THE HEART OF A WOMAN: LEADING FIRST NATIONS ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

by

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This study examines the way that Native women incorporate the history of colonization into the way that they think about, and organize against, family violence in Vancouver's urban Aboriginal community. Using Melucci's (1989) model of collective action, this thesis focuses on the social process behind Native women's organized resistance to domestic violence. This thesis studied family violence intervention programs among Vancouver's Aboriginal organizations in order to understand the underlying process of negotiation between collective identity, solidarity, and environment.

The study was divided into two levels: the organizational and individual. The thesis studied the narratives, or discourse of both organizations and individuals who delivered family violence intervention projects to the urban Native community. On the organizational level, data consisted of promotional texts that were produced by the organizations (posters, leaflets, brochures). The texts were then subjected to a content analysis, to identify the frequency of rhetorical devices, and then a rhetorical analysis, to see how these concepts were used. On the individual level, data was collected by means of loosely-structured interviews that asked questions about why participants were involved in family violence intervention. Nine interviews were collected from individuals who worked the organizations sampled. A rhetorical analysis of the interviews was also conducted, and compared with organizational discourse.

The study found that the anti-violence movement among Vancouver's urban Native women was articulated primarily through the rhetoric of healing through cultural identity and spirituality. Both on the organizational and the individual levels, violence against Aboriginal women was explained as a result of the colonial process. The low status of Native women was linked to the oppression of First Nations people. "Healing" from the destructive cycle of family violence involved recovering "traditional" ethnic and gender identities, which in turn involved raising the status of women in Aboriginal communities.
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CHAPTER 1: THE WAY OF THE WARRIOR

Introduction

There is an old saying among the Cheyenne Nation that honours women as the strength and lifeblood of the community: "a people are not conquered until the hearts of the women are on the ground."\(^1\) If this is so, then there is hope for Canada's First Nations: the hearts of our women beat strong as Native women everywhere struggle for emancipation from 500 years of colonization.

During the past decade, Canada's First Nations have often occupied the public spotlight in their pursuit of political, economic, and cultural autonomy: the 1980's and 1990's have brought the Red Nationalist movement to the forefront of public consciousness with events like the 1992 Charlottetown Accord, the resistance at Oka, and a myriad of land claims disputes. While these large-scale political skirmishes have stolen the headlines, the work of First Nations women goes largely unnoticed by the general Canadian public.

First Nations women are working together in a bid for self determination not only as Aboriginals, but also as women, as scholars, and as individuals. The women of Canada's First Nations are on the move: they are taking matters into their own hands and reclaiming their status in Native societies not only as mothers, but as teachers, warriors, and healers. For many Aboriginal women, the anti-colonial struggle becomes particularly intense around the issue of family violence, which is one of the most serious and debilitating social problems plaguing First Nations people.

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\(^1\) From Jaimies and Halsey (1992).
First Nations women have come together on both the macro and micro levels of Canadian society to effect cultural and political change. In the public sphere, Native women's collective action includes: the formation of women's professional associations; the formation of women's lobby groups; participation in community panels on health and welfare; and the demand for, and participation in, Royal Commissions designed to address violence among the Indigenous population. In the private sphere, Aboriginal women are instrumental in the movement towards cultural and spiritual reclamation. In this sense, Native women are "pulling the cart" on the road to recovery: they are helping their communities heal from the near-genocidal effects of colonial domination (White and Jacobs, 1992).

This type of grassroots mobilization supports Melucci's argument that social movements embody more than formal, political agitation. Melucci maintains that social movements live in both the public and private realms, existing in either a visible or a latent state. Social movements, "become visible only where a field of public conflict arises; otherwise they remain in a state of latency. Latency does not mean inactivity. Rather, the potential for resistance or opposition is sewn into the very fabric of daily life" (1989; 71).

Melucci's claim flouts conventional wisdom: we do not tend to think of the mundane when we think of Aboriginal movements, women's movements, or any other social movement for that matter. Domestic violence, however, insinuates - indeed camouflages - itself into the experience of our intimate lives. In this sense the struggles of Native women are indeed rooted in the experiences of daily life, and this ethos is reflected in the kinds of stories they tell about their efforts to end family violence. It is not the purpose of this thesis is to prove or disprove Melucci's theory; instead I wish apply it as a model for understanding the social process involved in Native women's organized responses to family violence in Vancouver's urban Aboriginal community.
The purpose of my thesis is to examine how First Nations women incorporate the history of colonial relations into the way they think about and organize against family violence. The thesis focuses on collective action as a social process: a process that is expressed and understood through the use of narratives. In order to understand why women mobilize around issues of domestic violence, we must examine how they define, explain, and make sense of their own actions to society and themselves. By analyzing these narratives, this thesis will illustrate how Aboriginal women and organizations connect their lives, experiences, and in this case, actions, to larger socio-political and cultural processes (i.e., colonization).

This study draws on Alberto Melucci's (1989) premise that social movements are neither events nor entities: they reflect instead a process of complex negotiations between individuals and their socio-political environment. Further, this process is both historical and cyclical.

This problem of [defining social movements] cannot be resolved by considering collective action either as an effect of structural conditions or as an expression of values and beliefs. Collective action is rather the product of purposeful orientations developed within a field of opportunities and constraints. Individuals acting collectively 'construct' their action by defining in cognitive terms these possibilities and limits, while at the same time interacting with others in order to 'organize' (i.e. to make sense of) their common behaviour. Collective action is not a unitary empirical phenomenon. Whatever unity exists should be considered the result and not the starting point, a fact to be explained rather than assumed. When actors produce their collective action they define both themselves and their environment (other actors, available resources, opportunities and obstacles). Such definitions are not linear but are produced by interaction, negotiation and conflict. (Melucci, 1989;25-26).

Contemporary social movements must be distinguished from mere aggregate behaviour, in which individuals behave similarly but separately (Melucci, 1989;29). The now infamous Vancouver Grey Cup riot of 1994 clearly was not a social movement. Social movements are defined by Melucci as possessing the following characteristics:
(social movements involve) a solidarity of their actors; (social movements) conflict with an adversarial group; (social movements) endeavor, and sometimes succeed, in breaking the limits of compatibility of a system (1989;29).

Melucci states that collective action is the result of negotiations that are mitigated by three important factors: solidarity, collective identity, and environment. Melucci suggests that studying the visible state of collective action will reveal the details of the latent state. Thus the proposed study will examine Urban Native women's narrative responses to family violence issues (visibility); in turn, this will elucidate the processes by which collective identity and solidarity are formed (latency).

Melucci defines solidarity as "actors' mutual recognition that they are part of a single social unit." (1989;29). Webster's Dictionary defines solidarity as, "common interest and active loyalty within a group." Collective identity is also "a chronic feature of collective action", and is defined by Melucci as "an interactive and shared definition produced by several interacting individuals who are concerned with the orientations of their action as well as the field of opportunities and constraints in which their action takes place" (1989;34-35). In other words, collective identity emerges among a group of individuals who share common needs and experiences, and who recognize this commonalty.

Given these definitions, the boundaries between the two variables may not always be clear; the key to understanding them lies in the distinction between recognition and action. Gamson (1992) distinguishes solidarity from collective identity as such:

In practice....collective identity and solidarity are closely intertwined, but it is possible to have one aspect of commitment without the other. A person may embrace the collective identity offered by a movement and feel alienated from its major organizational carriers. Conversely, there may be organizational loyalists whose personal lives are thoroughly intertwined with the fate of the carrier but feel little identification with any broader "we" that includes movement constituents. (1992;61).

Collective identity can be understood as an expression of "we are", while solidarity is an
expression of "we will". Collective identity articulates a shared definition of "us", while solidarity actualizes this concept through organized agency. Solidarity carries potential collective actors from the latent to the visible realm of the social world.

According to Melucci's definition, there would seem to be something of an Aboriginal women's movement. If we review just a few historical examples of Native women's activism we can find all of the criteria. For example, the famous moccasin-mile march² to amend the Indian Act certainly demonstrated high levels of solidarity. The famous march is but one example: Aboriginal women have often responded collectively when in conflict with some level of government. The presence of First Nations women at constitutional talks and participation in The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples demonstrates that Native women's organizations have fought repeatedly to "break the limits of compatibility" of the colonial system. As we shall see in following chapters, the women who organize against family violence in Vancouver's urban Native community are part of this larger social movement, in that they too struggle against common adversaries, towards common goals, for social change.

According to Melucci, visible, collective action results from interacting variables such as collective identity, solidarity, and environment. Solidarity and collective identity of the actors are separate but mutually interdependent factors requisite to the process of collective action. Thus it becomes necessary for the purposes of this thesis to distinguish between the collective identity of Aboriginal women per se, and women's' sense of solidarity as a sex within the context of the message of the anti-violence movement.

Last, but not least, we must consider the "field of opportunities and constraints" in which these women find themselves: an environment that is embedded within a particular historical, social, cultural, and political context. If we want to understand the nature of

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²Aboriginal women marched to Ottawa in 1985 to protest the sexist nature of the Indian Act. In support, Aboriginal women in other provinces marched on other capital cities as well. Details of gender discrimination in the Indian Act appear on p. 29 of this thesis.
this Native women's movement, it makes sense to ask, "how do Native women incorporate the history of colonization into the way they think about, and organize against, family violence?"

Literature Review

Violence Against Women

Violence, particularly violence against women and children, is epidemic in many First Nations communities, in both urban and rural populations (LaRoque, 1994; White and Jacobs, 1992). During the 1991 Manitoba justice inquiry, government investigators heard from many Aboriginal participants that the abuse of Native women and children is a common and widespread experience. This claim is repeated among many First Nations communities:

It is not possible to find a First Nation or Métis woman in Ontario whose life has not been affected by family violence. Either as a child witness...or a child victim, an adult victim of a husband or boyfriend's violence, or as a grandmother who witnesses the physical and emotional scars of her daughter or granddaughter's beatings (Hare, 1989: preface).

Family violence is defined by many Aboriginal activists to include not just wife battering, but a wide range of abusive behaviours that occur in a family, or any intimate relationship, which causes emotional, mental, spiritual, or physical harm (Leask, 1995). I will adopt this more inclusive definition of family violence for the purposes of this thesis.³

Accurate statistics on the incidence of family violence in the dominant culture are difficult to obtain: even more so when those cultures are Native (Hare, 1989). For example, criminal justice and government statistics may not be reliable due to under

³The terms, "family", "intimate", and "domestic", will be used to express this wider definition of violence. "Wife assault/abuse/battery", and "spousal assault" will refer specifically to the abuse of women by their male partners.
reporting. Violence and abuse issues are sensitive topics in themselves. Understandably, many survivors of abuse are reluctant to share their experiences with complete strangers. Further, mainstream family violence literature documents that abuser(s) maintain the victim's silence through isolation, intimidation, and fear (Williams, 1992: Gelles and Strauss, 1988).

Native and non-Native women share many of the same consequences of disclosure. For Native women however, these consequences differ in both their intensity and effect. For example, not only must Aboriginal women fear reprisal from the perpetrator, but also from his family, and the community in which she lives (Aboriginal Circle, 1994; LaRoque, 1994; Manitoba Justice Inquiry, 1992; Royal Commission, 1992; Hare, 1989). If a woman happens to live on an isolated reserve, disclosure may carry a sentence of social disenfranchisement. While urban Native women are not geographically isolated, they are isolated by racism and poverty (Royal Commission, 1992). In addition to these barriers, Aboriginal women who seek help will find that there are very few support services available for them and their children (Aboriginal Circle, 1994; Blaney, 1994; Hare, 1989). Furthermore, given the history of colonial relations between Whites and Natives, many First Nations women fear and distrust government and "authority" figures in general (Blaney, 1994; LaRoque, 1994; Hare, 1989; LaPrairie, 1987).

Sampling First Nations communities is problematic for several reasons, the first of which is that many rural populations are inaccessible; not only geographically, but sometimes linguistically as well. While urban Native populations are more physically accessible, and usually speak the dominant language in their area (i.e., English or French), they are not homogeneous culture groups. Consequently, it becomes impossible to construct one survey that can make accurate generalizations across many cultures: similarly, it would be infeasible to analyze the results of a general survey within each respondent's own cultural context. Furthermore, questions of self-identity (willing to self-
identify as a Native\textsuperscript{4} complicate data collection and analysis.

The same methodological concerns exist for Native and non-Native investigators alike: fear of disclosure, mistrust of researchers, and cultural/linguistic differences all affect response rates, which in turn affect reported rates of incidence. Several Native-conducted studies offer evidence, however, that violence is at epidemic proportions in many First Nations communities: a study done by the Ontario Native Women's Association found those 80\% of all Native women survey respondents had experienced family violence (Hare, 1989).\textsuperscript{5} Surveys conducted by B.C. Native organizations yield similar results: a province-wide study found that 75\% of all respondents had witnessed or experienced domestic violence (Blaney, 1994). Many Aboriginal researchers estimate the actual rate of incidence to be even higher (Blaney, 1994; Aboriginal Circle, 1994; Frank, 1992; Hare, 1989): a survey of Vancouver's urban Native community placed the rate of incidence at 83\%.\textsuperscript{6}

\textsuperscript{4}Due to overt, systemic, and internalized racism, many people of Aboriginal descent may not be willing to identify themselves as "Native".

\textsuperscript{5}Hare constructed a questionnaire addressing family violence and distributed six hundred and eighty of them through the Ontario Native Women's Association, and affiliated organization. Only 104 full or partially completed questionnaires were returned to ONWA; this represents a 15\% response rate. Hare acknowledges that this percentage cannot be used to draw general and statistically acceptable conclusions, but she notes that "it...provide[s] adequate information which, in combination with other studies and trends, confirms the apparent conditions of Aboriginal women. A high level of response consistency (i.e. uniform patterns of more than 90\% affirmative responses) on questions of fact, enhances the validity of evidence derived from the questionnaires. (Hare, 1989: 12-13).

Selective sampling may account for these high percentages: in all cases, questionnaires were distributed through various Native organizations and at Native events. Rather than being underreported, the actual rate of family violence may be inflated by the use of snowballing and other selective sampling techniques (Chrisjohn, 1991). This type of sampling, however, may prove to be most expedient when approaching sensitive topics like family violence. When answering questions about intimate (and possibly painful) experiences, participants who have some mutual connection with the researcher might be more likely to disclose abuse (or respond at all) than would participants who had been picked at random. Moreover, how does one conduct a random sample of women who may or may not self-identify as Native? It seems reasonable that the distribution of questionnaires through Aboriginal networks might minimize the latter concern.

Notwithstanding the debate around the "accuracy" of the statistics, there is ample indication that the rate of family violence in many Native communities is disturbingly high. In spite of this evidence, there is a lack of family violence research in mainstream social science that addresses the Native experience (Aboriginal Circle, 1994; Weirzba et al, 1991). This silence might lead one to assume that there are no Native voices to be heard; that the prevailing literature speaks to the experience of Native women; that the extant analyses and prescriptions for intervention are adequate for all women; that Native women are passive victims of the colonial system. All of these assumptions would be false.

Tired of being scrutinized by non-Native researchers and marginalized by government policy-makers, First Nations women are organizing to make sure that their voices are heard and understood. Aboriginal women and women's organizations have made significant contributions to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples as well as

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7 Some Native critics (myself included) would consider any rate exceeding 0% to be too high.
provincial justice inquiries; as a result, those who make policy and deliver social services have a better grasp of the issues than they have had in the past.

While there is an extensive literature on various forms of intimate violence and woman abuse, this scholarship is Eurocentric and reflects a class bias when approaching issues of etiology, effect, and treatment. Furthermore, mainstream family violence literature, when it considers Native women at all, tends to focus on their victimization: this research misses the point. "Victimologies" downplay women's agency, leading us to believe that women are merely passive dupes of a male dominated society (Harding, 1987: 4-5). While it is true that First Nations women have been (and continue to be) culturally, sexually and spiritually oppressed, they have also resisted this oppression individually and collectively.

Most importantly, family violence is experienced differently by First Nations women than by non-native women, and as such needs to be understood within its own historical, social, and political context. Although social disorganization, social isolation, financial hardship and substance abuse are indeed contributing factors to spousal assault in many Native families (Aboriginal Circle, 1993; Royal Commission, 1992), they are not the cause: they are themselves symptoms of the continued political, economic, and cultural oppression of Canada's First Nations people (LaRoque, 1994; Aboriginal Circle, 1993; Hare, 1989; White and Jacobs, 1989; LaPrairie, 1987). "In other words, the context of colonization and racism must be included in any discussion of family violence" (Blaney, 1994; 12).  

8 Blaney (1992) and Leask (1995) include racism in their discussion of family violence: "our definition would include residential school confinement, the extremely high child apprehension rate which still haunts present day Aboriginal families, wife battering, child abuse, incest and sexual abuse, rape, sexual objectification and prostitution, alcohol and drug abuse of pregnant mothers, elder abuse and especially systemic, institutionalized and societal racism and discrimination (Blaney, 1992:12)."
The Status of Women and Colonial Process

"Family Violence is Not Traditional"

Many First Nations critics maintain that traditionally, Native communities were generally cooperative, egalitarian, and peaceful; "family violence" was not the disabling and ubiquitous social problem that it is today (Aboriginal Circle, 1993: Manitoba Justice Inquiry, 1991: White and Jacobs, 1989). While recognizing the cultural diversity among First Nations, many Native writers agree that, historically, reciprocity, sharing, and cooperation are values common to Amerindian philosophies (Aboriginal Circle, 1994: Bull, 1991: Ing, 1991: Allen 1989a). These values were reflected in the way that pre-contact aboriginal societies organized themselves, including the construction of gender and family (Bull, 1991: Ing, 1991: Coontz, 1989).

This is not to say that violence, and more specifically violence against women, did not occur in pre-contact Amerindian societies: such a claim would be difficult to prove empirically. I will argue, however, that colonization affected the status of women and men in different ways. First of all, it radically altered indigenous familial structures and inter-relationships. Furthermore, the process of economic, cultural, and ideological imperialism upset the pre-existing balance of power between Native men and women (Devens, 1992: Anderson, 1991: Fiske, 1991: Coontz, 1989). Combined with the breakdown of original family organizations, this shift in gender relations has contributed to and greatly exacerbated family violence among Aboriginal populations.

The colonial structure disrupted gender relations on four major levels: the economic/material, the ideological/political, social/cultural, and the spiritual. There is no abstraction in Western social science literature that is directly translatable to "spiritual" as I understand it: for the purposes of this paper I will define it as similar to self-concept, either a collective (i.e., ethnic/racial) or individual self.

9 This phrase was coined by the Helping Spirit Lodge Society of Vancouver, B.C., and is used by them in their family violence intervention campaign.
Spirit is defined by one's people, and the way of life with which one identifies. The people with whom and the way of life with which one identifies, teaches personhood, the meaning of spirit, how it relates individually, and how everything fits together. The language of the people one identifies with is the way one learns about the formal teachings, beliefs and traditions of one's people and their understanding of life. One learns about oneself through the actions and examples of others, but also by participating in the ceremonies of the people. Spirit becomes the core or foundation of who one is as a person. In being connected to one's spirit, one is able to connect with others (AFN, 1995: 54-55).

In other words, "spirit involves one's identity" (AFN, 1995: 56). As gender relations responded to changing environmental conditions (ideological/political, economic/material), gender roles underwent a similar transformation. Aboriginal women and men began to think about themselves differently; this change was eventually manifested in the socio-cultural sphere. This shift in relationship and identity profoundly affected the status of Native women, not only in their own cultures, but also within the dominant society. Ultimately, the new colonial structure was to become stratified in terms of race, class, and gender: an hierarchy in which Native women were placed at the bottom.

From Drudge to Matriarch: The Contested Pasts of First Nations Women

Native scholar Paula Gunn Allen remarks upon the low status of contemporary Amerindian women her essay, "When Women Throw Down Their Bundles" (1989b), and discusses the historical process of how this low status came to be. Allen contends that, during the initial period of contact between Europeans and Natives, successful colonization depended upon the conquest and subjugation of First Nations women. Allen uses the image of women "throwing down (medicine) bundles" as a metaphor for women abdicating their prior claims to spiritual, political and economic power in indigenous societies, and assuming a subordinate role within the dominant, patriarchal culture.

Whether or not women had any bundles to throw at all has been a subject of much controversy in social science and feminist scholarship. Historically, mainstream
literature has paid little attention to the status of women in pre and peri-contact First Nations societies: when it did, what was written was distorted by eurocentric (and often androcentric) perspectives. Most early observers were European men, either traders or clergymen: viewing Native women through the distorted lenses of sexism and racism, these men cast Aboriginal women as drudges and concubines (Devens, 1992: Anderson, 1991: Coontz, 1989). For example, in some Native American societies, it was (and still is) customary for the Groom--or the Groom's family--to make gifts to the Bride, her parents, and her family. Early European observers, ignorant of the customs and unable to speak the language, may have mistaken the gifts for a dowry or payment for the bride (Coontz, 1989: Powers, 1986; Jamieson, 1978:). They formed their narratives based on the assumption that, as in European cultures, Aboriginal women were considered to be the property of men.

Later scholarly endeavours are similarly guilty of portraying First Nations women in a jaundiced light:

[there] has been a long history of treating Native American women roguishly. In both scholarly and popular writing, there have been trends and popular themes ranging from the noble sauvagesse to the scornful squaw...studies of Native American women have been selective, stereotypic, and damaging (Powers, 1986; 7-8).

