evans & Shields, 2002) and argue that these shifts are guided by a neoliberal policy orientation. Similarly, Scott & Struthers (2006) state that organisations "modify their activities based on the funding environment" (p.13). The question that this project seeks to explore is to what extent and in which ways.

Governmentality provides an important framework and way of thinking about neoliberalism and its relationship to community-based organisations. Most significantly governmentality encourages us to think about the art of governing including and beyond the state. For the purposes of this thesis this provides an opening to explore the role of CBOs as part of the project of governing, a perspective that reinforces the importance of this type of study. As a framework, governmentality also supports a ways of thinking about neoliberalism and its impacts beyond the government of the day. This affords us a way out of the impasse of right versus left that can help us understand why the fundamental character of neoliberalism has endured through governments of all political stripes.

Political Economy and Governmentality: Complementary Approaches

The political economy and governmentality approaches are complementary; taken together, they offer a more fulsome analysis of the forms of rule in neoliberal or advanced liberal societies. Each approach sheds light on a different element of the shifting relationship between the state, the non-profit sector, and citizens.

The political economy approach to theorising neoliberalism has been critiqued for overly emphasizing the role of the state and market at the expense of other social forms. Clarke, Newman, Smith, Vildler, & Westmarland (2007) argue that the political economy approach tends to 'residualise' social difference, subsuming the impacts of race, gender, ability and the like under the category of class. Brown (cited in Clarke et al., 2007) argues this reduces neoliberalism to "a bundle of economic policies with inadvertently political and social consequences" (p. 19). Neoliberalism's effects trace along and combine with markers of difference to form unique outcomes. In the case of this project for example, Canada's colonial history plays an important role; colonization and neoliberalism intertwine in a local and specific ways.

A governmental analysis, on the other hand, forefronts the ways that neoliberalism "produces subjects, forms of citizenship and behaviour, and a new organisation of the social" (Brown cited in Clarke et al., 2007, p. 19) and refocuses our gaze on the 'how' (rather than the 'who' or 'why') of governing. Focusing on how power operates through a complex assemblage of "institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics" expands the analysis beyond class to consider a range of other factors and processes (Foucault, 1977-78/2007, p. 108). Indeed, an important contribution from the governmentality literature is its aid in shifting the focus away from grand theories and onto the day-to-day practices and professions that make up the 'art of governing' (Rose, Malley, & Valverde, 2006). In fact, in refocusing attention on the practices of daily life, governmentality may have more in common with some feminist analyses than is commonly suggested.

However, the governmentality approach has been critiqued for privileging official discourse at the expense of local, lived realities. Critics of the governmentality approach argue that it relies too heavily on ‘official text’ and assumes too direct of a relationship between governmental intentions and their uptake; put otherwise, we do not always act as intended. In response, McKee (2009) argues for a ‘realist’ governmentality approach that employs mixed methods and focuses on ‘localized empirical accounts’ to address the limitations of governmentality. This approach emphasizes the primacy of “politics and social relations, as well as the importance of local variation and context” (p. 479). Rose et al. (2006) also argue that governmentality is appropriate to analyse politics and human relations.

Government is not assumed to be a by-product or necessary effect of immanent social or economic forces or structures. Rather, it is seen as an attempt by those confronting certain social conditions to make sense of their environment, to imagine ways of improving the state of affairs, and to devise ways of achieving these ends. Human powers of creativity are centered rather than marginalized, even though such creation takes place within certain styles of thought and must perforce make use of available resources, techniques, and so on (p. 99).

Such an approach is important to avoid the tendency to simply ‘tag-on’ an analysis of resistance; the tendency being to see local resistances as borne of, and in reaction to, broader narratives (McKee, 2009).

Peck & Tickell (2002) also draw our attention to the need for a both/and approach to analyzing neoliberalism. They suggest that most critical analyses present neoliberalism as either “monolithic and omnipresent...insufficiently sensitive to its local variability and complex internal construction” or in the form of excessively local and contingent analyses that are “inadequately attentive to the substantial connections and necessary

characteristics of neoliberalism as an extra local project” (Peck and Tickell, 2002, p. 382). They suggest the way between these extremes is to treat neoliberalism as a process rather than an end-state by paying attention to the processes of neoliberalization with its attendant contradictions and resistances. Throughout this project I heed these critiques by drawing connections between localized funding and reporting practices in one CBO and broader neoliberal discourses. Governmentality is just one part of my “analytic toolbox, good for some purposes but not for others, and capable of being used in conjunction with other tools” (Rose et al., 2006, p. 100).

An analysis of neoliberalism that draws from the political economy tradition points our attention to how the downloading of responsibility to the non-profit sector affects struggles for equity and social justice. From this perspective, the non-profit sector is understood as a site of struggle and resistance. A governmentality analytic helps draw our attention to the productive elements of power, focusing our attention, for example, on how neoliberal political and economic formations work productively to create new subject positions in the non-profit sector. From this perspective, power is more diffuse and multi-faceted. Throughout my research I find that people’s experiences reflect both types of power. Sometimes they engage in direct confrontation and struggle in a traditional social movement sense, for example, they directly resist the imposition of a specific directive or policy direction. Other times their relationship to power is more complex, they often simultaneously take up and challenge the identities and subject positions encouraged by neoliberalism, they also engage in practices that alter the very shape and form of neoliberalism itself.

The non-profit sector is not outside of government, rather, it is intimately tied to practices of governing in advanced liberal society. Working between these two positions allows us to see power as something that is, at times, mobilized in the interest of one group or another with material effects, and at other times, as a more diffuse set of society-shaping practices to which we neither consent or resist. Li (2007) adopts a similar in-between position; as she notes “some practices render power visible; they trigger conscious reactions adequately described in terms such as resistance, accommodation, consent. Other modes of power are more diffuse, as are peoples’ responses to them” (p. 25). This seems to me, entirely consistent with Foucault’s belief that power and resistance are polyvalent and multi-faceted.

In this chapter, I have explored the overarching context for my two theoretical positions, opting to draw from and combine these perspectives throughout my analysis. In the next chapter, I consider the overarching context of neoliberalism as it relates to a specific set of practices and policies that are re-shaping the community sector. In doing so, I hope to provide a starting point for analysis that links changes to the community sector to the larger neoliberal project.

CHAPTER 3: THE STATE OF THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR

The purpose of this chapter is to examine how neoliberalism has been taken up with respect to the non-profit sector by exploring how the mechanisms used to fund the sector have shifted in ways that align its goals and practices with neoliberal discourse. This has had a significant impact and destabilizing effect. However, changes to funding mechanisms have had a broader impact than on just the organizational capacity of the sector; they also reflect and contribute to a changed vision of the role for the non-profit sector and a new ideal of citizenship. It is important to consider the type and level of support to the non-profit sector because such an exploration yields insights in the social relations between the state, the non-profit sector, and citizens (Phillips, Laforest, & Graham, 2008).

By the end of the 1990s voluntary sector organizations were showing serious signs of stress. Evidence was mounting on all fronts that the new approach to financing services was not working. Voluntary sector organizations reported difficulty with ever increasing accountability requirements; rigid funding policies and practices that impeded service delivery, funding contracts that did not support organizational capacity, or in some instances, even cover the actual cost of program delivery. Voluntary organizations find it increasingly difficult to meet their legal obligations to staff and many lack the organizational capacity to sustain fundraising efforts. Voluntary sector funding is increasingly unstable and short term (Eakin, 2001, pp. 2-3).

Neoliberalism and advanced liberal mentalities of rule have resulted in a newly configured vision of the state in which the state is responsible for maintaining law and order, while a range of intermediate actors and private citizens are responsible to “promote individual and national well-being by their responsibility and enterprise” (Rose, 1999, p. 139). As governments have come to increasingly rely on the non-profit sector,

the mechanisms through which they provide support to it have changed to more closely reflect neoliberal rationalities. As Eakin's (2001) synopsis of the state of the sector above suggests, support to community-based organisations is inadequate and restrictive. In particular, funding relationships that have their origins in the New Public Management ideals and influenced by neoliberalism are impacting the work of CBOs (Evans & Shields, 2002, 2005; Richmond & Shields, 2004).

There is now a significant body of literature documenting the shifting relationship between the non-profit sector and the state in Canada (Scott, 2003). Much of this work has examined the nature of these shifts at the sectoral level. However, research in this area is still relatively new (Scott, 2003) and in Canada much of this work is clustered in the 1990s as organisations, activists and academics geared up in preparation for the Voluntary Sector Initiative.³ A similar flurry of activity occurred in several other countries around the same time, as organisations prepared to participate in similar voluntary sector-state accords. A related and more recent body of work in Canada critically reflects on the Voluntary Sector Initiative and its role in re-shaping relationships between the state and the sector, and within the sector itself. Among writings on the sector, the 1990s are almost universally acknowledged as a time of major change. These changes are often, although not always, acknowledged as having been influenced by neoliberalism. There is less writing, however, that critically examines these shifts as part of the part of the project of governing populations and the non-profit sector as a site of government itself.

³ The Voluntary Sector Initiative was a five-year (2000-2005) joint initiative between the Government of Canada and the voluntary sector (represented by select large, national voluntary organisations) that was designed to discuss and address key issues facing the sector.

Major changes to the welfare state model, influenced by neoliberal ideas and a significant level of panic around the deficit, took place in Canada throughout the 1990s and reshaped the roles and relationships between governments, the non-profit sector, and citizens (Eakin, 2007; Hall & Reed, 1998; Rice & Prince, 2000). The Keynesian Welfare State that emerged in Canada in the post-war years had sought to ensure the smooth functioning of the market through the provision of universal social programs that were intended to instil in citizens a common set of values and loyalty to the society as a whole (Mahon, 2008; Rice & Prince, 2000). However, this set of beliefs came under fire in the latter quarter of the 20th century as the cost of providing universal social programs became susceptible to the criticisms of the new logic of neoliberalism and the debate about the crisis of the welfare state came to be dominated by an ‘economic rationality’ focused on finding “cost-effective” solutions to the crisis and achieved largely through the privatization of public services (Procacci, 2001).

Throughout 1980s and 1990s, governments increasingly downloaded responsibility for the provision of social services to community-based organisations. This occurred through the reduction of direct funding to social services so that CBOs were in the position of needing to plug newly created holes in the social safety net, and through a new reliance on ‘contracting out’ to CBOs to provide specific programs formerly within the purview of government. The result was a reconceived vision of the appropriate role for the sector as a service provider rather than as participants in a broader movement for social justice and equality. These changes were accompanied by a heightened interest in ‘accountability’ as governments sought to retain some level of control over newly devolved services. In Canada, an already heightened interest in accountability was fanned

by a number of accountability ‘scandals’ in government including the HRDC grants and contributions audit and the federal ‘sponsorship scandal’ (Good & Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 2003). The result was the development of an accountability regime that is narrowly focused on protecting against the misuse and abuse of funds. It is the overriding singular nature of this focus that has negatively affected CBOs. As (Phillips & Levasseur, 2004) note “it is not whether governments should exercise accountability over contracts and contributions but how they do so that is the critical determinant of the impact of accountability measures on the contracting organisations” (p. 454).

A number of authors have drawn on the work of Julie Unwin to describe the state of the non-profit “funding economy” in Canada (Phillips, 2006; Phillips et al., 2008; Scott & Struthers, 2006). Unwin (2004) proposes a typology of funding styles that mirrors ones’ own financial decisions; funders are motivated to “give”, “shop” or “invest” in community-based organisations⁴. Each style corresponds to certain funding mechanisms. Giving has been the backbone of the sector; giving is represented in an “open-ended transfer of funds and/ or resources to an organization”, these are unrestricted funds traditionally in the form of long-term, core operating funding and favourable tax status for registered charities (Scott & Struthers, 2006, p. 7). Giving represents a ‘hands-off’ role for the state in providing for citizens and in its relationship to the sector. In contrast, investing aims to develop the capacity of, and long-term relations with, the non-profit sector. This approach is seen in targeted, long-term and relatively open-ended funding arrangements (Phillips et al., 2008). The dominant funding style today is ‘shopping’; this

⁴ To this list Phillips et al. (2008) add ‘promote innovation’ as a funder motivation, one that is reflected in the growing interest in social finance and social enterprise.

is seen in the prevalence of contract relationships between the sector and the state. The shopping model employs language and mentalities of commercial exchange.

Organisations compete with one another to win contracts for the provision of goods and services and “funders tie payments to defined activities and outcomes, and include provisions for the active monitoring of inputs, outputs, and more recently, outcomes” (Scott & Struthers, 2006, p. 8). As Evans & Shields (2002) note, “market, individual, consumers, clients—these are the new hallmarks, the conceptual furniture of the neoliberal project” (p. 146). The cumulative effect of this approach is significant. Scott and Struthers summarise the shifts

Funding time frames have become shorter, funding arrangements have become more prescriptive and less collaborative, and the types of allowable expenses have narrowed considerably and now exclude many essential core organizational functions. There is a greater emphasis on accountability to funders and risk management (tied to new ideas about results-based management and governance models) that...has created barriers to the effective and responsive performance on the part of non-profits...the system of project-based contracting, with its preoccupation with risk management, has undermined collaboration and partnerships by organizing the relationship between funder and recipient around control and compliance (Scott & Struthers, 2006, p. 12).

Shopping, conclude Scott and Struthers, is a model “designed to facilitate funder control” that has come to dominate grant-making programs (Scott & Struthers, 2006, p. 9). Community-based organisations report a substantial increase in the time and resources they expend in order to complete more and more onerous funding applications and reports, comply with ever more rigid funding terms, and respond to the general increase in the level of surveillance of their activities. This also speaks to some of the internal tensions within neoliberal discourse as, on the one hand, characterized by the practice of

‘government at a distance’ and limited government, and on the other driven by a desire for heightened surveillance.

Diminished and more targeted funding

Funders have largely moved away from core funding to increasingly targeted project funding as they seek to achieve the maximum ‘bang for their buck’. This reflects a change in perspective among funders, from “funding organizations delivering services to contracting with community organizations for specific services” (Eakin, 2007, p. 1). CBOs report pressure to constantly come up with new and seemingly innovative project ideas, even as the need for existing programming persists. Similarly, there are concerns that targeted funding schemes tend to favour organisations with appeal to broad swaths of the population; accordingly emergent, equity seeking and less popular causes, such as anti-poverty work tend to suffer. Targeted funding similarly favours larger, more established organisations, particularly as funders increasingly require that organisations partner or leverage matching funding.

