Governing the Social in Neoliberal Times

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4 Aboriginal Community Research: Government and Neoliberal Self-Determination

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In the social sciences the term "neoliberalism" has primarily negative connotations, appearing like a tsunami under which government services and public goods collapse in the face of free market forces and ideologies of privatization. More recently, however, scholars have argued that critical explorations of neoliberalism need to more seriously consider it as a generative field of regulatory restructuring that reconfigures fields of power in ways we cannot prejudge without more careful examination. Given the new articulations of social forces that neoliberalism has unleashed, anthropologist James Ferguson (2010) suggests that it may provide opportunities to imagine new and more progressive arts of government. This is a particularly intriguing proposition when considering Indigenous peoples' struggles for sovereignty and new forms of political autonomy. Aboriginal peoples have been oppressed, injured, discriminated against, and marginalized by the Canadian state and its colonial predecessor, the British Crown. To what extent might the decline and reconfiguration of the modern social welfare state offer new prospects for Aboriginal solidarity, autonomy, and self-government? To what extent is the self-government that neoliberalism may afford the self-government that Aboriginal peoples seek?

If neoliberalism is characterized by the restructuring of the state and the devolution of duties and obligations to corporations, non-profit social institutions, and other non-governmental organizations (NGOS), we might consider the opportunities this affords to Indigenous peoples to assert self-determination (an international Indigenous human right) and the qualities of such new forms of responsibility. In this chapter we explore the changing political context within which urban Aboriginal communities in Toronto are organizing to make themselves known as self-governing communities asserting specific rights through their exercise of new forms of accountability. We explore the new kinds of subject positions made available by neoliberal governmental restructuring and highlight some of the pressures that emerge as Aboriginal activists assume new subjectivities made possible and necessary under these conditions. The first section of the chapter introduces one example of Aboriginal community-based research in Toronto and explains the framework of neoliberal governmentality. The second section describes the historical context of policy making, program development, and Aboriginal community research in Toronto. In the final two sections we highlight the work that Indigenous researchers are doing and demonstrate empirically how neoliberal political processes influence both the context and the character of Aboriginal advocacy in Toronto. We show how these conditions contribute to the emergence of new forms of recognition and opportunities to build solidarities as Aboriginal communities in Toronto assert their rights and affirm an urban Indigenous identity.

The TARP Report: An Exercise in Response to Neoliberal Governmentality?

In 2011, the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC), representing a number of Aboriginal social service organizations in the city, released the most comprehensive research report on Aboriginal peoples in Toronto ever completed. Titled *Toronto Aboriginal Research Project (TARP) Final Report*, it was the result of years of community-based research involving the insights of over fourteen hundred individuals through seven methodologies, including interviews, surveys, and focus-group discussions. Nearly four hundred pages in length, it represents the experience and situation of members of all age groups in the urban

Aboriginal community in areas as diverse as poverty and social services, housing, homelessness, culture and identity, and law and justice (McCaskill et al. 2011). Each topical area concludes with clear recommendations for changes in policy and service delivery. The publication of the final report was quickly followed by the findings of two other research projects, the *Case Studies Report* and the *Life Histories Report*, providing in-depth descriptions of the history and operations of six Aboriginal organizations in Toronto and personal narratives of thirteen Aboriginal people living in Toronto, respectively.

Together the three publications provide rich empirical material highlighting the distinct needs and aspirations of Aboriginal peoples in the early twenty-first century as well as recommendations for policy and program development. These studies illustrate the growing capacities of Aboriginal peoples to organize and represent themselves, identify their own needs, and assert their rights through recommendations for changes in policy and service delivery. Indeed, they are clear indications of what has been called the "comeback" of Aboriginal peoples in Canada (Saul 2014). Moreover, the TARP might be viewed as an example of how a marginalized social group took advantage of neoliberal conditions for its own ends. More specifically, the TARP is unique in that it illuminates an instance in which what governmentality scholars call neoliberal technologies were used and reconfigured by Indigenous peoples in Toronto.

