RESTRUCTURING THE CHILD WELFARE DIALECTIC:

STATE-COMMUNITY INTERACTIONS AND COMMUNITY RESPONSES IN

THE GOVERNANCE OF CHILD WELFARE IN RURAL AND REMOTE

LOCALITIES

by

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Abstract

The challenges facing child welfare and child protection systems in the 21st

century are resulting in efforts to restructure their governance across western

industrialized nations, including Canada. These challenges must be situated within the

historic and contemporary crises in the welfare state, as well as broader questions

regarding the governance of child welfare in an era of budget cutbacks and introduction

of decentralized planning and service provision. A key question concerns how to

understand the evolving relationship between state and communities, and the impact of

restructuring on state-community relationships.

This research examines efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare in

three rural and remote communities in northwestern Alberta following the devolution of

child welfare responsibilities from the provincial government to Regional Child and

Family Service Authorities. This examination is informed by a conceptual framework

that views the governance of child welfare as a set of dialectic relationships among

children, parents, communities, and the state. The concept of the dialectic highlights the

mutually reinforcing relationships between these various elements that are

simultaneously autonomous, (inter)dependent to some degree, and parts of a whole

system, in this case the system that provides for child welfare. Relationships among these

elements are characterized by tensions, contradiction and conflict, making the governance

of child welfare complex, problematic and constantly changing.

The research focuses on the relationship between state and communities and

reveals the important roles played by local cultural, institutional, and economic factors in

shaping state-community interactions relevant to the decentralization of child welfare

governance. The research demonstrates the importance of understanding how the complexities of intra-community relations, and intra-community change affect the way communities relate to various levels and formations of the state as decentralized governance of child welfare is structured and applied. This finding suggests that the concept of "network governance," informed by participatory governance principles, can be helpful in developing policy frameworks that effectively address the variations and complexities inherent in decentralized child welfare governance, and the high degree of institutional flexibility such governance requires.

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For my parents,

Rita and Charlie Gillespie

Chapter One

The Context, Contributions, and Methods of the Study

Introduction

Formal systems of child protection have been referred to as "an unholy mess," "a growing crisis," "beyond the breaking point," "the ultimate failure," (Schorr, 2000, p. 124). Criticisms come from the public as well as from clients, special interest groups, and those working within the system itself. Tragic deaths, such as the death of 5 year old Matthew Vaudreuil in British Columbia in 1992 at the hands of his mother, suggest that child welfare systems should be doing more to remove children from abusive parents. However the 1984 suicide in Alberta of 17 year old Richard Cardinal who, in 13 years lived in over 28 different foster homes, suggests that child welfare systems should be doing more to preserve family ties. The fatal beating of 19 month old Sherry Charlie at the hands of her uncle in British Columbia in September 2002, and the death of 5 year old Jeffrey Baldwin in Ontario in November 2003, as a result of prolonged starvation by his grandparents, challenge the wisdom of placing children in the care of relatives. Yet there are an equal number of horror stories that challenge the wisdom of placing children with strangers. Ultimately what all of these stories have in common is that, time and again, the formal systems designed to protect children from abuse and neglect fail to do so. Despite this seeming failure, or perhaps underlying it, is the fact that the demands on these systems continue to grow and are becoming increasingly contradictory. Child welfare caseloads continue to grow, not only in Canada, but also throughout North America, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand.

There are, however, perceptions that, in many ways, something much more fundamental is needed in order to address the issues facing formal child welfare systems. There are perceptions that rising child protection caseloads, and the increasingly contradictory expectations placed upon child welfare systems are the consequence of societal fragmentation and loss of collective efforts on behalf of children. As a result, child welfare policies are attempting to restructure relations within communities, and between communities and the state. These efforts however, raise a host of troubling questions. Behind the recently popularized cliché "It takes a community to raise a child," are deeper issues concerning the meaning of 'community,' the role of community in 'raising' a child, the nature of the relationships within a community and how, specifically, various elements of a community interact in order to raise a child.

I argue that the crisis in child welfare and efforts to address this crisis need to be situated in the broader theoretical context of the "crisis" of the welfare state and conceptual, as well as empirical, searches for new forms of governance. This crisis, and subsequent efforts to restructure governance, has occurred within advanced industrialized countries over the past thirty to forty years. Within this thesis I draw on literature that identifies the nature of this crisis as both a crisis of legitimacy, and a crisis of governance and governability. The former has challenged the effectiveness and efficacy of the state and its policies and programs, while the latter has exposed increasing social conflict and fragmentation. As a result, new paradigms are emerging that challenge the Keynesian welfare state. I draw on literature that examines the emergence of neo-liberal discourses and policy approaches and their impact on the governance of welfare. The major characteristics of neo-liberal approaches include an abandonment of objectives of full or

almost full employment in favor of labor market flexibility and structural competitiveness; downward pressure on wages; a major reorientation of welfare from an emphasis on the social rights of citizenship to an emphasis on social responsibilities; and a shift from "passive" welfare programs to more "active" programs emphasizing labor market participation (Jessop, 1999; Loughlin, 2004; Melchers, 1999).

Within the field of child welfare, problems of both legitimation and governability have contributed on the one hand, to increased demands on statutory child protection systems, and, on the other hand, to decreased satisfaction with the performance of those systems. Neo-liberal approaches to governance further exacerbated these problems. I draw from international literature that points to rising child welfare caseloads over the same period of neo-liberal restructuring in western industrialized countries and a growing inability of child protection systems to effectively respond to these increases.

I am interested in suggestions that another discourse is emerging entailing a "rediscovery" of community, resulting in conceptual and empirical efforts to reconstruct governance in ways that address issues of empowerment as well as social cohesion and social solidarity. These efforts are particularly noticeable in the field of child welfare. Such claims however, need to be examined against criticisms that encompass ideological, conceptual, and empirical concerns. Three criticisms are of particular note. First, concerns have been identified that much of these efforts are based on uncritical conceptions of community, ignoring issues of oppression and marginalization within communities. Second, there are concerns that the role of the state and its relationship to and within community is inadequately theorized. And third, that the "rediscovery" of

community in fact represents a deepening of the neo-liberal paradigm and a loss of community autonomy and capacity to challenge both the market and the state.

Based on a review of both conceptual and empirical literature drawn from the fields of social policy and planning, public administration, child welfare, and community development, I argue that inadequate theorization of state-community relations is the most critical of these three concerns and it is this that informs the primary purpose of my research. Empirical examination of the restructuring of state-community relations can contribute not only to stronger theorization of state-community relations, but, by examining community responses, can address concerns of an uncritical conception of community, as well as concerns regarding community autonomy and capacity to challenge government and economic systems in the face of restructured state-community relations. At the same time, it can contribute to an understanding of how restructuring of state-community relations can address issues of social fragmentation and rising child welfare caseloads.

A primary purpose of this research is to further empirical understanding of the restructuring of state-community relations in the governance of child welfare within the context of rural and remote communities in northwestern Alberta. An underlying assumption of this research is that the "rediscovery" of community as a factor in the governance of child welfare means that community interactions and responses must be viewed as a significant factor in restructuring, while at the same time paying attention to the broader socio-political context within which the community is situated. Alberta offers an example of a Canadian province that, during the 1990s, underwent a significant neo-liberal shift in its social programs. During this same period of time, child welfare

caseloads in Alberta increased by 60% and the government of Alberta sought new ways to deliver child welfare services emphasizing community involvement and strengthening relationships within communities and between communities and the state. Much of the existing literature on child welfare tends to focus on city, urban, or suburban contexts. Rural and remote communities in Alberta, like those in other industrialized countries, represent a unique context that is often ignored in child welfare, and in broader social policy and planning literature (Zapf, 1996).

Child Welfare and Good Governance

Child welfare has, historically, meant the absence of negative outcomes for children, measured in terms of indicators such as child abuse and neglect, teenage delinquency, and school failure, and social policies have typically been designed around the prevention and remediation of such problems. However, concern for children is beginning to shift to an identification of positive outcome goals for children: social competence, the development of a sense of trust in the world, school achievement, among others. There appears to be agreement across a range of disciplines that the welfare of children is associated with (1) the achievement of *stage salient developmental tasks*, meaning the milestones that children can be expected to achieve by specific ages given their inherent biological capacities, (2) the attainment of *human capital*, meaning acquisition of the knowledge and skills needed to participate in economic life, and (3) the demonstration of *social capacity*, meaning attachment to others and concern for both immediate community and the larger society (Stroick & Jensen, 1999, pp. 18-19).

The achievement of these outcomes for children can be seen as a function of good governance, with the term **governance** referring to the coordination of interdependent social relations (Jessop, 1999, p. 351), or to the pattern or structure that emerges in a social-political system as an outcome of the efforts of all involved actors (Kooiman, 1993, p. 258). The governance of child welfare is typically conceptualized as a complex mix of the interactions of many elements of society from the state and its policies, to parents and their relationship to the economic system, to the norms, values, traditions and beliefs that guide and are transmitted through our social systems.

In this paper the **governance of child welfare** is conceptualized as sets of dialectical relationships between parents, children, communities, and the state. The concept of the dialectic refers to a relationship characterized by both interdependence of each element upon the other, and, at the same time, contradiction and opposition between each of them. This view of the governance of child welfare has been influenced by Paul Bernard's (1999) concept of the democratic dialectic and its relation to social cohesion. However I have also drawn from ecological theories of child welfare based on the research of Bronfenbrenner (1979), Garbarino (1977), Belsky (1993, 1980), and more recently, Fraser (1997) and Prilleltensky, Nelson and Peirson (2001). These theories, while offering a comprehensive discussion of the various elements, or social forces, that impact child well-being, offer a problematic understanding of their interaction with, and relationship to, one another. They cannot account for tensions between the various elements, nor can they account for changes within the system. The value of conceptualizing these relations as dialectic is the capacity to encompass at both a theoretical level, and an empirical level, the ways in which each of these elements are

dependent on and complement one another as well as the tensions and contradictions that exist between each of them and the ways that these result in changes to the overall structure or pattern of interaction.

The term **community** is typically seen as highly problematic in any discussion and certainly requires explanation and clarification regarding its use within the context of this research. There are three ways that the term community is used in this research. First, it is used to refer to both a specific geographical space and the people living and working within that space. It is within this definition that the term locality is used somewhat interchangeably. Within this definition of community, civil society is present in all of its forms, individuals and families as well as a range of public and private, formal and informal voluntary associations. The state and the market are also present in the form of local businesses and local government. A second definition of community is used to refer to groups of individuals within the locality who share common socio-cultural characteristics, interests or voluntary associations and may organize formal or informal associations to structure their interactions and/or represent their common interests to and/or against, external powers. A third definition of community describes social relations of mutual connection and concern, shared norms and values, feelings of trust and reciprocity. Within this meaning, terms such as solidarity or social cohesion are also used somewhat interchangeably.

Efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare in Alberta have focused on (local) **community capacity** and strategies to build community capacity. With respect to child welfare, local community capacity refers to the ability of the local community to meet the material, social, cultural, and spiritual needs of children and families. **Capacity**

building refers to efforts to strengthen local communities' abilities to meet these needs. Building the capacity of local communities may involve strengthening relationships between community members, expanding or improving the quality of services within the community, or mobilizing community members to gain greater control over community conditions.

Restructuring efforts typically entail strategies of **decentralization** and **participatory governance.** Decentralization encompasses various degrees of sub-state autonomy, ranging from the deconcentration of central government powers, to the delegation of local or regional child welfare authorities, to full devolution of responsibility for child welfare to local or regional structures. In general, participatory governance entails facilitating opportunities for a wide (or wider) range of involvement by citizens and citizens groups in the shaping of issues, the formulation of responses, and potentially, in the implementation of programs (Angeles, 2005; Peters, 1996). Efforts, issues, and consequent challenges, in facilitating this wider range of citizen involvement in the context of child welfare in rural and remote localities is the focus of this research.

A second term that is somewhat problematic in the context of this research is that of the **state**. On the one hand, the state is viewed as formal power that is situated within laws, public statutes and policies that are seen to be separate from and somehow over and above people. On the other hand, the state is viewed as a set of complex and typically hierarchical social relations. Within this research, the state is both of these. In terms of child protection, provincial statutes represent the formal power of the state but this power is exercised through hierarchical social relations. Recent restructuring in Alberta has delegated power to regional Child and Family Services Authorities (CFSAs) and their

employees and, in the eyes of the community, these regional authorities represent the state. It is these regional authorities that are attempting to restructure relations with and within communities and it is interactions between them and the communities that is the focus of this research. However, this research suggests that in addition to the above, the state should also be seen as embedded in and part of community, its structures and social relations.

Changes in State-Community Relations and Community Responses

In examining the restructuring of state-community relations, this research draws on discussion of the implementation of neo-liberal approaches to governance, theories of decentralization and participatory governance. I also draw from literature concerning the rediscovery of community and efforts to restructure relations within communities and between communities and the state. Critics of these more recent efforts have raised a number of relevant concerns. The first of these is that theories of community and efforts to revitalize community focus on an uncritical conception of community (McGrath, Moffat, George & Lee, 1999; Reddel, 2004; Shragge, 1998). The second criticism concerns the inadequate theorization of the state and of state community relations (Loughlin, 2004; Reddel, 2004). It is argued that much more work, both conceptual and empirical, is needed in order to develop a theory of governance that represents a shift to state-community partnership and revitalization of community. The third criticism is concerned with the colonization of community as a result of the restructuring of state community relations and the emphasis of social policy on community partnerships and community capacity building (McGrath, et al, 1997; Shragge, 1998).

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Various studies support these concerns while other studies do not. In Quebec emerging concepts of "cooperative conflict," "critical cooperation" (Panet-Raymond & Mayer, 1997), and "contradictory participation" (White, 1997) are used to characterize the complex restructuring of state-community relations. These concepts encompass a variety of challenges as well as opportunities facing community groups as a result of closer partnerships with the state. In the face of these, communities have struggled to maintain community relations, quality of services, and a degree of autonomy and capacity to challenge government policies and programs.

In a study of the delegation of authority for child welfare to Aboriginal communities, Brown, Haddock and Kovach (2002) argue that not enough control has been given to the community to address child welfare in a manner that is consistent with their culture and community empowerment. On the other hand Gray-Withers (1997) noted concerns among aboriginal women that delegation of authority for child welfare to their communities had entrenched and deepened patriarchal relations of power, and oppression of women and children within the community.

Obviously, these issues will be different in non-Aboriginal or mixed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. Shields (1995) describes a community systems approach underway in Ontario involving networks of state, civil society, and the market. He argues that it has shown a strong potential to mobilize a variety of resources on behalf of children and families.

Within the context of this research a dual perspective has been utilized. On the one hand, I examine the efforts of the community to create change in the pattern of state-community interaction and the responses of the state to these efforts. On the other hand, I

also examine efforts of the state to create change, and the responses of the community to these efforts. In utilizing this dual perspective, my interest is in both strategies of change as well as strategies of cooperation, resistance, adaptation and accommodation and the role that these have played in the new structures and patterns that ultimately emerged. At the same time this research also focuses on changes at the level of community in response to this restructuring. Here I am interested in the ways in which these emerging patterns and structures are strengthening or weakening community relations, community services, or community control.

Though this research is anchored in social work and a historical reading of changes in the governance of child welfare, I also draw upon three main bodies of literature to further inform my research. First, I draw from literature from the fields of social policy and public administration focusing on the crisis of the welfare state in advanced industrialized nations and changes in the governance of welfare over the past twenty to twenty-five years. In particular I have focused on literature that characterized neo-liberal shifts in the governance of welfare and on literature outlining conceptual as well as empirical concerns with community and the restructuring of state-community relations. I have also drawn from the field of child welfare. Here the focus has been two fold; on the one hand literature examining theories of governance with a particular focus on the role of community in the governance of child welfare, on the other hand, literature examining the current crisis in child welfare and efforts at restructuring. Both of these literatures contributed to my conceptualization of child welfare as a dialectic relation between children, parents, community, and the state. Finally, I have been helped by

literature from the fields of planning and social work examining issues facing rural and remote communities and the changing nature of these in the context of the 21st century.

The Research Questions and Contributions

As noted in the above discussions, it is clear that more exploration is needed regarding restructuring of state-community relations and the responses that these generate within the community. Important questions concern the role of the state in relation to the community, how new roles and relations evolve and the degree to which changes in state-community relations are influenced by previously existing structures, roles, and relationships. Additional questions concern the impact of restructuring on community relations, on the nature of services in the community, on the capacity of the community to manage these and to maintain autonomy in the face of efforts of the state to develop closer partnerships, as well as the roles and relations that enable or disable the maintenance of this autonomy.

There is also a need to focus on geographical contexts that are typically given little mention in child welfare literature and that are seldom an explicit focus of analysis in terms of state-community relations. As Zapf (1996) notes, social policy and program planners tend to operate from perspectives grounded in large urban contexts. This is reinforced by theory that is developed by focusing on urban contexts. Rural and remote contexts are then viewed against this urban "norm" and, where there is a poor fit with existing theories, policies or programs, context is identified as the problem rather than theories, policies or programs that are ill-suited for the context.

This research explores policy issues pertaining to state-community relations from the perspective of the rural/remote context within which they are occurring. Rural/remote communities are not problematized, instead they are viewed as unique geographical and social-relational contexts from which to examine efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare. Consequently this research offers a unique view on the governance of child welfare and current efforts to restructure this governance. The insights that were generated within this research and the models that emerged are specifically relevant to the context of rural/remote communities. At the same time, it is recognized that they may have some relevance for larger urban contexts.

This research explores the following key question: How are state-community interactions in the governance of child welfare being restructured in rural and remote communities in neo-liberalizing welfare states such as Alberta; how are communities responding, and what are the implications for child welfare governance and social planning at local, regional, and senior levels of government?

In answering these questions this research examines specific tensions as well as opportunities that occur within local contexts as a result of efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare. I note that tensions are evident in both local social relations and in broader state-community relations and encompass issues related to community roles in the governance of child welfare, control over resources, and accountability of the community to the state and the state to the community. This research points to the importance of understanding these tensions as part of an active dialectic of child welfare and examines conceptual frameworks through which these tensions might be managed.

Methodology of the Study

The theoretical questions will be addressed in the following chapters based on three case studies of communities in northwestern Alberta. Though anchored within the context of these rural/remote Alberta communities, these questions are also relevant for other provinces and communities undergoing restructuring of state-community relations in the governance of child welfare. They also contribute to a broader understanding of roles and relationships between the state and the community within current concerns for social cohesion and "community."

The following **empirical** questions were applied to each of the three case studies:

1. What new community and state roles and interactions emerged following efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare?

2. How were these new roles and interactions influenced by previously existing relations between the state and the community? How did previously existing community structures and relations influence these roles and interactions?

3. What new community structures and relations emerged following efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare? How did previously existing structures and relations influence these?

4. What challenges do communities face in the wake of new community and state roles and interactions? How are communities responding to these?

5. What opportunities are communities identifying in the wake of new community and state roles and interactions? How are communities responding to these?

My use of qualitative and ecological approaches within this study would not be complete without explaining in more detail my own positionality and the personal interests that have affected my interest in this research and my choice of research sites. Within the context of this research I hold multiple positions. I am a white female academic with a degree in Social Work at both the Bachelor and Masters level. Currently I am pursuing a doctorate in Community and Regional Planning. I spent 11 years practicing social work in northwestern Alberta. Eight of those years were spent as a child welfare worker and supervisor in an office that encompassed the three communities that comprise the sample cases within this study. Consequently I have considerable "knowledge" of these communities from a professional standpoint. While this knowledge may be helpful in many ways, it must be recognized as coming from a particular perspective and the relations of power that shaped it. At the same time, this professional knowledge is supplemented by a deep personal connection to this region. One of my great grandfathers homesteaded near one of these communities and I was born and raised in close proximity to all of them. Many immediate family, extended family, and close friends still reside in this region and although I have moved away, this particular part of northwestern Alberta will always, in one sense, be "home" to me. While these personal and professional connections to these communities supplement one another, they still offer only a partial perspective. My particular orientation to social work, child welfare, and community development views knowledge as inherently intersubjective, constructed through interaction with others. I have viewed this research as an opportunity to further knowledge of this region through interaction with those living and working within it whose perspectives may differ from my own. In doing this I have attempted to become

more conscious of particular biases and have included them in this research. However, I make no claims to full transparency. This research occurred within the context of a particular lens that I was not always aware of.

In the course of this research I have learned more than I ever imagined about the dynamics of small towns and the important of context in the governance of child welfare. One of the most poignant lessons occurred as I was sitting in a restaurant having lunch in one of these towns. I had spent the morning interviewing and had more interviews scheduled for the afternoon. I had ordered my food and was eating it, lost in thought about the information I had been gathering. All of a sudden I realized the person at the till was trying to get my attention. I looked up at him. *"Excuse me,"* he said, *"There's a phone call for you."* I quickly glanced around as I thought he must be speaking to someone else, but no, there was no one else near me. *"For me?"* I said somewhat stupidly. *"Are you Judy?"* he asked. *"Yes,"* I said. He held out the phone. As I walked up to take the phone I'm sure my confusion was written all over my face – after all, I hadn't mentioned to anyone where I was going for lunch. *"Hi, Judy?"* said a voice I didn't recognize, *"It's _____ I just wanted to let you know I'll be a bit late for our interview, I hope that's o.k."* *"Oh, sure,"* I said, trying to act nonchalant, *"No problem."* But then, curiosity got the best of me. *"How did you know how to find me?"* *"Oh,"* she said, *"well I knew you were talking to _____ this morning.* (How did you know that, I thought to myself). *So I called over there and she said you'd just left. She described you and said you asked about restaurants and told me which one to try, so I just called over and* [the cashier] *said, sure enough, you were right there. Anyway, I just wanted you to know I'll be a bit late."* I hung up the phone feeling both amazed that

people would go to this kind of trouble for me, intrigued by the networking that had occurred here, and a bit disconcerted by my lack of privacy. As I reflected on this whole experience later that evening, and in the following days, I realized how much it told me about small towns, the care and concern that people often show, the informal networking that occurs, and the utter lack of anonymity within them. I return to this topic in my discussion of ethical considerations posed by this study.

Data collection.

The essence of the case study approach is its detailed examination of naturally occurring social situations. It is seen to be particularly appropriate to research at an exploratory or hypothetical developmental stage (Neuman, 1997). Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with key informants, through participant observation, and through analysis of existing documents. Analysis of the data occurred through both cross-sectional and non cross-sectional methods of sorting and organization. The purpose of utilizing these two alternative methods of slicing the data was to facilitate a holistic analysis of the dynamics of governance in child welfare within each specific locality, as well as a comparative analysis across localities in order to generate working hypotheses relevant to issues of state-community interactions and community responses in rural and remote localities in general.

In case study research, sampling is generally purposive with the researcher choosing the cases to be studied on the basis of specific criteria. This may be related to their overall representativeness to the characteristics of the larger population, or to their capacity to reflect a particular range of relevant characteristics, or for their capacity to provide a particular view of the concepts or variables being studied (Mason, 1996).

Obviously, there would have been significant logistical issues in an attempt to create a representative sample of northern Alberta communities. Additionally, for the purposes of this study, representation was less important than the capacity to generate comparisons across cases. Thus the three communities that constituted the cases from which the data for this study was drawn were selected on the basis of the following considerations:

- All of them are similar in size and exhibit to some extent characteristics identified as associated with rural or remote communities however they vary considerably in the specific degree to which they exhibit these characteristics. For example, the economies of two of the communities are based primarily on agriculture and oil and gas while the economy of the third community is based primarily on mining and logging. One of the communities had had a fairly stable population while the other two have been more transient. All three communities have a mix of Aboriginal, Métis, and Euro-Canadian residents with few residents of other ethnic origins.

- Each of these communities has been impacted by welfare state restructuring and government led efforts to restructure state-community relations to address issues of community capacity, however the dynamics of these initiatives and the community responses have shown considerable variation.

- Each of them has "town" as opposed to city, village, or hamlet status with each encompassing a population base well under 10,000, however there are considerable variations in terms of specific demographic characteristics.

In deciding on sources of data, there are both ontological and epistemological assumptions that need to be addressed. The purpose of this research is to explore and

develop understanding of an objective reality – namely the dynamics of community responses to the coordination of child and family welfare in northern communities. At the same time, this reality is a result of social processes and subjective meanings that themselves are constructed through relations of power. Ideally, these would be examined through the subjective reflections of all the individuals engaged in these relations of power. Obviously this is not possible, thus the act of research into subjective perspectives is itself an act of power by the researcher and one that is shaped by additional relations of power. This in turn affects the outcome of the research. I have attempted to address (although not overcome) these issues using multiple sources of data collection including:

- **Semi-structured interviews** with key community informants. Neuman (1997, pp. 374-5) suggests that the ideal informant has four characteristics: familiarity with the culture and the capacity to witness significant events; current involvement in the field; the capacity to spend the time required for interviews; and the capacity to respond in a non-analytic manner. Furthermore, he suggests that it may be useful to interview contrasting informants who can provide a variety of perspectives. In the context of this research the capacity to capture a variety of perspectives was a primary consideration in the choice of informants. Interviews occurred with 42 respondents. 10-12 respondents were interviewed in each of the three communities. Key informants from each community consisted of: employees and board members of the regional Child and Family Services Authority (CFSA), representatives of community groups, employees or volunteers of community based prevention and early intervention services, and local government employees and elected officials. In addition CFSA employees and

board members were interviewed who were not connected to any of the three communities. Since the focus of this research is state-community interactions, the choice of informants was in part based on their knowledge of the community (length of time they have lived in the community and nature and degree of community involvement), their involvement in community organizing, and the perspective that they have to offer as a representative of a specific community sub-group, i.e. Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal. However, the choice of informants was also a function of knowledge of CFSA and community members who act as gatekeepers within the community, as well as the willingness and ability of various community members to participate in the study. I anticipated that I would be provided with conflicting information that, in itself, would reveal much about the struggles and power relations that are shaping the dynamics of restructuring in each of these centers. This did occur, however not to the extent that I had anticipated.

- **Participant observation**: I visited each town on at least two occasions, often staying for several days. While there I both walked and drove around the town. In two of these towns the layout, the sights, and the components of the town were somewhat familiar to me although, in the context of this study, I saw much of what I had seen before through new eyes and also saw much that I had previously overlooked. One of the towns was very new to me and I found myself making notes and recordings about minute details. I also engaged in observations within the specific community settings that I visited, the child welfare office, the Community Centre, the Town Office, the FCSS office, local agencies, schools,

churches, and service clubs. I took notes or made recordings in these settings typically asking for permission and trying to explain as fully as possible my reasons for doing so. However, asking permission and explanations of my note taking were given to the Community Coordinators and not to community residents who were present in these settings. In taking notes in these situations, I attempted to be as unobtrusive as possible.

- **Analysis of primary documents and demographic statistical data**: Documents that were analyzed included minutes of town council meetings in all three communities from 2002 through 2003, minutes of interagency meetings, where these were available, from 2001 through 2003, and CFSA documents including annual reports of 2001, 2002, and 2003, minutes of Board meetings from 2001 through 2003 and regional business plans of 2000, 2001 and 2002, issues of local newspapers from 2002 through 2003, as well as some forms of correspondence between CFSA and community representatives. Demographic data used in the analysis included population statistics and income and employment statistics from each of the three communities in the study as well as the Region as a whole.

The combination of these three research methods to gather data was intended to increase the rigor of both collection and analysis by triangulating information, enhancing the richness of the data and insights into state-community relationships and processes. Field observations can serve to reinforce, clarify, or contradict informant's perspectives or material contained in documents. Likewise residents' knowledge can reinforce, clarify or contradict field observations or written sources of information (Neuman, 1997, p. 336). In the process of gathering data, I found that all three methods provided rich sources of

information. I also looked to existing scholarly literature as an additional source of information.

However, as identified above, the use of each of these techniques occurs within relations of power. I tried to be aware and to reflect on these and how they may have affected the validity of the data. Throughout the course of this research I kept a personal journal and diary that also contained data. I also used member validation to check observations and transcripts of interviews, although this did pose some challenges as noted below.

Analysis of the data.

The essence of the case study is "a way of organizing social data so as to preserve the unitary character of the social object being studied" (Goode & Hatt, 1952 cited in Mitchell, 2000, p. 169). At the same time, the larger purpose of case study research is generally seen as the extrapolation of generalizations across different cases in order to develop them as both enduring and context-free. This is viewed as the most appropriate contribution to knowledge through the case study method. Thus the search for particularity competes with the search for generalizability. The production of generalizable knowledge requires the suppression of particular knowledge.[1]

The way around this particularity-generalizability dilemma in the analysis of case study data is to utilize a dual approach to data analysis, one that attempts to understand the cases holistically while another attempts to draw out comparisons across cases. One approach requires the use of cross-sectional data organization to facilitate analysis while the other utilizes a non-cross-sectional approach to data analysis. Mason (1996, p. 131)

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[1]Lincoln and Guba refer to this as the "nomothetic-idiographic dilemma" (2000, p. 33).

states "it is common to use both approaches in tandem, especially given the limited explanatory potential of cross-sectional data organization for many of the questions about social processes." It is this dual approach to data analysis that will be used in this study. State-community efforts to coordinate child and family welfare and community responses were treated as distinct phenomena in each of the three communities and understanding of these phenomena were then compared across cases. At the same time, data were organized categorically to facilitate cross-sectional analysis of child welfare restructuring and community responses. The social policy and child welfare literature identified a number of categories that were helpful in coding the data. These included issues of stigma attached to child welfare, the nature of the local social service infrastructure, and the role of civil society. Other categories were suggested in the literature on rural and remote communities. These included economic issues and the impacts of these on the community, and the role of the state and the nature of state services within the rural/remote community. As well, the data itself may suggest additional or alternate categories.

The analysis of the data in this study was especially challenging because it offered a variety of perspectives on an "objective" social reality. In many cases, the perspectives challenged or contradicted one another. These contradictions reinforced the triangulation of methods and sources of data collection. I also viewed contradictions as potentially indicative of tension or conflict within the community, or between the community and CFSA, as well as indicative of the nature of objective reality that, in fact, encompasses many perspectives. An example of this occurs in Chapter 5 with respect to the impact of the Neighborhood Resource Centre on social relations in the community. Multiple

perspectives are presented here and I attempt, without reconciling them, to incorporate all of them in my analysis.

During the analysis phase, I moved between the data and existing scholarly literature. This offered an opportunity to incorporate existing theoretically relevant material into the process of analysis as well as facilitate comparison and contrast with this material and the data generated in my research. This is particularly evident in Chapters 5 and 7 where the use of existing scholarly literature significantly enriched the analysis of the data.

Ethical considerations connected to the study.

There were several ethical issues connected to this study. One of these has to do with the issue of voluntary participation and informed consent of the participants. Permission was obtained from agencies for staff participation. No enticement or material benefits were offered to staff and all staff were given the opportunity to refuse interviews, to refuse to answer any questions, and to end the interview at any time they wished with assurances that such behavior on their part would not be reported to the agency in any manner. No one refused to participate although two participants did request to end their interviews due to time constraints. Interviews were conducted only with informants who were fully informed as to the nature and purpose of the study and who were judged to be competent to give voluntary informed consent. No deception of any kind was utilized in the course of this research.

A significant ethical issue in this study arose in terms of the need to situate respondents in terms of their position within or to the community against the need to protect their confidentiality. Small towns pose a significant challenge in balancing these

two considerations. To identify a respondent as "Aboriginal child welfare worker" or "town planner," or "female town councilor" can severely compromise confidentiality where there may be only one Aboriginal child welfare worker, or one town planner, or one female town councilor. Consequently, unless I have been given permission to directly link certain responses to specific respondents, I offer minimal information regarding the position of the respondents within or to the community. I have positioned respondents only in terms of the specific community they are connected to and whether they are community or CFSA respondents.[2] Respondents are numerically coded by these criteria. CFSA key informants are identified as CFSA, KI-1 or CFSA, KI-2 etc. while key community informants are numbered within their respective communities (C1, C2, or C3), i.e. C1, KI-1; C2, KI-4; C3, KI-2. All respondents have also had the opportunity to review a transcript of their interview(s), to challenge its accuracy or to withdraw certain information if they perceived that it compromised their privacy.

However, despite these efforts to ensure voluntary participation and to maintain confidentiality of the research participants, this research was undertaken in small communities and the results may compromise the confidentiality of the subjects and in turn may impact participant's relationships with others in the community, with employers, or with government funding sources.

Observation of inter-agency and community meetings, and analysis of documents was interpreted through the lens of an outsider. Some of these interpretations were subjected to review by other participants but there were occasionally areas of

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[2]In some cases this positioning presented a challenge as CFSA staff are also community service providers, and CFSA board members are also community volunteers.

discrepancy. These were noted. As well, efforts have been made to maintain confidentiality but, due to the context within which this research occurred, it is recognized that identities may not be completely anonymous.

There is also an ethical issue connected to the privacy of the communities themselves. In all communities there are conflicts, issues of power and oppression, and dynamics that challenge idealistic perspectives of 'community.' The communities in this study illustrate a candid picture of community dynamics, relations and challenges that they have experienced in the context of child welfare restructuring. In doing this, there is a risk that they may be perceived unfavorably by others. This research is not meant to portray any of these communities in a negative light, only to shed light on issues related to efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare and to suggest that, far from being unique, these issues are typical of the challenges of restructuring.

Finally, this research focused on interactions between the Regional Authority and community members involved in the coordination of child and family welfare. It did not attempt to examine these interactions and relationships through the eyes of the children or parents that are the target of these initiatives. Consequently, certain actors, their perspectives, and other relations of power are not part of this analysis. This neglect can in turn reinforce these relations. Attempts were made to address this issue by encouraging participants to engage in critical reflection regarding the impact of the efforts they are engaged in on those members of the community that are the target of their efforts. This critical reflection also forms part of the analysis.

The Structure of the Dissertation

The remainder of the dissertation is organized as follows. In Chapter 2, I explore the concept of governance as well as theories of the governance of welfare in order to develop the conceptual foundations for a theory of the governance of child welfare. The governance of child welfare is conceptualized as a dialectic relation between children, parents, communities, and the state. The role of each of these in the governance of child welfare is explored based on an ecological systems understanding of child and family welfare. The various meanings of the term community and their role in child and family well being, as well as their relation to the state, are also explored with an emphasis on major social policy dilemmas and debates in the governance of child welfare.

Chapter 3 examines the crisis of the welfare state and theories of transformation. This discussion is then used to examine the nature of the crisis in child welfare. It is argued that this crisis is a result of both Keynesian and neo-liberal approaches to the governance of welfare, each of which negatively impacted child welfare, albeit in different ways. Calls for transformation of the governance of child welfare are examined, as well as conceptual and empirical challenges of this restructuring. I review criticisms of conceptual and empirical approaches to community revitalization and focus on the need to strengthen theorization of state community relations. I also argue that this theorization needs to pay attention to specific contexts and that rural and remote communities represent highly relevant contexts from which to examine both conceptual and operational issues in restructuring the governance of child welfare.

Chapter 4 examines the restructuring of child welfare in Alberta within the broader provincial context, both in terms of community input into planning, as well as

recommendations from the Commissioner of Services for Children. Processes of restructuring and the provincial policy framework that was ultimately developed are also examined. Finally, regional plans for the restructuring of child welfare are examined to demonstrate the features and elements of broader organizational restructuring.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 present key themes and issues within each of the three communities used as study cases. Chapter 5 examines the establishment of a Neighborhood Resource Centre in the community of Beaverlodge and its impact on social relations and the provision of resources within the community, as well as the challenges that have arisen and the way the community has responded to these. Chapter 6 examines the emergence of a variety of networks within the community of Valleyview and the factors that shaped this emergence. Community responses within this form of restructuring are examined as well as key challenges and opportunities. Chapter 7 explores the challenges that occurred in restructuring state community interactions in the context of a remote community and identifies community responses in the face of these. Implications for child welfare governance and social planning are discussed in response to these challenges. Chapter 8 offers a summary and conclusions, highlighting models of governance that emerged within this research and key policy/planning implications as well as recommendations for further research.

Chapter Two

The Child Welfare Dialectic:

Conceptual Foundations for Theorizing the Governance of Child Welfare

Introduction

The development of a conceptual foundation for theorizing the governance of child welfare requires situating theories of child welfare within more general theories of governance. In the following chapter I develop the governance of child welfare as the consequence of dialectic relations between the state, communities, parents and children. I do this by first identifying key elements within ecological theories of child welfare and then challenging current representations of the relationship between them by drawing on theories of governance where I highlight Bernard's (1999) model of the democratic dialectic. I argue that the concept of a dialectic process of change allows for theorization of both the tensions and the complementarity that exist between all of these elements. It is this conceptual framework that then facilitates empirical and theoretical development of the ways in which the governance of child welfare has evolved, the crisis that has occurred, and the changes that are taking place. The focus of this research is on dialectic relations between the state and communities and the ways in which restructuring of those relations is occurring. I argue that understanding of the dynamics of restructuring relations between the state and communities enables new insights into the governance of child welfare in Canada.

Ecological Theories of Child Welfare

Ecological theories of child welfare build on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological

model of human development, Garbarino's (1977) and Belsky's (1993, 1980) ecological

theories of the maltreatment of children, and research on child resilience (Fraser, 1997).

Each of these views children's welfare as being impacted by factors at micro (local,

individual, private), mezzo (institutional, organizational, intermediary), and macro

(societal, national, public) levels and by the interactions and relationships between them.

At each of these levels, research has shown various factors that compromise or place

children's well-being at risk, as well as factors that act to protect or to promote child well

being (Prilleltensky, Nelson & Peirson, 2001). At the micro level, characteristics of and

interactions between children, parents, or the family unit impact children's welfare.

Similarly, at the mezzo-level, characteristics of and interactions within neighborhoods,

schools, friendship and kinship networks, also affect children's welfare, health, and well-

being. And, at the macro level, the nature of a society, its dominant values, and the ways

that these are embodied within public policies and institutions has also been shown to

impact on the welfare of children within that society.

Visual representations of the relationships between these elements tend to portray

them as nested within one another: children within families; families within

neighborhoods, workplaces, and communities; communities within public institutions,

government and society (Prilleltensky et al., 2001, p. 9, Stroick & Jensen, 1999, p. 9).

Prilleltensky, et al. suggest their construct (Fig. 2.1) portrays the "ecological and

hierarchical structure of wellness, whereby smaller units rely on progressively larger

constructs" (p. 9). Stroick and Jensen (Fig. 2.2) posit a similar relationship between the

various elements suggesting that "each successive nest contributes to the care, growth and development of the other nests enfolded within them" (p. 9).

Fig. 2.1. The ecological and hierarchical structure of wellness

Source: Prilleltensky et al. (2001, p. 9).
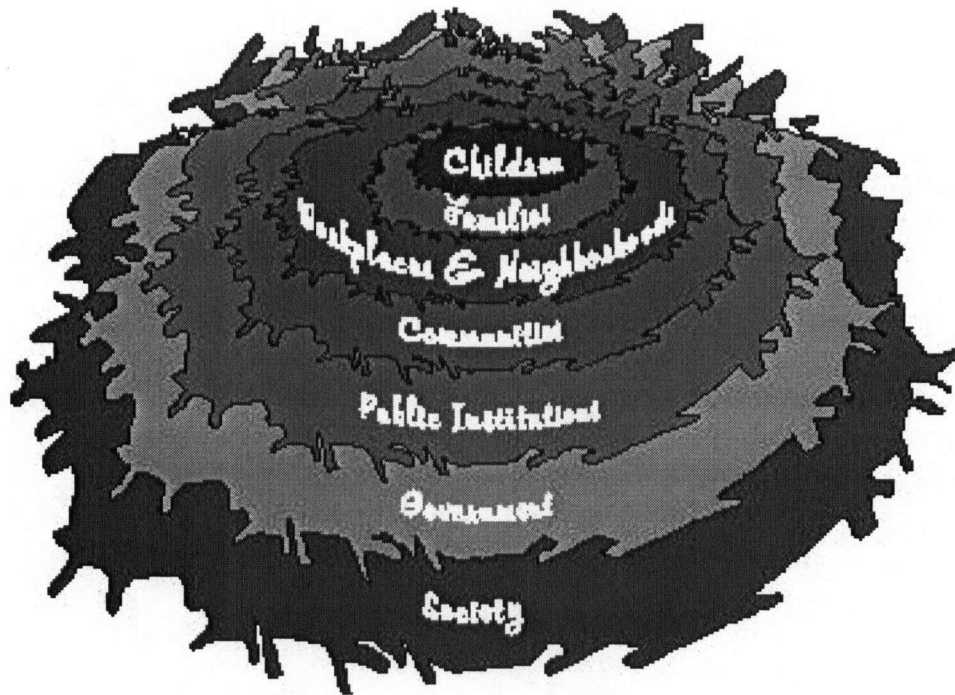
Fig 2.2. Children nested in multiple environments

Source: Stroick & Jenson (1999, p. 9).

The constructs portrayed above are useful in identifying the range of elements involved in the governance of child welfare. Yet neither Prilleltensky et al., nor Stroick and Jensen, theorize relationships and interactions between these various elements, either in terms of tensions between them, or in terms of changes within the system as a whole. An examination of the literature suggests that the nature of the interactions between these various elements is much more complex than that of hierarchy and dependence of smaller units upon larger units. As well, I argue below that theories of governance suggest crucial distinctions between values, social norms and social policies, and between families, workplaces, neighborhoods, society, and the state.

In this study I utilize an alternate conceptualization of child welfare; that of a set

of dialectic relationships between children, parents, communities, and the state (see

Fig.2.3). The concept of the dialectic highlights a number of things. First, as with the

constructs noted previously, the various elements of the dialectic are interrelated as parts

of a whole, each is dependent to some degree on the other, together they form a totality,

in this case child welfare. At the same time, however, each has a certain degree of

autonomy from the other and the relationships between these elements are characterized

by contradiction and conflict. The consequence of this contradictory interdependence is a

constant tension and shifting of relations with provisional compromises between elements

that in turn generate new tensions and conflicts. What this means is that the governance

of child welfare is always problematic but the terms of this problematic are constantly

changing.
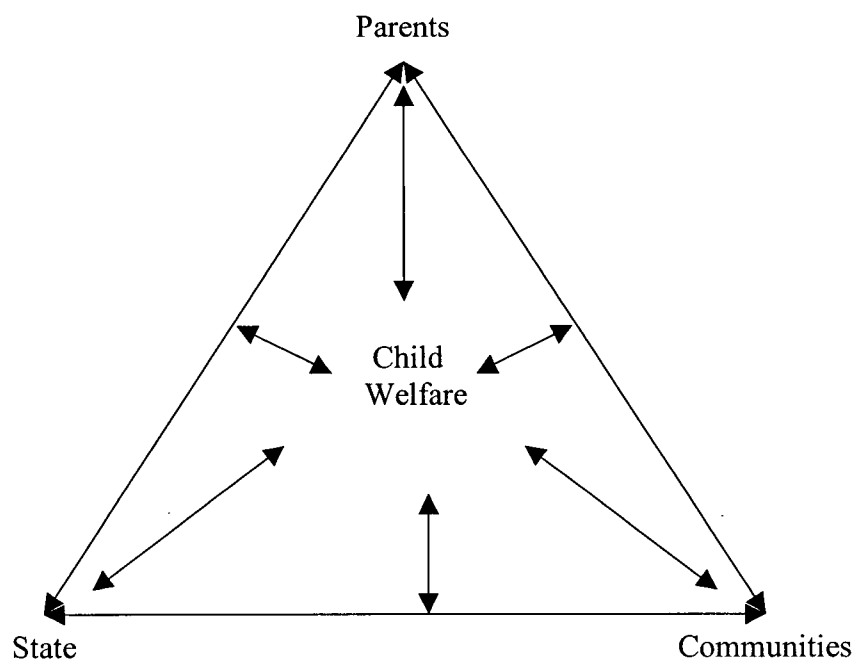
Fig. 2. 3 The Child Welfare Dialectic

In the remainder of this chapter I expand on this conceptual framework by examining theories of governance and conceptions of the role of parents, communities, and the state in the governance of child welfare.

Theories of Governance

Jessop defines governance as "any form of coordination of interdependent social relations – ranging from simple dyadic interactions, to complex social divisions of labor" (1999, p. 351). Kooiman defines governance as "the pattern or structure that emerges in a social-political system as 'common' result or outcome of the interacting intervention efforts of all involved actors" (1993b, p. 258). He goes on to note "the pattern cannot be reduced to one actor or group of actors in particular." Thus, as Melcher notes, "[r]ather than describing the rudder of the vessel, perhaps the term 'governance' better describes the maelstrom" (1998, p. 82). As Kooiman notes, governance is not just a pattern or structure, it also forms the medium through which actors can act and attempt to influence this system in accordance with their own objectives and interests (1993b, p.258). The concept of governance is, therefore, a descriptive and analytical tool for examining a particular pattern and the actors and institutions involved in shaping it, as well as reactions of actors to one another and to forms of coordination between them.

Mayntz (1993) suggests this view of governance also implies concepts of governing and governability. Governing refers to the efforts of one or more actors to bring about a certain pattern. The success of these efforts speaks to governability, or the ability to achieve the desired outcome (from a particular vantage point). For the

governing efforts of one or more actors may be resisted, countered, adapted, or avoided by others. With this in mind, governance is not just a pattern, but also a process.

> A pattern or order should not be seen as a system based on unchangeable social laws ... but as 'rules' or 'structures' which are interpreted, reinterpreted, formulated and reformulated in the process of social (human) action....Actors who govern, or try to govern, also influence the governance structure of a subsystem. Some (more powerful) actors have the possibility to rewrite some 'rules of the game' but no one has complete control. There is always some intended and unintended change, which creates maneuvering space for actors willing to change the existing pattern. (Kooiman, 1993b, p. 258-259)

Duclaud-Williams (1993) notes that it is possible to examine issues of governance on three levels. First, the level of intention; this includes the rationale used to justify approaches to governing, including existing or new structures or processes. Second, the level of practice; this concerns the translation of intention into institutions, procedures, and relations. Third, the level of outcome; this concerns the normative evaluation of the impact of practices of governing and patterns of governance. Duclaud-Williams argues that the distinction between intention, practice, and outcome is crucial to theorization of governance as there is a tendency to confuse the three.

Within this study, the focus is on the level of practice in the governance of child welfare. The level of intention serves as a background within which current practice is framed, but my concern is with efforts to translate this intention into institutions, procedures, and relations; and the patterns and structures that have emerged in response to these efforts. Thus it is the emerging pattern, as well as the process through which this pattern has emerged, that concerns this study.

