EDUCATION WORK: CANADIAN SCHOOLS
AND THE EMERGENCE OF INDIGENOUS SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores 20th century Canadian assimilationist educational systems and the emergence of contemporary indigenous social movements. It focuses on the ways in which schools contributed to transformations in identities and the division of labor in indigenous communities at the local scale, and, conversely, how the state transformed the division of labor for indigenous peoples. Finally, I examine how shared experiences and symbols from resistance to these schooling processes were used by indigenous activists in the construction of indigenous social movements pushing for indigenous land rights and sovereignty.

Each substantive chapter of this dissertation reflects a different site that helps illustrate these processes at work. First, I detail the genocidal consequences of transformations in the division of labor in the first half of the twentieth century. Next, I examine vocational training programs for Residential School students and the ways in which labor, gender, and morality interacted in the mid-twentieth century. I then study efforts by a local indigenous community to have a day school built after forced relocation to a reserve without a school. After that, I study racialized integrated schooling efforts and the use of quota systems for the admittance of indigenous children in public schools in the 1950s and 1960s. Finally, I look to the historical moment of the White Paper of 1969 and its effect on indigenous social movements, particularly in the context of news media.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

The end purpose of this dissertation is reconcile two incontrovertible facts. First, in the colonial context of North America, indigenous peoples have been subjected to genocide, assimilation, disease, and a shift from mercantile to corporate capitalist modes of production, among other things—all the while working to maintain their daily lives. Second, beginning in the 1960s—and out of a rich tradition of resistance—there arose several allied indigenous social movements and social organizations in North America. My research question, at the very broadest, reflects these facts and links them together as so: what is the relationship between assimilationist and resistance in colonial capitalist contexts?

In the Canadian context, schooling systems were central to cycles of assimilation and resistance. Schooling systems played contradictory roles, with often distinctive outcomes, in fulfilling the state’s assimilationist agenda. All the while, they worked to enfold indigenous communities into exploitative relationships with colonial capitalism, while sharpening certain boundaries between indigenous and exogenous communities through processes of racial formation that followed hierarchical colonial patterns of meaning- and difference-making.

In 1998, the Canadian government allocated 350 million dollars for community healing projects through the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (BSHS, 2013, 7; Milloy, 1999). In 2008, a series of complaints filed to the Canadian Human Rights Commission led to the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2008. The focus of research on residential schools has been largely to treat survivors of abuse and neglect, rather than focus on longstanding social and structural problems (Boarding School Healing Project, 2013; Milloy, 1999; Chrisjohn, Young,
and Maraun, 2006). This narrative has been criticized by scholars and activists for being a way for the Canadian government to “move forward” from focus on its treatment of indigenous peoples (Taylor, 1994; Coulthard, 2007), ignoring contemporary problems in favor of narratives of healing and wellbeing (Castellano, Archibald, and DeGagné, 2008), and differentiate reconciliation with indigenous self-determination goals (Corntassel and Holder, 2008).

In her work *States of Injury*, Wendy Brown (1995) argues that “‘freedom’ has shown itself to be easily appropriated in liberal regimes for the most cynical and unemancipatory political ends” (5). Following Stuart Hall and Hannah Arendt, Brown suggests that our ideas of freedom reflect “contemporary modalities of domination” (6), constructed “in opposition to whatever is locally and ideologically conceived as unfreedom” (6). She finds that we often discuss rights and freedoms as ideals that are abstracted from their historical and local contexts, which “not only prevents appreciation of their local and historical character but preempts perception of what is denied and suppressed by them, of what kinds of domination are enacted by particular practices of freedom” (6). Goals of freedom necessarily become reactionary:

Initial figurations of freedom are inevitably reactionary in the sense of emerging in reaction to perceived injuries or constraints of a regime from within its own terms. Ideals of freedom ordinarily emerge to vanquish their imagined immediate enemies, but in this move they frequently recycle and reinstate rather than transform the terms of domination that generated them…Such images of freedom perform mirror reversals of suffering without transforming the *organization of the activity through which the suffering is produced* and without addressing the *subject constitution that domination effects* (7).

Identities are constructed in paradoxical ways in regards to goals of freedom, with the paradox “in which the first imaginings of freedom are always constrained by and potentially even require the very structure of oppression that freedom emerges to oppose” (7). In other words, freedom, when institutionalized, requires submitting to a particular mode of domination. This is particularly important in a historical context in which “Western leftists have largely forsaken
analyses of the liberal state and capitalism as sites of domination and have focused instead on their implication in political and economic inequalities. At the same time, progressives have implicitly assumed the relatively unproblematic instrumental value of the state and capitalism in redressing such inequalities” (10). The capitalist state’s role as a site of domination goes ignored in language of equality and redress. Following Foucault and Marcuse, Brown argues that “disciplinary power is extraordinarily effective in "colonizing" allegedly free subjects, for example, those highly individuated, self-interested subjects produced by liberal cultures and capitalist political economies” (19). In liberal states, efforts to gain freedom require subsuming oneself to the “regulatory force» of the state,” (28), often through demonstrating proof of wrongdoing in legal contexts.

This demonstration of “woundedness” constructs certain kinds of subjects to be treated so that the issues can be closed—after all, the burden of proof lies with the subject harmed, and even if evidence proves wrongdoing, it still can ignore the more structural consequences of colonial institutional programs of assimilation and control. The construction of the “woundedness” narrative is also a construction of a certain “evidential politics of presence” (Kuletz, 1998: 67) in which the proof of wrongdoing requires following a certain established scientific-legal process of knowledge legitimation in which indigenous peoples often do not constitute an adequate sample size. What, then, can be gained by shifting the focus (even in the study of assimilationist schooling) away from the legacy of residential schools and toward the broader historical context in which they were seen as necessary? By refiguring this discussion, the dialog that ensues can go beyond healing those damaged by schools.

I conducted qualitative analysis of archival data and print media from three transitional periods: the “era of retreat” (pre-1945), the “era of integration” (1945-1971), and the “era of self-
determination” from the 1970s until the present. The data itself proved to be largely unindexed and difficult to access. Often, the microfilm and microfiche would have scanned empty folders. Other times, requests for data would be denied to protect living subjects. Most problematically, the data management of the archives having to with indigenous peoples is a political issue: part of the Truth and Reconciliation agreement was that the archival data would be indexed and returned to indigenous populations; however, this did not happen: “The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which was created by that deal, argues that the government is not living up to its part of the bargain by failing to retrieve and organize as many as four million documents that relate to the residential-schools experience” (Globe and Mail, 2012). Instead, “the government, faced with what all parties agree is a gargantuan and expensive task, says gathering all of the material demanded would be a redundant exercise and that anyone interested in the documents, including the commission, can go into the archives and get them” (Galloway, 2012). Even with the efforts of archival staff, the documents were not only difficult to access but to navigate: “The Library and Archives Canada website says the government departments do not know what records they have or how to find them. ‘Millions of records are at issue and we don’t know where they are,’ said Mr. Falconer” (Galloway, 2012). The method for data analysis for this dissertation, therefore, was working with the data (often not indexed) that was available by requesting relevant microfilm and microfiche.

Framing my research, I keep in mind Kuletz’s (1998) ideas of what is made visible and invisible in colonial and imperial contexts. In her research on indigenous populations living in close proximity with nuclear testing grounds in the American Southwest, she finds that historians and government officials purposefully ignore the presence of at risk populations (5) whose livelihoods often revolve around subsistence off of the land, which has been “plundered for its
wealth” (5) as sacrifice for imperialism and capitalism. These vulnerable populations become “invisible,” leaving it up to the researcher to use local knowledge to make visible these “geographies of sacrifice” (6). Once these geographies are interrogated, it is possible to “ask deeper questions about the mechanisms of power and exclusion, of visibility and invisibility, of knowledge, power, and marginalization, and of post-colonial racism” (120). Schools—and especially assimilationist ones—not only produce certain subjects but make others invisible.