A perfect example of this type of tabloid-style scholarship can be found in O'Meara's 1968 version of Native women in Fur-Trade society, Daughters of the Country. "According to O'Meara, the major impulse behind westward expansion was the search for those strange exotic creatures, the 'tawny belles of Canada' who could be seduced with a few 'baubles and gewgaws'...thus imperialism is blamed on the 'dusky maidens' who lured men west" (Brodribb, 1984:93).

Indeed, O'Meara's work is immediately suspect upon reading his introduction, which is more pornographic than it is "scientific": "We shall observe the Indian woman as the victim of raw lust and brutal force. We shall view her as a slave, concubine,
prostitute, a 'hospitality gift' or simply a loan for the night to a passing stranger" (O'Meara, 1968: 23). Evidently, O'Meara found Native women to be physically attractive: regrettably, he misrepresents his own personal sex fantasies as academic discourse. O'Meara uses such rhetoric to cast Native women into the European archetypal role of "the dark woman": sensual, sexual, and seductive -- a coy manipulator of good Christian (White) men. Although O'Meara's work is undoubtedly much more sensationalist and inflammatory than most examples of its genre, such maltreatment at the hands of "Indian experts" historically has been the rule, rather than the exception.

Early feminist literature has attempted to fill in the gaps left in the wake of androcentric scholarship, but still remains Eurocentric. Amerindian women charge that mainstream feminist scholarship focuses too much on issues of gender and neglects the primary issues of race and class (Blaney, 1994: Maracle, 1993: Jaimes and Halsey, 1992). As a result, the role of women in Aboriginal societies has been misunderstood and misrepresented by the dominant culture (Aboriginal Circle, 1993: Jamieson, 1978).

Another misconception has been that of values placed on certain behaviors in non-Western society. This approach is suspect, since much of the argument is based on the division of society into political and domestic spheres. This is a false dichotomy among the Ogalas and serves as another example of the imposition of Western categories on non-Western societies (Powers, 1986: 7).

An example of this type of eurocentric, albeit feminist scholarship can be found in Sylvia Van Kirk's (1986) Many Tender Ties, which is intended to be a revisionist history of women in fur trade society. Van Kirk argues that Native women actively promoted "the material and, to some extent, cultural change brought about by the fur trade." In other words, rather than being exploited by or actively resisting colonial interests, First Nations women manipulated the fur-trade system to their advantage.

Many Tender Ties differs from previous historical studies in that it casts Native women in an active, rather than a passive role. Van Kirk debates the pros and cons of liaisons with White men: "In the final analysis, it is debatable whether the lot of an Indian
woman in marrying a European was improved to the extent that the fur traders claimed" (p 7). Although acknowledging that Native women had to give up some autonomy, Van Kirk argues that ultimately, the gains of taking a White husband outweighed the losses: "segregation of the sexes at meals was common in Indian society, but now at least, the women did not have to make do with the leftovers" (Van Kirk, 1986: 86). An added benefit to their improved diet, claims Van Kirk, is increased fecundity: due to an increase in calories, Native women were able to bear many more children than before.

Van Kirk evaluates the peri-contact status of First Nations women using Eurocentric standards, thus failing to understand the prevailing gender relationships within their own context. First of all, it makes no sense that the accumulation of material wealth would be actively promoted by semi-nomadic, albeit trading, cultures. Furthermore, this alleged collusion (between Native women and White men) took place early in the Colonial period, when Amerindian cultures were still economically and politically autonomous from the colonizers, and in fact wielded considerable power within trading relationships (the traders needed the Indians more than the Indians needed them). The accumulation of material wealth was an unlikely motivation for Aboriginal women to seek European husbands.

Furthermore, life with a White husband brought with it different, and in some ways, more severe types of hardship for Native women. Notwithstanding the debated status of women in pre-contact societies, let's consider the pragmatic implications of this cultural shift. First of all, an increase in birth rate is a dubious advantage: the conditions under which these women existed were so harsh that perpetual pregnancy and childbirth could hardly be considered liberating. Moreover, with the assaults of missionization came a heavier workload for women, due to the Christian taboo against polygamy.

Ogala critic Marla Powers does recognize that the women's role in traditional Ogala society "has facilitated her movement into economic and political roles modeled after Euramerican concepts of propriety, albeit in part inadvertently" (p. 6). Although the
traditional gender roles of Aboriginal women did not undergo drastic change, the relationships between those roles and women's economic, political, social and familial environments were altered significantly. Ultimately, the transition from Native to European family structure affected women's lives dramatically—and not for the better.

More recent feminist work has endeavoured to compensate for Eurocentric and androcentric distortions in mainstream historical and social sciences research. Two recent revisionist histories of Native women contend that crown, capital, and clergy conspired to overthrow Iroquoian and Algonkian matriarchies in order to secure the interests of colonization. These writers contend that it was the clergy that provided the final and most lethal blow to women's self-determinism in indigenous societies. Using many of the same historical texts as Van Kirk, Devens (1992) and Anderson (1991) reconstruct the status of Native women within fur trade society. Unlike the model provided by Van Kirk, these particular works present the argument that, rather than capitulate to missionization, Native women knew that Christianity threatened their political, sexual, and economic autonomy: thus they actively resisted conversion.

In her work Countering Colonization, (1992) Carol Devens submits that missionaries provided the ideological component to the process of colonization: in addition to already stressed social organization brought about by economic and political changes, missionization further strained male-female relationships by introducing oppressive models of spirituality. Devens outlines three patterns of Native response to missionization. Where modes of production were strong and stable, Native communities had nothing to gain from missionization and were intolerant of missionaries. If modes of production were unstable, "adverse economic conditions elicited a quiet, if grudging, accommodation to Christianity by the entire group" (p. 4).

The third pattern occurs later in chronological history: "By the late nineteenth century...men grew more receptive to introduced practices and values that they hoped would allow them to deal successfully with whites, women stood only to lose status and
autonomy" (p. 4). In the third phase, genders respond differently to missionization: where the men accommodated it, the women resisted it by maintaining their traditions and languages. This difference in response served to divide First Nations on the basis of gender, a condition, some would argue, that still exists today in many First Nations Societies (Allen, 1986a).

Rather than capitulate to the colonial structure, Devens argues that Native women actively resisted it: they exercised their political power in the very act of defining themselves as mothers, healers, warriors, and matriarchs (Allen, 1986a). Devens does a good job of deconstructing colonial systems, and her models are well thought-out. Most importantly, Devens points to evidence of egalitarian and matriarchal societies, providing us with alternate models of political/economic colonial and gender relations. My major critique of Devens follows the structure agency debate. Although Devens pays tribute to agency, she still emphasizes the primacy of structure by reducing Native behaviours to economic determinism (when the economy is good, native women and men reject missionization, when the economy is unstable, there were varying degrees and modes of acceptance).

Karen Anderson (1991) went one step further than Devens in her book, Chain Her by One Foot. Anderson uses a multi-faceted, inclusive approach that stresses the subjective vision of Native women. Using Marxist feminism, Anderson places these experiences within a macro-structure while drawing on Foucault's dialogic model of power relations to explain the changing construction of gender and culture in Native societies. Anderson maintains that Native women had status and power comparable to that of the men in pre-contact societies, and argues that missionization served to change the way that Native men and women thought about themselves, each other, and their roles within the emergent fur trade society. Chain Her by One Foot is both interpretive and inclusive in its methods: Anderson uses not only historical conventions but also borrows form philosophy, economics, sociology, psychology, feminist theory, political science,
and anthropology. Anderson's sources include traditional archival sources, but she deconstructs them well with carefully chosen theories.

Anderson's work takes a more holistic approach than many previous authors, but remains a linear model of history, constrained by abrupt beginnings and endings. Native women and men simply do not experience their lives in that way. Perhaps more telling is the approach taken by both Anderson and Devens to their work. Indigenous cultures are not treated as though they are living, changing entities; instead they are represented as "dead" cultures, an historical text serving as a "snapshot in time". The implicit assumption is that missionization was successful in eliminating First Nations resistance to cultural imperialism. If that were true, I would not be writing this paper today.

Power, Privilege, and Prestige: A Woman's Place

Amerindian critics maintain that, like capitalism, patriarchy (as it exists in its present form) is a relatively new phenomenon among most First Nations cultures, and that prior to contact, women enjoyed equal status to men (Aboriginal Circle, 1993: Allen, 1989).

The empirical status of women is frequently clouded by two claims that do not obtain cross-culturally. One is that reproductive roles cause women to be subordinate; the second is a belief that males are somehow intrinsically and universally dominant (Powers, 1986:7).

It's difficult to prove absolutely the status of women in pre-contact societies because of the reasons cited in the previous section: the data collected by mainstream research is not always reliable. Further, any historical texts kept by Aboriginals were oral texts, and were eradicated almost entirely by the ravages of disease, loss of Aboriginal languages, etc.

If we wish to produce work that is neither Euro nor androcentric, then we must not attempt to impose Western theoretical models on non-Western cultures; nor can we assume that any single Western theory will completely explain the causes of family violence across cultures (Campbell, 1992). Campbell, building on Levinson's (1989)
work, maintains that it is necessary to use a variety of theoretical models when studying the complexities of family violence: an eclectic approach becomes even more necessary when comparing domestic violence across cultures. Although we cannot empirically prove the incidence of wife abuse in pre-contact societies, we can look for factors or variables that are strongly associated with the frequency of wife abuse across contemporary cultures, and see whether they were present to a greater or lesser degree -- or at all -- in peri-contact First Nations societies.

Levinson (1989) conducted a cross-cultural study of family violence in which he surveyed secondary data from 90 different societies. Using these data, Levinson tested several different hypotheses based on various western theoretical models of family violence. In each test Levinson looked for variables that were most strongly associated with the incidence of family violence. He found that family violence existed across cultures, and that adult women were more likely to be victims than adult men, adult men are more likely to be perpetrators than adult women, and that adult women are more likely than any other family member to sustain serious or debilitating injuries (Levinson, 1989: 81).

When testing Resource-based and conflict\textsuperscript{10} models of wife abuse, Levinson (1989) found that violence against women was strongly associated with (but not caused by) sexual inequality in the following areas:\textsuperscript{11}

- Wife beating is likely to occur more frequently in societies in which men control the fruits of family labor, men have the final say in domestic decision making, divorce is more difficult for women than for men, women do not band together in

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\textsuperscript{10}Levinson describes Resource Theory as "the notion that decision-making power in family relationships depends to a large extent on the value of the resources each person brings into the relations" (p. 15). These resources can be either material (money, trade goods, services) or organizational (kinship networks, political alliances). Conflict models include social Exchange (emphasizing cost-benefit analysis) and feminist (emphasizing gender) theories of family violence. The former theory focuses on disparate power relations within the family, while the latter focuses on gender inequities on both micro and macro levels of society.

\textsuperscript{11}Levinson notes that "the relationship may be more complex than a simple on-to-one association between specific aspects of inequality and wife beating (1989: 72)."
exclusively female work groups, the husband's kin group controls his widow's right to remarry, and polygynous marriage is permitted (although I find no evidence that wife beating wife beating is more common in polygynous than in monogamous marriages)....Thus wife beating is likely to be frequent in a society when men control the wealth, have the final say in household decision making, and are able to prevent their wives from escaping from the marriage through divorce (Levinson, 1989:72).

In other words, when men control the production of both women's labour and women's bodies, women are more likely to be abused.

It is problematic to compare issues about family violence across cultures: it becomes even more problematic when comparing those issues across time. We can use some of Levinson's findings, however, as a guideline for investigating the status of Native women in pre and peri-contact societies. For example, in many indigenous societies, labour was indeed divided on the basis of gender. It does not follow, however, that women's work was considered inferior to men's work. In many cases, women were considered to own and control the products of their own labour (Devens, 1992: Anderson, 1991: Coontz, 1989). This type of egalitarianism might indicate that the status of women in these cultures might be relatively high.

Consider the application of Levinson's hypotheses of sexual inequality to Joanne Fiske's (1991) reconstruction of women's roles within West Coast Tsimshian society. Fiske interpreted traditional European archival accounts of this culture, and concludes that Tsimshian women did indeed enjoy economic, political, and personal autonomy separate from their husbands. It is clear that Tsimshian women were not economically dependent on men; most notably, women were entitled to own and inherit the resources of their family lineage, and retained these rights upon marriage. Women sometimes preferred to return to their natal resource territories in order to join in seasonal activities or ceremonies, and did not have to always reside with their husbands. Widowed and separated women had several options: they could return to the household of a son or brother, or they could move in with a married daughter or sister, where they were granted
full use of the household's resources and property.

Women frequently traded their products independently of their husbands, and sometimes traded their husbands' property on the men's behalf. "Because women's personal property was neither transferred to their husbands nor controlled by their brothers, women had firm ownership of a critical portion of the means of production" (Fiske, 1991: 516). This control over the products of their own labour gave women some degree of power over the actions of men: for example, women could halt a war simply by refusing to provide food and other provisions to male war parties (Fiske, 1991: Coontz, 1989).

Aboriginal women enjoyed comparable status to men in the socio-cultural and political realms also. In both Iroquoian and Tsimshian cultures, the work of women was organized and consolidated by the senior women in the household: indeed, female work parties and cooperatives were present to some degree in many peri-contact First Nations societies (Devens, 1992; Anderson, 1991: Coontz 1989:). In these cultures, as well as in the East-coast Algonkian, corporate kinship groups were formed around matrilocal and/or matrilineal ties (Grumet, 1980). Moreover, in Tsimshian and Iroquoian cultures, marriages were arranged by mothers and grandmothers, "which linked women's household interests to the larger political maneuvers of the lineage" (Fiske, 1991: 516).

Campbell (1992) links three theoretical perspectives in order to view wife abuse in cross-cultural context: 12

When critically examining cross-cultural evidence about the treatment of women in a society, the following variables must be taken into account: (1) the degree of general violence in the society; (2) the presence or absence of active community intervention against wife-beating and battering (signaling general cultural norms regarding this violence); and (3) the degree of acceptance of definitions of masculinity that include the use of violence against women and/or their dominance by men (Campbell, 1992: 240).

12The three perspectives are the what Campbell refers to as: (1) Culture/subculture of violence (the degree to which violence in general exists in a particular culture); (2) Exchange theory (as described by Levinson); (3) feminist theory. p. 233-246.
Tsimshian society is but one example of an Aboriginal culture in which women enjoyed sexual autonomy (Fiske, 1991). Early reports of missionaries and traders indicate that among Algonkian and Iroquoian cultures, divorce was uncomplicated and egalitarian: both women and men had the right to terminate a marriage for any one of several reasons, ranging from infidelity and infertility to mere incompatibility (Devens, 1992: Anderson, 1991: Coontz, 1989: Leacock, 1980). From the early accounts of Huron society, clearly family disputes were everyone's business. Family members often intervened in marital and familial quarrels, and family members were accountable to the matron of the longhouse. Mothers and mothers-in-law often used their considerable power and influence to influence the behaviour of the men in the longhouse, ostracizing and shaming them if they converted to Christianity or made similarly unpopular decisions (Anderson, 1991).

The presence of egalitarian social structures does not prove anything in itself: it remains to be seen whether or not wife beating existed to a greater or lesser degree in Tsimshian culture. If we take Levinson's indicators into account, however, it would seem that the likelihood of wife beating would be minimal. "Our evidence shows a strong association between sanctions against battering, sanctuary for those severely beaten, and low levels or absence of battering" (Campbell, 1992: 236).

Anderson (1991) asks whether the power of women extended beyond the walls of the family home? Aboriginal scholars answer a resounding, "yes". The division between public and private worlds is a western distinction, and did not exist among many Amerindian cultures: therefore, women's domestic authority translated into political enfranchisement (Powers, 1989). The most famous example is the original Iroquoian confederacy of six Nations (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, Tuscarora). According to the Native Women's Association of Canada (1992), these six nations were
Matriarchal societies, complete with a constitution that entrenched the political, economic, and personal rights of women within the confederacy. They also note that Innuit, Cree, and Métis people also shared to some extent these egalitarian principles, if not formalized in law, but practiced in everyday life. For example, Iroquoian women had speaking rights at nearly all council meetings, and the clan matrons chose the male chief, who was called Sachem.

Declared a Oneida Chief to Albany colonial officials in 1720: "Brothers, our ancestors considered it a great offense to reject the counsels of their women, particularly of the female governesses. Who, said our forefathers, bring us into being? Who cultivate our lands, kindle our fires and boil our pots, but the women?" Oneida Matrons repeated this message in 1791, to the Colonel Proctor: "You ought to hear and listen to what we women shall speak, as well as to the sachems, for we are the owners of this land, and it is ours."

If we examine women from an Indian perspective, there is overwhelming agreement that the roles of men and women in traditional Ogala society were complementary. For the Ogala and other Native American societies where the sexes complement each other, women are neither inferior nor superior to men, merely different. Both sexes are valued for the contributions they make to the society. They are cooperative rather than competitive (Powers, 1986; 6).

In most pre-contact societies, women were not oppressed simply because they were female:

One common misconception held by Europeans, and perpetuated by their general ignorance of traditional aboriginal societies and their own patriarchal structures, is that Aboriginal women were subservient to men (Aboriginal Circle, 1992: 144).

13 In their discussion paper (1992), the Native Women's Association of Canada defines Matriarchy as: a "social organization in which the mother is head of the family and descent is reckoned through the female line...[a] woman corresponding in status to 'patriarch' who is the ruler or head of the family or tribe. Any perception that a matriarchy is an authoritarian form of government should be dispelled. It must be understood that the words have been defined by men and that a matriarchal system is based on the positive concepts of equality and caring in human relations, most importantly at the community and family level and a respect for the environment (Mother Earth). Matriarchy is a form of equalitarian social system based on kinship. Therefore, the word "matriarchy/equalitarian" is more appropriate in the description of matriarchal indigenous systems. pp. 1.
Although traditional Amerindian world views created distinctly different gender roles, this did not preclude gender parity. The biological facts of menstruation and childbirth were considered to be neither unclean nor profane in Aboriginal cultures: quite the contrary. These qualities were the source of a woman's status and power among her people:

Traditional societies universally recognized the power of women to bear life. It was believed that women shared the same spirit as Mother Earth, the bearer of all life, and she was revered as such. By virtue of her unique status, the Aboriginal woman had an equal share in all spheres. (Aboriginal Circle, 1993: 144)

Amerindian constructions of gender venerated the creative power of the female: women figure prominently in the myth and ceremony of nearly all Aboriginal cultures and in fact are the central agents in most legends of genesis (Allen, 1989a). Pueblo literary scholar Paula Gunn Allen (1991) reviewed the creation stories of twenty-one North American indigenous cultures and found that her claims were supported by the oral texts she collected. These are but a few examples: the Huron believe that the earth was created by Woman Who Fell From The Sky, who packed mud onto the back of a giant turtle (the Turtle is also referred to as female). According to Navajo legend, the universe was brought into being by Thinking Woman (who is also Spider Woman, or Grandmother Spider), whose very thoughts weave themselves into reality. Among Cree and Sioux peoples, the Creator was believed to have sent a female prophet and saviour—White Buffalo Calf Woman.

Men seem to have more humble beginnings by Amerindian accounts, and unlike the Christian creation myth, were created of woman—and not the other way around (Allen, 1989a). Amerindian creation stories seem to associate power, agency, strength, and continuity with the feminine principle, and portrayed neither as secondary nor inferior to those qualities associated with "masculinity" (Allen, 1989a). How did these interpretations effect gender relations in pre and peri-contact First Nations societies? Stories are for teaching the young, and serve as carriers of language, ideology, and
schemas for social roles. It's evident from these stories that values placed on the ability of woman to give birth and sustain life are undeniably positive. It stands to reason, then that these values would be incorporated into the social construction of gender, and definitions of "masculine" and "feminine". The ideal of woman as central to creation would shape and define not only the self-concepts of young girls and women, but also of the boys and men in relationship to them.

The Politics of Gender and Power in Fur Trade Societies

Changes in the economy and material basis for subsistence altered the way the family functioned as a unit of production, which ultimately affected the status of Native women. "Traditional Indian social organization had rested on constant circulation of both goods and labor on the basis of kin and marital relationships" (Coontz, 1989:62). The Fur Trade economy introduced into indigenous cultures the idea of private ownership and the individual accumulation of wealth. "The different concepts of property were tied to two different approaches to survival itself" (Coontz, 1989:63). Sharing, cooperation, and reciprocity were expedients to survival among Natives communities, while European colonists valued these qualities only within their own particular nuclear family unit.

Aboriginal peoples also perceived their relationship to their environment in quite a different way than did the Europeans: Natives considered themselves as part of the natural ecosystem, while Whites thought themselves to be separate from, and superior to it. These values become manifest when examining the difference in food production between the two cultures. The Europeans perceived the land to be wild and empty: thus they cleared the land extensively, built permanent dwellings, and kept domesticated (and branded) livestock.

The Indians, on the other hand, practiced extensive rather than intensive food production....This pattern of subsistence produced a stable ecology...They may have been more far-sighted than the colonists realized....for intensive monoculture, such as [Europeans practiced] exhausted the soil more quickly than
Indian methods... The pressure of colonists on the land forced Native Americans into the defensive adoption of concepts of ownership (Coontz, 1989:63-64).