Liberal theories of governance have typically constructed a "two-celled" model of governance distinguishing between "private" and "public" systems of governance (Barber, 1999). Within these, the market is seen to be the primary coordinating mechanism of the former while the state is viewed as the primary coordinating mechanism of the latter. Debates arise concerning the appropriate role for each. The market coordinates actions through the media of money exchanged between autonomous individuals for specific goods and services. Individuals are able, indeed are expected, to negotiate such exchanges based on their view of what is in their best interest. In theory, the market is viewed as a system whereby individual freedom can be maximized and the collective needs of a diverse society can be met. The state, on the other hand, functions as a coordinating system through the media of power. This power is situated within laws, public statutes and policies that are seen to be separate from and somehow "over and above people" but is exercised through complex and typically hierarchical social relations.

More recently a third element of governance has been identified – one that is frequently referred to as "**civil society.**" Within liberal theory civil society has been included as part of the private sector, along with the market, as both are outside the state. However, there are arguments that this results in a "conceptual kitchen sink" that fails to acknowledge important distinctions between the market and civil society (Barber, 1999, p. 29). The term civil society has been used to refer to "the rich web of associational life that people engage in freely and voluntarily" (Clague, 2000, p. 28). It has also been defined as "a private sector made up not of market relations, but rather of rich human

communities, communities that are comprised of families, churches, clans (and their

modern equivalents), neighborhood associations and foundations (Barber, 1999, p. 303).

In a paper written by John Parr, civil society is defined as:

> The place where people make their homes, sustain their marriages, raise
> their families, hang out with their friends, meet their neighbors, educate
> their children, worship their God. It is in the churches, schools, civic clubs,
> community centers, labour unions, synagogues, sports leagues, Parent-
> Teacher Associations (PTAs), libraries and barbershops. It is where opinions
> are expressed and refined, where views are exchanged and agreements made,
> where a sense of common purpose and consensus are forged. Civil society
> is the sphere of our most basic humanity – the personal, everyday realm that
> is *governed* by values such as responsibility, trust, fraternity, solidarity, and
> love. (Parr, 1999, p. 264 emphasis added)

In other words, there is a realm where actions are guided, not by the self-

interested exchange of goods and services, nor through the power exercised through laws,

statutes and policies, but through social relations grounded in shared norms, values, and

identities. Barber suggests this concept necessitates a three-celled rather than a two-celled

model of governance, with civil society different from, yet sharing characteristics of, both

market and government.

> Situated in a space of its own, civil society stands poised between the
> market sector defined by private economic liberty and the state sector
> defined by government, legitimate coercion, regulation, and bureaucracy....
> Civil society shares with the private sector a voluntary or discretionary
> character, but it shares with the state a public character. Civil society is
> public without being coercive, and it is voluntary without being private
> or radically individualized. (Barber, 1999, p. 304)

The above definition generates a degree of confusion with respect to the

relationship between the family and civil society, for the family is viewed as a private as

opposed to a public institution. This conceptual confusion regarding the term civil society

has been noted in the literature, along with numerous attempts to provide greater clarity. Cohen and Arato (1992) suggest that civil society is part of and embedded within a larger socio-cultural lifeworld that encompasses all social roles and relations, cultural beliefs and traditions, norms and values. This must be distinguished from both political and economic sub-systems. This lifeworld consists of both informal, unorganized associations as well as well as formal, institutionalized associations of socialization and communication. The term "civil society" refers to the latter, to institutionalized structures of association which, according to Cohen and Arato, encompass both private institutions, i.e. the nuclear family, as well as public institutions, e.g. labour unions or neighborhood associations. They suggest that there are two sets of public/private dichotomies: one at the level of systems – state/economy, and one at the level of lifeworld – public/private. Social relations take place within both private and public spheres, and governance occurs through both media steered systems and through the values, norms, traditions, and beliefs of the socio-cultural lifeworld. I have adapted their construction of these two dichotomies by situating within its cells, the institutions that they associate with each cell in the text of their work. Doing this offers a more specific conception of their relationship to the governance of child welfare. Within these systems, the market is identified as the primary private institution, and the state as the primary public institution; within the lifeworld the nuclear family is identified as the primary private institution, and voluntary associations such as trade unions, religious organizations, or neighborhood associations, as the primary public institutions (see Fig. 2.4).

	System	Lifeworld
Private Sphere	Market	Nuclear family
Public Sphere	State	Voluntary associations

Fig. 2.4: Public/private dichotomies in the governance of child welfare

Source: Adapted from Cohen & Arato (1992, p. 431)

The term civil society has been criticized for masking differences, differences in socio-cultural characteristics, differences in values, norms and beliefs, and differences in terms of access to power and resources. Thus, while civil society may be a sphere of our most basic humanity, values of intolerance, marginalization and disrespect can exist alongside those of fraternity, solidarity and love. One has only to think of civil society associations such as neo-Nazi parties or the Hells Angels. To use less extreme examples, chambers of commerce and labor unions are both part of civil society, yet it can hardly be claimed that there is fraternity, solidarity or love between them. Consequently, civil society can be a space of considerable conflict, oppression, and marginalization. These dynamics extend into the terrain of both the state and the market as sites through which social values and norms become translated into laws and policies or economic transactions.

Yet within the sphere of civil society are also forces that offer the basis for social change and greater solidarity through social movements aimed at introducing and legitimizing new beliefs, values and norms, individual and collective identities, social roles and relations (Cohen & Arato, 1992, pp. 510-563). It is through these forces that the state and the market are targeted and existing laws and policies are challenged in order to create changes within these systems that reflect these new norms, identities and social relations (ibid.). An adequate understanding of governance must therefore recognize conflict and change within this sphere between individuals and groups, as well as the transmission and mediation of that conflict between this sphere and the economic and political systems.

The above discussion highlights the complementarity, but also the tensions, between state-market-civil society. Current research is characterized by debates regarding the proper role and relationship of each of these within systems of governance, as well as conceptual development of roles and relations, and empirical application to problems of governance. A recent paper by Paul Bernard (1999) situates this analysis within the concept of the dialectic. Bernard suggests that a democratic social order rests on an active dialectic constituted by principles of liberty, equality, and solidarity. Once again, the concept of the dialectic indicates both the unity and complementarity of these concepts, as well as the tensions and contradictions between them.[3]

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[3] Bernard (1999, p. 7), notes that that true liberty is only possible for people who are relatively equal and who share certain values, at least that of liberty; true equality cannot be that of slaves, also it is based on a sense of a common destiny; solidarity is meaningless if it is not freely assumed and if it does not serve to combat exclusion. Yet he also notes that an extreme emphasis on liberty, especially its neo-liberal form, undermines equality and reduces solidarity to interpersonal action; the unchecked pursuit of equality

The consequence of this dialectic for conceptions of governance is that:

> Totality and contradictions explain the variability inherent in the
> compromises that give form to the democratic social order. Out of this
> triple-time ballet of theses and antitheses can emerge only provisional
> syntheses, historical compromises developed by the social forces that
> clash in the name of liberty, equality and solidarity. (Bernard, 1999, p. 7)

Bernard goes on to note that this democratic social order cannot be maintained in
the "dynamism of its totality and its contradictions" unless it operates on two levels: on
the one hand, a formal level, and on the other hand a substantive level (p. 23). Six
dimensions make up the formal and substantive elements of social cohesion within the
economic, political, and socio-cultural spheres of our day-to-day lives (see Fig. 2.5). In
the socio-cultural sphere, on a formal level, *recognition* requires tolerance of difference,
while on a substantive level, *belonging* corresponds to construction of a community, to an
active dialogue about mutual norms and values and a sense of relationship. In the
political sphere, on a formal level, *legitimacy* entails acceptance of public and private
institutions that act to mediate conflict, while on a substantive level, *participation* calls
for more active involvement on the part of citizens. In the economic sphere, on a formal
level, *inclusion* entails participation in the labor market, while on a substantive level
equality calls for a deeper commitment to social justice and equity.

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drowns liberty in uniformity and prevents solidarity from taking form and demanding a commitment; and
an extreme emphasis on solidarity stifles freedom and erodes equality.

Character of the relation / Sphere of activity	Formal	Substantive
Economic	Inclusion[4]/Exclusion	Equality/Inequality
Political	Legitimacy/Illegitimacy	Participation/Passivity
Socio-cultural	Recognition/Rejection	Belonging/Isolation

Fig. 2.5. Formal and Substantive Elements of Social Cohesion

Source: Bernard (1999, p. 20)

With respect to children, Bernard's dimensions of the democratic social order may appear somewhat problematic. If the element of belonging entails shared values, then obviously not all children can belong. And if inclusion supposes shared labour market capacity, then here too, not all children can be included. If participation is indicated by involvement in the management of public affairs, then once again, not all children can participate. However, if social cohesion involves recognition that goes beyond tolerating, to encompass valuing differences, then space is opened up not just to tolerate, but to value children. And if social cohesion supposes the legitimization of institutions that can act as mediators in conflicts, we need legitimate institutions that mediate conflicts with, and about, children. As well, the element of equality, defined as the pursuit of equity and social justice, would seem to be applicable to children.

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[4] In the original text the term 'insertion' is used.

If equality and inclusion are switched so that equality becomes a formal principle, while inclusion is its substantive aspect, then the concept of a democratic social order encompasses children more easily on the formal level than on the substantive level. This prompts a question regarding the substantive aspects of social cohesion: are they entirely meaningless with respect to children? The answer to this relates to the nature of childhood itself. A sense of sharing common values with one's community, inclusion in economic life, and participation in the voluntary sector, are very different for a two year old, a six year old, a twelve year old, and a sixteen year old. Thus while children begin their lives unable to participate in the substantive aspects of a democratic social order, successful social reproduction entails nurturing the development of these capacities by offering increasing opportunities for their expression. The following section examines the primary institutions through which this occurs – family, community, and the state, and their relationship to each other and to the governance of child welfare.

Elements in the Governance of Child Welfare

In a study of over one hundred years of social policy in the UK, Harry Hendrick (1990) noted that references to children situated them in one of three roles: child as threat, child as victim, or child as investment. As threat, the focus has been on the need to restrain and confine children. As victim, the focus has been on the need to protect children from harm. As investment, the focus has been on the need to develop children's potential as adults. These conceptualizations have focused child and family policies and programs largely on the prevention or remediation of negative outcomes.

However, research on children is beginning to shift from a reliance on such negative indicators of child outcomes, often measured by teen delinquency, rates of child abuse, or school failure, to an identification of positive outcome goals for children: social competence, the development of a sense of trust in the world, school achievement. And, interestingly, there appears to be agreement across a range of disciplines that good child outcomes are associated with: (1) the achievement of *stage salient developmental tasks*, meaning the milestones that children can be expected to achieve by specific ages given their inherent biological capacities, (2) the attainment of *human capital* meaning acquisition of the knowledge and skills needed to contribute to economic life, and (3) the demonstration of *social capacity*, meaning empathy for others and concern for both immediate community and the larger society (Stroick & Jensen, 1999, pp. 18-19). These "good" child outcomes are strikingly similar to Bernard's identification of the elements of a democratic social order. And they expand the emphasis from a preoccupation with children's future adulthood to a focus on the quality of children's present lives in *recognition* of children's inherent value as children, a concept already identified by Bernard as a formal element of this social order.

But what are the institutions that contribute to these positive outcomes for children? In general, the literature identifies three: family, community, and state. However, the emphasis given to each of these, their perceived relationship to positive child outcomes, and views of their relationship to each other are subjects of considerable, and often intense, theoretical debate. Indeed, child welfare has been referred to as an "ideological battleground," an arena where fundamental differences in values about children, family, and society are contested (Wolff, 1997, p. 212).

Theories of the governance of child welfare have also tended to utilize a two-celled model of governance. Within liberal theory, the family is seen as a "private" realm in which the welfare of individual children is connected primarily to their relationship with their parents and their parents' relationship to the market. The "public" actions of the state enforce rights and responsibilities for children and parents. At the same time, it is recognized that the actions of the state may also provide (or not provide) certain forms of public or collective support to families. Thus debates over the governance of child welfare have typically focused on the dialectic relationships between families and the state. These debates include questions of how far the state should intrude into the autonomy (liberty) of the family (Carlson, 1988; Lasch, 1977), what kinds of supports (equality) should be provided to families by the state (Daniel & Ivatts, 1998; Prilleltensky et al., 2001), and the role of the state in balancing children's rights (liberty and equality) against parental autonomy (liberty) (Leach, 1994).

More recently, theories of the governance of child welfare have expanded to include the broader environment in which children and families are situated, focusing on the role of neighborhoods, communities, workplaces, and civil society in the governance of child welfare (Prilleltensky et al., 2001; Stroick & Jensen, 1999). Yet the use of these terms, and their relationship to the welfare of children, may generate considerable confusion. Along with the challenges noted above in defining what is meant by civil society, the term community poses significant challenges.

> Community is ... that 'warmly persuasive word used equally for existing sets of relationships and alternative sets of relationships.' It is a curious concept; although there are periodic bursts of interest, it has never managed to gain entry into mainstream debates but it will not go away. (Smith, 1989, p. 137)

McKnight defines community as the "social place used by family, friends, neighbors, neighborhood associations, clubs, civic groups, local enterprises, churches, ethnic associations, synagogues, local unions, local government, and local media" (1995, p. 164). Carniol defines community as "people whose interpersonal relationships are linked by a consciousness of common bonds which extend within geographic and/or social boundaries" (1985, p. 92). Boothroyd defines community as:

> [A] human system of more than two people in which the members interact personally over time, in which behavior and activity are guided by collectively evolved norms or collective decisions, and from which members may freely secede. (1996, p. 81) [5]

Wharf & Clague (1997) suggest that the term community is often viewed as having two primary meanings. First, it is used to refer to both a specific geographical space and the locality and neighborhood are used somewhat interchangeably. Within this definition of community, civil society is present in all of its forms, individuals and families as well as a range of public and private, formal and informal voluntary associations. But the state and the market are also present and may be grounded in community in the form of local businesses and local government, or may be part of larger regional, national, or international structures.

A second definition of community is used to refer to individuals who share certain common socio-cultural characteristics i.e. the business community, the gay community or the immigrant community (Wharf & Clague, 1997). Here, the term "special interest group" may be used somewhat interchangeably. Within this meaning there is often an assumption of some degree of interaction and/or common interests and values based on

the shared characteristic(s), and these groups may be part of, or may organize, formal associations to structure their interactions and/or represent their common interests to and/or against, external powers. It is worth noting that at times, neighborhoods or other kinds of localities may act in these same ways, perceiving themselves as having common interests and organizing to represent these interests to and/or against external powers.

However, what Boothroyd (1996) and Carniol (1985) highlight is a third way that community is used and that is to describe social relations that entail mutual connection and concern, shared norms and values, feelings of trust and reciprocity. Within this meaning, terms such as solidarity or social cohesion are also used somewhat interchangeably. It is possible therefore to refer to a community, whether locality or special interest group, as having a strong or weak "sense of community."

Despite the various meanings identified above, what is perhaps most relevant, is the notion that, similar to civil society, community entails relations and interactions that are voluntary, guided by norms, values, and traditions that are socially transmitted as opposed to being guided by the self interest of the market or the coercion of the state, and that, like civil society, community is a counterweight to these systems, a source of pressure, as well as support, based on social values. Yet unlike civil society, the term "community" suggests a specific setting. Furthermore, unlike civil society, there is a particular concern with the quality and the nature of these interactions and the degree of solidarity or social cohesion that characterizes them.

With respect to the governance of child welfare, all of the above meanings of community are relevant. Within a locality, conditions such as levels of poverty,

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[5] Boothroyd (1996, pp. 81-83) suggests that community should also be distinguished from the nuclear family.

unemployment, and adequate housing appear to have a direct impact on child and family well-being (Cohen-Schlanger, Fitzpatrick, Hulchanski & Raphael, 1995; Coulton, Korbin, Su & Chow, 1995; Steinberg, Catalano & Dooley, 1981). As well, locally available and accessible services and resources also appear to have a significant impact on child and family well-being. These services and resources range from recreational facilities, job training programs, libraries, health care services, child care services and schools to counselling services, youth and women's shelters (Peirson, Laurendeau & Chamberland, 2001, pp.74-78). And families, parents, and children can all be seen as special interest groups with certain characteristics, interests, and values in common. Organizations and associations may form as part of civil society to address these interests and to advocate for them to and/or against external powers (Hudson, 1999; Wharf, 2002).

But, perhaps most importantly, the quality of social relations with others has been shown to significantly impact child and family well-being. In fact, research suggests that informal networks of support may play a more central role than formal services and supports in promoting child and family well-being.

> It's community supports, that they are connected with people, whether it's extended family or friends ... that really helps [families]. They aren't there alone, isolated with their children, their stress, and their frustration ...The families ...that do well are the ones that are connected in the community somehow. (Service Provider, cited in Peirson et al., 2001, pp. 107-8)

The term "**social capital**" has been coined to refer to the supports and benefits provided by social relations characterized by shared values and norms of trust and reciprocity (Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 1993, 2001). While much research has focused on social capital as an individual resource, there has also been considerable interest in social

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capital as a collective resource. It is recognized that a high degree of social capital exists in socially cohesive communities where there is a rich network of interaction and association, where individuals have shared values and norms and a high degree of trust in and concern for one another (Putnam, 1993). The benefits of socially cohesive communities to child welfare have been well documented. Studies have shown lower rates of child maltreatment in neighborhoods where there is a high degree of social cohesion and higher rates in neighborhoods with lower social cohesion (Garbarino & Kostelny, 1992; Vinson, Baldry & Hargreaves, 1996).

Social cohesion appears to play a role in three related, but slightly different, phenomena. First, cohesive communities offer benefits of "collective socialization" (Fegan & Bowes, 1999). Norms of appropriate behavior for children, young people and parents are widely shared and transmitted among members of the community. Second more cohesive communities offer families a variety of informal supports that, as noted above, can play a central role in promoting child and family wellness. Third, cohesive communities offer children and parents opportunities for participation, interaction, and connection that also contribute to a sense of belonging and healthy self-esteem (Hasler, 1995; Henderson, 1997).

Yet relations between communities, children, and parents must also be viewed as dialectic. Perspectives on the value of cohesive communities to the welfare of children and families are contradicted by other research showing that a high degree of social cohesion among adults in a community can also serve to perpetuate situations of child abuse or neglect and can transmit such norms and patterns to the next generation (Belsky, 1980; Wharf, 2002). The forces that can act as a counterweight to community norms and

standards that are harmful to children are the freedom of individual parents to act against community norms, as well as the power of the state to override community norms on behalf of the rights of children as citizens of the state. Moreover, Hasler (1995) notes that tensions can exist between parents and communities over the loyalties of children.

Additionally, communities are, by nature, bounded systems. As various theorists point out, communities, whether of location or special interest, are also sites of difference, and encompass relations of power that privilege some and exclude, marginalize, or oppress others (Wharf & Clague, 1997; Young, 1990). And while socially cohesive communities may provide extensive supports and benefits to their own members, these benefits are typically not available to non-members. Within a locality, special interest groups may form to block access of "other" groups to supports and benefits as in the case of a Minneapolis neighborhood where a group of white homeowners "took over" a community based development organization and proceeded to dismantle the cooperatively managed multifamily housing that was serving the needs of low income African American families (Briggs, 2004). Once again, the counterweight to these norms and behaviors is the freedom of individuals to challenge them, and the power of the state to overrule them.

However, the actions of the state in overruling community norms should not be viewed as unproblematic. State policies and procedures are not always enlightened nor in the best interests of children. The widespread removal of Aboriginal children to residential schools and later to foster and adoptive homes is an example of how supposedly enlightened policies generate considerable harm. The counterweight to such

power is the challenges that free individuals and cohesive communities can mount against the state, and its policies and practices.

The welfare of children is, therefore, dependent on this dialectic comprised of individual children and parents, and their respective rights, cohesive communities and their norms and values, and the power of the state, and its policies and procedures. As noted above, theorization of the governance of child welfare has focused primarily on relations between the state and the family, and secondarily on relations between families and communities. There has been little examination of the dialectic relationship between the state and communities or of the implications of this dialectic relationship for the governance of child welfare. Such an examination requires understanding of changes or restructuring within the state, and how these changes affected the way the state, and its administrative agencies, relate to communities and community organizations. More importantly, it also requires understanding of communities, intra-community relations, intra-community changes, all of which affect the way communities relate to the state.

Theories of community change focus on the way in which change occurs within and by communities, whether of location or special interest. **Locality development** refers to changes within a community that strengthen social cohesion and solidarity, and build social capital within a community. Of particular interest is the development of **bridging capital**, a form of social capital that creates linkages between diverse groups within a specific locality thus reducing social conflict, promoting social inclusion, and fostering greater opportunities for traditionally marginalized groups (Gittell & Vidal, 1998). **Social action** or **social advocacy** entails mobilization of community members in order to challenge existing power relations, either within or external to the community. **Social**

planning has been identified as the development of services and/or programs to address the needs of individuals and groups within the community. Theoretically each of these is presented as a distinct model that reflects different conceptions of community issues, of relations of power, of practitioner roles, and goals for community change (Rothman, 1979). In reality, it is difficult to differentiate these models and it has been argued that strategies to promote community change generally have two essential components, strengthening social provisions or resources and improving people's problem solving capacities and relationships (Perlman & Gurin, 1972, p. 58).

Yet others have suggested that there are important distinctions to be considered in theories of community change. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) and McKnight (1995) argue that some strategies of community change marginalize certain members of the community and erode collective social capital. Strategies of **community capacity building**, on the other hand, promote social inclusion and build social capital. Like locality development, community capacity building focuses on strengthening social relations between community members, but also, similar to social action, focuses on resituating power over programs, services, and resources within the community. The focus of this research is the way in which restructuring of the governance of child welfare created changes within communities as well as between communities and the state. It is recognized that these changes also have implications for relations between communities and families, and while this was not the primary focus of this research, implications are identified within each of the case studies and are discussed further within the concluding chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter has integrated theories of governance with ecological theories of child welfare in order to conceptualize the governance of child welfare as a dialectic relation between children, parents, communities and the state. What is relevant to studies of the governance of child welfare are the structures and patterns between these various elements and the tensions, contradictions, and crises that these produce and, more importantly, the processes through which these are addressed.

As noted previously, there has been considerable research examining relations between parents, children, and the state, and the impact of social policies on parents and children. Areas of tension between the state and the family have also been explored. More recently, there has been increased attention to relations between communities and families, again noting the supports that communities provide as well as the pressure that communities exert on families, and the tensions that exist between families and communities. Yet conceptualization of the governance of child welfare as a pattern of dialectic interaction between children, parents, communities and the state requires an additional focus on relations between state and community. Such explorations have the potential of enriching the child welfare research agenda by raising questions regarding the impact of these relations on parents and children.

In the following chapter I examine the governance of child welfare as it unfolded in the context of the Keynesian welfare state and, more recently, the neo-liberal state, and the crises that these forms of governance generated. I then go on to examine the emergence of (new) discourses of governance entailing a "rediscovery" of community. I

also introduce the province of Alberta as a focus for research into efforts to shift the

governance of child welfare towards a community centered approach.

Chapter Three

Crisis and Transformation in the [Child] Welfare State

Introduction

This chapter examines changes that have occurred in the welfare states of western industrialized nations with a particular focus on changes in the Canadian welfare state. I suggest that an understanding of current efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare must be situated within the context of the current larger crisis of the welfare state. Development of the post-war welfare state is intimately linked to an ideology of childhood that gradually emerged in western nations and had a profound influence in shaping the nature of welfare state development. Furthermore, while criticisms of the post-war welfare state parallel criticisms of statutory child protection systems in industrialized nations, neo-liberal restructuring has only contributed to a deepening of the current crisis in child welfare. A newly emerging paradigm entailing a "rediscovery" of community and civil society is resonating with ecological theories of the governance of child welfare as discussed in the previous chapter. This community paradigm, however, faces a number of conceptual and empirical challenges in terms of its translation into a more systematic policy/practice framework. Within these challenges key themes include relations of power within communities, the role of the state within the community, and community autonomy and capacity to challenge the state and its economic policies. Recent efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare in Alberta offer an empirical context within which these issues can be examined.

The Crisis of the Post-War Welfare State

There have been various references to a "crisis of the welfare state," said to have begun sometime in the 1970s and continuing through the 1990s, fuelling efforts at restructuring. But the nature of this crisis, as well as the nature of restructuring, are subjects of considerable debate (Pierson, 1998). In general, the form of welfare state considered to have undergone a crisis is what has been identified as the *Keynesian welfare national state* (Jessop, 1999), a particular form of governance that emerged in western industrialized nations in the first half of the 20th century. Jessop (1999) notes that the term Keynesian welfare national state denotes a "pure" form that showed a myriad of combinations and permutations among the various western democratic nations that adopted it to greater and lesser degrees during the post war era. Nonetheless, there were a number of common features. These included *Keynesian* economic objectives, a *welfare* orientation in terms of the relationship between citizens and the state, a *national* focus in terms of the scale of economic and social policies, and an emphasis on the *state* as the primary institutional mechanism of governance.

Despite considerable differences in the nature and scope of the "crisis" among the various industrialized nations, in all of these countries there are a number of common elements (Jessop, 1999; McCarthy & Jones, 1995). Perhaps the most widely recognized, at least initially, were the systemic aspects. The globalization of capital, as well as new patterns of production and consumption, challenged Keynesian principles of economic management.

But the other, and perhaps more complex, elements of this crisis were social. From one perspective this has been seen as a crisis of governability, and on the other hand as a crisis of legitimacy (Habermas, 1976/1988). The issue of governability stresses problems related to the qualities of those being governed. These problems include rejection of political leadership, lack of conformity, and lack of compliance (Mayntz, 1993, p. 9). They also include problems related to social cohesion (McCarthy & Jones, 1995).

The issue of legitimacy on the other hand, focuses on the view of the governed towards systems of governance. Problems here include public trust, as well as perceptions of efficacy (Clague, 2000). From both the left and the right came sometimes opposing, and sometimes overlapping criticisms. These included criticisms that the Keynesian welfare state eroded individual rights and freedoms; that it reflected and promoted patriarchal, Eurocentric norms and values at the expense of women, ethnic minorities and, in particular, Aboriginal cultures; that it fostered dependency and a sense of entitlement, undermining both individual responsibility and community capacity, and leading to divisive identity politics; that it had focused on centralized decision making structures that were removed from local issues and concerns, and that impermeable vertical networks (silos) had evolved at the expense of more permeable horizontal networks (Clague, 2000; Jessop, 1999; Loughlin, 2004; Melchers, 1998). In the face of expanding social and cultural pluralism, as well as growing distrust of claims of expertise, critics questioned the capacity of centralized government bureaucracies to address the needs of an increasingly heterogeneous population or to manage the complexity of the problems they were facing (Clague, 2000; Jessop, 1999). From a

variety of ideological standpoints government, and more importantly, governance, was seen as needing to be "reinvented" (Kooiman, 1993; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Rosell, 1999).

Shifting Paradigms in the Governance of Welfare

Despite widespread dissatisfaction with the post-war welfare state, the search for new forms of governance has been fraught with conflict. Discourses have emerged across the political spectrum emphasizing new conceptions of citizenship, of the role of the state, of the most appropriate relationship between state and citizens. Additionally, with the recognition of civil society and community as additional elements in governance, discourses have emerged regarding the role of community, the relationship between citizens and community, and between community and the state.

In a recent paper discussing changing modes of governance, John Loughlin (2004) notes that there are three kinds of change. First, what he refers to as "pseudo-change," change that is best captured by the French phase, *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose* (the more things change, the more they stay the same). Here, despite superficial changes, there is no real underlying transformation. Second, there is incremental evolutionary transformation. This form of change is a slow gradual process; in the short to medium term, features of the old system may remain predominant, but over the long term, there is a fairly deep and fundamental transformation of the system. Third, there is revolutionary transformation where fundamental changes occur within a short period of time. However, even with revolutionary change, elements of the old regime typically remain with deeper, more genuine, transformation occurring over time.

Loughlin suggests that incremental evolutionary transformation "punctuated by moments of epochal or paradigmatic change" best characterizes current welfare state restructuring (2004, p. 11). Noting that paradigms exist at both cognitive/conceptual as well as empirical levels of institutional and policy design, he argues that a paradigm shift occurs when both the cognitive and empirical elements of one paradigm are replaced by another. Such a paradigm shift affects the mode of governance as it redefines, both cognitively and empirically, the role and nature of government and its relationship with the wider society (p. 13). During any one period there are a number of competing paradigms that may also overlap with one another, and it is difficult to discern when one paradigm ceases to be hegemonic and gives way to another. That a shift has occurred is usually discerned after the fact and in the longer term (Loughlin, 2004).

It has been noted that within most Western nations neo-liberal approaches have emerged to challenge the dominance of the Keynesian welfare paradigm (Jessop, 1999; Loughlin, 2004). Their conceptual emergence began during the crisis of the late 1960s and early 1970s while actual empirical transformations began in the mid-1970s (Jessop, 1999; Loughlin, 2004; Pierson, 1998). The Thatcher government in Britain, the Reagan administration in the United States, and the Mulrony government in Canada, all implemented significant neo-liberal shifts in the governance of welfare.

Tracing the nature of the changes that facilitated the emergence of these approaches, it is important to note that these changes are highly interconnected and it is difficult to name any one of them as causal. Broadly, they can be grouped under economic, social and ideological factors. In terms of economic factors, a primary force has been the internationalization of capital. This undermined traditional Keynesian

approaches to management of the national economy and led to a new role for the state in lowering trade barriers and improving its own structural competitiveness *vis á vis* other nation states (Jessop, 1999; Loughlin, 2004). A second economic issue has been an increasing scarcity of natural resources and recognition of the limits of growth (Pierson, 1998). In terms of social and cultural factors there has been a weakening of national identity and national homogeneity, and a rise in identity politics. These have resulted in fracturing of traditional class compromises, dissatisfaction with the post war order, and new demands on the state going beyond material issues, leading to a further breakdown of centralized forms of governance. Finally, increased individualism has eroded popular support for forms of collective provision for those in need and led to a marked shift to the right in terms of the delivery of these programs and services (Jessop, 1999; Loughlin, 2004).

What emerges in neo-liberal approaches, both conceptually and empirically, is the dominance of the market as a form of provision, and a greater disconnection of the state from both the market and the citizen. The role of the state is primarily to ensure favorable conditions for the market to flourish. Society is conceived as a collection of atomized individuals competing for scarce goods both in the public and in the private sphere. Democracy and citizenship are seen as opportunities for the exercise of individual consumer choice rather than participation towards a common good. Public policy and public administration are restructured to reflect the introduction of these market principles, emphasizing individual choice and competitiveness as opposed to notions of the common good (Peters, 1996). While it is recognized that different nation states have

embraced neo-liberal approaches to different degrees and in different ways, the similarities across countries are striking (Jessop, 1999; Loughlin, 2004).

In the 1990s new discourses began to emerge on the "rediscovery" of community and civil society. These discourses are again reshaping governance, both conceptually and empirically (Clague, 2000; Loughlin, 2004). These discourses challenge both the Keynesian paradigm and neo-liberal approaches to the governance of welfare. Indeed some conceptions position them as a "third way" in the governance of welfare (Giddens, 1998). Within these discourses key strategies include decentralization and participatory governance.

These two strategies are, in fact, seen to be complementary. Participatory governance requires institutions that are decentralized to the level at which meaningful participation can be maintained (Ansell & Gingrich, 2003). There are, however, numerous challenges and criticisms associated with these emerging discourses. On the one hand, it is argued that they represent a deepening of the neo-liberal paradigm with the state further distancing itself from political and fiscal responsibility for welfare while communities must pick up the slack by what some consider to be "begging" from the private and public sectors through "partnerships" that then compromise their autonomy to challenge each of these sectors (McGrath, et al., 1998; Schragge, 1998). On the other hand, it is suggested that they are characterized by considerable conceptual confusion and unexamined assumptions. It is suggested that these discourses rest on questionable assumptions regarding the potentials, and the dangers, of citizen participation (Abram, 2000; Fischler, 2000) as well as uncritical conceptions of community, ignoring issues of oppression and marginalization (McGrath et al., 1998; Reddel, 2004). It is also suggested

that within them, the role of the state and its relationship to communities is inadequately theorized (Loughlin, 2004; Oxhorn, 2004; Reddel, 2004). Centralized government was, at least in part, a response to problems of local elitism (Guest, 1997). Consequently, there is confusion as to the nature and degree of power that should be transferred from senior government to local citizens' groups and there is confusion regarding the relationship between citizens groups and senior government. Some theorists suggest that senior levels of government have a role to play in setting priorities, in monitoring and evaluating outcomes, and in addressing issues of discrimination, oppression, and inequality at the level of community (Clague, 2000, p. 29). Yet, this would seem to be at odds with notions of community empowerment. Furthermore, it ignores the role of the state in creating and maintaining these same issues of discrimination, oppression, and inequality at the level of community (McGrath et al., 1998; Shragge, 1998).

Empirically, critics have likened implementation of community based governance to Loughlin's (2004) concept of pseudo-change, with the formation of various community boards or neighborhood councils entailing little or no change in the status quo. Peters (1996) has suggested that efforts to reform governance often utilize multiple reform strategies with little thought to their relevance for the issues they are intended to address or to their compatibility with one another. Clague (2000) suggests the problem is two-fold; on the one hand governments are reluctant to transfer power to the level of community, on the other hand, citizens are not interested in either the work or the responsibility that goes along with such a transfer of power.

> [C]itizens in local communities are not certain they want the work that goes with having power and authority. We enjoy at present … a kind of silent compact between government and governed.…It is a convenient cycle that requires little of us as citizens.… If we are serious about community empowerment, then we are talking about … committing our time and our resources to sweat through with our neighbors and fellow citizens the trade-offs that are inevitably necessary in arriving at workable solutions. Not enough of us have been prepared to do this. (Clague, 2000, pp. 28-29)

Some research suggests that the problem is that opportunities for citizen involvement are often structured in ways that act as disincentives for many community members who do seek greater engagement (Wolf, 1993). Those who do participate, rather than being representative of the community, are in fact those with vested interests and/or those with the time, education, and personal resources to devote to voluntary participation (Lomas & Veenstra, 1995). Rather than fostering increased interaction and shared purpose, strategies of decentralization and citizen participation further entrench local relations of power and maintain repression, discrimination and inequality (Abram, 2000). Other empirical evidence suggests that strategies of decentralization and citizen involvement may actually extend and deepen centralized state control over the lives of citizens as opposed to opening up space for greater local control (Oxhorn, 2004).

Some of the most interesting and theoretically provocative analysis comes from Quebec where research on state-community relations has led to terms such as "critical cooperation," "cooperative conflict," (Panet-Raymond & Mayer, 1997), and "contradictory participation" (White, 1997). These terms are used to reflect evidence that community groups in Quebec are engaging in partnership and collaboration with the state while at the same time continuing to challenge the state through social action and social advocacy. Also, research by Abers (1998) suggests that, despite inherent difficulties,

strategies of decentralization and participatory governance can facilitate broad citizen participation, and can result in empowerment of marginalized citizens, as well as fostering greater cohesion and collaboration between diverse groups and enhancing local problem solving capacities.

In sum, from an empirical perspective, the goals, as well as the outcomes, of decentralization and participatory governance are ambiguous and contradictory. Yet, as Oxhorn (2004) notes, underlying these empirical ambiguities and contradictions are certain theoretical antinomies. Decentralization and participatory governance are strategies linked to empowerment of marginalized individuals and groups by increasing their share of, and access to, political and social power in order to ensure that their needs are met, their rights respected and their priorities addressed (Angeles, 2005). However decentralization and citizen participation are also strategies linked to communitarian ideologies in which the emphasis is on strengthening social relations between diverse citizens and groups of citizens (Oxhorn, 2004; Peters, 1996). Elements of each of the above also resonate with certain aspects of neo-liberal ideology, which also views decentralization (if not citizen participation) as a strategy to reduce government monopoly and bureaucracy (Ansell & Gingrich, 2003; Peters, 1996). In the face of these theoretical antinomies, it is little wonder that strategies for, as well as assessments of, "successful" decentralization and citizen participation are so problematic (Oxhorn, 2004).

If, however, the achievement of a democratic social order is recognized as comprising elements of liberty, solidarity, and equality that are in constant tension with one another, then these ambiguities and contradictions are predictable. "It is no easy thing keeping all three indispensable and yet contradictory elements of the democratic social

order in play at the same time. We must expect curious reversals and omnipresent ambiguities" (Bernard, 1999, p. 15). The challenge from this perspective becomes understanding the policy frameworks that maintain this active engagement of all three elements and avoid distortions towards any one, or even two, of its elements. I will highlight two concepts that are given further attention within the context of this study. One of these is the principle of subsidiarity while the other is that of network governance.

The principle of subsidiarity suggests that decision-making capacity should be situated within the level at which decisions are carried out. It is typically associated with decentralization. However the concept of decentralization encompasses various degrees of sub-state autonomy ranging from deconcentration to delegation to devolution (Rondinelli, 2003, p. 50-51). Deconcentration redistributes day-to-day decision-making and financial management to government officials at sub-state, i.e. regional or district, levels. Delegation situates a greater degree of autonomy over decision-making and financial management to organizations outside of, but ultimately accountable to, central government. Devolution creates autonomous units of local government that have full authority over decision-making and financial management, including the capacity to raise their own revenues.

Clague (2000, p. 30) notes that subsidiarity is a more flexible concept than that of decentralization for it allows power to pass upwards as well as downwards. Etzioni suggests that the principle of subsidiarity can be usefully applied to relations between families, communities, and the state.

> In other words, individuals and families should do for themselves whatever they can; the community should do only those things that the individuals or families cannot themselves accomplish, and the state, in turn, should do only those things that the communities cannot accomplish. (In Rosell, 1999, p. 46)

However, Landy and Teles (2001) suggest that, rather than offering any clear answers, the language of subsidiarity merely restates the basic question of the proper distribution of power. The issue they raise in terms of the overlapping of problems between various levels of government is equally relevant in relations between families, communities, and the state.

> Subsidiarity assumes that establishing appropriate relations between different levels of government is essentially a matter of line-drawing: figuring out which functions should be placed at what level of government. As if one were carving a turkey, one finds the joints that link different public problems and splits them there. Unfortunately, governments are more complex than carcasses; real policy questions have no joints. Therefore the problem of intergovernmental relations is not one of discovering what questions are intrinsically local, national, or super-national but rather one of coordinating the overlapping involvement of different governmental actors in matters of common interest.
> (Landy & Teles, 2001, p. 414)

The principle of subsidiarity, however, does not necessarily deny the overlapping of policy issues between various levels, yet it may assist in debating the best arena in which to situate authority over specific aspects of decision-making and fiscal control.

Network governance is another proposed model of state-community relations. This framework is proposed as an alternative to traditional and outdated methods of hierarchical command while seeking to advance and engage the role of community and civil society. Described as a mode of governance based on interactions between public, private, and civil sectors, this framework builds upon concepts of governance through negotiation, horizontal networks, and policy learning. Within this model the state plays an active role involving collaboration and negotiation with civil society, fostering alliances across diverse organizations, and with outside interests, but also as a participant

in dialogue, negotiation, and mutual learning through dense networks of vertical and horizontal channels of representation and communication. Fundamental to this model is an engaged civil society, comprising a broad and diverse mix of citizens and citizen groups.

However, despite what are seen as promising ideas, principles, and indicative methodologies, their translation into more systematic practice frameworks remains a substantial and unfinished task. Reddel (2004) highlights two areas for further research and policy development. First, an understanding of specific network forms and their role in policy implementation and reform of social governance, and second, the institutional design that can effectively address the complexity of governance issues (Reddel, 2004).

With respect to criticisms of models of governance emphasizing the importance of community the most relevant issues appear to be those related to inadequate conceptual development and theorization of state-community-individual relations. Such theorization needs to incorporate a critical perspective of community, as well as addressing issues of citizen participation, community autonomy, and the role of the state. Yet Duclaud-Williams suggests that policy frameworks concerning the most appropriate relations between state and community are perhaps best dealt with within the context of a specific policy field as opposed to being generalized to the political system as a whole (1993, p. 236-237). Consequently, the remainder of this paper focuses specifically on the area of child welfare and efforts and challenges, both conceptual and empirical, to redesign state-community relations in the governance of child welfare.

In the following section, I examine efforts to reconfigure policies and programs in response to what is perceived as a growing crisis in child welfare. I begin by examining the nature of this crisis, first by tracing the development of the welfare state with respect to its assumptions regarding the governance of child welfare and the challenges that these are facing. I argue that significant social and cultural shifts in both perceptions of the family as well as family structure have contributed to this crisis. It has been further exacerbated by global economic restructuring as well as neo-liberal restructuring of the welfare state. At the same time, criticisms of traditional, centralized approaches to the governance of child welfare have resulted in calls for change and efforts to develop alternate forms of governance that re-involve local communities in the welfare of children.

The Crisis of Child Welfare in Western Industrialized Nations

Formal child protection systems have been referred to as "an unholy mess," "a growing crisis," "beyond the breaking point," "the ultimate failure," (Schorr, 2000, p. 124). Criticisms come from the public as well as from clients, special interest groups, and those working within the system itself. Yet the child welfare crisis is intimately linked to the broader crisis of the Keynesian welfare state and to neo-liberal restructuring.

Feminist analysis has tended to stress the "two-track" nature of welfare state development, with "masculine" social insurance programs tied to primary labour force participation and "feminine" relief programs oriented to families without a primary breadwinner (Fraser, 1995). Yet construction of the welfare state was actually a *three-track* process significantly influenced by the emergence of an "ideology of childhood."

Phillipe Aries (1962) has traced the gradual emergence of this ideology within Western society. As Rooke and Schnell (1983, p. 9) have noted:

> Until we grasp the nature of the triumph of the "discovery" of childhood we will underestimate its explanatory power. What Aries described in great detail is not merely a social transformation in all its complexity but more importantly the victory of a concept that radically changed the mentality of Western society.

For the ideology of childhood created serious tensions for liberal ideology and the emerging capitalist economy. It encompassed four key criteria – dependence, protection, segregation, and delayed responsibilities (Rooke and Schnell, 1983). In other words, children came to be viewed as dependent upon adults due to their immaturity, needing special supervision and protection due to their vulnerability, segregation from adult society due to their impressionability, and as having the right not to labor but instead to receive training and education to assist them in their development.

While these norms had gradually become characteristic of the life of children in the middle and upper classes, they were a far cry from the reality of children in the poor and lower classes. Here children worked alongside men and women at all sorts of hard labor, children were not typically supervised by, nor did they necessarily live with, their parents, and they were exposed to and often participated in drunkenness, crime, prostitution, and various other activities that conflicted with the newly emerging view of childhood. Thus the socially conscious among the middle class were confronted with the reality that the view of childhood that they had come to embrace was a "luxury" that many children either rejected or were denied (Rooke &Schnell, 1983).

A "child saving" movement emerged that took many forms. Family and community initiatives focused on education and socialization of families, particularly mothers and children, but also on the development of mutual aid and neighborhood social relations. At the local level there were movements to create more "child friendly" public space, and to address issues of air quality, sanitation, and housing, as well more closely regulate consumption of alcohol, gambling and prostitution. At a structural level, movements arose to institute a "family wage" for men that would reinforce their role as breadwinners, while women stayed in the home caring for dependent children. There were also movements to end child labor, to establish universal primary education for children, and to institutionalize preventative health programs for children, i.e. vaccination. It is worth emphasizing the dual nature of this movement. On one level it targeted transformation of family, community, and in some respects, national, norms, values and social relations. On another level it targeted transformation of political and economic policies to reflect and to enforce these norms and values. And with the latter, the political and economic institutionalization of various structural changes, the welfare state began to formulate into its three distinct tracks; one which reinforced the role of men in the formal economy, one which reinforced the role of women as homemakers and childrearers, and a third aimed at addressing children's dependence, protection, segregation, and delayed responsibility.

This third track has consisted of two aspects, according to Strong-Boag (2002): on the one hand, policies and programs such as health care and public education intended to address the needs of all children; on the other hand, systems of child protection geared towards those children that were seen to lack or to reject proper parental care. These

systems of child protection have always been controversial, constituting as they do the monitoring of and intervention into the family by the state, in direct contradiction to liberal ideology. Yet as long as norms and values stressed a certain kind of family structure – the two parent, breadwinning father and caregiving mother, and as long as political and economic structures were in place that reinforced these norms and values, it was assumed that the need for child protection services would be relatively minor (Schorr, 2000).

This assumption has proven to be false and child protection systems are increasingly struggling under the weight of overwhelming demands. There are a number of reasons for this. First, while the prevalence of sexual, physical and emotional mistreatment of children has not necessarily increased, societal perception of them, and of their impact on children, changed significantly over the course of the 20th century. There has been an increased emphasis on children's right to be protected from such treatment and on the obligation of friends, family, neighbors, and professionals to report concerns over mistreatment of children to child protection services. Second, there has been a profound cultural shift to concern with personal autonomy and individual freedom over collective solidarity and commitment to community that has impacted child welfare both in terms of collective commitment to children and families, and in terms of the commitment of children and families to community norms and values (Prilleltensky et al., 2001). The consequence has been a reduction in support for collective provision for children and an increase in conflicts between children, parents, schools and communities.

Economic restructuring, due to intense global competition, has also had a profound impact on the welfare of children. There has been an increase in work-family conflicts as more parents work shift work, weekends and holidays, and are left struggling to find time and energy to devote to children (Duxbury, Higgins & Coghill, 2003). The consequences of this are higher rates of stress and depression and poorer physical health for parents, as well as less time and energy given to children (Duxbury et al., 2003; Prilleltensky et al., 2001, p. 84). At the same time more families are dealing with issues of periodic or chronic unemployment. And more parents have jobs with low pay, few benefits, and little security. The consequence is that child poverty has deepened across all types of families. About twenty years ago, the term "feminization of poverty" was coined to describe the overrepresentation of women among the poor. Today, the term "juvenization of poverty" is an appropriate way to describe current trends (Peirson, et al., 2001, p. 66).

As well, in the face of economic restructuring, the neo-liberal emphasis on subordination of the state to the market meant that there was a reduction in welfare state services for children and families from child care to social assistance, and this spilled over in the form of increased referrals to the child protection system. Child protection statistics across most developed countries show significant increases during the same period that Western countries embraced neo-liberal transformations in the governance of welfare (Parton & Matthews, 2001). While it is too simplistic to suggest child welfare caseload increases are the result of welfare state restructuring, there can be little doubt that restructuring has had a significant impact (Kinjerski & Herbert, 2000; Prilleltensky et al., 2001).

