Perseverance, Determination and Resistance: An Indigenous Intersectional-Based Policy Analysis of Violence in the Lives of Indigenous Girls

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> *Resistance is a woman*
> *whose land is all on fire*
> *perseverance and determination*
> *are her daughters…*
> *(Connie Fife, 1998, p. 19)*

Introduction

According to the report by the British Columbia (BC) Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, *Nothing to Report* (2010), the BC government stands in violation of Articles 2 and 3 of the *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*. The report concludes that

> conditions for Aboriginal women and girls will not change in British Columbia until strategic and co-ordinated policies are put in place to address and reverse the specific disadvantages of Aboriginal women and girls and until adequate resources are allocated, over a sustained period, to support systemic change. (p. 11)

Addressing the root causes of violence, including within policy, is key to such coordinated and systemic efforts and is the focus of this chapter. Below, I start with a story of a young Indigenous girl that demonstrates how current policies, including the *BC Child and Youth Mental Health Plan for British Columbia* (CYMH), reify colonialism, perpetuate violence against Indigenous girls, and beg for new approaches for exposing intersecting colonial discourses and practices embededded in mainstream government strategies. I follow this story by introducing what I refer to as an Indigenous Intersectional-Based

Policy Analysis (IIBPA), which draws on and extends the IBPA developed in this collection to constitute such a new approach. I believe that an Indigenous IPBA is required in order to foreground and centre Indigenous worldviews and sovereignty/nationhood, and to highlight the role of colonization, past and present, in violence against Indigenous girls.

In order to address the root causes of violence for Indigenous girls and women, it is crucial to centre the knowledge of affected Indigenous communities and to support Indigenous researchers and policy processes grounded in Indigenous epistemologies. As Grande (2004) reminds us, sovereignty, or nationhood, must be at the centre of decolonization: "If the emancipator project is built upon the spoils of conquest, how is that liberatory for Native peoples?"(243). This approach challenges conventional intersectionality scholarship by foregrounding anti-colonialism and Indigenous sovereignty/nationhood. I contend that this foregrounding is required until Canada and Canadian policy addresses the root causes of violence embedded within historic and contemporary policy and state responses. At the same time, discussions of colonialism must not grow so abstract as to overshadow individual Indigenous girls' interpersonal experiences of violence and the particular forms of gendered colonialism operating within Canadian society and within Indigenous communities. In short, while IBPA is important for attending to many intersecting factors, including gender, sexuality, geography, age, and because it advances a commitment to social change, it does not centre Indigenous sovereignty. I therefore argue for an Indigenous IBPA that is intersectional, inherently activist, responsive to local and global colonization forces, and theorized for the emergent "multifarious, polyvocal" indigenous identity within a clear goal of sovereignty (Grande, 2004, p. 2).

To develop an IIBPA, I link elements of the IBPA to literature on Indigenous worldviews. In so doing, I reveal a little -known relationship between intersectionality and Indigeneity. I then apply the IIBPA framework by returning to the case study examining how policies like the CYMH operate within ongoing dynamics of colonialism when responding to individual disclosures of abuse. I include a close examination of the material outcomes of child and youth mental health policies and of "whitestream" (Grande, 2004) settler complacency -, meaning, the ways mainstream white power is overlooked. Finally, I demonstrate how, by focusing on the agency of individual Indigenous girls and women, the implementation of an IIPBA would support the development of more ethical, anti-colonial and ultimately less violent policies for dealing with violence against Indigenous girls.

This work is grounded in my own intersecting relationships to Indigenous communities and the institutional networks in which Indigenous peoples lives are shaped. Before I offer my analysis, I am called upon to situate myself and my analysis in relation to the

land and communities to which I belong, and within a tradition developed by many Indigenous academics. In this tradition, we start from our intentions and beliefs in the work we do (Wilson, 2008). Indigenous scholar Aluli-Myer (2008), for example, echoes this when she writes of her desire "to be a woman of my intention" (p. 222). Similarly, protocol within many Indigenous communities requires individuals to situate them-selves and their relationships to the people and the land. This is consistent with the IBPA principle of reflexivity, which invites researchers and policy-makers to identify how their knowledge, experience, and values informs the policy under scrutiny.

The land I am a visitor on and the community that I am part of is Secwepemc. I was born in Saskatchewan in Cree territory, but I have been on Secwepemc territory since I was five. In many ways this land and its people have shaped my worldview. Inspired by Andrea Smith, I see my identity as formed in a "radical relational way" not only through my grandmother's Indigenous roots, but also through my connection to the Secwepemc community, and through what Audra Simpson (2003) calls a "feeling citizenship." I know to whom I am accountable, and to whom I belong. These are the important questions that define my responsibility and my role within the Secwepemc nation. My work is also informed and mobilized through my interconnected identities. I am a solo parent of twin Secwepemc boys from the lands of the Secwepemc people, and a daughter who is biracial. I have spent fifteen years as a community based researcher, activist and trauma counsellor with Indigenous girls in urban and rural spaces. My heritage includes Welsh, Irish, English and Aboriginal (my maternal grandmother). This paper is rooted in my own journey and in my more than 15 years of front-line trauma work with Aboriginal girls as an ally, auntie, sister and group facilitator. In the pages that follow, I bring together my professional, academic and personal analyses, encouraged by Aluli-Myer (2008) to "see your work as a *taonga* (sacred object) for your family, your community, your people — *because it is*" (p. 219).