DISSERTATION CHAPTERS

The first chapter of my dissertation, “Deciphering the Social Problem of Assimilationist Policies toward Indigenous Peoples in Canada,” provides a historical overview of literature and theory having to do with subjects of this thesis, with a particular focus on tracing the history of colonialism in Canada, as well as the more specific narrative of how the schooling of indigenous peoples within Canadian sovereignty became the primary mode of assimilation adopted by the state. In this chapter, I draw on the sociology of education, the sociology of the state, and the body of theory known as critical indigenous theory to make a case that

The second chapter of my dissertation, “1900-1940: Genocidal Consequences of Colonial Capitalism,” examines the ways in which the construction of the reserve system, which at once spatially isolated indigenous communities while legally restricting their mobility, resulted in poverty, starvation, and the deaths of many indigenous peoples, especially in more isolated areas, and often blamed on racist stereotypes of the perceived “laziness” of indigenous peoples. It also discusses how restrictions on the movement and work of indigenous peoples on reserve contributed to a system of capitalist exploitation in which indigenous workers were required to work for encroaching white-run industries and landowners.
The third chapter, “‘Making Good’: Labor, Gender, and the Failed Construction of an Indigenous Service Class in Mid-20th Century Canada,” examines the intersection of labor and gender in the context of vocational training. The data for this chapter is comprised of follow-up evaluations on whether former residential school students were “making good” in their day-to-day work and personal lives. By studying these evaluations—as written by staff of the Department of Indian Affairs—new light is shed on the gendered (moral) expectations placed upon indigenous peoples as they worked and lived.

The fourth chapter, “Resistance as Compromise, Logics of Dispossession, and the Building of the Mattagami Reserve Day School, 1934-1949,” examines the process by which local actors (both indigenous and white) campaigned for the building of the Mattagami Indian Day School, which was promised to the Mattagami reserve community in exchange for their relocation to a spatially isolated, less resource-rich area from where they had been previously living next to a white rural town. The children were especially affect in that the relocation shifted them from integrated education with white students to no education at all. The result was a years-long campaign for the building of the promised school. This chapter illustrates the ways in which local actors—including indigenous leaders, the local missionary, and the lowest level Indian Affairs agent—successfully campaigned for the building of the school against a reluctant state.

The fifth chapter, “Working the Racial Ratio: Integrated Schools,” covers the case of integration efforts by the Department of Indian Affairs, who, in cooperation with local (white) school boards, split the cost of building infrastructure—such as gyms and assembly halls—in exchange for the public schools to admit a quota of Indian-status children. This chapter demonstrates ways in which bureaucratic cooperation in the name of integration was mobilized
by white community leaders to advance their own interests, often at the cost of the education of the indigenous children the programs were supposed to help.

The sixth and final chapter, “The White Paper and Indigenous Social Movements,” focuses on the historical moment of the White Paper of 1969—a new policy by the state that was supposed to erase the legal status of “Indian” in the name of colorblind equality. Ensuing protests were commonplace and the white paper was eventually abandoned by the government. This chapter examines the ways in which indigenous groups worked together in protest of the new policy.

This dissertation connects assimilationist educational systems with contemporary indigenous social movements that emerged in the mid-twentieth century in the 20th century Canadian context. First, my research focuses on the ways in which schools contributed to transformations in identities and the division of labor in indigenous communities at the local scale, and, conversely, how the state transformed the division of labor for indigenous peoples. Second, I examine how shared experiences and symbols from resistance to these schooling processes were used by indigenous activists in the construction of transindigenous social movements pushing for indigenous land rights and sovereignty.
REFERENCES


CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Until the early 1800s, British colonial policies toward indigenous peoples were constructed in relationship to European interaction with indigenous peoples of North America that began in the early 16th century. Famously, the British developed the legal concept of *terra nulla* as legal grounds to take land away from indigenous peoples. The logic of *terra nulla* was simple: since indigenous peoples did not follow the same practices of land ownership as in the British legal system, there were in effect no land owners prior to British colonial arrival. In the mid-19th century, British policy recommendations were sent to Canada for the consideration of the colonial governments. In the narrow legal sense, *terra nulla* did not include Canada, which like the United States had a long history of contact between Europeans and indigenous peoples in North America, engaging instead in processes of war, treaty, coercion, violence, to further along its invasive settler colonial structure.

Alfred and Corntassel (2005) critique perspectives that only discuss indigeneity in the terms of colonialism, “aboriginalism,” and the general idea that indigenous peoples and communities are acted upon rather than actors with agency. Champagne (2007) reiterates this argument, strongly arguing that even forms of social scientific knowledge that have been used to study indigenous peoples are problematic at best and generally have been used to control indigenous communities. Byrd (2011) argues that understanding colonialism is essential to understanding the history of indigenous peoples—in fact, indigeneity as a category for the classification of people only makes sense in the context of colonial settling.

SETTLER COLONIALISM, LAND RIGHTS, AND POLICY
From the 19th century until the late 20th century, the Canadian state instituted a series of policies to manage nearly all aspects of indigenous populations within their sovereignty. These systems of management remain today, though they have become more heavily contested. Policies were enacted on multiple levels of scale. Set with the purpose of removing, “civilizing,” or assimilating these populations through processes of genocide, bodily discipline, religious conversion, and physical isolation, the state eventually enforced coercive policies to reward indigenous populations who conformed to Western and Christian behavioral expectations while punishing those who did not successfully conform. These processes are being discussed in contemporary scholarship in terms of “settler colonialism,” a term that has been popularized by Patrick Wolfe. While settler colonialism has become a paradigmatic phrase, Byrd (2011) suggests that a better phrase might be “arrivant colonialism” since many of the so-called colonial settlers were forced for a variety of reasons—slavery, famine, etc.—to arrive in North America. Settler or arrivant colonialism differs from more “mercantile” forms of colonialism in that material exploitation of the land for imperial gain was not the primary purpose. Policies and practices for the management of indigenous populations were implemented in contradictory ways, often amounting to cycles of genocide and resistance.

Settler/arrivant colonialism differs from other forms of colonialism in that the center of its purpose is the attainment and ownership of “new” land. It does not require a “dominated people” to serve as a cheap labor force for the spread of industry. Instead, “to get in the way all the native has to do is stay home” (Wolfe, 1999: 1). Rather than occupying a region in order to exploit its resources (including people), the land is restructured to the wishes of the settlers, often to the opposition of the existing inhabitants. In order for settler colonialism to take root in (British) Canada, a colonial legal system was instituted that followed European (and especially
English) laws and policies while parting from the European model according to the particular contexts of “settling.”

Aimé Césaire claimed that “no one colonizes innocently” (Moses, 2008: 11). European colonization of non-European regions had an ideological component: progress, race, gender, and religious belief all played parts in not just rationalizing the actions of colonization but in the process of creating a vision for restructuring the existing social structures. European interactions with indigenous people in Canada dates back to French Catholic arrivals in the 16th century. In 1534, Jacques Cartier erected a cross in Montreal and mass baptized an indigenous group (Armitage, 72). Until 1763, there was a period of ongoing Jesuit conversion through missionary work, treaties, and French and British settling, which culminated in the 1755 French and Indian War, which was won by the British. At this point, the British government established the Indian Department to be run by a Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Under the Superintendent, the goal was to “conciliate…the Indian Nations, by every act of strict Justice…by affording them Protection from any Encroachments on the lands they have reserved to themselves” (Armitage, 73). A major goal of this Royal Proclamation (1763) was to unite all policies regarding persons of Indian status in all regions under British control, including Quebec.

Official correspondence between the Canadian governor and the British government detailed methods that the Indian Department would employ for the schooling and conversion of First Nations people (Armitage, 75). The conditional use of presents was decided upon to be a primary tool of control (Armitage, 75). Gifts were to be awarded to First Nations people who conformed to Indian Department expectations, policies, and commands. From the 1842 Bagot Commission through the 1876 Indian Act, the legal definition of Indian was gradually cemented:
by 1876, an Indian was “any male person of Indian blood…any child of such person…Any woman who is or was lawfully married to any such person” (Armitage, 84).

The 1842 Bagot Commission established residential schools as the “central instrument of social policy” (Armitage, 77) for these missions of change and conversion. Residential schools were a means to transform indigenous children through a process of removing them from their families and placing them in schools that were run by religious institutions. These schools were often isolated on former Indian territories, with lessons of menial labor and Christian conversion taught to the children. The Davin Report (1876) refers to the residential school system as a means of “aggressive civilization” (Davin Report, 1). In this report, the writer (E. McColl, and Inspector of the Indian Agency) describes how he had just returned from a trip to Washington, DC, to consult with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs (US) on the US model of industrial schools for indigenous children. He briefly describes why American industrial boarding schools were formed: to remove children from their families, to break apart the “tribal relation” (Davin Report, 1), and teach “Western” ideals of land ownership, citizenship, and individualism.