The gender balance of labour and resources was also distorted by the introduction of European trade goods. Aboriginal men began to trade for products that were traditionally made by women: iron pots, needles, and axes were longer lasting, and with them, men were better able to perform basic survival chores. Consequently, men were able to bypass the contributions of women to their general quality of daily life, as women's skills and products were devalued within the emergent market economy (Devens, 1992: Fiske, 1991: Coontz, 1989).

Women become secondary to the production of furs, which were of course the primary commodity (Devens, 1992: Coontz, 1989). As the Europeans increased their demands, Native trappers struggled to keep up the supply. And they did, for a while, because the Europeans had given them firearms and horses, which proved to be a far more efficient means of killing than were traditional methods. Overhunting contributed to diminishing game populations, which ultimately resulted in famine; a further stressor around which indigenous cultures had to reorganize. For example, young men started engaging in the trapping and snaring of small game -- an activity that was traditionally performed by women (Coontz, 1989).

Because of famine and the reliance on European trade goods and foodstuffs, Indians gradually gave up their nomadic lifestyles. Families became sedentary, and miscegenation between White men and Native women increased, further reinforcing the patriarchal family model within the Native world view. Diseases killed millions of Aboriginal people; societies had to reorganize around the smaller population.

Plagues decimated kin networks, disrupting social continuity and elevating the role of young male leaders at the expense of elders and women. They discredited traditional religious and medical practices, eroding the commitment to both material and spiritual values of communalism (Coontz, 1989:61).

Further undermining the status of Native women were the European traders and
government officials, who would deal with men only in matters of politics and commerce. Famine, disease, and fierce competition for scarce resources increased both the intensity and scale of warfare: the significance of battle shifted from values such as honor, to matters of mere survival (Anderson, 1991: Coontz, 1989). This caused status of women in peri-contact Aboriginal cultures to further decline.

To begin with, trade introduced material goods that rapidly replaced goods of native manufacture and became indispensable within Huron society. Second, trade altered the scope and meaning of warfare, and drew the Huron into networks of social relations with foreigners beyond anything they had experienced. But it did not, in and of itself, result in the diminution of women's status (Anderson, 1991:158-59).

If economic, political, and cultural upheaval did not destroy original gender relations, what is the missing element? Devens (1992), Anderson, (1991), and Allen (1989), point to the ravages of religious imperialism.

In stark contrast to Amerindian ideologies, the early Christian dogma under which the infamous "blackrobes" operated, holds that woman is profane rather than sacred: instead of being the catalyst and protector of creation, she is the downfall of it. Physical love between woman and man was considered unclean rather than natural, a necessary evil for procreation, but much less preferable to "the holy state of virginity" (Anderson, 1991:56). The Christian creation myth refers to the Creator as "father", and holds that woman was created from the rib of a man. The very act of woman seeking knowledge is termed "original sin", and the fact that humans suffer the wants of hunger, pain, and death are said to be the direct consequences of this sin. Within the Christian hierarchy, women occupied the lowest caste, due to "inferior" physical and mental facilities, and to a greater "susceptibility" to the influence of "evil". This line of thought provided early Christians with a justification for male domination (Anderson, 1991).

If we recall, Levinson's study linked sexual inequality in marriage with the incidence of wife abuse: women are more likely to be battered when husbands hold all of
the authority, and can prevent their wives from leaving through divorce. As we have seen, Native wives had considerable power within the family unit which was reinforced by easy access to divorce. Further, Native women enjoyed personal autonomy: there were few restrictions on their sexual and reproductive activities. Needless to say, these customs were not viewed kindly in the Christian worldview: horrified priests (and nuns) wrote home convinced that the success of the missions depended upon the elimination of women's power, status, and autonomy (Devens, 1992: Anderson, 1991: Coontz, 1989).

Missionization introduced into indigenous cultures patriarchal norms, values, and beliefs which did three things: they restricted the most intimate activities of women; they devalued women by virtue of their biology; and most importantly, these values taught women to consider themselves inferior (and secondary) to men.

Some scholars maintain that the patriarchal structure of Christian thought produced gendered responses to missionization. Women, they argue, stood to lose more in the short term if Aboriginal peoples did not rebel against European religious and cultural imperialism. From an historical perspective, we know that Native men stood to lose just as much as the women in terms of status and power. However, their loss was not as immediate, and therefore not as obvious (Devens, 1992: Anderson, 1991: Allen, 1989a). When combined with the economic, political, and cultural changes instigated by the fur trade, missionization produced disharmony and friction between men and women. Divide and conquer was the result.
"Post-Colonial" Canada?

...there's all kinds of violence. There's not just the violence of somebody beating on a [Native] woman individually, there's all the things that beat on her: the history of the Residential Schools; the legacy of the child welfare system; the discrimination in employment; the discrimination in schools....Like I remember myself being told by this teacher, who I think on one hand was trying to comfort children who came from other countries who were being put down because they were immigrants, and he asked a rhetorical question: "What would happen if all the Europeans went back to Europe? Who would protect Canada?" And of course I knew the answer! I waved my hand at him, and he looked at me - kind of in surprise, I guess - and I thought I could answer, and I told him, I said, "The Indians!" And he gave me this look of absolute and utter contempt (Catherine Brooks).

The "colonial period" did not end with the confederation of Canada: for Aboriginal people, cultural, ideological, and economic imperialism are very much alive. For written into federal law is the Indian Act, which was legislated in 1876 in order to "continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question and no Indian Department." In short, the Indian Act was meant to legislate an entire people out of existence.

The Indian Act discriminated against all First Nations peoples in general, and against women in particular:

This Act was to become the government's most effective tool in the abolition of Aboriginal women's rights, status, and identity, and it left in its wake a path of cultural and social destruction. The lines that separated Aboriginal women -- Status from non-Status and Métis -- were clearly drawn. The law separated aboriginal people through classification and created a new social order that would eventually divide nations, clans, and families (Aboriginal Circle, 1994:146).

The Indian Act controlled and defined who was "Indian" based on patriarchal lineage models. Native women who married non-Native men lost their status: they and their

15 Catherine Brooks is a Counselor at a Native-run shelter for battered women in Toronto, Canada. This quotation was taken from a video recorded interview, which appeared in Welsh, (1994) Keepers of the Fire.
children, etc., thus ceased to be "Indians" in the eyes of the law, and abdicated all previous status rights. Native men, on the other hand, retained status rights for themselves and their children, and even the right to extend them to their non-Native spouses, who then became "Indians" in the eyes of the law (Jamieson, 1978:1). In striking contrast to the rights previously enjoyed by her great-grandmothers, a Native woman now, upon marriage;

must leave her parents' home and her reserve. She may not own property on the reserve and must dispose of any property she does hold. She may be prevented from inheriting property left to her by her parents. She cannot take any further part in band business......and, most punitive of all, she may be prevented from returning to live with her family on the reserve, even if she is dire need, very ill, a widow, divorced or separated. Finally, her body may not be buried on the reserve with those of her forebears (Jamieson, 1978:1).

Jamieson further points out that other Canadian women face no such restrictions and penalties on marriage: they are entitled to live where they please, to inherit property from their parents, and to confer Canadian citizenship on their children, even if they are married to citizens of a foreign nation. The Indian act further divided the interests of men and women by introducing patriarchal forms of band council, and other tribal governing bodies (Aboriginal Circle, 1994: Jamieson, 1978).

The sexist nature of the Indian Act was first challenged in the Supreme Court in 1973 by Janet Lavell. Although the challenge was defeated initially (Jamieson, 1978), First Nations women did not give up their struggle. The Indian Act was eventually amended in 1985 when Native women marched on Ottawa and shamed Canada in front of the United Nations (Welsh, 1994). The Indian Act was amended to include bill C-31, which repealed forced enfranchisement of Aboriginal women upon marriage to a non-native: this legislation was retroactive. As a result of Bill C-31, the population of Status Indians in Canada rose by 115,000, fifty-eight per-cent of whom were women (Aboriginal circle, 1994:147).17

17Bill C-31 has its critics who argue that it continues to treat the offspring of Aboriginal women and men
Missionization continued in the form of the Residential school system, which is perhaps the most horrifying legacy of the colonial system. The Residential School System set out to do two things: to eliminate Aboriginal languages and cultures, and to assimilate Aboriginal people into the dominant culture. Its latent effects included systemic physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual abuse of generations of Native children. Although Mission Schools set out under the guise of education, the academic instruction received by the students was inadequate: ex-students report a disproportionate amount of time being spent on sectarian pursuits, with little time devoted to actual academic instruction (AFN, 1995: Furniss, 1995: Knockwood, 1992: Cariboo Tribal Council, 1991: Haig-Brown, 1989).

Interned Aboriginal children were instructed to hate themselves. Similar to the depersonalizing strategies of prisons and boot-camps, the residential school contrived to break the children's connection with their past, their families, and their cultures. Children were re-made in the image of Europeans, and taught to despise everything about being an Indian. Children were told that Aboriginal traditions were "pagan" and "evil" and "backward": children were severely punished for speaking their mother tongues (AFN, 1995: Furniss, 1995: Knockwood, 1992: Cariboo Tribal Council, 1991). Malnourishment and corporal punishment were common in residential school life, according to the existing literature. Corporal punishment included whippings, head-shaving, and public humiliation (AFN, 1995: Furniss, 1995: Knockwood, 1992: Haig-Brown, 1989). There are also tales of far more sadistic treatment: several residential school survivors recall having experiencing sexual assault and torture, either as victims or being forced to watch or participate in torturing other children (AFN, 1995: Furniss, 1995: Knockwood, 1992).

differentially through the implementation of a "one-quarter-blood" rule. While some Aboriginal women and their children can now reclaim their status under the new amendment, subsequent grandchildren can maintain their status only if they marry a registered Indian. Critics maintain that the enactment of the one-quarter-blood rule is form of racial genocide, since it ensures that two generations of intermarriage results in the loss of "indianness" in the eyes of the law (Aboriginal Circle, 1994).
Such punishment was outlawed by the Child Welfare Act (1965) and is now considered to be child abuse.

The effect of the mission school life was to grossly distort gender relations on both the individual and familial levels. Boys and girls were segregated, and sisters and brothers in some cases were forbidden even to talk to each other. Christian mores about sexuality were radically different from traditional First Nations values, and many ex students report having severe intimacy problems, especially physical intimacy with the opposite sex (AFN, 1995: Ing, 1991: Cariboo Tribal Council, 1991). Sexual abuse also impaired the emotional health of many aboriginal children. The residential schools practiced "divide and conquer" once again: men and women now have difficulty even relating to each other.

Contemporary Native-directed research reports that residential school experiences have had a direct and negative effect on Native family relationships. Rosalyn Ing charges that residential schools critically damaged Native parenting practices and family relationships: the loss of language and culture, the systemic attacks on individual and collective self-esteem of Native children, and the subsequent development of dysfunctional interpersonal skills caused the disintegration of indigenous family systems (1991).

Chrisjohn, in participation with the Cariboo Tribal Council (1991), conducted a study that examined the effects of residential school experiences on Native men and women. Chrisjohn found gender differences in the way that ex-students perceived their parents. Whether or not the mother attended residential school made little difference in styles of parenting: "This result may attest to either the durability of the mothers...or the uniform bigotry of education for women" (p. 172). This result may also attest to the greater continuity of the mother role between Native and White cultures.

18 The sample of 187 First Nations individuals was drawn from four Native communities in the Williams Lake area in British Columbia, Canada. Respondents were interviewed and also completed a questionnaire.
(both centered around caregiving and homemaking). The father role was found to have
been significantly affected by the type of school attended: "residential school fathers were
seen as having had more personal problems, as favoring more severe forms of
punishment, as giving their children less general attention, and less affectionate attention,
and less supportive communication" (Chrisjohn, 1991: 172).

The effects of the Residential School System have wreaked havoc on First
Nations families. Children were not only removed from family life in their own cultural
context, they were removed from family life entirely. Once at the residential school,
children were institutionalized: siblings were separated, and boys and girls were allowed
no interaction with each other. Children received no direct care giving, emotional or
moral support, or individual attention from an adult. How could they learn proper
parenting skills? Children were raised in an antiseptic, hostile, homogenized, artificial
environment, and then set out into the world armed with an inadequate education and
limited skills.

Cultural genocide and social disorganization were further assisted by the
implementation of the Child Welfare Act: although intended to protect children, this
piece of legislation became another tool in the dismantling of Native families. The Child
Welfare Act failed Native children because it was racist in its implementation, imposing
Western, middle-class values on First Nations families. Native critics claim that many
children were appropriated unnecessarily and placed into non-native foster homes, where
they were deprived of contact with their families, their culture, and their heritage
( Aboriginal Circle, 1994). Both the Child Welfare Act and Residential School system,
either intentionally or unintentionally, all but eradicated indigenous cultures. In effect,
they served Canada's colonial agenda quite well: these two pieces of legislation served to
separate children from their mothers, who are the primary culture and language carriers in
First Nations Societies. These strategies further disempowered Native women by
stripping them of their most fundamental human right: the right to raise their own
Carol LaPrairie (1987), a criminologist, attributes high rates of violence among First Nations populations to the social stress and disorganization caused by gender role reversal. Women have kept their traditional roles as mothers and caregivers, and though these roles suffered loss of status in transition to the now dominant culture, they still have some continuity; they are in many cases the primary breadwinners. Aboriginal men, on the other hand, are experiencing role confusion: their traditional role of provider/protector has become anachronistic within the dominant culture. Systemic racism ensures that most of them are unable to assume this role within the new culture: they are men in a world where men are powerful, but not if those men are Native. Thus Aboriginal men experience a contradiction between gender and social status.

This concept is similar to the "status inconsistency" theory, which hypothesizes that wife abuse is more likely to occur when males perceive their power in the family to be inconsistent with societal norms and values, or when these norms are ambiguous or radically altered (Campbell, 1992; Levinson, 1989). Related is Levinson's concept of "sex identity conflict", in which males lack a strong sense of "male" identity (however it is defined within a particular culture). In order to self-identify more strongly as males, these men completely reject everything that culture associates with the female or feminine. This rejection of "female" values leads to "machismo" attitudes and behaviour (the notion that "real" men should dominate women and each other through displays of aggression and violence) (1989: 58-63). Indeed, some Native men have reported that "macho" behaviour was associated with drinking, violence, and disrespect for women (AFN, 1995; Bull, 1991). While neither Campbell nor Levinson found a strong relationship between status inconsistency/sex identity conflict and family violence, this finding "does not preclude the possibility that a sex identity conflict in combination with other factors...does lead to more family violence" (Levinson, 1989: 61).

Given the history of colonial relations between Natives and Whites, it is no
wonder that many Native women view their material, political, and sexual oppression as a direct result of colonization (Allen, 1989: Jaimes and Halsey, 1992). Western feminism has not liberated Aboriginal women from anything: where female biology is used to oppress women in one culture, it is the basis for status and power in another (Powers, 1986: 6-7). We have seen that historically, Native women have been neither silent nor passive: instead they have repeatedly mobilized to protect their interests. In the early stages of contact, Aboriginal women resisted missionization; two centuries later they mobilized again to amend the Indian Act. They have lobbied the federal government for further change during both constitutional negotiations (Native Women's Association of Canada), and it was Mohawk women who were central agents both behind the scenes and on the front lines at Oka (Welsh, 1994).

Although these incidents are concrete examples of social movements in the visible state (i.e., organizing around particular events or issues) this does not mean that women are inactive in the meantime: according to Melucci, (1989) social movements exist also in a latent state. What is this latent state, and how do we study it? The answer lies in how Aboriginal women negotiate their collective identities and form solidarity in everyday life.

_They tell me that, in the Mohawk language, the word warrior means, "one who bears the burden of peace"...sometimes the battleground isn't a place, it's a state of mind (Welsh, 1994)._
The Way of the Warrior: Reclaiming our Stories

In many ways, the survivors of oppressive relationships do bear the burden of peace: although the perpetrators (as individuals and collectives) bear the burden of responsibility for their own malignant behaviour, they are unlikely to end that behaviour voluntarily. If the First Nations families are to recover from the abuses of the imperial system (the consequences of which include domestic violence), it is imperative that Aboriginal women take action to promote healing at the individual, familial, and cultural levels.

If we are going to be healers, if we are really going to help people with their lives...then we're also going to have to be warriors. Because that means we have to stand up and face the fact of violence, we have to stand up and speak out against it, and we have to be prepared to think of ways that are going to heal that violence...I think this idea of having to stand up, having to speak out, is hard on our women, because the stereotype is that...we don't have voices. And we do. And we have to continually find the courage to speak up...to speak our own truth, however we can do that. Some of us have to speak it in an angry way, some of us have to speak it in a quiet way. But we do have to speak (Catherine Brooks, 1994).

For too long, Aboriginal women have listened to their stories as told by the voices of others. As a result, too many generations of Aboriginal peoples have been deprived of their past, as their histories were appropriated and reconstituted by an alien culture. Now women of the First Nations are reclaiming those pasts, and declaring themselves as warriors, healers, mothers, and teachers.

Amerindian worldviews perceive time as cyclical rather than linear: beginnings and endings are relative rather than definitive (Allen,1989b). Therefore, in order to understand the past, we must begin with the stories of the present. In this sense, the narratives of contemporary Native women might offer an insight as to how they reconstitute the past (Rosaldo, 1980), and integrate that into their present situations. It is the telling of stories that feeds the oral tradition, allowing culture and identity to survive across time and space. It is through the telling of stories that First Nations people make sense of their world.
CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

The Heuristic Process

The heuristic process, as described by Michael Quinn Patton (1990), embodies a simple approach to social science research: "start where you are." This thesis was inspired by my experiences at the Indian Friendship Society in Kamloops, B.C. as a family violence worker. I was continually amazed at the strength and resilience of the women I met, worked with, and counseled, as they mobilized to end violence in their communities, their families, and their personal lives. As a Native woman working to end all forms of intimate violence, I am especially interested in discovering what these women are doing, why, and how they make sense of it to themselves. I have illustrated earlier that family violence among Native populations cannot be understood outside of the colonial context. It stands to reason, then, that Aboriginal women will incorporate this history into the way they negotiate their identities and their actions in relation to their cultural, political, and material environments.

How do Native women incorporate the history of colonization into the way they think about and organize against family violence? These questions revolve around issues of collective identity and solidarity: in other words, what individuals think about themselves, how they connect to others through shared experience, and how they use these connections to determine and achieve common goals. To explore these two aspects of collective action, the study was designed as two-tiered, examining the narratives of First Nations women at both the organizational and the individual levels.

The first level of analysis was intended to describe family violence intervention at the organizational level, and focused primarily on the formation of group solidarity, or group vision, and asked such questions as: what are Vancouver's contemporary Native social service organizations doing to combat family violence in the urban Native
community? How do they mobilize their resources, and why do they employ certain methods in doing so? Why are these organizations mobilizing at all, and how do they make sense of their actions to themselves and to the community?

The second tier of investigation was designed to discover the motives for resistance to violence at the individual level, focused mainly on issues of collective identity, and will ask the following questions: what are individual women doing in terms of family violence intervention, and why are they doing it? Why did they become involved? What have they done in the past to confront this issue? What is their personal vision for family and community healing? The data for the second tier of the study was collected by means of personal interviews. Through this method of inquiry, I hope to understand how the colonial context is incorporated into the way the First Nations women and men think about family violence, and the way they organize against it.

Inclusive and Collaborative Methodology

In pursuing this study, I wish not only to understand urban Native women, but also to provide information with which they might empower themselves. To this effect, I have incorporated some feminist methodology into the research design. I should begin by stating that I consider myself a feminist: having revealed this, I should also point out that "feminism" means different things to different people. To me, "feminism" means accepting that: (1) The dominant culture stratifies Canadian society not only by race and class, but also by gender; (2) Canadian society is dominated by white males; consequently Aboriginal women suffer compound systemic discrimination; (3) Canadians should strive to eliminate these inequalities; (4) equality does not mean sameness; different genders have different perspectives, abilities, and needs.
In short, my definition of feminism involves women working together to achieve social equality, not just for ourselves, but for our families and communities as well. As Native women we are oppressed first and foremost by race; this we know. We must not fail to recognize, however, that we exist within a larger social system that devalues and discriminates against women in general.\textsuperscript{19} The pathological incidence of domestic violence among Native populations might well indeed be attributed to patriarchal family structures and cultural imperialism, but it occurs nonetheless. If we wish to reclaim our traditional roles within First Nations cultures, then First Nations women do bear the burden of peace. If we -- as Aboriginal peoples -- are to heal our Nations, then we -- as Aboriginal women -- must first heal ourselves.

Although mainstream western feminism does not speak for all women, I believe that some elements of it might speak to us. I want to avoid imposing western feminist perspectives on the narratives of First Nations women, but at the same time, I think feminist methodology has some elements that might prove useful in conducting anti-colonial research. Linda Thompson (1992) makes the distinction between research on women and research for women, stating that research on women "strives (mainly) to fit women into existing or refined concepts and theories while expanding the subject matter of the discipline to include women's concerns....research for women is consciously aimed at emancipating women and enhancing their lives."\textsuperscript{20} Thompson (1992) sets out a guideline for feminist research, which states that research for women should:

(a) help women connect their personal experience in families to the larger social context;
(b) capture how women struggle against and adapt to family relations that nurture and oppress them;

\textsuperscript{19}I am in no way suggesting that the patriarchy discriminates against all women equally or impartially. I recognize that women of varying backgrounds (ethnic, class, gender, etc.) will experience sexism differently.
\textsuperscript{20}I think that here, Thompson is suggesting that research for women should contribute to the emancipation of women, and not that feminist research or researchers literally will act as the emancipators or rescuers of other women.
(c) provide a vision of non oppressive family relations;
(d) embrace the diversity among women and families by race, class, age, and sexual preference;
(e) challenge prevailing concepts and assumptions in the discipline, including how we think about gender.