Policies Embodied: Case Study

Just as policies are created, monitored and implemented by individuals, their outcomes are lived by individual Indigenous girls. They must contend with their construction within child and youth mental health policies and via "whitestream" (Grande, 2004) settler complacency. Like the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), I argue that case studies allow us to 'theorize up,' producing theory and understandings from the everyday lives of young Indigenous women in context. According to AWID:

> The rich descriptions produced through intersectional analyses illuminate the actors, institutions, policies and norms that intertwine to create a given situ-

ation. Such textured analyses are critical to our ability to effect progressive change in the face of the fundamentalist forces, neoliberal economic policies, militarization, new technologies, entrenched patriarchy and colonialism. (2004, p. 7)

By viewing the stories of individual girls as extensions of larger sociocultural processes embedded within a historical context, the true impact of current policies and policy processes can be revealed. Further, the lives of Indigenous girls and their resistance to violence are poorly understood, and stories of individual women can help fill some of these knowledge gaps. Finally, centring stories is consistent with any intersectional approach that prioritizes lived experience as a necessary theoretical foundation for the pursuit of social justice (Hankivsky & Cormier, 2009, p.3).

The case study reveals how policies fail to protect Aboriginal girls from victimization and how in this particular instance, the young woman was forced into a position of resisting the very policies and relationships that were supposed to protect her. In order to understand the violence today experienced by Aboriginal girls and women, it is necessary to situate this violence within the violence of colonization, the central role of the *Indian Act* and other federal and provincial policies in this process.

In relation to the experience of the young woman presented below, I argue that the violence of state neglect, combined with the lack of belief and support on the part of individuals in the communities and networks of which she is a member, can be understood as ongoing dynamics of colonialism that compounded the sexual abuse she was speaking up against.

Case study:

A 14-year-old Aboriginal girl living on a small reserve discloses sexual abuse at the hands of a male relative. She walks into a girls group and asks if she can make an announcement. She proceeds to tell the other girls that she has been sexually abused since age seven and that she will no longer remain silent.

Weeks go by and she has not been interviewed by police. Nor has the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) removed her from the home, in spite of the fact that her family will not believe her. She is no longer attending school and has been referred to mental health services. In a meeting with MCFD and Mental Health her disclosure is questioned as potentially being a story created to help her leave her home. Instead of focusing on the abuse, her actions are seen as the result of her "being a lesbian," and it is suggested that she is "using drugs and has mental health problems." These doubts are raised in the

assessment of her credibility, her believability and her motivations. She still has not been interviewed by the police or by MCFD. Thus, established government protocols have not been followed. These events stand in stark contrast with a non-Aboriginal girl from the same small community who also disclosed abuse and was interviewed within hours of her disclosure.

The other Aboriginal girl's group facilitator and I begin making phone calls –. I become more strident with each interaction, as I encounter the labelling of this young woman. I finally speak to a senior female RCMP officer from a larger centre who agrees to interview the girl and apologizes for delays in the local response. My calls to the local RCMP are never returned. Similarly, my call to the band social worker reveals that she supports the mother and stepfather. Without an interview, she is already questioning the believability of the girl's story. It is clear that the relevant agencies, health care providers and the MCFD have developed their own narrative – that of a young woman who made up a story in order to leave her small community. Together with the other facilitator I support this young woman in calling a meeting where she, with us as supporters, presents a different "picture" of who she is. She is articulate, strong and clear about the abuse and about her right to live in a safe home and to attend school where she chooses. Unfortunately, as there are no foster homes in her community, she is forced to move to a larger city and live in a non-Indigenous foster home. She gets her day in court, and the judge marvels at her strengths and her ability to represent herself and her needs. She becomes a leader in the new girls' group she is attending, speaking up and naming her feelings. She writes a support letter about the need for Indigenous girls groups and presents the model at a School District board meeting.

In this story, policies and procedures are revealed to be largely ineffective, as individuals worked to construct the girl as untrustworthy and showed complacency and disbelief towards the violence she had experienced. If this type of response is to be avoided in the future, it is important to examine how policies that could have protected her actually served to further victimize her. One policy relevant to this case study is the aforementioned *BC Child and Youth Mental Health Plan for British Columbia* (CYMH) (Ministry of Children & Family Development, 2003). Over the last 15 years I have developed a unique understanding of this policy. As a social worker, trauma therapist and activist who has directly witnessed the ineffectiveness of CYMH in addressing the intersecting vulnerabilities of Indigenous girls I have also seen how the policy itself has in fact constructed this vulnerability, which I maintain is a form of state structural violence. Such violence occurs in the failure to act and/or in interventions of the state, via policies and systems, that lead to a culturally unsafe environment for Indigenous girls and to further violence (Native Youth Sexual Health Network, 2012).

Failure of relevant policies:
Representations of Indigenous girls

In 2003, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) instituted the CYMH for BC as part of their commitment to improving the mental health of children and youth in the province. The CYMH was the first plan of its kind in Canada and has been recognized for its leadership in this area (Berland, 2008). Key goals within the CYMH include the need to address underserved populations, in particular Aboriginal children and youth, and to provide targeted funding of $10.1 million for the development of culturally relevant services for Aboriginal children, youth and their families. In 2008 MCFD undertook a consultation and review of the CYMH plan and produced a report entitled *Promises Kept, Miles to Go: A Review of Child and Youth Mental Health Services in BC* (Berland, 2008).

Berland (2008) found that while the investment of dollars in the Aboriginal mental health area and community-based programming were an important step forward, the key role of culture and spirituality were critical areas that had not been adequately or consistently addressed through the CYMH plan. Berland identified ongoing concerns with the labelling of Aboriginal children and youth and the medicalization of services that did not recognize the impact of colonization and ongoing trauma on the mental health needs of Aboriginal children and youth (2008, p. 51). Further, he identified a strong need for collaboration between ministries in addressing the complex needs of children and youth. Berland states:

> Although our recommendations are intended for MCFD staff, we recognize that **one Ministry of government is not solely responsible and cannot possibly address the issues alone.** Effectively tackling the myriad challenges affecting CYMH will require a whole community, cross-government approach with significant public support especially against stigma and discrimination. (bold in original, p. 5)