This emphasis on creating an individual mirrored the focus on the individual in modernity, which as Scully (2012) notes might explain why indigenous rights issues have so often failed to be seen as human rights issues. In the American model, tribal lands were broken apart and given to individuals; this process of remaking land rights was paired with taking away the children and “educating them in industry and in the arts of civilization” (Davin Report, 1). According to the author of the report, the Bureau of Indian Affairs had initially formed day schools rather than boarding schools, but “the influence of the wigwam was stronger than the influence of the school” (Davin Report, 1). To these Canadian and American bureaucrats, indigenous adults were seen as lazy and impossible to change. They created policies to “combat”
the children’s’ “inherited aversion to toil” (Davin Report, 2). The boys were taught to raise cattle and chop down wood; the girls were taught domestic duties “suitable for a farmer’s wife” (Davin Report, 2).

From the late 19th century until the 1950s, the restrictions on First Nations peoples continued to increase. The 1894 Amendment to the Indian Act allowed the government to commit children to residential schools if parents chose not to send children (Armitage, 79). By 1920, all children of Indian status who did not attend residential schools were marked “delinquent” (Armitage, 79); parents of delinquent children could be criminally charged. The 1927 Indian Act extended the government’s control over indigenous life, giving the state control of property, schools, labor for public works, right of assembly, residence, and ceremonies (Armitage, 95). This was basically the peak of a period of overt state control. It was not until the 1950s that the state began to ease its regulation: in 1951, the purpose began to change toward that of assimilation not just in daily life but in the education systems, with efforts made to set goals of drawing residential schools together with schools for white Canadians.

By the 1960s, it was apparent that these policies were receiving bad publicity within Canada and failing in their goals, as the government was sinking money into the school system with no obvious reward and paired with controversies over disease, sterilization, and abuse. In 1969, the Canadian government attempted to pass the first “White Paper,” an attempt to absolve itself from responsibility toward educating indigenous children and to repeal the Indian Acts; this effort stalled through non-cooperation with First Nations groups (Armitage, 80). In 1973, the White Paper passed, formally repealing the Indian Act and dissolving the Canadian government’s formal involvement with First Nations affairs. However, the Department of Indian Affairs still exists as the de facto management and rule (Armitage, 80). Since then, there have
been repeated efforts on the part of the Canadian state to move toward de facto self-government for First Nations education systems, with the Department of Indian Affairs renamed Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, with goals to “improve social well-being and economic prosperity; develop healthier, more sustainable communities; and participate more fully in Canada’s political, social and economic development – to the benefit of all Canadians” (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2012).

BEYOND THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL NARRATIVE

Between the 19th and 20th centuries, boarding schools became the archetypal model of education for indigenous children in the United States, Canada, Australia, Mexico, and much of Central and South America. For this reason, and perhaps due to their convenience as archetypical examples of efforts by the state toward indigenous assimilation, boarding schools also became the general symbol of state oppression and resistance.

Boarding schools began in England in the early 19th century as a method for dealing with the youth of the new urban working poor (Glenn, 2011: 84). In the middle of ongoing debates among government officials as to whether or not to "civilize" or “exterminate” indigenous peoples (Boarding School Healing Project, 2013: 2), the United States government established the boarding school as a paradigm in the mid-19th century. Soon after, a similar set of institutions was implemented by the Canadian government in close collaboration with the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs in the mid-19th century. In Canada, however, it was not until the 1950s that boarding schools fully replaced day schools, especially in Northern Canada (Coates in Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill, 1986a). The Australian government followed suit in the early 20th century. In South and Central America, boarding schools run by clergy were the de facto
education systems for indigenous children in the late 20th century. By the late 20th century, boarding school educational systems were broadly condemned by indigenous activists and movement allies because of accounts of abuse, neglect, spatial isolation, and disease.

In Canada, a series of complaints filed to the Canadian Human Rights Commission led to the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2008, ending in 2014. Much like the more general politics of recognition (Taylor, 1994; Coulthard, 2007), the politics of reconciliation have been criticized by scholars and activists for being a way for the Canadian government to “move forward” from its past treatment of indigenous peoples, ignore contemporary problems in favor of narratives of healing and wellbeing (Blackstock in Castellano, Archibald, and DeGagné, 2008), and differentiate reconciliation with indigenous self-determination goals (Corntassel and Holder, 2008).

While the United States government instituted the first boarding schools for indigenous children, the Canadian residential school system was a site of focused long-term institutionalization. Due to a series of treaties signed before the 18th century, indigenous title in Canada was formally recognized by the Canadian government from the mid-18th through the late 19th centuries (Barron, 1984: 1). Unlike the United States, the Canadian government before the mid-18th century formally recognized that indigenous groups had legitimate claims to the land. It was not until the late 19th century—a period of starvation for indigenous groups stemming from Canadian settlers' ecologically devastating hunting and fishing practices (Barron, 1984: 1)—that the Canadian government began to control indigenous territories. In the treaties the Canadian government negotiated with the tribes, the agreements stated that the tribes were to be allowed hunting and fishing privileges in exchange for the Canadian government's assistance in transitioning to Western agricultural practices (Barron, 1984: 2). After the treaties were
signed, the Canadian government interpreted this exchange as incorporating indigenous and Métis peoples within its sovereignty as wards of the state, with education the primary method of assimilation.

At the beginning, education came in the form of day schools that were located on Indian reserves, the Canadian analog to reservations in the United States. Whereas the United States government instituted boarding schools in tandem with other treaty agreements and outright massacres, the Canadian government settled on the residential school system as an overtly civilizing and religious mission, with a purpose to remake indigenous children into good Christian workers. A residential school refers to “the off-reservation schools that served youth from several tribes” (Glenn, 2011: 78), in contrast to the on-reserve day schools that existed at the time. Although efforts to “civilize” indigenous peoples in Canada began as early as the 16th century with the arrival of Cartier and his subsequent mass baptism of indigenous groups in Montreal, it was in 1879 that the Canadian government began to model its practices--day schools for indigenous children on the reserves (Boarding School Healing Project, 2013: 5)--after the United States boarding school system. In 1879, Nicholas Flood Davin, an MP, wrote what become known as the "Davin report," recommending that the day school system—education on reserves, often allowing for the continuation of indigenous hunting and fishing practices (Coates in Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill, 1986a)—be transformed into a U.S.-like boarding school system, off-reserves in order to break apart indigenous families. These new residential schools were administered by religious groups, primarily the Catholic Church and the Church of England. While children were being taken to residential schools, major changes were being forced into place on the reserves, with “detribalization” efforts breaking down traditional tribal leadership (Barron, 1984) to be replaced with leadership more accommodating to the goals of the
Canadian government.

At residential schools, boys were trained to be manual laborers while girls were trained to be domestic laborers, often domestic servants and low-level staff at institutions such as hospitals. The schools were spatially isolated from the children's reserves in order to separate them from their families and tribal groups, specifically to erase indigenous cultural practices and replace them with “assimilated” Christian practices (BSHP, 2013: 5). At the schools, evidence of children's indigenous cultures were discouraged, with the students physically and psychologically punished for seemingly non-white or non-Christian behavior. Disease was rampant: depending on the method of counting, in 1907 between 24-42 percent of indigenous children at residential schools died, mostly of tuberculosis. Children were often physically and sexually abused. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Affairs found in 1991 that these abuses were widespread. In response, government officials stated that they would focus on community healing instead of legal accountability (BHSP, 2013; Milloy, 1999; Chrisjohn, 2006). By 1931, there were approximately eighty residential schools in Canada, with the last school closing in 1984 (BHSP, 2013: 6). After several court cases, in 1998 the Canadian government allocated 350 million dollars for community healing projects through the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (BSHS, 2013, 7; Milloy, 1999). The focus of research developed from this foundation was to treat survivors of abuse and neglect at residential schools.