In order to safeguard against cultural exploitation and appropriation, Verna St. Denis, a Cree/Métis woman and scholar, argues that social science research should operate from a position of praxis when it is involved in the study of marginalized populations. To this effect, research should be community based, and participatory in its methods: "Community-based participatory research' suggests a way in which communities without socio-political power can use social science research to support their struggle for self- determination by gaining control of information that can influence decisions about their lives."

I cannot possibly hope to fulfill adequately this broad an agenda. I can, however, use it as a guideline for conducting non-oppressive, non-exploitative research. This study was designed to be as collaborative as was possible under the circumstances, and intended to benefit both researcher and participants. Great care was taken to ensure that the voices of the participants were heard accurately and clearly: participants had the opportunity to edit and clarify typewritten transcriptions of their interviews. Unfortunately, due to policy considerations, this work could be neither collaborative nor community-based in the most pure sense. This project was undertaken in order to complete my Master's thesis; as such, the University required me to retain full authorship.

I cannot emphasize enough that this thesis is in no way intended to speak for urban Native women; neither does it presume to represent the voices and experiences of all Native women in Vancouver. This thesis was intended to be a study for women of the First Nations: my hope is that some will find it useful in their struggles against the violence, sexism, and cultural imperialism that permeate both their public and their private lives.
Procedures

Population

Due to both economic and temporal restraints, I had to limit my sample to those women's organizations that were based in the city of Vancouver, and which address issues surrounding family violence and wife assault. Urban Indians comprise the sample population for several reasons, the primary of which is that many First Nations people do not live on reserves: 20% of B.C's entire Native population live in urban areas; Native women are much more likely than both Native men and white women to live in an urban area (White, 1985), and yet very little research has been done on urban Native women.

The sample was intended to be purposive and inclusive. I wished neither to make generalizations nor predictions about social movements per se: rather, I wished to understand the phenomenon within a particular context (Native women organizing against family violence). For the purposes of this thesis, a sample was drawn from a list of 60 Native organizations in Vancouver proper and North Vancouver: due to pragmatic considerations (i.e., time and money), surrounding communities such as Burnaby, Surrey, Richmond, and New Westminster were not included (the list appears in Appendix B). Thirty-four of these sixty organizations delivered some kind of social service program. "Social services" are defined here as services related to education, community development, legal issues, and personal development. Of these thirty-four organizations, fifteen offered programs and services related directly to violence and abuse issues: unfortunately, due to lack of funding, two organizations were not offering family violence programs at the time the study was being conducted. The actual sample was drawn from a total of thirteen organizations.

Urban organizations like these usually have personnel who handle community development; these people were in most cases my initial contacts. Organizations were contacted first by letter, which was delivered in person whenever possible. In my experience, personal contact is more warmly received in the Native community, and will
usually elicit a higher response rate. A few organizations, including one safe-house, were contacted first by mail or facsimile machine. In both cases, letters were followed by a telephone call, in which I briefly introduced myself and my study, and requested a personal meeting. At the meetings I presented the organization with a formal letter explaining the study in more detail, outlining the objectives of the study, and soliciting their participation.

If an organization chose to participate, a sample of textual data was collected (leaflets, posters, buttons, pamphlets, if possible program documents, mission statements, logos, etc.). Textual data were intended to facilitate the first tier of the study, which focuses on the visible state of collective action, emphasizing the issues around which solidarity arises. A sub-sample of individual movement constituents served the second tier of analysis: this research was intended to illuminate the latent phase of collective action, spotlighting the ethos that forms the basis of collective identity.

From those organizations, a smaller, interview sample of individuals was drawn: a snowballing technique was most expedient to this study because these groups tend to liaise with one another, and individuals tend to develop networks among organizations. After I had made the initial contact in which I requested the written material, I made inquiries about who in the organization delivered family violence intervention programs. I then contacted these individuals by letter, in which I requested an interview. Subsequent contact was then made by telephone, in which an interview was either granted or denied. I had hoped for a much larger sample of interview candidates, but due to time constraints, technical difficulties, and natural attrition, I ended up with only nine complete interviews.

I also included Aboriginal men in my sample for two pressing reasons. First of all, if I had limited my sample to women it would have been too small. More importantly, I found that the women were telling me that sampling only women would create an imbalanced picture. Granted, female workers outnumber male workers in the
social service field, Aboriginal or otherwise. There are men, however, who work with violence and abuse issues in urban Native communities, and their voices also should be heard. After all, some women reminded me, male violence will not end without male healing and male cooperation. Of the nine candidates interviewed, three were First Nations men.

How does this affect my thesis? How do I justify including male voices when the title of my thesis is clearly about Native women? The bulk of the research is still clearly about Native women; they and Native children are the most often victims of family violence; and they are the most likely to be involved in family violence intervention projects. This is congruent with Native women's traditional roles as caregiver, mother, and head of the household. Likewise, they most often take the responsibility and the initiative for their own well-being as well as that of their families. If we wish the sample to be representative of the movement against violence against Aboriginal women, then we must also include the Aboriginal men who are involved.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

Organizations

Perhaps most expedient to the heuristic process is an integrated approach to data collection, which Patton (1990) refers to as data triangulation: "the use of a variety of data sources in a study."

The term triangulation is taken from land surveying. Knowing a single landmark only locates you somewhere along a line in a direction from the landmark, whereas with two landmarks you can take bearings in two directions and locate yourself at their intersection (Feilding and Feilding, 1986; cited in Patton, 1990:187).
Most social service agencies produce informational and educational literature about the agency and its various programs. These were collected for use in comparative analysis between agencies. Besides agency literature, the study incorporated data from the following sources: interviews, government documents, training handbooks for counselors/advocates, and my experience as a participant-observer in the movement itself. Patton extols the virtues of program documents as a rich source of data:

Program documents provide valuable information because of what the evaluator can learn directly by reading them. Program records and documents serve a dual purpose: (1) they are a basic source of information about program decisions and background, or activities and processes, and (2) they can give the evaluator ideas about important questions to pursue through more direct observations and interviewing (p. 233).

A content analysis of program documents and literature was used to determine the strategies that organizations employ in the aboriginal community to address family violence. One level of content analysis concerns itself with the actual scope of the movement itself: here the unit of analysis is defined as the agency, while conceptual variables are defined as those issues and needs that are met by program agendas. For example, how many agencies are there in total? How many of these groups are specifically women's groups? How many of the groups have programs that focus specifically on abuse issues? Family violence issues? How many of these groups have programs specifically for male abusers? Based on the assumption, "where there's smoke, there's fire", I am hoping that this approach to content analysis will point to issues of common focus or contention, thereby indicating common experience.

The second level of content analysis focuses upon "specific events" in the texts themselves: how many times certain shapes or words appear; whether they appear together; the number of times specific themes appear in the documents, etc. Here the unit of analysis is the document, while the conceptual variables are specific occurrences in the text itself. Looking for such recurrences might tell us something about how Native
women's groups articulate, and make sense of their experience to themselves and to each other.

This treatment of program documents serves several purposes. First, content analysis provides an overall scope of the movement, in terms of its extent and its character. Second, content analysis illustrates how Native women act collectively in response to family violence, revealing the areas in which the movement's energy is most focused. Areas of concentrated activity, or collective action, represent that which is visible within the movement. Such analysis might be beneficial to the Native community, underlining not only the strengths of their collective action, but also possible deficiencies in and/or duplication of services. Finally, thematic analysis points to the latent state of the movement, indicating the ideas around which collective identity and solidarity might be formed. Presumably, people do not mobilize around particular issues without good reason: if we ask why participants are focusing their energies in a certain direction, we may get answers that will point to the less visible, latent aspect of collective identity.

**Individuals**

Nine individuals were interviewed; six women and three men. These individuals came from seven of the twelve organizations that deliver family violence intervention programs. Interviews were tape-recorded; a copy of the interview schedule appears in Appendix A. Questions were open-ended, and focused on issues surrounding participation in family violence intervention. Interviews were transcribed verbatim. Pauses and non-verbal noises (sighs, um, oh, laugh, etc.) were also transcribed into text. The transcriptions were then returned to the participants for approval: this gave participants a chance to clarify and edit if they so desired. The interviews were not intended to be representative of what urban Native women think about family violence
and family violence intervention projects. The interviews were meant to help us understand how urban Native women incorporate the history of colonization into their views of family violence, and how this helps to shape their resistance to it.

Analysis

**Narrative, Discourse, and Social Process**

One way of analyzing complex social processes that span both space and time is to examine both personal and group narratives: in this case, the narratives of urban Native women and organizations that are involved in family violence intervention projects. "Narratives" are the stories that we tell about ourselves and our existences, and can include both written and verbal form: they are "the primary scheme by means of which human existence is rendered meaningful (Polkinghorne, 1988:13)." Narratives can also refer to "the process of making a story, to the cognitive scheme of the story, or to the result of the process -- also called 'stories,' 'tales', or 'histories' (Polkinghorne, 1988:13)." Since my thesis research includes both written and verbal narratives, this thesis will examine literature that discusses the collection and analysis of both mediums.

The texts, for the purposes of this thesis, are divided into personal and group narratives: one differs from the other insofar as context, audience, and authorship. Personal narratives are the life stories of individuals; group narratives are public utterances, made by an aggregate of individuals who share a common purpose. The former genre is verbally expressed, situation-specific, and intended for a private audience. The latter category uses written and visual media and is intended for a broader, public audience.

Polkinghorne describes the narrative as a process in itself; the result of many interacting variables. Smaller units of meaning within a narrative are arranged and
ordered in such a way as to convey both implicit and explicit meanings: these "units" constitute "discourse":

Discourse...can be differentiated from the mere collection of words or sentences. A discourse is a unit of utterance: it is something written or spoken that is larger than a sentence. A discourse is an integration of sentences that produces a global meaning that is more than that contained in the sentences viewed independently (Polkinghorne, 1988: 31).

Discourse is a form of communication, and communication presupposes social relations in that it requires both a speaker and a listener (Polkinghorne, 1988: 33). Discourse is the medium through which social reality and social truths are constructed through the negotiation of shared meanings. It stands to reason then, that the analysis of discourse and narratives will prove useful in the further investigation of how First Nations women and organizations construct this sense of shared identity, purpose, and vision.

Much of the literature surrounding theoretical frameworks for analysis reflects the ideological cleavage between structuralism and post-structuralism. Neither perspective adequately addresses the kinds of questions posed by my thesis. I do not wish to make broad generalizations among Native women or urban Native populations (as would an urban ethnographer) or to use narratives as a means of validating historical facts. I do wish to draw some generalizations however, which places me in the precarious position of trying to reconcile structuralist notions of "Grand Narrative" with postmodern concerns about "relativism".

The Structuralist school, as described by Finnegans (1988) and Cruikshank (1994), looks for latent meanings in myth and oral text: "deep" meanings that "show the capacity of humans to think symbolically about complex problems (Cruikshank, 1994:406)." This seems very problematic. Granted, all messages are social products and are embedded in culture and institutional frameworks, such as worldviews (Vansina, 1985), but this does not mean that messages are determined and constrained entirely by these structures. While this theoretical framework may prove useful in the
analysis of the sorts of written texts to be used in this study, not all narratives fit the structuralist definition of mythic or symbolic type genres. For example: the interviews I examine in my thesis are not intended to be taken as folklore, or static cultural artifacts: "oral narratives are better understood by absorbing the successive personal messages revealed to listeners in repeated tellings than by trying to analyze and publicly explain their meanings" (Cruikshank, 1994:414).

This line of questioning might seem as though it should fall under the auspices of post-structuralist theory. Certainly, the notion of "polyphony" (the inclusion of many particular experiences or voices) is central to post modernist schools of thought:

The notion of the dialogic has become a fashionable metaphor for modern and postmodern concerns, recognizing as it does that dialogue and discourse are the very basis of cultural description...The realization that people get to know each other by telling each other story about themselves is not privileged academic wisdom (McBeth, 1993: 157).

In response to the realist schools of thought, postmodern theorists "suggest that ethnography should be offered as a negotiated agreement, play, polyphony or dialogue among the ethnographer, the subjects, and the readers" (Horrowitz, 1993:133). This is one of several techniques used to "decenter authority" of both the ethnographer and the text itself, thereby legitimating, or even privileging, the voice of the narrator (Horrowitz 1993: 133). I do want to pay attention to these kinds of issues when approaching my research: post-modern methods may be effective in avoiding the perpetuation of hegemonic scholarship, which is particularly relevant when addressing the histories of colonized peoples. "Polyphony [is] urging the refusal of imperial domination, and so of the West's claim legitimately to speak for all the Rest. Neither a formal theory nor a program, this call is, rather, an exhortation to proceed humbly and with care...(Krupat, 1981:17)." Krupat offers sound counsel here, and so "to proceed humbly and with care" has become the motto of my thesis work.

Notwithstanding postmodernist concerns, I still feel the need to draw some
generalizations. To say that each individual or cultural experience is unique, unknowable, and therefore incommensurable with other points of view (particularly those concerned with structuralism) is too extreme. While their attention to polyphony is good, postmodern theorists often become lost in the particular, and subsequently become paralyzed by the endless myriad of voices. This paralysis makes any kind of meaningful social analysis impossible. A preferable solution is to integrate the two perspectives -- find a place where they meet.

More relevant to my thesis are those theories that emphasize narratives as both shaping and being shaped by social process: "Broadly speaking, oral tradition...can be viewed as a coherent, open-ended system for constructing and transmitting knowledge (Cruikshank, 1994:408)." I am not interested in explaining the narratives of urban native women and the organizations they work for. I am interested in looking at how these narratives are used to connect personal or subjective experience to historical, social, and political contexts.

Another relevant framework for analysis links oral tradition with political movements, broadening comparison from small-scale societies to include modern states...Reification of oral tradition illustrates two basic principles by which local knowledge can be appropriated and integrated into the political sphere. On one hand, interest in oral tradition has emerged from nationalistic hopes that all lost or vanishing cultural heritage can be reconstituted in order to unify a population. One the other, this interest can be appropriated as a tool of the state to foster administrative governance and to extend political control (Cruikshank, 1994:406).

**Group Narratives**

To understand why women mobilize around issues of domestic violence, we must examine how they "organize", or make sense of, their social behaviours through their interactions with others. These questions in turn revolve around the formation of solidarity among Native women. Group narratives are the public utterances made by the Aboriginal organizations that took part in this study. The textual discourse produced by
these groups (mission statements, logos, informational pamphlets, etc.) could be said to represent some sort of consensual narrative about what the problem is and what the group is doing about it. In this sense, textual narratives produced by organizations (buttons, pins, logos, posters, brochures, etc.) could be treated as contemporary versions of traditional pictographs: they are indeed a social message intended for a wide public audience, communicating the identity of the group, its underlying ideologies, and its mandate for action, all in symbolic form:

Instead of being written, pictographic...narratives are rendered with the use of a set of artistic and oral conventions. Rather than focusing on an autonomous self, they reflect a communal self. They often do not reveal deep self-reflection, but focus instead on action. They are not unified, nor do they depict an entire life - they are fragmented and describe only discrete incidents of a life (Wong, 1992: 24).

Marianne Valverde advocates the use of literary technique when studying social discourse (1991a), which include tools such as rhetorical and thematic analysis. Valverde applied these tools to the social purity movement in turn-of-the-century Canada in her work, The Age of Light, Soap, and Water (1991b), on which this study is loosely based. Valverde examined the narratives produced by individuals and groups (even the state) involved in the temperance movement. Along with traditional archival sources of information such as newspaper reports and editorials, and essays, Valverde included other textual and material data, such as posters, handbills, and matchbook illustrations.

Valverde (1991a) provokes social scientists to challenge traditional methods of analysis, advising us that, "there are different ways of considering the multiplicity of discourses around us." Valverde advocates the appropriation of some (adapted) literary techniques for use in the examination of social discourse. These methods include the use of deconstruction and rhetorical analysis, not in an analysis of textual content, but of the text itself: "the interest of critical social theory lies in understanding the ways in which social subjectivity is formed, internalized, contested, and re-formed through the struggles
of competing discourses" (1991a; 76).

Deconstruction, according to Valverde, can be invaluable in the analysis of social discourse, when adapted suitably to the needs of social science: "one need not become a convert to deconstruction as a philosophy...in order to use some of its methodological innovations" (Valverde, 1991a). The premise of deconstructionism rests upon the notion that the validity of "truth" or "reality" claims depends upon the context in which the claim is made, who makes it, who hears it, and to what purpose the claim was made. Thematic recurrences in social discourse also appear in the form of rhetorical tropes (the shape of an argument):

The literary critic Patricia Parker has argued that classical rhetoric in fact organizes social relations of class and gender power through apparently innocuous organization of tropes (Parker, 1987). This insight is very relevant to political sociologists and observers of social movements (Valverde, 1991a; 179)

The use of Valverde's method will provide insight into the basis of solidarity among Aboriginal women. Discourse and rhetorical analysis will facilitate an examination of the validity claims made by the organizations, as well as the symbols and themes through which groups choose to articulate these claims. Such an analysis will situate the organizations in a position between the individual constituents and the socio-political environment, illuminating the ways in which the group makes sense of its actions in relation to social conditions. Further, this type of analysis may point to other factors that contribute to the formation of a shared identity.

Narratology is another mode of analysis suggested by Valverde. Although primarily focused on oral narratives, "narratologists seek to uncover the general patterns irrespective of specific medium or content, and there is now an extensive body of work on written literature" (Finnegan, 1992:40). Narratology is concerned with recurrent patterns in role, structure, and plot, and with the ordering and framing of narratives. Both polyphony and intersubjectivity are also of interest to narratologists (Finnegan, 1992:40).
The narratological approach is very similar to Vansina's analytical framework for understanding the narratives of oral cultures, which he describes in *Oral Tradition As History* (1985). Vansina also maintains that social messages must be understood within the historical, political, social, and cultural context of that society. All social messages have two levels of meaning, the "apparent" (explicit) and "intended" (p. 84-88). The apparent meaning can usually be grasped by anyone who can speak the culture's language, and has a rudimentary knowledge of the society's history and organization. All narratives, however, are organized and articulated through filters such as ideologies and worldviews, which are implicit in what Vansina refers to as the "intended" meaning of the message. In order to grasp the intended meaning of a message, the audience must have a deep understanding of the culture.

Meanings are conveyed through rhetorical devices which Vansina labels; "stereotypes", "imagery", and "clichés". *Stereotypes* are recurring, idiomatic expressions in a given culture. Vansina gives the example of the word "heart" in western European cultures, which is used to indicate ideas like courage, emotion, and bravery. *Images* add, "emotional value to a message; they add resonance...Images have the property of expressing what may be complex relationships, situations, or trains of thought in a dense, concrete form, immediately grasped on an emotional and concrete level" (Vansina, 1988: 137). For example, the image of Christ on the cross, or perhaps just the cross itself, is a powerful image in Western European cultures: it embodies not only the notion that Christians were persecuted, but also a whole philosophy about humanity and our place within the universe. Images are also used as analogy, to make abstract ideas concrete (139).

*Clichés* are a combination of stereotypes that act as "deliberate and purposeful simplifications," to the plot of a narrative. These appear as symbols and stock phrases that recur within and across cultures (Vansina, 1985:139). I think what Vansina is trying to get across here is similar to the concept of themes or thematic configurations. For
example, in western European folklore, common clichés might include; the evil witch/ogre versus the enchanted prince/princess; the kindly father/mother and the prodigal child who is "lost" and then returns home, or the impregnation of women by supernatural beings.

I have problems with Vansina's model because he stresses historical "truth" and the divination of "real" meanings of oral traditions and histories. He is still privileging his voice in the analysis of the narratives of other's cultures. This is evident in his typology of rhetorical devices: "stereotype" and "cliché" themselves are loaded images in western academic society, holding implicit derogatory and diminutive connotations. I will refer to these devices instead as, "signs" and "themes" or "thematic configurations". Although Vansina is mainly concerned with historical "truth" and "accuracy" in oral traditions, I think that his typology (albeit modified) will be useful, and will provide some scaffolding from which to begin.

Since messages are social products and express the culture, history, and validity claims of a given society, then these factors must surely shape the aim of the message also. Both Valverde and Vansina ask what the aim of the message is. Vansina points out that messages are often used as social tools: using tradition as a weapon to justify certain practices or beliefs (p. 102); messages have ideological uses (p. 103); they can also be used to idealize or portray model behaviour or examples (p. 105).

For the purposes of sociological inquiry, the following questions seem particularly relevant: Who is the text's intended audience? Who are the authors? To what purpose was the text constructed? How do I interact with the text as "reader", and how might my interaction differ from that of the intended audience? These are matters of exigency in classic rhetorical method. What seems to be the exigency of the various texts? How do the texts make use of different modes of persuasion, such as the manipulation of ethos, logos, and pathos? Can this method even be adapted to Native texts? Are the classical modes of persuasion used at all, are they modified, or do the texts utilize modes of
persuasion that are derived entirely from First Nations cultures?