Neoliberalism is often approached as a political and economic ideology, making Indigenous community research and political organization an odd area of practice through which to explore its consequences. A political economy approach to neoliberalism would likely emphasize economic restructuring, the privatization of public goods, the downloading of social services from state agencies to non-governmental and private organizations, and the impacts of corporate and managerial decision making in state agencies (Harvey 2005), all of which are relevant to understanding the conditions in which urban Aboriginal peoples find themselves and in which Indigenous peoples struggle for self-determination (Jung 2003; Slowey 2008). For example, in her work on the negotiations between Aboriginal peoples and the Canadian government over the construction of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, political scientist Isabel Altamirano-Jiménez (2004, 354) argues that neoliberal market logic

has been hegemonic to the extent that it demands Indigenous peoples' integration into global markets and thereby fundamentally undermines the substantive recognition of Indigenous rights: "Indigenous peoples are encouraged to throw away the yoke of internal colonialism by becoming successful entrepreneurs in the global economy." Neoliberalism is thus understood primarily in neo-Marxist terms, wherein Indigenous peoples are interpellated by discursive forces to articulate their identities in ways that are legible to the market and that serve capitalist growth (Altamirano-Jiménez 2013, 87). Neoliberal power is thereby understood both as imposed from above and as ultimately restrictive in nature.

Foucauldian approaches to neoliberalism conceive of power as a generative force that contributes to the making of new subjectivities through new technologies, such as auditing (explored later in this chapter). The neoliberal governmentality framework asks us to address new forms of self-regulation and self-constitution, including how these are configured by processes of state reconfiguration. As the introduction to this volume explains, Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller (2010) suggest that, under neoliberalism, political power is best understood through the analytic of "government," which is no longer solely the work of the state but is increasingly accomplished by diffuse networks of actors that co-produce specific technologies and rationalities of governance and regulation. Government, from this perspective, is a verb rather than a noun, and the state is just one source of government, albeit a central source of legitimation. The study of neoliberal governmentality destabilizes our understanding of the state as a unified political agent, vertically imposing disciplinary powers on subordinate subjects, and draws our attention to a greater multiplicity of actors such as NGOs, social service agencies, and corporations, who may establish new forms of governance and regulation that are often internalized by actors as constitutive of the way they understand their agency (Coombe and Weiss 2015). Government is in part facilitated through the use of technologies, which refer to tools or strategies constituted via political processes to render others legible and amenable to intervention for the purpose of shaping and instrumentalizing their conduct (Barry et al. 1998; Brady 2016).

Studies of neoliberal governmentality are characteristically focused on contextually specific and spatialized processes (Brenner, Peck, and Theodore

2010) that account for both the success and failure of new forms of government. Understood most broadly as a form of market-oriented regulatory transfer, processes of neoliberalization are non-linear and marked by resistance as newly "responsibilized" subjects perform acts of government. As geographers Jamie Peck and Nik Theodore (2012, 178–79) explain,

> neoliberalisation does not produce a singular, "advanced" or globalising state form that somehow coheres in politically functionalist, though socially destructive, ways. Neoliberalisation instead displays a lurching dynamic, marked by serial policy failure and improvised adaptation, and by combative encounters with obstacles and countermovements. It has carved a path, therefore, not of manifest destiny but one shaped by opportunistic moments.

We adopt the neoliberal governmentality approach to explore the opportunities and potential constraints afforded Canadian urban Aboriginal peoples under neoliberalism, using the work of the TASSC and the three reports highlighted above as a case study to explore both the insights and limitations of such an approach. To accomplish this research, we conducted a discourse analysis of the three TARP reports, an analysis of program reporting by Aboriginal organizations that participated in the TARP, and interviews and conversations with experts active in the field during the research and publication of the TARP. Qualitative research software NVivo was used to code the above sources and to identify themes and trends in the reporting. In considering the dialectical relationship between the Canadian state's attempts to implement neoliberal agendas and Indigenous peoples' use of such new technologies and forms of regulation for their own political purposes, we examine some of the limits of neoliberal "government" (Li 2007; Coombe 2007, 2012) as well as the new forms of political agency it enables. As a result of this dialectical process, we suggest, government programs are reconfigured in ways that exceed neoliberal imaginaries.