All the while a “woundedness” logic focusing on residential school survivors grew to be the iconic narrative of Canadian schooling practices for indigenous children. Certain parts of schooling history that were inconvenient or seemingly irrelevant to this narrative—such as the coexistence of day schools with residential schools in much of Canada and especially Northern Canada until the mid-twentieth century, or that the mid-twentieth century was the time when the
Canadian state and missionaries were most efficient in instituting their goals of breaking apart indigenous identities, families, and cultures—have been sidelined.

The emergence of large-scale indigenous identities in Canada and the global indigenous rights movement has been attributed to the function of residential schools in breaking down tribal identity and replacing local indigenous self-identification with a more global self-identification (Glenn, 2011; Miller, 1987). These large-scale categories include First Nations, Aboriginal, Indian, Métis, and indigenous. The use of these categories have been contested over time with very real legal and cultural implications. Andersen (2008), for instance, studies how the category of Métis that stands in for “mixed race” white-indigenous in the Canadian context has come to work against the actual indigenous Métis population through racial essentialism.

While contemporary psychological research has shied away from the issue of the transformation of identities and cultures almost entirely, certain scholars (e.g. Glenn, 2011; Adams, 1988; Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill, 1986) have focused on how the function of residential schools was largely to break apart indigenous family and tribal social structure, identity, and leadership to be replaced with Christianity, individualism, and government leadership. Essentially, while there certainly is a causal relationship between the institution of boarding schools and the breakdown of tribal structure, this argument has two related dimensions: cultural (the role of teaching) and spatial (instead of the prior system of day schools on reserves, residential school systems brought together students from a variety of tribal groups).

This institutionalist approach has governed most research on residential schools, even with the shift in focus to abuse, trauma, and wellness in the 1990s. Contemporary research on the experiences of indigenous students in the residential schools, for instance, often foregrounds the role of institutions in determining their long-term wellbeing. Similarly, research that strives to
demonstrate to a general public the existence of the systematic abuse of students, while certainly
necessary, may not adequately tie together the complexities of how indigenous culture was
reconfigured at residential schools, sacrificing any possibility of agency for indigenous actors for
more non-reflexive narrative that takes for granted that residential schools functioned as they
were supposed to—and without unintended consequences. Many of these institutionalist
approaches emerge from studies of student experience, based upon student interviews and
collections of personal histories.

The institutionalist approach does not paint the whole picture. In the 1960s and 1970s,
transindigenous social movements emerged, many using the experiences of students at
residential schools as symbols and points of reference. Instead, it is possible to pose a counter-
narrative that foregrounds the agency of indigenous actors in this reconfiguration of indigenous
culture, and one that focuses on both the intended and unintended consequences of schooling
practices. Furthermore, the typical narrative only focuses on the role of residential schools and
not day schools. This new approach would not ignore the role of institutions in breaking down
and constructing identity, but it would instead examine the negotiation of identity between a
variety of actors (both indigenous and non-indigenous) as the category of indigenous crossed the
scales of local, national (the Canadian state), and imperial (the British Commonwealth) within
the context of settler colonialism.

By the mid-20th century, the education of indigenous children had become a social
problem to be “fixed” by educational systems, missionaries, indigenous communities, and the
Canadian government. The centrality of residential schools in this social problem highlights how
they became culturally iconic both in indigenous rights movements and in state and church
initiatives—however, day schools may have played important roles that were much less iconic
and yet integral to the transformations of identities and the construction of transindigenous politics. Additionally, rather than arguing that the day and residential schools functioned to break apart local identity and construct global identity, a better way of conceptualizing the transformation of identity would be examine how global identities were added to local identities that continue to exist, with identities working at several scales simultaneously and the salience of identities residing at multiple levels of scale.

INSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES

Since the 1980s, the residential school system in Canada has become increasingly studied by academics from a variety of disciplines, often focusing on the relationship between institutions and the experience of students. Adams’s (1988) review essay on Canadian educational systems for indigenous children is particularly important as it introduces a series of case studies from the 1980s that focused largely on the changing organization structure of residential schools between the late 19th century and the mid-20th century. Following Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill’s (1986a, 1986b) two-volume edited volume of case studies, Adams divides into periods the history of these education systems into six parts: the aboriginal era (pre-colonial invasion), the early missionary era (1600s-1879), the era of assimilation (1879-1910), the era of retreat (1910-1945), the era of integration (1945-1971), and the era of self-determination (1971-present). While I intend to complicate this periodization in my dissertation research, it provides a good starting point.

In Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill’s periodization, the eras of assimilation, retreat, integration, and self-determination are in effect an institutional history of Canadian residential school systems. After the aboriginal era, the early missionary period continued until the issuance
of the Davin Report in 1879, beginning the era of assimilation. In this period, day schools on reserves (allowing for hunting/fishing patterns) were largely replaced by a new model of residential schools (off-reserves and intended to break apart indigenous culture). At these schools, indigenous students were forcibly relocated into the schools, health and disease issues were widespread, and the education of indigenous children first became a social problem. Day schools run by missionaries (with little to no funding on the part of the Canadian government) were operated in the Northwest Territory until the mid-20th century (Coates in Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill, 1986a).

By the so-called era of retreat, the schools generally had dual purposes: the transformation of identities of indigenous students and the education of the children so they could attain occupational equality with non-indigenous workers. The schools had become more industrial in nature, declining in number with increased centralization. During the late era of retreat (1940s), it had become clear to officials that attaining equality in educational outcomes between indigenous and non-indigenous students was not successful. The era of integration was in many ways a concession on the part of government officials that educational equality would not happen. Funding for education was decreased and a more overt emphasis was placed on missionary work and breaking apart indigenous cultures and families. The policing of indigenous peoples became decentralized, the boundaries between indigenous and non-indigenous land becoming more blurred, and citizenship and physical abuse becoming relevant social issues. In the era of integration, after the return of indigenous soldiers in World War II, indigenous groups were enfranchised (Barron, 1984: 33). At the time, nearly 80% of schools for indigenous children were operated by government or private authorities (Adams, 1986a: 100).

Beginning the era of self-determination (Adams, 1988; Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill,
1986a), the first White Papers—Canadian policy documents that are presented to the public—that related to indigenous self-determination were proposed (in 1969), with ongoing negotiations about the social consequences of ending the legal distinction between "Indian" and "non-Indian" people in Canada. Dale Turner (2006) refers to this type of politics as “white paper liberalism,” with the government seeking to “get out of the Indian business” (Turner, 12) through the institution of nominal legal equality and the retrenchment of discourses of individual freedom and equality (Turner, 13). Indigenous peoples argued that the passing of the White Papers would result in cultural genocide (Barron, 1984: 34) and the freeholding of reserve land belonging to indigenous groups. White Papers were finally passed in 1973, formally repealing the laws concerning indigenous peoples in Canada registered as Indians as enacted by the Indian Act in 1879 and amended from 1879-2011, but leaving intact the Department of Indian Affairs, the administrative division of the Canadian government responsible for policies concerning indigenous people within Canadian bounds. Since the 1970s there have been widespread indigenous rights movements which have attempted to renegotiate autonomy for tribes and make indigenous rights issues into a major social issue. Although the Department of Indian Affairs is the legal name of the department, it has since been referred to as Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada as part of a rebranding process.

Since a manifest function of schools was to educate indigenous children, it is logical to first turn to the sociology of education for guidance in how to study residential schools as educational systems. While the sociology of education has in the past several decades been sidelined within the broader discipline of sociology and often merged with studies in education departments (Deem, 2004), this marginalization of the sociology of education matches the broader marginalization of sociology as the study of social institutions (Deem, 2004: 23) in favor
of postmodernism and post-structuralism. Eventually, a more pragmatic and a-theoretical policy-oriented approach became the norm (Deem, 2004: 23).

The sociology of education has concentrated largely on social inequality in educational attainment. This focus, seemingly limited, has actually proved adept at bringing to the surface micro-scale intersections of race, gender, social mobility, and inequality. Theoretical concerns of sociology of education have included the purpose of schooling—liberation or social control?—, how educational processes work, and how education affects the life chances of students (Lauder, Brown, and Halsey, 2009: 570). Weis, Jenkins, and Sitch (2009) suggest that the “key problem” of sociology of education is “the production of social inequality: what it is; how it is produced; how actions and activities within schools, families, and communities connect to it; and, to some extent at least, what we can do about it” (913). Although there has been a recent push toward a sociology of international education (Resnik, 2012), much of the history of the sociology of education has been based on analysis of achievement within the nation-state. Findings from studies based in the sociology of education are largely policy-oriented (Lauder, Brown and Halsey, 2009).