However, despite the negative impact of neo-liberal restructuring there is, in general, little desire to maintain the centralized approach of the Keynesian welfare state in the governance of child welfare.

> [Centralized] services ... have been criticized for being ineffective and inefficient because they are unresponsive to local needs, alienating to users because they are inaccessible, highly professionalized and overly specialized, and undemocratic because they are subject to senior political and managerial control rather than local community and client control. (McKenzie, 1991, p. 2)

Nowhere are the effects of this more apparent than in aboriginal communities where the importance of the broader community and the culture to child well-being has been completely ignored. The widespread removal of children from their families and communities, first through enforced attendance in residential schools, and then through apprehensions under the guise of "child protection," and the abuses that children suffered within these settings, have resulted in aboriginal children being vastly over represented in current child protection systems (Connors & Maidman, 2001). Furthermore, these practices and their consequences eroded community structures and social relations thus setting in motion a vicious cycle.

Consequently, there are calls to re-engage citizens in addressing the needs of children and families and to facilitate greater local control and involvement (Barter, 1999; Brunson & Bouchard, 2003; Korbin & Coulton, 1996; Rothery, Gallup, Tillman & Allard, 1995; Shields, 1995; Waldfogel, 1998; Wharf, 2002). Brunson and Bouchard (2003) identify this as a shift from a minimal child protection approach in which the role of the community is simply to report concerns for child well-being to statutory child protective systems who are then responsible for addressing whatever issues need to be

addressed, to a maximal child protection approach that instills civic leadership and responsibility for the well-being of all children. In many countries, Aboriginal communities, frustrated by the impact of the traditional governance of child welfare, have led efforts to institute greater local control over governance of child welfare (Connors & Maidman, 2001; Foxcroft & Blackstock, 2003; Rothery et al., 1995).

Yet the policy framework that would most effectively facilitate the above remains unclear. Delegation of authority over the planning and administration of child welfare to local community or regional boards is seen as one way to one way to improve social relations, enhance community supports and services, strengthen advocacy efforts on behalf of marginalized and disadvantaged families, respect diverse cultures and recognize and respond more effectively to local needs (Rothery et al., 1995; Wharf, 2002). Integration and collaboration at the local level between various government departments as well as service providers is seen as another relevant shift (Cannan, 1997; Jones, Chant & Ward, 2003; Rothery et al., 1995). A third shift is from services constructed solely or primarily around a medical model to services that emphasize community collaboration and capacity building (Brunson & Bouchard, 2003; Cannan, 1997; Rothery et al., 1995; Waldfogel, 1998; Wharf, 2002). But such perspectives beg questions concerning citizen participation, the role of local government, the role of senior government and its relation to delegated authorities, as well as issues of standards and accountability in addressing the protection of children.

Nor are these issues merely conceptual. At an empirical level they are evident in a variety of initiatives to restructure the governance of child welfare (Brunson & Bouchard, 2003). Cannan (1997) notes that in France restructuring has been extremely successful at

shifting from centralized, medical based models to more decentralized, community based models, focusing on integration and collaboration of a broad network of local, regional, and national social agencies. Yet citizen participation remains problematic, and, on the whole, despite much rhetoric, it is a cadre of experts who continue who plan and administer programs for children and families (Cannan, 1997, pp. 100-101).

Here in Canada there are conflicting views regarding the relationship of senior government and communities in the governance of child welfare. Wharf (2002) suggests that senior government is necessary to set standards and monitor their implementation. On the other hand, Davies, Fox, Krane & Shragge (2002) suggest that the capacity of community groups in Quebec to maintain some degree of autonomy and capacity for opposition in the face of provincial funding and regulations is critical to their integrity, and to the welfare of the children and families that they work with and on behalf of. Brown, Haddock, and Kovach (2002) suggest that senior government acts as an impediment to the empowerment of First Nations communities in their efforts to implement culturally relevant models of child protection. Wharf (2002) agrees but advises that First Nations communities still need to establish provincial and national accreditation bodies to monitor and ensure adherence to standards. Gray-Withers (1997) claims that the centralization-decentralization debate is unlikely to go away in First Nations communities. She notes that on the whole, Aboriginal women favor a level of regional control of child welfare in order to offset the control of predominantly male chiefs at the local level.

Frameworks addressing the roles and relationships of senior government and local communities in the governance of child welfare can therefore be seen as highly

problematic. While there is evidence of strong community interest and involvement in the governance of child welfare, working out these various roles and relations is a major challenge if community approaches are to gain ground within this field. There is a need for further empirical study of efforts to strengthen the role of communities in the governance of child welfare and to understand the interactions between communities and the state in such efforts. Recent efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare in the province of Alberta offer a context for such an examination.

Shifting the Governance of Child Welfare in an "Ultraliberal" Canadian Province

In analyzing relations between the market, the state, and the family, Gosta Esping-Anderson (1990) characterized advanced capitalist societies into three different types of institutional arrangements. Canada was categorized within the liberal regime, where the emphasis is on individual liberty, with a primary role for the market and a lesser role for the state. European countries were categorized as either social-democratic, with an emphasis on equality and a significant role for the state as a counterweight to the market, or conservative, with an emphasis on solidarity and a significant role for associations in the social welfare of their members. Yet, within these regimes, there are differences of degree and Canada, while situated within the liberal regime, is closer to social democratic countries than the United States which shows a more pronounced degree of liberalism.

However, as Marchildon (1995) notes, notions of "the state" have different connotations in federal and confederal states where decision making authority is divided among different levels of government. Arguably, Canada has the weakest central

government in the advanced industrial world. Yet Canada also lays claim to one of the weakest degrees of power at the municipal/local level. It is at the provincial level that there is a degree of political power unmatched among other sub-state units in industrialized countries. The division of federal/provincial powers gives the provinces decision making power in a broad range of areas, including health, education, and social welfare, including child welfare.

In comparing provincial welfare regimes to Esping-Anderson's typology, Bernard and Saint-Arnaud (2004) note that among four Canadian provinces, Quebec and Alberta, are the two provinces that show the greatest difference from Canada, while Ontario and British Columbia are more similar. Of the four provinces, Quebec shows the closest affinity to European models while Alberta shows the most similarity to the United States. They suggest that Alberta can be situated within a cluster that might be called "ultraliberal."

The power of the provinces over social programs is countered by federal authority over taxation. This control over spending has given the federal government a measure of control in the development of social programs in Canada (Bernard & Saint-Arnaud, 2004; Marchildon, 1995). For many years the federal government assisted the provinces in building social programs through the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP), a 50/50 funding arrangement that offered the provinces a blank cheque but forced them to meet certain federal conditions. In 1990 however, the federal government introduced the first measure of fiscal restraint, the "cap on CAP," limiting annual increases in federal cost sharing to no more than 5% for the three "have" provinces of Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia (Battle, 1998). In 1995, the federal government effectively dismantled the

Canada Assistance Plan, combining it with funding for health and postsecondary education in the form of the Canada Health and Social Transfer fund, a single block grant given to the provinces free of conditions. The consequence of this increased fiscal pressure on the provinces, along with increased operational freedom was, predictably, considerable restructuring of provincial social programs. This has taken different forms in different provinces although most of them have shown a shift towards a neo-liberal agenda (Battle, 1998). Fig. 3.1 shows changes in combined federal and provincial expenditures on social programs in the decade between 1992-93 and 2002-03 while Fig. 3.2 distinguishes between changes in federal and provincial program spending over almost a quarter of a century, from 1980-81 to 2004-05. Both of these graphs highlight the degree of restructuring that has occurred with respect to the funding of social programs in Canada over the past fifteen years.
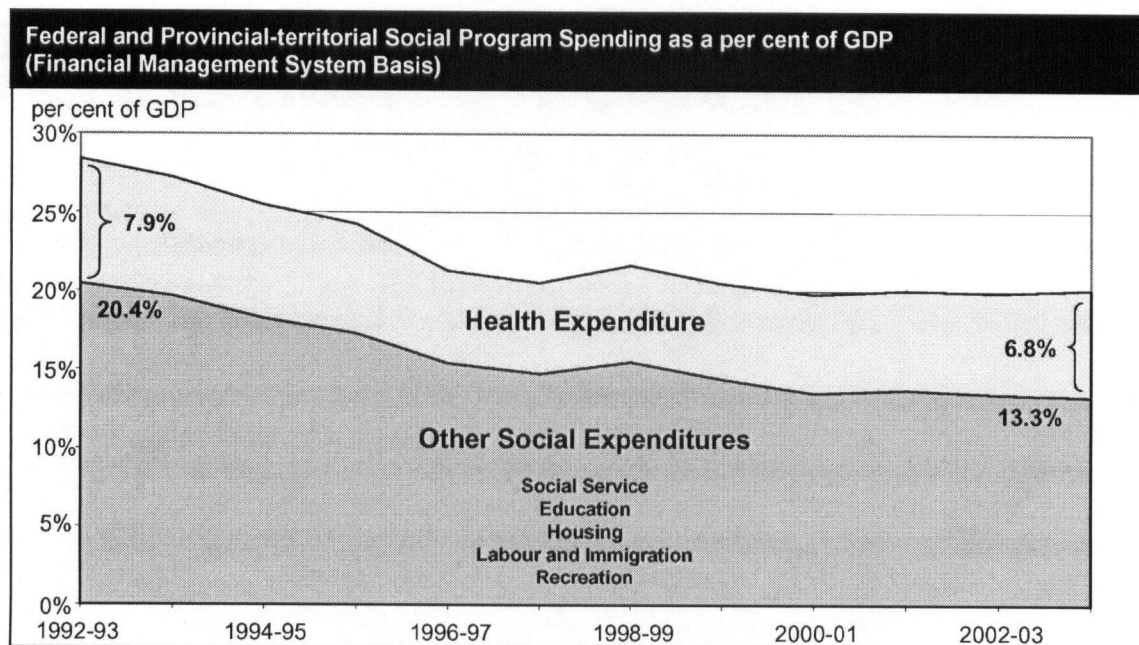
Fig. 3.1 Federal and provincial social spending as a percent of GDP.

Source: Lévesque (2005, April 29, p. 5)

Federal and Provincial-territorial Program Spending (Public Accounts Basis)

Data prior to 1983-84 is presented on a cash basis for the federal government.
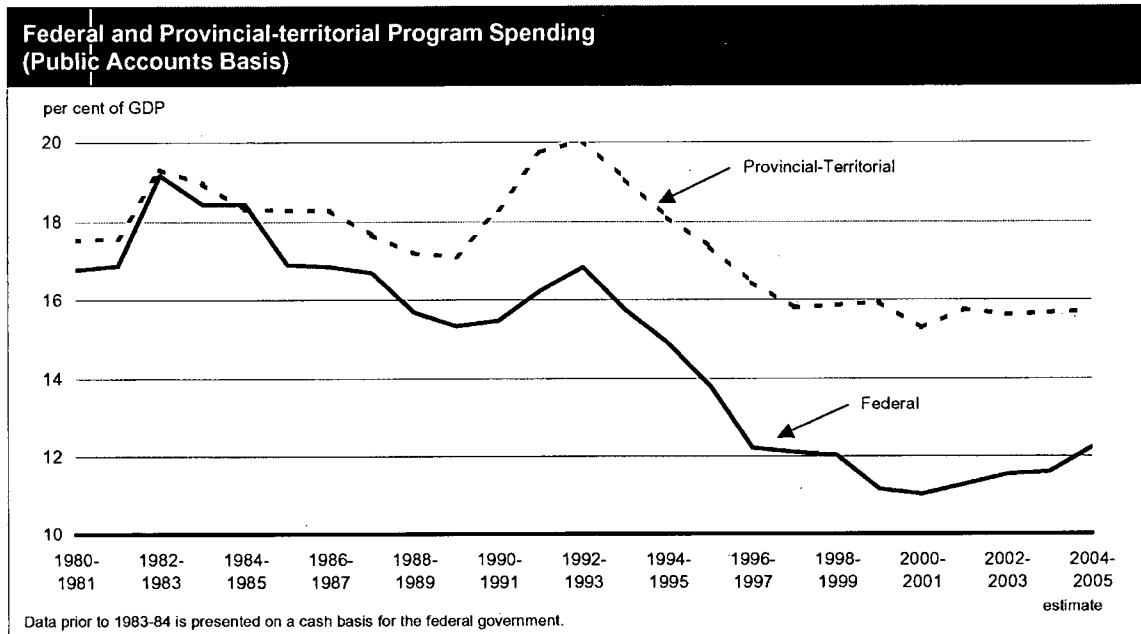
Fig. 3.2 Federal and provincial-territorial program spending.

Source: Lévesque (2005, April 29, p. 4)

Alberta was the first Canadian province to pioneer neo-liberal restructuring of social programs. In 1993 a Conservative government with a strong neo-liberal agenda came to power, and significant restructuring followed. One of the most dramatic was a restructuring of its social assistance program; between 1993 and 2003 the Alberta government achieved a 75% drop in social assistance expenditures, far beyond changes experienced by any other province. See Fig. 3.3 for a comparison of changes to social allowance expenditures from 1992-93 to 2002-03 among four Canadian provinces: Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec. Changes in Alberta were by far the most dramatic.

Provincial Social Allowance Expenditures ($1,000s of dollars)

▣ AB ▣ BC ☐ ON ☐ QU
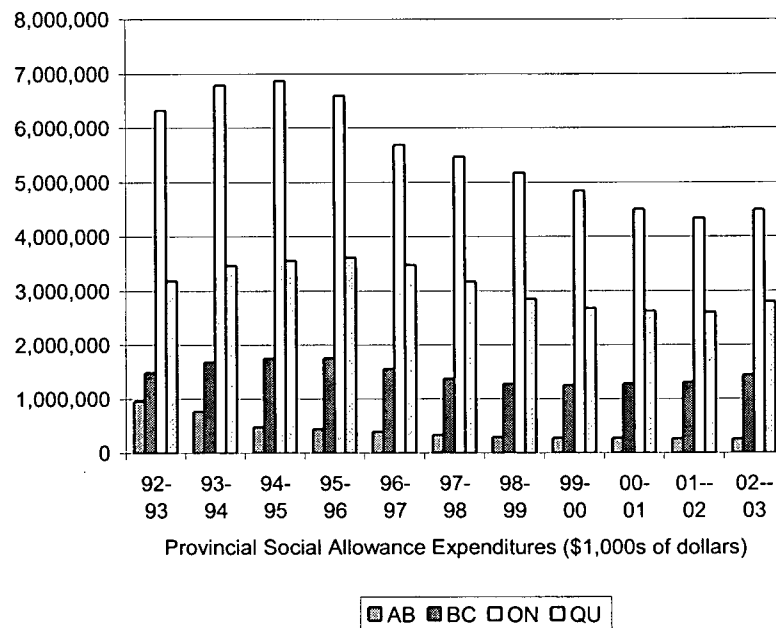
Fig. 3.3. Provincial Social Allowance Expenditures 1992-93 to 2002-03. [6]

Yet, over almost that same period of time, child welfare expenditures, along with
child welfare caseloads, rose dramatically in Alberta (Kinjerski & Herbert, 2000). Other
provinces faced similar increases in caseloads and expenditures. Fig. 3.4 and Fig. 3.5
show these caseload and expenditure increases among the various provinces. Alberta, like
many other jurisdictions, found itself facing a crisis in its child welfare system.

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[6] The information in Fig. 3.3 is extrapolated from Social Development Canada. (n.d.) *Social Security
Statistics Canada and Provinces 1978-79 to 20002-03: Table 438 Provincial and Municipal social
Assistance Program Expenditures 1980-81 to 2002-03.*
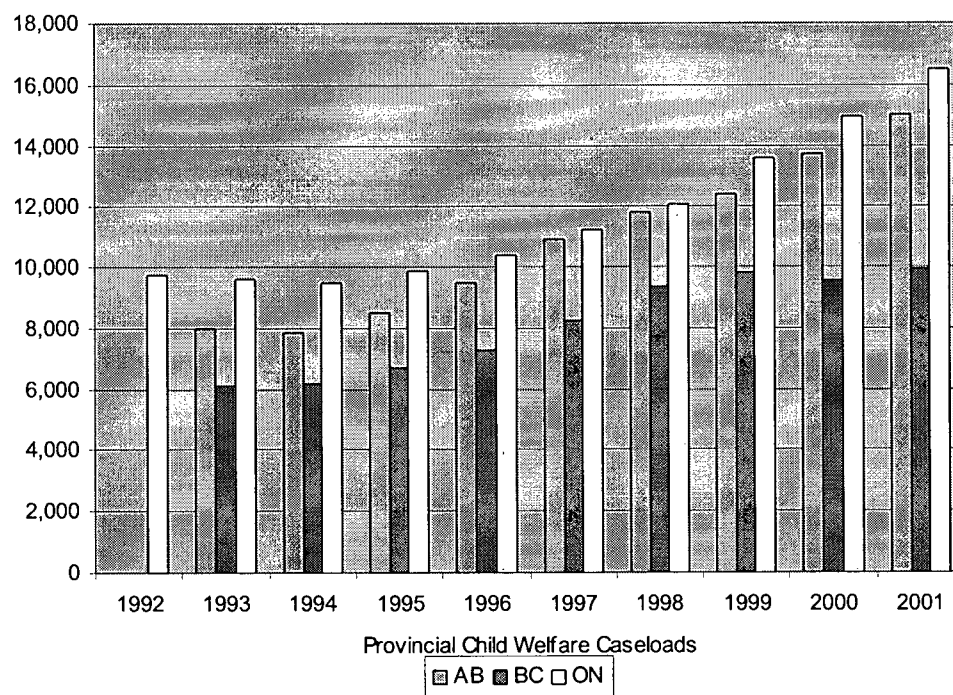
Fig. 3.4 Changes in child welfare caseloads from 1992-2001[7]

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[7] The information in Fig. 3.3 is extrapolated from Social Development Canada. (n.d.) *Child and Family Services Annual Statistical Reports, 1992-93 to 2000-01.* Caseload statistics in Alberta reflect all children with a legal status, i.e. including supervision orders and support agreements, while caseload statistics for BC and Ontario reflect only those children in government care.

900,000
800,000
700,000
600,000
500,000
400,000
300,000
200,000
100,000
0

92-93   93-94   94-95   95-96   96-97   97-98   98-99

Provincial Child Welfare Expenditures (by $1,000s)

▨ AB ▨ BC ☐ ON
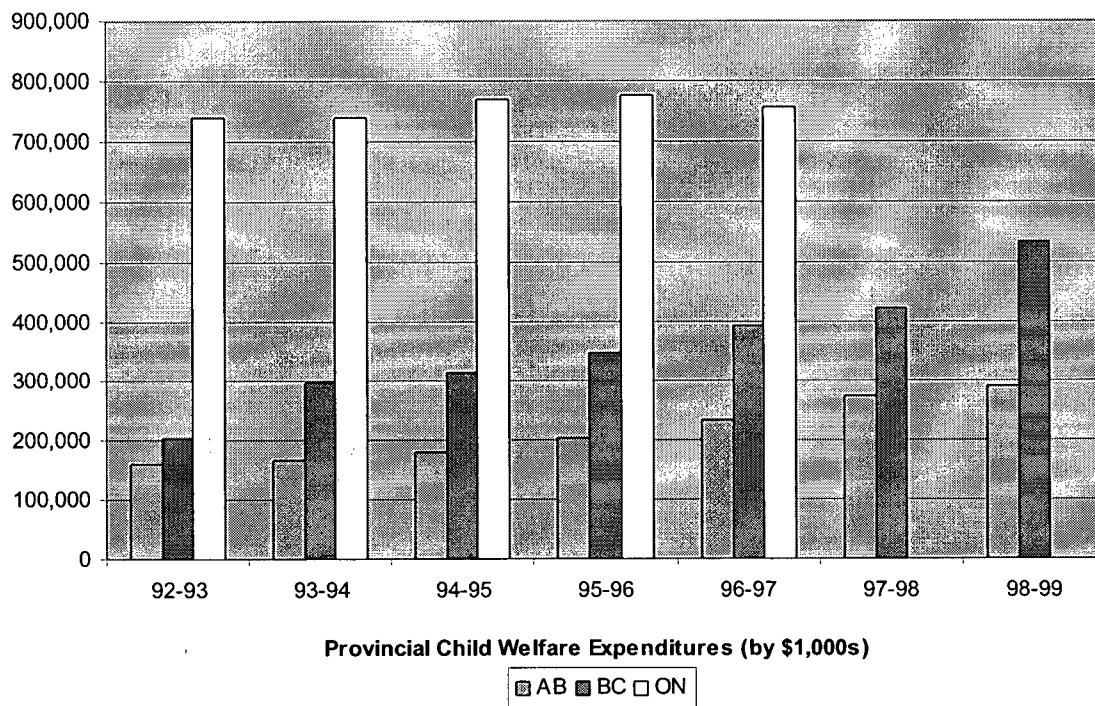
Fig. 3.5 Changes in provincial child welfare expenditures from 1992-93 to 1998-99.[8]

But Alberta had already developed plans to redesign its child welfare system. In 1994, a Commissioner of Services for Children was appointed and a process of public consultation and research began. In November of 1994, the Commissioner released his recommendation for comprehensive changes to the child welfare system in Alberta and the province began the process of restructuring the governance of child welfare. The plan for restructuring embraced the community discourse and participatory governance in child welfare at the local level. However it also evidenced much of the confusion that is present within the community discourse and concepts of participatory governance. The

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[8] The information in Fig. 3.3 is extrapolated from Social Development Canada. (n.d.) *Child and Family Services Annual Statistical Reports, 1992-93 to 2000-01.* Accurate information regarding expenditures is not available for Ontario beyond 1996-97, and is not available for Alberta beyond 98-99.

following chapter examines the plan for change, the public input into that plan, and the ways in which restructuring occurred at the provincial level.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined theories concerning crises in the welfare state, as well as crises in the governance of child welfare. I have also suggested that these two types of crises are intimately linked. The crisis of the Keynesian welfare state was reflected in criticisms of centralized and minimalist approaches to the governance of child welfare that viewed the welfare of children as purely a matter between parents and the state. The role of communities, other than an obligation to report concerns of child abuse or neglect, was largely ignored.

Yet it was argued that neo-liberal transformations in the governance of welfare only exacerbated the child welfare crisis and placed even more pressure on overloaded statutory child welfare systems. Neo-liberal ideology is incompatible with an ideology of childhood and its beliefs of childhood dependence and the necessity of collective forms of support for children and families. I have pointed to literature that suggests new discourses are emerging entailing a "rediscovery" of community and civil society. These discourses resonate with ecological theories of the governance of child welfare and increased awareness of the importance of community to the well being of children and families. At the same time, however, community discourses face a number of conceptual and empirical challenges in translating them into more systematic policy/practice frameworks.

Significant issues include the meaning of community, the role of the state and its relation to community, issues of diversity and relations of power within communities, and community autonomy and capacity to challenge state and economic policies. A major challenge remains to examine efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare within specific contexts and to advance empirical understanding of the strategies that are used, the challenges that they face, and the responses that they generate.

Recent efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare in Alberta offer an empirical context within which these issues can be examined. Alberta offers an example of a province that, like Canada as a whole, has undergone significant restructuring of its social programs. In part this occurred in response to broader federal restructuring. However, within Canada, Alberta has been identified as an "ultraliberal" welfare regime and was the province that pioneered neo-liberal restructuring in Canada (Bernard & Saint-Arnaud, 2004).

In 1994 Alberta began a major redesign of its child welfare system. A Commissioner of Services for Children was appointed and a process of public consultation and research into the experiences of other jurisdictions began. A report was released in November of 1994 that recommended sweeping changes to the governance of child welfare in Alberta, focusing on state-community partnerships and greater local participation The following chapter examines the Commissioner's plan for restructuring child welfare in Alberta, public input into those recommendations, and the fiscal and legislative framework that was ultimately implemented by the province.

Chapter Four

Restructuring the Governance of Child Welfare in Alberta

Introduction

The previous chapter examined the crisis of the Keynesian welfare state, the

consequences of neo-liberal restructuring, and the ways in which these have resulted in

new policy approaches to the governance of child welfare; approaches that would address

issues of government legitimacy as well as issues of social fragmentation. However, it

was noted that these new policy approaches are hampered by uncritical conceptions of

community, and limited theorization of state-community relations and the role of the state

within the community. The province of Alberta is a relevant context to examine these

issues since Alberta pioneered neo-liberal restructuring in Canada in the early to mid

1990s and has also engaged in efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare.

In 1994, after significant public consultation and research into the experience of

other jurisdictions, Alberta's Commissioner of Services for Children proposed a plan that

would fundamentally alter the governance of child welfare in Alberta (Commissioner of

Services for Children, 1994a). The plan emphasized community involvement in the

planning, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of services, and strategies to strengthen

community relations and build community capacity to better address the needs of

children and families. These included integration of services at the local level, an

increased focus on early intervention in the governance of child welfare, and the

involvement of Aboriginal people in the planning and delivery of services to meet the

needs of children and families. Yet the vision outlined by the Commissioner of Services

for Children was followed with legislative and fiscal changes that, initially, created

eighteen Regional Authorities. This essentially left the operationalization of restructuring to interactions between the Regional Authorities and the communities within them. The purpose of this research has been to examine the dynamics of this interaction within the context of restructuring in three communities and to analyze community responses to the restructuring processes that have occurred. In this chapter I examine the planning that characterized early state-community interactions and efforts to re-vision the governance of child welfare in Alberta. I suggest that within this planning there were a number of tensions and discrepancies between the vision of the state and the visions of individuals and community groups. These tensions were evident at both provincial levels as well as regional levels.

The first section of this chapter examines the governance of child welfare as it existed prior to restructuring efforts. It is noted that programs and services were criticized for their inaccessibility, fragmentation, residual nature, and lack of integration within and accountability to the communities within which they were situated. The second section examines plans to restructure the governance of child welfare, including intentions to foster greater integration of services and greater control of services at the local level. Plans also included strengthening local accessibility and equity of programs and services throughout the province as well as a greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention. However, government concerns included the need to strengthen communities by fostering increased mutual aid and reducing dependence on government services. Individual and community visions did not identify these concerns; instead the concern was with adequate resources and community control over those resources. This

section also notes that issues of diversity within communities were addressed only minimally within the planning that was done at the provincial level.

Issues of resource allocation, diversity, and social relations within communities were all played out in planning processes at the regional level as a result of provincial decisions to delegate Regional Boards with the responsibility of addressing issues of governance between communities and the state. The third section in this chapter examines the Regional context and the planning processes that occurred within this context. Again, similar tensions are noted in terms of resource issues, diversity and social relations. Ultimately, these are the issues that played out at the local level and are examined in subsequent chapters through case studies of three communities. The final section of this chapter introduces the three communities that served as case studies for this research, examining some of their similarities as well as highlighting some of their differences.

Social Infrastructure and the Governance of Child Welfare in Rural Alberta Communities

Small towns have often been associated with *gemeinschaft,* the term used by Tönnies (1957) to identify essentially rural localities where people are bonded together on the basis of a shared multigenerational history through which a dense web of interpersonal connections and shared norms and values developed. These communities are viewed as being rich in social capital (Putnam, 1993), having a strong sense of mutual obligation and natural systems of helping. Tönnies contrasted relations within *gemeinschaft* (translated as "community") to those within *gesellschaft* (translated as

"society"), localities that are essentially urban, open, and highly mobile, thus individuals do not share a common history, shared norms and values or interpersonal connections. Instead connections are impersonal and contractual and it is this impersonal, contractual relationship that characterizes helping systems, in contrast to the natural helping systems of *gemeinschaft*.

Zapf (2002, p. 73) suggests there is evidence to support a population figure of 10,000 as indicative of a qualitative difference between rural and urban settlements and that this may reflect the point at which concerned and active natural helping systems are replaced by specialized social services and systems of social planning. The communities in this study were each well under 10,000 and yet, in each of them, a range of specialized social services were evident. Thus a more plausible explanation of the shift from natural helping systems to contractual helping systems may be the weakening of a shared history and close interpersonal ties. In this study, although both Beaverlodge and Valleyview have their roots in *gemeinschaft*, they have also been impacted by social mobility and are a mix of residents with strong historical connections to one another, and residents who are new to the town or surrounding area and have few connections. Grande Cache was an "instant town," constructed to house the labour force for a new industry and situated in a relatively remote area. While "instant towns" are often constructed around or near other already existing, and often, long term, settlements, they are characterized by a large influx of new residents (Halseth & Sullivan, 2002).

Warren (1963) has suggested that communities are made up of two distinctive types of systemic ties: horizontal and vertical. Horizontal ties consist of linkages between residents within a community while vertical ties consist of linkages between members of

a community and larger regional, provincial, or national structures or organizations. The distinction between vertical and horizontal linkages offers a useful tool for conceptualizing social relations in each of the three communities in this study. Horizontal ties can be seen in local civil society organizations such as Chambers of Commerce, service clubs, and youth groups. Vertical ties were present in each of these communities in terms of federal and provincial government agencies as well as agencies and organizations linked to larger regional, provincial, or federal organizations. Often, agencies and organizations were a mix of both horizontal and vertical ties. Agencies or organizations that receive provincial or federal government funding yet rely on community volunteers, whether as board members or as service providers, are one example of this.

Within each of the three communities, this mix of horizontal and vertical social relations can be seen as comprising the **social infrastructure** within the community. It has been suggested that the Keynesian welfare state fostered the development of vertical linkages, and, in turn, weakened horizontal linkages (McKnight, 1995). Programs and services were implemented by higher levels of government, with little consideration for local realities and local needs and with minimal coordination between various external organizations resulting in fragmentation of services within local communities. Neo-liberal restructuring continued the pattern of higher level government decision making with little or no community involvement.

In Alberta, a variety of provincial departments play an important role in the governance of child welfare. These include Education, Justice, Health, Family and Social Services (more recently renamed Children's Services), Income Support, and the Alberta

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC). Each of these departments is centered

in Edmonton, the provincial capital, with regional offices, or regional boards throughout

the province. They operate a variety of programs and services and contract with

community based organizations to provide additional programs and services. Some

programs and services are present in small towns on a full-time basis, others are offered

to small towns on an infrequent, outreach basis, or not at all – residents must travel to

larger centres to access programs or services. Criticisms have focused on the inequity of

programs and services within communities across the province, fragmentation and lack of

integration between programs and services within communities, the residual, as opposed

to preventative focus of many of these programs and services, and the lack of any

accountability on the part of these programs and services to the communities they are

situated within. The following quote is taken from a report that heard from individuals

and community groups throughout Alberta regarding the need for restructuring the

governance of child welfare.

> Agencies aren't communicating. Referrals aren't being made. People
> don't know where to go for specific services. Information is not
> consistent from one agency to the next. (Single mother cited in
> Commissioner of Services for Children, 1994b, p. 16)

In addition to federal and provincial programs and services, municipal social

programs and services exist in many communities across Alberta. These are typically

provided under the auspices of Family and Community Support Services (FCSS). First

begun in 1966, FCSS comprises a cost sharing arrangement with the provincial

government. Funding is provided to participating municipalities on a 4/1 basis to a

maximum amount based on a specific funding formula. Thus the province matches every

$1 spent by local government with $4 of provincial funding. The choice of whether or not

to participate as well as how to allocate funds is left largely to the localities, based on

their perception of their own priorities.[9] The result of this has been key differences in

local social service infrastructures and this emerged as a significant factor in the context

of this research. For example, numerous respondents pointed out important differences in

FCSS programming, with one of the most important being the provision of *programs*

versus *services*.

Within some municipalities, the focus of FCSS is on the funding or provision of

specific and time limited programs, such as learning to budget, planning for retirement, or

youth leadership. In other municipalities, FCSS provides funding for services ranging

from crisis lines to homemakers to childcare to community kitchens. FCSS may also fund

community education programs such as prevention of family violence. In some

municipalities FCSS does both. As well, in some municipalities, FCSS has played, or is

playing, a central role in strategies of community organizing, increasing networking and

coordination between service providers and/or strengthening partnerships with civil

society or collaboration between formal and informal helping systems. In others

communities FCSS has played little or no role in community organizing, concerning

itself mostly with direct services or programs. As well, FCSS is intended to address

issues of social support for all members of the community, ranging from seniors, to

families, to children and youth, to single adults. These choices are made at the local level

as a result of perceptions of local priorities.

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[9] There are some restrictions in that what is funded must be preventative in nature, must not duplicate other services or programs, and must not be primarily recreational or leisure oriented.

It is also important to note that municipalities do not necessarily maintain consistent levels of funding for FCSS. Depending on the priorities identified municipalities may participate in cost sharing and the development of FCSS programs or services for a period of time and then may decide that they cannot continue this level of funding and may either reduce funding, or may completely withdraw from the program and programs and services within the community come to an end. Then, several years later the municipality may once again decide to allocate funding and programs and services will start back up.

Re-visioning the Governance of Child Welfare in Alberta

In 1994 the Minister of Alberta Family And Social Services appointed a Commissioner of Services for Children to design a plan for the restructuring of child welfare in Alberta. A process of public consultation as well as research into the experience of other jurisdictions began. Individuals and organizations across the province participated in the consultations and in November of 1994 the Commissioner's report, *Focus on children: A plan for effective, integrated services for children and their families,* was released (1994a). In this section the visions that shaped that plan, as well as the plan itself, are examined. It is noted that the plan was shaped by at least four different visions, and that within and between these four visions significant tensions are implicated that were not addressed by the plan that was set out.

The Commissioner's plan identified four key themes, or pillars, as the conceptual framework for the basis of restructuring (1994a). The first stressed the importance of integrated services; of ensuring that, at the local level, services were complementary and

collaborative, working together for the benefit of children and families, rather than being

isolated or competitive. The second theme stressed community control over all aspects of

planning, decision-making, delivery, and monitoring of a range of children's services.

This required the "development of processes to involve family and community members

in critical decisions about children" (Commissioner of Services for Children, 1994a, p.

10).

The third theme stressed the importance of addressing the needs of Aboriginal

children and families through services that were more culturally appropriate, designed by,

and for, Aboriginal community members. The plan emphasized the transfer of

responsibility for the planning, management, and delivery of services for Aboriginal

children and families to Aboriginal communities (Commissioner of Services for

Children, 1994a, p. 10). It was also noted that joint ventures between Aboriginal and non-

Aboriginal organizations should be encouraged.

The fourth theme stressed the importance of prevention and early intervention,

promoting child welfare as opposed to the residual focus of child protection.

> It is critical that resources be available for more than crisis intervention.
> Families experiencing difficulty should not be denied services because
> the situation hasn't reached a crisis yet. (Parkland Healthy Families
> Association, cited in Commissioner of Services for Children, 1994b, p. 19)

This theme also incorporated the importance of reducing the stigma of seeking

and/or receiving services, as well as promoting greater caring and mutual aid within

communities, and preventing family isolation. There was also an emphasis on viewing

children and families within the context of their community and, again, on the integration

of prevention and early intervention services. "Single access" or neighborhood centers

were identified as an important element in offering children and families a single, non-stigmatizing and *local* point of access to a wide range of services and resources, whether within the center itself, or by acting as the "hub" of local service networks (Commissioner of Services for Children, 1994a, p. 21).

> Parents and young people see a need for neighborhood centers which would serve as hubs within – or as points of access to – the community's larger network of child and family services. The people who work in these centers would know where a young person or family could find the kind of assistance they need. They would also be able to refer people to other family services, such as day care, public health, and income support programs. Participants from the Aboriginal focus groups said the presence of elders in their community centers would be essential. No clear preference emerged in regard to the location of these centers. Schools and health units were suggested most frequently, but many people suggested that each community could decide upon the best location within its own area. (Commissioner of Services for Children, 1994b, p. 17)

In terms of the structure of governance, in a report released by the Commissioner of Services for Children, it was stated that "municipal associations were very clear in their view that local government should not be asked to add the responsibility for children's services to their existing mandates" (1994b, p. 22). The task therefore was to recommend a structure of governance that facilitated local governance of child welfare but was not connected to municipal government. The Commissioner's plan suggested that this could best be accomplished through the creation of Local Authorities. Local Authorities would serve as participatory planning mechanisms that would involve a broad range of citizens and representatives of community organizations in planning for children and families and managing, at the local level, both provincial and community based services. Figure 4.1, taken from the Commissioner's report (1994a, p. 30) shows the

range of citizens and community representatives that were, within the vision of the Commissioner's Office, intended to comprise the membership of the Local Authorities. Child welfare professionals and local service providers were to be involved in an *advisory* capacity to Local Authorities. Figure 4.2, also taken from the Commissioner's report (1994a, p. 29), shows the range of services and organizations that the Commissioner hoped would fall within the scope of this community based planning process. The outer circle represents existing organizations and provincial departments, while the inner circle represents the range of services that would be integrated within this planning process.
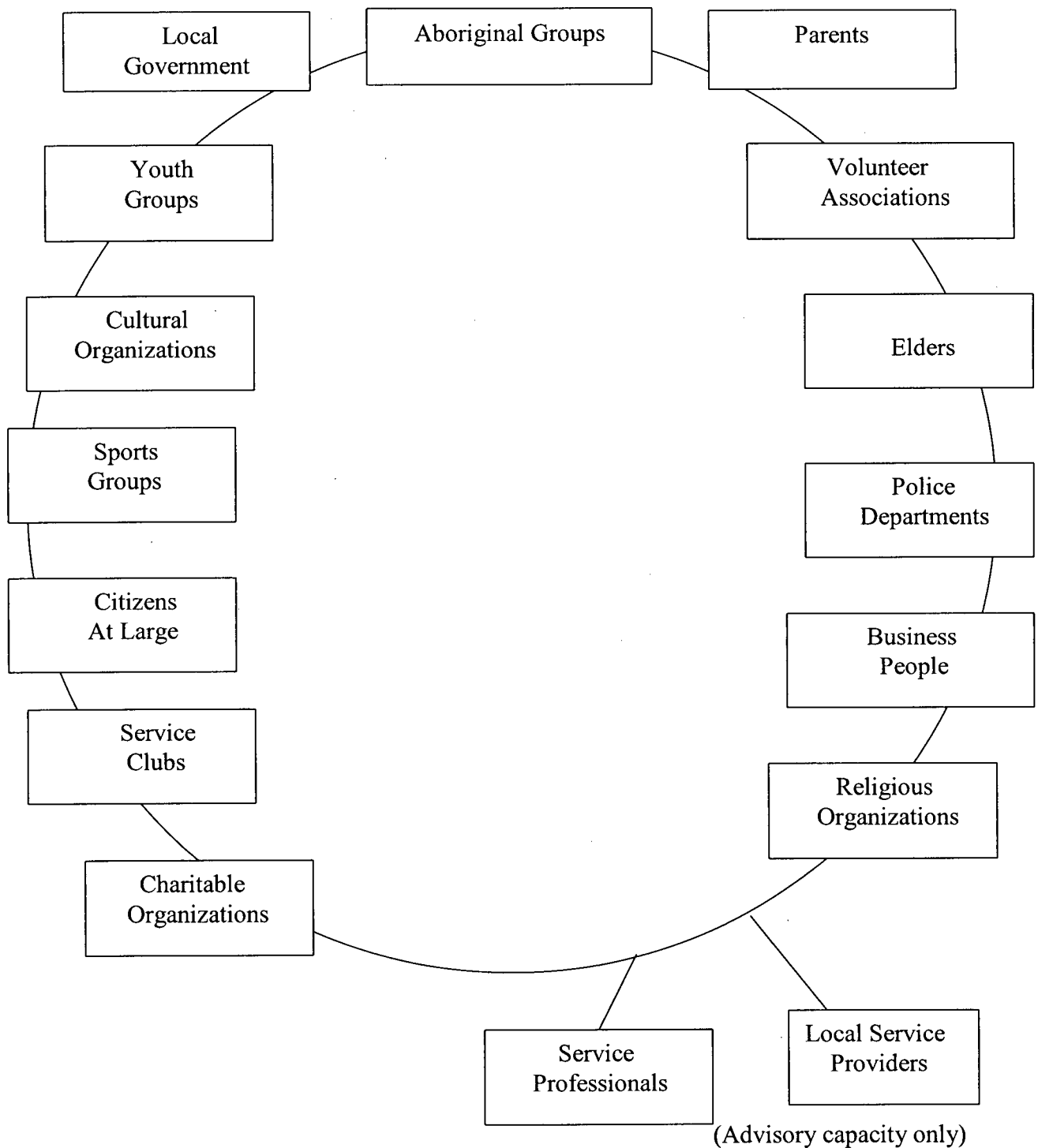
Fig. 4.1. Sample of proposed Local Authority

Source: Commissioner of Services for Children (1994a, p. 30)
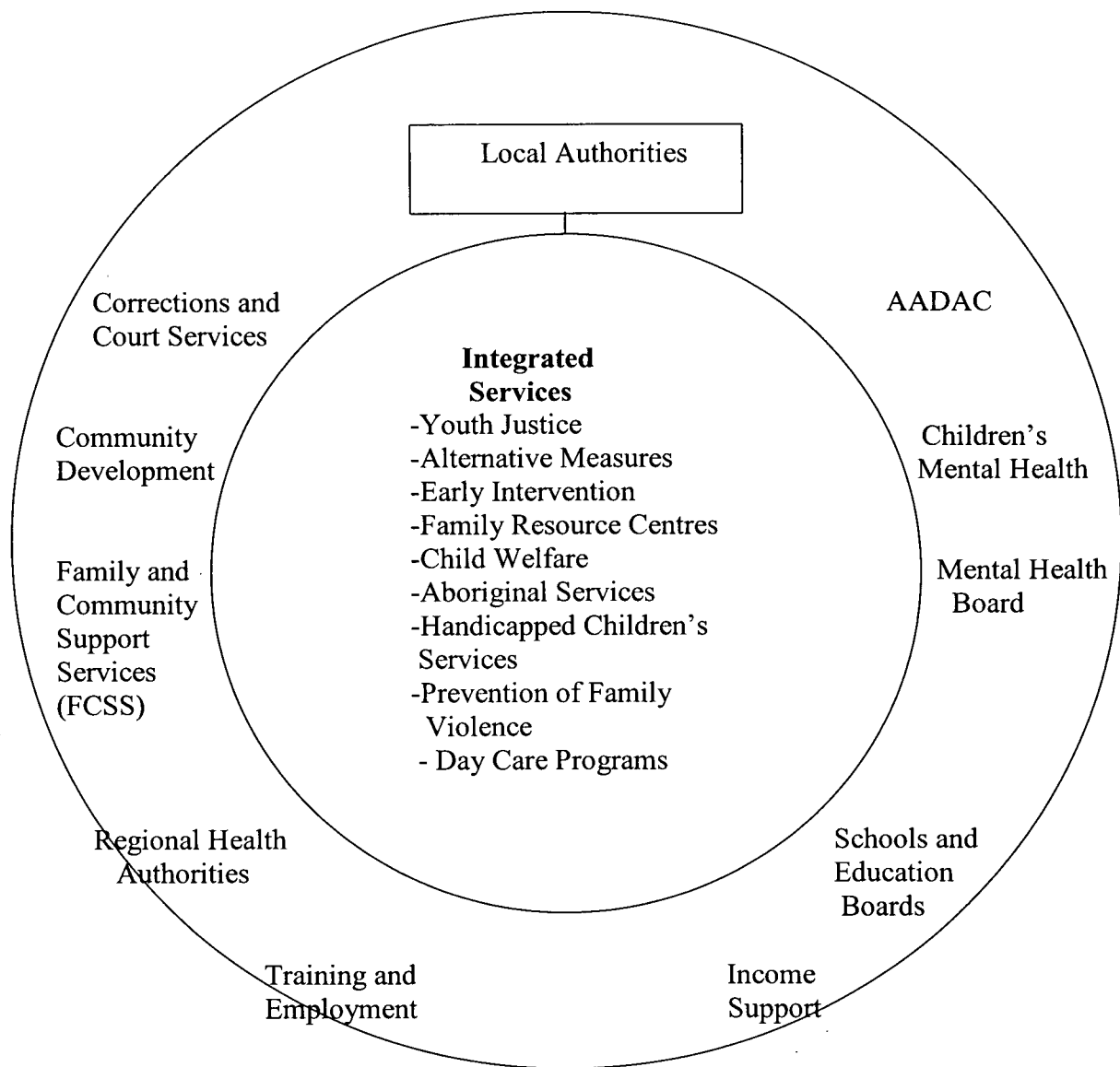
Fig. 4.2. Proposed model of integrated planning for Children's Services at the community level

Source: Commissioner of Services for Children (1994a, p. 29)

The ideas of prevention and early intervention that were highlighted in the Commissioner's reports signified a broad conceptual shift in the governance of child welfare. As noted in the previous section, child welfare in Alberta has consistently been governed through a residual approach, leaving families largely to their own devices until there is evidence of significant risk to the well-being of the child, at which time the state intrudes and largely coercive approaches take over. Another significant conceptual shift involved the move to a more community based and participatory system of governance. In the planning stages thousands of citizens became involved in a process that resulted in Alberta Children's Services being named Organization of the Year by the International Association for Public Participation. There is evidence that, in the beginning at least, the provincial government wished to maintain a high level of community participation in the governance of child welfare.

However, a closer examination of the conceptual shifts that encompassed the plan of the Commissioner of Services for Children raises numerous questions. These include the meaning(s) embedded in concepts such as community and community control, as well as visions of what was to be achieved through the restructuring of child welfare. These questions are reinforced by the second report released by the Commissioner of Services for Children, Finding a better way: The consultations and research leading to the redesign of Children's Services in Alberta (1994b). Within this report various answers to these questions are identified and, while there is much overlap, there are also areas of discrepancy and tension.

Certainly, the government vision of community control and management appears consistent with community visions, as do concerns for greater accessibility and integration of services at the local level. But embedded in the Commissioner's conceptions of community control and management are ideas of strong, caring communities that build on volunteerism and mutual aid, and the need to strengthen social relations within communities.

> Communities must be encouraged to assist their member families. The development of strong, caring communities is key to preventing family isolation and breakdown. (Commissioner of Services for Children, 1994b, p. 11)

In the report of the Commissioner of Services for Children, traditional government services are seen to be an impediment to strengthening communities.