Urban Neoliberalism and Canadian Aboriginal Politics

Geographers suggest that neoliberalism is experienced in localized and often contradictory ways in contemporary cities (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Hackworth 2007). This is especially the case for Canadian

Aboriginal peoples whose urban history has been marginalized in modern law, public policy, and political ideology (Porter 2013). If people generally experience the daily life of neoliberalism in American cities in terms of a fragmentation and differentiation of services and their quality (Hackworth 2007), this is notably the case in Toronto, where

> urban neoliberalism refers to the contradictory re-regulation of everyday life ... Built on models of technologies of power developed in the previous era, the everyday now has become a tight space where individuals (divided and collectivised by class, "race," gender, etc.) are suspended in a web of control and opportunity, rights and responsibilities. (Boudreau, Keil, and Young 2009, 29)

Neoliberalism takes place in assemblages – articulations of policies and programs, regulations, and technologies – that never shape the world anew but, rather, must contend with specific institutional histories. Neoliberal restructuring projects are "produced within national, regional, and local contexts defined by the legacies of inherited institutional frameworks, policy regimes, regulatory practices, and political struggles" (Brenner and Theodore 2002, 351). By "reflecting upon the particular geographic and temporal contexts within which practices or technologies of government unfold" we can see how governmental assemblages "link neoliberal with non-liberal rationalities and ... involve heterogenous practices and techniques" (Brady 2016, 4, 5).

Urban environments pose both ideological and legal obstacles in Canadian Aboriginal peoples' political struggles for rights and recognition. Both nationally and internationally, the dominant form of Indigenous political subjectivity has been forged on the basis of a close relationship to ancestral territories, conservation ethics, and ecological wisdom (Doane 2007; Li 2000; Sissons 2005; Tsing 1999). It might therefore be argued that Indigenous peoples perform their political "authenticity" through their connection to rural or wilderness areas. The close relationship between international Indigenous rights and environmental movements has reinforced this social imaginary in settler states like Canada, wherein "reserve life is reified as the ideal for protecting and promoting Aboriginal identity, self-determination, and self-government"

(Maddison 2013, 299). To the extent that the international Indigenous rights movement has focused largely on struggles over land and resources in nonurban areas, victories in Indigenous rights movements have not been felt in cities; Indigenous rights interests "remain much less visible in urban planning and policy practice ... than in the fields of natural resource management and environmental planning" (Porter 2013, 284). Aboriginal peoples in Toronto are therefore organizing in a context within which the particularity of their city struggles is largely unrecognized and their very identity as distinct peoples with distinct interests may be questioned.

The historical response of the Canadian state to the rights of urban Aboriginal peoples further reinforces their marginalization in state planning. Canadian policy relating to urban Aboriginal peoples has been described as a patchwork of programs and funding arrangements running across multiple agencies and functioning under different jurisdictions (Peters 2012). Historically, the needs of metropolitan Aboriginal peoples in the areas of income support, family violence, childcare, addiction, suicide, and human rights were ignored by specific policy objectives (Hanselmann and Gibbons 2002, 81, cited in Abele et al. 2012). In Ontario, the election of the NDP government in 1990 marked the beginning of policy and programming development specifically for Aboriginal peoples living in municipalities. This apparent progress came to an abrupt end, however, with the election of the Conservative government led by Mike Harris, who adopted radical neoliberal policies that emphasized the economic self-reliance of Aboriginal peoples and ignored any discussion of their inherent rights (Abele et al. 2012, 93; see also Atkinson, Chapter 9, this volume). This approach has contributed to increased regulatory differentiation and variegation (Brenner et al. 2012), with a proliferation of institutions operating at different scales with both overlapping jurisdictions and considerable gaps in coverage (Peters 2012). Indeed, the role that Indigenous organizations have assumed as service providers, advocates, and policy experts, may have precluded more direct representation of Indigenous communities in municipal government (Heritz 2018). In this environment, urban Aboriginal policy making is characterized as "complex, fragmented, and often conflict-ridden" (Peters 2012, 22).