To resolve these questions, I suggest a modified form of rhetorical analysis, combining both Valverde's and Vansina's methods for adaptation to this study. The rationale for this approach is as follows. First of all, it is problematic to analyze each message within its particular cultural context simply because urban Natives do not represent homogeneous culture group. Many urban Aboriginal communities are composed of individuals from many different cultural backgrounds: thus they must find common ground, re-invent their own subculture, if they are to work together for social change.

Secondary but essential to this notion is that urban Natives are often forced to articulate their experiences and identities "in the language and forms of 'the enemy'" (Wong, 1992: 5). These forms, which are Euro, andro, and anthro centric, influence the construction of contemporary First Nations narratives, resulting in a bicultural text (Wong, 1992: Sequoya, 1993: Bataille and Sands, 1984). Finally, urban Natives must interface with the dominant Euroculture on a daily basis; indeed, many First Nations organizations are based on, and must conform to, European models of political/business organization (the Assembly of First Nations, for example). It is not wholly inappropriate then, to apply Western rhetorical analysis to urban Native texts; the European method should be used sparingly however, to avoid imposing western symbolism and meaning onto the texts.

**Personal Narratives**

To return to Melucci's model, collective action depends not only on the solidarity of its actors, but also on their collective identity. In order for social mobilization to occur, social actors must construct their behaviour through the conceptual definition of themselves, other actors, and the realm of possibilities and limitations. How do Aboriginal women define their ethnic and gender identities, and how they incorporate
them into their explanations of family violence? Here, the narratives of individuals who were directly involved in family violence intervention yielded some clues.

Since Native cultures are traditionally oral cultures, interviews were a particularly appropriate method of data collection. Loosely structured interviews served to draw connections between the shared experiences of urban Native women who struggle against domestic violence. Biographical interviews with women who are involved in family violence intervention offer insight into how they integrate their own identities and personal experiences within larger socio-political contexts: personal narrative, "imposes a pattern on life, constructs out of it a coherent story...[because it] establishes certain stages in an individual life, makes links between them, and defines, implicitly or explicitly, a certain consistency of relationship between the self and outside world (Pascal, cited in Bataille and Sands, 1984:16)."

Works investigating indigenous concepts of colonial history demonstrate how people use images of the past to create present realities; how they do so in the context of a dialogue with Euro-American ideologies like Christianity; and how they may integrate such concepts into their own narratives to make sense of and to explain the contemporary predicament in which they find themselves, encapsulated as they are within boundaries of larger states (Cruikshank, 1994: 417).

Autobiographical works by Aboriginal women "tend to be retrospective rather than introspective," using the present as a framework for analyzing and organizing the past (Bataille and Sands, 1984:16). Reconstructing the past itself is not the aim of this research: I do not intend to portray an historical account of colonization from an Aboriginal woman's perspective. I wish instead to understand how these women incorporate historical knowledge, situations, and events into their present interpretations of self, culture, and community: "Orally narrated accounts about the past explicitly embrace subjective experience...facts enmeshed in the stories of a lifetime provide a number of insights about how an understanding of the past is constructed, processed, and integrated into one's life (Cruikshank, 1994: 408)."
For these reasons I agree with Rosaldo in his critique of Vansina's approach:

Oral sources are cultural documents that organize perceptions about the past, and not containers of brute facts. All facts are culturally mediated. Stories people tell about themselves should thus be conceived less as documents to be restored than as texts to be read. One must study historical consciousness because it is the medium through which oral testimonies present the shape of the past (Rosaldo, 1980: 97).

Vansina's method is meant to draw out implicit global meanings from oral texts, and to draw broad generalizations about "meaning" and "historical fact" within and between cultures. In analyzing the personal narratives of Aboriginal women, I wish to make generalizations about how they use those narratives to connect both experience and identity to larger social, political, and historical processes—not to deduce any subconscious or latent "facts" or meanings within the narratives themselves.

In her work, Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School, Celia Haig-Brown (1988) emphasizes the importance of storytelling in the humanities and social sciences, as well as the value of a researcher who "is an embedded participant, not a distant, uninvolved observer" (Pokalow; Haig-Brown, p 149-150). Questions of identity, representation, and voice are hotly contested among both Native and non-Native scholars (Sequoya, 1993). Taking Sarris' advice, I must situate myself in relation to the narrator, the audience, and the text: I am an urban Native woman who has been directly involved in family violence intervention. What are the effects of being an "insider" or an "outsider" on claims of "truth", "validity", and "objectivity"? This is not an argument that I wish to entertain here: I do not believe, however, that being an "insider" necessarily privileges my understanding of the text, nor does it guarantee research that is more "valid", "objective", or "true" than if I were an "outsider". At most, my situation as an urban Native woman may facilitate analysis and decrease the possibility of misunderstandings.
Audience, Text, and Dialogue

Even though I want to look for commonalities and breadth of experience among and between narratives, I want to avoid imposing any kind of pre-conceived analytic categories: urban Native communities are usually composed of many different culture groups, and do not constitute a homogeneous population. Each individual will be constructing her narrative from her particular perspective, while each group narrative represents a conglomerate of experience and voices: as urban Natives, we must continually struggle to re-invent ourselves as a more unified whole.

A further consideration is the negotiation of my role as the researcher/editor: I want to avoid privileging my own voice and perspective when analyzing and interpreting the texts. According to Greg Sarris, Pomo literary critic, the key to non-hegemonic cross-cultural textual or discourse analysis lies in the interaction between the reader and text. Native American discourse must be deconstructed not just in terms of its textual content, but also in terms of the process by which the reader interprets the text: "[Some critics ] might...attempt...to locate and account for [an] Indian presence or...themes..(in the text), but they do not consider how they discovered or created what they as saw Indian(Sarris, 1993; 123)."

Rather than impose preconceived notions of "Indianness" onto the text, the reader should deconstruct their own interaction with the text, situating themselves within their own historical/cultural context. In this way, textual analysis becomes a dialogue facilitating cross-cultural communication: "genuine critical activity...cannot occur unless critics can both inform and be informed by that which they encounter (Sarris, 1993;128).

A more clearly stated purpose for critical thinking might be to foster a process or attitude that enables the individual to, as Gramsci says, "know thyself as a product of the historical process to date" which can only come about...that history and assumptions about it are challenged....critical discourse and any activity that predicates interpretive acts depend largely on the thinker's tie to a given knowledge system and on the linguistic features associated with the belief system. If critical thinking or so-called rationalism does not at the same time point to its intrinsic limits, to its tie to the cultural and political realities that shape thinkers as
knowledgeable subjects, then a system that excludes difference, culturally or otherwise, is likely to be perpetuated. (Sarris, 1993:153).

Sarris criticizes Bataille and Sands for this oversight, pointing out that Native women's autobiographies are as much a construct of the editor/researcher as they are a product of the narrator's experiences:

[they] seem to forget that these themes or thematic patterns [tradition, culture, and the "reality" of Native women's lives] not only may have been invented by them for the texts and understood in terms of their particular interests...but also may emerge in the written documents as a result of the particular interests of the recorder-editors. Bataille and Sands never question how their themes may or may not be relevant from the point of view of the Indian women narrators (Sarris, 1993:89-90).

To take Sarris' advice then, I must situate myself in relation to the narrator, the text, the audience, and the context in which the narrative is told. Issues to remember while analyzing the texts include: that the stories will be told to me in quite a different way than if they were told to someone else; and I will interpret these stories quite differently than would another woman. In other words, I will not treat the transcriptions of the oral texts as static, or as speaking for themselves. I must keep in mind that (1): I am focusing the narratives to suit my own purposes (i.e., to answer particular types of questions about particular types of situations, and (2): that these narratives are unique and particular to the context in which they were told. As a critic, I must bear in mind my own biases and history when interpreting the textual data. As a sociologist, I must modify literary methods to suit sociological purposes. How can both imperatives be addressed? Building on Sarris' proposal, I will situate the texts themselves in relation to the dominant socio-political, economic, and cultural environment: such deconstruction will facilitate not only textual analysis, but also the social analysis of the process by which collective action results.
CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS

Reviewing Collective Action

At this point it is necessary to revisit Melucci's model of collective action, in order to contextualize the following analysis of the data. Summarized briefly, social movements are the product of social process. This process is both historical and cyclical, and exists in both visible and latent states. The latent state of resistance is the thread that connects episodes of high visibility, and is "woven into the fabric of daily life." According to Melucci, social movements possess the following characteristics: they involve a solidarity of its actors; they conflict with an adversarial group; they endeavor, and sometimes succeed, in breaking the limits of compatibility of a system (1989:29).

In this sense, the anti-violence activities of the women and organizations described in this thesis can be said to be part of a larger, anti-colonial movement among Canada's First Nations. In previous chapters, we have seen how Aboriginal women's struggles towards self-determination (the moccasin-mile march, the formation of political lobby groups, organized protest at both Meech Lake and Charlottetown) were articulated as part of a larger social movement towards decolonization. Like their predecessors, there is considerable solidarity among the actors involved with Vancouver's urban Native organizations, and the groups are in constant conflict with an adversarial group (although the identity of the adversary may prove to be a surprise to some). Furthermore, the groups in this study strive to break "the limits of compatibility" within the Canadian socio-political system. Unlike their predecessors, however, Vancouver's anti-violence groups do not mobilize around highly visible issues or events in the political arena: their struggles take place instead within the continuous, private world of home and family. If the potential for social activism is sewn from the fabric of everyday life, then surely these Aboriginal women possess material enough to fashion an entire revolution.

Recall that Melucci views collective action as the result of a process that is
moderated by three important factors: the solidarity of the actors, their collective identity, and their environment. According to Melucci, individuals 'construct' their actions through defining environmental possibilities and limitations, and organize these actions through the interacting with similar "others." In doing so, actors "define both themselves and their environment (other actors, available resources, opportunities and obstacles). Such definitions are not linear but are produced by interaction, negotiation and conflict (Melucci, 1989:25-26)." Melucci suggests that studying the visible state of collective action will reveal the details of the latent state. This thesis examines Urban Native women's narrative responses to family violence issues (visibility) in order to elucidate the processes of negotiation between collective identity, solidarity, and environment (latency).

The purpose of my thesis is to examine how the history of colonial relations influences the way Native women think about and organize against family violence. The thesis focuses on collective action as a social process: a process that is expressed and understood through the use of narratives. In other words, in order to understand why women mobilize around issues of domestic violence, we must listen to their stories. By analyzing these narratives, this thesis will illustrate how Aboriginal women and organizations negotiate collective identity and solidarity, connecting their lives, experiences, and in this case, actions, to larger socio-political and cultural processes (i.e., colonization).

In the first section of this chapter, the actual boundaries of the movement are mapped out for the reader to provide an outline or sketch of the actual programs, services, and networks: a sort of "snapshot" of the community at the time the data was collected. The second part of the chapter discusses the textual discourse produced by these groups, which are referred to as "group narratives". By subjecting the group narratives to content analysis, I identify specific rhetorical devices, as well as how often they are used across organizations. The group narratives are then subjected to a rhetorical analysis, in
which sub textual, symbolic, and thematic connotations are discussed. The final section of the chapter is a creative synthesis of both individual and group narratives. Here, the individual narratives are treated in a similar manner to, but are not rendered separately from, the group narratives. The interviews are used instead to illustrate how collective identity is defined and related to group solidarity, and how these factors shape, and are shaped by, their material and conceptual environments.

**Programs and Services: The Scope of Mobilization**

**Organizations**

At the time the data was collected, there were thirteen Native-directed agencies in total that provided social services to Vancouver's Aboriginal community, and which offered programs and services that addressed violence and abuse issues. The total scope of the programs and services offered by these thirteen organizations can be found in Figure 1.

**Table 1. Range of Services Offered by Native Organizations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Service</th>
<th>#Group's Main Focus</th>
<th>#Groups Offering Program</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addictions / Substance Abuse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Services / Job Skills</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Services and Gov't Advocacy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Skills / Family Counseling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral Services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter / Accommodation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife Abuse / Family Violence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table illustrates, only three of these organizations were specifically concerned with family violence; two for women, one for men. Both women's organizations concern themselves with improving the status and quality of life of
Aboriginal women. One is a safe house for battered Native women and their children: the other is an advocacy group that aids Aboriginal women with issues related to status, human and civil rights. Both organizations offer violence and abuse intervention programs as well as legal advocacy. The third organization offers a spousal assault intervention program for Native men.

Regardless of the focus of various organizations, all of them offered referral services to other agencies, indicating that they network with each other. Second, nearly all the groups, regardless of focus, offered some sort of programming that involved community and cultural development. Most of the groups offered a range of services, which were designed to meet a spectrum of client needs. For example, the Addictions group not only offers individual counseling and healing circles for substance abuse, they also offer art therapy, a women's theater group, and cooking classes (nutrition). The shelter not only offers women a safe place to stay, but also offers addictions counseling and cultural activities.

Family violence and substance abuse issues were addressed by nearly all the agencies. Legal issues, parenting skills, and shelter were the least frequently offered. However, the table does not indicate that there are several Native agencies in Vancouver whose main purpose is to provide legal advice and advocacy. Two of these agencies are included in the table because they not only focused on legal services, but also offered counseling for violence and/or substance abuse issues. Four of the remaining agencies also offered legal advice and advocacy as one of their programs, if not as their direct mandate.

The boundaries of this movement, in terms of the number of organizations, the types and number of services offered, staff and governance are not static in the urban Native community: there is a certain fluidity among and between organizations. There are several reasons for this effect. First of all, funding for social service organizations is hard to come by. Most of these organizations are funded in whole or in part by the
government (either federal or provincial), and are usually funded by a combination block and piecemeal formats. For example, an organization might apply for block funding from the federal government (Aboriginal and Northern Affairs) or receive funding in whole from a certain ministry (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Services, Ministry of Justice, etc.) for basic operating and start-up costs, and then apply for additional funding for specific projects through special funding programs and agencies within Provincial ministries (e.g. Ministry of Women's Equality). As a result, many Native organizations have no certainty about which programs will receive funding with each new fiscal year: indeed, they have no guarantee that the organization itself will continue to exist.

Personnel also are fluid among and between organizations for several reasons. First of all, a scarcity of resources precludes job security: if the program gets cut, so do those who deliver it to the community. Second, the burn-out rate for this type of work is very high. Counselors, court workers, and social workers can take the mental, emotional, and spiritual exhaustion only for so long. Moreover, the needs are so intense, the demand for services so high, and those people who are suited and qualified to meet those needs are so few, that burn-out among Aboriginal counselors is further compounded and accelerated. Finally, personnel tend to flow between organizations, both simultaneously and sequentially. For example, it is quite common for a staff or volunteer member at one First Nations organization to sit on the board of another, or to have been involved with several other organizations in the past. In fact, seven out of the nine interview participants either currently belonged to other organization(s) or had done so in the past.

These patterns illustrate a tightly woven network of individuals who work/counsel in the social service field in Vancouver. What can account for this phenomenon? This effect could be due to several factors, the first of which is that workers/administrators are drawn from an extremely small labour pool, ideally consisting of qualified applicants of First Nations heritage. Second, Aboriginal organizations are not immune from nepotism, and this must be considered as a possibility. I would like to point out, however, that it
may be difficult to avoid nepotism given the small size of the labour pool.

Gamson (1992) writes that interpersonal relationships and networks such as these are integral to the formation and functioning of social movements. He notes, however, that this can be stifling to some, resulting in "the tyranny of the group" (p. 63-64). More than one interview participant expressed concern about past corruption and nepotism in band politics and urban organizations. One woman noted that many urban Native organizations have recently implemented policies to discourage nepotism:

A lot of organizations have that policy in place. Especially nonprofit organizations ...where nepotism is dying and hopefully will die because I believe that was one of the major problems we had with our organizations--is that they were run by one family group or another and all others were excluded (no. 4).

Evidently, First Nations organizations are not immune from the conflict and controversy that plagues all social movements. Here, the controversy revolves around the formation of family oligarchies -- a problem recognized in the extant anti-nepotism policies. More importantly, these policies reflect an effort to address the problem of nepotism, and their existence holds potential for positive change. The implementation of anti-nepotism regulations will widen the scope of constituents and movement carriers. Furthermore, the enactment of such policies will allow organizations to maximize their potential by utilizing the best talents for the right jobs, rather than assigning patronage (matronage?) appointments.

**Individuals**

The nine interview participants came from varying First Nations culture groups: these included Cree, Coast Salish, Interior Salish, Tsimshian, Ojibway, Métis, and Mohawk. No one group was significantly represented more than any other. The participants tended to be mature adults, between 35-56 years old. Only one participant was under 30. Seven out of the nine participants have been involved previously with at least two other Native organizations, the number of which increased with the number of
years participants have been active in Aboriginal issues. All the participants report having been involved with general Native issues for at least five years. Two of these participants have been active for at least two decades, while two others report having had thirty years experience.

All of the interview respondents have been involved with family violence intervention and/or recovery programs for at least five years. I included a question about marital status in the interview schedule because I initially thought there might be some correlation between this variable and the number of years involved with family violence work. Due to the sensitive and personal nature of the topic, however, I was reluctant to ask participants outright if they were survivors of abusive family relationships, and whether this had influenced their choice of occupation. I discovered that there was no need to resort to this obscure form of inquiry: when asked why they became involved with violence and abuse issues, seven participants (four women, three men) responded quite candidly that it was because they had directly experienced and/or witnessed family violence in their childhood and/or their adult life. Two respondents (both women) became involved in domestic violence intervention because "it-came with the job", in other words, they were compelled to address this problem when they were hired to deliver social service programs to their respective communities.

Safety, Support and Spirituality: The Latent States of Resistance

Organizations, such as the ones cited in this study, are able to bridge collective identity and solidarity by creating free spaces, using pre-figurative politics, and forming "affinity" groups. These tactics are meant to create social support for movement constituents (Gamson, 1991). Gamson describes the concept of "free spaces" as
Movements that practice high-risk activism operate in an adversarial environment and have a special need to create a protected sub environment. Rather than creating such spaces de novo, movements try, when possible, to transform existing communal institutions into such protected environments (Gamson, 1991:62).

This notion of "free space" embodies more than physical places in the corporeal world; it refers also to conceptual space in the metaphysical realm, where individuals are free from emotional, mental and spiritual harm. Once given sanctuary from oppressive social structures and relationships, individuals then have the freedom to express themselves. "Free" spaces are safe spaces. Community, cultural, or drop-in centres often serve this function in the urban Native community, as well as do storefront education projects.

For Aboriginal women, "free space" means physical and/or conceptual space that is free from racism and sexism. For example, one organization offers a project called, "Quilts of Pride", a blanket-making workshop that also serves as a venue for learning both traditional skills and family histories. Similarly, another group sponsors a "traditional mother's dance troupe": Through traditional Aboriginal song and dance, First Nations women develop their self-esteem; they rediscover their histories, enhance their parenting skills, and pursue spiritual growth. Workshops and cultural activities also serve a latent agenda: they create safe places for women to gather. Here, First Nations women are able to gain support and learn from each other, sharing their experiences, concerns, and ideas.

These Aboriginal groups are not practicing "high-risk" activism in the sense that Gamson defines it. Unlike the Black civil rights activists, these Native women's groups are not mobilizing around a highly visible, political struggle. Family violence is considered by the dominant culture to be a personal, rather than political problem.

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Further, the whole population of Aboriginal women is not large enough to pose a threat to the dominant political system or culture. Finally, there is little chance that Aboriginal women will riot in the streets, given our small numbers and the fact that we are would have to find child care—which costs money--to participate in the riot, whilst taking care not to get arrested so we could be home at the promised hour. Consequently, the offices of the anti-violence groups are not likely to be under threat of organized backlash attacks, such as the rash of bombings of black churches in 1996 American deep south.

Although the political risks to the activists themselves are not great, the personal risks to the clients are tremendous. Intimate forms of violence, and violence against women, is embedded in our everyday experience: our homes, our families, our communities, our roles as mothers, sisters, daughters, etc....we cannot easily detach ourselves from these relationships, and nor would we necessarily want to. For the women who wish to escape abusive situations, the stakes are very high indeed. First of all, there is the immediate threat of physical violence for many of the women (and their children) who seek help from counselors, or refuge in safe houses. For the women who work on the front lines of the family-violence battle, the risk of assault is very real as well.

Most importantly, many times Native women are afraid to seek help because they are afraid that social services will take their children away from them, especially if they or their partner have substance abuse issues, or if the case is complicated by incest. Indeed, many times abusive partners use this fear as a weapon, threatening to expose the woman to the authorities as an unfit parent, or by admonishing her that if she seeks help, the counselor will deem her unfit. Either way, she fears that social services will remove her children from her care. Given the history of child apprehension in Aboriginal communities, Native women must take this threat seriously. If Aboriginal women represent one of the most economically, socially, politically and sexually oppressed minorities in Canada, then our family relationships are sometimes all that we have. For too many First Nations women, seeking help can mean risking everything.
Thus affinity groups organize quilting bees and women's theater groups and cooking classes: these sorts of activities are far less likely to provoke abusive and controlling behaviour from the partner. Furthermore, it's hard to argue that your spouse shouldn't take free cooking classes when you stand only to benefit from the results. Similarly, engaging in spiritual and cultural activities is less likely to be interpreted as threatening by abusive partners and other family members, since they are also able to take part in similar activities.