A second purpose of schools that has been of interest in contemporary studies is their function as systems of incarceration. Sociological literature on incarceration has been wide ranging, from the works of Goffman and Foucault to more recent interventions by Willis (2005) and Upton (2008). In Asylums, Goffman (1961) introduces the theory of the “total institution,” or institutions that break down the barriers between the three spheres of life—home, work, and play— (17), while establishing physical barriers to the outside world, in order to strip away the identity of the person who is an inmate and remake them anew. Through scheduling and the coordination of the everyday life of the inmates by the guards, the inmates are given new
identities and the distinction between inmate and guards is forged and maintained. Before the mid-20th century, the structure of residential schools in Canada closely resembled that of total institutions.

During the mid-twentieth century, there was a transformation in the mode of education in day and residential schools (Adams, 1988). In the previous era, the outward goal was to assimilate the children into “civilized” and Christian life. Instead, due to resistance from First Nations groups about schooling practices (Adams, 1988: 99) and the cost of maintaining the school systems as they were structured, there was a transition from an idealistic model of education for assimilation to a more pragmatic mode of education with “academic expectations…reduced to the point of merely preparing them for survival in an increasingly white Canada” (Adams, 1988: 99).

In a case study in Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill (1986a) “Separate but Unequal: Indian and White Girls at All Hallows School, 1884-1920), Barman writes “Increasingly, pupils’ aspirations were directed homeward rather than toward the larger society” (125). Similarly, in his case study of Yukon territory residential schools from 1890-1955, Coates (in Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill, 1986a) suggests that the actual education that was supposed to be taking place was not successful due in part to students’ inability to memorize their lessons between school years; instead, the goal was primarily to sever the “child-tribal bond” (Coates in Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill, 1986a: 142): “[Government] subsidies continued, but more as thinly veiled support for church missions than as a sign of commitment to Native education” (142). Any pretense of providing the students with education comparable to that of non-indigenous children was generally abandoned. According to Coates, transforming the daily life, cultures, and family structures of indigenous communities was the covert purpose of these schools, and in the mid-
20th century there was a transformation in which this covert purpose became overt.

Until the end of the era of retreat in 1945, residential schools in Canada resembled total institutions, with the focus on breaking apart families, cultures, and identities and replacing them with assimilated white/Christian ideals. After 1945, the transformation from total institutions to more practical systems of vocational education and somewhat more integrated high school educational systems renders the “total institution” approach less than adequate for analyzing the complex and contradictory processes at work, the unintended consequences of the institutions, or resistance from indigenous children and communities. While a “total institutions” approach to the study of residential schools following Goffman would perhaps underemphasize state power and the role of education, other scholars (e.g. Rothman, 1971) have examined total institutions in the context of colonialism, Christianity, and family structure.

Another approach which has gained traction in recent years is Foucault’s theory of the carceral. In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, as well as related lectures and texts, Foucault argues that there was a shift in punishment from punishment as spectacle—hangings, decapitation, dismemberment—to punishment as private and rehabilitative. With the new mode of incarceration, there was a transformation in how the behavior of inmates was regulated, from regulation to self-regulation. While Foucault’s discussion of this shift is largely social commentary about the behavior of modern citizens, there were some very real changes in how inmates were managed between the 19th and 20th centuries, ever since Beccaria argued in the beginning of the 19th century for prison reform and immediate punishment without infamy for the punished (Beccaria, 1812[2011]). Upton (2008) found that early prisons in the United States were regarded as symbols of social progress, with architecture a technology of power that reinforced individualism by segregating prisoners from each other.
Willis (2005) broadened his study of British systems of incarceration by arguing that the role of transportation—sending prisoners to North America and Australia—has been overlooked, suggesting that penal reform only makes sense in the context of changes in the state and social relations (203). Furthermore, against Foucault’s theories, he argues that “the origins of the penitentiary do not lie in an ideology of conscience or control, but in the elective affinity of larger processes of centralization, bureaucratization, and democratization” (173). Administrative efficiency in the management of penitentiaries increased with the strengthening of centralized states. With residential schools, the “total institution” model began to weaken with an increased decentralization in the mid-20th century, with policing and administration moving from Ottawa to the provinces.

Persson’s case study of the Blue Quill Catholic residential school is particularly illuminating (Persson in Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill, 1986a). In the transition from assimilationist policy in the era of retreat to a decentralization of education in the era of integration, Blue Quill transformed from a “total institution” to a much more contradictory system with the half-day work system removed in the 1950s and busing to an integrated high school for many students in the 1960s (Adams, 1988: 100). By 1969, there was a movement to close down the school, but in 1971 it became the first former residential school to be operated by First Nations leadership. Adams aptly reminds us that “the designation ‘Indian controlled’ is something of a misnomer” since “the fact remains that federal officials have been slow to let go of historical prerogatives” (100). Educational systems had become so bureaucratized that there was no such thing as pure “control” over the process; there would always be an element of state control. However, the major debates over the next several decades were about “who will control the educational process: the First Nations or the Government of Canada?” (Longboat, 40 in

The sociologies of education and incarceration are institutional approaches concerned with inequalities emerging from the practices of social institutions, generally ahistorical, and generally assuming the nation-state to be the unit of analysis. Especially in the field of criminology, there is a nearly a-theoretical focus on effecting change to policy. That said, several more theoretical works concerning systems of incarceration have much to offer with their focus on architecture, spatial isolation, and the movement from punishment to social reform. However, unlike the sociology of education, the sociology of incarceration has engaged with theories of the state, power, and colonialism.

Contemporary research on residential schools has been largely investigative in nature, relaying the experience of students in the schools and less so on the role of the state (for instance, the issue of government accountability). When these experiences have been analyzed, the analysis has often been psychological and focused on proving that trauma was inflicted upon the students. The prevalence of works discussing the harmful consequences of residential schools on the lives of indigenous students during and after schooling is understandable given the reluctance of a predominantly white public and media to take seriously the claims of indigenous communities about the realities of life in the residential schools. Even before the White Papers were passed, they were for removing accountability from the debate in favor of language of healing communities (Barron, 1984). This, in turn, echoed a move from the analysis of the role of institutions associated with residential schools to the problems of indigenous communities and personalities. In a way, this is an ideological act that serves to cloud research on residential schools.

This move toward healing places the wrongdoings in the past and centers the debate—yet
again—on creating institutions to fix or heal the “broken” indigenous peoples. And yet, this decades-old critique of the language of healing seems to have been ignored or forgotten by many of the authors of studies of residential school systems. Healing the victims of abuses and improving problem communities certainly has its place, given the problematic history of Canadian government intervention in the lives of indigenous peoples on behalf of improving their conditions, but language of healing in this context may promote or legitimate a hidden agenda, following an asymmetrical politics of recognition (see Coulthard, 2007).

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission instituted in 2008 has been a major focus of scholarship and the press due to its central role in contemporary indigenous politics, especially politics of reconciliation and recognition. The related Aboriginal Healing Foundation is a major publisher of articles, studies, and histories of the residential schools. It produces a variety of texts (both in print and online) and provides a space for many voices discussing the future of the study of residential schools. One work is “From Truth to Reconciliation: Transforming the Legacy of Residential Schools,” edited by Castellano, Archibald, and DeGagné (2008). This edition includes articles about restorative justice, the politics of truth and reconciliation, decolonizing education, the role of churches, and expanding dialog between indigenous groups and the Canadian government.

A close reading of the introductory letter by Georges Erasmus, the President of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, highlights key ideas: “The legacy of residential schools has weighed heavily on the lives and well-being of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis individuals and communities for generations. The Settlement Agreement endorsed by Survivors, churches, and the Government of Canada signals a shared commitment to create a more harmonious, mutually respectful future” (Castellano, Archibald, and DeGagné, 2008: xiii). This letter emphasizes how
the creation of a new collective identity will heal the fissions of the past and create a better future for everyone. A hidden agenda of state-sponsored processes of truth and reconciliation is to substitute reconciliation for restitution (Coulthard, 2007; Corntassel and Holder, 2008) and to fix past wrongs firmly in the past and not the present.