One of the most significant recent policy developments for Aboriginal peoples resident in Canadian cities is the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS), a federal policy directive in which neoliberal ideological principles are clearly evident. Originally developed in 1997, the strategy provides seed funding to strengthen the capacity of Aboriginal organizations and to coordinate activities between federal departments, provincial and municipal governments, Aboriginal communities, and the private sector. Such "capacity-building" norms and exercises are typical of neoliberal strategies that encourage people to take on responsibilities for care of the self and for the care for the communities with which they identify (Rose 1996, 57–58; Van Lier, Chapter 6, this volume). The UAS is pivotal in redefining the role of the Canadian state from that of exercising responsibility for the delivery of services to urban Indigenous communities to that of devolving responsibility to these communities themselves. This strategy "supports projects and priorities identified by community members, and, in so doing, works to build organizational capacity within urban Aboriginal organizations" (Abele and Graham 2012, 44). Arguably, however, such capacity-building exercises don't so much "build" capacities as presume them. In other words, the ability to take on new responsibilities seems to be assumed, without regard to the huge disparities in resources available to different collectivities to undertake such work.

Not surprisingly, the impact of the UAS has been uneven, even within provinces. In Alberta, Chris Andersen and Jenna Strachan (2012, 127) suggest, policy and programming has been rolled out unevenly with a pronounced lack of federal coordination and leadership, resulting in a jurisdictional maze that "has cemented a current patchwork of short-term, overlapping, and inefficient urban Aboriginal programs and policies." City-specific programming is one consequence, resulting in tensions between larger cities with more resources and smaller cities with less financial and administrative capacity. Rather than building capacity, the authors suggest that Aboriginal political actors primarily feel further marginalized from the policy-making process (Andersen and Strachan 2012, 128). As one of Huizenga's informants working with the TASSC suggested, the UAS has divided Aboriginal organizations in Toronto because the model requires that they compete for resources. It also created an environment of uncertainty

because it has been slow in delivering: some organizations were not able to survive a ten- or eleven-month wait for the promised funds.

The UAS has embedded and naturalized an ethos of coordination and decentralized programming into civil society actors, and this has had some negative consequences. The delegation of responsibilities has not been accompanied by sufficient resources or authority to carry out the concomitant obligations (Abele and Graham 2012, 48), which were historically those of the Crown. In short, devolution at first appears more like state abandonment than like an affirmation of Aboriginal rights to forms of self-determination (Altamirano-Jiménez 2004, 355). Nonetheless, it is in this context that Aboriginal peoples have established their own organizations, expressed their own concerns, and represented their own perspectives on these issues, and, in so doing, have found new ways of defining urban Indigenous identity and culture.

Organizing Indigenous Political Legibility in Toronto

The vitality of Indigenous cultural traditions in metropolitan environments and the importance of Indigenous teachings to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples living in cities have long been affirmed through art, activism, community organizing, and, increasingly, through research. This has resulted not only in academic literature but also in a shifting understanding of the urban landscape (Howard and Proulx 2011; McCaskill et al. 2011; Restoule 2008). Cultural programming, such as Indigenous-led tours that emphasize the Indigenous history and cultural significance of sites in the urban environment, provides new cartographies for the city (Johnson 2013) that emphasize its places of belonging in Aboriginal memory rather than its spaces of industrial/commercial alienation for Aboriginal peoples. Such endeavours have been central to Aboriginal organizing in Toronto.

The Native Canadian Centre Toronto (NCCT) has been one important place and space for Aboriginal community production (Howard 2011), although the means by which its practices are recognized are changing under neoliberalization. The longest-standing Aboriginal-run service and cultural centre in Toronto, the NCCT emerged out of a nation-wide Aboriginal social movement that created "Friendship Centres" to provide services to urban migrants (93). Unlike other Friendship Centres across

the country, which began to position themselves as service providers to encourage Aboriginal peoples to participate in Canadian society under the prevailing policy of assimilation, the NCCT, as early as the 1970s, promoted Indigenous culture by adopting a philosophy of self-determination within a human rights framework (100). It responded to local needs by emphasizing Aboriginal rights to autonomy, and local decision making and policy development were guided by Indigenous cultural values that were in line with a growing and increasingly vocal continental Native American rights movement.

> In contrast to the earlier integrationist approaches, challenging the legitimacy of the nation-state itself became central to the discourse of Native politics at the time. The Toronto centre and a small contingent of other centres saw their roles in terms of much broader community development, self-determination, and cultural programming. In 1978, the Toronto centre and several others withdrew from the provincial association and maintained independent positions in the national association. (99)

Aboriginal community-based research in Toronto, as represented in the *TARP Final Report*, clearly has its roots in a history of community-based organizing, but the way in which these political struggles are recognized has changed dramatically in recent years. As particular "technologies" of government (in the Foucauldian sense of "the conduct of conduct," as Rose and Miller [2008] explain) proliferate in this political environment, they enable the forging of new forms of subjectivity and legibility.