This need for culturally specific approaches and leadership has been echoed in a variety of recent government documents addressing mental health policy. For example, the 2007 Tripartite First Nations Health Plan called for recognition "that the mental health and substance use-related needs of BC's Aboriginal people require culturally-specific approaches" (Ministry of Health Services [MHS] & MCFD, 2010, p. 3). Similarly, on the federal level, the 2009 report by the Mental Health Commission of Canada, *Toward Recovery & Well-being: A Framework for a Mental Health Strategy for Canada*, identified the need for an understanding of health and well-being that "comes from a balance of body, mind, emotion, and spirit, is embedded in culture and tied to the land, with a

strong belief in family, community, and self-determination" (p. 17). The latter report also recognized that mainstream approaches to mental health focused on individual diseases and symptoms ignore the structural, historical and political contexts of mental health (p. 50). Still further, in the recently released BC document *Healthy Minds, Healthy People: A Ten-Year Plan to Address Mental Health and Substance Use in British Columbia* (MHS & MCFD, 2010), there is a similar commitment to developing a "complementary and culturally distinct plan for BC's Aboriginal populations that considers mental health, problematic substance use, as well as young adult suicide" (p. 3).[1] This report speaks briefly to the relationship between colonization, intergenerational trauma and the mental health of Aboriginal children and youth. However, the *Ten-Year Plan* does not clearly identify the link between trauma and the key mental health issues the plan addresses, and, in general, these documents fall short of their own aims. The movement towards brief interventions and solution-focused approaches is of concern, as these do not address the long-term treatment needs of trauma or the intersecting factors of age, gender, rurality or other factors that put Aboriginal populations, especially girls, at risk for violence.

According to a recent briefing paper by the Native Women's Association of Canada, the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action, and the University of Miami School of Law Human Rights Clinic [NWAC, CFAIA, & UMSLHRC] (2012), the intersection of gender, race, class and colonization, and an "ongoing narrative of violence, systemic racism, purposeful denial of culture, language and traditions, sex discrimination and legislatively imposed patriarchy" (10) underpin structural violence at all levels of policy in Canada. Yet, returning to the CYMH, the document about which I am most concerned, it is clear that the interaction of 'race,' ethnicity, class, sexuality and other social locations and systems of inequality is not taken into account. Significantly, the CYMH plan does not explicitly recognize that power operates within policies to continue the legacy of the *Indian Act* and other colonial structures and practices. Nor does it acknowledge the results of this continuation: structural violence that pathologizes resistance to violence and often leads to criminalization and medicalization of Indigenous girls. These failures speak to the need for alternative analytic frameworks, namely the IIBPA that I describe in the next section.

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[1] While the CYMH plan and the 10-year plan both identify the need for culturally based and centred treatment of mental health, they are clearly framed within a Western and Medical understanding of illness and wellness. Further, although acknowledged briefly in each policy, the impact of past and present colonization is not adequately addressed. There is also a danger of essentialzing culture within these approaches and thus failing to realize the potential of a culturally specific approach.

Why an Indigenous and Intersectional-Based Policy Analysis

> Ideological leverage is always superior to violence... The problems of Indians have always been ideological rather than social, political or economic... (I)t is vitally important that the Indian people pick the intellectual arena as the one in which to wage war. (Deloria Jr., 1969, p. 251-252)

Intersectional-Based Policy Analysis (IBPA) provides a useful starting point for understanding Indigenous girls' experiences of violence and for gaining the ideological leverage called for by Vine Deloria Jr. Its usefulness, however, stems not only from its capacity to allow us to see complex dynamics of power operating simultaneously, but from its connection to existing Indigenous worldviews, which, it has been argued, are inherently intersectional. While it is often assumed that intersectionality originated from African-American women in the US, especially Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), and that it is an idea that emerged in the 1980s, as Jessica Yee (2011) point out, the concept is not new to Indigenous peoples; it's the way we have always thought. Prior to colonization, Indigenous communities had multiple categories of gender, holistic understandings and approaches to health, strong matrilineal traditions, and complex systems of governance, treaty making and peacemaking. These systems of Indigenous knowledge persist in the ontologies and epistemologies of Indigenous women scholars. As Patricia Monture-Angus (1995) writes, "to artificially separate my gender (or any other part of my being) from my race and culture forces me to deny the way I experience the world. Such denial has devastating effects on Aboriginal constructions of reality" (p. 178). Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson (2003) echoes this insight, arguing that "we have to understand people within the *multiplicity* of frames that shape their lives - everyday frames of experience that they choose, that they inherit, that are imposed on them and that may be transformed, disintegrated, forgotten or ritualized" (p. 41). Among Indigenous writers and activists, there is also a strong history of resistance to colonial images (Campbell, 1973; Charnley, 1990; Maracle, 1975), which were intended to erase pre-colonization matriarchal traditions and, one can argue, intersectional ways that had existed prior to colonization of knowing. Intersectional worldviews have thus been important and, indeed, central for thousands of years in Indigenous and tribal communities.

Today, in principle, intersectionality allows theorization of current forces of colonialism, as found within reserve politics, lateral violence and identity politics (Clark & Hunt, 2011). It provides the explanatory framework called for by Indigenous critical scholar Sandy Grande (2004), "that helps us understand the complex and intersecting vectors of power shaping the historical-material conditions of indigenous communities" (p. 29).

The challenge is to "theorize the multiple and intersecting layers of indigenous identity as well as root them in the historical material realities of indigenous life" (Grande, 2004, p. 238). However, I argue that until intersectionality acknowledges its own colonial history and the erasure of Indigenous feminist scholars, it is not well situated to address the challenges that Indigenous communities experience, in particular, violence against Indigenous girls. Further, similar to other critical theories, intersectionality remains rooted in western notions of democracy and sovereignty that do not recognize the importance of tribal knowledge, spirituality and interconnectedness of past, present and future generations (Grande, 2004, p.81).