As funders have shifted focus away from core funding they have narrowed the scope of activities that they are willing to fund. This is seen, for example, in the reticence among funders to provide funding for ‘administrative costs’ (also known as the cost of ‘keeping the doors open and the lights on’). The result has been a reduction in the overall level of funding provided to each organization, to the extent that CBOs are now most often funded at “rates below cost recovery” (Eakin, 2007, p. 27). At the same time however, the project funding model allows funders to “extend... greater financial control and administrative oversight through new funding mechanisms” (Scott, 2007, p. 39) by more and more tightly specifying the activities that organisations may engage in. The shift to

project funding means that organisations are forced to rely on a “complex web of unpredictable, short-term, targeted project funding” (Scott, 2003, p. 3). This creates new problems for CBOs in attempting to retain staff and provide continuous service to the communities they serve. The overall effect has been described as a ‘project treadmill’ and a ‘house of cards’ as organisations are faced with the dilemma of trying to meet increasing need while being forced to do so in an increasingly regulated and restrictive environment (Rice & Prince, 2000).

Risk aversion, accountability and outcomes-thinking

The new accountability regime is not only creating more work for CBOs, it is also stifling innovation among them. CBOs now operate in an environment that many see as intolerant of risk, particularly as CBOs are forced to comply with contract terms that require them to specify outcomes in advance of commencing the work. This is challenging for CBOs who now find they are unable to adapt to changing local conditions and circumstances. This has only further deepened the administrative burden on CBOs, forcing organisations to stretch resources to the absolute breaking point and redirect energy away from much needed services towards the maintenance of funding (Eakin, 2007). Lara-Cinisomo & Steinburg (2006) find that the cost to CBOs of funder compliance is significant: in their study 44% of staff time and 11% of CBO’s budgets were found to be spent on funder compliance activities. Eakin & Richmond (2004) describe the impact of changes made in funding and accountability practices made during the 1990s as “devastating” (p. 261).

CBOs have learnt to repackage their projects to better fit with funders’ requirements. This is having an impact beyond the application process, as CBOs not only repackage

their projects for funders; they also alter the type of work they engage in. This is supported by a number of studies of the sector in which the authors find that “style and forms of political action” the sector is willing to engage in are changing (Laforest & Orsini, 2005, p. 491; Scott, 2003). Foucault (1977) also speaks to the productive capacity of technical documents, noting they become “no longer a monument for future memory, but a document for future use” (cited in Graham, 2005b, p. 5). There is a lasting impact of changes in the ways of writing about the work of CBOs. All this is not to suggest that CBOs are unaware of the ways that funding requirements are reshaping their work; rather, faced with extreme community need CBOs simply try to do the best work with what is available to them.

In sum, Scott (2003) argues that changes in the level and type of support to the non-profit sector have broader impacts than are immediately apparent. “Project thinking”, she argues, “speaks to the broader driving change in the sector: the privatization of risk; the erosion of social cohesion/civic engagement/community-mindedness; and the marketization of social and economic relations” (p. 39). The changes made over the last twenty years in Canada have seriously hampered the ability of the non-profit sector to fulfill its potential and mission and have rendered it a heavily regulated and relied upon, yet unstable, sector. These changes have challenged more than the operational capacity of the sector, they represent a new vision of its role in society in which CBOs are created a sites of community government and are responsible for providing for, and reforming populations. However, changes in support to the sector also go further yet, for they also reflect a changed vision of citizenship in Canada. In the next section I will discuss how

they mechanisms used to finance the non-profit sector map onto and reflect a neoliberal ideal of citizenship.

Implications for citizens

The non-profit sector is an important site for the formation and practice of citizenship. It is a means by which citizens express collective identities and values and make claims on the state, and has the potential to promote social inclusion and cohesion (Phillips, 2006). Because of this unique role Phillips et al. (2008) argue that differing visions of the relationship between the state and citizens, and of citizenship itself, are reflected in the different funding mechanisms to the non-profit sector. As they write “[financing] instruments structure ... the forms of interaction between actors by directly affecting the terms of access to policy making, the routes of political representations, and the forms of political expression through which claims are made... they inform and shape the way collective actors organize themselves, delimiting the boundaries of what is acceptable and legitimate” (p. 10).

Financing mechanisms that provide core funding and support advocacy functions for non-profit organisations reflect a vision of the role of the non-profit sector as a promoter of social change and inclusion. Phillips et al. (2008) refer to this as a ‘citizenship financing’ model. From this viewpoint the role of the non-profit sector is to promote the full inclusion of all members of society as citizens; the goal of the model is to level the playing field between members of society by “redressing long standing power imbalances” (Phillips et al., 2008, p. 8). In Canada, this model was the basis on which the non-profit sector was funded up until the 1990s. Phillips et al. (2008) argue that the financing regime up until this time was meant to support collective action in the practice

of citizenship; governments believed that they could “promote the formation and maintenance of a Canadian identity” by mobilizing disadvantaged segments of the population (p. 11). The result was a strong network of advocacy and social justice seeking groups that persisted until economic pressures caused governments to begin downloading responsibility for the social safety net. As this occurred many of the advocacy groups once supported by the government, became critical of the new policy directions it was engaging in. Governments responded by seeking to contain criticisms by placing new limits on the advocacy functions of the non-profit sector (Laforest & Orsini, 2005; Phillips et al., 2008). This strategy altered the dynamics of the non-profit sector as advocacy-seeking organisations were replaced with larger, more professional philanthropic organisations and as the government ceased to provide funding to sustain organisations, providing funding instead only in return for action on specific deliverables (Phillips et al., 2008). These changes represent more than simply containment and change in character of the sector; they are reflective of a changing vision of citizenship itself.

The vision of social citizenship has been replaced with a new, marketized model of citizenship in which citizenship rights are recast as ‘obligations’. Speaking about the Canadian experience Jenson & Phillips (2001) describe the 1990s as an era of ‘reconstruction’ of citizenship, characterized by an “individualization of responsibility for life’s hardships” (p. 80). In Canada, this shift is emblemized in rising backlash against ‘special interest groups’ who were increasingly castigated in public discussions in favour of the undifferentiated, ‘average’ citizen (Phillips et al., 2008). Freeland (2001) argues that the move to a model of third party-provided social services undermines the value of social citizenship in favour of a model of market citizenship. He notes three ways in

which the contracting regime supports this: by positioning the citizen as a ‘consumer’ of services, by marginalizing the role of the state in citizens lives through the creation of a buffer layer of third party providers, and by defining the relationship between third party providers and the state in increasingly marketized terms (see also: Goode & Maskovsky, 2001).

The cumulative effect of this new model of citizenship goes further yet. Market citizenship not only supports new ideas about our relationship to the state and non-profit sector as consumers of services, this form of citizenship also circumscribes solutions to social problems we see as possible, redefining them, for example, in economic terms. Procacci (2001) notes that “citizenship is hence undermined in current social reforms under the dominance of orientations such as individualization, contractualization, flexibility, marketization, humanitarianism—all promoted as ‘new’ solutions to social problems” (p. 50). In this formulation, the analysis of issues such as poverty and marginalization is shifted away from structural or societal causes onto the behaviour of the poor. These newly individualized notions of citizenship set up a different set of responses to social problems. The solutions now come in the form of interventions designed to work to ‘improve’ the capacities of the individually affected. Thus, we see a proliferation of programs designed to act on the entrepreneurial, job-seeking and self-improvement capabilities of the poor. Evidence of this is easily found in the host of programs in the non-profit sector that seek to increase the participation of the marginalized in community planning exercises, in governance functions through community councils or co-operatives, or by enrolling them in job readiness programs that focus on providing supportive working environments in which participants can gain job

skills and experience. It also highlights the ways that many contemporary poverty alleviation strategies work by “soliciting the active participation of the poor in dozens of programs on the local level, [in] programs that aim at the transformation of the poor into self-sufficient, active, productive and participatory citizens” (Cruikshank, 1999, p. 69). These initiatives are not, in and of themselves negative, nor are they run by individuals who are hell-bent on privatizing what is left of the social safety net; rather they are run by well-meaning social reformers hoping to improve the lives of marginalized people (see: Li, 2007 for a similar argument). As Heald (1990) notes of her participation in a similar initiative, “we were not compelled, we cared” (pg. 156).

The voluntary sector is a key site for the performance of these new identities. Ilcan & Basok (2004) refer to this as “governing through community” or “community government” and note “making citizens responsible for service provision to their own clients and communities is a phenomenon of advanced liberal forms of government” (p. 137). Rather than sites of collective struggle, community organisations are increasingly looked to as agents in the moulding of the poor and marginalized into the properly behaving (market) citizen, an identity most often achieved through participation in the paid labour market. Hyatt et al. (2001) echo this in noting that community interventions are now designed as “measures intended to inculcate in all citizens, including the poor, the values of the marketplace. Social programs, such as they were, now emphasize... the need to encourage the poor to be self-managing and entrepreneurial and to rely on themselves and their own innate abilities rather than on government assistance” (p. 203). What remains of social citizenship, she argues, has been repackaged in the form of a new identity, that of the ‘volunteer’.

The “volunteer” is a new kind of political subject, one who is deemed better adapted to the particular requirements of the present form of neoliberal governance. These include an unquestioned acceptance of the claim that the free market is the most cost efficient and the fairest way of delivering services to both the poor and the non-poor, the privatization of formerly public and state-sponsored amenities, and an emphasis on competition and consumerism in all spheres of life (Hyatt et al., 2001, p. 205).

CBOs, themselves repositioned as service providers rather than social justice advocates, are ideal sites where this new identity is performed. Ilcan & Basok (2004) support this contention arguing that the non-profit sector has become a “target community of service providers” whose role it is not just to re-form the attitudes, skills and abilities of a client population, but also to create volunteers as ‘responsible citizens’ who take on the role of providing for others.

In this section I discussed how neoliberalism has been taken up with respect to the non-profit sector by exploring how the mechanisms used to fund the sector have changed to better align with neoliberal discourse. This has had significant impact on the sector itself; the relationship between non-profit organisations, the state, and citizens; and has contributed to a new ideal of citizenship that reflects neoliberal values and goals. Funding mechanisms used to support the sector reflect a vision of community-based organisations as a site of ‘community government’ and of citizens and ‘individualised’, ‘responsibilised’, market citizens. However, the neoliberal aspirations that these funding relationships represent are not taken up without question. Community-based organisations engage in myriad practices that challenge, alter and undermine these goals.

It is the 'push and pull' of these practices as they occur 'on the ground' that I now explore.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN- METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Having discussed the theoretical framework and political context that inform the study, this chapter provides an overview and explanation of my main methodological approaches. These methodological approaches reflect my epistemological and ethical commitments to understand how power operates and in doing so, create opportunities for critique and disruption and to recognise the value of non-dominant discourses and situated knowledges. In what follows I outline an approach to critical research that draws from community-based and feminist methodologies as well as from the traditions of critical discourse analysis. Finally, I introduce the reader to the case study site and main methods of analysis used in this thesis.

Methodological Approaches

This research is informed by a commitment to the power and potential of critical research to contribute to expanded understandings of power and its workings. It also seeks to understand the complex relationship between dominant discourse and resistance. This is not a disinterested inquiry then; understanding power can help us to understand how specific formations of power are created and come to dominate, and to reveal in whose interests power operates (Weedon, 1987). Esterberg (2002) notes that the goal of “critical research is to work towards human emancipation” (p. 17), while Mertens (2007) states that in this context “the role of the researcher... is reframed as one who recognizes inequalities and injustices in society and strives to challenge the status quo, who is a bit of a provocateur with overtones of humility and who possess a shared sense of responsibility” (p. 212). A commitment to social justice has informed my choice of topic,

my methodological approach and will continue to shape my research, both in terms of process and outcomes.

Critical research also takes place in real sites with actual people and communities. As such, it is important to approach this research guided by an ethical commitment to honour and respect the lived realities of the people and places that feature in this project. Many marginalized communities have expressed that they have been ‘researched to death’, most often not to the benefit of their members. In fact, the experience of research for many marginalized groups has been oppressive rather than transformative. In paying attention to my research processes I hope to contribute to a body of critically informed research that is respectful, meaningful to the participants, and connected to an agenda of social justice in both the research process and outcomes, one of which will be to contribute to a body of work that can help Ma Mawi and other CBO’s in their daily practice and efforts to shift policy debates. Constructing a research project built on principles of partnership and dialogue has been fundamental to this goal. With this in mind, I draw from several methodologies that reflect these commitments. Feminist and other anti-oppressive methodologies, community-based research methodologies, and Foucauldian discourse analysis all make up my methodological perspective. These approaches share a commitment to uncovering power and its operations with a goal of understanding how we may affect it.

Community-based methodologies

The term ‘community’ is a highly contested one, variously referring to communities of locality, ethnicity or identity (based on personal characteristics or shared beliefs and practices). In spite of this, a diverse set of practices has developed and clustered together

under the umbrella of community-based research; these practices are often united more by an epistemological and ethical commitment than a common set of research methods. It is these commitments, rather than clear definitional boundaries of community and method that I draw on in this thesis.

Community-based research (CBR) has emerged as a challenge to hierarchical, positivist research methods by actively positioning communities as ‘knowers’ and valuing practice-based knowledges (Isreal, 1998). While approaches to CBR vary widely, most share at least three principles: CBR is a collaborative enterprise between researchers and community; CBR acknowledges the value of ‘local knowledges’ and in doing so contributes to the democratization of knowledge; CBR has social action to change local conditions, policies or debates as its goal (Brown & Strega, 2005; Isreal, 1998; Reitsma-Street, 2002; Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Donohue, 2003). My own research will honour these principles in a variety of ways.

Reitsma-Street (2002) notes that even “deciding to join together” is an important part of the process of CBR. Strand et al. (2003) add that “involving the community is absolutely critical in two research stages in particular: identifying the research question and making decisions about how the results will be used” (p. 10). In the case of this project, the research question has been mutually developed between Ma Mawi and me, in response to needs identified by the community-based organization. After meeting with the Executive Director to discuss issues facing the organization and my own research interests I drafted notes on my impressions of our meeting and what a research project exploring these ideas might look like. Only after receiving feedback from the CBO on my ideas and a commitment to continue working together, did I proceed to draft a proposal.