Aboriginal community-based organizations have been brought into the ambit of government programming through the UAS, making them not only visible to policy makers but also responsible for Aboriginal programming and service delivery in Toronto. For example, the *TARP Final Report* and its findings were taken up by city councillors (Demsey 2011), and the municipality appears to consult the report as an authoritative source on Indigenous peoples' needs in planning, programming, and policy making. After the final report was published, the authors made dozens of presentations to all levels of government and social service agencies. Copies were mailed to members of the provincial legislature

and federal Parliament, significantly raising the profile of Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (along with their communities), who became recognized as particular subjects responsible for their own organization and representation.

The means and politics through which the community work of organized Aboriginal organizations is made "legible" is shifting, enabling urban Aboriginal peoples and their rights to become recognized and legitimated in new ways. In his pioneering book *Seeing Like a State* (1998), James Scott provides a historical analysis of how modern states established centralized means to administer peoples through the development of specific tools to simplify and standardize populations, the territories in which they live, and the economies in which they participate. To "see like a state" is to deploy technological means to objectify and render a populace "legible" to state administrators for the purpose of making it governable.

The politics of legibility are fundamentally reconfigured under neoliberalism as governmental powers and responsibilities become more diffuse and a greater number of actors and agencies, such as NGOs and community-based organizations, participate in practices that make subjects legible to the state and to one another, precisely because the points of government have proliferated (Coombe 2012; Coombe and Kisin n.d.). In Toronto, prior to the creation of the TASSC and the publication of the *TARP Final Report*, neither state actors nor private donors had any ultimate authority to which to turn for the purpose of learning about Aboriginal peoples' lives and living conditions, making it very difficult for actors seeking funding to substantiate their proposals. Today, organizations such as the NCCT and the Toronto Aboriginal Networking group actively work to make the distinct experiences and needs of urban Aboriginal peoples visible to other social services in Toronto by organizing monthly meetings between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal service providers. At these meetings they share programs and coordinate activities, while educating non-Aboriginal community workers on the distinct effects of colonialism. As an informant described it to Huizenga, such programming is "planting a seed" that will grow to make collaboration between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples the norm. This work illustrates how an urban Indigenous social group makes itself known and understood as a collective political subject by means of its self-knowledge, organization,

and representation. This is also an example of the neoliberal processes under which subjectivities are reformed "not simply as the outcome of rhetoric or political manipulation, but rather as an integral part of the process of restructuring" (Larner 2000, 19).

Community-Based Research

The reorganization of political power and the diffusion of regimes of regulation under neoliberalism contributes to the formation of new self-governing subjects (Rose and Miller 2008, 2010). "Community" is a means through which the social is acted upon and divided into distinct and manageable parts wherein citizens are encouraged to manage and sustain themselves (Bennett 2000, 89). It is also a particular subject formation that has been imbued with new values under neoliberalism (Coombe 2011a, 2011b) where it has arguably replaced the "social" as the mode through which collective life is rendered legible and targeted for intervention (Rose and Miller 2008, 88). Just as it is targeted by governance strategies, community is also invoked by its members as a means to express agency and to gain access to rights. In other words, subjects are not only the effects of power's exercise but also the outcome of expressions of self-will and agency. In the articulation of themselves as subjects, people take part in power relations, thereby reproducing and transforming them (Bröckling et al. 2011, 14).

Appealing to "community" is an important rhetorical and performative dimension of the work of Indigenous-run organizations in Toronto (FitzMaurice et al. 2013). As David Newhouse (2001, 252) states, "one of the central notions of indigenous thought is community." The importance to Indigenous peoples of working and living in community has a history that long predates neoliberal processes that rely upon such historical bonds while investing them with new values, affiliating tradition with new forms of expertise and reconfiguring collectivity in new relations of competition and exclusion (Rose and Miller 2008, 88). This is clearly illustrated by how the UAS positions a "community" as something that can be appealed to, called upon, and given certain capacities. As it states on its website:

> [The UAS] invests in building capacity within the urban Aboriginal community through investments that help form effective partnerships