An Indigenous and anti-colonial perspective on policy-making centres Indigenous worldviews together with a strong commitment to activism and Indigenous sovereignty (that is mindful of the different meanings and experiences of sovereignty for different Indigenous peoples). This perspective also acknowledges the many intersecting factors operating through all policy work, including Indigeneity, gender, sexuality, age and geography. Overall, I contend that an IBPA analysis within an Indigenous framework, or IIBPA, offers a means of documenting first, how policies intersect and, second, how social policies, institutions and practices enable and constrict opportunities for Indigenous young girls from diverse communities and with different experiences.

Drawing on and extending IBPA to IIBPA

An IBPA starts from a set of descriptive questions about representations of the 'policy problem,' in this case, violence against Indigenous girls. These questions investigate how a problem is framed, by whom and why (questions 2 and 3); what groups are most affected (question 4); and current policy responses that maintain inequities (question 5). These sets of questions provide an important starting place for policy development because they inform the researcher/policy-maker that the violence experienced today by Indigenous girls and women originates and continues in the context of the violence of colonization.

Bringing together the IBPA Framework, literature on Indigenous intersectional knowledge, lived realities of Indigenous girls and women under neocolonialism, and intersectionality scholarship, I would like to offer five key elements of the expanded IIBPA: (1) analysis of policy and policy intersections as colonial violence; (2) anti-colonial gender analysis; (3) contextualization of individuals within community and family history; (4) positioning of agency as central, which I treat alongside of (5) acknowledgment of resistance. Through my discussion, below, of these elements, I demonstrate that, while applying the IBPA Framework allows us to consider how factors such as age, gender and Indigeneity come together to produce structural racism and barriers for Indigenous girls

the expanded Indigenous framework is essential for recognizing the multi-generational impact of colonization and trauma and points towards policy solutions that acknowledge sovereignty, build on resistance and emerge from the strengths within the community. This approach fosters a holistic understanding of policy, which encompasses mental, spiritual, physical and emotional well-being, and that builds on the strengths and resistance that exists among girls, women, and Elders within Indigenous communities.

(1) Analysis of policy and policy intersections as colonial violence

Although there is recognition in both the CYMH and in Berland's 2008 review of the plan that colonialism impacts a number of policy sectors, including education, child protection, addictions and youth justice, policy analysis and development across these sectors has not been practiced. An IBPA can attend to these connections not only in terms of describing the current policy context and approach, but also by asking transformative/normative questions about interventions (question 6) and proposed policy responses (question 8). In their analysis of Clayquot Sound and forestry policies in BC, for example, Hoberg and Morawski (1997) demonstrate that strategic alliances and "the intersection of policy sectors can be an important cause of policy change" (p. 410).

Similarly, we can consider the intersection of the related areas of child and youth mental health policy, child welfare policy and youth justice policy. The IBPA principle of multi-level analysis allows us to think about how policies have responded to the issue of violence against Indigenous girls, and how they address, maintain or create inequities between different groups (especially through questions 5 and 6 of the IBPA Framework). Such an analysis quickly unearths inequities within criminal justice and child welfare responses to Indigenous children and youth, and reveals how these systems intersect to create further harm and risk for Indigenous children and youth. A joint report by the Representative for Children and Youth and the Office of the Provincial Health Officer in BC entitled *Kids, Crime and Care: Health and Well-Being of Children in Care: Youth Justice Experiences and Outcomes* (2009) reports that Indigenous youth are overrepresented in the child protection system and within the justice system of Canada. The report was based on one of the largest studies of children and youth in Canada and included over 50,000 children and youth. It highlighted that Aboriginal children who have experienced trauma and who live outside the parental home are more likely to be involved with the justice system and to experience mental health symptoms and challenges within the education system. They are also more likely to be sexually exploited (p. 4). The report revealed intersecting vulnerabilities of age and Aboriginality, showing that nearly 1/3 of youth in custody in BC are of Aboriginal ancestry, and that Aboriginal youth are five

times more likely to be incarcerated than youth in the general population (p. 7). Aboriginal children and youth are also more likely to be in care, with 1 in 5 Aboriginal children in that situation, in contrast to 1 in 30 of the general youth population considered in the study (p. 7). Drawing similar conclusions, the organization Justice for Girls, in its 2011 report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, states that:

> Widespread human rights abuses against Indigenous girls are committed in the context of the criminal justice system, both in terms of over-criminalization and policing of girls, and physical and sexual abuses by police and other criminal justice authorities. These state perpetuated abuses and state failure to prevent, investigate and punish acts of violence against Indigenous girls, along with a lack of independent oversight and accountability of policing... are very serious human rights concerns.... (as cited in NWAC, CFAIA, & UMSLHRC, 2012, p. 10)

Yet, while the IBPA Framework points to the intersection of policy sectors, it does not clearly link these to colonial policies and to the process of ongoing colonization. As Mohawk scholar Patricia Monture-Angus (2006) demonstrates, criminalization is clearly a strategy of colonization, yet the criminalization of Indigenous girls and women within prisons has not been adequately examined within Canadian policy (p. 26). Current policy within the criminal justice system not only locks up girls but also fails to address the trauma, and their resistance to it, that criminalized them in the first place. As in the case study, we see how trauma is wrapped up in discourses of pathology or criminality.

In reality, policy and policy processes are central to the colonization of Indigenous peoples, locally and globally, historically and currently (Alfred, 1999; Harry, 2009; Lawrence, 2003). Policy is deeply rooted within Eurocentric value systems, and yet colonization is not often centralized or critiqued in policy analysis (Fleras & Maaka, 2010). Colonialism needs to be critiqued as a central component of any policy, including the CYMH. Meanwhile, the relationship between contemporary policies and other existing gendered and colonial structures, such as the *Indian Act,* needs to be clearly articulated.