While case studies of Canadian residential schools from the 1980s largely focused on the organizational structure of residential schools, research in the 1990s foregrounded the lived experience of students who attended the schools, again with relatively little focus on day schools. This shift in focus mirrored the release of the report from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1991 which admitted to the government’s role in the abuses and health issues at the residential schools but sidestepped issues of accountability in favor of centering the debate on the wellness of residential school survivors. Miller’s Shingwauk’s Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools (1991) is the most comprehensive historical account to emerge from this period. This work paired archival research with interviews, providing voice to the lived experience of the students. In many ways, works like this from the 1990s were methodological advances over works from the 1980s, with the beginnings of attempts by researchers to bring in the voice of indigenous students. Scholars writing the case studies a decade earlier were adept at describing the historical processes that transformed the structures of educational institutions. They were less concerned, however, about connecting their works together and theorizing from their cases.

SOCIOLOGY OF THE STATE

The sociology of the state is broader than institutional approaches in that institutions of education and incarceration are tied to how the state constructs sovereignty, consent, and control.
Much of the sociology of the state boils down to two theories that have run parallel throughout the twentieth century: theories of the Marxists and neo-Marxists in debate with Weberians and neo-Weberians. Beginning with the so-called ‘cultural turn’ of the 1980s, postcolonial studies began to influence the sociology of the state to the point where there became three major perspectives: Marxian, neo-Weberian, and colonial/postcolonial thought. A fourth perspective, post-structuralism (e.g. Foucault), introduced the idea of a state in which power has become diffuse, subtle, and decentralized.

Weber introduced the state as an inherently coercive power: a state “claims the monopoly of the use of legitimate use of force within a given territory” (Gerth and Mills [1948]1998: 78). With Weber, sovereignty is equated with legitimated violence. The purpose of the bureaucratic and rational state is its own coercive legitimation. After state theory fell out of favor in the 1960s and 1970s, the 1980s ushered in a largely neo-Weberian “second-wave” state theory (e.g. Tilly, 1992; Mann, 1984; Skocpol, 1979) which focused on the state as a social organization that has interests in maintaining its sovereignty, even in a more flexible modernity, through the administration of citizenship and boundaries (Hanagan and Tilly, 1999). “Second wave” state theorists have been criticized for legitimating the state through their writings in portraying it as real, necessary, for omitting the role of culture (Steinmetz, 1999), and for overstructuring their analyses by focusing on the role of institutions over the agency and experience of individual actors (Sewell, 2005).

Orthodox Marxist thought holds that the state is an instrument representing the interest of capitalists and the logic of capitalism, with state power the will of the bourgeoisie (Ollman, 2012) in working against class consciousness. Whereas Marx devoted relatively little time to the role of educational systems in relation to the state (for him, simply enough, educational systems
fostered the ruling ideas of the ruling class), 20th century Marxian thinkers extended this somewhat underdeveloped part of Marxist thought into more sophisticated theory. Gramsci claimed that the relationship between base (mode of production) and superstructure (law, culture, ideas, the state) was two-directional rather than one-way, with instruments of knowledge creation a form of production that manufactures consent (Hoare and Smith 1971: 145). However, while Gramsci’s model of educational systems is part of civil society, residential schools blur the distinction between civil society and the construction of consent with the state and its coerced management of populations.

Influenced by Gramsci, Althusser suggested that the state functions through ideological state apparatuses, which reproduce state power in everything from institutions (educational, cultural, etc.) to everyday life, bridging false distinctions between public and private (Althusser 1971: 18). Rather than simply a producer of repressive power, the state is also a producer of positive power. Foucault, a student and contemporary of Althusser, claimed that power functions at the scale of the everyday, however without an overt state and in ways not ideological but disciplinary. Foucault claimed that the state had become decentralized and diffuse, with ideology, which requires conscious obedience, replaced by discipline, the regulation of the body. The state no longer required state power because people had been taught to do the work of the state by regulating themselves through normalizing judgment (Foucault 1979: 170).

Foucault elaborated on state power through the introduction of theories of governmentality and biopolitics. Governmentality concerns the “art of government” or the practices of knowledge creation that legitimate rule, while biopolitics concerns scientific knowledge creation to regulate populations. The government in governmentality “designated not just the activities of the state and its institutions but more broadly any rational effort to influence
or guide the conduct of human beings through acting on their hopes, desires, circumstances, or environment” (Inda 2005: 1). Biopolitics, on the other hand, is the regulation and management of life processes of human populations (Inda 2005: 5). Though concerned with the scale of the population or group, biopolitics concerns how the human body at the individual level is managed, aggregated, and regulated to conform to life process expectations.

Poulantzas, a student of both Althusser and Foucault, integrated aspects of Foucault’s theories into Althusser’s concept of the state and state power, suggesting that state power is not merely ideological or repressive state apparatuses (Poulantzas 1978: 12), and that class inequality comes not just from the mode of production but from other means, with the state a political field that founds and is founded by the mode of production (Poulantzas 1978: 17). This mutual articulation constructs an ideology that falsely separates the economy from the state (Poulantzas 1978: 16), therefore legitimating the mode of production. In contrast to Althusser, Poulantzas claimed that the state is ultimately a set of material practices. Building from Foucault’s central argument that we had entered into a stateless society in which individuals self-regulate through disciplinary micropower and in which the state regulated through forms of power that were not at the level of the state, Poulantzas incorporated concepts of discourse, power, knowledge creation, and discipline into his revised model of state apparatuses. The state, then, is not a passive instrument serving the logic of capitalism but an organized actor with material practices of class dominance.

Together, the neo-Weberians, neo-Marxists, and poststructuralists introduced a series of concepts that are important for the study of state power, including sovereignty, social class, citizenship, the material conditions of capitalism, material practices, and the state as a social institution that manufactures consent. With the addition of feminist theories of the state
(Pateman, 1980; MacKinnon, 1989) and theories of the racial state (Omi and Winant, 1986; Goldberg, 2002), arguments have been made that rather than being simply the ruling power of the capitalist mode of production, the state is also gendered and racialized, producing consent for purposes other than class dominance but dominance by other means as well.

Other theorists are important as well: Brubaker (1996) argued that the nation-state is a category that is constructed through the practices of its subjects; following Foucault, Stoler (2010) emphasized how European colonialism dominated through the creation of affective politics and forms of racialized and gendered conduct; and Rose (1999) suggested that government is a linkage of technologies and people in webs of affiliation (6) connecting the state as an institution with a sub-state of micro-practices, ultimately manufacturing consent. Rose contributes to such discussions on the relationship between the state, institutions, and personal practices by more evenly distributing the complicity in the state project among its members—or, more precisely, the technologies of government contain the aspirations of both subjects included and excluded from its purview (Rose, 1996: 52). In order to bridge the gap between theorists of the strong state (Marxist and neo-Weberian thought) with theorists of statelessness (neoliberal and poststructuralist thought), Rose contributes the idea of translation—the mechanism by which linkages between micro-practices and disparate groups form a government—to explain how linkages between the state as an institution and the state as micropractice emerge.

With notable exceptions (Rose, Steinmetz), most theories of the state do not adequately provide frameworks for studying colonial states such as Canada and, even broader, the shared practices of government across the Commonwealth. If, as Poulantzas suggests, the state is a series of material practices, the practices of instituting and maintaining boarding schools for indigenous subjects is not unique to any one state. The sociology of the state foregrounds the
ways in which the state legitimates its economic, racialized, and gendered domination of its subjects, but historical examples of how people became subjects (and resisted subjectification) have been overlooked in state theory, especially for cases from North American history. Relegating day and residential schools—a primary method of assimilation, expansionism, Christian conversion, and the creation of subjects in Canada and the United States—to state ideological apparatuses leaves little room for the role of indigenous actors, missionaries, mid-level bureaucratic officials such as Indian agents, all working within a complex and contradictory system. Following certain scholars (Anderson, 1993[2006]; Brubaker, 1996) who have suggested that the nation-state is a constructed territory, educational systems, including day and residential schools, play a part in establishing this new territory through the construction of national identities and subjectivities.