> and develop and implement strategic plans that address the unique needs of each community ... The UAS is an opportunity-driven strategy designed to leverage other federal, provincial, municipal and private funding for community-based projects rather than funding pre-planned projects. (AADNC)

In this context, Aboriginal peoples are encouraged to organize themselves in communities in order to make themselves legible to the state. In their discussion of Aboriginal community organizations in urban centres in Canada, for example, Frances Abele and colleagues (2011, 113) find that community organizing is important to "creat[ing] local visibility. City governments respond to community organizations, and when Aboriginal service providers come together, they make it easier for cities to 'see' needs and respond to them." Here we witness how different appeals to "community" can derive from Indigenous culture, be demanded by state agencies, and be rearticulated as Aboriginal peoples recognize the kinds of agency that are afforded by so representing themselves.

Community-based research is one means through which community is rearticulated and reimagined as both materially and symbolically valued by Aboriginal peoples and, thus, as a significant political resource that represents a form of resistance to the forms of colonialism they have endured. Historically, research has been done "on" Aboriginal peoples as objects of study without their consent and without any consultation with them regarding its purposes and uses. More recently, Aboriginal peoples across Canada have been involved in research as subjects directing inquiries for their own ends, and they have begun to see its political advantages (Bull 2010, 18). Involving peoples from Aboriginal communities is a defining characteristic of the research that contributed to the *TARP Final Report*:

> From the very beginning, TARP was committed to a community-based approach to research. This approach is similar to a participatory action or applied research approach. There are two fundamental characteristics of community-based approach. First, it involves Aboriginal community representatives assuming key decision-making roles in overseeing all aspects of the research. Second, the research is

> designed to be useful. That is, addressing community-defined issues with a view to inform social action designed to ameliorate social problems and improve social conditions. (McCaskill et al. 2011, 68)

Such practices have their origins in Aboriginal cultures. In recent years Aboriginal cultural perspectives on research and ethics have been formalized in Canadian research ethics protocols (Brunger and Bull 2011; Bull 2010). The Ontario Federation of Friendship Centres has also developed a research framework called the USAI (utility, self-voicing, access, and inter-relationality) Research Framework, whose guidelines give direction and focus to urban Aboriginal community research (OFIFC 2012). Aboriginal scholar Julie Bull (2010, 19) insists that research with Aboriginal peoples needs to be founded first and foremost on an authentic relationship, defined as "how communities and researchers collaborate together in a co-learning environment whereby mutual interests and agendas are discussed and enacted in the entire research process." These examples join others in their call to decolonize knowledge using Indigenous methodologies (Smith 1999) and to transform traditions in Western-based academic research by incorporating Indigenous cultural knowledge (Kovach 2009).

The *TARP Final Report* identifies divisions that exist between Aboriginal groups in Toronto, a recognition that may provide an opportunity for Indigenous peoples to reconstitute and redefine their urban communities. According to findings in the report, Aboriginal peoples living in Toronto represent an economically and culturally diverse demographic that has varying degrees of involvement in Aboriginal cultural activities. Respondents surveyed during the research for the final report indicated that there is antagonism between low- and middle-class Aboriginal peoples. Such conflicts have become so severe that, in Toronto, Aboriginal peoples from these two echelons have been said to occupy two different communities (Dempsey 2011). Survey participants were asked, "Do you agree or disagree with the statement, 'If some Aboriginal peoples attain financial success, there will be others who will put them down?'" The majority of respondents agreed with this statement, and many also indicated that they believe that Aboriginal peoples discriminate against other Aboriginal peoples. Of the total respondents, 23 percent said that

lateral violence is a major issue in Toronto (McCaskill et al. 2011, 233). The authors equate this class-based division in the Aboriginal community to colonial conditions wherein historically victimized peoples develop feelings of resentment towards those in their communities who progress beyond states of poverty and disenfranchisement. This division, while it may have colonial roots, is also a symptom of neoliberal tendencies to put people and groups into competitive relations as they struggle to secure resources. This work demands that Indigenous peoples represent themselves as a cohesive community in order to gain rights, even when faced with the contradiction that the rights they are claiming are needed to secure the community to which they aspire. The neoliberal recognition of "community" thus represents both an opportunity and a burden.