It is clear that government policies have been central to replacing Indigenous worldviews and systems of thought with those of a settler society. An Indigenous IBPA takes this a step further by connecting current policy and policy intersections as forms of ongoing colonial violence that are directly related to the early policies of the colonial government. I argue that it is essential to further examine and reveal the relationship between these policies and historical and ongoing colonial polices such as the *Indian Act*. For example. in my previous research on reporting of violence, my colleague Sarah Hunt and I found

that past colonial legacies of policing and state intervention had led many young women to resist police or state intervention even when they had experienced violence. These young women clearly situated their current experiences with the child protection, child and youth mental health and/or criminal justice system within a larger colonial legacy of policies that have created harm, and this prevented Indigenous girls from reporting violence (Justice Institute, 2002, 2006). We found that it was common for young women to have experienced violence or witnessed violence as a child; to have had a negative experience with police, the justice system or the child welfare and mental health system; and, in turn, to have developed a lack of trust in these institutions and their representatives. We noted that if young women do speak out, reserve politics and family relationships often lead to further violence. Furthermore, in a high-profile case against a well-known judge in Prince George, girls acknowledged that they did not report violence, as the police and the justice system were part of their abuse. Through an IIBPA approach to Indigenous girls and violence, then, we begin with an acknowledgment of the harm created by policy, and directly link this harm to colonial policies and both historical and current state interventions.

(2) Anti-colonial gender analysis

An IBPA calls for a radical contextualization of policy. In the case of the context for violence against Indigenous girls and women, this would involve more careful study and disruption of gendered-colonial images, and to social justice approaches for addressing societal complacency and inaction. As NWAC (2010) identified in their research on the missing and murdered Aboriginal women from across what is now Canada, "violence is perpetuated through apathy and indifference towards Aboriginal women..." (p. 7). Statistics demonstrate the outcome of this indifference: Indigenous women are five times more likely to die as the result of violence (NWAC 2010). Widespread apathy is also reflected in the media's failure to report high-profile cases. For example, the under-reporting of the 1994 Crawford trial in Saskatchewan into the murder of three Aboriginal girls and young women (ages 16, 22 and 30) can be contrasted with the Bernardo case and the media circus that followed the victimization of white women. Similarly, in northern BC, the Highway of Tears and Sisters in Spirit campaigns have been working hard to publicize the ongoing issue of missing and murdered women, yet have received little coverage. This stands in sharp contrast to the widespread media reaction when a white woman, Nicole Hoar, went missing in BC (Hunt, 2008). Winona LaDuke (2002) writes:

> we collectively, find that we are often in the role of the prey, to a predator society, whether for sexual discrimination, exploitation, sterilization, absence of con-

trol over our bodies, or being the subjects of repressive laws and legislation in which we have no voice. This occurs on an individual level, but equally, and more significantly on a societal level. (p. 41)

However, an IBPA alone will not adequately address the context of violence against Indigenous girls and women. The Indigenous frame for the IBPA enhances the analysis by encouraging us to expand the context to include the violence of colonization and of policies, such as the *Indian Act*, that have constructed violent ideas about "Indian women." Colonization required the silencing of First Nations and other Indigenous women, as matriarchal and co-operative societies did not fit within the individualistic and patriarchal ways of the colonizer. To take the land they had to remove the women (Harry, 2009; Lawrence, 2003; Yee, 2011). Lawrence (2003) and Harry (2009) are two Indigenous scholars who have traced the key role that gender played in colonization, from the Gradual Enfranchisement Act of 1869 through to the *Indian Act* and up to today. Policy has been a tool to institute violence against Aboriginal women and girls, including via gendered and colonial policies within residential schools, and later, in the removal of children through child welfare and the 1960s "scoop," which further disconnected and displaced Aboriginal girls through adoption and foster placement (Downe, 2005; Harry, 2009).[2] Indigenous scholar Bonita Lawrence (2003) considers the *Indian Act* and the framing of Indigenous identity as a colonial production of discourse. She writes that "For Native people, individual identity is always being negotiated in *relation to* collective identity, and *in the face of* an external, colonizing society" (p. 4).

Controlling the dominant image of Indigenous girls and women and creating a discourse of "Indian women" as colonial subjects has been a tool of colonization. Indigenous scholar Fiske (1996) describes how images of Aboriginal women, constructed during times of early colonialism in Canada, included the introduction of the dichotomous images of the "squaw' and the "Indian princess," as the colonizers "reconstructed aboriginal women in the prevailing European Christian dichotomy of the Madonna-prostitute complex" (p. 663). She states that, "today Aboriginal women seek to shake off the shackles of this dichotomy and call for a new, more realistic and more empathetic understanding of the complexities and truths of their spirituality and sexuality' (p. 664).

An IIBPA thus serves to contextualize violence against Indigenous girls and women within colonialism and its intersecting forces. In this way, it complements and expands on some of the work already done to apply an Indigenous lens to policy making (Fleras & Maaka, 2010), including culturally sensitive gender based analysis of policy-making pro-

[2] For a detailed analysis and understanding of the impact of the *Indian Act* and other colonial policies on Aboriginal women, see Katrina Harry's 2009 paper *The Indian Act & Aboriginal women's empowerment: What front line workers need to know.* Battered Women's Support Services: Vancouver, BC.

cesses (NWAC, 2007). One note of caution in this regard: although the Indigenous lens and gender-based analysis both helpfully critique colonization, essentialized or fixed concepts of "Indigeneity" and "gender" within these processes are problematic. It is important to continuously come back to the questions about group representation in the IBPA Framework. Qwo-Li Driskell (2011), a Cherokee and two-spirit academic, postulates that the implementation of dual gender systems through law, policy and social norms is itself is a colonial project. Driskell points out that prior to colonization some communities had up to twelve genders, and that colonization and patriarchy needed a gender binary system in order to install colonial domination. Cherokee scholar Andrea Smith (2006) advocates for the view that activists cannot separate out colonization from gender or other factors. IIBPA facilitates the use of a gender analysis that is attuned to the particular role of gendered colonial violence in perpetuating images of Indigenous women as deserving victims, or in ignoring and normalizing their victimization.