References to the metaphysical and to spirituality permeate the rhetoric of this anti-colonial, women's movement, and has played a similar role in other social movements as well. Gamson (1992) cites examples of Protestant churches providing "free-spaces" for blacks involved in the civil rights movement in the 1960's. Indeed, spirituality and notions of the sacred are central elements in both movements. Unlike Blacks in the civil rights era, however, Natives are not using mainstream sectarian institutions to find freedom within religion. Their justification rests instead upon an institutionalized value: "freedom of religion" or choice.

In many Indigenous North American belief systems, the universe is regarded as a balance of the four basic elements: in humans, their incarnations are body, mind, heart, and spirit. To many Native North Americans, the spiritual subsumes all earthly existence, and cannot be separated from matters in daily life. Neither can spirituality be confined to the dictates of a single, grand narrative: this attention to differences makes spirituality an inveterate component in the process of decolonization.22 Both the ideology and the practice of Amerindian ceremonies, rites, and rituals are in themselves anti-hegemonic.

22Just as religion has endeavoured to liberate humanity, it has also been employed towards human bondage. The social purity movement in turn-of-the-century Canada rested squarely on the canons of Christian ideology, and used religious allegories, themes, and images with great zeal (Valverde, 1992b). It should be noted here that Valverde views this movement as an effort of the W.A.S.P. patriarchy to justify and maintain the status quo. The difference here being that, while Native and Black groups used religion as a vehicle for emancipation, the social purists used it as a tool of oppression.
Religious ideology also serves to embody values and beliefs about the way society should be: these ideals are often articulated through allegories made on moral and ethical arguments. Religion and spirituality naturally lend themselves to what Breines (1982) described as, "pre-figurative politics", in which the envisaged social and individual ideals are practiced in everyday life. For example, an analysis of both group and personal narratives revealed the use of spirituality as a rhetorical device. Many of the groups surveyed used spiritual imagery in general and individuals expressed themes surrounding woman-as-sacred. In both group and individual narratives, children and family are of central importance. Traditional women's roles were most commonly referred to as mothers, healers, and leaders. Both individuals and organizations tended to view the reclamation of these roles as a moral imperative, since they are believed to be a "sacred trust" bestowed upon women by the Creator.

Organizations may also offer its constituents assistance with basic needs for subsistence and moral support. Gamson refers to these as "affinity groups":

an affinity group, which is small (perhaps ten to twenty people), takes responsibility for activating its own members and participates as a unit in collective action. In addition to providing members with emotional support, these groups are typically expected to provide many of their instrumental needs for transportation, food and shelter (Gamson, 1992:63).

This type of group is evident in the scope of the movement, although I do not agree with Gamson that affinity groups need always be this small. Many of the groups in this study provide services that meet basic subsistence needs of Aboriginal women and their children: if not providing food, shelter, and clothing directly, some organizations help indirectly by showing Native women how to access and utilize services and programs which will do just that. If battered women need legal counsel about family law,

criminal law, or child apprehension, the groups meet those needs. Many of the organizations have support groups for women and children in some form or another: these services include parenting programs, dance troupes, cooking night, etc., as well as healing circles (similar to group therapy). These types of strategies are meant to encourage networking among clients, so that they will form their own support networks, rather than relying on the agency alone for emotional and moral support.

What does this have to do with engendering solidarity among the target population? Participants in the movement are meeting these instrumental needs because they must. Due to systemic racism and sexism in both the education system and the labour market, First Nations women and their children are among the most impoverished groups of people in Canada. For many of these women, the kind of assistance offered by affinity groups is essential to their basic survival. Native women are not likely to see past their present situations and work for social change if they are being constantly dragged down by poverty. Further, many of these groups help Native women navigate the labyrinth of bureaucracy that both reflects and perpetuates hostile social structures. Affinity groups create solidarity among urban Native women and the carriers of the movement (organizations) because people are more likely to have some kind of loyalty to a group that offers not only material and moral support, but also a sense of security or belonging. Once instrumental needs are met, then women are better equipped to address other issues that will affect social change.

Affinity groups supply more than just immediate, short-term support: they provide the women with information. Native women are able to access information about the system, and their rights within it. What is more important, these groups provide Aboriginal women with information that reveals alternate visions of history, race, and gender. Affinity groups are key in the movement towards decolonization. A fair amount of "consciousness-raising" takes place in such circles; here, the purpose is to debunk the old, colonial and worldview, along with its version of history, spirituality, culture, and
gender. Once old attitudes and identities have been stripped away, they can be replaced. The old worldview can now transformed into an empowering vision, rather than a defeating one.

Creating Consciousness

Gamson (1992) maintains that, in order to counteract hegemonic discourse within the dominant (or in this case, colonial) culture, the carriers of social movements need to author an alternative consciousness. In this case, Natives are a step ahead because they are united as a "race" of people. They all share the experience of being a colonized person, whether they articulate that experience overtly or not. However, simply recognizing oneself as Native is not enough: many people express that they have previously held negative associations with "Indianness".

Well I, like a lot of people, I grew up being ashamed of my background. I grew up in an alcohol and drug environment home, and I grew up not being very proud of who I was and who I represented, and so I was very ashamed of being Native, so I didn't have too much contact with Native organizations growing up as a youth (no. 3: male).

Some people of mixed Native - White descent may recognize their Aboriginal heritage, but may not identify themselves as Native. When asked why, these people usually state that they, their Native parents or Grandparents held negative associations with Native identity, and so discouraged this consciousness from developing in subsequent generations.

I was non-Native as far as I was concerned... but...I was called Indian lots of times and...looking for a job or something like that,...there is a lot of discrimination or whatever. But I never knew anything about my past...I knew I was Native but...after being out of the convent I didn't want to be Native anymore. You know--that type of thing? And I just grew up and went into the world [and was] always involved with non-Natives...and married a non-Native and so...even my husband...when he use to beat me up...when he was drunk, that's what he used to call me; "dirty Indian", and all this stuff...so being called all these things all your
younger years you didn't want to be an Indian. That's the way I felt like, you know. If I could get away with not being one I didn't want to be one and then so ... I spent all my years like that. Raised my children the same way and everything like that (No. 5: female).

For movement carriers, the first order of business is to remove negative connotations from "Indianness" so that people will be less reluctant to identify as a person of Aboriginal descent: the identity must instill pride rather than shame. How do they do this? Through the process of restructuring, or reframing what it means to be a person of Aboriginal descent. "Frames" are schemata which allow people to interpret and make sense of, the world around them. Benford and Snow (1992) first developed the idea of collective action frames:

We see movement organizations and actors as actively engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders or observers. This productive work may involve the amplification and extension of extant meanings, the transformation of old meanings, and the generation of new meanings.24

Instead of accepting externally imposed (not to mention racist) representations of "Indian", the movement carriers re-frame them: consequently we have terms like "Native", "Aboriginal", and "First Nations." The latter definition is a very strong statement in itself, implying political, cultural, and economic sovereignty in its reference to nationhood.

The emergence of these self-referent terms exemplifies what Benford and Snow call frame transformation: in order to introduce radical, new perspectives, "new values may have to be planted and nurtured, old meanings or understandings jettisoned, and erroneous beliefs or 'misframings' reframed".25 This "frame transformation" has been so successful that the term "Indian" is disappearing from the public lexicon in many First Nations communities. Only two organizations and one interview respondent used "Indian" as a self-referent. When it is used, it no longer holds the same connotation for

many Native people:

In 1988 I went to this pre-employment course at Urban Images for Native Women, and then that's when I started...taking a good look at myself and everything, and ...really changed my perspective.....Anybody calls me an Indian now...I am proud: before I didn't want to be. (no. 5: female).

A second consideration is how to unite Native women as a gender: a difficult task considering the social, psychological, and often physical isolation that is suffered by abused women. In order to do this, the movement carriers must reframe gender roles: they need to encourage women to think about themselves differently. How do you do this in an urban environment, where the Aboriginal population is constantly in flux? How do you make the constituent population aware that you exist, and what you have to offer? Better yet, how do you convince them that they should join the organization, or access its programs? By utilizing public space, organizations can reach many people as cheaply as possible. Media such as leaflets, posters, brochures, and newsletters provide a way to connect author and audience: not only do they carry new ideas, they also map out for Aboriginal women the routes to "free spaces".

**Content Analysis: Textual Discourse**

*From Public to Private: Creating Free Spaces*

On this level of analysis, the literature produced by these organizations was most useful when asking questions about how issues of identity and solidarity are "framed:"

The locus of it [collective identity] is cultural; it is manifested through the language and symbols by which it is publicly expressed. We know a collective identity through the cultural icons and artifacts displayed by those who embrace it. It is manifested in styles of dress, language, and demeanor. Collective identity need not be treated as some mysterious intangible but can be as empirically observable as a T-shirt or haircut. To measure it, one would ask people about the meaning of labels and other cultural symbols, not about their personal identity (Gamson, 1992:60).
I divided the textual data from the organizations into three categories for descriptive, rather than analytic, purposes. The text in each category contains progressively longer and more complex messages. I defined "global" texts as posters, flyers, and advertisements in newsletters. These types of formats are like pictographs: they are messages meant to capture attention using public space, and lend themselves well to visual imagery and symbolism. Simple and direct, these messages are confined to a single visible surface (usually one page). This means that they can be consumed by the audience very quickly because, most often, global messages contain only one general meaning.

The second group of texts consist of brochures and/or pamphlets. Like global messages, brochures incorporate both graphics and text. Brochures also fit on one page, technically, but use the space quite differently. Brochures need to get across much more complex messages than those conveyed by posters, ads, etc.: rather than expressing one global message, they instead link several messages together. At the same time, these messages must be brief and concise. In order to achieve this effect, brochures are folded twice to divide one page into three sections—six if you count the other side.

This format allows the author (in this case the organization) to fit much more information into the same area. Each section of the folded page usually conveys one message at a time, which are subsequently linked together as the reader unfolds the page to reveal more messages. This design not only makes the brochure easy to read, it also becomes easier to hold, fit in bags, pockets, and human hands, because it occupies less space than one loose page, or a poster. Although brochures are often displayed and disseminated in public space, they have the attraction of quickly becoming private space once they are in the hands of their audience. This element of secrecy or discretion is of paramount importance when the target audience are women who are trying to seek help.

26 for the purposes of analysis, brochures and pamphlets are defined as a similar medium of discourse, and will be used as interchangeable terms.
with, or leave an abusive relationship.

Like global messages, brochures incorporate both graphics and text. I classify these as short text because, although brochures differ from "global" texts both in content and in their use of space, they are still simple mass messages, designed to reach as many people as quickly as possible. The type of pamphlet just described seems to be the medium of choice for many of the organizations. First of all, shortage of funding makes publishing any kind of literature difficult. Brochures are quick and easy to produce: accesses to a computer, paper, and a photocopier are all that is required. Even professionally done, glossy pamphlets are relatively inexpensive to publish.

Longer texts were categorized as messages that appeared in an essay-prose type format, and were at least one page long. There were six longer texts collected which addressed themes represented in the frequency tables (pages 78-82). One long text addressed status issues, and one addressed constitutional rights. The remaining four directly spoke to family violence issues: an article in an annual newsletter, a report to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples, a training handbook for a men's spousal assault program, and an edited publication of Narratives by Native women on family violence. These longer texts are complex messages, not meant to be taken in globally. Rather than conduct a content analysis of these longer texts, I chose to do a rhetorical analysis: there is no point in counting how many times "family violence" appears in the text, if this is the specific message of the text itself. We know it's about family violence: what we want to know is how it's articulated. With longer texts, I did count the number of times that an organization used the themes listed in Table 4 (p. 82).
Frequency of Rhetorical Devices

Group Narratives

In order to qualify as a rhetorical device, according to Vansina (1988), an item must recur frequently in the discourse of the culture being studied. The first thing I did was to look at all the short texts and pick out the words, concepts, and images that recurred within the discourse of each organization: from these items I constructed a list that appears in tables 2-4 (pages 78-82). Then I gave each organization an identification number, and counted how many times the words or concepts appeared in discourse across organizations. In some cases, a word or concept that I thought might hold some significance was in reality not used much at all: for example, "warrior", and "sacred", were used in the discourse of only one group. If an item did occur frequently (three or more times) within or between the narratives produced by the various organizations, I identified it as being a type of rhetorical device.

Using a modified form of Vansina's typology, I grouped these devices according to whether I thought they functioned as signs, images, or thematic configurations (the specific groupings are also represented in tables 2-4).

Legend of Organizations by Identification Number, type and orientation

1. Status of women
2. Addictions: general orientation
3. Emergency shelter: women's group
4. Family services: general orientation
5. Family violence: men's group
6. Emergency shelter: general orientation
7. Social services: general
8. Legal Issues: general
9. Social Services: general
10. Social Services: general
11. Family services: general
12. Legal Issues: general
13. Status of Women
Table 2. Frequency of Signs by Type

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As discussed in the previous chapter, Vansina describes "signs" as idiomatic or stock expressions of a culture: they stand for or indicate things, people, or sets of simple ideas. Signs can appear as words or illustrations. Images are meant to convey emotion, and add empathic resonance to the meaning of a narrative. Themes, or thematic configurations, embody a combination of related signs and/or images: they simplify the plot (in this case, the unifying shape or message) of a narrative. A typical example is the "boy-meets-girl, boy-loses-girl, boy-wins-girl-back" plot found in many of Hollywood's "B" movies. The plot consists of several romantic themes linked together to form a coherent, whole, message. The structure of the story remains constant, while the names, places, and
circumstances are interchangeable.

First, I looked for signs that indicated identity: if I want to study how women are incorporating the history of colonization into the way they think about and organize against family violence, then I need to look at how issues of race and gender are expressed (Table 2). Both men and women were represented across the board, but the sign "woman/women" or "female" occurred much more frequently than did "man/men" or "male". Of course, groups 1, 2, and 13 are bound to refer to women more often than to men: these groups are targeted specifically at women. Group five is targeted specifically at men: thus the male to female sign ratio is inverse (5:1). The remaining organizations are oriented to a more general Aboriginal constituency. In the final analysis, women are represented in the texts at least twice as often as men, even when the authoring organizations are not targeted explicitly at women. More organizations used the term Aboriginal or Native than they did First Nations: only two agencies used the term "Indian": Group one had this word as part of their name. Métis were mentioned infrequently.

The next group consists of signs that occurred frequently as illustrations, sometimes accompanied by words. Eagles and eagle feathers are often associated with Native identity, also carrying spiritual connotations. Circles, circular shapes, or the word "circle" indicate Amerindian worldviews which emphasize cyclical motion and continuity. Four organizations incorporated the image of Eagle into their logos, three of which were presented in a circular format. Faces and hands are also recurring signs in Aboriginal discourse. The final category of signs connotes identity because it includes items that pertain directly to First Nations experiences: whatever the culture group of the audience, these words will speak to a particular ethos. The word "culture" was used more consistently across organizations than any other term.

Table 3 illustrates the frequency of images (page 81). Images add emotional value to a message, and resonate deeply within the cultural consciousness (Vansina,
I grouped the images first in terms of family roles: child, mother, father, grandfather, elder, etc., -- with these roles are associated strong feelings. Eight of eleven groups used the role-images, with children appearing most frequently, followed by youth and elders. Surprisingly, mothers appear in the discourse of only one group.

Next I focused on images that appeared as specific family groupings: mother/child, androgynous parent-child, single-parent-child, and the most generic, family. All the eleven groups used various forms of family imagery.

References to the spiritual and the sacred are numerous: eight of eleven organizations used some sort of spiritual imagery as a rhetorical device. Pipes, feathers, eagles and medicine wheels appeared in illustration as well as in prose. Three of eleven groups mentioned the sweatlodge ceremony, which is also a healing ceremony. In very general terms (as I understand it), the purpose of the sweat is to purify body, mind, heart and spirit through a symbolic return to the womb of Mother Earth. I would like to point out that, although these images appear frequently in the group narratives, this is does not mean that this is a religious movement.

If culture is a sign, what does it signify? What social constructs, norms and values are "traditional"? The next set of images are grouped according to "culture" and contains images that tend to be associated with (but not always exclusive to) First Nations societies. The images of the Medicine Wheel, Mother Earth, Sweatlodge, Potlatch, Pipe Ceremony, and Smudge Ceremony signify culture as well as spirituality. These rituals are particular to Amerindian cultures. The images of healing, honour, and sacred, etc., are not necessarily exclusive to Aboriginal societies, but they are used frequently in First Nations discourse: it is how they are used that articulates cultural content.
Table 3. Frequency of Images by Type

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Table 4 deals with themes or thematic configurations, which are made up of several signs and/or images, and which simplify the plot of a narrative. The narrative in this case is the "story" of the organization: who the group is, what their purpose and objectives are, and what they are doing to fulfill their mandate. All these themes are episodes in the history of colonization, and for many Aboriginal peoples, are pivotal to the understanding of family violence. Here I deviate from Vansina's prescription once again. In some cases, the themes represent actual historical events, such as the implementation of the Indian Act, or the Residential School System.
Table 4: Frequency of Themes and Thematic Configurations by Type

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In other cases, the themes embody some of the worst of human experience, such as domestic violence and sexual abuse. The exact details of historical occurrences, and the order in which they transpired is not addressed here: rather, I am interested what effect they had on Aboriginal families. Consequently, I do not wish to validate historical events: I seek instead a different interpretation and representation of them—to reframe them, as it were.

Both sets of themes (Native-state relations and interpersonal violence) set the exigence (reason or need) for the group's call to action. The themes represent events, or a series of events, in condensed, symbolic form. If the public discourse is the group's narrative about who they are and what they do, then the thematic configurations simply the plot by explaining why they are doing it. Two sets of themes appeared in both group and individual narratives: themes surrounding Native-State relations and themes surrounding interpersonal violence. Only four of eleven organizations articulated government themes, the most common of which revolved around the Ministry of Social Services; three groups mentioned child apprehension in particular. Two groups mentioned the legal system, and only one group referred to Residential Schools. Eight
groups expressed personal violence themes, however.

Individual Narratives

A content analysis of the interviews was conducted also: I counted how many times each of the signs, images and themes (as listed in Tables 2-4) appeared in the interviews. At the same time, I did not wish to reduce the personal narratives to a cluster of quantifiable variables. I did not think that a quantitative, comparative analysis between interviewees would tell us anything significant. Reporting the exact number of times that interviewees used a certain word would have been meaningless given the variation among interview times (the shortest was only thirty minutes, while the longest exceeded two hours) and degree of verbosity of each individual participant. Subsequently, I thought it might be more appropriate to pick out the rhetorical devices that recurred most frequently across the oral texts, and to see how they compared with the written texts.

Unlike the organizations, individuals used the term "Native" more than any other term to signify identity: nearly twice as often as "First Nations", and fourteen times more often than "Aboriginal". This could be significant, or this could mean that "Native" is easier to say in conversations than the other two options. As in the group narratives, women were represented more than twice as often as were men; no surprise given that two-thirds of the respondents were female, and that the general topic of my research focused on women. Of the remaining signs, culture, tradition, and circle were used most frequently.

Because the topic was family violence, images embodied family relations, with child/children being the image most frequently evoked. Individuals were asked specific questions about the themes of interpersonal violence (Table 3), so I did not include this set in my analysis of their narratives. When asked to explain the high degree of interpersonal violence that exists in may First Nations communities, all nine respondents cited the residential school system as one of the primary contributing factors. Five
participants indicated that they had in fact attended residential schools. Four participants pointed to systemic discrimination in the legal system as another major source of oppression for Aboriginal women. Four individuals cited parochial and racist government attitudes as a primary cause of distress for many Aboriginal women and their families.

Eight of nine individuals made overt references to Amerindian spiritual belief systems and religious practices, connecting them directly to First Nation's political, cultural, and individual emancipation. Six of nine participants made explicit references to healing, both in the individual and collective sense, describing the decolonization of Aboriginal peoples as a "healing" process.

**Rhetorical Analysis: Synthesizing Group and Individual Discourse**

According to Valverde (1991b), analyzing the discourse produced by movement carriers can reveal underlying social processes. Rhetorical analysis "show[s] how certain images, words or constellations of both resonate[d] with pre-existing social cosmologies; it can also shed light on practical organizational forms used by its activists (p.34)." To this end, I conducted a discourse analysis of both group and individual narratives, paying attention to their use of specific rhetorical devices and structures.

Rhetorical analysis in the western tradition rests upon the tenets of the classical art of persuasion. In public discourse, the goal of the speaker/author is to convince the audience of the validity of her opinion, political position, social actions, etc. Often, the argument contains a "call to action" for the audience (you should do this because...). A speaker/author uses various rhetorical devices to sway the opinion of the audience. In the classical model of rhetoric, there are three principle modes of persuasion: **ethos, logos**
and pathos. Ethos refers to the credibility of the author or speaker of the message. Ethos situates the speaker/author in relation to the audience and to the argument at hand. For an illustration of this idea, we can look to the editorial pages of our daily newspapers. An editorial supporting the beneficial effects of clear-cut logging will be taken more seriously by the audience if it is written by an environmental scientist than if it is written by a corporate executive in the logging industry. Logos refers to the message itself: not only to its actual content, but also to the format in which it is presented. Pathos is the invocation of emotion: it incites the passions of the audience. Pathos is often used to form the exigence - the reason or need - for many arguments, and is the most easily manipulated, and most often abused mode of persuasion.