Kuletz’s (1998) idea of deterritoriality is of particular interest in framing the contradictory relationship between colonial states and indigenous populations. Once local knowledge has been transformed the (forcibly) invisible into visible patterns, it is possible to reveal the presence of deterritoriality: “the loss of commitment by modern nation-states (and even the international community) to particular lands or regions” (7). In this framing, Kuletz argues that deterritoriality is “a disembodiment—the perceived separation between self and nature” (7) and a consequence of land use patterns of “capitalist, late-industrial Euroamerican societies” (7) and a form of cultural imperialism, especially in relationship with indigenous societies.

This notion of deterritoriality draws on existing sociological research on internal colonialism, an idea what has been used in discussing Canadian state policies toward indigenous populations. According to Frideres and Gadacz (2007) in Clair and Denis (2015), internal
colonialism describes these historical structures and events because they involve a system in which “one racialized group imposes its ideas, systems, and lifestyles on another via policies (such as Canada’s Indian Act) and practices (such as the Indian residential school system) that are justified by the former group’s presumed superiority” (Clair and Denis, 2015: 861). With the resource-oriented logic of internal colonialism, “native communities become ‘raw materials colonies’” (Kuletz, 1998: 36) from which resources are to be extracted.

CRITICAL INDIGENOUS THEORY
By bringing in an interdisciplinary body of scholarship known as critical indigenous theory, it is possible to position day and residential schools as part of a system of settler colonialism, education, work, and everyday practices. Critical indigenous theory is a body of literature at the intersection between postcolonial theory and indigenous studies, rising from the need for a “critical reevaluation of the elaboration of these historical processes of oppression within postcolonial, critical race, queer, and American studies at the beginning of the twenty-first century” (Byrd, 2011: xxv).

The word critical serves as a marker for a diverse array of perspectives emphasizing critical reflection on the concerns of indigenous scholarship: settler colonialism, sovereignty, and the politics of recognition. Another goal of critical indigenous theorists is to center the temporality of indigenous studies from the past to the present. Byrd (2011) situates indigenous studies in a broad interdisciplinary context, arguing that there is a complex relationship between indigenous peoples, colonialism, settler society, and identity politics. Critical indigenous theory is essential to the understanding of these relationships and histories, a theory that brings together the lived experience and scholarship of indigenous peoples and the broader structures of empire and colonialism (Byrd, 2011). For Byrd, while colonialism does not “explain” indigeneity,
understanding colonialism is essential to understanding the history of indigenous peoples. In fact, she argues that *indigenous* as a category of the classification of people only makes sense within the context of colonial settling.

Studies of settler colonialism often begin with Wolfe’s (2006) contention that settler colonial invasion is a structure and not an event: settler colonial states have restructured lands and peoples that they have come to control through “logics of elimination.” For Wolfe, logics of elimination are not necessarily outright murder (though this is certainly a possibility); they can also be processes of education, spatial and social inclusion or exclusion, and the propagation of Christianity and individualism. Although Wolfe’s maxim has become somewhat of a paradigm in settler colonial studies, Povinelli (2011) contends that focusing on settler colonialism as a structure and not an event ignores the consequences of the temporal quality of settler colonialism: instead, by examining settler colonialism as an event, we can better understand how everyone is complicit through everyday practices in maintaining the structures of its systems. For instance, much contemporary scholarship on indigenous history furthers a harmful politics of recognition that forces indigenous people to demonstrate their residence in the past in order to participate in the present, often through assessment of their ability to perform indigenous culture (see Barker, 2011).

Sovereignty is a legal distinction with social consequences. As sociologists of the state have been often pointed out, the state has interests in maintaining its sovereignty, especially its authority to rule. Settler colonial states had to first construct their sovereignty before they could legitimate it. This construction of sovereignty was both legal and social, but the legal processes of constructing sovereignty required first undermining the sovereignty of indigenous peoples who had prior claims during and after colonial settling. By the institution of residential schools,
sovereignty had become the legal justification for the forced dispossession of lands used by indigenous peoples (Goldstein, 2008), as well as part of an intricate legal framework for social control, assimilation, and conversion, that uses private ownership as justification for dispossession. Since sovereignty has been in effect legal justification for the taking away of indigenous lands and rights, it is in fact historically contingent and potentially unstable (Barker, 2005: 26) since it is a legal claim to power and little else. For this reason, many indigenous rights movements have focused on regaining sovereignty, often in courts of law.

In 2007, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People attempted to provide some form of sovereignty to indigenous peoples as part of a decolonization process, but the four most prominent settler colonial states—Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States—cast dissenting votes. Eventually, representatives from these four states reiterated the so-called “salt water thesis” before assenting. In effect, the salt water doctrine holds that for decolonization to exist the states must first have been colonizers, that is, exploiting another region across a geographic boundary such as salt water (Goldstein, 2008: 836). The salt water thesis—also known as the Belgian thesis—was first created in the mid-20th century in GA Resolution 637 (VII) in 1952 (Roy, 1998). The argument is that without such a boundary, these states were not colonizers, therefore decolonization policies do not apply to them, rendering the declaration unusable for indigenous peoples within the boundaries of the major settler colonial states.

In addition to settler colonialism and sovereignty, critical indigenous theory focuses on the politics of recognition. Who is recognized—and how—is tied to both the broader structures of colonialism and sovereignty but also is a process in itself. At its most fundamental, recognition begins with an understanding of what is human and what is not human. This binary between human and animal has been long discussed in social thought (e.g. Derrida’s *The Beast*.
and the Sovereign and Agamben’s *The Open: Man and Animal*). Agamben suggests that the state maintains a distinction between human and nonhuman that is fluid enough to create a state of exception whereby certain groups of people are seen as nonhuman—or, in the case of conversion and assimilation—*potential* to be human. The recognition of humanity—beyond even who is allowed to be human and who is not—has had longstanding pernicious effects on indigenous peoples, with liberal thought not acknowledging the role of enslavement in constituting the human (Byrd, 2011). Systems of liberal government write into law systems of classification that make up the politics of recognition: who is, who is not, and the material consequences of such classification.

Regarding processes of US legal and cultural recognition, Barker (2011) argues that the politics of recognition have become enmeshed with identity politics. The performance of “Indianness” has become racialized and the ability to so perform—the demonstration of authenticity—is required to be assigned the legal distinction of “Indian.” Against any essentialist definition of “Indian,” she contends that the system of classification that gives rise to the cultural-legal distinction of “Indian” is inextricably tied to colonial processes of domination and exclusion. Indigenous identities are not static; instead, they are managed by a variety of sources, from the administration of blood quantum by state and tribal groups to the more casual internal policing of “culture cops” (Lyons, 2010: 85). Native authenticity has become the issue that determines who has a stake in indigenous political movements—but the bodies that decide who is authentic and who is not are problematic at best. Legal and cultural acts that distinguish “real Natives” from those who are not adequately authentic compromise any efforts to move away from the power of the US legal system. As Barker (2011) notes, when it comes the legal recognition of indigenous groups, “not just any ‘Indian tribe’ will do” (34). The correct type of
group keeps to an essentialist, colonialist, “pre-historical” ideal of what it means to be indigenous. To be this correct type of group, there are a series of legal hurdles to face, often requiring proof of both cultural authenticity and long-term land tenure.

Ultimately, through legal recognition, indigenous groups gain some ability to defend themselves from legal infringements (Barker, 2005). However, not only does legal recognition require the non-recognition of certain groups but it also furthers the construction of “racial privileges” (Barker, 2005; Kauanui, 2008) that gain power through the struggle over conflicting sovereignties—a conflation of race and indigeneity. In fact, the problem of recognition is an inherently colonial construction (Lyons, 2010). As long as recognition is granted or imposed upon indigenous groups rather than through self-determination, the politics of recognition merely further the authority of colonial states (Coulthard, 2007). Indigenous identities, after all, have been long targeted by colonial states: through the politics of recognition, it is only after indigenous groups demonstrate that “they have survived every government policy and doctrine designed to destroy them” (Kauanui, 2008: 639) that they can be legally recognized.