> In the past several decades, government has assumed more and more responsibility for "solving" social problems and concerns. In the process, the important roles which have traditionally been played by the family and the community have been ignored.... This view holds that the helping profession's and the government's service systems have unwittingly helped to undermine the family, and have created obstacles to strengthening the family and the community. (1994b, p. 5)

In submissions by individuals and community groups, the vision of community control and management of child welfare is somewhat different. Within these submissions there is no mention of the role of voluntary or informal supports in meeting the needs of children and families or of the need to strengthen social relations within communities. Instead the emphasis is on improving the availability and accessibility of services for children and families. This includes "more prevention and early intervention services" (1994b, p. 9), a need for neighborhood centres that would serve as a hub within,

or point of access to, a larger community network of child and family services (p. 17),

"stable and flexible funding" (p. 9), and equitability of services across regions and

communities (p. 16). A key element of strengthening communities is seen to be

community control over services including priority setting, service delivery, and holding

services accountable (p. 22).

Communities are presented as "knowledgeable," "caring," "concerned," and

"united" while government services are portrayed as having weakened community

capacity to provide for children and families. It is suggested that addressing the needs of

children and families could be accomplished largely by transferring control over the

planning and delivery of local services back to the community.

> [Albertans] emphasize that community members understand the problems
> and issues experienced by local children and families and are able to
> determine the most appropriate way of responding to them, but
> government programs are not designed to give them flexibility in doing
> so. (1994b, p. 6)

Furthermore, it is social and structural factors, particularly economic, rather than

government services, that are viewed as having weakened the family.

> Families have been weakened, we heard, by economic factors, such as
> unemployment, underemployment, the need to work longer hours to
> maintain the same standard of living, and the need, in many cases, for
> both parents to work to support the family.(1994b, p.18)

However, the community concern for stable and flexible funding is not echoed by

a similar vision on the part of government. Instead, the Commissioner notes that the

assignment from government includes expectations of designing an "affordable" system

(1994b, p. 10) that "make[s] the best use of all available resources" (p. 9).

Issues of diversity were addressed only minimally within the Commissioner's reports, both on the part of government and in submissions from individuals and communities. In general the reports ignored the challenges that diversity presents to a community centered approach. Issues of diversity were identified primarily with respect to the needs of Aboriginal children and families. It was noted "the concept of community responsibility for children's services received particularly strong endorsement from Aboriginal participants" (1994b, p.23). It was also noted "Aboriginal groups do not want to be absorbed into any new provincial/regional/community system. Most Aboriginal communities want to continue to move toward their own governance of children's services..." (p. 9). Furthermore, within the Aboriginal community, issues of diversity were identified in terms of both geography and ancestral ties. It was noted that while Aboriginal people saw a need for cooperation within the Aboriginal community as well as between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, political organizations, service providers, and government, they also identified significant barriers to such cooperation.

This suggests a clear distinction between non-Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal communities in terms of community control over the governance of child welfare. Yet how this distinction is to be addressed in localities where there is a significant proportion of Aboriginal as well as non-Aboriginal residents is not clear. Throughout the plan developed by the Commissioner of Services for Children there is emphasis on the transfer of responsibility for planning and delivery of services for Aboriginal children and families to Aboriginal communities (1994a). However, within this same report Aboriginal Groups are included as part of the membership of Local Authorities (see Fig. 4.2, p. 98), suggesting that in communities where there are both

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents, issues of diversity would have to be addressed within the context of the Local Authority.

An additional area of tension concerns the responsibility for child protection. The government has directed the Commissioner to design a system that "delegate[s] sufficient authority, including *child welfare authority*, to communities for the delivery of services" (1994b, p. 9,emphasis added). Yet, submissions by a number of individuals and community groups indicated that responsibility for child protection and investigation of allegations of child maltreatment should not be given to communities, but instead should be regarded as a separate function from community based planning and control of other child welfare services. It was suggested that responsibility for statutory child protection, including investigation of allegations of child maltreatment, should either remain a provincial responsibility, or should be transferred to police departments (1994b, p. 22). In the plan set out by the Commissioner, Local Authorities are to be delegated the authority and responsibility for statutory child protection responsibilities.

The plan released by the Commissioner of Services for Children in November of 1994 called for the development of Local Authorities that would serve as community based, participatory planning mechanisms for local governance of child welfare, including responsibility for statutory child protection. The plan that was set out envisioned a two year time frame during which Local Working Groups, guided by Regional Transition Teams, would develop service plans for their communities. The Regional Transition Teams would serve as a liaison between the Office of the Commissioner of Services for Children and the Local Working Groups to ensure that the development of local service plans reflected provincial goals and standards. These

Regional Transition Teams would be temporary, disbanding once local service plans had been approved and the province had delegated responsibility to Local Authorities. It was recommended that the boundaries of these Regional Transition Teams be co-terminus with the boundaries of the 17 newly established Regional Health Authorities. Local Working Groups were set up across the province and given the responsibility of developing service plans for their communities. Regional Steering Committees were also set up to liaise between the province and the communities and guide local planning processes.

At some point in the two years following the release of the Commissioner's reports the Province decided to abandon the recommendation to delegate responsibility for the planning and delivery of child welfare to the local level. The fiscal framework that the province developed, and the legislative changes enacted in 1996, called for funding and delegation of responsibility for the planning and delivery of child welfare, including child protection and investigation, to Regional Authorities. A total of 18 Regions were identified. Regions 1-17 were defined by specific geographical boundaries that were co-terminus with the boundaries of Alberta's Regional Health Authorities while Region 18 was comprised of five land based Métis settlement areas spread across the northern half of the province (see Map 2, p. 118).

It was these Regional Authorities that became accountable for operationalization of the conceptual framework of integration of services, greater community involvement and control, greater Aboriginal community involvement and control, and increased prevention and early intervention. They also became responsible for managing the funding they received in order to ensure equitable services throughout the Region that

addressed the needs of children and families, and reflected both provincial priorities and the needs and priorities identified by the communities. In terms of their relation to the communities, the Regional Authorities were placed in the role of the state, both as a result of their responsibility for statutory child protection, as well as their control over allocation of resources to the communities. The following section examines this relationship more closely as it played out in the development of plans for restructuring the governance of child welfare within Region 13.

Region 13 and the Challenges of Child Welfare

The area initially defined as Region 13 is bordered to the west by the Rocky Mountains and the province of British Columbia (see Map 1, p. 109). The area is primarily prairie, part of the fertile Peace River basin. Inhabited by Cree and Beaver First Nations prior to European settlement, various fur trading posts were established in the area and many residents identify themselves as Métis. Missions were established in this area by various churches, and were eventually followed by residential schools. Europeans began to homestead in the area in the early part of the 20th century and small centres developed throughout the region. Throughout the first half of the 20th century social and economic life for the non-Aboriginal population was organized around family farms and the many small centres that sprung up around them. While the family farms are disappearing, agriculture remains a primary industry in this area.
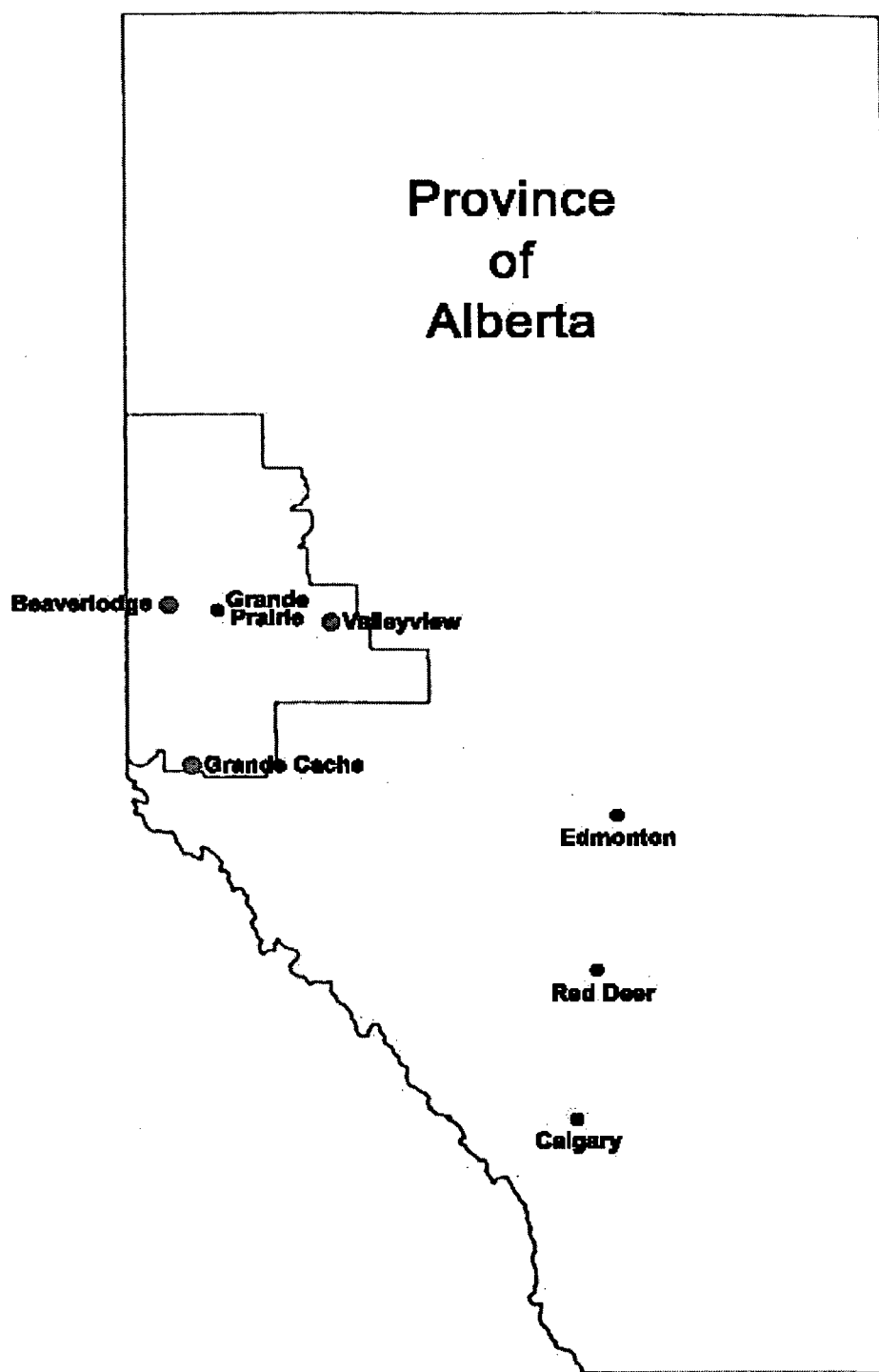
Map 1: Region 13 Child and Family Services Authority

After the second World War, resource development in Canada increasingly moved northward, concentrating in the northern parts of each of the provinces as well as the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut, and encompassing mining, oil and gas extraction, forestry, and hydroelectric projects (Halseth & Sullivan, 2002). All of these projects impacted areas within Region 13, although particularly notable is the development of the forestry and oil and gas industries. The consequence has been increased settlement of the north, but also greater instability in terms of both population and economy.

For Aboriginal people in the area, the first half of the century entailed increasing colonization, including confinement on reserves, loss of traditional lifestyles, and the removal of their children to residential schools. In the second half of the century, the legacy of colonial practices continued with the federal government's decision to delegate responsibility for statutory child welfare to the provinces. Provincial responses ignored the contribution of structural issues to child maltreatment and perpetuated practices of child removal that had begun with the residential schools.[10]

At the time of its delegation, the population of Region 13 was deemed to be around 85,000 people. Grande Prairie was the largest centre in the Region with a population of over 40,000; the residents of this city and surrounding county made up 60% of the Region's population. Grande Prairie serves as an economic centre for the entire area of Northwestern Alberta as well as parts of northeastern British Columbia. The city

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[10] I was first exposed to these issues as a child, through playmates that were foster children living across the street from my family. Of the many children who came into this home, all were Aboriginal. Through social work training, and with the help of Aboriginal students, I learned more about this issue. And, in 1988, in my first year of child welfare practice, I saw a multigenerational genogram that had been developed by a child welfare worker and an Aboriginal family. It poignantly illustrated the family legacy of residential schools, jails, and foster homes.

is surrounded by numerous smaller towns, villages, and rural areas, and it is these that primarily characterized Region 13, although there were also some remote and sparsely populated areas. In addition, the Region encompassed two First Nation reserves, the Sturgeon Lake Indian Reserve, and the Horse Lake Indian Reserve. Since the 1980s these Reserves have been under the jurisdiction of Tribal Councils that are delegated to administer their own child protection services, effectively making them a separate Region. Excluding the residents of these two Reserves, the First Nations population for the Region was identified at approximately 2500, or about 3% of the overall population of the Region (Region 13 Steering Committee, 1996, p. 11), although CFSA respondents noted that this figure does not take into account the many non-status Aboriginal residents in the area.

Within Region 13, average family incomes were noted to be about 90% of the provincial average. However, it was also noted that the Region was characterized by extreme gaps, with some families and communities enjoying a very high level of prosperity, while other families and communities in the Region suffered considerable poverty. This issue was noted to be particularly relevant for farming families and communities as well as Aboriginal families and communities. The Regional Authority also identified the economic instability of the Region as an important issue.

> The Region continues to experience a mixture of prosperity within the urban area and economic challenges within the more rural areas. The ongoing instability in the Grande Cache area continues to be monitored closely by the Authority. Poor crops and record low commodity prices have been experienced in many rural areas of the Region for a number of years. With the oil and gas industry boom comes a transient population and significant economic swings. Poverty continues to be the greatest challenge for the Authority, its partners, communities, and residents. This is particularly evident in some of the Native communities of the Region. Many of Region

13 Native children and families continue to experience extreme poverty standards of living. (Region 13, March, 2000)

With respect to issues of health and well-being, the report noted that Northern Albertans have the lowest life expectancy of all Albertans, with higher than average rates of cancer, cardiovascular disease and injury. High rates of hospital psychiatric admissions were also noted for males and females as well as extremely high rates of male suicide. In terms of issues for youth, rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases are higher than provincial averages and youth crime and drug and alcohol use are also viewed as significant problems however these are also seen to be related to adult crime and adult alcohol and drug use within the Region. Family violence was also identified as a serious problem within the Region, with a high incidence of crisis calls to police and women's shelters.

All of the above was seen to significantly impact child welfare issues in Region 13, where the area alone has been correlated with increased risk of child maltreatment. An ecological study of child maltreatment in Alberta found that regional characteristics that were positively correlated with child maltreatment included population change, unemployment rate, percentage of native population, and Northwest regional location (Krishnan & Morrison 1995). Thus even controlling for those factors that are more characteristic of northern communities, simply living in the northwestern part of the province created an increased risk for child well-being.

To address issues of child welfare and to develop a regional plan for the governance of child welfare, seven Local Working Groups were established within the Region. Two of these were set up within the City of Grande Prairie in order to represent

both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents. The remaining five groups represented the towns and surrounding rural areas throughout the region, and were a combination of Aboriginal as well as non-Aboriginal residents. The Local Working Groups identified local services, local needs, and local priorities, and ways to address the issue of community involvement in the governance of child welfare at the local level.

A Regional Steering Committee was also established and given the role of preparing a regional service plan that reflected community goals and priorities, but also met provincial standards and reflected the spirit and intentions of the four pillars. In April 1999, upon provincial approval of the regional service plan, Region 13 received delegation from the Minister of Social Services. The Region was then responsible for the preparation of a three year Business Plan that would reflect both provincial standards and goals for the restructuring of child welfare, as well as local issues and priorities.

In the previous section it was noted that there was considerable overlap between the government and individuals and community groups in terms of some of the goals for restructuring the governance of child welfare. This overlap included concerns for greater community involvement in and management of the governance of child welfare, as well as increased integration of and collaboration between services, greater accessibility and equity of services within communities across the province. The concern for greater community involvement in and control over the governance of child welfare, as well as increased accessibility and equity of services was evident in the priorities identified by Region 13 Local Working Groups. The Preliminary Service Plan notes that input from local communities affirmed that

Communities have the best understanding of their local needs for children's and family services, communities can play a valuable, positive role in planning and delivering their own children's services, and communities want to share responsibility with the province of Alberta for children and family services. (Region 13 Steering Committee, 1996, p. 2)

There were also concerns from the communities to promote greater integration and collaboration of services and to increase the accessibility of services within local communities, in particular prevention and early intervention services, and to decrease the stigma associated with receiving child welfare services. An interest in "one-stop shopping" or a centre that could serve as a place to access a wide range of local and regional resources was identified as a need by many of the community groups.

In response to the issues identified above, Region 13 Child and Family Services Authority (CFSA) prepared a three year Business Plan to address goals for greater integration of services at the local level, increased community involvement and control, increased Aboriginal involvement and control, and increased attention to early intervention and prevention. Strategies included the establishment of Community Councils, the development of One-Stop Centres, and the enhancement of early intervention strategies in communities throughout the region (Region 13 2000-2003 Business Plan, March 2000).

Within the Regional Authority's Business Plan the establishment of Community Councils can be seen as a key community organizing strategy. They were intended to facilitate community involvement in planning (March 2000, pp. 10, 13, 15, 17), as well as monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness and integration of services within the community (pp. 13, 15). The Community Councils were also intended to build on community assets and strengthen community capacity to better meet the needs of children

and families (pp. 13, 16, 17). Five community councils were to be established by March 2001 with a total of seven in place by March 2002. Community Councils were also a vehicle to address the involvement of the Aboriginal community in planning, monitoring, and evaluating services and in building the capacity of the Aboriginal community to address the needs of children and families. The Business Plan includes strategies of encouraging and facilitating the establishment of Community Councils that will "ensure Native representation and values," striving, wherever possible, for "50% Native representation" (p. 12).

One-Stop Centres were another key strategy within the Region's 2000-2003 Business Plan. CFSA intended to have five Centres in place by March 2001 and a total of seven by March 2002 (March 2000, p. 15). The One-Stop Centres were seen as a way to facilitate information on and access to a wide range of local and regional resources to meet the needs of children and families. The impetus for the Centres came from community consultations by the Commissioner of Services for Children, and reflected a strong and consistent message regarding the inaccessibility of or barriers to resources for children and families within local communities. However while neighborhood centres were a provincial theme, there was also evidence of concern at the local level to ensure "accessibility" of services, and "one stop shopping" (Region 13, 1996). In Region's 13's 2000-2003 Business Plan, the One Stop Centres are also intended to be a place that would be accessible, comfortable, and culturally appropriate for the Aboriginal community (March, 2000, p. 12).

The third element in the Region's 2000-2003 Business Plan was the implementation of early intervention programs and strategies throughout the region. This reflected concerns identified in the Commissioner's reports that existing services were not responding until situations reached a crisis point. An emphasis on prevention and early intervention was also reflected in Region 13's Preliminary Service Plan and reflected the input of the Local Working Groups, in terms of the need to "promote a wellness perspective that decreases the stigma of reaching out for someone else in a time of need" (Region 13 Steering Committee, 1996, p. ii).

While the development of the above strategies reflected the overlapping concerns of both the government and local communities with respect to the restructuring of child welfare, the tensions that were noted in the previous section were also present in efforts to address restructuring of child welfare in Region 13. These tensions encompassed issues of diversity, tensions over conceptions of community and community relations, and control over services and resources including issues of adequacy, accountability, and equity. The Preliminary Service Plan, developed with input from the Local Working Groups emphasizes community *responsibility* for the planning, delivery, and monitoring of services for children and families (pp.4, 16, 20). However, the Region's 2000-2003 Business Plan, developed by the Regional Authority, emphasizes community *involvement* in planning for children and families (p. 13).

Additionally, there appears to be little attention on the part of Local Working Groups to issues of diversity and how these would play out within communities and, along within this, how social relations should and could be strengthened within Region 13 communities. The creation of stronger and more caring communities was, however,

identified as a goal in the 2000-2003 Business Plan developed by the Regional Authority and several strategies were included to address the attainment of this goal. This plan outlined intentions to work with and within communities throughout the region to establish a variety of early intervention programs that incorporated community organizing and community capacity building aspects in order to strengthen social relations.

It should be noted that the province restructured regional boundaries in April, 2003, reducing the original eighteen regions to ten (see Map 2). As a result of this realignment, the area that had been Region 13 was amalgamated with part, or all, of four other regions to form Region 8.
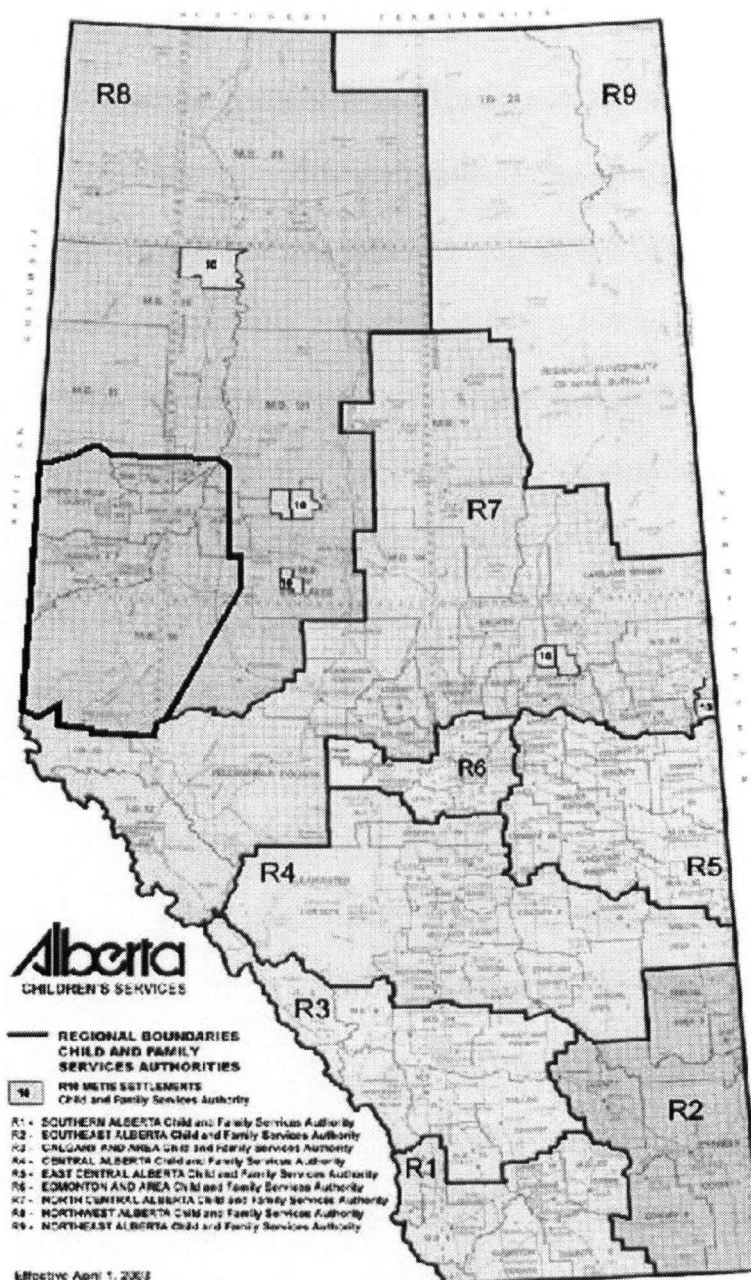
Map 2: Revised regional boundaries, effective April 2003. Region 8 is in the upper left

hand portion of the map: the area that was Region 13 is shown within it.

This new region covers the entire northwestern quarter of the province. Region 8 is much larger and much more diverse in terms of its communities, their residents, and their needs. This research, however, focuses on efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare in three communities that were all part of what was initially Region 13. In the following section each of these three communities is briefly described.

Case Studies in the Governance of Child Welfare: Rural and Remote Communities

The three communities that are the focus of this research are scattered throughout the Region (see Map 1, p. 109). Beaverlodge is located approximately 50 kilometres to the west of Grande Prairie. The area has a strong pioneer history and is populated with 3rd and 4th generation farm families. In recent years the area has been the focus of increased oil and gas exploration. This is changing the stability of the town and has

Swathing in late summer near Beaverlodge

also had a negative impact on the cohesiveness of the overall community. In the 1990s tensions between the oil industry and local farmers and other residents escalated, along with acts of "eco-terrorism" against oil and gas wells in the area. In 1999, a 16-year-old girl was fatally shot as a result of these escalating tensions, and the community went through an emotional upheaval.[11]

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[11] Karman Willis was shot at approximately 4 a.m. on June 20th. She and seven other teens had driven out to a local farm whose owners were suspected of eco-terrorist activity in the area. The teens drove around the yard in two pickup trucks, left, and then returned a second time. Sleeping outside in a tent on the property were four girls aged 9-20. Members of the family reported that, in light of threats against them by local residents who worked in the oil and gas industry, the presence of the trucks created considerable fear. However, no one admitted to the shooting, the gun that was used has never been recovered, and no one has ever been charged with the shooting.

The town of Valleyview is located approximately 110 kilometres to the east. Like Beaverlodge, Valleyview has a rural pioneer history. However, significant oil and gas exploration and development began here sometime in the 1950's, bringing with it a more transient population and a more unstable economy. In addition, the Sturgeon
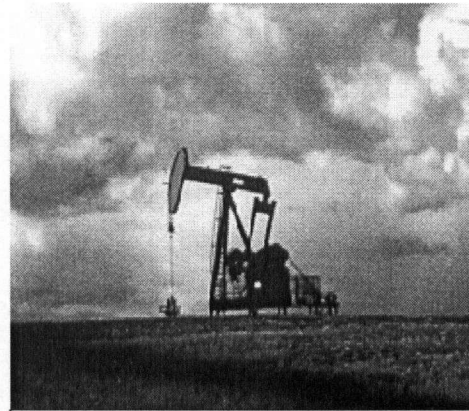
Pumpjacks are becoming a familiar sight throughout the Region.

Lake Indian Reserve is located just west of the town and there is a high percentage of Aboriginal residents in the town, many of whom are connected to the Sturgeon Lake Band. There are noticeable differences in this town between the prosperity of the oil and gas workers and the poverty of many of the Aboriginal residents.

The town of Grande Cache, unlike the other two towns, is a recent creation, an instant town, created by the province in response to the development of a coal mine in the area. Built in 1969, the town was "ready-made" for the families that it attracted with the promise of good jobs, high quality services, and a comfortable life style. But the town is in a remote part of the province, until fairly recently accessible by one highway that went in and out of it, and despite efforts to diversify its economy, it has remained economically dependent on the coal mine. In 2001 the mine was closed and, in the face of this, the town has struggled with an uncertain future. At the same time, the area has been home for many generations to an Aboriginal people who have no official status with either the provincial or federal government.[12] The opening of the mine and the development of the

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[12] The plight of the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation and their lack of official status is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

town challenged their traditional lifestyles and brought about poverty and numerous social problems. While many reside outside the town on land that they have incorporated into Cooperatives, they too are struggling to develop a viable future and to address the economic and social problems that they are facing.

In each of these communities, there were efforts to establish Community Councils and neighborhood, or "one-stop" centers that would integrate a range of services and serve as local hubs within the community. Yet, efforts to establish Community Councils were successful in only one of these three communities and in this community the council operated for approximately a year and then disbanded, never realizing the broad range of citizen participation that was envisioned. One-Stop Centres were also established in all three communities however they continue to operate in only two of these communities. Furthermore, they are very different in terms of the role they are playing within their community. In one community the Centre is indeed a bustling "hub," with people coming and going at all hours. Its coordinator draws in a wide range of community resources and connects a wide range of residents to these resources, as well as facilitating access to many more. In the other community, the Centre is quiet, rarely utilized; yet its coordinator is playing a central role in creating change in this community. New prevention and early intervention services have been established in the communities yet their focus varies and there are ongoing struggles between the Regional Authority and the communities over control and accountability of these services.

Yet rather than examining restructuring in terms of what did or did not happen with respect to each of the above, it is more relevant to analyze the ways in which restructuring efforts have unfolded in the context of the communities themselves. None

of these three communities offers an example of a paradigm shift in the governance of child welfare. Yet in two of the communities changes in governance are apparent, although these shifts have little in common. Overall they are testimony to the complexity that characterizes the communities of Region 13 and the challenges that were encountered in efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare. The differences between them point to the overriding relevance of local context in any effort to shift the governance of child welfare. In the chapter that follow, ways in which restructuring has occurred are examined along with key factors within local contexts that emerged in the course of this research.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the planning processes and outcomes in the Province of Alberta in terms of efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare. It was noted that criticisms of existing approaches included issues of accessibility of services within and across communities, as well as fragmentation of services within communities, lack of accountability by services to the communities they were situated within and a failure to focus on prevention and early intervention. These criticisms led to calls for greater integration of services within communities, increased local control over services, increased accessibility and equity across communities, and an increased emphasis on prevention and early intervention. At the same time however, there was evidence of tensions and discrepant visions between government and individuals and community groups.

The provincial government expressed concern that its services had weakened communities and community capacity, and had fostered dependence on government services to solve problems. A vision was forwarded of strengthening social relations within communities and encouraging residents to look to each other before they look to government for solutions. However, it is important to note that this vision was not echoed by individuals and communities who participated in re-visioning processes. Instead their emphasis was on accessibility of services and local control over those resources as well as stability and flexibility of funding. There was also minimal discussion of diversity and the challenges that diversity presented in the governance of child welfare. Diversity between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community was noted as well as diversity within the Aboriginal community however there was no mention of other forms of diversity within Alberta communities.

The plan that was recommended by the Commissioner of Services for Children called for the establishment of Local Authorities that would assume responsibility for planning, delivering, and monitoring a range of programs and services, including responsibility for statutory child protection services, within their communities. This approach would foster integration at the local level as well as local involvement, control, and responsibility. However, the framework that was developed by the province established Regional Authorities. These Regional Authorities became responsible for operationalizing the vision of strengthening social relations within the community and facilitating greater community involvement in and control over the governance of child welfare. The following three chapters examine the interactions that occurred with respect

to this restructuring in three communities in northwestern Alberta and the community

responses that have emerged.

Chapter Five

The Establishment of a Neighborhood Centre in a Rural Community

On the drive to Beaverlodge my mind is alive with memories. My grandfathers farm mid-way between Beaverlodge and Grande Prairie, my great-grandfathers homestead north of Beaverlodge. As I child I would come with my family to Thanksgiving Dinners at the Albright Hall outside of Beaverlodge. My parents would bring me here to visit my great-aunt, or some of my father's cousins. As a teenager I came out to the arena to watch my boyfriend play hockey, or I partied at the local bar, at dances, or bush parties. As a child welfare worker I came out here to investigate reports of child abuse or neglect, and to try to find resources for families. As a mental health therapist I came to this community as part of a school-community team to provide information and support to teachers, parents, and students. My memories of this town and its people are all good. When I think of this town, I think always of its history, for it is a town that seems very aware, and very proud, of its past. I also think of its autonomy – it is a town that seems to have a strong sense of itself, of its uniqueness as a community, from the artists who have made their home here and have painted its landscapes, to the research that is done at the Agricultural Station on the "Mountain," to the "Mountain" itself, rising incongruously out of the vast prairie, this town has always been different, unique, and independent. And I think of its social conscience for it is a town that has always seemed aware of and concerned with social issues – with ways to address housing, poverty, isolation; its residents seem to "pull together." But perhaps most of all, I think of its permanence, for many of its residents trace their roots back to its beginnings, and want their children and their grandchildren to grow up here and stay here, seeing this as a community that has much to offer them. Yet I am aware that this picture that I carry around in my mind is a white middle class picture and that the town is more complex than this. I know that the challenge for me is to explore this complexity, to understand what it means for the children and families that live here, and to situate it within the questions that I am seeking to answer.

I spend the morning at the Neighborhood Resource Centre. It is a busy place this morning with many people coming and going. I speak with people involved in the Centre in various ways and I leave with a sense that this Centre has indeed become a resource centre for many people in this community. Yet in the afternoon and again the following day, I spend time with people whose perspectives raise hard questions about the impact of the centre on social relations within the community. (Journal entries June 10 and 11, 2004)

Introduction

This chapter is the first of three case studies examining state-community interactions and community responses in the governance of child welfare. The focus of this chapter is on the community of Beaverlodge, its interactions with CFSA, the factors that influenced these, and the community responses that have emerged. This chapter examines the emergence of a Neighborhood Resource Centre as a major initiative between CFSA and the town, as well as the opportunities and challenges that have resulted from this Centre, both in terms of relations within the town and the larger regional area, as well as between the town and CFSA. One of the major challenges has been the development of a partnership in a town that offers a limited role for the Regional Authority within the community. CFSA is largely absent from the community except as a funder of programs, services, and infrastructure. Yet both CFSA and the town struggle with the maintenance of an effective partnership and issues of accountability. I examine how the concepts of subsidiarity and network governance might inform policy approaches to address these issues within the context of this community.

This chapter begins by offering a brief profile of the community, in terms of its demographics, its history, and the programs and services that characterize its social infrastructure. Following this I examine the emergence of a neighborhood resource centre within this community and the interactions that characterized this emergence. Literature on the role of neighborhood centres as an approach to addressing the needs of children and families is examined, however it is noted that much of this literature focuses on the role of neighborhood centres in urban settings. Thus this section focuses on key questions that are raised in the context of this research regarding the meaning of "neighborhood,"

the role of neighborhood centres, their programs and services, issues of governance and funding, in the context of small towns and rural communities.

The fourth section of this chapter examines issues related to the role of the Neighborhood Centre within the community and its impact on other community institutions that traditionally play a significant helping role in small towns and rural communities, specifically the church and the school. Tension between the role of these institutions and the role of the neighborhood resource centre are noted. The final sections of this chapter examine issues related to the role of the Regional Authority in the Centre and in partnership with the community. It is here that concepts of subsidiarity and network governance are examined as possible policy approaches to address interactions between the community and the Regional Authority.

Four questions are central to the study of state-community interactions and community responses presented in this chapter:

- How did the Regional Authority situate itself in the community and what challenges did it face in doing this?

- What role does the Neighborhood Resource Centre play in meeting the needs of children and families within the context of a rural community?

- What challenges have CFSA and the community faced in attempting to develop a partnership in the governance of child welfare in this community?

- How can a model of state-community partnership be facilitated in the context of a limited role for the state within the community?

Local Social Infrastructure

The town of Beaverlodge is situated on Highway 2 approximately half an hour west of the city of Grande Prairie (see Map 1). Less than an hour west of the town is the British Columbia city of Dawson Creek, the beginning, or "Mile 0," of the Alaska Highway. While it sits in the middle of a vast area of rolling prairie, looking west from the town, the snow-covered peaks of the Rocky Mountains are visible. Just south of the town there is also a large hill that rises some 200 metres above the surrounding prairie. Known locally as Saskatoon "Mountain," it is believed to be part of an Asian-North American corridor that somehow escaped glaciation during the last ice age, and thus provided a route for migration of the first peoples into the North American continent. During the Cold War the Mountain was home to a radar station and Canadian Forces Base. Currently it is a protected area as it harbors species of unique vegetation.

The town's population is around 2200 people. Canadian census data shows that 24% of that population is comprised of children 0-14, slightly higher than the provincial average of 21%. The town could perhaps be thought of as a "bedroom" community to the city of Grande Prairie's 45,000 residents. However, Beaverlodge has a history that dates as far back, or even farther, than that of Grande Prairie, and it continues to serve as a regional center in its own right to another 2000 or so residents of the surrounding rural area. Prior to European settlement, the area was home to members of the Beaver Nation. Today Aboriginal residents comprise only about 7% of the town's population, the lowest of the three communities in this study. The area was first settled by European pioneer families in the early 1900's. The roots of the town remain grounded in agriculture, which continues to be the primary industry in the area. However the community has shown a

high degree of economic diversity. The Canadian Forces Base provided some of that diversity. The community is also home to a federal Agricultural Research station that was first established in 1915. There is also a thriving local artisan community that has nurtured such talent as Canadian artists Euphemia McNaught and Robert Guest. In recent years oil and gas production in the area has increased significantly and, according to community respondents, this has brought with it a more transient population. The high price and scarcity of housing in Grande Prairie has also caused an influx of individuals who work and socialize in Grande Prairie but are seeking more available and affordable housing, at least temporarily, in Beaverlodge.

As it comes into Beaverlodge, the highway is running northwest and the town stretches to the northeast. Along the highway are gas stations, convenience stores, hotels, and motels, as well as a grocery store. Driving on the highway, as you are about halfway

"Main" street in Beaverlodge

through the town, you will come suddenly to 10th or "Main" Street. If you do not know the town, you will drive right past it, for there is nothing to warn you that you are coming to the town centre. Suddenly, you will find yourself on the outskirts of the town, wondering where it all is. Homes, schools, churches, businesses, clubs, and facilities, are all set away from the highway. But, if you are careful, once you have turned right onto 10th street you will have gotten "into" the town. To tour it on foot is the work of several hours for it is spread out. The "downtown" is a mix of small retail businesses, restaurants, and offices that always seem busy. Streets running perpendicular are a mix of

older homes, businesses and churches. Farther along 10th street there is an RCMP office

and a public elementary school. Around this older town core are parks, residential

neighborhoods, two more schools – a Catholic school, and a public high school, a

hospital and an extended care facility. Just north of the town is the South Peace

Centennial Museum, 40 acres depicting a pioneer

village, that each year hosts a weekend of

"Pioneer Days," demonstrating

a variety of heritage crafts and skills. A building

that served as the town's original hospital has

been turned into a cultural centre that offers space

The Beaverlodge Cultural Centre

to local artisans and displays of their work, as well as housing the town's historical

archives.

The town of Beaverlodge is governed by a mayor and six Town Councilors. Local

emergency services include fire and police protection and there is an acute care hospital

although its services are limited. There is also a library and various recreational services

including an arena/skating rink, curling rink, and an outdoor swimming pool. The town

has three schools, including a high school. There is an active civil society comprised of

numerous service clubs and special interest groups including the Beaverlodge Elks,

Beaverlodge Lions, the Royal Canadian Legion, the Knights of Columbus, the

Beaverlodge Agricultural Society, the Beaverlodge Oilmen's Association, a Chamber of

Commerce, a Toastmaster's Club, a Senior's Association, a Historical Association,

numerous churches, youth organizations including 4-H clubs, Scouts Canada and Girl

Guides or Canada, and a range of sports organizations for children, youth and adults,

from curling, skating, and hockey, to baseball, soccer and gymkhana. There is one non-profit day care in the community as well as a preschool.

Given its proximity to Grande Prairie, it is perhaps not surprising that many government services are only available in the larger centre. There is, however, a local health unit and Peace Country Health provides a Mental Health outreach clinic on a weekly basis. Statutory child welfare services are also provided to this community on an outreach, as needed basis. However, within the community there is a wide range of community-based social services. These include a Food Bank, a community kitchen, and several prevention and early intervention programs for parents of young children including a parents and tots playgroup, Babies Best Start and a Healthy Families program. There is also an Adult Literacy Program through Alberta Advanced Education, and the RCMP operates a Victim's Services program. There are also a range of services and supports for seniors within the community including Meals on Wheels, Community Outreach, wellness clinics, home care and home support services.

Numerous respondents, both CFSA and community members, discussed the significant role that FCSS has played in this community. It was noted that FCSS has operated continuously in this community since the early 1980s and, over the years has funded, or directly delivered, a wide range of programs and services. Respondents also noted that FCSS has also played a significant community development role within the community, fostering collaboration between a range of voluntary organizations in the community, developing and promoting volunteerism within the community, and promoting local business sponsorship of many community programs and services. Several respondents also noted that FCSS played an instrumental role in developing an

interagency committee within the community that meets on a monthly basis and involves a range of local social service agencies, staff from local institutions such as hospital and schools, as well as members of service clubs and representatives of the local ministerial association.

Respondents also noted that the role of FCSS has been fostered by a Town Council that has been and continues to be supportive of social programs and a strong social infrastructure within the community.

> *The Town Office does a great deal of organizing of events, in the fall*
> *they open the community centre and everybody has a booth and its*
> *an information night about what everyone has to offer, but the Town*
> *organizes it all. They also put together a directory of all the different*
> *groups in town and all the people that are in charge of them and you*
> *can pick that up at the Town Office. Being a small town, they really do*
> *have their hands in a lot of things. (C1,K1-7)*

In particular, respondents suggested that Beaverlodge is a town that is especially supportive of its children, youth, and families. Example after example was offered of the way that local government, as well as residents of the town, attempt to support children, youth and families. One respondent urged me to look at playground equipment in the schools and how it is all new, that the Town had made that a priority.

Other respondents emphasized the role of business in supporting youth in the community. One said that rather than having to solicit businesses to support summer camp experiences for children whose families can't afford the fees, businesses contact her to find out how they can help out. Another noted the support that businesses gave to recent graduates; gifts included microwaves, television sets, and luggage. As well, over

$22,000 in awards was given out to 150 graduates. In general, there was a theme among

respondents that the community is very child, family, and youth oriented.

> *The town is 100% behind anything youth. The high school is really*
> *supportive of anything youth oriented, they're always telling me, 'If*
> *you want to take a youth group here, or do this, we'll get you buses.'*
> *They'll put up the bucks to do it, and that's unique here. Anything*
> *youth wise, I've had absolutely no problem approaching the school*
> *or the Town Office and getting support, getting resources, businesses*
> *have been great, so it's been really good. (C1,KI-9)*

> *The way the community works together for youth and families, they*
> *bend over backwards, a family last year, they were from the East*
> *Coast, the Maritimes, and he was killed and they needed help getting*
> *back home and we raised money and got the family food, and got them*
> *back home, because where else do you turn, you know, just the*
> *frustration. We had a family lose their home to fire and immediately*
> *there was $20,000 raised to help them get re-set up. (C1,KI-5)*

Respondents also pointed out that support to children and families is not just

support to the traditional two-parent nuclear family, the community in general is also

very accepting and supportive of unmarried mothers, of common-law relationships, and

blended families. One respondent suggested that the priority on children, youth and

families is a reflection of a "pioneer mentality" as well as having to do with the fact that

there are strong family connections among residents.

> *Anytime it's family, anytime it's youth oriented, you know, whether it's*
> *for camping, whatever it happens to be, there's lots of support... children,*
> *youth, families, those are really big priorities here – that comes from the*
> *pioneer, the settler attitude – as I've said, the people that are here, a lot*
> *of them came up as pioneers, built their farms and its 2nd and 3rd*
> *generation families. (C1,KI-7)*

This same respondent, as well as others, suggested that supports within the community

might begin to change as the community is becoming more transient. It was hypothesized

that people who lack a long term commitment to the area will be less likely to show support for others.

Restructuring the Governance of Child Welfare: The Emergence of a Neighborhood Resource Centre in a Rural Community

In 2002, a new sign was erected in front of a previously unused building. The sign identified the building as the site of the Beaverlodge Neighborhood Resource Centre and it represented the culmination of discussions between CFSA and Beaverlodge FCSS regarding the best way for CFSA to restructure the governance of child welfare in

The Neighborhood Resource Centre

this community. As noted in chapter 4, the establishment of neighborhood centres was a key recommendation in the report of the Commissioner of Services for Children (1994a). It was also a key element of the Regional Authority's 2000-2003 Business Plan. Five "One-Stop" Centres were to be established by March 2001 and a total of seven by March 2002 (p. 15). The Centres were intended to serve as an access point to a variety of local and regional resources.

In Beaverlodge, the FCSS Coordinator was also interested in establishing a neighborhood resource centre that would bring together a variety of FCSS funded programs and services as well as offering space for other community based services. A meeting occurred between the FCSS coordinator and CFSA's Manager of Community

Development in the early part of 2000 to discuss the logistics. The FCSS coordinator had

her eye on an empty building that was a former courthouse and thus belonged to the

provincial government.

> *I guess you could say the whole thing was sort of serendipitous. We had*
> *made a commitment to establish the One-Stop Centres. [The FCSS*
> *Coordinator] wanted a community resource centre that would bring*
> *together her programs under one roof. But in other communities there*
> *was always a problem with location. Because there was no money for*
> *new buildings. But in Beaverlodge there was this empty courthouse that*
> *was just sitting there. It took awhile, it definitely didn't happen overnight.*
> *Public works had to be involved and renovations had to be done and all*
> *the bureaucracy took a fair bit of time. But eventually it all came together.*
> *We had the grand opening in April 2002 and the Minister [of Alberta*
> *Children's Services] was there and did the ribbon cutting and community*
> *officials and the MLA. It was quite a big deal; it was seen as a real feather*
> *in the Minister's cap. (CFSA, KI-2)*

The interest of CFSA in the establishment of Neighborhood Centres reflects

information from a wide range of literature suggesting that such centres can play an

important role in shifting the governance of child welfare to a community paradigm.

Alternately referred to as Neighborhood Resource Centres, Family Resource Centres, or

Community Resource Centres, it has been claimed that, "the bedeviling feature of family

centres has been a lack of definition" (Warren, 1993 cited in Lloyd, 1997, p. 143).

Neighborhood centres may be operated by community based or charitable agencies,

contracted services, or organizations with a formal child protection mandate. Their

programs and services may be universally accessible, geared to prevention or community

development. They may be based on referrals and the provision of early intervention

programs to "at risk" children and parents. Or they may provide statutory services or

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intensive therapeutic intervention. They may target a particular sector of the community or all residents in the community.

Referring to neighborhood family centres as a "new paradigm in welfare states," Cannan & Warren (1997) suggest that the most effective neighborhood centres are those that "are open to their local neighborhood and have a diversity of activities for a wide range of users" (pp. 7-8). They argue that the way ahead lies in the creation of multi-agency partnerships that integrate a variety of functions. Evidence from the UK, USA, France and Germany indicates that:

> These centres reach large numbers of people, and encourage user ownership of the center, thus reducing stigma, and raising users' self-esteem and confidence. They also contribute to local friendship networks and enable parents to participate in their local community and in their children's social worlds. They have enabled many parents to make the transition from helped to voluntary or paid helper, and to gain training, education and employment.... There are activities for children as well as parents. There are counseling and therapeutic services as well as leisure and educational activities. There is a focus on individual users as well as the local neighborhood. Many family centers bridge the generations, with activities for all ages of children, for youth and elderly people, as well as parents. (Cannan & Warren, 1997, p.8)

Embedded in this description of an ideal type of neighborhood family resource centre are a number of qualitative indicators. First of all, their location is within the neighborhood, both visible and accessible to local residents (Cannan & Warren, 1997). Second, there is an approach to neighborhood space that attempts to meet multiple needs within the same space rather than partializing space within neighborhoods according to particular needs, i.e. the playground, the welfare office, the school, the counseling centre. Third, children are recognized as an integral part of the neighborhood and the focus is on bringing together children and adults within the neighborhood rather than maintaining

their separation. Fourth, neighborhood residents/centre users are involved in the governance of the centre. And finally, the centers focus on community capacity building with "outreach" as well as "in-house" activities.