Secondly, the findings of this research are aimed at “changing local debates and policies” (Brown & Reitsma-Street, 2003, p. 69) that limit the ability of community-based organizations to contribute to social change. This process of identifying common areas of interest and remaining open to adjustments as we proceed has been carried forward throughout the project, one example is by changing or adding questions as the interviews progressed.

Ristock & Pennell (1996) identify “community research” as a type of research that can contribute to a goal of empowerment. Empowerment in this usage is defined broadly, “as an approach to community research that means thinking consciously about power relations, cultural context, and social action. It is an approach to building knowledge that seeks to change the conditions of people’s lives, both individually and collectively” (p. 2). In a previous project conducted with Ma Mawi, MacKinnon & Stephens (2008) echo these themes noting that “education and awareness of systemic forces is an essential step towards individual empowerment and emancipation” (p. 3). However, Cruikshank (1999) and others have argued empowerment and participation are often called upon as a form of government in the neoliberal society. It is important to acknowledge post-structural and other critiques of empowerment and participation that argue that the two ideas have themselves become governmentalized. Cooke & Kothari (2001) for example, refer to a “tyranny” of participation in which peoples’ participation and empowerment is brought into a project of governing populations. While this is undeniably so, I argue participatory and emancipatory methodologies and methods also create the space for new and counter forms of discourse to arise; these are iterative methods, allowing space to critique and deconstruct dominant discourse in the service of creating something new.

MacKinnon & Stephens (2008) further note that attention to power relations in the research process are particularly important when working with this community in particular, as many people involved with the CBO experience heightened surveillance and “controlling relationships” in their lives as a result of their involvement with the state via social assistance, child welfare and criminal justice authorities (p. 4). Further, as my research begins from the premise that the experience of those working in CBOs is to some degree controlled by the requirements of funders, it has been important to model an egalitarian research relationship in which the perspectives of participants are encouraged and respected. One way this is done is by broadening the participation of participants by seeking their feedback on interview transcript and initial findings and working with participants to discuss appropriate ways to mobilize the findings.

Feminist and Anti-oppressive methodologies

Feminist and anti-oppressive methodologies also form an important piece of my ethical commitment to the research. Smith (1999) draws our attention to the need to locate research in a larger historical, political and cultural context. This research project takes place in a historical and contemporary context that has been deeply marked by the experience of colonization. Ma Mawi works to address the effects of colonization and identifies “decolonization and anti-oppressive frameworks” as important to their work (MacKinnon & Stephens, 2008, p. 3). However, dealing with the effects of colonization is a long-term project and one that often puts this CBO at odds with the short-term, project based requirements of their funders. Smith (1999) further discusses the role of community research within a decolonizing or anti-oppressive framework noting that, “community action approaches assume that people know and can reflect on their own

lives” (p. 127). Again, Smith draws attention to respect, uncovering power, healing and education as important components of the anti-oppressive research project (p. 128). I have sought to respect these principles and those of: partnership, protection and participation identified in the Protocols and Principles for Conducting Research in an Indigenous Context at the University of Victoria (University of Victoria, 2003). The principles of partnership, protection and participation are addressed in the collaborative and consultative nature of this project, particularly in its design, analysis and dissemination.

My research is further informed by feminist approaches to research that share three tenets: feminist methodology highlights the socially constructed nature of knowledge; it takes the ethical protocol to ‘do no harm’ further paying attention to the power dynamics in the research relationship; and it requires that research be of value to participants in the research (Esterberg, 2002; Kirby & McKenna, 1989; Montell, 1999; Reinhartz & Davidman, 1992; Ristock & Pennell, 1996; Stanley, 1990). While feminist and Foucauldian approaches are sometimes placed in opposition to one another because of their oftentimes differing understandings of power, I believe that there are significant areas of overlap between these two approaches. Foucault sought to expand our conception of power beyond a simply negative or restrictive force to include the understanding that power is constantly circulating in all directions; it is a productive as well as restrictive force. This is not to suggest however, that there is no such thing as power imbalances. For Foucault, power exists in relation and in historically contingent and local specific moments in which specific formations of power become dominant. Further, Foucauldian, feminist and community-based methodologies all share a belief in

the power of knowledge as something that comes from varied sites and locations. All represent a challenge to traditional, hierarchical notions of power.

In traditional academic-based research relationships a specific set of power relations tends to be created. Typically, the researcher determines the research focus and methods, creates an analysis from peoples' experiences and ultimately 'owns' the final product; activities that can set up a power relationship that, in the extreme, has been extremely exploitive. Feminist methodologies require an ethical commitment on the part of the researcher to acknowledge these relations and contribute to their re-formation. Ristock & Pennell (1996) argue that the goal of the feminist research should be to "reconstitut[e] power in a responsible manner" (p. 2). Further, participants are also active subjects in the research process; they may resist, shape, co-create or alter the research and analysis. This acknowledges that power is created *in relation* in the research relationship. I have employed strategies to create reciprocity (Esterberg, 2002) and engage in 'reflexivity' to help me remain cognizant of power relations throughout the research. Further, Foucault (1990) encourages us to consider the ways that power is inscribed on individuals and individual relations; critical reflection on the research relationship may also provide insight into the forms and types of power in society. Put otherwise, I ask what can we learn about power through consideration of specific and local forms of resistance, including those manifest in the research relationship (Heald, 2004).

Discourse and Discourse Analysis

"Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but it also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (Foucault, 1990, p. 101).

The concept of ‘discourse’ provides a useful entry point to understand the ways that CBOs and those who work in them navigate a policy and practice environment shaped by neoliberalism. Discourse is a way of understanding power and its operations. Taking up the concept in a Foucauldian tradition, I am interested in discourse as a system of knowledge characterized by “rules, systems and procedures” (Young cited in Hook, 2001, p. 522) that construct and constrain what we can know at any point in time. Discourse “constructs the topic” by giving objects and practices meaning (Graham, 2005a); (Hall, 1997, p. 73). This is not to suggest that practices do not exist in some material sense, but rather that they only take on significance and meaning in specific and historically contingent discursive formations or assemblages of text, institutional practice, law, ways of conduct that exist across a number of different sites (Hall, 1997, p. 74). Discourse is more than simply talk or text, it is “social practice” (Fairclough, 1995). Discourse is in “a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it. A dialectical relationship is a two-way relationship: the discursive events are shaped by situations, institutions and social structures, but it also shapes them” (Fairclough & Wodak, cited in Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 6). Discourse is at once produced by, and productive of social relations.

Reflecting on the ways that discourse gives meaning to objects and practices, a number of points emerge. First, discourse both allows and constrains what meaning is given to things at any given time; it dictates what *can be said* and what is *unsayable* at any point in time. Secondly, discourse is a productive force, it creates certain *subject positions* that are available to people at any time. In the work of CBOs, for example, the subject positions increasingly available to staff and volunteers are those of money-manager,

community-expert, or risk manager, while for ‘clients’ it is increasingly the position of ‘at-risk individual’ that is created. In constituting these subject positions, however, discourse also sets up the corollary, that is, those that are ‘outside’ the desired subject position and therefore are subject to a variety of disciplinary techniques to regulate their behaviour. ‘At risk’ clients, for example are outside of the desired subject position; they have the possibility of reforming oneself into an ‘active’ citizen. Funding contracts, reporting mechanisms, and evaluation models become a mode of not only creating desired subject positions, my analysis shows that they are also employed as disciplinary tools for those attempting to work outside the dominant discourse.

Discourse is at once a productive and restrictive force. This leads to two additional points to consider in an analysis of discourse. Discourse is *historically contingent*, that is the discourses about community work and CBOs shift over time. Lastly, discourses are *not absolute*; they contain counter-discourses or resistances that contribute to new and constantly changing discursive formations. In this research I am particularly interested in looking at how resistances are enacted within the prevailing neoliberal discourse and the counter-discourses that are created and employed in these acts of resistance. Scholars working within a governmentality framework have begun to identify the need to supplement discursive analyses with empirical and ethnographic research that explores the ways that discourses are taken up and resisted by their “intended audiences” (Teghtsoonian, 2009). This is because, as Clarke (2007) explains, “subjection– the process of creating subjects– is too often treated as a presumed effect ... rather than being treated more problematically as an ambition which may or may not be achieved in practice” in governmentality approaches (p. 21). As a student of Studies in Policy *and*

Practice I am particularly interested in the interactions between discourse as intended (and transmitted via policy statements and official documentation) and its effects on the ground. I am interested in the point where the ‘rubber hits the road’ so to speak. Keever et al. (2008) note “the multiplicity of discourses and their operations are neither predictable nor consistent across the sector but intersect and interact chaotically, resulting in policy interventions that create practice contradictions for community organisations... these intersections and contradictions also create opportunities for critique, resistance and intervention by non-government organisations” (p. 461).

Discourse, as conceived by Foucault is a critique of claims to truth and the objectivity of positivist research. Accordingly, there is a reticence among Foucauldian discourse analysts to prescribe a method of ‘doing Foucauldian discourse analysis’ (Graham, 2005a). Rather, this type of discourse analysis suggests a theoretical and methodological orientation and a particular way of understanding the operations of power; it is more an analytic than a method. Graham (2005a) suggests that this resistance to prescription is itself an important challenge to the “claims to methodological superiority” of positivist and, increasingly, social scientific research (p. 5). She draws on Thomas’ (1997) concept of ‘methodological anarchy’ as a creative and catalytic force that can help us to move beyond the “straight-jacketing confines of methodological rules” (Graham, 2005b, p. 6). This, she maintains, is not an ‘anything goes’ approach to research, but rather requires the researcher to “ground [their] work in careful scholarship and engage in respectful conversation with Foucault; whilst looking to and building on the insights of others, all while making what [the researcher is] doing clear without prescribing a model that serves to discipline others” (Graham, 2005a, p. 6).

Discourse analysis is a way of considering *how* power and knowledge are produced and transmitted more so than offering up theories of *why* it is; it asks ‘how it works’ (Moss, personal communication). Foucauldian discourse analysis does this by rendering the ‘everyday’ strange to illuminate its workings (Graham, 2005a; Li, 2007). I find this a particularly productive approach to the research as the focus of the analysis here is not to compare various funding models with the goal of attempting to produce a ‘better’ model. Rather the aim is to disrupt the often taken for granted practices of grant and proposal writing, contracting and reporting in order that we may see the relations of power that belie certain ways of thinking about CBOs, communities and poverty.

My discourse analytic approach to research follows that articulated by Stuart Hall (1997). Hall (1997) suggests six elements to consider when examining discourse: the *statements* made about a subject that give it a certain kind of meaning, the “rules which prescribe certain ways of talking about these topics and exclude others”, the ‘subjects’ who personify the discourse, the practices for dealing with these subjects (e.g. what interventions are made to create the subject of money-manager in CBOs), consideration of “how this knowledge about the topic acquires authority...constituting the ‘truth of the matter’, at a historical moment” and, attention to the different or contradictory discourses that are also present at any moment in time (p. 75).

Similarly, Graham (2005a) expands on the role of ‘the statement’ in Foucauldian discourse analysis, according the statement particular importance as “the means by which... discursive objects become articulated and made manifest in a form that is recognizable” (p. 8). She further articulates the role of the discourse analyst as asking “how does this statement function?” (Graham, 2005a, p. 4).

In a discourse analytic approach it is important to pay attention to the weight and import given to various types of knowledges and to the different subject identities within the funding documents and interviews. Stone (1988) for example, describes the role that ‘numbers’ play in defining policy problems and their solutions, while Hankivsky & Friesen (2007) discuss the primacy of ‘evidence-based decision-making’ in health and social policy decisions (see also: Laforest & Orsini, 2005). Rose et al.(1996) discuss the new role of ‘calculative technologies’ in advanced liberal societies. In the context that CBOs operate within, ‘outcomes management’, ‘risk aversion’, ‘accountability’ and other measurement based ideas are significant defining discourses. As CBOs become proficient in their use of these forms of knowledge, specific subject identities are constructed for CBOs (as experts about, and managers of, community), their staff (as people accountable for the use of funds and skilled in expressing their work in particular and quantifiable ways), and their participants (as clients, as a demographic, or as a trend). Throughout my interviews, respondents demonstrated a conflicted relationship to these discourses, at times embracing neoliberal discourses in various forms, while at other times rejecting them. The shaping effect of discourse is never complete. Discourses are multiple; taken up, challenged and, combined in ways that may be unforeseen. Further, given that discourses are multiple, subjects may draw on a number of competing discourses in pursuit of their actions. This is not meant to suggest that in this conception of discourse anything is possible. Rather, for Foucault, “truth conditions are extremely stable and secure, as situated in a highly specific and idiosyncratic matrix of historical and socio-political circumstances, which give rise to, and are a part of, the order or discourse” (Hook, 2001, p. 525); once again drawing our attention to the materiality of

discourse. Thus, the discourse analyst must be attentive not only to what is said, but to the “scarcity of meaning, with what cannot be said, with what is impossible or unreasonable within certain discursive locations” (p. 527). Throughout my documentary analysis and interviews I consider: the discourses that shape the work of CBO’s, the ways that those working in CBO’s both take up and challenge these discourses, and importantly, what these discourses silence in our understanding of the role of CBO’s and social justice.

Bacchi (2005) notes a tension in much writing on discourse analysis, between those who see subjects as “discourse users” and those who see subjects as “constituted in discourse” (p. 200). Put otherwise, she notes a tension between the “*power of discourse*” that lies in the fact that discourses delineate a range of what is sayable and not, and the “*power over discourse*” in which different groups and individuals can deploy and shift discourses for their purposes (Bacchi, 2005, p. 38). I do not see these positions as mutually exclusive. We are not either wholly shaped by, or wholly in control of, discourse. In support of this perspective, I draw from a range of feminist scholars who seek to ‘work the hyphen’ between feminist and Foucauldian perspectives (Naples, 2003; Ristock & Pennell, 1996) by seeking to understand the points of tension and interplay between these perspectives.

Research questions and method

I seek to better understand how CBOs take up and challenge neoliberal discourses by considering the role that funding plays in shaping their work. This project builds on the work previously undertaken by MacKinnon & Stephens (2008) that explored the meaning of successful outcomes in the work of CBOs. In that study, the authors argued that CBOs

engage in myriad activities not easily captured in funders' reporting requirements. I

expand on this using a discourse analytic approach to consider three related questions:

How are neo-liberal discourses taken up and challenged by community based organizations (CBOs) in the funding programs of government and community foundations such as the United Way?