In analyzing any rhetorical argument, one must consider matters of audience (who is the message intended for?), exigence (what is the reason for the call to action?), and constraint (what outside factors influence or moderate the logos of the argument?). The content, style, and delivery of a message can be shaped by environmental factors such as the social political, and cultural environment in which it is embedded, or by the material resources available to the author. The identity of the author and audience can also function as constraints. To refer again to the editorial example, the logging executive is constrained by his ethos: he knows that his credibility is already tenuous with most members of the audience. If he is to convince them of clear cutting's beneficial effects, he must compensate for his dubious credibility through the content and style of his argument.

I found this very general framework could be applied quite well to the analysis of the discourse of the Aboriginal organizations. It allows for some peripheral structure in which to place the text without imposing any external meanings onto them. Take for example how the simple manipulation of color can be used as both logos and ethos in the rhetoric of urban Native organizations. When colors were used in group narratives (posters, brochures, etc.), they tended to be red, black, white and green. The combination
of black white and red and/or green is striking and attention-getting. Aside from being dramatic and easy to reproduce in print, these colors hold specific connotations for First Nations people. Red, black, and white were favored in West Coast dress and art, evoking visions of the famous button blankets. For prairie cultures, red is often associated with Mother Earth, tobacco, and fertility. Mother earth can also be represented in the form of a turtle, which is green; green can also be used to indicate vegetation, such as forests and trees. When used in certain combinations (black-red-white), these colors carry messages of their own, while establishing identity and credibility.

In addition to the use of particular color schemes, ethos and identity are further indicated by the use of signs. This includes both explicit self referents ("Native" "First Nations") as well as implicit ones (eagles, feathers, and circles). When used in specific ways, the use of such "culture" signs helps to establish the author's credibility (the organization) with the intended audience (Native women). For example, a single feather might represent a sacred object or a primitive writing tool, depending on the context and form in which it appears (quill up, attached to a hoop, or quill down, pressed against the surface of a paper?) Neither does the illustration of an eagle always indicate Native culture: the eagle as represented by "Federal Express" is distinctly different from the eagle as represented in Aboriginal art forms.

To this effect, eight of eleven organizations incorporate North West Coast Art into their "logo"s (in this case I am referring to the "symbol" used to indicate the group's identity): this style of art is very distinctive and is immediately recognizable as Aboriginal in origin, indicating shared identity. Due to general mistrust of authority figures and "Indian experts", these signs say "trust us." Eagles were everywhere, appearing alone, and as descriptors of people, or human qualities (i.e. eagle-woman, eagle-spirited). Eagles have profound spiritual connotations for many Native North American culture groups. Among other connotations, Eagle is associated with pure spirit, and their feathers are used by many culture groups in rituals and ceremonies. Eagle is also associated with healing.
The names of the organizations also contribute to ethos. Many organizations incorporated the signs "Native", and "First Nations" into their names (e.g.: Indian Homemaker's Assoc., Native Court workers and Counselors Assoc.). Other organizations named themselves using Indigenous languages and concepts (e.g.: Helping Spirit Lodge, Hey-way noqu' Healing Circle)

The slogan for the addictions group is "Let the Healing Begin". This is an appeal to the emotions; it is the use of pathos. Although it is often considered to be a cheap and exploitative tactic, pathos can be a legitimate form of rhetorical persuasion when it is used properly. Gross emotional manipulation or blackmail (hate or fear-mongering, guilt, etc.) is both sensationalist and unethical, but in this context, the use of pathos is impossible to avoid. For many First Nations people, any discussion of colonial relations raises emotionally charged issues. "Healing" in this context does not usually connote recovery from physical injuries or illnesses. It is used to describe a process by which Aboriginal peoples become "self-actualized" as individuals, families, and societies. The injuries are damages not to person, but to personhood: the abuses involve mind, heart, and spirit, and merely manifest themselves physically as violence, suicide, and substance addictions (Leask, 1993: 15-16). Healing is a positive, regenerative endeavor.

There is no question that "healing" is an innocuous image, evoking positive feelings. Seemingly an a-political act, the endeavor to heal oneself can hardly be considered militant or threatening. Here the apparent meaning is different from the intended meaning: each meaning will be understood differently according to the audience. Healing necessarily implies injury--but injury from what?

Implicit in the rhetoric of healing is the oppressive shadow of colonial history. For an Aboriginal audience, the implied assumption rests on the experience of being colonized peoples. To illustrate this line of reasoning, I will construct a hypothetical example. Assume that the poster from the addictions group is displayed on the side of a bus shelter. The poster is bright red in color, and the illustration depicts a kindly Native
elder embracing a young woman and a child. The graphic is encircled by a hoop which is adorned at the top by two eagles that are represented in the distinctive style of the North-West Coast culture groups. At the bottom of the hoop hang four spotted eagle feathers, which frame two pipes that are positioned to form an "X" shape. The slogan below the graphic reads, "Let the Healing Begin: Hey' Way' Noqu' Healing Circle For Addictions Society".

Non-Natives seeing this poster might pass by and think, "Native people are healing themselves--how nice": most non-Natives are unlikely to consider or even be aware of the nature of the injury itself. If they do think about it, likely they will think of it as an *individual*, rather than a social problem: substance abuse, spousal and child abuse, etc. Very few non-Native people are going to look at that poster and see the context in which these problems occur, and what causes them.

An Aboriginal person viewing that same poster will see it quite differently, interpreting the meanings according to her own experiences. To her, the word "healing" prompts memories of events that are excruciatingly *real*, and quite often, part of her daily life. The image of "healing" cannot be separated from the prerequisite image of "injury", whatever the nature of that injury (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual). Hence the image of healing has more potent emotional resonance for the Native audience members, holding out promise of respite or sanctuary from personal suffering. Here is an example of how affinity groups use public discourse to lead constituents to free (private) spaces. The apparent meaning of posters like the one just described are innocuous and non-threatening to mainstream audiences, while to First Nations audiences, the intended meaning is likely to evoke stronger emotional responses, whether they are positive or negative or both.

The image of healing resonates deeply in Amerindian cultures, and is often associated with regaining balance, continuity, and unity with oneself, one's family, and one's community. Separation from society followed by reintegration is a popular theme
in Amerindian legends (Allen 1991). An individual may be separated from his or her family or community by choice or circumstance, but is usually reunited with the group at the end of the tale, once balance has been restored. This ethic is reflected in the way that many indigenous cultures deal with anti-social and destructive behaviour: once the individual has restored balance to their life, they are welcomed into the community once again. The theme here is solidarity through reunification: in fact, the name of the addictions group, "Hey-Way noqu'" is Coast Salish, and loosely translates into "bringing families back home (into the circle)."

Interviewees from other organizations echo this philosophy:

One thing that I had been involved with quite a while actually for two and one half years was running a healing circle...The whole thing that I love about all that is the idea that nobody is ever looked upon as bad...It's like those [dysfunctional] behaviors were learnt from somewhere, we don't cast that person aside and we don't call them bad. Everybody is welcome to come in the circle...When you sit in circle, there's not such a thing as judgment (no. 9).

The coordinator of one group tells of an employee who was discovered to have behaved in a way that was not congruent with the goals, values, and ideals of the society. The employee, rather than being fired, was given a leave of absence to resolve any personal issues before resuming official duties:

I think that type of openness and that type of understanding of another person is not just an expendable staff person but someone...who's got potential and will realize that potential. If we kicked [them] out or given [them] a pink slip what would we be doing to the same [people] we are trying to counsel? Would we say, "well, you did something, you committed this. You can't come here anymore."? I think the same values that we try to get across to [people] in the group are values that we have to try and live by in the way that we conduct business of this organization (no. 7).

Again, the dynamic of this group, as in many of the other First Nations organizations, demonstrates Breins' (1982) concept of "pre figurative politics", in which carriers of the movement practice and instill the social relationships and behaviours
which are embodied in the ideal society that the movement is trying to bring about. In other words, "walk your talk".

Also associated with healing is the image of the pipe: it is mentioned by several respondents, and appears in the logo of the addictions group. The pipe is used in healing ceremonies and other rituals. The bowl is usually made of red pipestone or some other kind of stone (earth). It is a receptacle (female) for tobacco, which is used in prayer and giving thanks. The stem is made of wood (the type of wood and the significance behind it may vary from region to region) and represents male. The two pieces of the pipe are stored separately and are assembled only for prayer; both pieces must unite in order for the pipe to function, and neither piece can function without the other.

The pipe is an example of how metaphors can organize relationships between groups; or in this case, between sexes (Valverde, 1992: p 35).

A lot of Native women's organizations are doing really good work. I just hope that there is no "us" and "them", or the real adversarial kind of a situation created between male and female....The joining of the pipe is the joining of the male and female for the perpetuation of life and goodness, and that when male and female come together-- as in all of nature-- they come together in a complimentary way: a non-adversarial way. That's the deeper meaning of those...ceremonies. It should be kept in mind that's a really good thing...to be aware of in one's work whether male or female. When we say that it's the joining of the male and female forces in the universe we have to work towards a common...a positive end. That's what we try to do in our work (no. 7).

The traditional, or ideal relationship between Aboriginal women and men is embodied in the analogy: woman is to man as bowl is to stem. In this way, the ideals of harmony, interdependence, and balance between the sexes are reproduced and maintained through both metaphor and ritual. The use of circles also organizes peoples' relationships to each other. In the previous case, the circle symbolizes the unity and equality of the group: the clients to the coordinator, and the coordinator to the employees. When discussing family

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violence intervention and recovery, the circle indicates the relationship of group members to each other, and of the offender to the rest of the community.

As expressed in both the group and the personal narratives, traditional Aboriginal worldviews are concerned with "right relationship" to self, family, society, and the universe. "Right relationship" may be defined differently within different cultural contexts, but is generally characterized as "balance". A personal balance between mind, body, heart, and spirit is necessary to have a healthy view of, and relationship with, one's self and the world in general. Imbalance is unhealthy, and, if you are an Aboriginal person, untraditional. Helping Spirit Lodge has adopted this ethic for their credo, "family violence is not traditional". Here the goal is to bring about a shift in gender and familial relations by using tradition as a weapon (Vansina, 1988:102): concepts such as "respect" and "honour" are used to indicate how people are supposed to act towards each other.

Logos refers not only to the layout, arrangement, or presentation of the message (e.g. brochure, poster, advertisement), but also to the content of the message itself. The discourse produced by the organizations differed according to the intended audience: when clients (or potential clients) were the intended audience, the messages tended to be general and non-threatening. Cooking classes, traditional blanket-making, and parenting classes may not seem directly aimed at violence issues. Again, the apparent meaning is not the same as the intended meaning. Apparently, a group is offering quite innocuous activities unrelated to family violence. The intended messages are, "find human contact", "receive moral support", "build social networks", and "rediscover your culture and history". These goals are all quite important to breaking the cycle of violence.

When approaching topics of violence, the rhetoric tended to be non-confrontational: not specify who is doing the violence. Male violence against women is referred to less often than are images that do not draw gender lines (family violence, domestic violence, etc.) Interesting to note is that the men's group identifies male violence against women as being problematic more often in one text than does any other
organization. Perhaps this is because the groups and programs that are directly aimed at women take it for granted that men are most often the perpetrators of domestic violence. This fact would be implicit in the messages aimed at women: they know they are being abused.

Programs aimed at abusive men, however, must confront these men's rationalizations and denial of their abusive behaviour: they must be explicit about the realities of "family" violence. When aimed at other aboriginal professionals who deliver social services, the apparent meaning is the intended meaning: there is no need to euphemize issues of violence and abuse when the audience knows the score. While recognizing that family members other than the husband may behave violently, the training manual for a men's intervention program delineates clearly where responsibility lies:

The debate on whether Native men assaulted their partners/spouses/wives before European invasion will likely continue to rage for some time. Regardless of the origin of the problem, it is acknowledged that abuse of women by Aboriginal men DOES in fact exist. Certainly, it is valid to suggest that the acculturation of Aboriginal people and the disempowerment and disenfranchisement of the First Nations people have created an environment that facilitates abuse (Wood and Kiyoshk, 1992: 9).

When the target audience is the general public or government officials, language becomes forceful and confrontational. In a report to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal people, Blaney (1992) writes:

Because of the abhorrent and blatantly racist ways in which First Nations people have been treated historically by those who monopolize the economic and political power, we have preferred to band together, even with those men who abuse us, to maintain Aboriginal solidarity (9).28

Discourse intended for social service agents and policy-makers is confrontational because it has to be. Where First Nations are concerned, quiet negotiation with the dominant Euro-culture has never gotten them anywhere.

28 This statement may not necessarily reflect the views of all First Nations women.
Although the discourse intended for clients does not use images that are emotionally charged, it still makes use of pathos. Public discourse tended to focus on positive images, such as mothers, children and elders shown in healthy family relationships. These images were often used in conjunction with images that evoke a sense of the sacred, such as the Medicine Wheel, the Sweatlodge, and the words, "respect" and "honour".

The narratives of the individual participants were generally more expressive and made liberal use of emotionally charged imagery. For example, both men and women tended to cast Native women not only as the mothers of the nation, but as leaders and healers as well. Women tended to perceive women's family and community leadership roles as both the right and responsibility of First Nations women.

Well in mine [my reserve], our chief was a woman who was a very strong spiritual woman and, I think women will be playing a large important role only because women traditionally have been taking care of the family, raising the kids, running the house hold and I think that is extending past the house into the community. And as you know women at home take care of scraped knees, bleeding noses, etc. and so in the community they also play that same role where they are healers, and spiritual guides, because they raise children they raise the next generation. They carry the seeds from the past into the future and pass it on. So they are...becoming aware that their role as care-givers is more important than anything else because they hold the future generations within themselves (no. 4).

Children seem to be the most frequent image used in explaining the exigency of family violence intervention, and in the need for healing in general. In the group narratives, particularly in the short texts, images of children were used to promote ideals about family relationships. Often, Native children were illustrated as happy and healthy, and were usually accompanied by a benevolent-looking adult (mother/father/grandparent).

These scenes are meant to instill a sense of responsibility and protectiveness in the parent, providing a positive schema for parent-child relations. After all, children are the most defenseless members of society, and often parents will do things for them that they cannot or will not do for themselves. When framed this way, it becomes imperative for
adults to keep ancient histories, cultures, and languages alive; these are the birthright of - and our legacy to - our children.

At home there is a 7 year old who wants to get back into traditional Indian dancing and all that goes with it. So I am seeing it through her eyes again as if for the first time-- because I have seen it so many times that I don't really look at it anymore. But her enthusiasm I tend to look at it as a new thing again, and it is really encouraging to see young people more interested in tradition, whereas before they would walk away because it was something to be ashamed of. (no. 4: female)

The image of children was used in another, very different way: child sexual abuse is mentioned frequently throughout both group and personal narratives. References to child sex abuse do not usually expand on this image. In the group narratives, children are not portrayed as being in adversarial relationships with adults, although this is implied in the image of sex abuse. Again, here is an example of how emotionally traumatic and politically sensitive material is referred to obliquely, rather than head-on.

Although Residential Schools did not appear often in group narratives, it was a major theme in the personal narratives as the biggest major trauma to Aboriginal families. Eight of the respondents attributed violence in their personal lives to the legacy of the mission schools, while seven of these individuals expanded this "frame" of understanding to include the high rate of interpersonal violence, substance addictions, and suicide that plagues Aboriginal populations:

I could go on and on. I could go back to the residential school issues, and how so many of our elders were abused both physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, sexually abused in the residential school. How they were removed from their families. How they didn't learn family lifestyles and then they came home and had children of their own. Like maybe, their children went to residential school, or maybe their children were raised at home, but they didn't really because their parents never grew up in a family setting. They had no idea how to teach their children a family setting, and did the best they could. Of course, then, a lot of methods of discipline [in residential school] were hitting, or punishment like kneeling in corners for long periods of time.

I had one woman...who was making her child kneel in a corner for up to two hours at a time. Then of course the Social Workers come in and they want to apprehend the child, and she's like, "I only made him do it for two hours, I had to
do it *all day.*" How is she supposed to know? So either way she's the victim of the system. First the residential school, and now the Ministry of Social Services. So she's taken away from *her* parents, and then we have another agency that wants to take *her children* away from her, and she is very much a victim (no. 6).

Two respondents pointed out that the residential school experience explicitly reinforced patriarchal attitudes. Perceived as a divisive tactic by many Native critics, the oppressive gender roles espoused by Mission School dogma not only further undermined the status of Native women in the eyes of Native men, but also taught Aboriginal children that "within oppressed classes, there are hierarchies" (Wood and Kiyoshk, 1992: 42).

Again, depending on the audience, the imagery is more forceful and graphic when addressing issues of family violence. Edna Leask (1993), in association with the Professional Native Women's Association, published a collection of narratives of First Nations Women who were survivors of family violence. Because the volume is intended as a tool for creating awareness and understanding among non-Aboriginal people, the narratives are brutally candid. The editors of this text do not seek to protect the audience from unpleasant emotions: these stories are **meant** to disturb the reader.

Many respondents believed that one of the most important methods of family violence prevention and intervention is education. Native women need to be informed that they, as well as their family members are entitled to personal safety under constitutional law; that there are different kinds of abuse; that these behaviours are not "normal"; and that victims of assault are entitled to protection and redress under the criminal code. Aboriginal women also need to be informed of the social and colonial processes that contribute to the violent, destructive behaviour found in many First Nations communities.

In other words, Native women must change the way they think about themselves in relation to the colonizer.

On reserves, people in authority were the doctor, the nurse, the teachers, the preacher.... and when you are on the reserve they, and the RCMP, those are the 5 figures of authority and you never question them. When you come off reserve,
coming to the city and any European making any decision or is making a suggestion that, "maybe you should do this:" because you are so used to having this authority figure on the reserve that you will follow that advice of that person. But most First Nations people in the urban setting for any length of time will realize that the doctor, nurse, preacher, RCMP are not the ones that make decisions in your life but that you are the one that makes these decisions for your own life. And once that happens and then the person can carry on and start making a way for themselves (no. 4).

When women's frame of awareness is expanded to include a larger, socio-historic context, the impetus for social action moves beyond matters of mere survival, to matters of political and social change:

So when I went into ___ Lodge I had full awareness of my rights to contact a doctor or dentist of my choice. And ___ Lodge was under the supervision of other[non-Natives]...that were trying to direct their lives into the doctors they chose, but I sort of guided the women by saying, "no you don't have to go to that doctor."...we felt that we had the right to choose whom we would like to see, and also the right to choose where we would like to guide our career...we felt that we didn't have to be housewives, or maids in hotels, and this type of low-class jobs that they would direct us (no. 2).

In refusing to accept these externally imposed identities and roles, Aboriginal women are taking control: not just of their personal lives, but of their families and communities as well. The parochial efforts of the government to determine Aboriginal futures has backfired: the women have now regained a sense of entitlement to personal and political power, and are both ready and capable of taking First Nations peoples in new directions.

Our heritage rights over 500 years ago, before we were invaded, we are looking at where the woman stood in the community. The women were the healers, they were the leaders of the communities, they were the advisors, they were the ones that were in charge of the family, the property. The men had nothing. All they did was go hunting and bring food and be providers. The women...through residential school and Christianity, gave up their own powers to cater to the men and to the opposite sex.

But now we are saying that has got to come to an end. We are going to take our rightful positions, we are going to start healing our children, we are going to heal ourselves, and we are going to start healing mother earth...and we are going to start teaching our children our traditional cultural ways. We are hoping to return dignity and pride into our children because many of them have suffered racism and discrimination, and now the women are saying, "it's our time has come to take up our responsibilities and not to sit back and watch destruction continue."
And many of the women are taking their leadership qualities back (no.2). This rhetoric is reflected in the discourse of a battered woman's shelter, whose motto reads, "family violence is not traditional". One poster for this campaign shows a black and white photograph of a Native woman holding drum. In the background we can see a statue of "blind justice" holding her scales aloft. The photo is occupies only 50% of the page, and is set against a black background. To the right of the photo, in green and white, is the logo for the shelter, and beneath it, also in green is the name, "Helping Spirit Lodge". Beneath that line, more green text reads: "one of the goals of the society: returning Aboriginal women to their traditionally respected positions in the family unit, the community, and society." Below the photograph, also in green, reads the line, "Social justice must be won with pride and dignity: pride and dignity must be won with social justice." There is more text below that, which tells us that the woman in the photograph has achieved a law degree and works towards justice for Aboriginal people in the Canadian legal system.

This poster has several effects, but the global message directly equates women's political and social power with social justice for Aboriginal people. The poster provides First Nations women with a positive role model (pre-figurative politics), and it legitimates their presence in key positions of power that were previously held to be the exclusive province of white men (the judicial system). By equating the role of "lawyer" with "women's traditionally respected roles", the poster juxtaposes two worlds: the contemporary reality of the dominant colonial culture, against the history of indigenous traditions. This juxtaposition is reconciled by the image of the woman, which conveys the message that women's leadership among many First Nations is neither new, nor "radical". It is rooted in tradition, and continues through the present: this notion is articulated through the woman's traditional regalia, as she stands before the modern courthouse, replete with its own feminine personification of "justice".

In this way, Aboriginal women are able to negotiate claims to power and status
through extending the frame of colonial oppression to the issue of gender oppression. By condemning sexist attitudes, practices, and social structures as part of a larger colonial attitude, First Nations women are able to include the restructuring of gender roles and identities within the larger mandate of the anti-colonial struggle.