However, much of the research pertaining to neighborhood resource centres has focused on urban neighborhoods. Studies by Powell and Nelson (1997) as well as Carniol (1985) focused on urban neighborhoods in Ontario, while research by Fuchs (1995) and McKenzie (2002) focused on neighborhoods in Winnipeg. Wharf (2002) examined neighborhood centres in Victoria and case studies by Barford, O'Grady and Hall (1995) and Harrison, Hoggett and Jeffers (1995) examined centres in urban neighborhoods in Great Britain. Much less research is available examining neighborhood resource centres in rural communities. Thus there are a number of questions regarding the role of these centres in rural communities. It is unclear what "neighborhood" resource centres have to offer to the governance of child welfare in rural communities given their unique dynamics and the undeniably urban connotations of the term neighborhood.

In this section, these questions will be examined in terms of three aspects that were highlighted, both by the literature on neighborhood resource centres, and by various respondents in this study: first, the contribution that the Neighborhood Centre makes to the community, in terms of the programs and services that it offers and the ways that these programs and services bring together a range of community residents; second, the governance of the Centre; and third, the core and operational funding of the Centre and the challenges and opportunities that this presents. Following this section, the role of the Neighborhood Centre within the broader community will be examined focusing on some

controversial aspects identified within this research that are not present in the literature on Neighborhood Centres.

Despite its official name as the Beaverlodge Neighborhood Resource Centre, respondents noted that, in fact, the centre serves a regional population. Users of the centre are from the town itself, but also from the surrounding villages and rural areas. The FCSS coordinator has just begun to maintain formal statistics on the geographical area that the centre draws its users from and these are confirming what she already realized – centre users are coming from an approximately 30 kilometre radius that encompasses the villages of Wembley, Valhalla, LaGlace, and Hythe, smaller centers adjacent to these areas, and individual farms and acreages (See Map 1, p. 109).

> *C1,KI-1: We offer services that many of the smaller places around here don't have. And it's not like these services are new here. But, now that they are in the Centre, we are seeing a lot more people using them, and a lot of those people are coming from out of town. Look at our Mom's and tots playgroup – it used to be in the United church. And it was well-used, no doubt about it, but not like it is now. Some weeks there are up to thirty people coming out, almost double what it used to be.*
>
> *J.G.: And you're saying a lot of those people are coming from outside of the town?*
>
> *C1, K1-1: Absolutely, probably a third of them. I've just started to keep track because the County [of Grande Prairie FCSS] does not contribute funding to the Centre, it's all Beaverlodge [FCSS] funding, and yet it is being used by County residents.*
>
> *J.G.: So why do you think having the Centre is causing more people from the larger area to use services that have always been available?*
>
> *C1,KI-1: That's a good question, I don't know, I think maybe people pay more attention to what a Centre has to offer, it's more visible as a service in the community, it's not like, 'Oh the United Church has this group.' Now its, 'Beaverlodge has this group.' I'm not sure. (C1,KI-1)*

This suggests that a Resource Centre, situated in a town, can be effective in serving the needs of residents from the surrounding areas. Thus, in the case of rural communities, terms such as "local" and "neighborhood" must be reconceptualized to encompass a regional definition.

In establishing the Neighborhood Resource Centre the goal was to bring together a range of programs and services to meet the needs of a variety of residents and to lower the stigma associated with the use of certain services. The Centre offers programs and services geared to the needs of adults, seniors, children, youth, parents, and families, and these range from information and education, to skill development, to preventative supports to social services. Programs geared to the needs of children, youth, parents, and families include a food bank, a community kitchen, a parent and tots playgroup, a preschool program, literacy services, youth leadership programs, parenting programs, and early intervention services.

Therapeutic or counseling services, however, are not part of the services of the Beaverlodge Centre. Several respondents indicated that this has been a conscious choice that is related to the dynamics of small communities.

> *There was talk of giving Mental Health an office for when they are out here. But neither them nor us were very interested. This is a busy Centre, there are people coming and going all day and I think a lot of their clients would be uncomfortable with that. (C1,KI-3)*

> *A lot of people here drive in to Grande Prairie for counseling, just because it's more anonymous that way. People in a small town don't necessarily want people to know they are receiving counseling. Or they aren't certain that confidentiality will be upheld. (C1,KI-6)*

The role of child welfare services in neighborhood community centres is a significant issue. In a study by Powell and Nelson (1997), development of a neighborhood centre in Ontario involved residents overcoming their suspicion that centre staff were "spies" for the local Children's Aid Society. A similar issue was noted by Wharf (2002, pp. 48-53) who noted that neighborhood centres in Victoria, British Columbia encountered reluctance on the part of residents to utilize services when child protection workers became involved in the centre. This in turn caused the board of the center to question the presence of child protection as a component of the centre's services. Yet there are examples of child protection services playing a key role in the development of neighborhood centres (c.f. Carniol, 1985 and Fuchs, 1995). In one neighborhood the impact of this development was a substantial reduction in child protection referrals (McKenzie, 2002, p. 87).

In this Neighborhood Centre, child welfare workers are not located within the Centre. This was a joint decision between CFSA and Beaverlodge FCSS who both indicated that the services of the Centre would be utilized much less if child welfare workers were situated in the Centre. Several respondents indicated that the purpose of the Centre – bringing together a wide range of community members and reducing the barriers to accessing services – would be defeated by the presence of child welfare within the Centre.

> *The whole point of the Centre is to bring together people in the community.*
> *If child welfare was part of this Centre, that would not happen. A whole*
> *group of people that are now very comfortable coming here would*
> *suddenly not be showing up. (C1,KI-3)*

*It would totally change if child welfare was here. People would be afraid to
come here instead of seeing it as a place to bring your kids, where everyone
is welcome. (C1,KI-8)*

This concern with the presence of child welfare extended to placing CFSA's name

on the sign for the building. Several respondents discussed this issue.

*As a funder of the Centre and as an organization that sponsored
services within the Centre we wanted our name on the sign for the
Centre. However this became a major issue as several community
organizations said they did not want our name on the sign – they
felt people would not use the services of the Centre. (CFSA,KI-2)*

*It wasn't a huge deal but we did not want the building identified as CFSA
because people would identify it with child welfare. And that would
change the way people saw it – it would not be seen as a neighborhood
centre, and that was really important to us. So we sat down and basically
said, 'Look, we don't want CFSA to be on the sign outside, we want this to
be seen as a neighborhood centre not a child welfare office.' And they took
it really well. We agreed that CFSA's name would be on the door but that
the big sign outside would only say Beaverlodge Neighborhood Resource
Centre. So it got resolved that way. (C1,KI-1)*

The second respondent is suggesting that in the context of this town, there is a

fundamental incompatibility between a neighborhood centre and a child welfare office,

the former cannot be the latter, and the latter cannot be the former. Thus while there is a

role for neighborhood resource centres in meeting a broad range of community needs and

thereby bringing together a broad range of residents, this does not extend to more formal

services, both voluntary as well as involuntary. Voluntary therapeutic services are seen to

require a quieter, and a more anonymous, setting, while statutory child welfare services

are viewed as simply not part of a neighborhood. They are part of a separate service.

In terms of the governance of neighborhood centres, the literature suggests that in shifting to a community paradigm, the most appropriate form of governance occurs through the establishment of a board representing a range of centre users (Cannan & Warren, 1997; Carniol, 1985; Powell & Nelson, 1997). Staff of the centre are accountable to, and take their direction from, this Board. This is a significant contrast to the Keynesian welfare paradigm in which users of such services are clients, and experts define the services provided (whether these are staff, or members of a volunteer board, who determine Centre policy). This form of community-based governance is not necessarily conflict free. The study by Powell and Nelson (1997) noted when this form of governance was used, conflict occurred between different users of the Centre regarding the services of the Neighborhood Centre. Middle class women saw different priorities for the Centre than did poor and low-income users.[13]

Within this community, conflict has occurred over the governance of the Centre, however it has not been between users of the Centre. There is no formal structure or process in place that involves users of the Centre in its governance. Instead, the conflict emerged between CFSA and FCSS.

With a significant portion of funding for the Neighborhood Resource Centre coming from FCSS, the Centre also became the new office of the FCSS Coordinator. As noted in Chapter 4, municipalities that operate FCSS programs in Alberta have several options in determining its structure of governance. They can put in place a volunteer board comprised of community residents as well as elected officials, or they can simply govern FCSS through the existing Town Council. In Beaverlodge, FCSS is governed

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[13] The authors of this article did not elaborate on what the different priorities were between middle-class and low-income users of the centre.

through Town Council. Community respondents suggested that because the Neighborhood Resource Centre was viewed as part of FCSS, it was unnecessary to put a separate governance structure in place. The FCSS coordinator was deemed to be "in charge" of the Centre. CFSA respondents, however, indicated that CFSA did not view the Neighborhood Resource Centre as part of FCSS, but rather as a partnership between the town and the Regional Authority since the Regional Authority was also providing a significant portion of the funding. As noted in Chapter 4, CFSA's 2000-2003 Business Plan indicated that the "One-Stop" Centres were to be staffed by Community Coordinators. These Community Coordinators were CFSA staff, accountable to the Regional Authority. The responses below suggest that struggles occurred between the CFSA Community Coordinator and the FCSS Coordinator concerning the role and the authority of each within the Centre.

> *[The community coordinator's] role was primarily administrative, handle referrals, keep statistics, maintain files, that sort of thing. But she didn't see it that way and kept trying to get involved defining service needs and how the Centre could address these, which was not her area. So that was frustrating. (C1,KI-1)*

> *As far as CFSA was concerned the Community Coordinator was there to ensure that the Centre met the goals that CFSA had set out – that is to work towards greater integration of services and supports within the community. I think [the Community Coordinator] tried to do that. But there was a lot of resistance to anything she tried. (CFSA,KI-4)*

> *I was getting a lot of calls essentially trying to sort out who was supposed to do what and who was in charge of what. And I guess that's one thing we really didn't look at when we looked at staffing of the Centre – what were the roles and responsibilities and how could they complement one another. Instead I think there was a lot of overlap and that led to problems. (CFSA,KI-2)*

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The conflict that emerged over the roles and responsibilities of the two different coordinators, one connected to the town and the other to the Regional Authority, ended when CFSA abolished the position of Community Coordinator. However the issue of roles of CFSA and FCSS staff within the Centre was mirrored by a larger issue of the role of the Centre within the community. As discussed in Chapter 4, FCSS is intended to meet the needs of all community residents, from seniors, to single adults, to parents, children, and families. The concern for CFSA is the needs of children and families, particularly high-risk children and families.

> *Well, we were seeing less of a focus on the families that we wanted to see services directed at, not that we didn't recognize that it was a community centre, just that we wanted to see a bit more emphasis on these families, and their needs, and, well, we were a major funder, and I guess we were feeling a bit like, 'Well, thanks for the money, see you later.' (CFSA,KI-4)*

> *The vision was for a centre that would meet a broad range of needs in this community. That was clear from the beginning – something for everyone was how we put it. And there seemed to be support for that, and then, I don't know what happened, but more and more we had to justify what we were doing if it didn't relate directly to the needs of child welfare clients. And that was never our understanding. (C1,KI-1)*

In these two responses, the crux of the conflict appears to focus on the role of the centre in the community – "something for everyone," or a centre primarily geared to the needs of "child welfare clients." This issue mirrors the conflict that was noted in the Powell and Nelson study between middle class users of the centre and low-income users. But within this, there is the larger question of who the Centre is accountable to, and, as these responses suggest, this issue is intimately linked to funding.

The operational and administrative costs of the Centre are funded by both CFSA and FCSS, and, in addition, both fund programs that are housed within the Centre. Other

government and community services also contribute to the funding of services within the Centre and thus offset some of the operational costs. For example, Alberta Learning contributes through funding of the literacy program that is located in the Centre. In addition, respondents noted that the Centre is also supported by donations from service clubs, as well as businesses, within the community. This connection to multiple sources of funding is seen to be a key strength in the operation of neighborhood resource centres (Lloyd, 1997).

At the same time, this research supports a fundamental contention within the literature that if they are to be successful, neighborhood centres require a stable and secure base of *public* funding, supplemented by charitable donations (Cannan & Warren, 1997; Lloyd, 1997). This research suggests that this is especially true with respect to rural resource centres. Rural communities lack the large charitable organizations that are often present in urban localities, such as Boys and Girls Clubs or Save the Children or other organizations. They rely heavily on public funding that is supplemented by donations from local business or service clubs. A significant issue in the operation of the Beaverlodge Neighborhood Resource Centre has been the inconsistent commitment of the Regional Authority to provide its portion of the operational funding of the Centre. Despite the fact that the Regional Authority initiated the establishment of the Centre, and the importance of such centres was highlighted by the public consultation of the Commissioner of Services for Children, two years after its grand opening, the Centre received notice from the Regional Authority that the level of Regional Authority funding was being cut back. According to community respondents, this placed the operation of the Neighborhood Centre in jeopardy. Community residents responded by making a

strong political issue out of the planned cuts. Letters were sent to the local MLA as well as the Minister of Children's Services, the Minister of Community Development, and the Premier's office.

> *Oh yeah, it got very political. The town got the MLA involved as well as the Minister [of Children's Services] and remember, these people were at the opening of the Centre a couple of years before and it was seen as this great example of community services and community control, so it was a pretty big deal for it to be facing closure. So the whole funding issue had to be rethought. (CFSA,KI-2)*

CFSA respondents pointed out that the funding issue with respect to the Neighborhood Centre was, in large measure, brought on by the realignment of regional boundaries that occurred in April 2003. This realignment reduced the number of regions from 18 to 10, thus significantly increasing their scope. Beaverlodge became part of a region that was, geographically, over three times bigger than it had been. At the same time, overall funding levels were reduced. The Regional Authority now had to provide for a much larger population and deal with numerous highly isolated communities. Thus they were searching for ways to reallocate funds.

In the end the political process utilized by the town resulted in the level of funding for the Centre being maintained, however the Centre continues to lack a secure commitment from CFSA regarding its funding. One strategy that the FCSS worker is utilizing is to begin maintaining statistics on use of the Centre by County of Grande Prairie residents. This may lead to financial support for the Centre from the County FCSS program thus providing another avenue of income. Ultimately, however, community respondents suggested that there is a need for a more secure commitment from the Regional Authority. This issue is part of a larger issue concerning the relationship

between the community and the Regional Authority that is dealt with in more detail below.

This section has suggested that neighborhood resource centres do have a role to play in the well-being of children and families in rural areas. In this context, however, the term "neighborhood" must be recognized as encompassing a regional population. Furthermore, while able to offer a wide range of programs and services to address many different needs, the tensions that have been noted in urban settings regarding the primary focus of the centre on the needs of high risk families versus the needs of the whole community are also present in small towns and rural areas. This research suggests that in these areas it is questionable if the needs of residents are met by incorporating formal therapeutic services within these centres. Statutory child welfare services also appear to be contraindicated within rural neighborhood centres given the degree of stigma and the amount of fear that such services appear to generate among residents of small towns and rural areas. Stable and secure funding has been identified as a key issue for Neighborhood Centres and this emerged in the context of this study as well. This is related to a broader issue that will be discussed further in this chapter: the autonomy of Neighborhood Centres as a method of addressing the well-being of children and families. First however, the following section examines the impact of the Neighborhood Resource Centre on the role of other community institutions. This is an issue which is not present in the literature on neighborhood centres, and which may not be as relevant in urban settings, but which did emerge in the context of this research.

The Rural Neighborhood Resource Centre: The Centralization of Helping?

Respondents noted that, prior to the establishment of the Neighborhood Resource Centre, many social services had been run out of churches and schools within the community. Examples given by respondents included the Community Food Bank, a literacy service, parenting courses, a preschool, and a parents and tots playgroup. With the establishment of the Neighborhood Resource Centre, these services and programs were re-situated within the Centre (see Fig. 5.1). The goal of this was to create a neighborhood hub; a place that would meet a wide range of needs and that would bring together residents from a variety of backgrounds. While the previous section has examined the views of community members who suggest that the Centre has been successful in achieving this, and who see this success in a mainly positive light, this section presents perspectives from community members who are more ambivalent about what this has meant for the community. There are suggestions that the success of the Neighborhood Centre in meeting a wide range of needs, and bringing together a broad range of residents, has changed the role of other helping institutions within the community. Within this section, debates arise concerning the value of having a single, centralized space that brings residents together, versus the benefits of maintaining a range of helping institutions within the community; the consequences of freeing services from connections to religious institutions, and the definition of "government" versus "community" services.
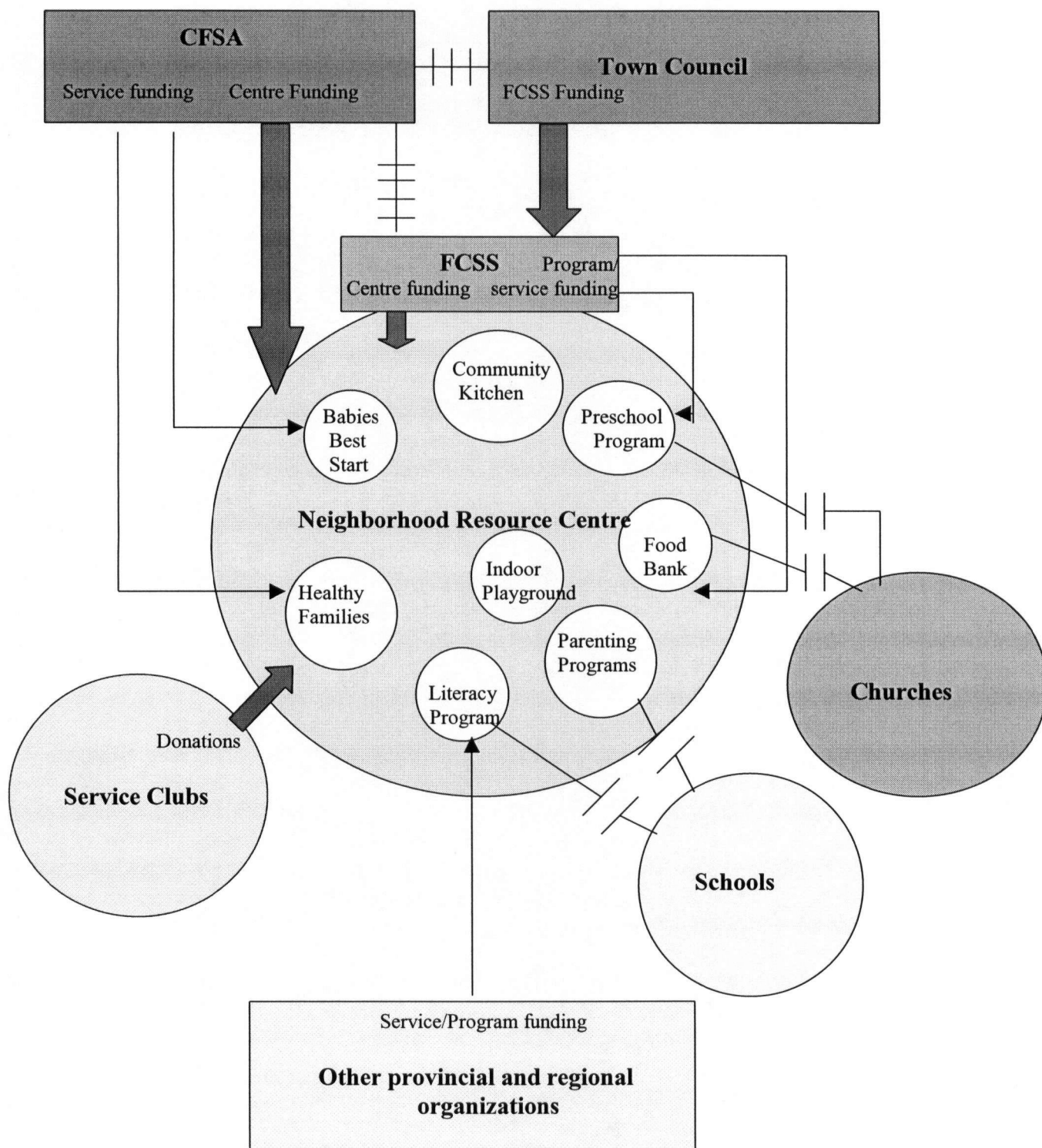
Fig. 5.1 Roles and relations in the Beaverlodge Neighborhood Resource Centre

There's no doubt it's been helpful to have the Centre, to have all these services in one place, to have a single place that you can direct people to, that's been good. We had a family that moved here and they were enrolling their kids in school and the Mom was expecting, and they were wanting some things for the kids, to get them involved, but there wasn't a lot of money, and I told them about the Centre and the Mom was in a few weeks later and she was really pleased, really gung ho, she had connected with Babies Best Start, and the littlest one was in the preschool, and her husband had been hired to do some stuff there, I forget exactly what, some repairs I think, but anyway she was just incredibly positive.... And it felt good because she got all this from one place, I mean it used to be kind of hard to keep track of who was offering what so this simplifies it a bit. (C1,KI-2)

In the response above, the value of the "One-Stop Shop" is identified, where it "used to be hard to keep track" of all the services or supports available in a town, now is it "simplified" and someone new to town can be quickly and easily connected with a variety of supports. Other responses suggested that the Neighborhood Centre has helped to decrease stigma within the community.

A lot of people didn't want to go into the Town Office, because everybody knew why you went into the Town Office, you were asking for help, same as if you went to the church, people knew you were getting food. But now it's in a Centre, and there are a lot of different things going on there so you can be going in for lots of different reasons. (C1,KI-9)

Yet, the following response suggests that the benefits to the community are more mixed:

In some ways it's more accessible and in other ways it's not as accessible. The reason why I'm saying it's more accessible, more people go to [the Neighborhood Centre], because it's not religious, they aren't seen going to a church, but it puts things under government regulation, where with the church there's more freedom in some ways. (C1,KI-4)

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In this response the Neighborhood Centre is viewed as an element of the state and the respondent is questioning which provides a better form of helping in terms of access and degree of freedom, church or state? Other responses focused on the way in which the establishment of the Neighborhood Centre had changed the role of institutions such as churches and schools within the broader community.

> *Well, it's good for the school in a way, because we really don't have time to coordinate those things, we used to set up courses and offer courses here for families ... we don't do that anymore. I guess you could say we are not really a community school anymore, I mean we just basically offer the building if someone wants to use it, but we used to do a lot more. (C1,KI-2)*

This response suggests the establishment of the Neighborhood Centre is a mixed benefit to the school. On the one hand it frees up time for overburdened teachers. Other respondents also suggested that it has freed up space in overcrowded schools. However, there is recognition that it also changes the role of the school from that of a "community" school. A similar issue regarding the role of the church can be seen in the following responses.

> *The community no longer looks to the churches as much for help and assistance, and where the churches used to play a major role in the community, but now more and more people look to government. (C1,KI-10)*

> *The church used to run these programs and things and now its all moved, and under new regulations. Some of the volunteers are there but the church doesn't see ownership of it anymore because it's not in our building. (C1,KI-4)*

> *I used to get transients coming through and stopping in and saying, 'I'm trying to get back to there,' or 'I'm unemployed,' or whatever, would come by the church 2 to 3 times a week because we had the food bank and I dealt directly with*

FCSS. Now it all goes to the other building and I don't see any of that. So we are taken out of the loop, which is fine in some respects, but it also takes away from the mission of the church. (C1,KI-7)

What these responses suggest is that the previous approach of situating programs within schools or churches created a sense of "ownership" of the programs and services, as well as a sense of connection to the larger community, that went beyond the specialized role of religious or educational institution. Shifting programs and services from these institutions into a Neighborhood Centre results in a loss of connection on the part of these institutions to social needs within the larger community (as indicated by the broken lines in Fig 5.4). The above also suggests that within a small town, the Neighborhood Centre may be a seen as a source of competition, rather than complementarity, to other helping institutions.

This case study, therefore, raises important questions regarding the role of the Neighborhood Centre within a small town, the way that the establishment of a Neighborhood Centre changes the social infrastructure within a small town and the role of other institutions in addressing social needs. It also raises questions regarding ways that Neighborhood Centres and institutions such as churches and schools can play a complementary rather than a competing role in addressing social needs within the community. In the context of this community, this issue was unresolved at the time this research took place.

Issues of Partnership and Questions of Accountability

As noted above, CFSA initially placed a Community Coordinator in the

Neighborhood Resource Centre. However conflict emerged between the Community

Coordinator and the FCSS Coordinator over the role and responsibilities of each within

the community. CFSA, recognizing that the role of Community Coordinator overlapped

in many ways with the role of the FCSS Coordinator abolished this position. Doing this

however, left CFSA a very limited role in this community. Primarily, its role became that

of funder, of both the Neighborhood Centre, as well as some of the services that were

operating within the Centre. Yet, while there were contracts in place for the services that

were being funded, there was no such structure of accountability to CFSA in terms of the

Neighborhood Centre. The operation of the Neighborhood Centre and its role within the

community was in the hands of FCSS and Town Council. Several CFSA respondents

identified this lack of accountability to CFSA for the operation of a service that it

provides a significant amount of funding towards as a concern. In the following responses

it is framed as an issue of "partnership" and of the role of CFSA within the community.

> *It's not that we don't think that a great job is happening. We are really*
> *pleased with the way things are being done. It's just that partnership*
> *was the original intention and the way that this has evolved, it's not a*
> *partnership. (CFSA,KI-1)*

> *It's not going to be solved by looking at what's happening today or*
> *tomorrow because this is an ongoing issue. It's a matter of our role*
> *within the [Neighborhood] Centre and within the larger community.*
> *(CFSA,KI-3)*

However, while CFSA identified concerns with respect to accountability of the

community to CFSA, community members expressed similar sentiments with respect to

accountability of CFSA to the community. This was most frequently brought up in the

context of efforts that occurred in early 2004 to cut the level of operational funding

provided to the Neighborhood Resource Centre.

> *C1,KI-1: In January we were told that CFSA was cutting back its level of funding for the [Neighborhood Resource] Centre.*
>
> *J.G.: What would you say the reaction was?*
>
> *C1,KI-1: Well, first shock, shock and disbelief. Like, 'How can you cut back funding to the point where the community can not operate this Centre anymore?' I mean, this was supposed to be a partnership and yet these decisions were being made with no consultation and no sense of why.*

> *I have to say I wasn't all that surprised. I mean...well I guess actually I was surprised, or maybe I should say I was caught off guard. We had been led to believe that they wanted to work with us, and that they wanted this Neighborhood Centre, they were all for it, and so we went ahead and put our eggs in this basket, so to speak, and it seemed like it was all working well, everyone was happy, and then there was this sudden about face, and as a town, we're left holding the bag. (C1,KI-10)*

These comments suggest that restructuring efforts had created new expectations

of state-community interactions. The involvement of the community in the establishment

of the Neighborhood Centre, and the partnership that had occurred in its early operation,

had led to a perception of a certain kind of relationship between the community and

CFSA. The announcement of funding cuts was a "shock" and caught community

members "off guard" because it seemed like a change, an "about face" that was at odds

with the relations that had been established. Community residents responded by creating

a significant political issue out of the closure of the Centre, protesting the intentions of

CFSA to the local MLA, as well as to several cabinet Ministers including the Minister of

Children's Services. This created a politically damaging situation for the Regional

Authority causing them to rescind the proposed funding cuts. These actions on the part of the community, however, are also at odds with a concept of partnership between CFSA and the community. Both of the above are indicative of the tensions between communities as recipients of resources and delegated authorities as providers of those resources (and are shown through conflict lines in the relationship between CFSA and FCSS/Town Council).

Defining State-Community Roles and Relations in Local Governance of Child Welfare

A key issue that arises within the context of this case study concerns the roles and relationships between CFSA and the community. There appears to be a limited role for direct community-organizing by CFSA in this community. This is seen to be a community with a strong and cohesive social infrastructure, one that is particularly supportive of children, families, and youth. The Town Office as well as the FCSS Coordinator have been identified by respondents as playing key roles in community organizing. The establishment of the Neighborhood Resource Centre in conjunction with the FCSS office has consolidated the central role of FCSS in this community, particularly in terms of community organizing. At this point, the role of CFSA within the community is primarily that of providing funding for the Neighborhood Resource Centre, as well as some of the programs and services within it, and delivering statutory child protection services within the community on an as needed basis. Yet both CFSA and the community have identified issues of accountability and confusion regarding the meaning of partnership in the context of their relationship.

What relevance do concepts such as subsidiarity and network governance have for this context? Do either of these concepts offer useful ways to address issues of partnership and accountability? Furthermore, how might they be operationally distinct within this context?

It was noted that the concept of subsidiarity implies that communities may be left to manage programs, resources, and social relations as they see fit. Thus CFSA could completely devolve responsibility for the Neighborhood Resource Centre to the locality to operate as they see fit. CFSA could continue to fund and/or deliver programs situated within the Neighborhood Resource Centre and targeted to specific families within the community. However, within this scenario, should CFSA also continue its funding of the Centre, even though it will have no input into the management of the Centre? Alternatively, CFSA could maintain funding for the Neighborhood Resource Centre, within a delegated model, establishing some broad standards for its operation and its purposes, and monitoring adherence to these, leaving day to day operations and strategies in the hands of the locality. Establishing standards for the operation and purposes of the Neighborhood Centre could include a requirement for community based governance of the Centre, including the participation of youth. This second scenario entails a more indirect, or "arms-length," and hierarchical role for the Regional Authority.

The concept of network governance, on the other hand, implies a slightly different scenario. Operationalization of this concept implies the establishment of negotiation and dialogue between CFSA and a variety of community groups regarding the role of the Neighborhood Resource Centre, the relationship between it and other community institutions, the role of the Regional Authority, and the most appropriate form of

governance for the Centre. This scenario suggests a less hierarchical role for the Regional Authority, one that is engaged with the community in mutual learning regarding the role of various institutions within the community and their role in the addressing issues of inclusion and well-being for children and families.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare in the context of the emergence of a Neighborhood Resource Centre in a rural community. The Neighborhood Resource Centre was seen by the Regional Authority as a way to situate itself in the community, to increase community coordination of programs and services, and to reshape perceptions of CFSA from an agent of social control to a partner within the community. To achieve these objectives, a Neighborhood Centre was established in conjunction with the local FCSS office. It was staffed by a Community Coordinator hired by CFSA, however it also housed the office of the FCSS coordinator. This research noted that the presence of a strong local social service infrastructure led by a well-established FCSS program within the community left little room for a community organizing role for CFSA. The consequence was that CFSA largely withdrew from the community, becoming primarily a funder of the neighborhood centre and several of the programs within it.

The research suggests that, like their urban counterparts, neighborhood centres in rural communities can incorporate a range of services to meet a variety of needs, and in doing so, can bring together diverse groups within the community. However, in contrast to the literature on neighborhood centres in urban areas, this research challenges the

viability of both therapeutic services as well as statutory child welfare services within Neighborhood Resource Centres in small towns.

In terms of the role and relation of the Neighborhood Resource Centre within the community as well as to the Regional Authority, a number of issues were identified. First, the establishment of the Centre resulted in a number of programs and services becoming centralized within the Neighborhood Resource Centre. This has fostered use of the Centre's programs and services by a broad range of community residents. Users are being drawn from residents of neighboring villages and the surrounding county as well as from the town. However, some community respondents suggested that this had contributed to a marginalization of the role of other community institutions such as churches and schools. This issue has not been identified in the literature on Neighborhood Resource Centres and is worthy of further study. In addressing social needs within the community, do Neighborhood Resource Centres play a complementary or competitive role in small towns and rural areas? How the former can be strengthened and the latter reduced are key questions that arose in the context of this case study.

A second issue concerns ways in which the governance of Neighborhood Resource Centres can be addressed within small towns. The literature suggests that community members, including users of the Centre, should play an active role in governance. Within this study, community members and users of the Centre were identified as participating in the governance of the Centre only in a very informal way. Moreover, as a result of conflict between CFSA and FCSS, CFSA eventually withdrew its direct role in the governance of the Centre. Thus the running of the Centre is almost entirely the responsibility of the FCSS Coordinator, who is accountable to Town Council,

who are in turn accountable to the residents of the town. An unanswered question in the context of this study is how funders of the centre, residents of the community, and users of the centre's services can all be involved in its ongoing governance.

A third issue arose in relation to funding of the Centre. It was noted that small towns and rural areas may lack multiple sources of charitable funding that may be available within larger urban areas. Consequently they will rely more heavily on government funding. However, the partnership arrangements that will facilitate funding for neighborhood centres has been shown, in the context of this case study, to be a significant challenge. Despite initiating the establishment of the Neighborhood Centre within this community, CFSA has shown no commitment to maintaining ongoing funding at the level that is needed for its operation. The Centre has stayed operational only as a result of political action on the part of the Town and its residents.

In light of both issues of funding and governance, perhaps the most significant issue in the context of this case study concerns the question: What relationship should exist between CFSA and the community, and the role of CFSA with respect to the Neighborhood Centre? Concepts of subsidiarity and network governance were examined in terms of how they could inform this relationship. It was noted that each offers a different approach to issues of partnership and accountability. These are examined further in the final chapter of this study.

Chapter Six

An Emerging Model of Network Governance in a Rural Community

Driving towards Valleyview I am remembering other times I interacted with this community – most of them in my capacity as a child welfare supervisor. I remember the degree of frustration I felt towards this community, its conservative and racist attitudes, its unwillingness to acknowledge its lack of supports for families. Our child welfare caseload always seemed so much higher here than in other small towns and our options for utilizing community resources always seemed so much more limited. I remember the town's minimal support for and participation in FCSS and the frustration expressed by the part-time FCSS worker over the town council's attitude towards funding community based services. I remember our efforts to put resources in place that would build relationships within the community and then the meetings that were held to express criticism that we weren't apprehending more children – primarily Aboriginal children who, in the minds of the community members at the meetings, were being neglected by their "alcoholic" parents. I know (wait – how do I "know"?) that part of the problem is the transient nature of this community – the fact that oil and gas people view this as a "stepping stone" community (to use a phrase from the literature), they are mostly interested in making a lot of money and getting out as fast as they can. I remember the derogatory names I heard for Valleyview while growing up and living in this part of Alberta. I think of the different cultures that comprise this community – Cree and Métis, French Canadian, British and European pioneer families, and the oil and gas workers that came sometime later. I realize that I need to understand more about the history of this community and decide that I will stop in at the local library while I am here. I am here this morning to visit the Community Resource Centre and to interview its coordinator. I am interested in what she will have to say about what is happening in this community. Is anything changing?

The Community Resource Centre is located in the courthouse, a curious location for a Community Resource Centre. Inside the courthouse, it is extremely quiet as I walk down the long hallway past Alberta Justice offices to where the CRC is located. The office is big, but feels very empty. There is a rack of brochures, a desk, and a table and chairs. The Community Coordinator comes out to meet me and we leave the front of the office and go into a coffee area in the back. I am there talking with her almost two hours. In that entire time only one person comes into the office – a probation officer wanting to know if the client he referred has been in touch. No one else comes in and there are no phone calls. But I leave completely intrigued. I have learned that there is a story happening in this community, one that does not revolve around a building, but instead

around roles and relations, those within the community as well as between the community and CFSA. The story begins with a struggle; the ending is yet to be written. (Journal entry Feb 19, 2004)

Introduction

This chapter once again examines state-community interactions and community organizing responses, this time in the context of the community of Valleyview. Four key questions are examined in the context of this case study:

- What tensions characterized early Child and Family Services Authority (CFSA)-community interactions and how did these shape efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare?

- How did CFSA situate itself within the community?

- What role has the Community Coordinator played in the community and in CFSA-community interactions?

- What are the emerging characteristics of CFSA-community interactions and what structures, roles, and relations do these encompass?

In exploring these questions, I draw on the responses of both CFSA and community informants. Yet within these explorations a question persists throughout: whose voice is speaking? CFSA respondents typically speak "on behalf of" CFSA although they do not speak with a single, unified voice. Similarly, community respondents speak "on behalf of" the whole community, yet they too do not speak with a unified voice. In fact, responses often indicate areas of tension, both within the community, as well as between CFSA and the community. They also illuminate different attitudes and approaches to these tensions. In analyzing these responses, and the differences and tensions that they represent, I am inserting my own voice into this community.

I begin this chapter by briefly profiling the community, focusing once again on its social infrastructure and noting the high degree of stigma attached to statutory child welfare services within the community. Struggles between the community and the Regional Child and Family Services Authority (CFSA), as well as criticisms of each towards the other, are examined in terms of how these criticisms and struggles shaped early interactions. I then examine ways in which state-community interactions are being restructured. What is emerging in this community is forms of networking between CFSA, community service providers, municipal government, and civil society. This networking is being facilitated by the CFSA Community Coordinator; situated in the community she is playing an active role in addressing social relations, both within the community, as well as between the community and the Regional Authority. I highlight the ways this role represents a duality of relations, both in and of the state, and in and of the community, and the relevance of this duality within the context of state-community relations. I then examine the implications of this emerging model of governance to Reddel's (2004) concept of 'network governance.' I suggest that the form of governance that is emerging in Valleyview offers a viable policy framework for the governance of child welfare in other rural communities.

Another "Typical" Rural Alberta Community

Officially known as "The Portal to the Peace," Valleyview is the southern entry point to the Peace River country of northwestern Alberta (see Map 1, p. 109). The town is nestled within the junction of three major highways: one heading west towards Grande Prairie and linking with the Alaska highway; the other heading north towards the town of

Peace River and linking with the Mackenzie highway, the only Alberta highway into the Northwest Territories; the third leading south, to the city of
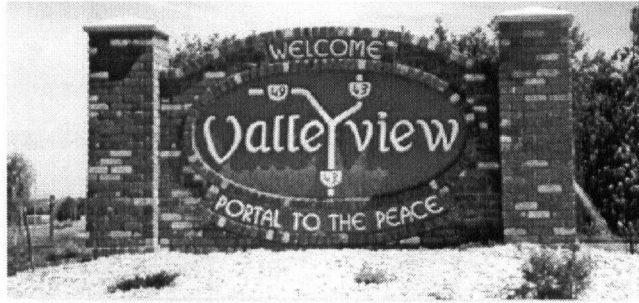
Edmonton. At the time of European contact Beaver and Cree First Nations inhabited the area around Valleyview. Fur traders from the Hudson's Bay Co. established a trading post on what is now the Sturgeon Lake Indian Reserve, 15 kilometres west of Valleyview's present location. In 1916 pioneers began to settle near the Red Willow Creek and agriculture took hold. In the 1950s, oil was discovered in the area and the town experienced a significant jump in population and services. Since then, agriculture, and oil and gas, have remained the two primary industries in the area.

An aerial view of the town of Valleyview looking to the northeast

The town, all two dozen or so streets, sits in the middle of a vast prairie that stretches all around it to the north, south, east, and west. The rural character of the area is

very evident as fields of wheat, barley, canola, and rye surround the town as the eye can see. Yet interspersed with these are the natural gas wells that are so prevalent on farms around the Peace River country.

In 2001 the population of Valleyview was 1855. According to Statistics Canada 2001 census data, approximately 25% of this population is comprised of children from 0-14. However, the town is also the centre of a large rural region encompassing various municipal districts (M.D.s) comprising some 5000 people who interact with the town, its residents and its services, in a variety of ways. This includes approximately 900 residents who make their home on the Sturgeon Lake Indian Reserve. Many members of the Sturgeon Lake Band have moved to the town and Statistics Canada's 2001 census puts the Aboriginal population at around 395 people, or approximately 22% of its population.

Within the town, there is a "main street" that consists primarily of businesses and services as well as the provincial courthouse. Aboriginal residents often gather outside the courthouse, sitting on its low stone wall, to visit with one another and to chat with those who have come to town from "the Lake." At lunchtime, youth, many who live on the surrounding farms, come "downtown" to the 7-Eleven to purchase "subs," "donairs," candy and cigarettes, before heading back to the high school two blocks away. They gather in groups outside the store, in front of the sign that reads, "NO MORE THAN TWO STUDENTS ALLOWED IN STORE AT ANY TIME."

The smells of restaurants along main street mix with the smell of exhaust. Walking down the street in the winter you are afforded little protection from the bite of the north winds that typically blow across the prairie. On a good day, it will be a Chinook wind coming from the west, melting the snow; bringing a feeling of restlessness and the

illusion of spring. In the summer, the sun shines on the sidewalks and makes being outside more pleasant, although there is still the wind; on the prairie there is always the wind. On the south side, on streets running perpendicular to main street are a mix of older homes, apartment buildings, businesses, and other government buildings, all jumbled together from the days before town planners tried to make everything neat and orderly. The north side reflects the efforts of those town planners, older homes surrounded by schools and churches and, at the far edge, new homes with newly paved streets, and actual curbs and sidewalks. On the east end of town, across one of the highways is the hospital and, nearby, a mobile home park and several streets with homes built in the 1970's now showing their age.

The town is governed by a town council consisting of a mayor and six town councilors. Local services include fire and police protection as well as a library. Recreation in the town centers around hockey and curling, and there is an indoor arena complex and curling rink. The town's recreation centre consists primarily of an outdoor swimming pool and an all purpose room that offers activities such as morning aerobics classes, and movie night on the weekends. There are several hotels and bars in the town. The hotels are filled with oil and gas workers while the bars are a mix of locals and "rig pigs."

In chapter 4, the importance of municipal social services to the local social infrastructure was discussed. In Valleyview, Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) has operated on a part-time basis only since approximately 1990. The position is shared with the Municipal District (M.D.) of Greenview (see Map 1, p. 109), who also provide part-time funding, making the FCSS coordinator's position a full-time one,

responsible for programs and services to residents of the town of Valleyview as well as to residents of the Municipal District. In addressing the needs of local and regional residents, the priority for FCSS has been on the delivery of information and education programs. The FCSS Coordinator outlined some of the programs that had been put on in the community:

> *We do Grief and Loss groups in the school and Anger Management groups and this weekend we have our Wolf Pack program for kids 9-12 who are at risk, just with low self-esteem.*
>
> *This year we initiated doing quarterly information sessions for the seniors and they were huge. We did "Money Matters" and we did "Financial Safety" and "Fraud" and "Seniors Abuse" and different sessions like that and they were huge, they attended.*
>
> *This year we started up our parenting program, Active Parenting, we did one session this year and we were full.*
>
> *That was one thing, was the parenting group, so we did that and the other thing was the use of Crystal Meth and street drugs and we brought Steve down and had him do 7 presentations for us, Valleyview and the M.D.*

Consequently, the majority of formal social services in Valleyview have come from community based agencies and organizations funded through regional, provincial, or federal government departments, as well as outreach services to the community from the larger centre of Grande Prairie. Key community based services have included Babies Best Start funded through Peace Country Health, a MITTA (Métis Indian Town Alcohol Association) outreach clinic funded through the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC), and Native Counselling Services, funded through the provincial and federal Departments of Justice. In terms of social services that come from outside the community, Alberta Justice provides probation services on an outreach basis, Peace

Country Health provides Mental Health Services also on a regular outreach basis, and CFSA provides child protection services on an as needed, outreach basis. Other senior government services are offered only in the larger centres of Grande Prairie or High Prairie, each over an hour away.

A variety of community based services operate in the community in partnership with senior levels of government but rely on the volunteer efforts of community residents. The RCMP office operates a Victims' Services, relying on community volunteers to work with and assist those who have been crime victims. A restorative justice program for youth has also recently been developed, and it too, relies on community volunteers. There is an adult literacy program through Alberta Advanced Education that utilizes volunteer tutors and a Valleyview and District Further Education Council. The town also has one day care run by a non-profit society that receives a partial operating grant through Alberta Children's Services.

There is an active civil society comprised of numerous service clubs and special interest groups. These include Women of Unifarm, Valleyview Oil Wives, Valleyview Chamber of Commerce, Valleyview Regional Economic Development Board, Valleyview Retail Merchants Association, Valleyview and District Association for the Handicapped, Valleyview and District Santa's Anonymous Society, The Food Bank Society, Valleyview Voice of Life, Valleyview Elks Club, Valleyview Environmental Society, Valleyview Lions Club, Valleyview Toastmasters, Valleyview Welcome Committee, Valleyview Enhancement Committee, Valleyview Cultural Society, Valleyview Square 'N Aders, Valleyview and District Historical Society, the Valleyview and District Sun Valley Pioneers. There is also a wide range of religious organizations,

primarily Christian, and there are youth organizations including Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, Brownies and Girl Guides, and 4-H. There are also numerous sports organizations for children, youth and adults, ranging from curling, skating, and hockey, to baseball, soccer and gymkhana.

Community members suggested that, within the community, there is a high degree of stigma associated with child welfare services and a number of service providers in the community identified the need to distance themselves from child welfare in order to receive community support and participation.

> *Any programs that we run, there's always parents asking us, 'Are you Child Welfare,' 'Are you counsellors,' and if you say yes, they will not participate or allow their children to participate. (C2,KI-2)*

CFSA-Community Struggles: Control and Legitimacy

The following section highlights issues of control and legitimacy that were present between members of the community and CFSA. Within this section, three inter-related struggles can be discerned between the community and the state. The devolution of authority over statutory child welfare services transfers the terrain of these struggles from community-state to community-region. The first of these concerns the community's perception of inadequate service provision by the state and issues of entitlement to state services within the community. There had been longstanding frustration on the part of many community members over the (inadequate) provision of child welfare services to the community. And broader federal and provincial government restructuring appears to have exacerbated this frustration. Community respondents consistently expressed a lack of, or inadequate, service provision on the part of the state. There were also issues around

ownership, as well as entitlement, of government services within the community. A guest

columnist in the local weekly newspaper, responding to the release of a provincial

document on the revitalization of rural Alberta, expressed these sentiments:

> Over the years they have shut down East Smokey School Division.... Then
> we have the sizing down of our agriculture services, the Alberta Lands
> office, the Parks office, and most of the Forestry office. All of these
> government offices employed personnel with families who lived, worked
> and spent money in our community, which assisted economic growth....
> The government never gave a thought to what moving these offices along
> with the employees and their families, would do to our community.... So
> why are they now so concerned about rural Alberta?... Have they realized
> all the money they spent on centralizing, decentralizing, moving, shifting,
> and reorganizing all the departments have resulted in very serious economic
> problems for rural communities? (Kobe, 2004, Mar 31)

The following comment by a community respondent refers to the inaccessibility

of income assistance services:

> *The income assistance office is in Grande Prairie; their idea is that if people*
> *need money and need it bad enough, they'll get over to Grande Prairie. And*
> *in some situations that may be ok, but if you are looking at it from a rural*
> *community, that is an hour away number one, you haven't the funds to get*
> *a bus ticket or put gas in your vehicle to go. You have kids, you don't have*
> *money for day care, you don't have money to spend feeding them once you*
> *get there, it's like why should I leave my community to get a service that is*
> *provincially supplied? Another example is AISH packages [Assured Income*
> *for the Severely Handicapped], again that is coming from a regional office.*
> *You have severely handicapped people living in the community, but yet they*
> *have to be serviced in Grande Prairie, they have to leave their community*
> *to get the assistance. (C2,KI-1)*

Another community respondent raised the issue of lack of service provision

several times within the interview:

> *We don't have the government presence here, we had a number of*
> *government organizations here, but government keeps shifting and*
> *we in the rural areas seem to get the short end.*

We don't have enough services on site. Just because we're a small community doesn't mean that we don't need services here – maybe the problem is that we don't want to be small. I don't know, it just seems they've taken away so much, and we never had that much to begin with.