Despite recognition of divisions within and between Aboriginal communities, the *TARP Final Report* clearly and affirmatively articulates the importance of Aboriginal culture to almost all Aboriginal peoples living in Toronto (McCaskill et al. 2011). TASSC member informants emphasized that Aboriginal peoples in the city have a fractured sense of identity and that the *TARP Final Report*, and related organizational programming across Toronto, responded to this issue by helping them better understand their history and teachings. The vital role of traditional practices and culturally sensitive approaches in service delivery is uniformly asserted by Aboriginal-run organizations in the *Case Studies Report* (FitzMaurice et al. 2013). Through networks of collaborating partners and community-based research they have been able to make themselves legible to both one another and to the state as having distinct cultural practices. While the *TARP Final Report* illuminates very real divisions within and between Indigenous communities in Toronto, it is perhaps through this recognition that new communities can emerge. Reflecting on the history of the NCCT, anthropologist Heather Howard (2011, 104) asserts:,

> Winning and maintaining legitimate authority is a complex process of balancing its roles and responsibilities against the diverse, and often opposing, expectations of people inside, outside, and on the ever-shifting borders of the "community." Native culture, and how it is asserted, defined, reconfigured, and negotiated remains a key source of leverage in this political economy.

It is through the work of Indigenous researchers producing community research that Aboriginal communities are making themselves both legible and legitimate, affirming their culture and authority with one another, with other NGOs, and with state agencies.

Neoliberal Competition and Technologies of Audit

The importance of being visible to a diverse set of actors is particularly important in order to gain funding, an arena in which we can also see how neoliberal demands and pressures hold the potential to undermine a collaborative ethos among Indigenous peoples, their communities, and their organizations in Toronto. In order for Aboriginal organizations to achieve self-sufficiency they need to compete with one another for limited funding opportunities (McCaskill et al. 2011, 335). This is a reality that NGOs around the world are facing as they compete for funding from multiple foundations and donors and struggle to find the resources to meet the administrative burdens imposed by funding criteria and reporting guidelines (Choudry and Shragge 2011, 208). The competitive nature of this context is reiterated throughout the *TARP Final Report* and is considered a significant barrier to achieving Aboriginal self-governance in the city (McCaskill et al. 2011, 336, 338), as the following two quotes taken from a focus group discussion conducted during the research for the final report reveal:

> There is very little funding, so whenever there is money, you have all these organizations clawing at these small pots. They are guarding their own organizations. It is about organizational survival. The way the government provides funding facilitates the disconnection and competition for funding. When they put housing money on the table, only housing organizations should access that money. The same for youth, women, health, etc. The government is part of the problem. We only do housing because we would be cutting someone else's throat for taking other program money.
>
> Agencies all have a specific segment that they look after and although we all know that it is important that we all help each other, everyone wants to guard their own program dollars. So we all hold our cards close to us and this fighting for funding diminishes our

> ability to come together as a community. (Governance Focus Group, cited in McCaskill et al. 2011, 344)

It is here that we see the highly contradictory nature of neoliberalism most clearly: it promotes and encourages forms of community participation and collaboration while, at the same time, creating and facilitating unwanted and regressive forms of competition.

An often under-acknowledged aspect of Aboriginal activism and organizing is the incredible array of funding agencies upon which these organizations rely to support their work. Aboriginal Legal Support Services, for example, receives funding from six major funders: the Department of Justice (Canada), the Ministry of the Attorney General (Ontario), the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (Ontario), Legal Aid Ontario, MiziweBiik Aboriginal Employment and Training, and individual donors (FitzMaurice 2013, 158). Native Child and Family Services Toronto, one of the largest and oldest Aboriginal organizations in Ontario, which provides child welfare protection services and supportive services for parents, maintains up to sixty different funding envelopes at one time. This creates a significant strain on these organizations because of the workload required to constantly apply and reapply for funding and to produce regular program evaluations coupled with the uncertainty created by the fear of losing program funding (FitzMaurice 2013, 91). Such pressures are further exacerbated by the constant and incessant audits to which they are necessarily subject.