To recap AFN's definition, spirit involves identity, as individuals and as First Nations peoples. In order to regain balance, we must heal our spirits: many Natives feel that this necessarily involves reclaiming our cultural identities as First Nations peoples. The words of this woman, an elder, reiterate the sentiments expressed by many Aboriginal women: "The only way to get through to Native people, to put a stop to the violence, is through the pride of ancestry; the pride the old people had; and not just become Indians living on the street, on welfare. Pride must be brought back. We have to take control."(Pearson, 1993)²⁹

And it wasn't until my sobriety that I started finding my way back to culture and traditions, you know pow-wows, art, and things like that is when I found my way- and being introduced, you know meeting new people in the field, especially in the alcohol and drug field. Meeting people from all over the place, from different Native organizations-- and just finding my way through it, and back to my culture. Through my own healing, through the shame, by breaking through it myself and working on those kinds of issues is how I found my way back (no. 3: male)

Many Aboriginal people believe that, in order for healing to take place that the men must also begin to perceive themselves differently, in relation to the colonial structures that oppress them, in relation to each other, and in relation to the women in their lives.

We believe that becoming involved and establishing a good sense, a strong sense, a proud sense of who you are as a Native person...can bring you out of all those negative ways of thinking. So that it's doing, not watching, ...I think becoming involved is the key. Not just picking it up at the beginning and then paying some kind of lip service to being Native, but actually doing things that are meaningful. And I think those are the messages that we try to get to them in here....(no. 7: male)

²⁹Taken from A Safer Place. Vancouver: Native Court workers and Counselors Association of British Columbia.
Male violence against women and children in this context is articulated as an imbalance of spirit, both on a personal and collective level. It is through the restructuring of Native consciousness that women and men are able to restructure gender consciousness.

A lot of Native people say that certain things are sacred. We asked them what does that mean, "sacred"? They'll talk about their eagle fans or their eagle feathers, their pipes or their bone whistles or whatever it may be. So often...people say well, "females are the life givers and they are this and that", and there is a lot of values espoused around a female. Respect really isn't attributed to them and behavior and in their actions and the language, and how you treat them. Perhaps it might be appropriate to record that same respect to which you consider a sacred object as to those people who are probably more important than those other things (no. 7: male).

When asked what role they saw women playing in the healing process of Aboriginal peoples, these men replied that they saw women as being at the forefront of the movement towards Native re-discovery:

I feel that even in my organization, even with clients you know...women [are]regaining their confidence, regaining their self-esteem, regaining themselves and standing up for who they really are and their own rights, that, "hey, no one is allowed to do that to a human being." And they are learning these things and women are... stronger than the men anyway and they are taking their rightful place now (no. 3: male).

This argument very effectively draws the men in too: Aboriginal men also experience oppression at the hands of the colonial structure, and have real self-interest in decolonization. "In abusing us as women and children, you are abusing yourself as First Nations men".

When our women cry, there is a part of me that cries with them. When they hurt, a part of me hurts with them. I really hope that they don't lose the courage that they have, and I really hope that they don't lose their voices. Within those voices, there's a hope for our children and grandchildren. To quote the human being that was wise enough to say, "our women are life-givers": they are (no. 8: male).

This line of reasoning makes the stakes more immediate to Native men. Embracing Amerindian lifeways and belief system means accepting alternate constructs of gender.
and gender relations. Part of defining yourself as an Aboriginal male means to redefine your attitudes towards and relationships with women.

Our grandmothers have given us so much we need to make use of that. We need to remember that we are created equal and not to put so much stock into what some demented minds put out in books and literature in society. If it wasn't for our women we wouldn't be here. If it wasn't for our mothers, and grandmothers and great-grandmothers, we wouldn't be here. I would like to pass that message on to all the men out there in the world. Remember to thank their mothers and grandmothers and great-grandmothers. Without them, we wouldn't be here. That the past history of family violence doesn't have to keep on going, it can stop (no. 8: male).

In theory, Native women might have an easier time reframing gender relations because they do not need to be fabricated entirely from thin air; neither must they be teased from an ancient and shadowy past. The new identities which First Nations women now forge are merely a re-emergence of traditions that have been not long underground; in some cases, within living memory. In theory, Aboriginal women are able to make claims to power, privilege, and prestige, since these rights are encapsulated within the larger framework of ethnic and cultural identity. In practice, however, it may be another matter. Seven generations of this behaviour may be hard to change.
Summary

From the analysis of the data, it appears that women's organized resistance to family violence in Vancouver's urban Native community is composed of a small, tightly-woven network of individuals, most of whom have had direct personal experience with violent family relationships. The cultural make-up of the interview respondents reflected the heterogeneity of the community's culture groups. Out of Aboriginal agencies in Vancouver, only 13 provided anti-violence intervention programs. Only three groups were aimed specifically at violence: two of them were oriented exclusively to women, and one exclusively to men. Three of the thirteen groups were women's groups.

The anti-violence activities of these groups were framed within the context of "healing". The rhetoric of healing had both apparent and intended meanings, which differed according to the audience. The apparent meaning of healing referred to individual healing from dysfunctional behaviours caused by traumatic events to the person. The intended meaning referred to collective healing of Aboriginal peoples from the trauma of colonization.

When the target audience was other Native women, the apparent message tended to be positive and non-threatening. Intended meanings in these cases were contained within the subtext of the message. For example, politically and emotionally sensitive issues were rarely referred to, and when they were, they were approached in an oblique fashion. When the target audience was non-Native and/or government officials, there was less discrepancy between intended and apparent meanings. Language was direct and blunt, and sensitive topics were met head-on. Audience seemed to influence the medium of communication also: global and short texts were aimed at the public, while longer prose was aimed at non-Native government workers.

The image of healing was articulated through notions of the spiritual and the sacred, and messages tended to allude to healing through the use of images related to
healing (pipe, smudge, and sweatlodge ceremonies, eagles, eagle feathers). Healing was very clearly connected to pre-colonial indigenous cultures, languages, and traditions. Allusions to the spiritual served two purposes: they organized relations between people (pre-figurative politics) and they provided the moral justification for collective action. Spirituality gives people a way to practice what they preach: in this way, ideal social relationships are manifested in everyday life. Furthermore, practicing ceremonies and rituals directly associated with First Nations cultures gives people a sense of personal and ethnic identity. Just as important, these activities unite Aboriginal peoples in common practices that are distinctly non-Native.

The low status of First Nations women was often linked to the low status of Amerindian peoples within the dominant culture. The egalitarian values expressed through indigenous cultures and traditions were used in two ways: as the basis for Aboriginal women's claims to power, privilege, and prestige, and as a solution to the oppression of First Nations peoples. By reorganizing their relationship to the colonial culture, Aboriginal women are able to reorganize their relationships with Aboriginal men. By drawing connections between the loss of traditional social practices and the oppression of First Nations peoples, women make their efforts to raise their status relevant to men. This in turn increases the likelihood of male support and solidarity in the struggle against family violence.
CHAPTER 4: BEARING THE BURDEN OF PEACE

The purpose of my thesis was to examine how First Nations women incorporate the history of colonial relations into the way they think about and organize against family violence. The thesis focuses on collective action as a social process: a process that is expressed and understood through the use of narratives. If we want to understand why women mobilize around issues of domestic violence, it makes sense to listen to their stories: how they make sense of their own actions to themselves, each other, and society. In analyzing these narratives, the thesis illustrates how Aboriginal women and organizations connect their lives, experiences, and in this case, actions, to larger socio-political and cultural processes (i.e. colonization).

How do Native women incorporate the history of colonization into their perceptions of, and resistance to domestic violence? These questions revolve around issues of collective identity and solidarity: in other words, what individuals think about themselves, how they connect to others through shared experience, and how they use these connections to determine and achieve common goals. According to Melucci, collective action is the result of complex negotiations that are moderated by solidarity, collective identity, and environment. Melucci suggests that studying the visible state of collective action will reveal the details of the latent state; thus this study examined urban Native women's narrative responses to family violence issues (visibility). In turn, I had hoped this strategy might elucidate the processes by which collective identity and solidarity are formed (latency).

The third variable in Melucci's equation, the environment, includes not only family relations, but colonial relations as well. Family violence is experienced differently by First Nations women than for non-native women, and as such needs to be understood within its own historical, social, and political context. It stands to reason, then, that
Aboriginal women incorporate this history into the way they negotiate their identities and their actions in relation to their cultural, political, and material environments.

The first level of analysis was intended to describe family violence intervention at the organizational level, and focused primarily on the formation of group solidarity, or group vision. Here, I sought answers to questions such as: what are Vancouver's contemporary Native social service organizations doing to combat family violence in the urban Native community? How do they mobilize their resources, and why do they employ certain methods in doing so? Why are they mobilizing at all, and how do they make sense of their actions -- what is their story? The content analysis informed us about what these groups were doing about family violence in the community, and the rhetorical analysis told us why: because of this, we are doing that.

The second tier of investigation was designed to discover the motives for resistance to violence at the individual level and focused mainly on issues of collective identity. Here, the following questions were asked: what are individual women doing in terms of family violence intervention, and why are they doing it? Why did they become involved? What have they done in the past to confront this issue? What is their personal vision for family and community healing? The data for the second tier of the study was collected by means of personal interviews. Through examining the narratives of individuals, we saw how these women (and some men) think about family violence as framed by their understanding of colonial history. This level of analysis illuminated how these individuals connect their experiences with larger socio-historical processes (colonization).

These points bring us back to the first part of the original research question: how do First Nations women think about family violence? How do they explain it?

1. "Family violence is not traditional" this sums up the whole frame transformation process. Fact: Aboriginal women recognize that they suffer from high rates of interpersonal violence. Why?
2. Violence happens because Aboriginal women are economically, socially, and sexually oppressed. Why?

3. Because Aboriginal people in general are oppressed. Why?

4. Women's oppression through colonization

Reframed, the history of violence in Aboriginal families goes something like this: domestic violence is a product of colonization. Native women and men have learned patriarchal models of social relations: Native men have incorporated sexist and chauvinistic attitudes into their family and gender relationships. The process of colonization affected men and women differently, causing the destruction of ingenious family structures, and the disruption of power relations between the sexes. European imperialism disrupted gender relations on four levels: the economic material, the socio-cultural, the ideological/political, and the spiritual.

Due to economic imperialism and huge land grabs by the colonial government, Aboriginal peoples were unable to meet basic sustenance needs. Reliance on European trade goods and technology changed the means of production in Native societies, and often resulted in women's skills being devalued. Missionization introduced androcentric and misogynist attitudes about women's roles in the family and in society. The Indian Act further entrenched patriarchal models, completely disenfranchising Native women both economically and politically. The residential school system and the child welfare act caused the disintegration of indigenous family structures, languages, cultures, and histories. As a result, First Nations people have suffered untold anguish and loss. The high rates of violence, addictions, and suicide among Aboriginal populations are a testament to this loss:

I have seen it on the reserve level, where there is hopelessness, alcoholism, suicide, no life in the eyes of the young, babies dying because they are afraid of the white doctor that comes to town and treat their kids without medication...so there is so much happening on reserve and yet the people are so resilient. It's incredible, you know, sometimes I compare it to genocide?...it is a really heavy
word to use but it is still there...you can think positively, that even if just one person turns their act around, that is...growth in the right direction for that nation: for one person to make a change.

Grievous injuries have been done--continue to be done--to Canada's First Nations people: interpersonal and family violence is symptomatic of this trauma. Recovery is articulated in the discourse of healing: for many Aboriginal people, this entails embarking a journey of self-determination and discovery, as individuals, as families, and as Nations.

Now that Aboriginal women have begun to decolonize their thought, they must also take steps to decolonize their action. Now that they can no longer accept the old explanations and roles, they need new ones. To this purpose, they look to history again -- but not to the colonial version. Many Native women have transformed this frame of reference to focus instead on the histories, identities and lifeways of pre-colonial ancestors. In re-creating their identities as First Nations peoples, they are able to forge themselves new roles as women.

5-the way to decolonize is to become more, not less, "Native". This is constitutes a worldview and lifeway that is distinctly different that the Euro-Canadian.

6-pre-colonial cultures defined gender identities and gender relations in egalitarian terms. Women were entitled to certain status and power in most pre-contact societies.

7.-patriarchy and its attendant misogynist attitudes were imposed upon Amerindian societies by Western imperialism.

8.-Therefore, to buy into Euro-patriarchal structures, roles, and ideas about gender is to perpetuate your own colonization.

This brings us to the second part of our research question: how are Aboriginal women incorporating this new frame of reference into the way they organize against family violence? Recall that Levinson (1989) found that violence against women is more likely to occur in societies which:

*men control the fruits of family labor
*men have the final say in domestic decision making
*divorce is more difficult for women than for men
*there is an absence of women's work groups

Women organized against the Indian Act to regain their economic rights as Aboriginal women, so that men did not control heritage, inheritance, and the products of women's labour (this was a good deterrent against Native women: they were often economically unable to leave abusive relationships). They also fought the government for the right to determine the identities of their children, and for the right to raise them and educate them in the manner they saw fit. They organize women's work and artisan's collectives. These strategies raise the status of Aboriginal women in their communities while increasing their collective political power, which, according to Levinson's findings, should reduce the likelihood that women will be abused.

Campbell (1992) put forth another set of socio-cultural factors that must be considered when evaluating the status of women in cross-cultural context:

*the degree of general violence in the society;
*the presence or absence of active community intervention against wife-mattering (signaling general cultural norms regarding violence)
*the degree of acceptance of definitions of masculinity that include the use of violence against women and/or their dominance by men (p.240).

We live in a society that sends ambiguous messages. On one hand, section 1:7 of the 1982 Constitution Act guarantees all Canadians the right to "life, liberty, and security of person"30. Parliament has passed legislation to protect women in abusive relationships, making wife abuse a criminal act punishable by law. In theory, it would seem that Canada is a relatively peaceful society that places high value on personal security. I think it would be safe to say that generally, Canada is a relatively non-violent society -- at least in the public sphere.

The trouble is that most violence against women takes place in the privacy of our homes and families. This fact is reflected in the tacit way society condones male violence

against women. Many times, offenders are sentenced lightly, or not at all. Systemic sexism and racism in the courts make it difficult for women (especially minority women) to press charges. Images of women being sexually assaulted, confined, beaten, tortured, and dismembered permeate the media of popular culture, to be consumed as cheap entertainment in "thirty-second-bytes". In a capitalistic society that reduces humanity to either a commodity or a unit of production, the suffering of women is a growth industry. For Aboriginal women, sexism is further compounded by racism in that First Nations are in a similarly abusive relationship with the state. As a consequence, the general degree of violence in Aboriginal communities rises, and with it, domestic violence.

How do we bridge this gap between public ideals and private practices? We accomplish this task by confronting misogynist attitudes and behaviour, and by providing support and relief systems for survivors. The presence of sanctions against battering and sanctuary for those beaten is strongly associated with lower levels of wife assault (Campbell, 1992). Vancouver's urban Native community provides this sanctuary for survivors of family violence, both in a physical and emotional sense. Emergency shelters, legal advocacy programs, and healing circles fill immediate needs. The spiritual/cultural component of the movement helps to transform women's and men's attitudes towards violence, by changing their attitudes about gender and family relationships, and by providing new models for gender identity. The credo, "family violence is not traditional" sends out a message, strong and clear to Aboriginal communities; that "family violence is not acceptable".

In organizing, even if it is not explicitly against family violence, women are strengthening their position in Native North American societies. In recreating the old roles, (women's work collectives, women's societies, women lobbying for the entrenchment of their human and political rights) women are strengthening their socio-political position while weakening the cycle of violence. In recreating their ethnic and gender identities, aboriginal women are reclaiming what missionization took from them.
By transforming the story of colonization, women of the First Nations thereby transform themselves.

It would seem that by Mohawk standards, these First Nations women are indeed "warriors". In their struggle to end family violence and to heal the survivors, Aboriginal women effect social change. As Melucci said, "the seeds of resistance are sewn into everyday life" - so it is in Vancouver's urban Native community. For many urban Native women, basic survival is everyday life: by meeting the needs created by systemic oppression, affinity groups are resisting that system.

Healing involves reclaiming our identities as First Nations peoples. Engaging in social and cultural activities -- holding pow-wows in school gymnasiums, forming Native dance/drum troupes, establishing Aboriginal art classes, re-learning old stories, songs, and lineages -- creates "free spaces" in which women can express and develop a Native identity. Organizational structures, goals, and objectives embody the ideals and relationships that they want First Nations families to emulate. For five hundred years, Amerindian cultures have been systematically stripped of their land, their children, and their identities: for most First Nations, it is an act of resistance merely to survive.

Healing also entails the restructuring of gender relations between Aboriginal women and men. Balance and reintegration between the sexes must be restored: this way, the sexes have the potential to achieve solidarity in their efforts to end family violence, since they share the common ethos of being colonized peoples. Cultural identity is being used to create this solidarity: patriarchal models of gender relations are undermined by labeling them as "non-traditional", "counter-cultural", and more directly, as "genocidal".

There is a need to understand family violence in Native communities, not in terms of women's continued victimization, but in terms of our efforts to move beyond it. First Nations women are leading their communities in the endeavor to heal Native spirit and to protect Native culture; in doing so, we create strategies with which to diffuse the negative
effects of the colonial system. Resisting the violence that insinuates itself into our homes and our communities is the first step on the road to recovery: the de-colonization of Aboriginal peoples.
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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Nation of Origin (Cree, Haida, Blackfoot, etc.)
2. Age
3. Marital Status
4. How long have you been involved with this particular organization?
5. Have you ever been involved with any other Native organizations?
6. How did you become involved with this agency? With Native organizations in general?
7. When did you first become involved with family violence issues? Why did you become involved?
8. What are the issues (surrounding family violence) which you feel are the most important?
9. How do you see these problems being addressed in your community?
10. How do you see these problems being addressed within your particular organization?
APPENDIX B: LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS

Aboriginal Business Development Program
810-650w Georgia Street, Vancouver B.C. V6B 4N7

B.C. Treaty Commission
203-1155 West Pender Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6E 2P4

Aboriginal Expressions
P.O. Box 56071 1st Avenue Marketplace
Vancouver, B.C. V5M 4S9

Burrard Band
3082 Ghumlye Drive
North Vancouver, B.C. V7H 1B3

Aboriginal People's Business Assoc.
Centre for Native Small Business
680-1155 West Georgia Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6E 3H4

Canadian Executive Service Organization
305-140 West 15th Street
North Vancouver, B.C. V7M 2R1

Aboriginal Peoples Employment Network
300-1550 Alberni Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6G 3C5

Canadian Native Bible College
304 E 26th St.
Vancouver, B.C. V5H 2H5

Aboriginal Services Team:
Ministry of Social Services
204-3284 East Broadway
Vancouver, B.C. V5M 1Z9

Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House
4065 Victoria Drive
Vancouver, B.C. V7M 2R1

Aboriginal Women's Council
107-1607 East Hastings
Vancouver, B.C. V5L 1S7

CFRO Co-op Radio
337 Carrall Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 2J4

Allied Indian & Métis Society
Halfway House
2716 Clark Drive
Vancouver, B.C. V5N 3H6

Chief Mask Bookstore & Gallery
73 Water Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 3V4

A.I.M.S. Job Development
203-96 East Broadway,
Vancouver, B.C. V5T 1S7

Crabtree Corner: Vancouver YWCA
101 East Cordova Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6K 1K7.
Aries Project
1-1607 East Hastings
Vancouver, B.C. V5L 1S7

Eslahallan Learning Centre
345 West 5th Street
Vancouver, B.C. V7M 1K2

Fine Day House
1906 West 15th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V6J 2L3

Hey-Way-Noqu' Healing Circle for Addictions Society
206-33 East Broadway
Vancouver, B.C. V5T 1V4

First Nations Drum
222-810 West Broadway,
Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 4C9

Kathou News K'Watamus Publications
443 West 3rd Street
Vancouver, B.C. V7M 1G9

First Nations Family Development
418-788 Beatty Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 2M1

Legal Services Society: Native Programs Branch
300-1140 West Pender Street
Vancouver B.C. V6E 4G1

First Nations Focus
403-318 Homer Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 2V2

Lift Indian Future Training
203-2112 West Broadway
Vancouver, B.C. V5K 2C8

First Nations Organizations
208-1999 Marine Drive
North Vancouver, B.C. V7P 3J3

Longhouse Council of Native Ministry
2595 Franklin Street
Vancouver, B.C. V5K 1X5

Gitsan Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs
68 Water Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1A4

Lu'Ma Native Housing
301-West 7th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1L4

Healing Our Spirit B.C. First Nations Aids Society
102-1193 Kingsway
Vancouver, B.C. V5V 3C9

Musqueam Indian Band
6370 Salish Drive
Vancouver, B.C. V6N 5C9

Indian Homemaker's Association
208-175 East Broadway
Vancouver, B.C. V5N 5R3

Native Brotherhood of B.C.
200-1755 East Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C. V5L 1T1

Helping Spirit Lodge Emergency Shelter
Tel: 872-6649 fax: 874-5235

Native Courtworker and Counseling Association of B.C.
50 Powell Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6A 1E9
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<td>Native Investment &amp; Trade Assoc.</td>
<td>Box 10, Suite 150 1111 Melville Street</td>
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Outreach Alternative Program
320 East Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6A 1P4

Professional Native Women's Assoc.
1-245 East Broadway,
Vancouver, B.C. V5T 1W4

Vancouver Police and Native Liaison Society
312 Main Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6A 2T2

Vancouver Sunshine Coast Aboriginal Management Society
3088 Ghum-Lye Drive
North Vancouver, B.C. V7H 2V5