I think the biggest problem is we don't have somebody here to always address pressing problems because a lot of times they have to travel to Grande Prairie. But some of these concerns have to be addressed now and can't wait. (C2,KI-3)

This general frustration with lack of government services within the community, and more specific frustration with the provision of child welfare services, was now directed at the new Regional Authority, with a particular focus on child protection services:

We were phoning to do [child protection] intakes or whatever and comments were made, you know, 'They were just out there, they won't be back until next Wednesday,' you know, things like that and we need someone now, right. We were seeing some real problems in the schools and parents were saying, 'Well, I've tried calling [CFSA] and they don't want to do anything, so I don't know what to do.' So we were having huge problems, so letters were sent, not only from my Board, but from all the schools, the parents. It was just, we needed service and we weren't getting service, that was the issue. (C2,KI-2)

All our child welfare services come from Grande Prairie and when we need service, we don't have service and we don't want to wait and so it gets frustrating that way. (C2,KI-2)

Another community respondent expressed a similar issue.

You have 14-year-old girls whoring around and nobody is willing to do anything. These girls need to be put somewhere where they can be helped but you have parents that don't give a damn and you have a government that doesn't give a damn and the problem just gets worse and it doesn't seem to matter how many calls we make. (C2,KI-6)

But the frustration was not simply one sided. CFSA respondents expressed considerable frustration towards the community. The following responses suggest that CFSA had a very critical view of community leaders, viewing them as racist, uninterested in working in partnership with child welfare for marginalized members of the community, and wanting primarily to strengthen their control over the social control function of statutory child welfare services. In the exchange below, a Métis respondent discusses a personal experience of racism with town leaders.

J.G.: What about Valleyview? Tell me a bit about your role there?

CFSA, KI-4: The Alabama of the North. I remember going to Valleyview, ... I think Valleyview's issue with Region 13 at the time was we weren't providing service and we were, it's just Child Welfare isn't a service you would know was in your community until you went home one day and there were no kids there. I'm being facetious, but you're not in an office, you're in people's houses, you're working with them. So it didn't matter how you explained that to them, the community hung onto the concern, rightly or wrongly. We did a subsequent meeting about services, I went out [in my role] at the time and we were talking about some of the things we wanted to do for Aboriginal people in the community and I drew so many blank looks like, 'That's the Reserve's problem,' and I said 'Well no it isn't, it's the town's problem, you guys have a huge Aboriginal community.' I just remember being really offended because I said, 'Your Aboriginal population is 30%,' and it was stuff like, 'Where are those people, what are we going to do with them, they drink...blah, blah, blah.' [The others] were with me and I couldn't even say anything and [one of them] said 'You're pretty quiet.' That was the worst place I've ever experienced racism, and listening to them and being Métis, and not being all that visible you get that perspective.

J.G.: So who did you have these meetings with?

CFSA, KI-4: The town, not the Mayor, but the Town Manager, the RCMP was there and the schools were there. It's a leadership issue. If you look at leadership in small town Alberta, leadership is usually in their 50's or 60's, very conservative, very ethnocentric.

J.G.: So do you work with that leadership, or do you work around that leadership?

CFSA,KI-4: Well, it depends, sometimes you work with them and sometimes you work around them. You work with those you think are able to work with you, you get a sense that, ahh, they're ethnocentric, they just don't understand, but once we get them to that point of understanding, they're going to be excellent allies and partners. Some of the leadership ... you might just go uh, uh, you know, that guy's going to be "Bubba" for the rest of his life and there's no way he's going to deal with a person who doesn't come from white rural Albertan background. So sometimes you work with them and sometimes you work around them.

In another exchange with a CFSA member who had been at the same meetings:

J.G.: So tell me a bit about your involvement in Valleyview?

(CFSA,KI-5): Oh, Valleyview, well, you know Valleyview. I mean its always been a challenge to work with. Valleyview was much different, they were more focused on services to their white community, not really caring about the Aboriginal content. They also wanted services the way it used to be – you know, someone phones and complains, complains about their child acting out, or the school phones and complains about a child and a social worker comes and takes the child away and puts them somewhere. Valleyview has always seen that as our job and in their opinion we were not doing our job.

CFSA respondents also expressed frustration with the individualistic, client-centered approaches that characterized services in the community as well as with the lack of cooperation and collaboration among agencies within the community. Community agencies were viewed as working largely in isolation from one another and as seeing the answer to every problem as more money or more services within the community.

Many of the agencies have been so used to getting the money and doing what they need to do on their own. (CFSA,KI-2)

In previous meetings with CFSA people in the community were always kind of 'Give us more,' 'We don't have this,' 'That's not our problem to solve.' (CFSA,KI-6)

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The above exchanges highlight three inter-related struggles between community members and CFSA. One of these relates to issues of values. The 14-year-old girls identified by the above respondent are viewed as being denied the services they need because CFSA doesn't "give a damn." However the community is viewed by CFSA as "the Alabama of the North" based on perceptions of its leadership and the values of those leaders. A second element of struggle concerns control over, and accountability of, services. Community members view child welfare services within the community as theirs, and accountable to the community on whose behalf they speak. Yet CFSA's view of the community is one of divisions based on age and ethnicity and while community leaders are viewed as the community, they are not seen as legitimate and thus "the community" is not seen to speak with a legitimate voice. Furthermore, other services within the community are seen as failing to promote cooperation and collaboration within the community. The third element of struggle concerns the role of the state versus the role of the community in child welfare. Community members view their role as one of reporting problems, and expect statutory child welfare services to respond by addressing the problems they have identified. CFSA, on the other hand, views community members, and particularly community leaders, as having a responsibility beyond simply reporting problems. They are expected to actively participate (and to want to actively participate) in problem solving issues that are identified within their community.

These struggles highlight some of the challenges of restructuring the governance of child welfare towards a community paradigm within rural communities. First, the stigma associated with child welfare is characteristic of both conservative and liberal welfare paradigms, with their emphasis on the authority of parents over children and the

autonomy of the family. Furthermore, the "conservative" and "ethnocentric" attitudes of leadership in "small town Alberta" are precisely the values that statutory child welfare services were originally built around. In attempting to shift the governance of child welfare to more "progressive" policy approaches, these services inevitably face resistance and challenges to their legitimacy. As well, however, the more socialist Keynesian paradigm was grounded in hierarchical senior government services as the answer to local problems. As McKnight (1995) has noted, this welfare paradigm encouraged communities to view themselves as needy and full of problems that only outside "experts" could solve. In turn, the contracting of services within the neo-liberal paradigm fostered competitiveness between community-based agencies over increasingly scarce funds, as well as over legitimacy in terms of whose services met the "greatest need." Neither of these paradigms built on the capacities of communities, or encouraged cooperation and collaboration between community services.

The above exchanges also highlight strategies of governance on the part of the community as well as on the part of CFSA. Strategies of confrontation occurred through letters that were sent to CFSA by community members. On the other hand strategies of avoidance or dialogue are suggested by the terms "sometimes you work with them and sometimes you work around them."

However, underlying these issues over the legitimacy of particular policy approaches, and control over services, are deeper issues of community autonomy and identity, as well as the rights of rural people to have equal access to provincial services. These issues are evident in community concerns over government sizing down of "our" agriculture services, and "never giving a thought" to what moving these offices would do

to "our" community. They can also be seen in concerns of having to "leave my community to get a service that is provincially supplied." "We don't want to be small" is another way of saying we don't want to be marginalized.

These issues are highlighted in by a CFSA respondent who had also attended the above meetings:

> *You know, Valleyview is a little town with a big voice. I think they're really trying to establish their own independence and identity. They're trying to establish their own autonomy, they want to be self-sufficient, they don't want to be under the wing of the Regional Authority. They are a transient community. You need to go in, but I think, assist the community in identifying and establishing who they are as a community, what they have as a community, what they do, what they can do and then work from there. Even in this planning thing, for the Community Enhancement Partnership Initiative, Valleyview is insisting that they have their own separate meeting. Most of the tiny communities are quite happy if we will have a meeting that says, 'You come to ours, we have one Board, this many members & if we meet in each of the communities, there'll be 18 meetings that these volunteers have to go to. So it would be easier, how can we do this together?' Most of the communities say, 'Ok, come to the closest point & we'll come & meet you there.' The cost can be covered. However with Valleyview its, 'You come to our community.' I think that there's a real strong need for them to establish their own identity. They don't want to be sucked up by High Prairie, they don't want to be part of Fox Creek & they certainly don't want to be under the wing of Grande Prairie. So however you can work that into them identifying who they are, then you do that. (CFSA,KI-3)*

The above response suggests strategies of accommodation and adaptation. You "go in" but you "assist the community in identifying and establishing who they are as a community," and "however you can work that into them identifying who they are, then you do that."

Situating Child Welfare Within the Community

The tensions shaping early CFSA-community interactions were highlighted in the previous section. These tensions had to do with issues of community values, attitudes, and stigma towards child welfare, as well as the role of the community versus the role of statutory child welfare services in addressing child welfare within the community. They also concerned issues of service provision, and ownership and accountability of services, and underlying these, issues of community identity and autonomy. Strategies of confrontation as well as resistance, avoidance, and accommodation and adaptation were identified in the context of early CFSA-community interactions.

The Regional Authority entered the community with a significantly critical perspective of this community. In becoming situated in the community, CFSA respondents suggested that the Regional Authority was hoping to foster greater collaboration between agencies in the community, to build on community capacities and existing resources, and to create more awareness of the impact of structural issues on families, including poverty, conflicts between work and family, and issues of isolation and lack of social support. The Regional Authority was also hoping to shift community perceptions of child welfare, from viewing child welfare as primarily an agent of social control to a view of child welfare as a partner in the community and a source of social support for families.

Both CFSA and community respondents suggest that community leaders received the Regional Authority in the community also with a specific agenda. They wanted to increase the level of child welfare services in the community and the immediacy of the response to concerns identified by parents and/or schools, in particular addressing issues

of child neglect and problem behaviors of older children and youth, both in the schools

and in the community. In addition, given the history of lack of government consultation

with the community, they were wary of an agenda of "collaboration" and "partnership."

The first services to be put in place by the Regional Authority were an Early

Intervention service and a Community Resource Centre. The Early Intervention service

was targeted at "high risk" youth, those in conflict with school, home, or community. In

doing this CFSA was acknowledging the concerns of the community and their perception

of problems with youth in the community. However, from the start, the service was

intended to utilize a community organizing strategy, addressing issues of isolation and

marginalization by connecting youth and their families with community resources, as

well as attempting to build more resources and supports for youth and their families

within the community. The implementation of this approach within the community has

presented somewhat of a challenge and one respondent noted what amounted to a "tug-

of-war" over the nature of this service and its accountability.

> *When the contract ran out on the EI (Early Intervention) program, the town*
> *approached CFSA and wanted them to fund it in part along with the town.*
> *Now, in my opinion, the town was looking at that as a position locked into*
> *the community, CFSA was looking at it as , you need to have that position*
> *doing what it is supposed to do, there are guidelines to follow, it needs to*
> *be an early intervention strategy. So you have the town on one side going,*
> *'It's a position in the community,' and the other philosophy from CFSA,*
> *'The person in that position needs to follow the terms of the contract.' We*
> *did get our early intervention provision and the person in that position is*
> *very aware of strategy and that the town is seeing it one way but the*
> *contract through CFSA specifies certain guidelines. (C2,KI-8)*

One initiative that emerged as a result of early intervention community organizing

efforts was the development of an interagency committee to foster greater awareness and

collaboration between service providers in the community. Also, at the time of this research, the early intervention worker was in the start-up stage of an initiative working with single mothers to strengthen informal support networks, and had also become involved in a community asset-building project for and with youth.

The second way that the Regional Authority situated itself in the community was through a Community Resource Centre. The Centre was designed around the concept of the "One-Stop Shops" identified in the Regional Business Plan as discussed in Chapter 4. The intention was to have a community based centre that would act as a single entry point from which community residents could access both community and regional resources. However, a community organizing role was attached to this service as well, identifying gaps in, or barriers to, effective services within the community, increasing community collaboration and community supports for children and families, and advocating for the needs of children and families. Initially, the Centre was staffed by a Community Coordinator and an Assistant Coordinator, however, not long after its establishment staffing was cut back to a single Coordinator.

The initial intention was for the Community Resource Centre to be co-located with a community based agency. However, respondents noted that agencies that were approached were concerned that community residents would be reluctant to utilize their services if they were associated with a "child welfare" office. Consequently, rather than the storefront office that had been envisioned, the Community Resource Centre was located in an empty office area in the courthouse, adding even further to its stigma and its association with government and social control. However, almost immediately, the Centre began to act as a satellite office for Income Assistance and Assured Income for

The home of the Valleyview Community Resource Centre

the Severely Handicapped. This addressed one of the concerns regarding lack of services in the community and offered the Centre a small window into the community. Additionally, neither the Community Coordinator position nor the Early Intervention position included delegated authority for statutory child protection services.

Respondents noted that the impact of this has been to situate CFSA in the community without the traditional legal authority attached to child welfare and its attendant function of social control. This has served to counterbalance some of the stigma associated with these roles. Respondents also noted that while the Early Intervention Program has been seen as a community based service, the role of the Community Coordinator has been seen as a dual one – both in and of community and in and of the state.

The Dual Role of the Community Coordinator: Building State and Community Capacity

The role of the Community Coordinator can be seen as dual, on the one hand in and of the community, and, on the other hand, in and of the state (CFSA). This dual position is evidenced in her language. In interviews she often speaks of the community in which she is situated as "we" or "our" while CFSA, who is her employer, is "they" or "them."

*By bringing everyone together and bringing the Regional Specialist
out to the community and identifying that **we** all have the same
concerns, there's letting Grande Prairie (CFSA's regional office)
know that **we** are actually questioning services.*

*That's one of the barriers that **we** have in **our** community right now...*

*That's another education part; educating **the community** what **we're** all
about, **we're** not just child protection, **our** goal is more than just making
sure children are not running around on the street.*

The community *viewed [it] as having another social worker in the
community, because **they** feel that if **they** have another social worker in
the community.*
(Emphases added in all of the above)

In a presentation to Town Council, the Community Coordinator defined her role as

"representing the Regional Authority on behalf of the community, and ensuring that

services meet the needs of the community" (Valleyview Town Council Minutes March

25, 2004).

Information from both CFSA and members of the community, as well as

secondary sources, indicate that the role of the Community Coordinator should be seen as

dual, on the one hand strengthening social relations within the community and the

capacity of various segments of the community to address the needs of children and

families, and, on the other hand, strengthening relations between the community and the

Regional Authority. Responses suggest that the role of the Community Coordinator in

community capacity building is occurring in several ways. First, there are efforts to build

networks and strengthen collaboration between service providers in the community. An

Early Childhood Development Committee has formed as a result of the work of the

Community Coordinator in bringing together all Early Childhood service providers

within the community. Second, there have been efforts to promote greater awareness and

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ownership of services among community residents through the development of "Information Fairs" that target residents of the town as well as the surrounding district, and through the use of local media to disseminate information regarding services as well as needs, issues, and local initiatives. Third, the Community Coordinator is involved in the same initiative as the Early Intervention worker to build community assets for youth and strengthen social relations between adults and youth. Fourth, the Community Coordinator is making regular presentations to Town Council meetings to provide Council members with information regarding the needs of children and families within the community, initiatives that are occurring to address those needs, and the ways that Town Council could better address the needs of children and families.

> *Our Town Council, and most Town Councils, do a great job in making sure our streets are paved, well, making sure our garbage is taken, you know they do a good job, but I think you need to have the flip side of that, looking at the things that maybe aren't so tangible, in order to have a good strong community. I'm talking about issues of poverty and affordable housing, and child care, and town councils and town managers traditionally haven't had to think about those things.*
> *(CFSA Community Coordinator)*

Responses from CFSA and from members of the community suggest that these community capacity building processes have evolved slowly, involving processes of learning about the community and its needs, as well as educating the community regarding the role of the Community Coordinator and, most of all, gradually building relations within the community, respecting the pace of community members.

So it was a lot of educating and letting people know, 'ok, this is what we can do, this is what we can help you do, and this is how we can help you identify to bring things into the community and when we first started we did a lot of getting out in the community and then I know on my part, I felt that maybe we pursued it a little too aggressively and that made people dig in their heels and go 'no, we don't want to be involved in that,' so we backed off. So it's been just letting it happen, all very slowly and building relationships and being very careful.
(CFSA Community Coordinator)

The data suggests that the role of the Community Coordinator should also be seen as a bridge between the community and the Regional Authority. This bridging role encompasses a number of activities. On the one hand, it is as simple as ensuring that the community is aware of services and resources available in the community through the Regional Authority. As discussed in chapter 4, the Commissioner of Services for Children noted that a frequent complaint of community residents concerned lack of information regarding specific services.

Agencies aren't communicating. Referrals aren't being made. People don't know where to go for specific services. Information is not consistent from one agency to the next. (Single mother cited in Commissioner of Services for Children 1994a, p. 16)

This issue was evident in Valleyview, through the example of community service providers not being aware of the extent of early childhood services and resources that were available to assist families within the community.

I was at a meeting with the Health Unit and I was talking to them about one of the contracts through CFSA to access child care and travel for someone to attend a program and they were looking at me like, 'what are you talking about'... no one was aware how or where or how they could get the funding for the subsidies and all this. (C2,KI-5)

In becoming aware of this issue, the Community Coordinator saw it as her responsibility

to address it. She did this by bringing the regional Early Childhood Specialist out to the

community where all ECD service providers in the community could attend a meeting.

> *We have 5 or 6 agencies that work with families with children from 0-6*
> *years in age and everyone was getting little bits and we weren't really*
> *clear on the whole picture, so rather than all of us getting a different*
> *story we decided, myself with the Health Unit, I called the person that's*
> *in charge of the contract, the ECD contract, and we set up a meeting for*
> *her to come out to the community. (CFSA Community Coordinator)*

> *So [the Community Coordinator] said, 'Let's have a meeting and just get*
> *it all out on the table.' So she actually got all the ECD, anybody that*
> *had anything to do with 0-6, and the [Regional] Early Childhood Specialist*
> *to come and talk about the contracts. So [the ECD Specialist] did this huge*
> *presentation and everybody was completely overwhelmed. People were just*
> *like, jaws dropped, the daycare, the dayhomes, Public Health, everybody*
> *was just like, 'what, there's all this money available?' (C2,KI-2)*

To the Community Coordinator, initiating these kinds of meetings serve two

purposes. On the one hand, it holds the Regional Authority accountable for providing

adequate and consistent information on what's available to the community. On the other

hand, she views it as a way to promote networking and collaboration within the

community.

> *By bringing everyone together and bringing the Regional Specialist*
> *out to the community and identifying that we all have the same*
> *concerns, there's letting Grande Prairie know that we are actually*
> *questioning services and how we can access them better, and its*
> *developing some networking within the community. It's kind of*
> *empowering agencies within the community is what it's doing.*
> *(CFSA Community Coordinator)*

But both the Community Coordinator and other community members identified

ways that the role of the Community Coordinator included advocating on behalf of the

community to ensure that CFSA services are meeting the needs of the community. This was seen as an important component of her role in the community. Because she is of the state, she was identified as having the "right contacts" and "know[ing] who to call," elements of bridging between CFSA and the community that other community members identified as highly challenging.

An Emerging Model of Network Governance in a Rural Community

In chapter 3 I introduced the concept of f **network governance** as a proposed model for restructured state-community relations. It was described as a mode of governance consisting of a dense network of interactions between public, private, and civil sectors, emphasizing dialogue and mutual learning (Reddel, 2004). The state is actively involved in these networks but not in a traditional hierarchical sense. Instead the role of the state is one of collaboration and negotiation with civil society, fostering alliances across organizations and with outside interests. Within this model, the state may also play an essential leadership and strategic function in order to foster social cohesion and social and economic development. It was also noted that despite promising ideas, principles, and indicative methodologies, their translation into more systematic practice frameworks remains a substantial and unfinished task, particularly in terms of identifying effective forms of networks and the institutional design that can facilitate them (Reddel, 2004).

A model is emerging in the community of Valleyview that offers a viable approach to network governance within the child welfare policy field. In the remainder of

this chapter I examine five elements that constitute this emerging model at the local level: collaboration among service providers, connections with civil society initiatives, engaging town council, dissemination of information to the broader community, and linkages between the community and the Regional Authority. I also examine the institutions, roles and relations that it is encompassing (see Fig. 6.1).
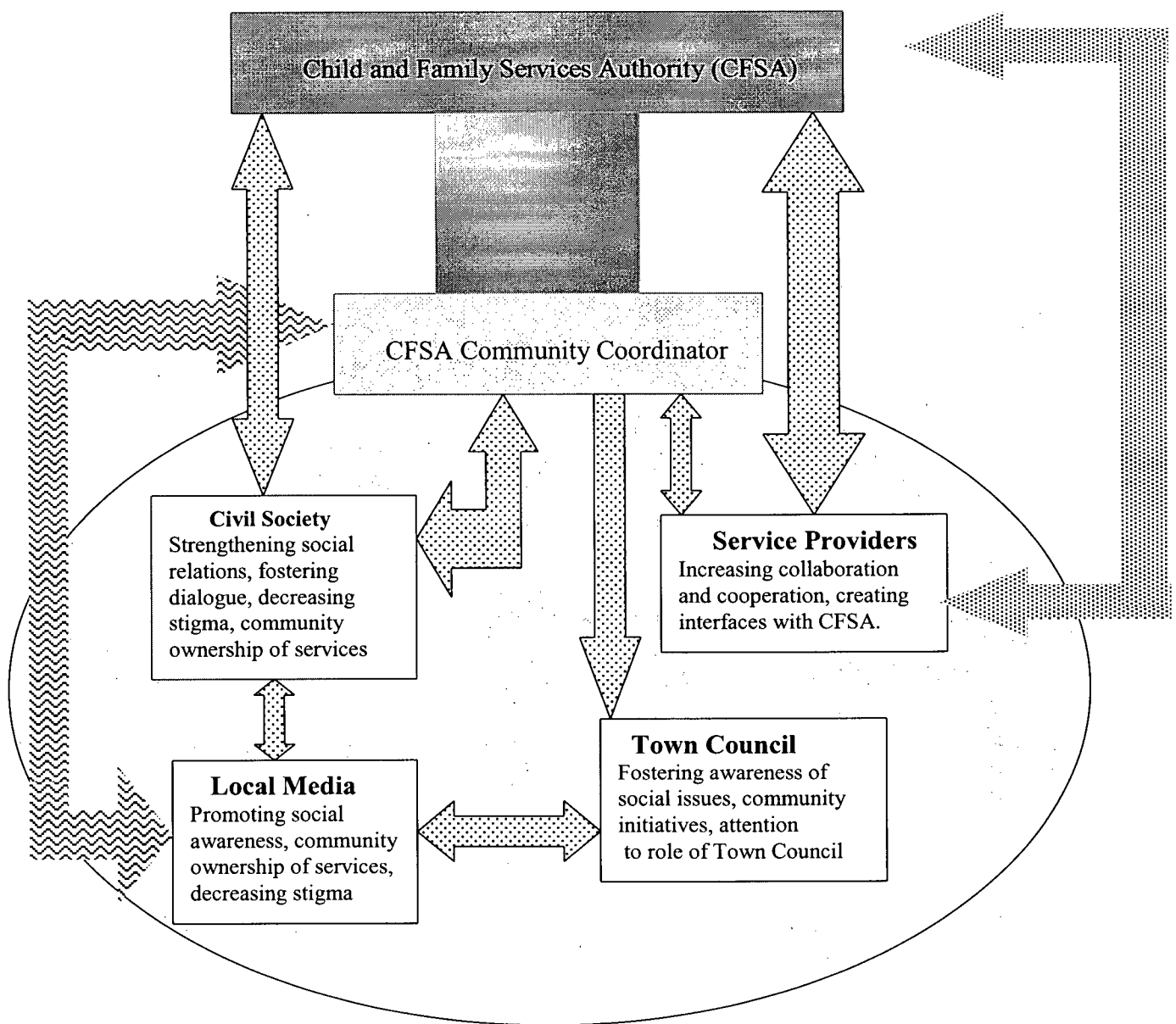
Fig 6.1: An emerging model of Network Governance in a rural community

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Strengthening collaboration among service providers: interagency meetings

and the ECD committee.

The stereotype of a small town is that "everybody knows everybody" and this

extends to agencies and organizations in the town. There is a perception that because it is

a small centre with fewer services, agencies and organizations regularly communicate

with one another and everyone is aware of the services and supports that are available. In

this small town that stereotype proved to be false. Community respondents identified that

significant change is occurring as a result of members of local agencies and organizations

meeting regularly, getting to one another and learning more about what each other does.

Interagency meetings were first established through the efforts of the Early Intervention

worker.

> *When [the Early Intervention worker] first came to Valleyview she said,*
> *There are so many services here, but no one knows what's going on,' and*
> *she said, 'We're going to have Interagency.' She just said 'This is what we*
> *need,' and it's awesome. We meet monthly, it's not formal at all, it's 'Hi,*
> *how are you, this is what's going on this month and this is what we need*
> *to do.' Sometimes there's a presentation done but very seldom. We have*
> *up to 40 organizations attending these meetings – I mean not all the time,*
> *but typically there will be about 20 different organizations that come out.*
> *It's a good group. (C2,KI-5)*

The meetings don't just bring together social service agencies; they also involve

local religious leaders, and representatives from certain town services, such as the

coordinator of the town's recreation department. Agencies from Grande Prairie that offer

services in the community on an outreach basis such as Community Corrections, child

welfare, and Mental Health, also occasionally attend the meetings. And while initially the

meetings were primarily information sharing, respondents noted that more recently the

group has begun to develop a social planning role that has involved greater collaboration and cooperation.

> *We were at one Interagency meeting and that's where the bullying sub-committee came from because the meeting went on for hours about bullying in the community and it was like, 'Ok, we need to stop the meeting, and we'll form a sub-committee on bullying.' Or if people see certain programs that are going on in Grande Prairie or surrounding area, then they might bring it to the meeting and we discuss if we want to try it in Valleyview. (C2,KI-5)*

There is also an Early Childhood Development (ECD) committee that resulted from an information meeting with the regional ECD specialist. The committee has continued to meet regularly in order to explore together in more depth the nature of the supports and services that are available to the community for ECD and to generate ideas on how to best utilize these within the community.

This committee has also resulted in increased collaboration and cooperation in addressing community needs. Recently an ECD sub-committee has formed to address the issue of childcare in the community. The only daycare currently in operation in the town is facing closure as they require funding for a new building and the group is looking at ways to assist with this. This committee is a mix of parents as well as those who provide early childhood services within the community.

> *Right now the ECD committee has formed a sub-committee to support the daycare ... This community cannot survive without a daycare and we don't have enough dayhomes as it is, so it's a need, so we'll see what happens. (C2,KI-8)*

Civil society initiatives: generating dialogue within the community.

Reddel (2004) suggests that an important element of network governance is an engaged civil society characterized by dialogue and mutual learning. In this community an initiative has begun to foster dialogue within the community regarding the social relations of a healthy community, in particular between youth and adults, but across all sectors and groups within the community. The initiative involves religious organizations, Aboriginal elders, service clubs, businesses, schools, parents and youth. Community respondents who are involved in the initiative noted that it asks for a different form of engagement from businesses and service clubs than what is typically requested, one that involves examining their role in the community in relation to youth; the efforts that they make to create and to sustain healthy relationships with youth, and to support youth in their endeavors.

> *One of the things business is good at here is signing cheques. Business is very generous in this community. But this is something different. People say that there's an attitude in the culture amongst some businesses that they come first, regardless of what's going on and that's something else that needs to change. What we hope to do here is to identify those companies that are, quote "family friendly" and show others what they could do, give them ideas. (C2,KI-4)*

> *Many of the service clubs are, 'oh yeah, we'll give you money,' you know, and with this it's not the money, its 'we need your support, we need your commitment to buy into this philosophy' and it's going to take a while to work on, but we have lots of time; we have no money, we have a lot of time. (C2,KI-1)*

Respondents noted that it also situates youth in a different role than what they are typically offered within the community. Within this initiative, youth are neither problems to be controlled, nor are they passive recipients of services. Instead, they are actively

involved in creating and organizing the dialogue through the development of a power point presentation that is then disseminated within the community.

As noted in chapter 2, civil society is an important element in the governance of child welfare. However, as noted in chapter 3, the Keynesian welfare paradigm largely ignored the role of civil society in children's lives, while the neo-liberal welfare paradigm attempted to hand over responsibility for welfare to civil society while the state ignored its own role. In this initiative, while civil society is taking the lead, a number of community based service providers are actively providing support to this initiative. This includes the Early Intervention worker and the CFSA Community Coordinator. Interagency meetings provided the initial venue through which the connection was established.

> *The Pastor came and made a presentation about Community Asset Building and asked if there was anyone interested in being involved. I had a really hard time identifying what he wanted to do, but I knew it fit what this office was all about. (CFSA Community Coordinator)*

An Aboriginal community member involved in the initiative suggests that simply involving the youth in the organization and development of this initiative is a positive step for the community:

> *Everyone's always talking about all the problems we have with youth in this community, but the community creates a lot of those problems by not listening to the youth and not offering them ways to be part of the community. Mostly its 'Stop doing that,' 'Go away,' 'Get out of our face,' 'Behave yourselves.' Will what we're doing change any of that? I don't know but it's worth a try. Just to see the excitement on the part of the kids is worth it – they're really into it, that alone is a positive step. (C2,KI-7)*

What is perhaps most interesting to note about this initiative is that it is bringing together many of the same players that the Community Council was intended to involve in planning for the needs of children and families: service clubs, religious organizations, schools, professionals, parents, local business, Aboriginal elders, and youth. Yet this initiative is bottom up as opposed to top down. CFSA is playing a role in assisting with and supporting the initiative through the participation of the Early Intervention worker as well as the Community Coordinator, but the lead is being taken by a range of community residents who are not in a service provider role.

Engaging Town Council: ensuring the social awareness of local government.

Another element of network governance in this community can be seen in interactions between municipal government and CFSA. This is occurring in two ways. First through regular presentation by the Community Coordinator to town council. As the Community Coordinator noted, within the community, the majority of social agencies are funded by senior levels of government, and have tended to ignore the role of town council in the governance of welfare unless they are seeking something specific from the town. The consequence is that the town gets left out of the broader picture.

> *So part of our role has been to bring these issues to town council.*
> *Initially, when we first opened the office, the coordinator was meeting*
> *with the Town Council at least every two months and letting them know*
> *what the office was doing and the whole bit.*
> *(CFSA Community Coordinator)*

The purpose of "bringing these issues to town council" has been first, to create greater social awareness among members of Town Council and awareness how structural issues are impacting the welfare of children and families, and to educate Council

members regarding local initiatives to address social issues, and , finally, to foster a

greater sense of responsibility among members of Town Council for the role of the Town

in addressing social needs. A town councilor suggests that at least some of the above

goals are occurring as a result of these efforts.

> *The fact that [the Community Coordinator] will come to Town Council*
> *without being invited and share what's going on and we really appreciate*
> *that because it keeps us aware and gives us a bit of the bigger picture*
> *that maybe we on council, I mean you try, but there's so much on your*
> *plate that you can't stay on top of it all. But Council is definitely becoming*
> *more socially aware. (Valleyview Town Councilor)*

A second interaction is occurring between the Regional Authority and Town

Council as they co-fund services within the community. As was noted earlier, this has

proven challenging as the two have had different visions and goals for the services. The

role of the town in defining and addressing social issues is also new and respondents

suggested that is role is posing new challenges for town administrators as well as Town

Councilors.

> *It's never been set up that way where we had to problem solve, it's*
> *always been someone has problem solved for us. The government*
> *has always told us what we need. Well now, you know, in order to*
> *access this money, they're saying 'no, you need to be identifying your*
> *own issue,' which is great, however I think the breakdown Judy, was*
> *in the education, they didn't give people or regions or whatever – the*
> *general public, Town Council, school system – they didn't give them*
> *enough foundation information, skip the political flowery stuff and just*
> *give them what they need to work on, like 'this is the formula, this is*
> *how its going to work,' and that's what town planners are looking for,*
> *what is going to make this human services thing work in our community.*
> *(C2,KI-7)*

Information fairs and local media: fostering community ownership of services.

Another element of network governance in this community can be seen in efforts to create a stronger sense of community awareness and ownership of services within the community. This is occurring through Community Information Fairs as well as through the local media. Soon after becoming established in the community, the Community Coordinator organized a Community Information Fair. Agencies and organizations set up booths at the community hall and offer information on programs and services. Since then, the fair has become an annual event. Information is provided on community based agencies, government programs and services, recreational, leisure, and volunteer opportunities. The fair is held on the same day as, and is co-located with, the farmer's market. The Community Coordinator views it as an effective way to provide information to residents of the town as well as the surrounding district. Holding it in conjunction with the farmer's market and having information from a broad continuum of services is a strategic move that is designed to do two things. On the one hand, to make as much information as possible accessible to as wide a range of people as possible, in the least intrusive and stigmatizing way. Thus information on services to address family violence is available along with information on swimming lessons, along with opportunities to buy homemade bread and fresh vegetables.

> *The goal is to remove that stigma, that fear or shame associated with these services. To make people think of them as a normal part of the community, a normal part of every community.*
> *(CFSA Community Coordinator)*

The other goal is to create a sense of community ownership of the services:

> *I think people need to see these services as part of a healthy community, something they should expect as a part of their*

community, something that is there for them, their friends, and their families. (CFSA Community Coordinator)

No information is kept on the degree to which the Information Fairs are achieving these goals other than to note that the number of agencies and organizations presenting information has increased each year and upwards of 800 people are taking the time to look at the information they offer.

Inspired by the success of the Information Fair, FCSS began an annual Baby Fair targeted at expectant parents and those with 0-5 year olds. The Fair offers a variety of information on services, programs, and supports for parents and expecting parents as well as general information on child development and child well being. In the past year over 200 parents attended the Baby Fair as well as grandparents, great-grandparents, and other extended family. Once again, the perspective offered by a various community respondents suggests that the Fair offers a chance to provide a range of information from the mundane to the very sensitive, i.e. information on Shaken Baby Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, in a way that is positive and non-intrusive; it helps to connect families in Valleyview to information, services, and supports in a non-stigmatizing way; and it fosters a sense of ownership of the services and resources within the community.

Use of the local media to cover social issues and efforts to address those issues is another element of network governance within this community. An article in the March 31, 2004 edition of the weekly local paper, "Community service needs for a healthy community," was an overview of a presentation made by the Community Coordinator to town council. Similarly, the newspaper covers the Community Information Fairs and the

Baby Fair. Local media is an important component in the emerging model of network governance, an effective way of getting information out to the broader community and, in the process, perhaps increasing community support in addressing social issues, and decreasing the stigma attached to some of those services.

Building bridges: ensuring effective interfaces between CFSA and the community.

The final element of network governance in this community is the creation of interfaces with the Regional Authority. There are four ways that community – Regional Authority interfaces are occurring. First, between community service providers and organizations and frontline CFSA child welfare workers, including child protection, family enhancement, and foster care. This interface occurs primarily through child welfare workers' attendance at interagency meetings. Respondents indicated that these meetings provide the front line child welfare workers with information regarding supports and services in the community, as well as providing both community members and frontline workers a chance to exchange information on issues one, or the other, or both, are seeing in the community, i.e. bullying, or youth drug use, and to become aware of and coordinate efforts to address these issues.

The second way that CFSA-community interfaces are occurring is through the participation of CFSA in community Information Fairs. These fairs offers an opportunity for CFSA to present the full range of services that it provides within the community thus promoting an image as more than just child protection. The Community Coordinator initiated these Information Fairs.

A third interface in this community is occurring between CFSA contract specialists and community service providers. One example, mentioned earlier, was a meeting between ECD community service providers and the CFSA ECD contract specialist in order to clarify services and supports available for parents of young children. Similar interfaces have occurred with other community service providers and CFSA contract specialists. In addition to clarification of services and supports available to the community, the meetings have provided an opportunity to discuss changes to contracts that would better serve the needs of the community. The data from this study suggests that these interfaces have been facilitated primarily through the Community Coordinator. Viewed as both in and of community, and in and of the state, her role has been one of a bridge between the community and the Regional Authority.

> *[The Community Coordinator] has been instrumental in getting us into the community in a positive way and getting information out on the services we offer. I think it's made a big difference. (CFSA,KI-1)*

A fourth interface is occurring between CFSA managers and the FCSS coordinator. These meetings are more recent, and are focusing less on specific needs and issues, and more on general roles, expectations, and ways of collaborating to address the needs of children and families in the community. These meetings are generating dialogue regarding needs and expectations, what role each can play in addressing these, as well as how more effective partnerships can occur. From the perspective of both CFSA and community members these meetings represent significant change.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined changes in the governance of child welfare in a rural town in terms of the emergence of a model of network governance. In understanding the emergence of this model, three aspects stand out. First, the significant degree of conflict that characterized early CFSA-community interactions regarding expectations of each other's role in addressing the needs of children and families within the context of the community. The community remained engaged in efforts to address what they saw as CFSA's neglect of its statutory role in acting to provide child welfare services to the community. This in turn forced CFSA to think about how to situate themselves in relation to this community. The model they chose was to locate themselves within the community in a role that had a dual focus, providing information and referral but also engaging in community organizing. At the same time, they excluded from this role any authority for child protection within the community.

It should also be noted that, given the nature of the local social service infrastructure, there was considerable "space" within the community for a community organizing role. FCSS had focused primarily on the provision of programs within the community while other agencies were focused on direct service provision. There was little communication or collaboration between agencies, and there was a need to develop stronger interagency connections. The development of these connections in the form of the interagency network also opened the door to connecting local service providers with members of civil society and a civil society community initiative. The engagement of Town Council should also be seen as an important aspect of this community organizing.

Finally, an essential element of this model is the existence of interfaces between the community and the Regional Authority, connecting one to the other, fostering dialogue and maintaining open communication. In the case of this community, this was provided most effectively through the presence of a Community Coordinator who was positioned as both in and of community and in and of the state and whose role was to develop the capacity of both in relation to each other and to facilitate the two-way movement of information, from CFSA to community and from community to CFSA.

The consequence has been a form of governance in which community service providers are connecting with and learning from one another, local government is becoming more socially aware and engaged, civil society initiatives are emerging to facilitate greater dialogue within the community, and the state is playing an active role within this community, both providing information and listening to community members regarding what is needed to better meet the needs of residents.

The structures and roles identified above have proven successful in facilitating relations of mutual learning between CFSA and the community and within the community itself. I will conclude this chapter with observations from various respondents whose comments speak to the awareness that they have gained regarding the role of dialogue and mutual learning in addressing the challenges of the restructuring processes in this community.

Regarding relationships between CFSA and the community, respondents suggested that each had to become willing to learn from the other:

It has changed things 100%. Its still not 100% because of Valleyview right, but it has improved greatly. And the biggest thing was to educate our community. (C2,KI-2)

We have had to realize that if we want a positive relationship we have
to listen and to be aware of how we are interacting, what are we doing
that in the eyes of the community is making things better or worse. We
haven't always been very good at that. (CFSA,KI-5)

And in addressing needs and relationships within the community, one respondent noted

that this too has involved a process of communication:

Just getting the communication started, it was kind of starting from that
and taking baby steps, but it has gotten a lot better. (C2,KI-1)

As I noted in the introduction of this chapter, the story began with a struggle; there is

evidence that the struggle continues but there is also evidence that change is occurring.

Chapter Seven

Pseudo-Change in a Remote Community

Driving towards Grande Cache, I am thinking that, for me, Grande Cache is the least well "known" of the three towns, the one I have had the least interaction with, either personally or professionally. I think of this community mainly in terms of its geographical area. I know the area as a beautiful area in which to camp, to kayak, to hike, to horseback ride. Whenever I drive here, I am aware of its remoteness, of the fact that in traveling to it – well-paved highway all the way – I am likely to meet more animals than other cars. This is the case this morning. I meet seven cars, three moose, a black bear, twelve deer, a coyote, and, as I approach the town site, a herd of elk. I know that in the summer, the road poses little danger other than these animals. It is in the winter that travel is riskiest and, at times, impossible. Neighbors include the Aboriginal settlements to the north and the east, the town of Hinton an hour and a half to the southeast, and the city of Grande Prairie two hours to the north. In between there is little but wilderness. To the west is the province of British Columbia but between it and Grande Cache are the Rocky Mountains and the Continental Divide.

Initially, I spend the day in this community, meeting, getting to know people, and doing interviews. I spend the night at a hotel and in the evening I drive around the town. I am intrigued by its layout, it seems very well planned. (I am a planner, I have learned about urban design). I tour the rec centre, the library, and the little mall. I imagine myself living here when my children were young and I think I would have found this a good design. Then I drive around the neighborhoods. House after house is dark and for sale signs are posted on the well manicured lawns. Without a working economy, it is becoming a well-designed ghost town.

The next day I have more interviews. On this day I am meeting with members of the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation. I spend some time out at several of the Coops and I am very conscious, and very troubled, by the contrast that I see between these communities and the community I toured last night. Here there are no nice new homes or manicured lawns, there are no well paved roads and well lit streets, and there are no indoor swimming pools, big arenas, fitness centres, or fancy libraries. There are houses that have no running water, muddy roads, no play areas, and no facilities. But I do hear about youth heading out on horseback to visit the gravesites of their ancestors, going rafting, raising money to go off to leadership conferences, learning to tan animal hides and smoke fish and listen to the wisdom of their elders.

I leave Grande Cache at the end of this day very confused – unsure of what I have learned. Already I can see multiple threads in the story of this community. Only one of these, and perhaps the least important, concerns interactions between the Regional Authority and the community. Beyond that are the concerns of the Aboriginal community and its struggles to impact the governance of child welfare, and of the town and its economic struggles and the impact of these on the governance of child welfare. (Journal entries, Feb 23 and 24, 2004)

Introduction

This chapter is interwoven with two stories, the story of an "instant resource town" struggling to maintain a viable community in the face of economic crisis, and the story of an Aboriginal people struggling to develop a healthy community in the face of economic deprivation and cultural colonization. Within these two stories occur efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare. In examining these efforts these stories sometimes converge and frequently diverge.

Elk grazing on the highway just north of the Grande Cache townsite.

Since the end of the Second World War, resource development in Canada has increasingly moved northward. This development has ranged from minerals, to oil and

The Smokey River valley near Grande Cache

gas, to forestry, to hydroelectric, and has encompassed the northern parts of the provinces, from Quebec to British Columbia, as well the Territories (Halseth & Sullivan, 2002). Some of this resource development has occurred in remote or sparsely populated areas and has entailed the development of "instant towns," towns built to house the workforce needed for resource development.

Grande Cache is an example of such a town. Established by the Provincial government in 1969, it can be seen as a stereotypical example of "province building" through resource development mega projects that both relied on, and enabled, multinational corporations to engage in resource speculation. In the case of Grande Cache, the resource was an abundance of high quality coking coal in the nearby area. A rise in world coal prices resulted in the opening of a mine and the need to attract a workforce to the remote and sparsely populated area.

The chapter begins by examining the development of an instant resource town within the context of the "comprehensive planning" approach that characterized it. This approach included efforts to attract a stable workforce and to build a strong community infrastructure, with a range of services and an active civil society. Despite these efforts, however, the community remained largely dependent on a

The Porcupine Mine at Grande Cache

single industry and thus economically vulnerable. In early 2000, the community experienced the closure of the mine and a massive out-migration of community residents. At the same time, the community attempted to rally, and to maintain its viability through a variety of community economic development initiatives. The most successful of these has been the effort to attract a large seniors' population by marketing the town as the perfect retirement community. It is within the context of this economic crisis and its subsequent impacts – the massive out-migration of residents, mostly families, and the

influx of new residents, primarily seniors – that efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare unfolded.

These efforts also unfolded within the context of an Aboriginal community that had made the area their home for many generations. The development of the town and the exploitation of the natural resources within the area significantly impacted these residents and created a legacy of poverty, cultural disintegration, and accompanying social problems. It also led to the creation of communities that are geographically and culturally separate from, yet at the same time intertwined with, the town and its services. This chapter examines efforts that are occurring within this community to restructure the governance of child welfare as well as the role of the Aboriginal community in restructuring efforts between CFSA and the broader Grande Cache community.

I suggest that in the context of the town of Grande Cache, the story can be seen primarily as one of "pseudo-change" (Loughlin, 2004), where superficial changes occurred but there was no underlying transformation and, consequently, patterns of interaction with respect to the governance of child welfare remain largely the same. Four aspects are identified as constituting this pseudo-change occurring within the larger context of restructuring. First, significant time and effort occurred on the part of members of both the local community and the Regional Authority envisioning as well as attempting to implement transformative change. Second, there is evidence of obstacles, struggles or challenges in attempting to implement these changes and a lack of strategies or processes to address these. Third, in the face of these obstacles, a top-down decision was made to abandon efforts to create change. And fourth, there is evidence of increased cynicism and disillusionment on the part of various actors involved in change efforts.

However, the final chapters in this story of pseudo-change in Grande Cache are not yet written. As this research was being completed, there were indications that the coal mine was reopening and the town of Grande Cache could expect another shift in its economic base, its population, and its needs. Ultimately, this chapter is testimony to the challenges of strengthening community governance in an instant resource town.

Within this chapter the following four questions are considered:

- What was the nature of the social infrastructure in this instant resource town?

- What dynamics characterized efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare?

- How did the economic crisis experienced by the town impact efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare?

- How can the challenges of shifting to a community paradigm in the governance of child welfare be addressed in an instant resource town?