How do these discourses shape the work of CBOs?

And, how, in spite of the pressure created by neoliberal discourses, are CBOs also a site of resistance and transformation?

The following section describes the research site and the methods used to address these three research questions.

Case Study Site- Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre

To gain a better understanding of the dynamics set up by the funding relationship in community-based organizations, I chose to focus on one organization. A case study is an appropriate type of research for this project because it allows the opportunity for a fine-grained look at the dynamics created in CBO's through funding relationships. Combined with a Foucauldian governmentality analytic it also encourages thinking that connects these fine-grained practices to broader discourses and dynamics, thus offering the opportunity to locate everyday practices in a broader context. The site for this research is a CBO in Winnipeg, Manitoba called Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre (Ma Mawi), literally meaning 'we all work together to help one another.' Ma Mawi "works to create preventative, supportive services and resources for Aboriginal families living in Winnipeg: of, by and for Aboriginal people...it is designed as a bridge between the community and the 'systems' that interact with it" (MacKinnon & Stephens, 2008, p. 44). Ma Mawi was selected for this research for a number of reasons. Ma Mawi is a highly

respected organization in Winnipeg, its Executive Director, for example having just received an honorary degree from the University of Winnipeg for her work as a “pioneer” and “champion of a distinctively Aboriginal way of doing community-based work” (www.uwinnipeg.ca). Ma Mawi is considered to have strong relationships with the community and with their funders and is often held up as a model for excellent community work.

Established in 1984, Ma Mawi is the “first and largest major urban native child and family support program” in Canada (Reimer, 2005). Ma Mawi’s approach to community involvement has evolved significantly over time in response to a changing funding environment and community need. Today, Ma Mawi is an organisation that is strongly connected to community and that involves community members throughout all aspects of the organisation. However, maintaining these practices in the face of a slew of requirements that would seem to support a return to Ma Mawi’s older model of care is a challenge. In the next chapters, I explore how Ma Mawi meets this challenge.

Ma Mawi is a compelling site for a case study of the relationship between funders’ requirements and the work of CBOs. Ma Mawi receives core funding through the United Way and additional project funding from a number of sources, allowing consideration of the issues associated with funding that extend beyond those associated with project versus core funding⁵. While Ma Mawi has immensely strong relationships with their funders, these are relationships in flux. The impetus for this particular project came in response to Ma Mawi’s efforts to understand how to integrate the United Way’s new

⁵ The organisations that make up the non-profit sector in Canada have suffered immensely from the shift to a funding model that favours short-term projects over longer term organisational support. I contend however, that this shift is only a part of a broader set changes in attitude and support to the non-profit sector. Considering the dynamics of an organisation that relies on both project and core funding allows a fuller exploration of these changes by not limiting the examination to only those associated with project funding.

program logic model and evaluation tool into their work and their understandings of successful community work. Faced with yet another new model to follow, Ma Mawi became interested in considering what a funding and evaluation model would look like from their perspective. Further, the pressure put on CBOs (through official communiqués and documentation, personal relationships, and funding requirements) to adopt this (or other similar) models or face a loss in funding is palpable. As one United Way workshop participant told me, when they disagree with the model they are treated as though they “have a deficit”. This comment itself is suggestive of the individualizing aims of neoliberal discourse. Engaging in research that includes the United Way now is relevant as it may be used to shift policy debates before the practices become entrenched.

Data sets

I consider two primary data sets: key funding documents; and information gathered through in-depth interviews with key staff members. I have adopted a discourse analytic approach to examine the ways that neoliberal discourses are taken up and challenged in the written word of funding documents and in the ‘talk’ of interviewees. However, as noted earlier, this analysis extends past the written/spoken word to include attention to the discursive frames employed – the preferred techniques of government, their presentation and the power they convey.

Funding documents

I analyzed the funding program description, official media announcements or public statements by the funder about the project, the application form(s), and the project evaluation models or reporting requirements employed by two key funders of Ma Mawi’s work.

First, I have analysed documents related to funding provided by the Canadian Heritage Urban Multipurpose Aboriginal Youth Centre program⁶ for *Camp Wii Gii Dii Win*, a cultural camp for Aboriginal youth and their families run by Ma Mawi. Ma Mawi has received project funding in the amount of approximately \$60 000 CA per year for several years now to run the camp. Youth participants in the program are referred from a number of ‘sister’ organisations also working in the inner city. Ma Mawi’s funding relationship with Canadian Heritage has not always been a straightforward or easy one; they have experienced withheld funding; at one point had to deal with an abrupt 60% reduction in funding only weeks before the camp; have had to resubmit project reports three years after the fact to accommodate a change in reporting style; and, at times, had a difficult personal relationship with their assigned project officer. Despite all this, Ma Mawi remains committed to this project and sees it as important service to community and a good example of a positive relationship between various CBO’s working in the same community.

Table 1: Documents considered- Camp Wii Gii Dii Win

Documents considered- Camp Wii Gii Dii Win
<i>Program Application guide</i> Canadian Heritage Funding Application Guide-Aboriginal Peoples’ Program- Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth (name change), (8 pgs), n.d.
<i>Proposal</i> Proposal for Camp Wii Gii Dii Win to Canadian Heritage-Aboriginal Peoples’ Program- Urban Multipurpose Aboriginal Youth Centre program (UMAYC), (16 pgs), December 2006
<i>Funding Agreement</i> Canadian Heritage-Ma Mawi Contribution Agreement (17 pgs), August 20, 2008
<i>Reports</i> Canadian Heritage-Aboriginal Peoples’ Program- Urban Multipurpose Aboriginal Youth Centre program (UMAYC) Community Project Final Activity Report for 2007-2008, (12 pgs), n.d.

⁶ Now called the Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth program.

The second funding relationship considered is that between Ma Mawi and the United Way of Winnipeg. Ma Mawi receives two types of funding from the United Way. They are a core-funded organization (a United Way agency) and they receive additional project funding for a partnership project with other inner city CBOs called *Aboriginal Visioning for the North End* (or just Aboriginal Visioning). Ma Mawi receives an annual contribution from the United Way of Winnipeg of approximately \$200 000 CA to support their core mission through youth and community programming as well as volunteer training and support programs. Ma Mawi has received an additional \$50 000-\$75 000/year from the United Way for the last three years to support the Aboriginal Visioning project. Interview respondents from Ma Mawi describe Ma Mawi's relationship with the United Way in positive terms, as collaborative and dialogic, one where the United Way and Ma Mawi learn from each other. And yet, participants also articulate a sense that this relationship is changing, their relationship is now more "business-like", "rigid" and seems as though they are "back where they started"; there is a sense of loss in these changes. Participants also seem confused about why these changes are occurring, yet also express awareness that they are part of a broader set of changes in the United Way and in the practices of funding to CBOs more generally.

Table 2: Documents considered-United Way

Documents considered-United Way
United Way-Aboriginal Visioning project
<i>Proposals</i> Implementing an Aboriginal Vision of the North End of Winnipeg- Summary of Objectives, Outcomes and Proposed Actions, April 2005
<i>Reporting and follow up</i> Aboriginal Visioning for the Renewal of the North End of Winnipeg- Report to Winnipeg Foundation, United Way, Neighbourhoods Alive!, (14 pgs), September 2008
United Way- Core Funding
United Way- Sustained Funding Application, (17 pgs), February 10, 2008

United Way- Annual Agency Update Form and ‘Confirmation of Monitoring Meeting and Key Discussion points cover letter, (11 pgs), April 20, 2009
United Way Monitoring meeting and key discussion points-notes from meeting.
United Way-Ma Mawi Funding agreement and cover letter (15 pgs), May 9, 2008

Lastly, these sources have been selected because they provide a reasonable cross-section of different types of funders (government, foundation) as well as an opportunity to explore potential similarities and differences between core funding (provided by the United Way) and project funding models (provided by Canadian Heritage).

Participant Interviews

As an analytic approach governmentality provides significant theoretical guidance for this project, offering a way of thinking about shifts in the relationship between the non-profit sector, funder and citizens that is rich and helps us to think beyond the policies and ideologies of one government or another. The studies stemming from this analytic perspective are overwhelmingly interested in shifting discourses, however, many of them have been critiqued for being overly reliant on official text and as a result assuming a ‘straight line of flight’ between discourses and subjects of the discourse. I heed Teghtsoonian’s (2009) suggestion that discursive analyses be supplemented with empirical and ethnographic research that explores the ways that discourses are taken up and resisted by their “intended audiences” (p. 34). Teghtsoonian highlights the importance of this approach in her analysis of the discourses around mental health, pointing out that despite the overwhelming force of discursive practices encouraging a particular conception of mental health issues as an individualized problem, community groups, physicians and patients all draw on competing discourses that challenge the primacy of this ‘dominant’ discourse in their actions.

Accordingly, I conducted a total of six in-depth interviews with Ma Mawi staff members, each of whom has responsibility for interacting with funders in their work. The Executive Director recommended interview participants based on the above criteria. The interviews were between thirty minutes and two hours in length and were digitally recorded and the written transcripts stored in a locked filing cabinet in my apartment. Electronic transcripts were stored in a password-protected file on my personal computer. Throughout these interviews we explored how funding requirements shape their work and how they negotiate the pressure to adopt neoliberal practices in their work. More specifically, we considered the following areas: Are there elements of the funding relationship that are particularly positive or particularly challenging? How do they understand the concepts 'success' and 'accountability' in their work? What role does decolonization play in their work and how it is this received by their funders? What are their perceptions of the ways that funding and reporting requirements shape their work?

I used an interview guide and a number of open-ended questions to structure the interviews. The benefit of this approach is that the interview guide acts as a touchstone while still allowing for flexibility in the interview so that participants can co-direct the interview. In a number of the interviews we diverted from the questions to explore other areas that seemed fruitful for exploration. Additionally, a question regarding recommendations to funders and policy-makers was added to the initial list of questions at the suggestion of one participant.

Analytic Framework

A number of signposts that have helped guide my analysis. Following from Hall (1997) I have considered: what statements are made about the role of CBOs? What subject

positions occupy the discourse about CBOs? How do these statements and positions become reified as ‘truth’? What resistances are present? Further, I also considered the function of *practices* spawned of the funding relationship. In this way, my work also draws on the work of Roxanna Ng (1988) and others who have considered the effect of funding on workplace organization and practices.

My analytic approach is an iterative one between the official documents I analysed and the participant interviews. Throughout this research my aim has been to draw connections between seemingly isolated daily practices and the broader discourses that shape these practices. This is similar to the approach taken by Ristock & Pennell (1996) as they call for an analytic approach that “doubles back” on itself (p. 79). In developing my analysis I first read the funding documents that frame this inquiry. Reading these first allowed me to develop a sense of the environment in which participants are working and the types of programs they work with. I then conducted and transcribed six interviews with Ma Mawi staff members. In transcribing the interviews I made initial note of areas that seemed significant, troubling or that otherwise ‘stuck out’. I then re-read both the funding documents and the interview transcripts a number of times to gain a better sense of how the two data sets relate to each other. In returning to these documents I sought to deepen my analysis of each set of materials and to weave together connections between the ‘official’ documentation, in the form of funding documents, and the thoughts and reflections of the interview participants. Throughout this project I have also had opportunity to informally connect with a range of people working as funders, in CBOs, government, or the academy at conferences or in my own role as a staff person in a community-based organisation. While these conversations are not ‘officially’ part of the

research, they have been invaluable as they have suggested new areas for exploration and have helped locate a number of practices in a broader context and history, sometimes validating my thinking and at other times challenging it.

Validity

Participant feedback is an important element of both feminist and community-based methodologies. Participants were given transcriptions of their interviews and asked for feedback on the transcripts. I have also shared my initial analysis with the participants and asked for their feedback. One criteria for validity in this research will be the degree to which the analysis ‘makes sense’ to the participants. However, several authors have noted the challenges that result when the researcher’s interpretation and that of research participants are not the same (Luff, 1999; Mosse, 2006; Thorne & Varcoe, 1998). Thorne and Varcoe (1998) argue that a requirement of consensus about the interpretation of data may actually hinder feminist emancipatory goals by forcing the researcher to “re-create or perpetuate hegemonic ideology that emerges from subjectively constructed knowledge” (p. 490) and further may stand in contradiction to post-structural claims about the existence of multiple knowledges.

Consideration of these points is important as my theoretical framework is cautious about the extent to which we can ever ‘get outside’ the discourse. Attention to multiple and contradictory themes in research is an important challenge to the notion of a singular ‘truth’. Oftentimes researchers working in a post-structural vein are pushed to ‘compete’ with social scientific research that privileges ‘scientific, evidence-based’ paradigms over analyses that are more open and contradictory. Thus, for research such as this the concept

of validity is a considerably more complicated one best achieved by seeking to be transparent about aims and processes.

Ethical Considerations

While many critical researchers have complicated the idea of insider/outsider status in research (Naples, 2003; Narayan, 1993), as a non-indigenous student seeking to engage in research with an Aboriginal organization, it is important that I am particularly aware of my role throughout this project. I have adhered to the guidelines set out in the Protocols and Principles for Research in an Indigenous Context by the Faculty of Human and Social Development, specifically as they emphasize the importance of partnership and collaboration (University of Victoria, 2003). My own status as a researcher is also a complicated one. I occupy elements of both an insider and outsider throughout the research: for example, I previously interviewed and drew on the experience of the Executive Director of this organization during research I conducted as an undergraduate student (Amyot, 2007), I have work experience in the non-profit sector and as a grant writer for many grassroots and community organizations and am currently employed in this sector, and I previously lived within blocks of where the main offices of Ma Mawi are located. I occupy a position of 'in between' in this research and will remain conscious of the responsibilities and ethical implications that come from being both an 'insider' and an 'outsider'.

This research was accepted for human participant research under the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board. Participants were given a letter of intent describing the nature of the study and a consent form, which they were asked to sign. Participation in the research was entirely voluntary and the participants were able to

withdraw at any time. Transcribed copies of the interviews were provided to the research participants who were given opportunity to provide feedback on the transcriptions and to remove any comments with which they were not comfortable. A similar opportunity for feedback and comment has been provided on the initial analysis. Dowhy (2003) reflects that she provided this opportunity for participants in her project and, as a result, they asked her to “re-frame” an element of her analysis. In my own research I have had to contend with similar negotiations, for example, one participant after reading through the transcript of their interview asked that certain statements not be included as phrased in the interview. In this instance, I was still able to analyse and communicate the theme without losing its key import, but do so in wording that was mutually agreeable and respectful of the participant’s wishes. An openness to such re-framing is important when one’s work is public and could have potentially negative repercussions for the organizational partners, especially in a climate where funding is often already precarious. In light of the necessity of compromise, having clearly understood values and guiding principles in the research will be important, as they will act as a touchstone for any such conversations. Reitsma-Street (2002) suggests that values of “social justice, engagement or agency, community connectedness and critical curiosity” are appropriate to this type of research (p. 4).