Finally, due to early gendered colonial policies and the resulting forces of patriarchy on reserve, violence exists in Indigenous communities. As described by Indigenous activist Wilma Mankiller:

> Our tribe and others which were matriarchal have become assimilated and have adopted the cultural value of the larger society, and, in so doing, we've adopted sexism. We're going forward and backward at the same time. As we see a dilution of the original values, we see more sexism... The thinking that people come to in a patriarchal society is crazy. (as cited in Mihesuah, 2003, p. 42)

A central component of a IIBPA anti-colonial gender analysis must therefore be the development of tools that allow an examination of historical and current constructions of Indigenous girls not just externally to but within Indigenous communities.

(3) Contextualization of individuals within community and family history

IBPA foregrounds issues of power and knowledge. This type of analysis therefore points to the need for policies affecting Indigenous girls and women to include traditional and intergenerational knowledge specific to each Nation and community. To this end, Fine, Tuck and Zeller-Berkman (2008) call for:

> work that digs deep and respectfully with community to record the particulars of historically oppressed and colonized peoples/communities and their social movements of resistance, as well as work that tracks patterns across nations,

communities, homes and bodies to theorize the arteries of oppression and colonialism. (p. 174)

Such deep work is possible with the IBPA Framework, particularly using questions 2 and 6. These questions allow us to consider the impact of multiple relational factors on the issue of violence against Indigenous girls, many of which are often under-analyzed in current policy development. However, to contextualize policies such as CYMH within individual Indigenous family and community settings requires the enhanced Indigenous IBPA. Avoiding dependence on romantic notions of community, this contextualization should occur instead through reflection upon the complex realities of Indigenous girls' lives. Carolyn Kenny (2006) calls for greater complexity in policy, deeming it "an opportunity to describe lives in context, complete with historical, personal, and cultural elements critical for meaningful and useful policies" (p. 552). Further, contextualiztion through an IIBPA seeks to recognize the importance of local and traditional tribal teachings and the intergenerational connection between the past and the present, while also accounting for, in this case, the emergent diversity of Indigenous girlhood; the geographic movement off and on reserve; and the construction of Indigenous girls through policies such as the Indian Act.

Thus, in considering the issue of violence against Indigenous girls and their mental health and well-being, an IBPA within an Indigenous framework allows us to understand the context of colonization, the racial and colonial stereotypes of Indigenous girls and women, and the material impact of these stereotypes on the lived reality of different girls at different stages of life. This is an improvement on much policy and research on violence against Indigenous women and girls, which often discusses women without reference to age (see Culhane, 2003; NWAC, 2010). Yet, of the missing and murdered women, over half (55%) have been women under the age of 30, and 17% have been under 18 (NWAC, 2010, p. 23). Similarly, although many Indigenous youth identify as two-spirit, gender and gender-expression is often essentialized in policy and considered from a non-Indigenous perspective (Driskell, 2011; Yee, 2011). Within the IBPA Framework,(question 6) binary constructs of gender and problematic constructions of Indigenous girlhood within any intervention must be challenged.

Geography is also overlooked within much policy, in particular, how place intersects with age, gender expression and Indigeneity. While an IBPA considers geography in assessments of policy, an Indigenous IBPA brings geography and Indigenous relationships to the land and to spirituality to the forefront and allows us to consider multiple relational factors, including sacred connections between land, language and spirituality, together

with gender, age and transportation. In making this kind of policy inquiry, it becomes clear that geography is a factor for the majority of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada, who lived in the Western provinces, with 28% in BC (NWAC, 2010, p. 25). Although the majority of women are missing or murdered from an urban setting (over 70%), most had ties to rural and reserve communities, and the issue of mobility is not often examined (NWAC, 2010, p. 27). As well, it becomes evident that transportation is a policy factor. Indeed, transportation has been identified as a key issue by the Missing Women Inquiry, the Highway of Tears Initiative and in other research examining youth health (Smith, Peled, Leadbeater, & Clark, 2010).

An Indigenous intersectional-based policy analysis must also attend to the call from Indigenous communities to create policies that reject a pan-Indian approach and instead reflect the uniqueness of Indigenous communities throughout Canada (Kenny, 2006). Therefore, an IIBPA must facilitate the development of policies and policy processes that are rooted in dynamics specific to each community and individual's context.

Overall, then, an IIBPA approach contextualizes intersecting factors of gender, gender expression, and sexuality and how these come together with age, geography,transportation, and culture. In describing the policy problem through this kind of intersectional lens, the links between policy interventions related to these factors also become clearer. For example, it becomes evident that health policy is related to transportation policies of rural and remote communities. Examining how the interaction of interventions, or lack of interventions and these factors work together in individual communities and in the lives of individual girls, we can see how policies sometimes compound violence and work against efforts to address violence for Indigenous girls across diverse geographies.

Critics of intersectionality might argue that policy cannot be written to address the needs of individuals. However, it is important to consider how standardized policies, such as the CYMH, create the conditions for certain kinds of experiences at the individual and population levels, and to point out that the many examples showing that these experiences are often negative for Indigenous girls (including the ones I have given here) are not exceptional. Policy must be responsive to these experiences. A case-specific analysis can point to future directions for policy reforms, especially because such individual stories often reveal systemic issues. In particular, by asking a set of questions about policy interventions, an IIBPA would consider how policy frames individual Indigenous girls' coping and experiences within the current mental health, criminal justice and child welfare system policies and programs.