Social Infrastructure in an Instant Resource Town

It can be assumed that the "good governance" of child welfare is no different in an instant resource town than in any other type of town. In other words, it relies on healthy families, cohesive communities, and a range of adequate services and supports. However, resource towns face a range of unique challenges in achieving these.

The social development of towns created around a resource industry where no established town previously existed has been conceptualized as proceeding through four stages (Lucas, 1971, see Fig. 7.1). In the first stage, the physical construction of the town, the workforce consists primarily of young, male, construction workers, there is a rapid

population influx, but it is extremely transient and there is high turnover as construction crews work through the various stages of town site building. In the second stage, there are efforts to recruit the workforce that will operate the resource industry and that will remain and bring stability to the town. However, the population may be very transient as people may be initially attracted by employment opportunities and high wages but fail to develop an attachment to the town and soon move on. As the town progresses through to the third and fourth stages, town management shifts to the community. In the third stage the town's population stabilizes, social norms and relations become established, and residents become active participants in the management of the town through the creation of volunteer clubs, groups, and organizations and through participation in local government. In the fourth stage, the town reaches maturity. There is a well-established civil society and local system of government; population turnover is low, primarily involving the out-migration of youth.

Town Management	Stage	Demographic Characteristics
Company	Construction	High population turnover High % of young men
Company	Recruitment	High population turnover High % of young families
Community	Transition	Stable population
Community	Maturity	Lack of job mobility Youth out-migration

Fig. 7.1 Lucas' (1971) stages of community development in single industry towns

Source: Halseth & Sullivan (2002, p. 15)

Bowles (1992) suggests that since approximately 1945, the planning of single industry towns has been characterized by the "comprehensive approach." The goal of this approach has been to move a community as quickly as possible through stages 1 and 2 and into stages 3 and 4, creating a stable, mature community with a high degree of permanence thereby avoiding the social problems characteristic of the early development of instant boom towns (Halseth & Sullivan, 2002). In order to achieve this it has been seen as necessary to attract a high quality workforce to the area, and then to facilitate their attachment and commitment to the town, building a sense of community and belonging (Halseth & Sullivan, 2002, p. 29). Attention has been paid to both "pull" and "push" factors, factors that attract and retain people to the town and its employment, as well as factors that cause people to leave. Comprehensive planning initiatives have sought to address both of these aspects.

In general, recruitment of a new workforce in an instant town favors young families eager to establish themselves and their career (Halseth & Sullivan, 2002). High wages and opportunities for advancement offer strong incentives to these families while they in turn are seen to offer stability and commitment to community building. However, isolation, lack of services and supports, economic uncertainty and harsh climate, can all act as disincentives to move to, or to remain in, the community. Beyond high wages, opportunities for home ownership, as well as a range of high quality facilities, services, and supports, from education and health care, to leisure and recreation, are seen to be key in attracting residents to the town. Economic diversification is also seen as critical in order to reduce the vulnerability associated with single industry resource towns (Bowles, 1992; Halseth & Sullivan, 2002).

While the above are viewed as important in attracting residents to the town, other factors are viewed as important in creating attachment to the town and building a sense of community. Satisfaction with the quality of housing, and overall neighborhood design, are viewed as important aspects in creating attachment to a community. Additionally, satisfaction with the nature and quality of facilities, supports, and services is also important in creating commitment to the community. In part this requires that while services and facilities are available within the community, they need to be flexible enough so that residents can have input in shaping them to their own needs and interests (Halseth & Sullivan, 2002). Participation in the community, and the development of social bonds as a result of such participation, are also key to building attachment to the community. In addition, participation offers an opportunity to shape the life of the community, to build networks of support and mutual aid, and to influence the provision of services.

In recent years there has also been increased recognition of the need to attend to the experiences of women and children in resource towns, the role of women in building community capacity, and organizing community supports and services, and to services, facilities, and social relations that support women and children, and promote healthy family relations (Barton, 1999; Halseth & Sullivan, 2002; Peacock, 1985). For women, opportunities for participation and the development of social bonds can be especially important. Because employment in resource towns tends to be geared towards "male" occupations while recruitment favors married men with young children, gender roles in resource towns are often highly traditional, with men working outside the home, while women are caring for children. This can result in considerable social isolation for women,

particularly in northern climates with their long, harsh winters. The provision of services and supports geared to the needs of women and children, as well as opportunities for participation in the life of the community can facilitate women's attachment to the community. It is only when the community matures and stabilizes that greater employment opportunities for women begin to arise (Halseth & Sullivan, 2002).

The emergence of local government and structures of local governance, are seen as critical aspects through which greater community control and participation can be facilitated (Halseth & Sullivan, 2002). Here again, however, the importance of economic diversification must be stressed. Residents of a community are less likely to invest time and effort into the community if the future of that community is uncertain and community cohesion is significantly impacted by the boom and bust characteristic of resource towns. Lack of stability and constant turnover of residents can make sustaining social ties and community participation extremely challenging or impossible (Halseth & Sullivan, 2002; Peacock, 1985). Furthermore, the provision of services to resource dependent communities can also be highly problematic. Attracting professionals to small, remote towns whose future is uncertain presents a significant challenge at the best of times. In the current era of government restructuring and reductions to public sector expenditures this can be even more challenging (Halseth & Sullivan, 2002).

While this research did not encompass a history of the social development of Grande Cache, there was evidence of many of these elements of comprehensive planning. The design of the town is similar to Clarence Stein's plan of the town of Kitimat (Halseth & Sullivan, 2002). This design emphasized the grouping of uses such as single family residential, and multifamily residential, and the separation of uses such as industrial,

commercial, and residential. It also emphasized the development of residential neighborhoods around schools, parks, playgrounds and greenspaces, linking these through pathways as well as roadways. In the case of Grande Cache this attention to design is very evident with a well laid out and highly orderly town (see Map 3, p. 213).

Highway 40 runs through the town. On the west side of the highway is a commercial core with a shopping centre, restaurants, and a medical centre. Hotels and motels are grouped on one side of this commercial core while on the other side are government, private, and community services, as well as a supermarket, and, off to one side, the hospital. Just beyond this commercial core are several apartment buildings, and just west of these are grouped two schools, the town library and a recreation complex. There are also a number of sports fields, tennis courts, and volleyball courts located adjacent to these schools and recreation complex. To the north, west, and south, of these are the residential neighborhoods. The two main collector roads that lie on either side of this central town core branch off into local roads that lead into quiet streets and neighborhoods of detached single family homes, parks, playgrounds, and greenspaces. On the east side of the highway are gas stations, more motels, and the town's industrial area with its shops and services. There is also a trailer park and, north of it, a BMX track, baseball diamonds, a golf course, and a campground are all grouped together. The whole effect is tremendously neat, tidy, and orderly emphasizing "a place for everything and everything in its place."
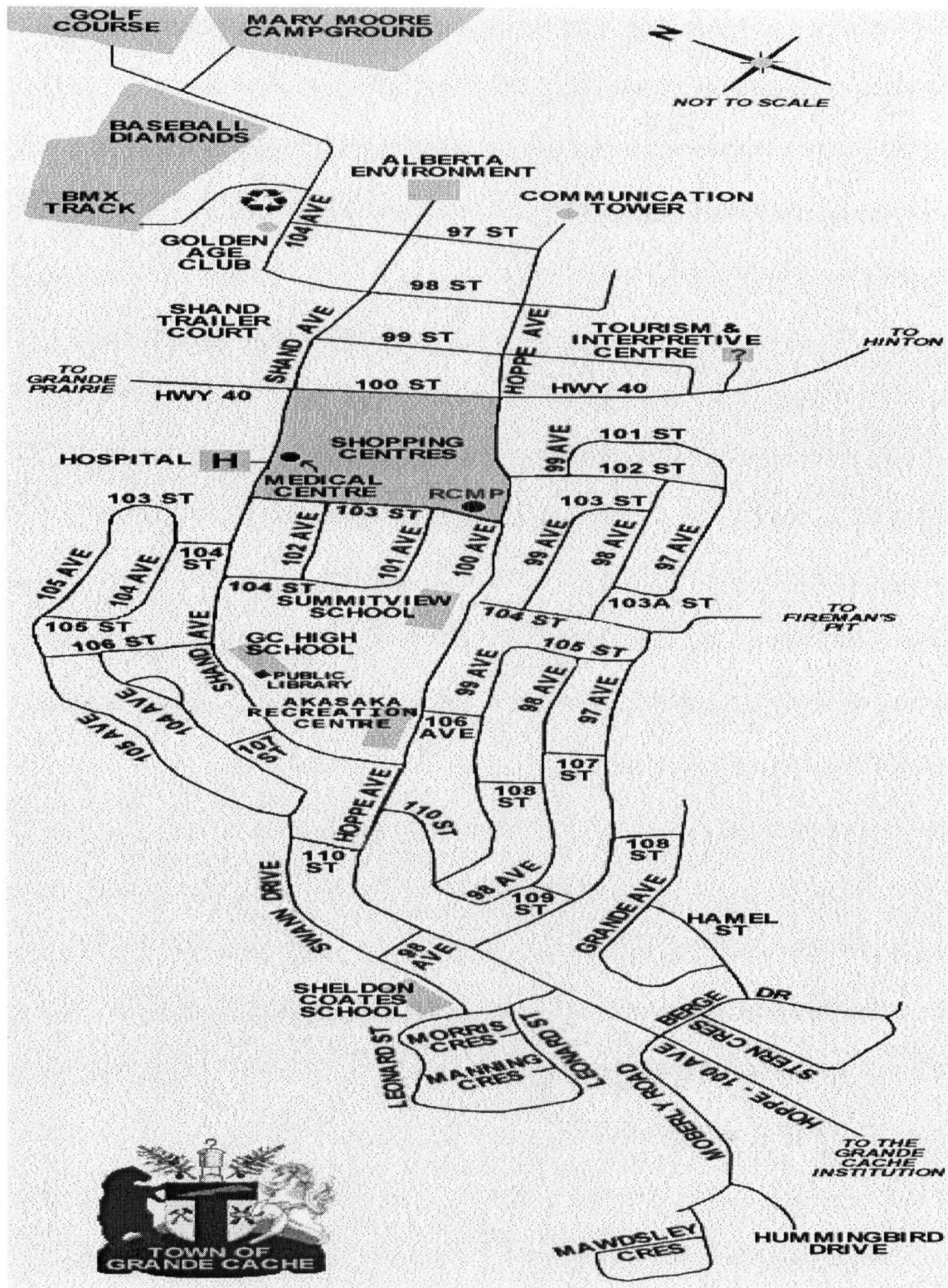
Map 3: The Town of Grande Cache

But perhaps most significantly, the coal mine, as well as the town's other major

industries, are all well away from the town itself. There is no "shadow of the mill" (or

mine) over the residents of Grande Cache. The town was constructed approximately 20

minutes south of the coal mine, while the Correctional Institution (now a medium

security federal penitentiary) was constructed also out of direct view of the town, some

10 minutes west, and the sawmill that was eventually established was located about 10

minutes south of the townsite, again out of direct view.

Grande Cache town centre looking west. On the right hand side is the mall.

The recreation complex also testifies to the perceived importance of high quality

services in an instant resource town. The complex offers excellent facilities including an

arena, indoor swimming pool, curling rink, weight room, and aerobics studio.

The indoor pool

The weight room

In terms of its social development, Grande Cache has the characteristics of a mature community. In 2001 its population was 3,830 residents. There is a system of local government that includes a mayor and town councilors. There are various voluntary governance structures, i.e. Parent Advisory Councils within the local schools, a Chamber of Commerce, etc. The community hosts a number of local events that offer opportunities for residents to interact and to participate in their community. There are also numerous civil society organizations and associations including churches, civic and charitable associations. According to both census data and community informants, there is also a high rate of female labor force participation in this community, something that is characteristic of a more mature resource town (Halseth & Sullivan, 2002). And, as noted by community respondents and an article in the June 8, 2004 edition of the *Grande Cache Mountaineer*, a senior's population developed within the town through the aging of some of its first residents.

A variety of preventive and supportive social services have also been in place in this community since soon after its inception. A major avenue for these services has been Family and Community Support Services (FCSS). As noted in chapter 4, the bulk of FCSS funding is provided through provincial grants while the community has considerable autonomy in deciding the services that are provided. This ability to shape community services in instant resource towns is seen to be an important element in the community building process (Halseth & Sullivan, 2002). In the case of FCSS, community respondents noted that its services were strongly shaped by the needs of expectant mothers, and young children and their mothers. Furthermore, unlike many small towns,

according to community respondents, there has been a low degree of stigma associated with the use of these services. Respondents identified a number of factors that might contribute to this decreased stigma. It was suggested that many residents come from urban centers where there may be less of a "pioneer" mentality than is present in rural farming communities. As well, there may be less distrust of government and more willingness to look to government for supports and services. It was also suggested that for newcomers, the services offer a way of reducing isolation and making immediate contacts within the community.

The delivery of statutory child welfare services in remote towns often occurs through outreach services provided from a larger center. This may mean that services are only present in the community once or twice a month. On the other hand, services may be present in the community through an office that is staffed by a single child welfare worker. The town of Grande Cache has experienced both of these forms of delivery. However, for the past thirteen years a child welfare office has been located in the town and staffed by 1-2 child welfare workers. While there has been some experimentation with community involvement, the delivery of services has followed a largely traditional model and child welfare appears to have been viewed by the community as primarily an agent of social control. And while respondents suggested that there is little stigma associated with the use of community based services, the majority of respondents indicated that there is significant stigma associated with child welfare involvement.

A Forgotten People: The Aseniwuche Winewak Nation

Unrau (2001) has noted that the development of resources often disrupts the lives of Aboriginal people, the original inhabitants of the land. Across Canada there is considerable evidence of this claim. For Aboriginal communities that lack official status and title to land, the problem is even more significant. The plight of the Lubicon Indians of northern Alberta is one of the most well known of these situations, gaining worldwide attention in 1988. Less well known is the story of the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation, Canada's 'Rocky Mountain People.'

In 1907 Aboriginal people living in the Rocky Mountains were evicted in order to create Jasper National Park. The federal government told the people that they could relocate where they wished and they would not be bothered again. They chose to relocate in a remote area to the north of Jasper, near relatives already in the area, and to continue their traditional, self-reliant lifestyle. However, no formal status or land rights were granted to them. Thus in 1969, when the provincial government allowed the development of coal mining in the area, and incorporated the town of Grande Cache, the Aseniwuche Winewak had no say in this development even though it significantly impacted their traditional lands and traditional way of life. Moreover, they were advised they owed the municipal district thousands of dollars in back taxes.

In 1974, the People incorporated two Enterprises and four Co-operatives in an effort to maintain their collective identity and lay claim to some of their traditional lands despite lack of official recognition by either the federal or provincial governments (See Map 4). The six settlements are all situated outside the town of Grande Cache, within the municipal district (M.D.) of Greenview and together they comprise about 75 households

totaling over 300 people. Each of the settlements pays taxes to the M.D. and, in the eyes

of the M.D., are viewed as tracts of privately owned land. Thus, like other private

landowners, the communities are responsible for their own services such as power and

gas, sewage, the construction and maintenance of private roads, etc. Each of the

settlements also has its own structure of governance, thus the overall community is highly

decentralized.
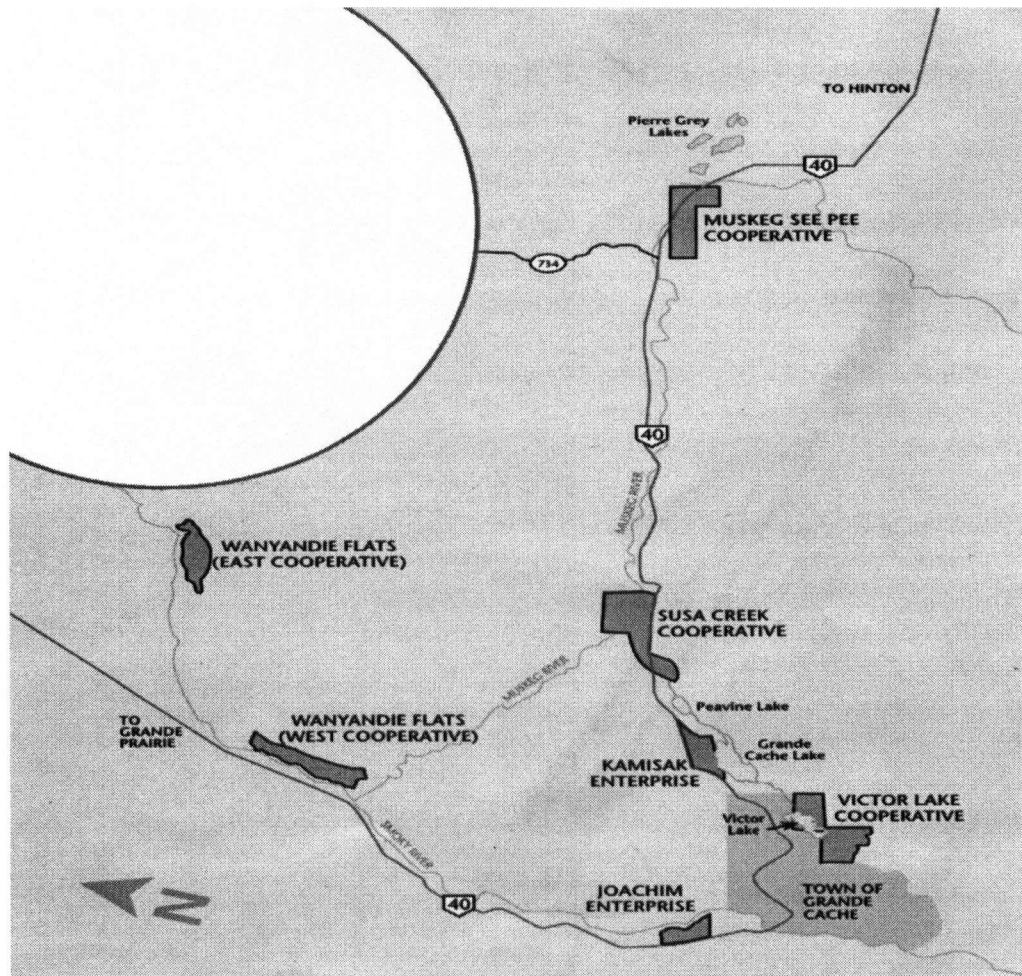
Map 4: The Co-ops and Enterprises of the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation

With the erosion of traditional lifestyles, social problems, including poverty, alcoholism, and family violence, became more and more prevalent. Moreover, without official recognition of their Aboriginal status, the community has faced numerous challenges in attempting to address these issues and bring about positive changes. The
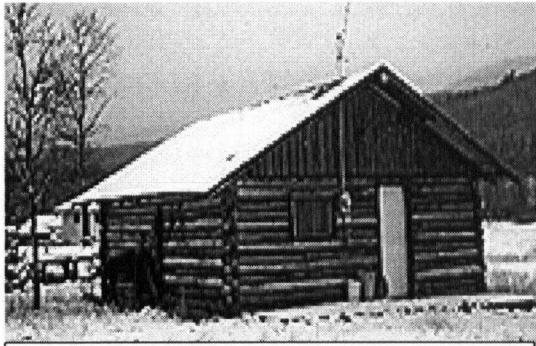
A home on Muskeg Seepee Coop

housing on the Co-ops and Enterprises, as well as roads, services, and community facilities stand in stark contrast to the town of Grande Cache. Houses are small and many are badly in need of repairs. Approximately half of them lack running water and the vast majority lack septic or sewer systems. The Susa Creek Co-op is the only community with facilities or amenities. Susa Creek has a school, a playground, a community hall, and a church. The others lack all of these. Transportation is a major issue for those living in these communities. This includes transportation between each of the communities in order to facilitate better

The Susa Creek School

cohesion, but also transportation for people living in these communities into town in order to access its services and amenities. There is a high rate of unemployment and lack of transportation, as well as lack of education and experience, were all cited as barriers to employment. Moreover, residents of the Wanyandie Flats Co-op, are living, literally, in the shadow of the coal mine, and the effects of coal dust has been identified as a major health concern for the residents of this community.

Many of the members of this Aboriginal community have moved into the town of Grande Cache, or have left to other areas. Statistics Canada's 2001 census placed the Aboriginal residents of the town at about 340 people, approximately 8% of its population. However, if the residents of the Co-ops and Enterprises were considered, the Aboriginal population of the area would be around 17%.

In 1994, members from the six settlements incorporated the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation (AWN), with a mandate to address issues of social and economic development. The AWN is the only body striving to represent people from all six of the settlements, although not everyone who is a member of a Co-op or Enterprise has chosen to become a member of the AWN. Moreover, not everyone who is a member of the AWN lives on one of the settlements as the AWN also has members who have made their home in the town.

Evidence provided by numerous respondents suggests that AWN's approach to community organizing resembles a community capacity building model in which efforts are internally focused, building consensus and drawing on the strengths of its own members rather than looking to outside experts (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). The development of community consensus and maintaining control by the community over its own future is a key aspect of this strategy and an integral component of Aboriginal community organizing (Absalon & Herbert, 1997).

AWN is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of a president and six directors, one from each of the six settlements, as well as an Elders Council who act in an advisory capacity to the Board on matters of policy, programs, procedures, and services, as well as mediating, negotiating and resolving disputes. In working to improve the

welfare of its members, the AWN is striving to address both economic and social needs. An ongoing youth program, parenting programs, and employment training programs are some of what they have offered. In doing this they have drawn on the resources of various levels of government, from the M.D. to Grande Cache Town Council, to regional, provincial, and federal government departments. They also utilize corporate partnerships and sponsorships to assist with both economic and social development efforts and initiatives. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community respondents as well as CFSA respondents noted the ways in which the town, including FCSS, as well as the Municipal District of Greenview (and its FCSS program) assist the Aboriginal community in addressing the needs of its members. All respondents suggested that relationships are, for the most part, very positive.

It should be noted, however, that not all Aboriginal residents within Grande Cache view the AWN as a positive structure working for the good of the Aboriginal community. There is opposition to the work it is doing among Aboriginal residents of both the Co-ops/Enterprises, and the town. This adds to the complexity of social relations in Grande Cache and between CFSA and the community.

Restructuring the Governance of Child Welfare

In Grande Cache, efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare took two main forms. First, there were efforts to create a Community Council, a participatory planning mechanism to involve community residents in developing, implementing and monitoring efforts to better meet the needs of children and families. An explicit goal for the Community Council was the involvement of Aboriginal residents in order to ensure

planning that was sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal children and families. These efforts began in early 2000 and by 2001 the Grande Cache Community Council had been established.

The second effort to shift the governance of child welfare occurred through the establishment of a Community Centre. The Community Resource Centre was established within the existing child welfare office. Renovations were done to open up the front of the office to make it appear more accessible and welcoming and to set up an office off to one side for the Community Coordinators. The centre was staffed with two part-time Coordinators, one of whom would function as part-time Community Coordinator, part-time child protection worker.

It appears that from the beginning both of these initiatives were problematic. In terms of the Community Council four related issues emerged. First, numerous community respondents referred to the "imposed" nature of the Community Council, purported to be a participatory planning mechanism. In the development of the preliminary service plan Local Working Groups from communities across the region had identified the importance of community based planning. Grande Cache was one of those. A Grande Cache resident involved in the development of this preliminary service plan played a key role in efforts to develop a Community Council within Grande Cache. However, responses by community members involved in the Council portrayed it as a CFSA imposed structure.

> *C3,KI-4: We were told that we had to get this council up and running, we had to have policies put in place...*
> *J.G.: Sorry, you were told by whom?*
> C3,KI-4: CFSA.

J.G.: O.K.

C3,KI-4: And so we did, we had someone from CFSA come down and we had all the policies done and we went through the process and what our role was, and our role was to be the eyes and ears of the community, to report back to CFSA any gaps in service delivery, any issues, that we would be the eyes and ears of the community to CFSA.

I don't know whether the rest of the Council felt that it was a good use of their time, I'm not sure how they were feeling, but it was certainly imposed. (C3,KI-7)

There was also confusion as well as frustration expressed by those who participated in the Council regarding its role and purpose. One of the above responses suggests that the role of the Council was to be "the eyes and ears of the community" and to "report back to CFSA" any "issues" or "gaps in service delivery." Yet this same respondent goes on to indicate that there appeared to be little point to this role.

J. G.: Did you feel like [the Community Council] was useful, that you were doing something useful for the community?

C3,KI-4: No, I think if we could have been a voice that could have been heard and that could have been backed up with something, it could have been a useful body, but I think you hear all the time, without sounding angry, 'Yah, that is a gap, there is no doubt. Sorry, we have no money. You are just going to have to do more with less as a community...'

Another respondent suggested that the role of the Community Council kept changing, that the role that was initially presented "kept changing and pulling back." Aboriginal respondents echoed other community respondents' feelings of frustration over the lack of clarity regarding the purpose of the Community Council. Members of the Council wanted to have more input into initiatives to address the needs of Aboriginal children and families but CFSA appeared resistant to this input.

*I know at one time the Aboriginal Board members [were invited] to come
to the community and we were told the wording of [the invitation] sounded
like these two people would be walking into a firing squad rather than,
'Please come and share with us the initiatives of the region.' So that never
happened, so there was some political stuff, even on a local level, who was
in charge, CFSA or the community, and whose purpose did it serve. (C3,KI-6)*

Within these responses is the implication that community members understood

the role of the Community Council as one of advocacy to CFSA to meet the needs of the

community. None of the community respondents identified the Council's role as one of

community capacity building or problem solving. Yet CFSA responses suggest that from

the perspective of CFSA the goal of the Community Council was to develop consensus

within the community on what was lacking, what the priorities were, and how the

community could address those within existing resources.

*Well, I think there was a belief that there would be all this money and
and the community would be given carte blanche to spend it as they
saw fit. But in fact, there was very little new money and the existing
money was basically spoken for unless they wanted to shift it around
somehow, which no one seemed to want to do. (CFSA,KI-2)*

*The goal of the Community Councils was to look at ways to bring about
better integration of services in the community and to create a forum
where people could look at what was working and what wasn't. But it
became a forum where agencies simply talked about the need for more
money to provide additional services, no one was interested in thinking
how they could work differently with what they already had. (CFSA,KI-5)*

Between these two positions, the challenges of shifting to a community centered

paradigm are evident. The Keynesian paradigm is one in which the community identifies

its neediness and advocates for more resources allocated by the state. The neo-liberal

paradigm is one in which the state claws back its resources to communities regardless of

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community needs. Community Council participants appear to have interpreted the role of the Community Council within the Keynesian paradigm, one of advocating for more state programs and services. When this did not happen, "sorry, we have no money," is interpreted as a neo-liberal response: "you have to do more with less" and the role of the Community Council is seen as "changing and pulling back."

However, this presents a third issue regarding the role and purpose of the Community Council. Numerous community respondents suggested that the Community Council was a duplication of an already existing interagency committee whose role was to promote mutual awareness, collaboration and partnership between both formal and informal supports in the community.

> They had Community Council for CFSA, and what it was, we were all community agencies. Basically, what it was, was an interagency, a second interagency meeting every month because we had a hard time getting [non-agency] community members to come on board, but we had some. (C3,KI-4)

> It was the same people as came out to inter-agency, on this Community Council and you know, once a month you took a whole morning and a lunch and they paid for it, to sit and have this meeting about, 'Ok, what are the gaps, what do you see, how are we going to function as a council? (C3,KI-6)

This sense of duplication of purpose further contributed to community respondents' feelings that the Community Council was a structure imposed by the Regional Authority, one that had little purpose and was not useful in meeting the needs of the community. Yet other community respondents saw an important role for a community planning mechanism that was broader than an interagency group. These respondents saw a lack of

communication within the larger community and a need for structures and processes to facilitate better communication and coordination.

> *My eyes were really opened when I attended a CFSA board meeting in Grande Cache in May and there was representation from the FCSS Board, representation from [Aseniwuche Winewak Nation], which is one of our local Aboriginal groups, we had people there from our school division, and it became very obvious that there has not been a good job of talking to one another and discussing areas of common concern. (C3,KI-9)*

Yet respondents that identified a concern regarding the need for broader 'social' planning were not clear how this could or should be done. Several suggested that Town Council needed to play a leading role in facilitating this broader planning within the community.

> *I think that the direction that has been set over the years in Grande Cache for its Municipal Council, is that it has removed itself very, very much from what I would call the social needs of the community. I believe that there is a perception out there that the job of Municipal Council really has no bearing on what is happening out there in terms of children and families. [Council] has attempted to scratch the surface but [has not] made a concerted effort to a) become aware of the needs of our community and b) to become involved. (C3,KI-1)*

> *So the decisions that are made, I would say that the perception by the community is that the decisions that affect us are made elsewhere and we have very little input into those decisions. ...So it becomes a question of whose challenge is it to bring this all together? Is it the Municipality? I think maybe it is. (C3KI-3)*

This respondent identified ways that Town Council had convened a type of Community Council to deal with economic development and that it could do the same thing in terms of social issues.

*Town Council invited members of the Chamber of Commerce, the
Economic Development Committee, Communities in Bloom, our
Grande Cache Tourism Operators Association, we sat in this room and
we basically did just that. We said 'What are you doing, what are your
major initiatives and goals, what resources do you have to put that in
place, what are ours, how does this all fit together and how can we come
up with some strategies and some action plans and some time lines to
make sure that I'm not doing what you're doing? And that, more
importantly, one of us is doing something that needs to happen.' And it
was really eye opening for us because we have been doing all of the
same thing, kind of working in isolation. And wouldn't it be exciting if [Town
Council] could sit down with all of the Agencies in town that are working
with children and families and trying to address those social needs and say
'Ok, you're doing this and I'm doing this, and you're doing this, how can we
do it better by working together?'(C3,KI-3)*

The goal of the Community Council was to facilitate this broad based planning
between multiple sectors in the community, not just between agencies and service
providers in the community. The fact that this did not happen (as noted above there were
some non-agency participants but on the whole it consisted of a group of service
providers that met regularly) appears to have impacted CFSA perceptions of the
legitimacy of the Community Council. CFSA respondents referred to the "vested
interests" of Council members, suggesting that because of this it was really not able to
achieve its purpose.

The second major initiative within the community was the establishment of a
Community Resource Centre. The report of the Commissioner of Services for Children
had suggested that single access community centers were needed in communities to
reduce barriers to people seeking assistance and to increase access to the range of
resources in the community (1994a, pp. 16-17). The Commissioner's report suggested,
"each community could decide on the best location" for their own Centre (1994a, p. 17).

An explicit goal of the Community Centre was for it to be a place that was accessible, comfortable, and culturally appropriate in the eyes of the Aboriginal community. The establishment of "One-Stop Centres" was a key element in Region 13's 2000-2003 Business Plan. The intention was to develop Centres that were "community based and [would] provide a linkage to local and regional resources" (Region 13 2000-2003 Business Plan, March 2000).

Yet the responses of community informants suggests that the location of the Community Resource Centre was not a community decision, but rather a unilateral decision made by CFSA. Several community respondents suggested that the Community Centre should not have been located within the child welfare office. The responses reiterate the stigma associated with child welfare, both in terms of the stereotype assigned to the service itself, as well as the stigma associated with receiving child welfare services. These views were expressed by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community respondents.

> CFSA had started the ball rolling on this and they wanted it [the Community Centre] through CFSA, which it never should have been. I mean, no one wants to walk through that door, especially in a small town, you are downtown someone sees you going in there and then it's, 'Guess who I saw going into child welfare today?' It's not, 'Guess who I saw going into the Community Centre,' it's, 'Guess who I saw going into child welfare?' (C3,KI-4)

> I just felt it was in the wrong place. There is a stigma associated with child welfare, there's no doubt about it. (C3,KI-6)

> Even though it was separate, it was still in that building and still associated with child welfare. (C3,KI-5)

Several respondents suggested that the FCSS office would have been a better site for a Community Resource Centre since FCSS did not carry a significant stigma within the community.

> *Many of us [members of the Community Council] felt if it was run through*
> *FCSS there wouldn't be that stigma. The Community Coordinator could*
> *work out of the FCSS office and families would be more inclined to use the*
> *services. FCSS just has a completely different image in this community.*
> *(C3,KI-5)*

> *You have families that would probably come through [the FCSS] door,*
> *but wouldn't go through [the child welfare] door, simply because, 'I must be*
> *a bad parent,' 'It's child welfare, they're going to take my kids away from me,'*
> *'Oh now I'm going to have a record, now they're going to have a file on me*
> *somewhere,' there's the fear of it. Whereas coming through [FCSS], there's*
> *no stigma. (C3,KI-4)*

These sentiments extended to concerns over attempting to combine the role of child protection worker with that of community coordinator. In this town, combining these roles was viewed as highly problematic; the role of child welfare worker is not viewed as that of a helper.

> *So CFSA wanted people to use a Community Centre that is also a child*
> *welfare office and to talk about their problems to someone who is also a*
> *child welfare worker. I mean how likely is that? (C3,KI-7)*

Several service providers suggested that not only families, but they also, were uncomfortable with the combination of these two roles.

> *You almost wondered if they wanted to see it fail. Someone had to realize*
> *how impossible it would be to separate these roles in the minds of people*
> *in the community. I mean even me, I was thinking, when I phoned [the*
> *Community Coordinators] for services, 'How much should I tell them*
> *because, after all, they are the child welfare worker.' (C3,KI-4)*

Aware of how some parents might react to the conflation of these two roles, one key informant expressed concerns over the divulging of sensitive information regarding one family's problems.

> *I was always conscious when I was talking to her that she was also a child welfare [officer] and so I was very careful what I said about a family. (C3,KI-2)*

Other respondents suggested that the role of the [CFSA] Community Coordinator represented a duplication of the role of the FCSS coordinator.

> *Well it seemed a bit fuzzy, I mean there was some definite overlap, and it wasn't clear what [the FCSS coordinator's] role was versus what [the CFSA community coordinator's] role was. (C3,KI-7)*

The decision to situate the Community Centre in the child welfare office is, in fact, a puzzling one given that the intention was to create a place that people would feel comfortable coming to and as much as possible remove the barriers to people seeking help. It also clearly ignored the recommendation of the Commissioner of Services for Children that the community should determine the best location for a community center.

Yet some respondents suggested that Aboriginal community members did not view the FCSS office as more welcoming or comfortable for Aboriginal community members. As one respondent stated,

> *Part of the problem was that the biggest portion of the caseload came from the Aboriginal community so if you are going to have a Community Centre that you want people to go to for information and to get referrals for help well it needs to be someplace where Aboriginal people are comfortable going and that's not necessarily FCSS. (C3,KI-6)*

Respondents suggested that for many Aboriginal children, youth, and families, it is the AWN office that serves as a Community Centre, and the place that they are most comfortable going to. A variety of children's, youth, parent, and adult programs have been run out of this office. Yet CFSA and the community, including AWN, agreed that this office was also not a feasible option for the location of a Community Centre.

In analyzing information provided by both community members and CFSA, two issues are evident. First, in implementing the above changes to strategies of governance, there appears to have been little dialogue as to what they were intended to change and, in light of these intentions, how they could best fit into existing services, structures and strategies within the community. To many community members, they appeared as top down strategies that did not reflect the needs of the community. Second, there is no evidence of strategies, efforts, or mechanisms to address the challenges, struggles, or conflict that characterized these initiatives. As the same time, it is important to note that these initiatives were considerably hampered by the economic crisis that the town experienced as a result of the shutdown of the mine.

Economic Crisis and Community Change

Economic diversification of resource dependent communities has been seen as a key factor in the creation of permanence and stability for such communities (Halseth & Sullivan, 2002; Peacock, 1985). However, for many communities economic diversification proves highly elusive and they remain vulnerable to characteristic cycles of boom and bust (Bradbury, 1988). In Grande Cache efforts to diversify the economy had included the construction of a federal penitentiary (which has since become a

provincial correctional institution), and the construction of a highway linking Grande Cache with northern Alberta. The opening of a Weyerhauser sawmill in 1984 added some additional employment to the community. However, the economy of the community remained largely dependent on the coal mine and thus extremely vulnerable. In March 2000, the coal mine shut down and the community went into crisis. The closure of the sawmill a few years later exacerbated this crisis.

Lucas' model of social development in single industry towns has been adapted to reflect issues of resource closure, the impacts of these on the towns that were built around these resources, and the futures that the towns face (see Fig. 7.2, p. 233). After studying the impact of mine closures on towns along the Quebec-Labrador border, Bradbury (1983) added stages of "Winding Down" and "Closure" to Lucas' model. More recently, Halseth (1999) has suggested that "Winding Down" and "Closure" may not be the only options for communities facing the loss of industries they are dependent on. Based on the experiences of resource towns in BC in the 1990s, Halseth suggests that when resource towns face closure of the primary industry they were built around, there may be a range of "Alternate Futures" that move the town beyond the winding down and closure suggested by Bradbury. There is evidence that with the closure of the mine in 2000 and the subsequent closure of the Weyerhauser sawmill, Grande Cache experienced elements of both "winding down" and "alternate futures" and each of these impacted the governance of child welfare in this community.

Town Management	Stage	Demographic Characteristics
Company	Construction	High population turnover High % of young men
Company	Recruitment	High population turnover High % of young families
Community	Transition	Stable population
Community	Maturity	Lack of job mobility Youth out-migration
CLOSURE OF	PRIMARY RESOURCE	INDUSTRY
Company (Caretaker)	Winding Down (Closure)	Job losses Out-migration
----------------------------------	-------------OR---------------	----------------------------------
Community	Alternate Futures	Economic transition Sustainable community

Fig. 7.2 Adaptation of Lucas' model of community development in single industry towns

Source: Halseth & Sullivan (2002, p. 16).

One of the characteristics of "winding down" is the out-migration that occurs as residents begin to seek a future elsewhere (Bradbury & St-Martin, 1983). With the closure of the mine, Grande Cache lost many of its families, particularly its younger families. Census data shows that the population declined by 14% in the year after the closure of the mine, with 34% of those children between the ages of 0 and 4, and a 44% loss of young people between 20 and 24 years old. Overall, there was a 22% loss in the population between the ages of 0 and 54 years old. Respondents said that this was just the beginning. Over the next three years more and more families left the town.

But it is not only residents that leave the community; it is also services and community organizations (Bradbury & St-Martin, 1983; Halseth & Sullivan, 2002). A loss of residents means that many of the services that once existed in the community can no longer be sustained and schools, health and other services begin to disappear. In the case of Grande Cache the loss of services reflected the loss of its young population and impacted what the community had to offer young families. Respondents noted the closure of one of the daycares as well as a school, and the loss of certain health services. In particular, the local hospital no longer offered obstetrical services –giving birth to a child required traveling to a hospital over 90 minutes away. Community residents also noted the loss of voluntary associations geared to the needs of children and families.

At the same time, the efforts of the town to rally and restructure its economy required significant energy on the part of both local government and citizens and citizens' associations. Halseth & Sullivan note that in the face of global economic restructuring, the ability of single-industry resource towns to survive may depend on their capacity to take advantage of a "flexible community development future" by seeking new opportunities and ways of diversifying in the face of economic crisis (2002, p. 259). These alternate futures are built around local economic development initiatives and rely on the leadership of local government and the collective entrepreneurial efforts of its residents (Halseth & Sullivan, 2002). In the case of Grande Cache there is considerable evidence of efforts by local government and civil society organizations to develop alternate futures for the town. Town councilors as well as local citizens have worked with provincial and regional economic development groups to address economic restructuring in the community. Local associations also developed to promote economic development.

Efforts included studying the feasibility of community ownership and operation of the

mine with the help of provincial or federal government funding combined with private

investment. There were also efforts to achieve community ownership of the sawmill.

Efforts to develop tourism through a local tourism association also developed. Many

respondents commented on the amount of energy that these efforts took.

> *As a town we have had to put a tremendous amount of energy into ensuring that we are viable, that we have a future, and this has meant that for some aspects of our community life we have not focused our attention there. (C3,KI-1)*

> *People in this town and particularly town council, but not just them, a lot of the business people and even the service clubs and so on, have put a lot of effort into addressing the economic needs of the town. Not that they haven't been concerned about social issues, but these have taken second place to basic survival. (C3,KI-8)*

Efforts to develop the Community Council occurred at the same time as the

community was facing its economic crisis and several respondents noted that this crisis

impeded the development of the Council.

> *We were working with [a resident of the community] to put together the [Community] Council and we felt like we were getting somewhere and then the closure of the mine was announced and, bam, it seemed like we were back at square one. The people you thought you had put together were suddenly leaving the community or they were now serving on this revitalization committee and no longer had time for this, so it was like starting all over. (CFSA,KI-2)*

> *C3,KI-4: We had a hard time getting community members to come on board but we had some.*
>
> *J.G.: Community members meaning 'non-agency?'*
>
> *C3,KI-4: Uh-huh*
>
> *J.G.: Why do you think it was hard to get community people on board?*

C3,KI-4: Well, I think there were a lot of reasons. People weren't sure what it was for and some people were nervous about coming to a meeting with child welfare. I tried to get some of the Moms I work with to come out but they were really nervous, I remember one woman saying 'how do I know I won't just say the wrong thing and the next day someone will be on my doorstep to take away my kids?' Also the whole shutdown of the mine. We had people who were interested and coming out and then the next thing they'd show up and say, 'well we're moving.'

One of several economic development strategies that the town utilized was to market itself as the perfect retirement town – friendly, caring, affordable, and safe. The segment below is taken from a section of the Grande Cache visitor's guide under the heading "Mountain Retirement:"

Resting among the snow-capped peaks of the Rockies is a community where people still take time to visit, to help out, to care. Whether having hot coffee and fresh cinnamon buns at the local café or taking a leisurely stroll on a forest path, Grande Cache has an active seniors community with real heart. If you are an active senior looking for a quiet, safe and beautiful place to retire, you will want to explore Grande Cache. A modern community with affordable housing and reasonable taxes, Grande Cache is an ideal place for retirement. Not only is it in the mountains, Grande Cache is still very much a small town with a true sense of community.

A local property management company took this farther by marketing rental units at extremely low rates to qualified individuals. In general the marketing of these units was geared to seniors receiving monthly pensions. As a result of these initiatives, the seniors' population in Grande Cache has increased substantially. As one community member noted:

The town historically was a young town, it had young families. Our senior's population was something like 45 people and now it's over 450 and it happened over a three-year period... it just blew up. (C3,KI-3)

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An article in the local paper confirms this new dynamic for the town:

> With coal mining and logging being the mainstay of Grande Cache's
> economy, the community has always attracted relatively young men and
> their families. This has changed in recent years with the decline of coal
> mining and the town's campaign to stabilize its economy by making
> Grande Cache a retirement community. (Veitch 2004, June 8)

The out-migration of young families as part of "winding down," and the in-migration of seniors as part of "alternate futures," significantly altered the dynamics of the community. Where services had traditionally focused on the needs of young families – parenting programs, children's programs, Mom's and tots groups, Mom's time out programs, toy lending libraries, etc, the influx of seniors created entirely new demands.

> *The human services agencies were just inundated because a lot of these*
> *people had specific needs. Our human services weren't able to deal with*
> *this huge shift in demand ... all of a sudden you had a whole new different*
> *type of clientele with high needs... yes in one respect it did help the town,*
> *there's no doubt about it, but the strain on the human service end of things.*
> *(C3,KI-4)*

> *You have seniors who have moved here and have left all their supports*
> *behind, and its limited medical services, there's no surgeries here or they*
> *need specialized medical services that aren't available here and they have no*
> *transportation, and there's this expectation that there will be these services*
> *available to them. (C3KI-1)*

Furthermore, as seen in the following statement, where the economic viability of the town shifts from the need to recruit and retain young families, to the need to recruit and retain seniors, the focus of service provision must shift accordingly.

> *If we don't have services that they need, they're going to leave and the town*
> *is going to hurt again. So we need to look... one of the things that we need or*
> *are desperate for is transportation for seniors out of town, absolutely*
> *desperate for it. (C3,KI-4)*

The loss of children and families within the community significantly shifted CFSA's perception of its role in the community. As one person stated: "*the child welfare caseload in Grande Cache disappeared overnight.*" At the same time, the influx of new residents meant that, more and more, demands on the resources of the Community Centre and its Coordinators had nothing to do with the needs of children or families. The Community Centre experienced a crisis in terms of organizational identity and function that did not go unnoticed by community residents or CFSA management.

> *One fellow showed up ... and he just showed up, he didn't book a spot to stay or anything, so he took a lot of everybody's time and of course that's not really what the [Community] Centre was intended for. (C3,KI-7)*

> *Well, maybe the goal of it was too broad, maybe, well it did, it included anybody in the community. If you walked through the door, we could be of assistance, we could help. And it being Child and Family Services, there was a need for it to stay child focused. (CFSA,KI-9)*

Plus Ça Change, Plus C'est la Même Chose

As noted previously, there is no evidence of attempts to address the above challenges through processes of joint planning between the Regional Authority and the community. Instead there was essentially an abandonment of efforts to achieve change in the governance of child welfare. The following excerpts from interviews with community members discuss the abandonment of change efforts. What is perhaps most notable is the resident's perception of the top down nature of the decision making. The Community Council was the first initiative to be abandoned. Approximately a year later the decision was made by CFSA to close the Community Centre and abolish the Community Coordinator positions.

So anyways for a year we did this and then all of a sudden we were at a meeting and a CFSA representative said, how it was put was basically, 'I wouldn't worry about the Community Council anymore, if you don't want to be on board anymore it's o.k. because it's not going to continue.' And that's what happened, they stopped. (C3,KI-4)

Once a month you took a whole morning and a lunch and they paid for [lunch] to sit and have this meeting about 'What are the gaps, what do you see, how are we going to function as a council?' Then a year later it's 'Well, its not happening anymore.' (C3,KI-6)

They were going to have what they called "Community Coordinators," in fact, they even hired them and then I don't know what happened, but all of a sudden, their positions were gone and the Community One Stop Centre, that was gone. (C3,KI-5)

All of these responses convey a lack of community based planning from the very people who were meeting regularly in order to develop broader community input into planning for children and families. Furthermore, the way in which the decisions were made appears to have impacted the relationship between CFSA and members of the community. The following comments are indicative of both a degree of frustration, as well as a certain amount of cynicism, towards a Regional Authority that the community was led to believe would involve them in its decision making.

C3,KI-5: They were going to have what they called "Community Coordinators," in fact, they even hired them and then I don't know what happened, but all of a sudden, their positions were gone and the Community One Stop Centre, that was gone.

J.G.: So you weren't in the loop at all in terms of was this [the closure of the community center] a good thing...?