Confidentiality

I have not identified the participants in this study to protect the identities of any participants. However, this research is being undertaken in partnership with Ma Mawi and as such, the name of the organization has been made public through the research. Given the relatively small number of staff people that work for Ma Mawi it may be

possible for readers to identify specific people from the research. Any risk associated with participation in this project was assessed to be low, in particular as participants are being interviewed vis-à-vis their work functions.

As with any research, the project set out here is limited in terms of time, resources, method and focus. Some of the practical limitations of the research are heightened by virtue of the fact that this project is a Master's thesis and as such time and money are particularly limited. These limitations will be particularly visible in the somewhat abridged version of community-based research (CBR) adopted. Most significantly, the participatory nature of the project has been limited to the development of the research question, feedback on the analysis and any dissemination plans. Further, research does not occur in a vacuum, during the course of writing I have returned to working full-time, something that has significantly extended the writing process and made use of the research findings less immediately applicable in any active negotiations between funder and agency. On the other hand, this more drawn out research process has allowed time for me to deepen my thinking and analysis.

In this chapter I have provided a description of the three key methodological traditions that I have drawn from in this project. These are community-based, feminist and other anti-oppressive methodologies and critical discourse analysis. I haven't attempted to adopt any of these in a pure form, rather I have maintained a focus on their key values and central insights while combining approaches throughout. All three methodological traditions share an interest in challenging the hierarchies and strictures of positivist research and all share an interest in hearing from non-expert voices. However, each adds their own insights. Community-based research reminds us of the importance of

research that can be used to effect local situations and policy debates, while feminist and anti-oppressive methodologies bring a sharp focus on the role of power relations in the research relationship and Foucauldian discourse analysis reminds us of the importance of discourse in creating and transmitting ideas. All three methodologies remind us that power is not simply something that is imposed from above, rather it is found in a variety of forms and places. In the next chapter, I present my analysis and key findings, focusing in particular on the points of intersection and tension between official discourse and everyday practice.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I draw on data from two funding programs and from interviews with key respondents to consider the role of neoliberal discourse in the work of community-based organisations at the point of intersection between policy and practice. First, I consider the way that various elements of the funding process operate discursively to structure the work of CBOs through two processes ‘textual accountability’ and social construction. Textual accountability refers to the reorganization of community work to meet the documentary demands of funders; while social construction refers to the discourses through which ideas about the targets of funding programs (in this case Aboriginal youth) and the role of community-based organisations are constructed and conveyed through funding programs. Together these processes tightly delimit the role and work of CBOs.

Secondly, I explore several areas of contradiction and tension between the views and aims of funding programs and those of CBOs themselves and the “opportunities for critique, resistance and intervention” (Keevers et al., 2008, p. 461) created in these areas of tension. I look more closely at how Ma Mawi addresses the challenges set up by funding programs and consider how Ma Mawi draws on the discourse of ‘community’ as a source of strength that allows them to challenge the limitations of the project funding model and neoliberal discourse. In this section of the chapter I also argue that Ma Mawi sees a role for themselves in educating funders about the limitations of the current funding model. These practices point to the need for a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between CBOs and the state.

The Funding Process: Textual Accountability and the Work of CBOs

Roxanna Ng (1988) draws our attention to the important role of documents in organizing ruling relations in modern society. As she writes

it is through documents of various kinds, from interdepartmental memoranda to job descriptions to statistical data, that the multitude of the seemingly disparate activities of the state apparatus is coordinated and given coherence. This documentary mode of action concretizes and binds departments and individuals to a legal mode of action (p. 22).

Within this documentary mode of action, ‘textual accountability’ is the process through which “the ‘product’ for which funding [is] granted [is] given shape and visibility through ... the production of various documents” (p. 42). In what follows I examine the function of the various aspects of the funding process from application through contracting and reporting. Attention to the funding process and associated documents is important, as these are the tools that make the aims of neoliberal rationalities technical and practicable.

The program description and application

Funding *program applications* serve an important function in the funding process; they set out the terms of potential projects from the perspective of the funder, rather than from the perspective of the CBO or community. This excludes CBOs from the key definitional phase in the process; they are left simply to respond to a set of predetermined priority areas and program guidelines. As a result CBOs often alter their description of their work to better fit with program application guidelines. This is problematic as, through this process, the work of CBOs is represented as a “decontextualized text artefact” based on

externally defined terms and priorities (Mehan cited in Graham, 2005b; Phillips & Levasseur, 2004).

Further, as there is most often a time-limited window during which CBOs may submit project applications this is a process that limits their ability to develop projects based on community need. As one of my interview participants said of this process,

I think that if community organisations had an opportunity to be leaders in defining funding priorities that would have huge impact on services to community. Because you know, we do the dance and play the game to raise the money, that is a fact, no matter what organization, but if we were involved in the front end in defining those priorities, you'd have a heck of a lot more partnerships, a heck of a lot better use of resources and more services to community, have better impacts (2010-01-22A).

The program application process does not stop once an application is submitted, rather the process continues as organisations wait for a response to their proposal. This period often lasts several months and in some cases extends right up to and even beyond the proposed project start date. This puts CBOs in a holding pattern as they wait for a response, without the resources to prepare for the project should it be approved and yet often expected to be ready to begin a project on extremely short notice. This creates difficulties in ensuring that projects are adequately staffed and resourced. As one respondent noted

We never get advance notice of whether we've been approved. Usually the application goes in the first week of December and we don't hear whether we've been approved until right before we are delivering the camp...and at that point, we've already hired the mentors in April. We find out in June or July. And then one time July comes and we find out we are cut \$60 000! So, you've already paid April-June salaries for people that you now have to lay off (2010-01-13).

These dynamics are aggravated by the ‘request for proposal’ (for the delivery of a specified service) model that is more and more commonly employed by funders and is modeled on similar private sector tendering practice, favoring lowest cost proposals over participatory and community-based approaches. However, even where project priorities are more collaboratively determined at the outset (as is often the case with the United Way), funders tend to revert back to a reliance on private sector tools to entrench and monitor the relationship with funded CBOs. These practices establish competition between CBOs for limited funding and in doing so contribute to the further marketization of public services.

The Contribution Agreement or Funding Contract

Funding contracts and/or Contribution Agreements are the legal means of ensuring that the ‘product’ for which funding is provided is delivered to the funder (Ng, 1988, p. 37) and through which ‘consequences’ are established for non-compliance (Scott & Struthers, 2006). The contract takes up the (now technical) ideas set out in the program application and entrenches them in legal terms, providing a reference point for future reporting.

From the perspective of CBOs contract terms restrict their work and limit their ability to react to local situations, as diverting resources from the pre-established deliverables is often not permitted or only permitted with permission. Further, funders are reticent to support activities that are not easily reflected in contract terms: network or coalition building, community needs assessments, advocacy work, and social or attitudinal change are among activities unlikely to receive funding (Phillips & Levasseur, 2004, p. 459).

Reporting and Outcomes-based management

Ongoing reporting, often in the form of outcomes-based management, is a key mechanism through which accountability is monitored. Respondents reported a number of examples of burdensome reporting requirements, including of staff members required document, in 15 minute intervals, all interactions with clients for program with over 100 participants. Other respondents recalled being required to re-file reports up to three years after funding ended in order to accommodate a change in reporting style, and examples of withheld funding resulting from a two dollar overage. While these may be among the more egregious examples of intrusive reporting requirements, all were required by funders in order to ensure that Ma Mawi was acting ‘accountably’. Examples such as these also draw our attention to the internal inconsistencies within neoliberalism itself, while on the one hand neoliberalism is interested in ‘governing at a distance’, on the other it is also driven by a desire for increased surveillance in many aspects of organisations’ work.

Increased reporting requirements are reflective of a reconceptualized relationship between CBOs and funders in which “each application is treated as a stand-alone project, rather than as a relationship” that drives the need for considerably more information (Phillips & Levasseur, 2004, p. 458). Power (1999) argues that this is part of a broader shift to an ‘audit society’ in which relationships of trust are replaced with ‘rituals of verification’. While Ng (1988) argues that this type of ‘textual accountability’ serves two purposes: to ensure the correct use of funds and to produce the ‘product’ for which funding is granted, by giving it “shape and visibility” (p. 42).

According to Scott (2003) non-profit organisations initially welcomed outcomes-based reporting as an opportunity to exert more control over the types of activities reported on

and to demonstrate the complex nature of their work. However, ‘outcomes thinking’ has been operationalised in a much more tightly specified way as a measurement tool to track changes in the lives of program participants and a way to introduce “more extensive monitoring and evaluation in the pursuit of ‘value for money’” into CBOs (ibid). As one respondent noted

I thought it was a good idea originally but then there was this meeting where we were told we were the fundee and they were the funder...I told them, ‘when you first came to us with this you said it was a tool and now you are using it to beat us with’ (2010-01-13).

This sense of being ‘beat up’ by outcomes-based management regimes is further evident in one respondent’s recounting of her experience at a workshop with a funder

The coordinator was told that she didn’t know what she was doing because she didn’t know how to follow the program logic model. She did what any of us would have done and asked for help, and that was seen as a failure on her part cause she didn’t get it from lesson one ...now there was some question about her performance and then the overall program (2010-01-13).

For those who work in CBOs, this feeling is a common one. Many feel they are treated as though they ‘have a deficit’ when they disagree with outcomes-based management tools; their disagreement is treated as a deficiency on their part, rather than a legitimate critique of the model itself. This speaks to the power of discursive concepts such as ‘outcomes’. Outcomes-based funding operates discursively by claiming an apolitical, common sense status that shelters it from critique; it comes to appear as part of the “natural order of things” (Brodie cited in Kershaw, 2004). After all, what organization is going to claim that they oppose achieving positive outcomes for their community?

However, the ‘neutral’ status of outcomes-based funding masks its true role in “the articulation of neoliberal principles within a rhetorical framework that conveys a sense of political neutrality and individualizes responsibility for social inequalities” (Kershaw, 2004, p. 928) and in re-visioning the role of community-based organisations. As previously argued, a new diagram of the role CBOs has been drawn, one in which their role is to represent citizens as individuals rather than as members of collectives where individuals lay claim to rights through their membership in said group (Ilcan & Basok, 2004; Jenson & Phillips, 2001; Laforest & Orsini, 2005). Outcome-based funding supports this new diagram by focusing on demonstrable behaviours in the individual at the expense of harder to define activities such as advocacy (Ilcan & Basok, 2004). To achieve this, outcomes-based funding refocuses the scale and scope of CBO activities onto the individual and the short-term.

Phillips et al. (2008) suggest that outcomes-based funding reframes debate around “mechanical issues such as the nature of reporting and risk assessment procedures- rather than around broader visions of outcomes and goals” (p. 15, see also: Clarke et al., 2007). Outcomes-based measurement doubles back on itself: outcomes-based funding becomes no longer a tool for tracking individual or community change, instead it is made ‘technical’ as tool against which CBOs are evaluated for their ability to follow the outcomes model. This is also illustrated in the following example. McLaughlin & Jordan (1999) suggest the following measures to include in a program logic model to evaluate program success:

is each element proposed in the logic model in place, at the level expected for the time period? Are outputs and outcomes observed at expected performance levels? Are activities implemented as designed?...did the causal

relationships proposed in the logic model occur as planned? Is reasonable progress being made along the logical path to outcomes? (p. 71).

Thus, CBOs are encouraged to measure success against the design of the logic model, rather than against other, more locally relevant indicators of success. As one respondent noted, for many funders, “success is defined by a good report” (2010-01-13). While another argued that funders defined success by whether or not “I can follow the logic model” (2010-01-13). Success becomes a question of ‘good’ model design rather than meaningful social change, while a reticence to adopt this model is seen as a failure; it is a ‘deficit’ rather than a critique.

According to the United Way, “outcomes are expressed in terms of the target of an intervention. A target is ‘what’ or ‘who’ changes as the result of the intervention” (Julian & Clapp, 2000, p. 234). In the current neoliberal context, the ‘what’ or ‘who’ in the above most often refers to the individual skills and abilities and the condition of employment of program participants. Funding through the Urban Multipurpose Aboriginal Youth Centre of Canadian Heritage, for example sets out program outcomes as the increased educational completion and achievement, participation in employment skills development and counselling and programs, and improvements in life skills, including parenting skills of Aboriginal youth. These are outcomes focused on changes in the individual behaviour of program participants, reforming target populations into active citizens. Further, Hall et al. (2003) note that outcomes-based funding requires organisations to find ways to “measure behaviours that occur *after a service has been provided*” (p. 17, italics added). This speaks to their function as a technology of government. Beyond their function in ensuring the accountable use of project dollars, outcomes-based funding tracks changes in individuals beyond the direct reach of

government. Thus, outcomes-based funding ties the survival of CBOs to the successful reform of target populations into active citizens (Dean, 1999).

Ironically, outcomes-based funding also homogenizes individuals by treating them as undifferentiated citizens. As Woolston (2008) argues (speaking of the prevalence of outcomes-based learning in educational settings), outcomes-based management schemes are premised on a Fordist manufacturing model designed to ensure predictable results. As a result, the model forces those with responsibility for program implementation to minimize or ignore differences between participants. Similarly, Ng (1988) writes, “when dealing with clients as real people, there are things that cannot be encapsulated as a statistical category” (p. 43). While outcomes-based funding encourages intervention into the lives of *individual participants*, it tracks success *in aggregate*. Thus, outcomes-based funding creates a double movement, at once intervening in, and changing the lives of individuals toward a particular result while simultaneously glossing over differences between participants.

A common problem for community efforts is that no matter how strong the results are, they often cannot live up to the need for quantifiable outcomes in a relatively short project life span. Torjman (1999) makes this point in her case study of an Ontario anti-poverty campaign, noting that real goal of these types of projects and institutions are to “build the capacity of community members to tackle complex problems and to find ways to ensure that these efforts can be sustained... [and to] establish the long-term structures that can enable the community to reduce poverty” (p. 11). MacKinnon and Stephens (2008) make a similar point in reflecting on the work of Ma Mawi and the other members of a local network of community-based organisations.