Neoliberal processes often lead to new demands for forms of expertise and new kinds of participation from subjects to cultivate that expertise (Katz 2005), a trend that we are beginning to see in the area of community collaboration. For example, the UAS requires that a single Aboriginal organization be made responsible for collecting grant applications from other organizations, deciding which urban programs to focus on, and distributing funding accordingly. Here the state attempts to place, enrol, and empower "strategic brokers" (Larner and Craig 2005) in particular roles to facilitate the accomplishment of what were previously state duties and obligations. "Collaboration" becomes one means by which organizations and individuals are recognized for forms of labour that were not previously expected of them (Muehlebach 2011). In Toronto, however,

no single organization has agreed to take on this responsibility because they do not want to intensify the already competitive atmosphere. Aboriginal organizations thus refuse one dimension of the neoliberal strategy for the purpose of maintaining more cooperative relations between organizations. Over time, new ways of collectively organizing programs and distributing funding may develop through the work of such organizations as the TASSC. While the UAS attempts to create relations between responsibilized subjects in order to "govern at a distance," certain responsibilities are being actively resisted to promote forms of Aboriginal solidarity not foreseen by neoliberal programs.

Technologies are fundamental to the government of organizations under neoliberalism. Neoliberal technologies of audit are essential to the forms of legibility necessary to achieve legitimacy in these dealings – detailing aspects and characteristics of organizations and their constituencies that become visible, cognizable, and comparable as a consequence. In neoliberal conditions subjects and their collectives remain tied to centres of calculation and governance through technologies used to translate their actions into forms legible and understandable to both the state and other participating actors (Barry et al. 1996, 11–12). Organizations and individuals enrol one another in technologies of auditing: "to be auditable, then, is to be visible and governable at a distance, rather than to be efficiently pursuing the substantive goals of the organization" (Higgins and Hallström 2007, 698). The practice and demands of auditing are clearly articulated in the *Case Studies Report* (FitzMaurice 2013, 107):

> There is just so much paperwork involved in working for this organization. We are audited almost monthly through either licensing audits or crown ward audits. I work on audit preparation every day and I am forced to micro manage my workers to track statistics. We need more time and capacity to keep up with the administrative side of our work ... In child welfare the paperwork is crippling. We undergo periodic resource audits, financial audits, and random audits as well as a full annual audit. My time is divided 75 percent on administration and 25 percent working with kids. We are working to audit to the detriment of our working with the kids.

As the state redistributes responsibility to Aboriginal organizations, it also subjects them to new technologies of audit that put their organizations and programs under microscopic forms of surveillance while creating new demands for excessive monitoring activities that distract them from doing the substantive work that might better fulfill their social objectives. And this undermines their political aspirations.

Conclusion

In his book *The Comeback*, public intellectual John Ralston Saul argues that Indigenous peoples are making a swift resurgence in Canada. He points out that, despite the fact that the Supreme Court recognizes the legal validity of the treaties signed between First Nations and the Crown, Canadian politicians and the Canadian public at large continue to ignore this resurgence. In this chapter we argue that the work of the TASSC and the *TARP Final Report* represents one articulation of the strength of this "comeback" as Aboriginal peoples define themselves through Indigenous-led research and make policy recommendations to assert new forms of self-determination. Community-based collaboration has been making huge strides in Canada in recent years:

> Urban Aboriginal coalitions cut across jurisdictional and ethnic lines ... these grassroots organizations serve as the policy-making conscience of Ontario municipalities, countering, often without resources and support, invisibility, poverty, jurisdictional mazes, and the challenges of diversity ... The self-organization of urban Aboriginal peoples in all its diversity ... seems to be a major element in the making of good public policy in this area. (Abele et al. 2011, 115)

Such collaborative coalition building in urban environments promises to transform colonial perceptions of urban Aboriginal peoples as having lost, or being without, any Indigenous "Culture." Community-based research is used by Aboriginal peoples to legitimate themselves as newly recognized political subjects, to affirm their rights, and to redefine what it means to be Indigenous in the city. They are developing productive relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations while striving for forms of solidarity too often undermined by the competitive

nature of the funding environment in which they find themselves. The neoliberal governmentality framework, which appreciates that governmentality has inevitable and inherent limits, enables us to consider how political-economic restructuring reconfigures urban politics and power relations to capacitate Indigenous peoples in ways anticipated by but often significantly exceeding neoliberal governmental programming while subjecting them to its technologies. In the process, urban Aboriginal peoples claim new opportunities and strengthen alternative forms of solidarity to assert new forms of self-determination.

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