C3,KI-5: Well, I wouldn't say we weren't in the loop. I guess if being in the loop means that 'This is the way its going to be, you can either be with us or not,' I guess that's being in the loop.

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*C3,KI-4: So anyways, for a year we did this and then all of a sudden we
were at a meeting and a CFSA representative said, how it was put was
basically, 'I wouldn't worry about the Community Council anymore, if you
don't want to be on board anymore it's o.k. because it's not going to
continue.' And that's what happened, they stopped.*

J.G.: So how did people react to that?

C3,KI-4: I think, as a group, we just thought, 'It doesn't surprise us.'

*So it was kind of a frustrating exercise in that I think we all started with a lot
of optimism and really, really positive. (C3,KI-7)*

Community members attempted to protest the decision to abolish the position of

the Community Coordinator. CFSA responded by arguing that the lack of "caseload" no

longer justified the position.

*So the mayor became involved and contacted the CEO of the Region and
wrote letters in support of this staffing situation. Once he had access to
the information that basically said, you know what, the reduction in the
caseload does not justify the continuation of this particular program and/or
person. You understand, that nothing had changed and the decision had
been made and it was based on good, sound information. (CFSA,KI-1)*

In this response, "the decision had been made" and it was "based on good, sound

information;" the top down nature of decision making is confirmed. Community input is

not sought, and when it is given, the top down decision is justified because of the loss of

"caseload." But framing of the abolishment of the Community Coordinators as a caseload

issue ignores the fact that the decision was made to abandon any efforts to develop a

model of community based governance. The role of child welfare in the community has

returned to its traditional approach – depending on workload and availability of time, the

child welfare worker may attend interagency meetings and participate in community

organizing initiatives, but the primary role of child welfare in this community is that of

providing statutory child welfare services to the individual families (see Fig. 7.3).
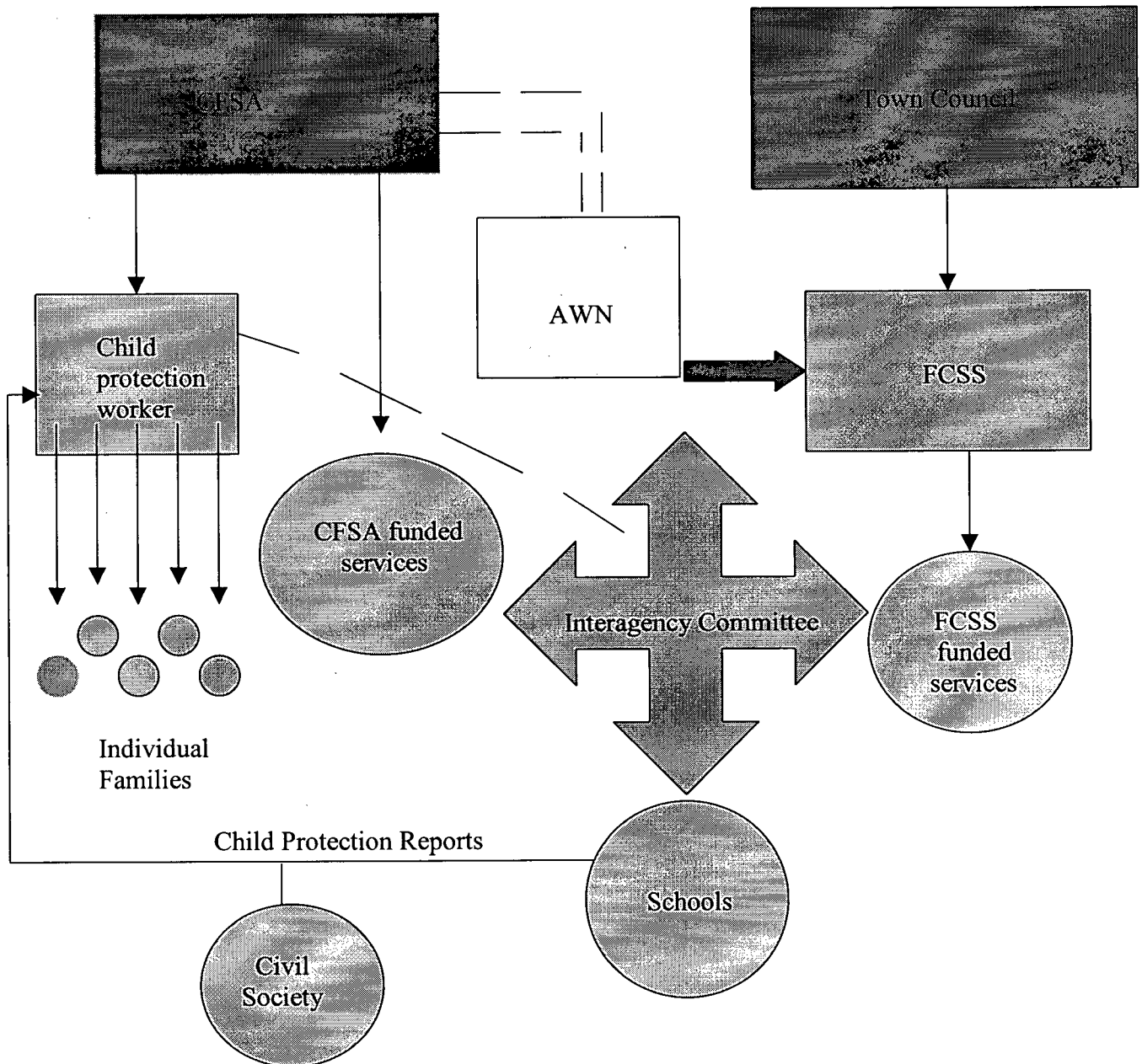

Fig. 7.3 CFSA-community interactions in Grande Cache

CFSA and the Aboriginal Community: A Shift From There to Here

The frustration and cynicism expressed by many community residents was not echoed by Aboriginal respondents. The third pillar or theme in the provincial redesign of child welfare stressed the importance of addressing the needs of Aboriginal children and families through services that were more culturally appropriate, designed by, and for, Aboriginal community members. For the most part, the plan emphasized the transfer of responsibility for planning and delivering services to Aboriginal communities. Where there are federal treaties in place with First Nations communities, the province has delegated to these communities, or to broader First Nations Regional Councils, authority and responsibility for a variety of child welfare programs. The province also chose to delegate a separate Regional Authority to represent land based Métis settlements in Alberta, despite the fact that these settlements are geographically dispersed. However, the Aseniwuche Winewak do not have a treaty with the federal government, nor are they a recognized Métis settlement. Consequently, they have no special status or recognition except what is negotiated with the Regional Authority.

Community respondents noted that even prior to the provincial restructuring of child welfare and the identification of the Aboriginal pillar, there was a good working relationship between the local child welfare office and the Aboriginal community. The delegation of the Regional Authority, and efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare to incorporate greater community based processes, created some degree of uncertainty as well as "cautious optimism." The inability to incorporate a structure of community based planning and greater integration of services within the community has also reinforced a certain amount of cynicism. However both CFSA and Aboriginal

respondents suggested that the delegation of the Regional Authority has improved

opportunities for Aboriginal community input as well as the capacity of the region to

work more directly with the Aboriginal community to identify community needs and the

best ways of meeting those.

> *Our role with [the Aboriginal community in] Grande Cache, at least*
> *when we started, was unique because they're land based and they're not a*
> *Métis settlement and they're not First Nation and they'd already had a*
> *fairly good working relationship with the Child Welfare Office. When I got*
> *involved there was not a negative working relationship, so our involvement*
> *with the Aseniwuche was really to meet with them and to say, 'What are*
> *your needs, how do we work with you and how do we work with you and*
> *the community of Grande Cache?' And that was never an issue with*
> *Aseniwuche. They've always partnered with the town.... They have some*
> *amazing leadership down there. (CFSA,KI-4)*

> *I see us having the capacity to develop better partnerships, better ways of*
> *working together to address the needs of the community and I don't think*
> *we were able to do that as well within the old system. For example, we*
> *have sat down with them and put together programs to address healing*
> *within the community and that has meant funding a resource to provide*
> *that. And we have more ability to do that within this system – to identify*
> *our priorities and then develop ways to address them. (C3,KI-1)*

Some respondents also suggested that the articulation of the four pillars was a

positive step in the evolution of Aboriginal child welfare as it promoted a stronger

partnership approach. As one respondent put it:

> *Where the [Regional] Authority is committed to the [Aboriginal] pillar, it*
> *allows them to do things differently, to have a different approach. This*
> *Regional Authority has shown a willingness to work with us, to involve*
> *us in the planning. That's important to our community, to its development.*
> *(C3,KI-6)*

At the same time, both CFSA and Aboriginal community respondents noted that there are largely informal structures and strategies in place to facilitate input into CFSA planning. There is a child welfare committee that receives guidance from the elders and it is this committee that works with the Regional Authority in an effort to address the needs of children and families. In attempting to characterize the shift that had occurred, one respondent suggested that it is not yet partnership, but it is better than it was, having gone "from there to here." What will happen in the future is largely unknown.

> *I don't think you can characterize it as a partnership; it's definitely not that, but it has changed; there is more recognition and respect, and more willingness to involve [the Aboriginal community] in how to address the needs It's kind of like it was there, and now it's here, and that is progress, but it's slow, and its hard to say where it will go from here. I don't think we want to be too optimistic, but we are hopeful. (C3,KI-7)*

Conclusion

This chapter has examined efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare in a remote community characterized by the presence of a non-Aboriginal population economically dependent on a single industry, and an Aboriginal population struggling to overcome decades of cultural disintegration, economic deprivation, and social problems. Efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare included efforts to develop a participatory planning structure involving a wide range of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents in ways to better meet the needs of children and families as well as the establishment of a Community Resource Centre to facilitate access to local and regional resources. These efforts occurred in the context of a town with a well developed social infrastructure characterized by a strong FCSS presence in the community, a range

of civil society organizations, and existing partnerships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations.

I have noted that neither of these efforts was successful and that what has largely occurred in efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare in this community is an example of pseudo-change that is characterized by the following elements. First, there was considerable time and effort on the part of both the local community and the Regional Authority envisioning and attempting to establish meaningful change. However, there was a lack of clarity regarding the specific outcomes that these initiatives were intended to achieve and how they fit within existing community perceptions, strategies, and structures. At the same time, these initiatives appear to have been significantly impacted by the economic crisis that the town faced, the resulting out migration of families, the energy that remaining residents put into trying to maintain the town's economic viability, and the influx of a new population into the town that changed the priorities of human services. These challenges were never addressed through a process of community dialogue and a top-down decision was made to abandon efforts to change. The consequence of this has been a legacy of cynicism and disillusionment on the part of those involved in change efforts.

At the same time, however, it must be reinforced that despite these problems in implementing greater community based governance within the town, the Regional Authority has shown a commitment to fostering greater partnership with the local Aboriginal community and respect for their input into programs and services that would benefit them. There is a cautious optimism expressed by the Aboriginal community that

is in marked contrast to the frustration or cynicism expressed by non-Aboriginal residents of the town.

This, however, is not the last word on changes to the governance of child welfare within the town. As this research was concluding there were indications that the mine was reopening and the town could expect an influx of new residents – young families seeking the opportunities that a resource town has to offer. Thus, once again, the town will go through stages of recruitment and transition and social relations will have to be reestablished, now with a significant seniors' population.

This could present a unique opportunity to involve newly arrived residents in efforts to plan a community based child welfare system. However, mobilizing the energy from within the town will be extremely challenging given past experience. If the Regional Authority undertakes such an effort, it needs to begin with a thorough understanding of the structures and processes for collaboration and integration that are currently in place in the community and how it can fit into, complement, and enhance these.

In doing this however, it would be critical that the Authority not abandon the partnerships that are being forged with the Aboriginal community in addressing the needs of children and families in this community. The Regional Authority will need think about its relations in this community in terms of three different dimensions: first, continuing to develop partnerships with the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation in order to further their self-determination in the governance of child welfare; second, partnering with the town in the provision of services for newly arriving families; and third, a three way partnership between CFSA, the town, and AWN. The town and AWN already have a history of

working together, the Regional Authority needs to understand its role in complementing this relationship.

The larger lesson within this case study concerns the relevance of theories of the stages of community development in instant resource towns to theorizing community centered approaches to the governance of child welfare. In implementing a community centered approach attention should be given to understanding the stage the community is at and the challenges and needs associated with each of these stages.

Chapter Eight:

Conclusions: Reconceptualizing Decentralization and Participatory Governance in The Governance of Child Welfare in Rural and Remote Localities

Introduction

This research, while focused on Alberta, has wider relevance to rural and remote communities in other Canadian provinces, especially the far North, as well as other welfare states in industrialized countries undergoing restructuring of their child welfare systems. It has focused on the dynamics of state-community interactions in the course of efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare. I have suggested that the crisis in child welfare and efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare in Western industrialized countries is connected to the broader crisis of the Keynesian welfare state and the emergence of new discourses regarding the governance of welfare. One emerging discourse entails a 'rediscovery' of the role of community in the governance of welfare. Ecological theories of child welfare suggest that communities play an important role in the governance of child welfare and there have been efforts to develop policy frameworks that reflect the importance of this role. These efforts however, are hampered by the lack of research on community-state relationships, as well as the problematic theorization and empirical confusion regarding the goals and strategies, as well as the outcomes, of restructuring efforts.

I have conceptualized the governance of child welfare as a set of dialectic relations between children, parents, communities and the state. This conceptualization recognizes the essential role of each element or actor, and the ways in which they complement one another, while also acknowledging inherent tensions between them. It is,

therefore, able to encompass the normative battles and empirical contradictions that characterize current theorization in the field of child welfare. The goal of this conceptual framework is, however, to assist in moving beyond these battles to develop policy frameworks that better address the complexities that characterize the governance of child welfare. The purpose of this research is to assist in this endeavor by advancing the analytical understanding of state-community dynamics in restructuring the governance of child welfare in rural and remote localities, an area that has been given little attention in the child welfare literature.

Three localities in northwestern Alberta have served as case studies for this research. Alberta pioneered neo-liberal restructuring of many of its social programs in the early 1990s, and then in the mid-1990s attempted to restructure the governance of child welfare in ways that reflected the importance of community to the well-being of children and families. In this final chapter, I review key elements of these restructuring efforts and the ways that they unfolded within these localities. I then examine the relevance of this for theories of social planning and policy development in the governance of child welfare. Specifically, I revisit concepts of subsidiarity and network governance to assess their usefulness in addressing restructuring of state-community interactions and strategies of decentralization and participatory governance.

State-Community Interactions in Rural and Remote Localities

As noted in Chapter 1, restructuring efforts in the field of child welfare are attempting to implement strategies of decentralization and participatory governance. Participatory governance as applied to child welfare entails creating more effective forms

of collaborative engagement by local organizations and partnership with the state, and facilitating new opportunities for wider range of citizen involvement in the shaping of issues, the formulation of responses, and potentially, in service provision, as well as the implementation of child welfare programs. This form of participatory governance in child welfare is best facilitated through various strategies associated with decentralization – deconcentration, delegation, or devolution - of decision making to the level at which meaningful participation can be maintained (Ansell & Gingrich, 2003). In the field of service delivery, participatory governance mechanisms developed to improve the responsiveness of public service providers to service users, especially those who are marginalized, may involve "amplifying citizen 'voice' in order to move engagement with the state beyond consultative processes to more direct forms of influence over policy and spending decisions" (Goetz & Gaventa, 2001, p. iii).

However, I have noted in Chapter 2 that concepts of decentralization and participatory governance contain certain theoretical antinomies (Oxhorn, 2004). Decentralization and participatory governance are strategies linked to pluralistic democracy in which emphasis is on empowerment of marginalized individuals and groups (Angeles, 2005). Decentralization and citizen participation are also strategies linked to communitarian ideologies in which the emphasis is on strengthening social relations between diverse citizens and groups of citizens (Peters, 1996). Furthermore, decentralization and certain forms of citizen participation, are elements of a neo-liberal agenda to reduce government monopoly and bureaucracy, and to increase bureaucratic accountability (Ansell & Gingrich, 2003; Peters, 1996).

These multiple agendas were evident in both provincial and regional restructuring efforts. Empowerment of marginalized groups, strengthening local social relations, increased community control, and reduction of government in the lives of citizens were all identified as goals in the restructuring of child welfare in Alberta. Consequently, a closer examination of these concepts is called for within the context of state-community interactions in the governance of child welfare.

In Chapter 2, I also drew on conceptions of the state as a system that coordinates action through the media of power. This power is situated within laws, public statutes and policies that are seen to be separate from and somehow "over and above people" but is exercised through complex and typically hierarchical social relations. The functions of the state include social control, as well as social support through the provision of resources.

In Canada, statutory authority for child welfare is vested in the provinces and their legislative frameworks. In the province of Alberta, the restructuring of child welfare delegated the coordination of a range of child welfare programs and services to 18 Regional Child and Family Service Authorities[14]. This included responsibility for statutory child protection, as well as community based prevention programs, day care licensing and subsidies, and services for handicapped children. A Regional Board, whose members were appointed by the provincial government, became responsible for managing child welfare within guidelines set out by the province.

This study clearly shows that delegation of statutory responsibilities to Regional Authorities placed them in the role of the regional state in relation to communities and

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[14] Regional boundaries were restructured in April 2003, reducing the number of Regional Authorities to 10 (see Chapter 4).

municipalities within them. With respect to the governance of child welfare, they assume state functions of allocating resources as well as mediating conflicts regarding the welfare of children. At the same time, the provincial government retained (in fact increased) their control over funding of child welfare. This placed the Regional Authorities in the position of having to make resource allocation decisions within specific budgets, while also having to meet the costs of statutory child protection services within their region. In terms of restructuring the governance of welfare, concepts such as decentralization and participatory governance thus need to be examined against these considerations, how decentralization resituates the powers of the state and results in new state-community configurations, and how strategies of participatory governance address these new state community interactions.

Communities, on the other hand, entail relations and interactions that are voluntary, guided by norms, values, and traditions that are socially coordinated as opposed to being coordinated through the power of the state. Theories of relations between children, parents, and communities have noted that cohesive communities can be a source of significant support for children and parents, providing benefits of collective socialization as well as fostering mutual aid. Yet it has also been noted that communities can be a source of oppression, marginalization, and exclusion for children, for parents, or for both. Concepts of participatory governance are generally understood in terms of formal relations and structures between the state and citizens however this study suggests that the concept of participatory governance must also encompass participation between members of a community in the construction or contesting of norms and values.

Geographical localities are a mix of community relations and state authority and thus offer a complex range of social relations. Rural and remote localities are often characterized as encompassing stable, multigenerational relationships with strong informal helping networks. They are also often portrayed as socially conservative, intolerant of diversity, and rigid in terms of norms and values. This study suggests that such 'grand narratives' must be avoided. Like urban neighborhoods, rural and remote localities are extremely diverse in terms of their dynamics and the impacts these have in the lives of children and parents within the locality.

Beaverlodge was viewed by respondents in this study as a stable, cohesive community with a well integrated social infrastructure that provided a high degree of support to families and children, including youth, pregnant and parenting teens, and low income and single-parent families. Valleyview, on the other hand, was viewed as more fragmented and less supportive of youth and of diverse families, including low income, single parent, and aboriginal families. Grande Cache was experiencing an uncertain future and significant instability and population turnover at the time of this research, while its aboriginal residents were struggling to rebuild community capacity and cohesion.

In planning the restructuring of child welfare within the region, two key strategies were identified. First, the development of community based planning through the establishment of Community Councils that would involve a range of community residents. Second, the establishment of "One Stop" or Community Resource Centres that would serve a coordinating function within the community and facilitate integration of a wide range of community services. These initiatives have unfolded very differently

within each of these three communities and are testimony to the challenges of attempting to implement "one size fits all" policy frameworks to address the governance of child welfare within rural and remote localities. Instead, these case studies suggest the need for careful assessment of community dynamics and how they are impacting child welfare, as well as the ways that state-community interactions are impacting on, and being impacted by, those dynamics. Participatory governance and planning principles, in fact, eschew "one size fits all" models, suggesting that decisions are best implemented by people and communities who make them, own them, and are accountable to their results and outcomes. This suggests a kind of reverse hierarchy to traditional state-community relations. However, this research indicates that community control may also be problematic and that the state has an essential role to play in decision making.

Assessing the Complexity of Community Dynamics in the Governance of Child Welfare

Assessment of the complexity of intra-community dynamics in the governance of child welfare requires particular attention to how such dynamics are impacting youth, teen parents, single parent and low income families, Aboriginal families and families new to the locality. Understanding how these residents are integrated into, or marginalized or excluded from, communities is critical given that research clearly shows the impact of community cohesion on the welfare of these groups. Within this research there were significant differences in the ways in which the above groups were integrated within or were marginalized or excluded from communities. Assessment of complex community dynamics also requires attention to evidence of integration, collaboration, and cooperation between community agencies and organizations.

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In Beaverlodge, a high degree of interaction, networking and collaboration between individuals and organizations was identified as characteristic of the locality and it was noted that there were considerable efforts within the locality to include youth, teen parents, single parent families, low income families, and families new to the area. FCSS played a strong role within this community and the strength of this role appeared to leave little room for a CFSA role in the community beyond that of funding. While there were efforts to develop a Community Council these efforts were unsuccessful and CFSA's Manager of Community Development worked almost exclusively with the FCSS Coordinator in defining the needs of the community in relation to prevention and early intervention strategies.

In Valleyview, networking and collaboration between individuals and organizations had been identified as very weak within the locality. Furthermore, issues of conflict were apparent within Valleyview, particularly between youth and businesses, schools, and the municipality. It was also noted that Valleyview showed minimal effort to understand or to address the needs of single parent or low-income families. In addition, there was evidence of racism towards Aboriginal residents. Initial efforts to develop a Community Council in Valleyview were also unsuccessful and CFSA found itself dealing primarily with Town Council in planning for resources within the community. Yet CFSA and town leaders had very different visions for services within the town and there was considerable tension and conflict as these joint planning efforts unfolded.

In Grande Cache, the primary dynamic for the town was the instability that had resulted from the closure of the mine and the impact this was having on the town's population and social infrastructure. A Community Council was established in Grande

Cache however it was viewed by community residents as a structure imposed by CFSA that had little influence or authority. CFSA, however, felt that the Community Council consisted largely of the 'vested interests' of local service providers who were resistant to efforts to rethink the provision of services in the community. Efforts to involve other community residents in the Community Council were significantly hampered by the economic crisis the town was facing and the population turnover that occurred as a result of this crisis.

Where there is a significant Aboriginal population, assessment of social infrastructure in rural and remote localities needs to include assessment of the connections between Aboriginal residents, and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents. In Grande Cache the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation (AWN) was attempting to strengthen relations between Aboriginal residents in order to address the needs of Aboriginal families, and to develop the capacity of Aboriginal youth. This organization also engaged in advocacy on behalf of Aboriginal children and families. In doing this they had developed partnerships with organizations and services within the town of Grande Cache including FCSS and the municipality. They had also developed partnerships with regional, provincial, and national organizations, both private and public. The restructuring of child welfare offered AWN a stronger voice in planning with CFSA to address the needs of Aboriginal children and families and to develop community capacity. They viewed their relationship with the Regional Authority as one of "cautious optimism." Valleyview, despite its high Aboriginal population and concerns of racism and marginalization of Aboriginal residents, had no formal structure or organization engaged in this role.

The stability of the locality also emerged in this study as a significant variable in assessing community dynamics in the governance of child welfare. Residents of Beaverlodge noted that the community had enjoyed a high degree of stability with the presence of third generation families in the area. It was suggested this stability had contributed to residents' concern for the welfare of children and families and commitment to the provision of community resources to address child welfare. Some residents noted that Beaverlodge had begun to experience greater transience and predicted that this would result in less collective commitment to the welfare of its children and families.

In Grande Cache, the closure of the mine resulted in significant population turnover. Remaining town residents mobilized around efforts to maintain the town's economic viability. Both of these dynamics had detrimental impacts on the participation of civil society in the governance of child welfare. In addition, there was a significant exodus of families, along with an influx of seniors as the town marketed itself as the "perfect" retirement community. This placed new demands on community social services that competed with the needs of remaining children and families.

The Stigma of Child Welfare

The stigma attached to statutory child welfare services also emerged as a significant theme in the context of rural and remote communities. Reidpath, Chan, Gifford and Allotey (2005) note that while there is considerable literature on stigma, its conceptual development is 'patchy' (p. 470). Most theorists utilize Goffman's (1963) conception of stigma as arising from social interaction and marking an individual as

deviant and incapable of fulfilling expected role requirements. One of the legacies of Goffman's conception is that it focuses on micro level interactions ignoring broader macro-sociological perspectives in understanding stigma, its origins and its impacts as well as effective interventions to address stigma. This research suggests while micro and macro level perspectives are important in understanding stigma and the process of stigmatization, with respect to the governance of child welfare, there are also important mezzo level elements in the construction and consequences of this stigma.

The stigma attached to community residents' utilization of child welfare services was already identified in the research of the Commissioner for Children's Services. The Commissioner's (1994b) report noted community concerns that the stigma attached to services prevents many people from using them. While this issue has been noted in other research (e.g., Powell & Nelson, 1997; Wharf, 2002), it has not been theorized or addressed in terms of linking the construction of this stigma to its consequences for efforts to restructure the governance of child welfare.

The larger macro level forces shaping stigma and stigmatization in the governance of child welfare can be seen as a combination of liberal ideology and an ideology of childhood. These have resulted in idealization of an autonomous nuclear family that has no need of outside support to effectively address the needs of its dependent and vulnerable children. Families that fail to meet this ideal standard are stigmatized – in Goffman's conception, seen as deviant and incapable of fulfilling expected [parental] role requirements. Yet historians Donzelot (1979) and Lasch (1997) have shown that idealization of the autonomous family occurred alongside an increased professional "policing" of the family, designed to identify families that were failing to

meet this ideal. In other words, the more privatized the family became the more it was seen to require surveillance. The family becomes "always justified in theory, and always suspect in practice" (Donzelot, 1979, p. 178). Families identified as failing to meet the ideal then require a host of therapeutic interventions aimed at addressing their deficiencies, which is seen as further proof of their deviance. Moreover, failure to meet the ideal of the autonomous family has often been assumed based on other stigmatizing characteristics such as ethnicity, employment status, income, or marital status (Strong-Boag, 2002).

This study suggests that the construction and consequences of stigma within local contexts have two dimensions. First, the stigma attached to those identified as being in need of child welfare services; and second, the stigma – and consequent fear – attached to the services themselves. The evidence of this study suggests that rural and remote localities attach considerable stigma to child welfare services. However, the stigma attached to community-based prevention and early intervention services, was different within each of these communities. For example, it was noted that in the early stages of an 'instant town' such as Grande Cache, there might be less stigma attached to prevention and early intervention services as these may be seen as ways for stay-at-home mothers to connect with one another.

In all three communities, it was child welfare services that carried the highest degree of stigma.

> *Any programs that we run, there's always parents asking us, 'Are you Child Welfare,' 'Are you counsellors,' and if you say yes, they will not participate or allow their children to participate. (C2,KI-2)*

*Many of us [members of the Community Council] felt if it was run through
FCSS there wouldn't be that stigma. The Community Coordinator could
work out of the FCSS office and families would be more inclined to use the
services. FCSS just has a completely different image in this community.
(C3,KI-5)*

*You have families that would probably come through [the FCSS] door,
but wouldn't go through [the child welfare] door, simply because, 'I must be
a bad parent,' 'It's child welfare, they're going to take my kids away from me,'
'Oh now I'm going to have a record, now they're going to have a file on me
somewhere,' there's the fear of it. Whereas coming through [FCSS], there's
no stigma. (C3,KI-4)*

Even in Grande Cache where a child welfare office had been located in the community

for thirteen years and the child welfare worker had resided in the community as parent,

and neighbor, the role of child welfare and child welfare worker were viewed as separate

from and outside of 'community.'

This perception of separateness impacted efforts to situate child welfare within

the community and to integrate child welfare with other community agencies and

organizations. In Grande Cache, community agencies were not supportive of efforts to

locate a Community Resource Centre within the existing child welfare office and to

combine the role of Community Coordinator with that of child protection worker. In

Beaverlodge and Valleyview community agencies resisted co-location with child welfare;

they perceived that community members would be reluctant to utilize their services, both

for fear of being viewed as a child welfare client, and due to a fear of surveillance by

child protection workers.

The fear of surveillance by child protection systems also impacted efforts to

develop participatory planning mechanisms to address the needs of children and families.

The following exchange occurred with one community service provider and concerns

efforts involve community residents in a CFSA sponsored Community Council.

> *C3,KI-4: We had a hard time getting community members to come on board but*
> *we had some.*
>
> *J.G. Community members meaning 'non-agency?'*
>
> *C3,KI-4: Uh-huh*
>
> *J.G. Why do you think it was hard to get community people on board?*
>
> *C3,KI-4: Well, I think there were a lot of reasons. People weren't sure what*
> *it was for and some people were nervous about coming to a meeting with child*
> *welfare. I tried to get some of the Moms I work with to come out but they were*
> *really nervous, I remember one woman saying 'how do I know I won't just say*
> *the wrong thing and the next day someone will be on my doorstep to take away*
> *my kids?'*

Thus while one of the broader goals of restructuring was to reduce the stigma

associated with child welfare services in terms of statutory child protection services there

was little evidence that this goal was achieved in any of these three localities. More

notable were efforts to strengthen community relations and foster greater inclusiveness

and understanding of the role of prevention and early intervention within the community.

Strategies to achieve this ranged from the development of a Neighborhood Resource

Centre in Beaverlodge, to community networking and education regarding the role of

communities in promoting child, youth, and family wellness in Valleyview.

While this study suggests that communities play a role in the construction of

stigma and the fear of child welfare, there was evidence that community members also

attempt to protect families from contact with representatives of statutory child protection

systems.

I mean even me, I was thinking, when I phoned [the Community Coordinators]
for services, ' How much should I tell them because, after all, they are the
child welfare worker.' (C3,KI-4)

I was always conscious when I was talking to her that she was also a
child welfare [officer] and so I was very careful what I said about a family.
(C3,KI-2)

This contrasts with the dynamics identified in Valleyview in which community

members actively pressured CFSA to intervene to address what they perceived as deviant

behavior on the part of youth or parents.

You have 14-year-old girls whoring around and nobody is willing to do
anything. These girls need to be put somewhere where they can be helped
but you have parents that don't give a damn and you have a government
that doesn't give a damn and the problem just gets worse and it doesn't
seem to matter how many calls we make. (C2,KI-6)

Community thus plays a role in both creating, as well as protecting children and families

from the stigma associated with child welfare and this role is intrinsically connected to

dynamics and social relations within the community.

Restructuring the Governance of Child Welfare in Rural and Remote Localities

This research has identified three key elements involved in addressing the welfare

of children and families in rural and remote localities: **provision of resources, advocacy**

on behalf of community members, and **efforts to strengthen community relations.**

Community discourses stress the need for provision of child welfare services and

resources that strengthen, rather than erode community relationships, fostering increased

dialogue, interaction, collaboration, and cooperation. Community discourses also stress

the need for local input and advocacy on behalf of community members both in the development and provision of resources and in the role of the state within the community. It should be noted, however, that these discourses encompass two distinct goals. One, the strengthening of relations between diverse community members and groups through increased dialogue, interaction, collaboration, and cooperation, and two, community empowerment *vis-à-vis* the state through increased local input and involvement in the development and provision of prevention and early intervention resources within the community.

In examining efforts to facilitate both of the above, this research illustrates the complexity these goals entail in the face of community diversity and issues of oppression and marginalization. As a result, the two goals identified above are not simply distinct; they may be contradictory. In Valleyview the "community" did not wish to see early intervention services that focused on creating community supports for high-risk youth, it wished to see services that promoted greater social control and individual treatment of acting out behaviors. Should CFSA "empower" this community, ignore it, or challenge its perspective? In Grande Cache AWN has been recognized as a voice for the Aboriginal community in Grande Cache. Yet not all Aboriginal residents are supportive of this role for AWN. How does the state respond to this fragmentation within the Aboriginal community? Whose voice best represents Aboriginal children and families?

The challenge for restructuring state-community relations entails how to facilitate greater community empowerment in the development and provision of resources and strengthen community advocacy on behalf of children and families, while also addressing issues of community diversity, fragmentation, oppression, and marginalization. Ashby's

law of requisite variety suggests complex systems require complex strategies of governance. This research has clearly indicated the complexity of relations between community and the state in the governance of child welfare. It therefore calls for sensitivity to these complexities, as well as thinking about how complex governance strategies might be developed. Has it offered any insights into policy frameworks that can adequately address this complexity?

In chapter 3, I introduced subsidiarity and network governance as two concepts with possible relevance to the governance of child welfare. The principle of subsidiarity suggests that decision-making authority should be devolved to the level at which decisions are carried out. However, Landy and Teles (2001) suggest that, rather than offering any clear answers, the language of subsidiarity merely restates the basic question of the proper roles and relations between various actors, while failing to address areas of intersection and overlap which constitute the real policy dilemmas. In the field of child welfare there have been numerous calls to delegate or devolve certain kinds of authority for child welfare to communities (Rothery et al., 1995; Wharf, 2002). These same advocates for decentralization also suggest curbing local autonomy through standards and guidelines enforced by senior government. This reflects the principle of subsidiarity – power being divided between levels. What this research shows is that decentralization to regional or local authorities within centralized standards and guidelines does not solve these issues. It simply reconfigures state-community relations and issues of power and authority, norms and values, and overlapping responsibilities for the care and well-being of children. Where the values and norms of certain individuals or groups conflict with those of other groups, with respect to the care or behavior of children or youth, this

conflict will be directed towards child protection systems, within whatever level they are situated, who are called upon to judge the dispute.

Network governance is proposed as an alternative to traditional and outdated methods of hierarchical command. It encompasses goals and strategies of participatory governance by seeking to advance and engage the role of community and civil society. However it also encompasses a critical view of community, recognizing issues of diversity, oppression, marginalization, and exclusion. Described as a mode of governance based on interactions between public, private, and civil sectors, this framework builds upon concepts of governance through negotiation, horizontal networks, and policy learning between various actors. Within this model, it is suggested that the state plays an active role involving collaboration and negotiation with civil society, fostering alliances across diverse organizations, and with outside interests, but also as a participant in dialogue, negotiation, and mutual learning through dense networks of vertical and horizontal channels of representation and communication.

This concept, with its dual emphasis on the participation of a diverse mix of citizens and citizens groups, as well as the active engagement of the state, and goals of dialogue and mutual learning between public, private, and civil sectors, appears to offer a more promising approach than subsidiarity for the development of a policy framework that can encompass the complexity of child welfare in rural and remote communities. The concept of mutual learning is particularly relevant to participatory approaches to the governance of child welfare; as this research shows, both state and civil society need to learn from each other the factors that are impacting the welfare of children and families, and struggle together to develop effective responses to these issues.

Yet it has also been noted that the translation of these ideas, principles, and methodologies into more systematic practice frameworks remains a substantial and unfinished task (Reddel, 2004). Two areas in particular have been highlighted. First, an understanding of specific network forms and their role in policy implementation and reform of social governance, and second, the institutional design that can effectively address the complexity of governance issues (Reddel, 2004).

In chapter 6, I identified five elements that constitute an emerging model of network governance at the local level: (1) collaboration among service providers, (2) connections with civil society initiatives, (3) engaging town council, (4) dissemination of information to the broader community, and (5) linkages between the community and the Regional Authority. A key feature of network governance in Valleyview was the grassroots evolution of participatory structures of governance within the community, as opposed to the top-down imposition of participatory structures that proved so problematic in Grande Cache.

The institutional design that facilitated the emergence of this model involved situating a CFSA Community Coordinator in the community whose primary responsibility was to engage in community organizing and education, to build networks and participate in community initiatives. This community coordinator was not given any authority or responsibility for statutory child protection within the community. Thus she was seen as part of the community and this enabled her to effectively network within the community. Yet she was also seen as part of CFSA and this enabled her to play an effective bridging role between the community and CFSA.

This institutional design may not be relevant however for every community. This research suggests that where the local social infrastructure is weak or fragmented, and there is little or no community organizing, there is considerable space for a community organizing role for the state. However, as in the case of Beaverlodge, where the local social infrastructure is strong and well coordinated and local community organizing and networking structures are already in place, there is little space for a direct community organizing role for the state.

This does not mean that network governance is not a relevant model for state-community interactions in this community. However, it suggests that, as a policy framework for the governance of child welfare in rural and remote communities, network governance requires a degree of institutional flexibility to ensure its relevance to local contexts. In Beaverlodge, for example, network development could focus on dialogue and negotiation with CFSA managers regarding CFSA's role in the Neighborhood Resource Centre, the programs and services it should offer, as well as the relationship between the Neighborhood Centre and other community institutions, and the most appropriate form of governance for the Centre. Given the use of the Centre by many County of Grande Prairie residents, County representatives may also be relevant participants in such dialogue and negotiation.

In developing models of network governance to address the governance of child welfare in rural and remote communities in Canada, three key areas were identified by this research that require particular attention within specific local and regional contexts. *First* is the engagement of municipal government in the governance of child welfare. *Second*, is the institutional design and forms of networking that address the needs of

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Aboriginal children and families in rural and remote communities. *Third* is the need for broader regional networks. The following sections highlight the issues and implications that this study identified with respect to these three areas.

Engaging municipal governments in child welfare governance.

The role of municipal government in the governance of child welfare emerged as a significant component within this study. Municipal government is 'local state,' accountable to the residents of the locality and expected to reflect their values and norms but vested with power and encompassing hierarchical relations. In Alberta, municipal government plays a role in the provision of prevention and support programs within the community through Family and Community Support Services (FCSS). FCSS is a cost-sharing program between the province and municipalities. Municipalities have a great deal of autonomy in setting their own priorities in the development and operation of these services while also receiving substantial funding; for every dollar spent by the municipality, the province contributes four dollars. This study noted considerable differences in the way in which these programs and services had developed within municipalities, and the priorities that were identified by municipalities. Some municipalities chose to develop extensive services and programs, while others choose not to participate or developed more minimal or sporadic programs and services. Moreover, some municipalities prioritized supports for youth, teen parents, single parents, low-income, or Aboriginal families, while others offered few supports to address the needs of these groups.

The capacity of the municipalities to develop their own programs and services offered opportunities for partnership between CFSA and the municipality with each being

able to make a relatively equal contribution to the partnership. In some ways this maintains the autonomy, and true partnership, of each. At the same time, however, these case studies suggest that the locality has a greater stake in the ongoing provision of the services, while the Regional Authority is more fickle in its commitments. Partnerships between the Regional Authority and the municipality increase the potential for tension and conflict between the two, but also for dialogue and mutual learning.

However, numerous respondents noted that municipal governments are struggling to understand their role within restructured state-community relations and that this is an area in which much more interaction is needed between the Regional Authority and the municipality, and between municipal government and members of the community.

> *The fact that [the Community Coordinator] will come to Town Council*
> *without being invited and share what's going on and we really appreciate*
> *that because it keeps us aware and gives us a bit of the bigger picture*
> *that maybe we on council, I mean you try, but there's so much on your*
> *plate that you can't stay on top of it all. But Council is definitely becoming*
> *more socially aware. (Valleyview Town Councilor)*

> *It's never been set up that way where we had to problem solve, it's*
> *always been someone has problem solved for us. The government*
> *has always told us what we need. Well now, you know, in order to*
> *access this money, they're saying 'no, you need to be identifying your*
> *own issue,' which is great, however I think the breakdown Judy, was*
> *in the education, they didn't give people or regions or whatever – the*
> *general public, Town Council, school system – they didn't give them*
> *enough foundation information, skip the political flowery stuff and just*
> *give them what they need to work on, like 'this is the formula, this is*
> *how its going to work,' and that's what town planners are looking for,*
> *what is going to make this human services thing work in our community.*
> *(C2,KI-7)*

> *I think that the direction that has been set over the years in Grande Cache*
> *for its Municipal Council, is that it has removed itself very, very much*
> *from what I would call the social needs of the community. I believe that*

*there is a perception out there that the job of Municipal Council really
has no bearing on what is happening out there in terms of children and
families. [Council] has attempted to scratch the surface but [has not]
made a concerted effort to a) become aware of the needs of our
community and b) to become involved. (C3,KI-1)*

*So the decisions that are made, I would say that the perception by the
community is that the decisions that affect us are made elsewhere and
we have very little input into those decisions. ...So it becomes a question
of whose challenge is it to bring this all together? Is it the Municipality?
I think maybe it is. (C3KI-3)*

Policy frameworks addressing the governance of child welfare must therefore
address the engagement of municipal government in understanding and addressing the
needs of children and families, how this is already occurring and how to facilitate
dialogue and mutual learning between municipal councils, community residents, and
community service providers, and between municipal councils and Regional Authorities.

Networking among Aboriginal residents in rural and remote communities.

This research noted the role of the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation (AWN) in
Grande Cache in addressing the needs of Aboriginal children and families. This role is
both one of community capacity building as well as advocacy with local, regional,
provincial, and national organizations on behalf of community members. Yet I would
suggest that the role of AWN in addressing the well-being of Aboriginal residents is
somewhat unique compared to other rural and remote communities in Alberta.
Community and regional representatives engage in this role on behalf of children and
families residing on reserves. In larger urban centres, organizations such as Friendship
Centres are engaging in this role. However, despite high numbers of Aboriginal residents
in many rural and remote communities, and despite goals for restructuring that included

involving Aboriginal residents in the governance of child welfare in their communities, there is little evidence of community organizations or structures directed at Aboriginal residents in rural and remote communities. Certainly this was the case in Valleyview where, despite its high Aboriginal population, there was no structure or organization addressing community organizing with Aboriginal residents. CFSA, despite engaging in considerable community organizing within the community, has not addressed this issue. Given the high proportion of Aboriginal children in the child welfare system, this issue should be a priority for future research and policy development. A caution must also be expressed that, as in the case of Grande Cache, conflict will be present within Aboriginal communities and efforts to empower one group may inadvertently exclude others. Care needs be taken that where this is the case, alternative opportunities for participation are offered.

Involving communities in regional networks.

A third issue identified by this research is the absence of policy frameworks that facilitate community involvement in broader regional networking. It was noted that community residents challenged cuts to services within their community with no apparent understanding or concern for how their efforts might impact regional services or other communities within the region. Furthermore, none of the communities attempted to advocate to the provincial government to address issues of overall regional or provincial funding of children's services. What this suggests is that decentralization has not only fragmented decision-making; it has also fragmented advocacy efforts on behalf of children and families. These efforts are now directed primarily at the Regional Authorities who lack control over funding as well as many of the conditions that are

impacting child and family well-being within the region. Facilitating broader regional networking and dialogue may help communities to understand and attempt to address the broader provincial role in the provision of resources within the regions.

With respect to Region 8, one area of particular concern should be the funding formula that is used to determine funding to the regions. This research suggests that the current formula places regions with a high number of rural and remote communities at a distinct disadvantage. Current funding is based on demographic considerations with no consideration for issues such as travel distances between regional centers and smaller communities, or issues of community instability and population turnover. These issues appear to magnify the challenges of child welfare and should be factored into regional funding formulas. Aside from Region 10 (Métis Settlements), Region 8 has the lowest population base in the province, yet it has the largest geographic area. And, along with Region 10, it has the greatest travel distances between its centers. Between Grande Cache in the south and the border of the Northwest Territories is 1000 kilometres. Region 8 is also composed of many small farming and resource based communities that experience tremendous instability.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research identifies a number of areas for future research regarding state-community interactions in the governance of child welfare. These concern two areas, first, the dynamics of state-community interactions, and second, examination of efforts to restructure these interactions. With respect to the dynamics of state-community interactions, it was noted that there is a high degree of stigma attached to child welfare

services in rural and remote communities. This stigma hampered efforts to co-locate child welfare services with community based agencies as well as inhibiting participation in participatory planning. Greater understanding of the dynamics of stigma, its construction and its impact is needed. In particular, comparison of the dynamics of stigma in the governance of child welfare in rural and remote contexts as well as rural and urban contexts would be useful.

This research focused on primarily on interactions between communities and the Regional Authority in the governance of child welfare with little attention to the broader context of Provincial-Regional Authority interactions. Examining these interactions and how they impact and are impacted by Regional-community interactions would add considerable depth to understanding of the dynamics of state-community interactions in restructuring the governance of child welfare.

Concepts of subsidiarity and network governance have been examined in terms of their relevance for models of policy development in the governance of child welfare. I have suggested that the concept of subsidiarity does not offer the degree of complexity that is needed to address dialectic relations between the state and the community. I have also suggested that the concept of network governance does offer this potential and have shown its relevance within one specific context. At the same time, I have suggested that flexibility is needed in the institutional design of this policy approach in order to ensure responsiveness to the diversity of local contexts. However, much more research is needed to develop such a framework. Within this research two areas are of particular concern: Aboriginal networking in rural and remote communities, and addressing the role of municipal government in participatory networks in the governance of child welfare.

Restructuring in Alberta appears to have created opportunities for greater Aboriginal involvement in community organizing and advocacy for Aboriginal children and families. However this research has raised questions regarding the apparent lack of networking and community organizing with Aboriginal residents in rural and remote communities. This is a significant concern given high rates of Aboriginal involvement in the child welfare system and attention should be given to rural or remote localities in which this form of community organizing is occurring and the relevance of this for other localities.

This research indicates that restructuring has resulted in many municipal governments reexamining their role in addressing social relations within their communities and in meeting the needs of children and families. They are also struggling with their relationship to the Regional Authorities and to agencies and services within their communities. Research that focuses on how Town Councils in rural and remote communities are attempting to navigate these new challenges would also be useful to deepen understanding of policy approaches to address state-community relations.

Within the child welfare dialectic, community plays an essential role, but one that is fraught with tensions, contradictions, and conflict in relation to children, families, and the state. Efforts to restructure this dialectic require attention to the complexity of these dynamics within specific contexts. Strategies of decentralization and participatory governance are seen as ways to increase community control and involvement in the governance of child welfare. However such strategies require attention to how relations of power between communities and the state are reconfigured, as well as attention to critical perspectives of community, and structures and processes between citizens at the

local level. In the governance of child welfare, the state also plays an essential role. The concept of network governance offers an approach that encompasses strategies of participatory governance, but also recognizes an active role for the state as an agent of change with and within communities, facilitating connections between a range of citizens and citizens groups, but also engaged with them in dialogue, negotiation, and mutual learning.

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