The CBOs that guide this project have a transformative vision. Many believe that fundamental change requires that we first address the damage of colonization and oppression. While funding institutions, in particular governments, wish to see individuals adapt to the existing social and economic structures, our community partners are interested in fundamental changes in these structures (p. 1).

Little has been written about the role of decolonization in the work of community-based organisations, especially in the mainstream voluntary and non-profit sector literature. However, it is a fundamental element of Ma Mawi's work. Throughout Ma Mawi's history their work has been intimately connected to an analysis of colonization; the organisation was first developed in 1984 to "take back our role as caregivers of their own children", a clear reference to the legacy of the sixties scoop and residential schools. This focus continues into their current work.

Participants articulated the meaning of decolonization in their work in two main ways: as a process of coming together to achieve their goals and as efforts to create change in powerful institutions. The first usage is reflected in Ma Mawi's name, which literally means 'working together to help one another'. When asked about the meaning of decolonization in their work one participant noted, "it's about being in this together" (2010-01-13), while another noted that it is about building "family and it is about community and about relationships" (2010-01-22 p. 4). This attitude is an important challenge to neoliberal discourse that seeks to individualize and responsabilize community members, making them into clients rather than parts of a larger whole. The second way that decolonization was described was as part of a process of creating structural and attitudinal change in powerful institutions (2010-01-19A). This type of analysis has been discouraged among CBOs as part of the advocacy chill that has taken hold of the sector in Canada. Several respondents connected these meanings of

decolonization to their efforts to “guard against clientization of people” (2010-01-19A) and drew connections to Ma Mawi’s efforts to include community throughout the whole of the organisation, noting that decolonization also informed their approach to community work as something done “by community rather than by professionals” (2010-01-22). All of these conceptions of decolonization challenge neoliberal discourse that emphasizes that the role of CBOs is to intervene in the lives of ‘targeted populations’ with the aim of reforming them into ‘active citizens’.

The elements of the funding process create and structure an ongoing relationship between CBOs and funders that is based on ‘textual accountability’. Textual accountability describes the ways that funding programs structure the day-to-day realities and work of CBOs and prescribe new roles for them in the government of individuals. The above sections focus in on each piece of the funding process as a discrete element to better understand the specific role that each of these plays as a technology of government. However, expanding our focus to consider the funding process as a whole offers additional insights and highlights how the funding programs rely on socially constructed categories and identities.

The Social Construction of Community, Aboriginal Youth, and CBOs

Ng (1988) reminds us that racial and cultural categories are socially constructed. In her work, Ng identifies a state funded community-based agency as a location through which the category of ‘immigrant woman’ is brought into being. Similarly, Rose (1999) argues that community is a socially constructed category and coins the phrase ‘governing through community’ to refer to a “new partnership between community and responsible citizens, based on the strengthening of the natural bonds of community” (p. 186). In the

case of Aboriginal-run and serving CBOs like Ma Mawi, the discursive concept of ‘community’ intertwines with a discourse of culturalism to privilege certain identities and actions over others. However, ‘community’ is also a source of strength for Ma Mawi and a concept that they draw on to challenge funding constraints and neoliberal discourse.

As a socially constructed category ‘community’ has many different meanings. What is common to these meanings is a sense that the virtue of community is derived from its simultaneously extra-political state and its potential and necessity as a site and locus of government. Community, as a discursive concept has come to replace the idea of the social, a common entity around which peoples’ allegiances are constructed and values shaped. In this sense ‘community’ is a concept better aligned to the particular aims of neoliberalism as it helps free the state from its obligations to ‘steer from the centre’. The discourse of community thus involves a “double movement of autonomization and responsabilization” (Rose, 1999, p. 174) as community comes to stand in for the reorganization of the state and the proliferation of community-based organisations and service providers. As Rose (1999) notes, community was brought into this particular form

as a language of resistance and critique was transformed...into an expert discourse and professional vocation—community is now something to be programmed by Community Development Programmes, policed by Community Police, guarded by Community Safety Programmes, and rendered knowable by sociologists pursuing ‘community studies’. Communities became zones to be investigated, mapped, classified, documented, interpreted, their vectors explained to enlightened professionals-to-be in countless college courses and to be taken into account in numberless encounters between professionals and their clients, whose individual conduct is now made intelligible in terms of the beliefs and values of ‘their community’ (p. 175).

Marinetto (2003) argues, “community involvement is a form of government ... [that] promotes a particular type of personal morality and positive forms of life for communities, individuals and governments” (p. 109). Funding programs are an active component of this particular form of government as they create CBOs as mediating entities through which the terms of participation in community are constructed.

A salient example comes from my personal experience regarding amendments made to the funding program of Status of Women Canada in 2006. The changes replaced reference to women’s equality with reference to women’s ‘full participation’ in society and explicitly removed ‘advocacy’ from the list of fundable project activities. The new language represented a shift away from the collectivity implied by the term ‘equality’ toward an individually focused view of women’s role in society. Whereas equality implies the equality of women *as a group* and a degree of collective responsibility to address the issue of inequality, ‘full participation’ refers instead to the ability of *individual* women to participate society. Further, while the former implies that societal and structural changes may be required to achieve equality, participation depicts women’s participation within an already existing structure. The altered program terms prescribe a new role for funded organisations, as their work is restructured to conform to new funding parameters. As organisations responded to calls for proposals under these new terms of reference, they did so without reference to equality or advocacy, something that may contribute to a collective erasure of these concepts from the lexicon of women’s organizing in Canada. As the above example highlights, program applications and terms of reference construct the targets and types of intervention for CBOs; they are a means by which a community becomes knowable and therefore amenable to intervention.

In the case of organisations such as Ma Mawi a discourse of community intertwines with culturalist discourses to construct a specific type of Aboriginal subjecthood. Browne & Fiske (2006) discuss the way policy discourse constructs Aboriginal people as discredited subjects. They argue that official discourse shifts the focus away from relations and structures of power that contribute to inequality onto the perceived deficits and ‘problems’ of individual Aboriginal citizens. Specifically, they employ the concept of culturalism as a ‘technology of power’ that proscribes the understandings of inequality by subsuming the reasons for inequality under a discourse of cultural difference. Culturalist discourse employs a limited vision of Aboriginal culture, seen through colonialist lens. As McConaghy writes this “is not culture as lived, but the culture as constituted, as written about and described in ethnographic texts. It is this notion of culture that allows indigenous people to be othered in colonialism” (cited in Browne & Fiske, 2006, p. 99). These discourses redefine the role of CBOs as institutions to help individuals with ‘personal needs’ rather than in terms of addressing ‘racialised power structures’ (p. 99). Further, they argue, these metaphors have intertwined with neoliberal market discourses in new forms to strip policy debates of moral concern. This has resulted in a discourse in which the motivations to fund community-based programs for Aboriginal youth are justified through a market logic and in which culture is called on in service of the market.

The Urban Multipurpose Aboriginal Youth Centre program, funded through Canadian Heritage was officially launched in 1999. The UMAC was “the first national initiative targeted at urban Aboriginal youth” (Government of Canada, N.D.-a). The program is intended to provide locally relevant, culturally-focused projects for Aboriginal youth. The

program's development stemmed from recommendations made in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and later commitments made in the Speech from the Throne. From its very launch the program has relied on a certain construction of Aboriginal youth.

From the Speech from the Throne:

To help those young Canadians who need a second chance, the Government will develop and expand community-based programs for youth with greatest difficulty making the transition to the world of work because of low education and skills. These will include establishing multi-purpose Aboriginal youth centres that will provide targeted social and cultural support in addition to increasing work and learning opportunities for urban Aboriginal youth (Government of Canada, 1997)

In this statement we can see Aboriginal youth positioned as 'risky subjects'; they are in need of a "second chance" and among those who face "the greatest difficulty" in securing employment. This is particularly evident in the fact that while the statements made ostensibly refer to all 'young Canadians who need a second chance', those targeted for intervention are Aboriginal youth alone. From the outset the subject position constructed for Aboriginal youth through this program is that of the 'targeted population' in need of reform to become the appropriate subject in neoliberal society, the 'active citizen' (Dean, 1999). The identity of the active or 'good' citizen is achieved through participation in the workforce. Aboriginal youth centres are the site where this transformation is to occur, while the targeted funding provided to the centres is the technology through which this is ensured.

This is reinforced in the Program Application Guide, which sets out the object of the program as to improve the "economic, social, and personal prospects" of Aboriginal youth (Government of Canada, N.D.-b) through the provision of culturally relevant programming in one of seven defined activity areas. These include: "encouraging

educational completion and attainment; increasing effective participation in employment, skill development, career counselling and training programs; addressing life skills, including parenting; increasing participation in a wide range of health, cultural, recreational and other development programs...” (Government of Canada, N.D.-b). Notably, of the seven activity areas, all focus on correcting perceived deficiencies of Aboriginal youth, while none discuss the need for broader social, political, or economic change in the systems that have marginalized certain populations at the expense of others. The Guide further specifies eligible program activities, and includes under the heading of Leadership Development “workshops or seminars [on]...problem-solving, [that] encourage teamwork, and time management”, “exploration of different business models...”, “workshops that clearly demonstrate an opportunity for youth to develop a business concept” (Government of Canada, N.D.-c). These activities clearly set out a very limited vision of Aboriginal youth and Aboriginal youth leadership that privileges the entrepreneurial subject.

This construction of the ‘problem of Aboriginal youth’ has persisted throughout the life of the program. Recently, in renewing the program⁷, the Minister responsible noted, “young Aboriginal people represent an increasingly important segment of the Canadian population. By investing in the potential of urban Aboriginal youth and providing them with culturally-focused programming, we are contributing to the social and economic prosperity of current and future generations” (Government of Canada, 2010). By connecting the ideas of Aboriginal cultural identity with that of social and economic

⁷ In January 2010 the program was re-named the Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth program and continued for a further six years.

prosperity, the program attempts to bring culture into the service of economic development and in doing so reduce economic and social disparities between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth to cultural difference. Further, statements such as these position Aboriginal youth as a potential drain on society and therefore outside it (Browne & Fiske, 2006) p. 101). This language sets up the imperative for the program by “constitut[ing] the majority as a vulnerable collective” (ibid.), making participation less an option and more an obligation if Aboriginal youth are to be taken seriously. This discourse allows Canadians to ignore responsibility to redress past wrongs or continuing disparities between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples and obscures the power structures that contribute to the marginalization of some peoples at the expense of others.

In this section I have explored the ways that funding documents operate discursively to materially restructure the work of CBOs and to socially construct a particular image of Aboriginal youth as subjects in need of reform. In the next section I look more closely at the policy and practice tensions that are created through the deployment of neoliberal discourses into the work of community based organisations.

Contradictions and tensions

Keevers et al. (2008) draw our attention to the ways that policy-practice interactions are neither straightforward nor predictable; their intersection creating points of tension and contradiction. Tensions and resistances are created by funding policy interventions at the point of intersection with practice. Specifically, tensions arise between: competition and collaboration; textual accountability and community need; reporting, learning, and teaching; different problem solving approaches; and individualism and community building practices. These tensions or contradictions also create a number of resistances. I

have chosen to think of these resistances as ‘promising practices and sources of strength’ to draw attention to the material nature of practices that CBOs engage in to challenge the effects of dominant discourse.

Competition and Collaboration

The entrenchment of competition between CBOs for limited funding is a well-documented trend. Competition between CBOs is said to change the nature of activities in CBOs, undermine their very modus operandi and ethos, and disadvantage smaller, more grassroots organisations. Keevers et al. (2008) argue that mandating competition “compromise[s] collaborative and participatory approaches to local community services” (p. 465). This tension was apparent in Ma Mawi’s work as well. As one respondent noted,

we recognize at the community level that a lot of the funding initiatives are done in isolation, that they are done sometimes to divide us because organisations have to compete for the same dollars and that is sometimes done successfully (2010-01-22A).

However, rather than succumb to competition Ma Mawi has developed collaborative partnerships with several other inner city CBOs in the form of Community Led Organisations United Together or CLOUT. Their participation in CLOUT is an important source of strength in Ma Mawi’s work and a response to the strictures of the neoliberal context.

As Larner & Craig (2005) argue, partnerships between community-based organisations should be seen as “a response to the fragmentation of services associated with the earlier phases of neoliberal reforms” (p. 14). Challenging the limitations of the project-funding

model that forces CBOs into competition with one another was a main reason to start the CLOUT coalition, according to one respondent. She elaborated on this rationale noting,

we are applying for the same funding, fighting for the same buck so why don't we just collectively decide who is applying for what, so that person can do it well, instead all of us doing a little bit of everything and nothing (2010-01-22A)

According to respondents, this approach has strengthened all of the organisations involved in the coalition, freeing up additional time and strengthening relationships between the organisations. Further, CLOUT has been able to use their collective voice to bring many inner city issues to the forefront.

Textual Accountability and Community Need

CBOs and funders often have different ideas about the meaning of accountability. Even among funders there is confusion about the term (Binnendijk, 2000). Aucoin and Heintzman argue that accountability measures are employed by governments for different purposes: to control the misuse or abuse of funds; to ensure that public resources are used in ways that reflect the values, rules and regulations of the public service; and as a basis for learning and development (cited in Phillips and Levasseur, 2004, p. 454-455). Scott (2003) argues that despite their potential utility as a learning tool, there is an “inherent contradiction embedded in results-based management between its function as an accountability system and its function as a management improvement system” (p. 48).

Participants in this project reflected on this tension as well. When asked about their definition of accountability, the respondents stressed that for Ma Mawi accountability is a ‘dual track’ approach. Participants repeatedly stressed that their primary accountability is to the community. For those at Ma Mawi, accountability is a values-based concept that is

enacted in relation with community. As one participant noted “accountability is doing what the community wants us to do” (2010-01-22A). This was often juxtaposed with the type of accountability that is required by funders, which was expressed as an action or series of actions, such as completing an audit or report. As one respondent noted

accountability is two things. It is accountability to the community...if the community feels we are doing a good job that is what is important...and I don't know how that really gets reflected. I also know accountability means that we have to get an audit; we have to send our financial reports in to say we actually bought hot dogs when we said we were going to. I know it means that we did what we said we were going to do (2010-01-13).