The case study I described in the opening of this chapter reveals a young woman caught between systems and draws attention not only to jurisdictional approaches but also to community politics. Because IIBPA is based on principles of Indigenous sovereignty, confronting power and promoting equity, it can provide possible solutions when applied to this case. Through the normative/transformative questions on types of interventions; whose knowledge informs interventions; levels of intervention; how policies promote equity; and mechanisms of accountability, IIBPA might lead to such policy changes as providing additional funding on reserves for child welfare, advocacy for access to safe housing and foster homes on reserve, and more collaboration between policy units and ministries to provide support rather than creating more stigma and harm. An IIBPA also importantly avoids individualizing the problem because the focus is on multiple levels (e.g., how the individual level links to the structural level), and instead situates mental health and trauma among Indigenous girls who have experienced violence within a broader context and acknowledges their resistance and agency at the intersection of colonialism, poverty, patriarchy, racism and discrimination, among other systems. As well, an IBPA within an Indigenous framework allows us to understand the diversity that exists within communities and cultures, and to support, through referral and advocacy, the use of local resources, capacity and strengths.

(4-5) Positioning agency as central, and acknowledgement of resistance

"Complacency is a far more dangerous attitude than outrage" (Littlebear, 1977, p. 36).

Indigenous women and girls have always resisted their colonial constructions within policy and media, and this resistance is an integral place to begin the development of an IIBPA. Such resistance takes diverse forms and is both individual and collective. For example, oral storytelling and other forms of storytelling, such as creative writing, have always been a political act and have provided an important space for Indigenous women to resist and replace colonial images with images of strength and agency (Armstrong, 1990). One example is the Memorial March that began on Valentine's day, 1991, in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside neighbourhood and has continued annually as an act of resistance by Indigenous and other marginalized women to "these acts of erasure" (Culhane, 2003, p. 593). As well, Culhane points out that staying alive is itself an act of resistance, an insight echoed by Cherokee scholar Andrea Smith (2006), who writes of the "dead Indian" and the attempt through the colonial project to erase the Indigenous body in order to clear the way for settlement.

Other acts of resistance are found in the work of Indigenous artists, such as An-ishinaubae artist Rebecca Belmore. Belmore often displays and performs her art out-doors in public spaces. She states that "creating in the presence of the absent makes me a witness. I believe I am just beginning to understand my role, particularly as an artist who has inherited an Indigenous history" (Belmore, 2004, as cited in Deutsch, 2008, p. 70). One example is Belmore's piece "Vigil," which she performed on June 23, 2002 in the Downtown Eastside. As part of the performance she called out each missing or murdered woman's name while scrubbing the pavement and lighting candles. She then ate a rose and its thorns. Art and performance of this kind allow for a telling of lives lived in context, while at the same time creating new narratives of resistance where before there were only victims and statistics.

Resistance by Indigenous women does not only take aim at society's "whitestream," however. These women also hold their own communities and leadership accountable. After reading a news story about the murder of an Indigenous woman, Sarah Hunt (2011) wrote to National Chief Shawn Atleo:

> Half way through the article, I read the word "beheaded" and burst into tears, turning my face away from the screen. Apparently, I have reached a breaking point for my ability to hold these truths, as the years and generations of loss pile up on me. I wonder how is it that these ongoing losses, constant deaths, and unrelenting assaults, continue day after day without it being deemed a crisis. And why aren't First Nations leaders negotiating for a fundamental shift in approaches to ensure Indigenous girls' and women's safety, along with our economic development, resource use and treaties? Yes, National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo, I am talking to you. (para. 4)

Another example of resistance is provided by Norma Peters, a Secwepemc Elder who has used local and international venues to address the issue of violence in her life and on her reserve. In 2010 she was a member of the Kamloops community group that success-fully lobbied Kamloops Mayor and Council to make the city the first community in BC to name an Angel Street. The idea of Angel Streets began with Inuit Mayor Elisapee Sheu-tiapik, in Iqaluit, Nunavut, who sought to raise awareness of the issue of violence. Peters, together with other advocates and community members, chose to re-name the street leading from the village to the school an Angel Street "to send a strong message to the young people of their community about the importance of ending domestic violence." Their decision is both purposeful and symbolic in that it tells young people of their com-munity and others that "we are all in this together and it is up to all of us to take action

to end domestic violence" (Secwepemc News, 2010). The Lesos (Angel) Street naming ceremony brought together Skeetchestn Elders, children, youth and community members to remember those impacted by violence in their community, as well as to honour the more than 600 missing and murdered Aboriginal women (Secwepemc News, 2010). In July 2011, Peters travelled to the International Women's World Conference in Ottawa to share her activism and her journey. Flying for the first time, she, together with this author and hundreds of women from around the world, marched on Ottawa to demand action on the issue of violence against Indigenous girls and women. Her poster proudly stated: "Marching for Skeetchesten First Nation." Stories such as this highlight how local Indigenous activists and policy makers can provide rich examples of changing norms around violence at the local level, and can impact policies at the national and international levels.

Meanwhile, the case study I have described demonstrates how Indigenous girls' resistance to their construction within the CYMH plan often leads to further labeling of the girls and/or criminalization of their resistance. For example, coping behaviours in response to trauma, such as self-harming, suicidal ideation and eating disorders are identified within both the CYMH and 10-year plan as critical areas to address; yet these issues are not connected to an understanding of trauma that is rooted in intersecting gendered, heteronormative colonial histories. Medical model approaches towards mental health issues further label and pathologize girls and also result in their criminalization and medicalization.[3] An IIBPA approach to policy would clearly situate the colonial context of violence and would not promote a medical model approach to trauma. Instead, it would require us to consider the question raised by Nadeau and Young (2006) of how "the language of deficiency and dysfunction reduces to personality traits or syndromes behaviours that have emerged as survival or resistance responses to oppressive conditions" (p. 89).

Ultimately, Indigenous girls and women continue to engage in ongoing acts of resistance to harmful policies that do not reflect their realities. Honouring this resistance is central to acknowledging Indigenous girls' agency in the development of an Indigenous intersectional-based policy analysis framework. Indigenous girls and women are the best guides for determining their own needs in this respect, as they are already engaging in daily acts of understanding, negotiating and pushing back against colonial policy.

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[3] Policy and practice related to girls, trauma and violence have continued to medicalize girls and their coping, locating risk within the girls themselves. As others have noted (see Rossiter and Morrow 2011) this is consistent with research and practice in the area of adult mental health.

