F. MacDonald, “Indigenous Peoples and Neoliberal Privatization in Canada: Opportunities, Cautions, and Constraints,” *CJPS* 44:2 (June 2011)

**Overview**

Article addresses the impact of the current neoliberal political context for Indigenous governance in Canada. While some observers have argued correctly that the neoliberal context provides new opportunities or points of entry in the political opportunity structure for “self-government” initiatives, MacDonald examine to what extent recent decentralizing initiatives, generally viewed as “concessions” made by the state to meet the demands of Indigenous peoples, must be evaluated as part of a broader governmental strategy of neoliberalism. This strategy is not simply about meeting the demands of Indigenous peoples but also about meeting the requirements of the contemporary governmental shift towards “privatization” within liberal democratic states. As such, certain manifestations of Indigenous self-government are vulnerable to criticisms launched against practices of privatization, practices which include a variety of policies designed to promote a shifting of contentious issues out of the public sphere and thereby limiting public debate and collective—that is, state—responsibility.

**Background**

* Paper explores the emergence of *neoliberal Aboriginal governance* – which specifically refers to state-crafted responses to indigenous demands that fit within a neoliberal ideological policy framework
* MacDonald argues that although on the surface the shift to neoliberal Aboriginal governance appears to meet the demands of Indigenous peoples for progressive change, these practices foster an Indigenous–state dynamic that, in many ways, is regressive.
* Essentially MacDonald is arguing that govts are shifting responsibilities for Aboriginals onto private corporations, privatizing service delivery, etc, and the move towards devolution is in fact in line with neoliberal practices of govt
* As Slowey aptly notes, “Since neoliberalism favours a system of policies and processes designed to assist the marketplace, First Nations self-determination becomes more attractive than First Nations dependence on the state”