The respondent's language here reflects a distance from the accountability requirements of funders, this is seen in the use of the distancing “I know that...” that suggests these requirements not of her own making. This is in comparison to the declarative statements she uses to express a sense of accountability to the community. The competing visions of accountability can have the problematic effect of making CBOs less accountable to the populations they are intended to serve as the burden of meeting the accountability requirements imposed by funders often comes to dominate.

Ma Mawi's approach to community involvement has evolved significantly over time. During its early history, Ma Mawi modelled an organisational culture similar to many mainstream social service agencies: their offices were not located in the community where most of the people they worked with lived, they employed a ‘case-worker’ model of care, ‘clients’ booked appointments to deal with their assigned case-worker. By 1997 the organization began experiencing significant funding cuts, up to 25% of their funding from all sources, prompting one respondent to note that she'd “never worked in an organisation that had been cut so much” (2010-01-13). The cuts came as funders and the

leadership of the organisation realized that Ma Mawi's services were underutilized. Faced with greatly reduced funds and an awareness of a need to provide more service, Ma Mawi's leadership embarked on a year-long consultation to "go back to the community and see how they were feeling about us" (2010-01-13). Speaking of this time, Josie Hill, Ma Mawi Executive Director says, "the community clearly told us they wanted be involved in the organisation, they want not just to be a client but part of the solution, they want opportunities to be involved" (Ma Mawi Centre, N.D.). The result was a dramatically reconfigured approach to working with community. They closed all case files, focusing instead on community capacity building and addressing deeper, systemic reasons for the marginalization of Aboriginal peoples. They moved their offices into the heart of the community in which they worked, and encouraged people to 'drop-in'. And they developed a new model of accountability in the form of a covenant with the community that is revisited each year. In revisiting their community contract annually, they ask:

are we [they] integrated and involved in the community, are we [they] building the capacity of the Aboriginal community, are we [they] nurturing Aboriginal leadership, are we [they] facilitating participation in and ownership of the direction-setting and activities of Ma Mawi, are we [they] building on people's strengths and providing opportunities for people to use their gifts, and more generally, how have the health and well-being indicators for Aboriginal families in Winnipeg changed? (Reimer, 2005, p. 7).

According to respondents these changes were overwhelmingly supported by Ma Mawi's funders, their reaction described as "almost like a sigh of relief... [as] they were happy to see us deliver more services since they were paying for them" (2010-01-13).

In some ways Ma Mawi's experience mirrors that of the many CBOs who have been asked to do more with less under neoliberalism's influence. However, in other ways their story diverges from that laid out in the literature. The tightened financial environment did not prompt Ma Mawi to become more 'efficient' in the sense that is usually suggested, they didn't hire more professionals or adopt a more market-based approach to service delivery, instead they responded by becoming more grassroots and connected to community. In this case less funding, while not necessarily facilitating community connection over the long term, did spur it.

However, staying connected to community is an ongoing challenge in the face of neoliberal discourse and a constrained funding environment that seek to turn community members into customers and clients, and CBOs into professionalized service providers. One effect of the neoliberal funding environment on CBOs is that in many organisations the involvement of community members is limited to only the legal requirements for their participation (for example, as Board members or at AGMs). Even this limited involvement can be difficult for community members as the demand for Board members to be professionals increases (Orsini, 2006). The result is that many CBOs are community based in name only. In spite of this trend, Ma Mawi maintains strong connections to community and draws significant strength from doing so. I argue that this is because Ma Mawi has taken concrete steps to entrench community involvement in concrete ways throughout the organisation; as Ma Mawi's notes in the video, *Walking the Talk*, "being community based is about more than accessibility" (Ma Mawi Centre, N.D.).

Overwhelmingly, respondents emphasized Ma Mawi's role as an equal member of the community. One respondent described their approach saying, "we work with

community, we don't do to community" (2010-01-19). Ma Mawi describes their position is community as one of "walking beside"; in fact, Ma Mawi's name literally means "we all work together to help one another." Ma Mawi's commitment to community connection is also evident in a host of organizational practices. For example, they have developed a commitment to the community that is revisited and mutually agreed upon between community members and Ma Mawi representatives, annually. This agreement states, "at every level of our work, community members are engaged in identifying needs, creating solutions, seizing opportunities, and building assets and networks". Further, all of Ma Mawi's over 30 programs are co-facilitated by a community member who is mentored until they can take over the program on their own.

The focus on community connectedness is also evident in what participants refer to as the Ma Mawi model; a model of care based on "values, beliefs and relationships" (2010-01-12). Another participant describes Ma Mawi's approach as a "relationship-based intervention" through which Ma Mawi teaches people "how to be in relationship and what it feels like to be nurtured and cared for" (2010-01-19). The adoption of a model of care based on relationship building is significant in a context shaped by neoliberal discourse that seeks to individualise and responsabilize subjects. In this way, Ma Mawi's relationship-based model can be read as a challenge to neoliberal discourse.

Ma Mawi's focus on relationship building and community connectedness is a significant source of strength for the organization that helps them overcome some of the challenges of the current funding model. Strong internal relationships and community connectedness operate in three main ways at Ma Mawi: as sources of strength that help

Ma Mawi retain staff, as sources of authority in times of challenge, and as touchstones that guide the direction of the organization.

A number of the participants I spoke with referred to Ma Mawi as a ‘family’ and source of support in their own lives. For many, the support and relationships that they experienced as a staff member at Ma Mawi kept them working with the organization, even when they recognized that they could be earning more financially in other fields and organisations. This sense of loyalty to the organization is fostered by a very inclusive and collaborative work environment and by Ma Mawi’s policy of ‘laddering’ former clients and volunteers into staff positions. As one participant noted

when I started with Ma Mawi I was a student and I was quite young and one of the shiest people you could have met- wouldn’t even say my name. And they really invested in me, in allowing me to come here and be a student and they started giving me opportunities to build my own capacity. And now I’ve been here for 13 years and had lots of learning opportunities to get me to be the person I am today. And so that, in and of itself, is a good example of how Ma Mawi really builds on community and capacity and lived experience, which is also important. The work that they do here, it’s not like coming into work; it’s like coming to your second family (2010-01-22).

Or, as another participant reflected on the personal benefit he derives from working in this type of environment.

I think Ma Mawi is a great organisation. I came here on a 3-month contract and here I am seven years later. The values that they have here just make more and more sense every year... I’ve definitely learned as much here as I’ve contributed and I’ve really benefited personally (2010-01-19).

And lastly, another participant reflected that this approach is evident throughout the whole of the organization.

I know when I first came here I thought it was weird ...learning this kind of culture, this kind of value-based approach, as we call it here. I kind of like it! ...I am more relaxed. It is easier on the soul and that is what it should be about. Having worked in that rule-based environment for a number of years, I am more appreciative of this kind of approach than of that western mindset. ... But this approach is also used in the community; it is not a corporate thing or an upper management thing, it flows through the organisation and through the community as well (2010-01-12).

Several commentators have noted that as responsibility for social service provision was devolved to CBOs many lost touch with their membership base resulting in ‘mission drift’ and the development of services more attune to the whims of government than the needs of community (Orsini, 2006; Shragge, 2003). However, respondents in this project reflected that Ma Mawi’s connection to community was an important touchstone and source of authority for the organisation. Several respondents noted that their connection to community enabled Ma Mawi to determine their own priorities based on community need rather than based on available funding. Said one respondent,

we are in constant consultation with community, that is where programs are birthed during those sessions and not by responding to what government is announcing as the latest initiative (2010-01-19)

Or as one Board describes Ma Mawi’s decision to build stronger connections with the community

We started to change from doing the programs that government touted at the time, you know ‘they’ll say there is a need for this or a need for that’ and so they’ll put money in that one pot. And we started to say that is only helping some people so we started asking the community what was needed (Ma Mawi Centre, N.D., Sandra Funk, video).

Community connection is also drawn on as a source of authority that has been particularly useful in helping to navigate disagreements with funders. One respondent relayed a situation about a nationally funded project in which Ma Mawi had different policies with regard to an aspect of the program. In this instance, the respondent noted that “we have to remind them that we are an independent, community based organisation and they can’t...their policies can overrule our policies because our authority is community based” (2010-01-19A). Turning to community in this instance, helped Ma Mawi overcome a challenging situation with a funder. Conversely, respondents recall that without these connections to the community around them “negative things can happen...we know that when we weren’t [connected to community] we went off in a totally different direction and were isolated and meaningless and offered very little to the community” (2010-01-22).

This practice of remembering and documenting their history as an organisation is itself an important practice that supports Ma Mawi’s adherence to their core principles. Ma Mawi’s ongoing re-telling of their story helps challenge the documentary mode of action of funding programs that often limit the ‘story’ of a CBO to the information contained in funding reports and therefore reflective of outcomes-based management discourse.

Reporting, Learning, and Teaching

For funders, accountability is often determined through documentary measures such as reporting. One participant reflected that for funders “the report is *the* sign of accountability” (2010-01-19). This can obscure the real work of CBOs by forcing them to speak differently about, or only about certain aspects of their work. As one respondent put it, “to be involved in making your community better, healthier...people just ‘get that’,

but how do you *report* that” (2010-01-13, p. 8). The respondents for this project are aware of this dynamic and see it as problematic. As one participant reflected “I think accountability means us being able to report what we are really doing, not hiding things for fear of being penalized” (2010-01-13). However, experience often suggests this is not the case.

Several respondents made distinctions between reporting, which is required by funders as a demonstration of accountability, and learning, a process of reflecting on their work to improve their practice. For some respondents this distinction has become sharper over time. One respondent reflected that much had been lost in their relationship with the funder as ‘trust’ became more reliant on the written word. She noted that the reliance on the written form and the language required to satisfying reporting requirements disadvantages organisations like Ma Mawi that seek to involve community members throughout all aspects of the organization. This finding is supported by Orsini (2006) who notes that the increasing focus on expertise in management and policy analysis makes it more difficult for citizens to participate in the governance of CBOs (p. 32). In short, the focus on reporting hides, rather than illuminates, CBOs’ work from those to whom they feel most directly responsible, community members.

Respondents reported that reporting was of mixed usefulness. All of the participants in this study indicated that current reporting mechanisms are unable to capture the meaning of success for an organisation like Ma Mawi and yet many respondents continue to use reporting requirements as a benchmark against which they assess their work. For example, several respondents indicated that reporting provided a helpful overall picture of the activities of the organization, helping them to see “where we are”, and serving as a

“benchmark for what we are doing” (2010-01-22, 2010-01-19A). Ng (1988) reflects on a similar dynamic, writing,

paradoxically, this view of the usefulness of statistics, and the ‘proper’ management of documentary information was shared by most members of the agency, even though at one level they knew that the categories given by Outreach [the funder] and developed by themselves did not fully reflect the agency’s operation or the situation of immigrant women in the labour force (p. 47).

For CBOs this has the potential to result in conflicting priorities and divided focus, and puts CBOs in an unenviable position of internalizing a way of measuring success that is often acknowledged to be at cross-purposes with their vision.

Similarly, a number of participants indicated that while reporting could be useful to help them ‘take stock’ of a program, these insights were not the same as the type of learning that was achieved ‘in relationship’ with others. Learning processes in non-profits require time to connect as a team, learn from mistakes, and draw on the knowledge of other team members. The loss of opportunities for shared learning is a significant issue in CBOs as the project funding model does not allow the time or resources for this type of activity.

The differences experienced between reporting and learning reflect the distinction that Gherardi (2009) makes between knowledge and ‘knowing- in- practice’. Traditional understandings of knowledge employ the mind-as-piggybank analogy, where knowledge is an object that can be acquired and stored. This assumes that objects of knowledge are relatively stable and identifiable as discrete objects. This is in contrast to a more practice-based understanding that sees knowledge as a process that occurs constantly and in relationship. Gherardi argues that “to know is to be capable of participating with the

requisite competence in a complex web of relationships among people, material artefacts and activities (cited in Keevers, 2009, p. 36). This viewpoint on knowledge emphasises the human and relational aspects of knowing and also better reflects reality for many CBOs. Knowing in practice acknowledges that contexts are constantly shifting and changing and that knowledge crosses many boundaries (between cerebral and embodied knowledge for example). This understanding of knowledge better reflects the realities that many CBOs find themselves working in. As Keevers (2009) argues “changes in the conceptions and role of knowledge in Western societies and developments in practice-based approaches to knowing in organisations and the social services professional practice literature are pointing in a similar direction. This direction fundamentally challenges the view that successful community services practice depends only on the prior acquisition of knowledge and principles codified in the various disciplines” (p. 53). The reality remains however that CBOs are most often subject to regulation that does not account for this vision of knowledge.

Ironically for funders, the experience of reporting also highlighted for many respondents the inadequacy of current funding models by pointing out the extent of extra work Ma Mawi is engaged in beyond what they are funded for. The perceived limitations of reporting were aggravated by the belief among many that reporting is little more than an exercise, the content of reports never examined. “The reports just go to [the funder] and I’m not really sure they really look at them...I’m not sure it’s not just an exercise so they can say they have a report...we never get any feedback [from the funder] either way, so it seems kind of useless” (2010-01-19) was a comment that reflected a general sentiment and feeling about reporting in the organisation.

Ma Mawi uses a story-telling approach in their work because, as one participant stated, “the kind of change that Ma Mawi provides is best communicated with a more anecdotal approach” (2010-01-19). This is also a conscious effort to disrupt some of the limitations of current reporting systems. Respondents repeatedly emphasised the importance of narrative reporting in the interviews; for them, this demonstrated a more fulsome picture of success and one that acknowledges community members as people and citizens in their own right.

So whether they want to see it or not, they are going to see that ‘so and so’ graduated today. Because it is going to the Province, they are familiar with some of the kids, they know the kids because they’ve been in the system for a long time. So, I think it is good for them to see, you know, an example of a kid where five years ago they were saying ‘nobody can do it’ and now see in those reports that this child is now doing well on their own, they got a job, are in school (2010-01-22).

Acknowledging these types of successes demonstrates respect for the community members who participate in Ma Mawi’s programs. It represents a refusal to reduce people to numbers. It also highlights that Ma Mawi sees a role in educating funders. Several respondents articulated this sentiment one noting, “we feel we need to be building their capacity as a reader” (2010-01-22A) and another stating, “sometimes we have to teach funders about why we do things the way we do” (2010-01-22). Movement on this issue is slow, but there is a sense that their efforts are having an impact and that there is a growing willingness among funders at all levels to have a conversation around these issues.