Building Transformative Policy Processes: Lessons from an Indigenous Intersectional-Based Policy Analysis

Returning again to the stories of individual Indigenous women, I would like to show how the work of one young Indigenous woman can illustrate the potential for building transformative policy processes using an Indigenous intersectional-based policy analysis. Jessica Yee founded the Native Youth Sexual Health Network, a national organization that addresses issues impacting Indigenous women in North America, including reproductive justice. Yee recently worked with the Native Women's Association of Canada on a project and film called the *Highway of Hope,* in response to the Highway of Tears. As Jessica Yee describes it:

two of the most powerful elements of Aboriginal culture are our youth and our traditions. Traditions strengthen and root our identity as a people. Children are revered as the most sacred of these beings. When grappling with one of the most devastating travesties in the history of violence against women in Canada, it is time to arm ourselves with enough youth and tradition to lead the way for healing, reconstruction, and hope. (Smith & Yee, 2009)

These powerful stories of resistance and hope speak to the silence in mainstream media and provide examples of both Indigenous approaches to healing and guidance to policy development. One of the principles of IBPA is inclusion of diverse knowledges, and indeed a central component of Indigenous epistemologies is local Indigenous stories and ceremonies. An IBPA informed by Indigenous frameworks would promote policy transformation that is inclusive of many forms of Indigenous knowledge, including Indigenous poetry and art, and the wisdom and knowledge of Indigenous Elders.

A recent policy statement developed by Jessica Yee (primary author) and the Native Youth Sexual Health Network provides a direct example of solidarity and coalition building across divergent interest groups, and a rich example of the transformative potential of IBPA within an Indigenous framework As well as centering sovereignty and cultural safety within policy processes, the policy states:

Sexual and reproductive rights provide the framework within which sexual and reproductive health and well-being can be achieved. Within this framework, we take a gender-based, human rights approach to FNIM women's sexual and reproductive health, acknowledging but going beyond the Treaty rights and

constitutional obligations specific to First Nations and Inuit peoples. The sexual and reproductive health rights of FNIM women include the right to prevention, treatment, education, information, and privacy. They also include the right to:

- have timely, culturally safe, high-quality care
- decide the number and spacing of children
- rely on traditional knowledge and share in the benefits of scientific advancement
- make informed health decisions
- be free from harmful practices, including discrimination against two-spirit people, gender based and other forms of discrimination, and all forms of violence.
- (Society of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists of Canada, 2011)

This kind of policy statement offers hope because it builds policy communities composed of traditional policy stakeholders and groups who are typically marginalized in the policy process. In this case, Indigenous activist Jessica Yee worked with the Aboriginal Health Initiatives Sub-Committee and gained support from the Executive and Council of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, the Assembly of First Nations, the Canadian Federation for Sexual Health, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, the Native Youth Sexual Health Network, the Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada, the Canadian Association of Perinatal and Women's Health Nurses, the Canadian Association of Midwives, the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives, the College of Family Physicians of Canada, the Canadian Medical Association, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, and the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada. The potential for collaborations in policy formulation, implementation and evaluation is built into the IBPA Framework, particularly through questions about the transformative possibilities of policy. Further, in making sovereignty and cultural safety as well as Indigenous girls' and women's rights to their bodies central to policy processes, this statement points to the central importance of anti-colonial and Indigenous frameworks within IBPA processes.

Conclusion

As this chapter has demonstrated, although the CYMH plan (2003) and other policy directives, such as *Healthy Minds Healthy People* (2010), speak to the need for Aboriginal centred policy within mental health, these policy directives fail to consider and act upon such important variables as age, rurality, gender expression, experiences of trauma and

cultural difference, including the violence done through contact with multiple policy systems. What might the people who develop and implement these policies learn from Indigenous young women such as Jessica Yee, in working across various sectors to develop policies that adhere to the principles of an Indigenous IBPA?

By centring colonization, activism and sovereignty, IIBPA highlights how the intersection of policies at all levels—federal (funding), provincial (CYMH) and civic (transportation)—creates risk and contributes to violence against Indigenous girls in BC and Canada. To be consistent with IBPA principles it is crucial to centre the knowledge of affected Indigenous communities and support Indigenous researchers and policy makers whose work is grounded in Indigenous epistemologies. An IIBPA allows us to locate the source of Indigenous girls' challenges within structural and systemic problems, such as colonialism and neocolonialism that, in turn, provoke racism, poverty, sexism and the intersections of these in their lives. Finally, an IBPA within an Indigenous framework understands the diversity that exists within communities and across Indigenous cultures. It can therefore support the use of local resources, capacities and strengths, as demonstrated through the resistance stories of Angel Streets, the film *Highway of Hope,* and in individual Indigenous girls' stories, as represented in the case study.

Ultimately, there is a pressing need for an approach that recognizes how time, law, spirit and the past and current policies of colonization shape us all differently. I argue that the principles of IBPA together with the five elements of IIBPA provide a starting place for developing this theory. Until we acknowledge and reconcile the damage done through colonization, including through intersectionality theory itself, all critical theories must remain in service to Indigenous communities. This means placing nationhood and sovereignty at the centre of any IBPA, utilizing indigenous epistemologies and worldviews in their great diversity, and recognizing the relationships between humans and all of nature as equal and important sources of knowing. Indigenous activists like Jessica Yee, Sarah Hunt, Norma Peters, and my own work with Indigenous girls groups, together with Indigenous girls' stories of resistance are essential as examples of policy development and processes that resist colonial images of Indigenous women and girls and provide solutions rooted in the community and tradition while recognizing the complexity and diversity of these communities. Our work is already mindful of intersectional considerations and can be formally included in policy development by applying and drawing on IIBPA. Through examples like this we can move forward from the legacy of policies that created harm towards those that have the potential for transformation and equity.

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