Problem Solving: a straight line or an integrated approach?

Outcomes-based funding, as employed by funders limits the scope of action CBOs can undertake in two key ways. Outcomes-based funding encourages organisations only to undertake those that are quantifiable and measurable. Secondly, outcomes-based funding focuses attention on change achieved at the level of program participant rather than community, familial, or societal level changes. An example from the United Way highlights this perspective, outcomes are defined as the

benefits or changes for individuals or populations during or after participating in program activities...Outcomes may relate to behaviour, skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, condition, or other attributes. They are what participants know, think or can do; or how they behave; or what their condition is, that is different following the program” (United Way of America, 1996, p. xv).

Outcomes-based funding then, rewards certain types of actions by CBOs and not others. According to Julian and Clapp (2000) outcomes-based funding is “a process for distributing community resources based on the ability of service providers to define and measure results” (Julian & Clapp, 2000, p. 232). However, satisfying these criteria proves difficult for CBOs because the issues they address are complex, emergent, and require long-term solutions, all dynamics that are poorly expressed in outcome models. As Gamble (2008) writes

The dominant approach to solving problems is that of logic. There is a natural sequence of steps that moves us from problem to solution. We move methodically from assessing the situation to gathering and analyzing data, formulating a solution and then implementing that solution. This linear logical approach works very well when the problem is well understood; there are clear boundaries and there is a limited set of possible solutions, of which there is likely one that is optimal. Current evaluation is generally built around supporting this kind of problem solving... The challenge for evaluators, and for problem solvers, is that not all

problems are bounded, have optimal solutions, or occur within stable parameters (p. 12-13).

And further that,

the very techniques that enable evaluation excellence in more static situations – standardization of inputs, consistency of treatment, uniformity of outcomes and clarity of causal linkages – are unhelpful, even harmful, to situations where there is a lot of uncertainty and ‘moving goalposts’ (p. 13)

Several respondents noted that this approach to problem solving is particularly problematic for organisations like Ma Mawi that employ a culturally-based problem solving model. Ma Mawi’s approach is based on the Medicine Wheel, an approach to problem solving that is circular rather than linear and emphasizes the important connections between people and their communities. Whereas outcomes-based funding encourages and rewards organisations for the changes they make in the lives of individuals, Ma Mawi’s approach emphasizes the connections between individuals, communities, and social or structural change, recognising that it is impossible to address the needs of the individual in isolation from the dynamics of community.

MacKinnon & Stephens (2008) reflect on this dynamic when they explored the meaning of successful outcomes in the work of several CBOs in Winnipeg, Manitoba. They argue that CBOs engage in myriad activities that are not easily captured in funders’ reporting requirements. CBOs, and particularly those whose work is influenced by a decolonization framework, create meaningful qualitative outcomes for participants and those around them that cannot be reduced to a series of measurable outcomes. This was reflected by all of my interview respondents. As one respondent noted on several occasions “success is more mixed” than outcomes-based funding can capture (2010-01-

12). Yet another expressed “a lot of the stuff that is going on gets lost” as a result of outcomes-based funding (2010-01-13).

Further, this research finds that outcomes-based funding shifts the focus of assessment away from the process of change, something that is particularly important in the work of CBOs. Ilcan and Basok (2004) support this contention arguing that activities that are not easily quantifiable, such as advocacy, are not reported or not undertaken at all. Outcomes-based funding masks the inherent messiness of community work and in doing so, contributes to a perception that longer-term, structural solutions to the issues of poverty, and marginalization are not needed. What is needed is simply a well-designed project. This view was supported throughout my interviews. For example, the Aboriginal Visioning project run by Ma Mawi has recently gone through a re-visioning itself, at the behest of the project funders. The project was originally conceived of as a broad and holistic attempt to encourage the participation of Aboriginal people (Aboriginal women, in particular) in the community. However, this proved difficult to track and report on to the project funders. As one respondent noted “Aboriginal women have been so powerless for so ... long *but I don't think we can translate that or that people get that*” (2010-01-13, p. 2). The respondents' use of the term *translate* draws our attention to the disjuncture between the aims and goals of the project and the strictures and limitations imposed through the funding and reporting model. As a result, the project has been refined and is now more narrowly conceived of as a community economic development project. This speaks to the productive power of outcomes-based funding; because this aims of this project were not easy to track, they were altered and narrowed.

Ma Mawi engages in a number of promising practices that disrupt the linear decision-making model embedded in an outcomes-based funding approach. This is seen, for example, their use of decision making structures based on the medicine wheel, a cultural symbol that emphasises the interconnectedness of all beings and the cycles of the natural world, and that for many represents equity, as in the circle no one is above another.

Ma Mawi's approach is guided by the values of reciprocity, respect, inclusion, learning, diversity, caring, independence, and leadership (Reimer, 2005, p.4). The medicine wheel that guides Ma Mawi's work is also built on the four quadrants of community involvement, community-based, leadership role, capacity building. All of these elements are taken into consideration when designing new programs or projects at Ma Mawi. This Master's research came about as Ma Mawi sought to develop a response to new outcomes-based funding and reporting models that they are being asked to adopt; the long-term goal is to develop their own evaluation models that better reflect their approach to community work. In this sense, Ma Mawi can be said to engage in what DeSantis (2010) refers to as policy advocacy. Ma Mawi is engaged in a process of trying to improve the conditions of their funding relationships.

This chapter has considered the functions and meanings contained in both 'official texts' and in the interviews and conversations with people working day to day in one CBO. The analysis has highlighted some of the different ways that funding documents operate discursively to materially restructure the work of CBOs and have constituted the subjectivities of those who are the targets of the interventions of funding programs. I have demonstrated how the current funding environment creates a number of contradictions and tensions in the work of CBOs and how, in the spaces created by these

tensions, we can see a number of promising practices emerge. In the concluding chapter that follows, I summarize my findings and note what conceptual and empirical contributions flow from this case study.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

I began work on this thesis hoping to reflect on, and make sense of, my own experiences working with community-based organisations. I have experienced the transformative power and energy of many community-based organisations and have been continually amazed by the commitment and ingenuity that CBOs regularly exhibit in their approach to addressing complex social issues. However, I often worried that despite this energy and potential, the alternatives put forth by CBOs had been co-opted. I feared that CBOs operated as a sort of ‘shadow state’ that actually facilitated the diminishing level of social protections afforded to citizens. In this schema, resistance or co-optation were the only options. However, a Foucauldian perspective on power opens our analysis up to greater possibilities. In the Foucauldian tradition power is not conceived of as a freedom from an oppressor, rather power is the exercise of subjecthood of all parties, it is the possibility to invent alternatives to current modes of governing (McKee, 2009). By engaging with some of the literature on governmentality and working on this thesis I have come to more clearly understand that power is not an either/or proposition. Rather my research demonstrates that there is a complex interplay between neoliberal discourses, the practical parameters of funding requirements, and resistive practices in CBOs that plays out both in what is officially seen and recorded and in the everyday practices that make up the in-between.

Ma Mawi’s relationship to the practices of governing are always complex and transitioning. Throughout this thesis I have attempted to demonstrate that while funding practices work to re-organise and shape CBOs, this is not total, rather much of this re-shaping can be read in multiple ways. For example, the practice of involving community

members throughout all aspect of the organisation can be read at once as, a source of strength to the organisation and recognition of the need to remain connected to community, and as an example of governing through community. Ma Mawi challenges the individualising claims of neoliberalism by remaining focused on relationship based models and yet they are also active participants in projects of self and community improvements that meet the needs of government.

Throughout this thesis I have drawn on diverse theoretical and methodological traditions to deepen my understanding of complex phenomena. This thesis attempts to look outward- connecting the everyday constraints and practices in CBOs to broad trends in the funding of CBOs and broader yet, connecting these trends to neoliberal discourses. However, this thesis also zeros in on and digs down into the work and everyday practices in one CBO to better understand the complexities of the relationship between CBOs, funders, and discourse. Combining these approaches provides a fuller picture of the complex reality in which many CBOs operate and offers opportunity to reflect on some of the strengths and limitations of each approach. For example, by employing a case study methodology within a governmentality analytic I've been able to present a finer grained look at some of the trends and phenomena affecting the sector. In doing so, I've demonstrated that these trends are not monolithic or unidirectional; rather there are many points of points of resistance and directional changes along the way. A case study approach has helped affirm some of the critiques offered of the governmentality analytic by creating opportunities to focus in more closely on points of diversion from the 'straight lines of flight' often assumed in the governmentality framework. By taking a sometimes overly historical and broad arc, governmentality can miss the points where

things are not behaving as intended. By focusing on the actual practices that CBOs engage in, this thesis has highlighted some of the points of disjuncture between the intentions of neoliberal discourse and its actual adoption. For example, while Ma Mawi has experienced pressure to behave 'neoliberally' by professionalizing their practice and treating people more like consumers or clients rather than as community members, they have often chosen to respond differently, opting instead to become *more* community-based, more grassroots and less 'professional'. In other instances too they have acted in ways that challenge the presumptions of neoliberal discourse- focusing on relationship building, strengthening community connections and practicing holistic models of care.

On the other hand, a governmentality analytic is an exceptionally important tool that helps 'make strange' many taken for granted concepts. Economic stability, rational decision-making, risk aversion, and accountability are all taken for granted virtues that are projected on to CBOs and the populations they serve. Governmentality helps to unpack these ideas, exposing their historical roots and evolution. While neoliberal discourse has moral dimensions, these are masked as commonsense ideas and objective realities. For example as this thesis demonstrates, accountability, management ideas and even the role and function of CBOs are contested concepts, yet neoliberal discourse operates in such a way to present a singular image of these concepts, an image that is largely reflective of a specific set of economic rationalities. This thesis attempts to open up these concepts for deeper exploration, looking at how Ma Mawi understands and operationalises these concepts. In doing so, we are able to gain a fuller understanding of the terms and their impacts. For example, Ma Mawi's relationship-based model opens up the individualising tendency of neoliberal discourse to scrutiny. This thesis, does as

McKee (2009) suggests, which is to highlight the “inventedness of our world” (p. 468) and in doing so expand the possibilities around us.

Further this thesis also highlights the impacts of different understandings of knowledge itself. Most funding models operate in ways that suggest knowledge in something that is acquired and held while the activities and conversations in this CBO suggest that knowing is a process that is practiced in relation with one another. Recognising these different conceptions and how they are manifest in the relationship between funder and CBO is an important contribution to organisational practice and may suggest new ways of learning and reporting in CBOs.

As McKee (2009) argues “a governmental perspective is not... traditionally concerned with the ‘truth’ or ‘falsity’ of ... political rationalities, rather how they are constructed as objective knowledge (p. 468). Adopting a governmental analytic allow us the room to deconstruct these rationalities and in doing so, better understand them. A political economy perspective compliments this analytic work by helping to locate these discourses and rationalities in real spaces and places. A political economy perspective helps ground our analysis in the material conditions of peoples’ lives. This helps bring us closer to the conception of social justice as distribution, recognition and participation, originally articulated by Nancy Fraser (1996). It is my belief that while we cannot truly ‘get outside the discourse’ there is still a place for everyday politics – while neoliberal discourse seems to transcend political party or allegiance, this level of intervention is still one where cracks and shifts in the discourse can be created; these are the points of intervention highlighted by a political economy perspective.

Fraser's (1996) contribution to our understanding of social justice is also applicable to Ma Mawi's explicit positioning of themselves as an Aboriginal run and serving organisation; this represents a challenge to the notion that we are all undifferentiated 'everymen' that reminds us that we are also members of collectives who have often worn the advantages and disadvantages of history differently. In the current context, where CBOs are discouraged from these positions, this is an important challenge.

Most of the available Canadian and American literature on the practices of community-based organisations tends to contrast community organising and community development approaches (Shragge, 2003; Stall & Stoecker, 1998; Stoecker, 2002). The tendency is to cast community organising as a more confrontational approach and a more 'real' challenge to neoliberalism; community development on the other hand is seen as more inward looking and consensus seeking and as less of a challenge to neoliberalism. Surely, governments favour community development processes over community organising ones and tend to fund accordingly. However, this does not mean that community development approaches are not a meaningful challenge. For organisations like Ma Mawi, whose work is deeply connected to the histories and present realities of colonization community capacity building is intimately connected to the process of decolonization. Community capacity building and community development in this context occurs in conversation with challenges to external systems based on racism, classism, and colonization. That Ma Mawi's work exists in constant conversation with these histories poses a challenge to the idea of the undifferentiated enterprising individual.

Working on this thesis while simultaneously working in the non-profit sector has created an interesting vantage point from which I've able to reflect on the role of these

discourses and practices in the non-profit sector. Working on the thesis that is, by and large, very critical of the current focus on outcomes-based practices while simultaneously working in a sector largely governed by them can be a bit discomfiting. This experience has affirmed some of my critiques and helped ground my analysis, in places tempering it.

I am often frustrated by the circular nature of the project funding model. Like many others working in the sector I am often frustrated by funding requests that ask for a mapped out plan to respond to an issue that is emerging and changing as we engage with it, and like many others I am frustrated by the short term nature of funding and by the extremes of evidence tested funding or funding for ‘innovative new projects’. And yet, like the people I spoke with working at Ma Mawi I also come to rely on some of the concepts that are part and parcel of the discourses I critique here to guide and evaluate my own work. Oftentimes work in the non-profit sector can feel overwhelming, the problems and concerns almost too complex to move forward on. In these situations some of the strictures and regulations discussed in this thesis can actually feel like a reprieve from this complexity, sometimes they provide a framework that can allow us to move forward. The danger, I think, comes when we start to accept these concepts and discourses uncritically, when we in the sector accept accountability-as-finances as the definitive meaning of the term. What is needed is a fuller perspective on the complex processes of community building and change making that incorporates those uncomfortable perspectives that attempt to make strange those taken for granted ideas that contribute to the shape of our work.

My interest in this topic is an extension and refinement of personal and political commitments to community-building and social justice and my connection with ‘home’

in Winnipeg. I hope that this research is of use to the organizations participating and the broader movement for social justice and equity. There is much to be learned by focusing on the daily practices that those working in CBOs engage in about the relationship between funding practices and the work of the non-profit sector. It is my hope that this thesis will invite further critical discussion of the practical and transformative potential of these practices and their complex relationship to the practices of government.

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