The Canadian state historically has used educational systems—whether integrated, day, or residential schools—as the primary mode of assimilation of indigenous peoples, but this does not mean that scholars have to follow the same logic. Instead, the problems of the politics of recognition—and reconciliation—present a larger issue that must be dealt with. Rather than allowing the “woundedness” narrative to successfully partition the harm done to indigenous children away from the actual history of colonialism in the Canadian context, we must place the field of “education” back where it belongs—as inseparable from the settler colonial and indigenous pasts, the lived present, and possible futures. In this way, this dissertation contributes to the sociology of education, not only by exploring assimilative educational systems in
historical context but in examining other fields of study for theories that can be mobilized to better understand the subject.
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CHAPTER THREE
GENOCIDAL CONSEQUENCES OF COLONIAL CAPITALISM

INTRODUCTION

During the early- to mid- twentieth century, indigenous communities were incorporated at once into both Canadian sovereignty and industrial capitalism. As this chapter discusses in detail, this incorporation of indigenous communities with the capitalism of large corporations (such as timber and fishing companies) led to dire and genocidal consequences. Namely, *laissez-faire* starvation became both the cost of nonconformity and conformity with state regulations. The establishment of the reserve system through land surrender led to a system in which indigenous communities were coerced into moving to resource-lacking locations. Often the only work available was manual labor for the companies which controlled the resources, which became in effect a form of forced labor, often without pay.

The first half of the twentieth century was a time of massive transformation for indigenous communities that fell within the bounds of Canadian sovereignty. It was a time of outright genocide, through disease or starvation, as well as more subtle shifts in indigenous ways of life, producing cycles of assimilation and resistance. While residential and day schools both existed beginning with the late 19th century, such massive transformations deserve their own analysis, which works to provide historical context for constructions of indigenous subjectivities explored in later chapters.

During this time, indigenous communities, cultures, societies, and identities faced hardships that ranged from the everyday—the difficulties of working to stay alive, or remaining healthy (as certain ways of life, such as hunting, were no longer possible with the eradication of
game)—to moments of brutal and sometimes irrevocable trauma—including the forced removal of children from their homes to residential schools, or nearly undocumented mass deaths to starvation.

Communities in the more remote regions of Canada, such as in northern British Columbia, found their lives legally managed by large corporations and agents of the state. Work and conduct became bound together, with any deviation punished.

Colonial states present indigenous peoples as subjects of development. In a multiplicity of contexts (Scott 1998, Mitchell 2002), it has been found that, in colonial regimes, development is a set of ideologies and practices that create “social problems” (Brown 1995, Marres 2012) that justify state interventions. These interventions, in turn, are rationalized with language of liberalism and human rights, legitimating the role of state apparatuses, especially legal and educational systems. Instead of solving the social problems, such state interventions work to construct contexts which justify further interventions.

The data for this chapter come from Indian Affairs Central Registry Files, 1844-1970, from unnumbered files in a folder that became a microfilm reel. This file contains detailed reports written by administrative staff employed by the Department of Indian Affairs about the status of ongoing projects, the complaints of local leaders, as well as the opinions of the report writers on the relative success or “progress” of the communities in question.

In the context of Canadian bureaucratic management of indigenous populations between 1900 and 1940, these efforts at management took on the following forms: the introduction of livestock programs, farm programs, garden plots, industrial fishing, schools, and behavioral policing. By examining these forms of management in two contexts (Manitoba and Northern
Quebec), we can better understand the relationships between colonial bureaucratic management, capitalist incorporation, assimilation, and genocide.

NORTHERN MANITOBA

In the 1930s, the mode of production changed drastically in Northern Manitoba, with ensuing shifts in the division of labor. Reserves in this area included the Fisher River, Brokenhead, Black River, Little Grand Rapids, Peguis (Salteaux), Berens River, Bloodvein, Hole River, Roseau River, and Fort Alexander. All fell under the management of the state in the form of the Clandeboye Agency, a division of the Department of Indian Affairs, which had a central office in the area in the form of an “old log building.” All the reserves in the region faced drastic poverty, disease, and starvation. For instance, members of the Peguis reserve “faced a hard life,” with the workers hauling wood “day after day, even in the extremely cold weather (10 to 50 below zero)” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). In all of these cases, selling goods to the capitalist market was central to any of these occupations.

The division of labor in Northern Manitoba often revolved around hunting and fishing. In 1934, a Department of Indian Affairs report stated that “Many of the Indians were still out fishing. Those back were busy fixing up their homes or repairing their nets in readiness for winter fishing” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). However, game was scarce in the forests, and the population of fish was thinning. At the Peguis reserve, the Department of Indian affairs noted that “the Peguis Indians, in many ways, find it very difficult to get along. They trap some, but this year fur is scarce. If they wish to trap or hunt, they have to travel from 30 to 50 miles…the only outside work obtainable is on the lake or at Birch Point, some 40 miles distant” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). At both as Peguis and the Fisher River reserves, people (especially women and children) were inadequately fed and clothed: “[At Peguis reserve], as on
Fisher River, difficult times are made visible by the lack of clothing. The women and children are poorly clothed” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17).

Department intervention largely involved using existing markets as solutions to these “difficult times.” The Department hoped that incorporating these communities into markets would solve the immense problem of poverty, largely brought on by the state and white settling.

At the Fisher River reserve, a report stated that

the Fisher River Indians have passed through difficult times but we are hopeful that conditions will improve. It will not be long before winter fishing starts and it is expected prices will be better. In addition to this, we expect a market for pulpwood; thus their income will be in increased. The trapping season is near but unfortunately the country is trapped out. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

Another report found that “The Indians derive their income mostly from fishing and trapping” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). Without trapping as a viable option, an already suffering community would suffer more. An additional option for income was the sale of wood, but “it is too long a haul to Hodgson for the Indians to engage in the wood business. Besides, only a few of them have horses and these, in most cases, are small.” In 1936, another report on the division of labor stated that “The men were practically all away, either fishing, trapping, or working in the bush at Birch Point. In a few areas, the Indian women accompanied their husband” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). The poverty of the area was notable, once again in regards to the situation of women and children:

The Fisher River Indians are too far from the railroad to sell wood, consequently, when the fishing ceases and camps are closed, they experience very trying times…One can notice the hard times are more especially in relation to the women and children. They are, in many cases, not only poorly clad, but the supply is very scanty. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

At the time, the Department had a policy of giving out only minimal relief to these communities in the form of loans, food, and supplies. It was thought that rather than giving out relief, by
adding markets and taking a hardline approach toward encouraging self-sufficiency, the Department would not have to provide funds to keep indigenous populations alive. On one particular project of adding leased land for a market, the report writer remarked that “It is far better to spend money in assisting the Indians in a project of this nature than to continually hand out relief. I hope the land will be obtained before some private party slips in and secures a lease, which would be disastrous to our Indians” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). With land occupied by indigenous communities in the reserve system given the status of leased private property, resource-rich land was often leased by encroaching white landowners and corporations.

Even when relief was granted by the state, it proved far from adequate—and at best was only granted to a select few. As one report stated, “Relief is given to the old and helpless” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). A 1938 report on Fisher River confirmed that “The relief can hardly be reduced, and is granted only to the old and helpless” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). Even though aid was needed, the Department regularly asked its agents to verify that rations were necessary. Reporting on the situation at Peguis reserve in 1938, the writer noted that I checked the ration list and at present fail to see how the number can be reduced. In fact, some complain that the flour ration is too small and always there is the cry for clothing. In many cases, I must admit, the need is very evident. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

The writer concluded the section with a remark that he hoped that eventually “these people will be in a position to make good” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). Even though the report writer found that aid was necessary, a moral judgment followed in which it was found that the community was not “making good.” Only through achieving self-sufficiency (i.e. no aid necessary) would the community be seen as successful.
Other communities fared similarly, as white and corporate encroachment left few resources for survival. At the Bloodvein Reserve, located on Lake Winnipeg in Manitoba, in 1939, a report stated:

They go 35 miles to gather wild rice; but to date have sold very little, keeping it mostly for winter use. Their livelihood is a game of chance—if fishing, hunting and trapping are good there is plenty, but if poor, then there is hardship, especially for the women and children. These people cannot remain home on the reserve, especially in the winter, if they expect to live—they must get away for fishing and hunting. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

Survival was difficult for the members of this reserve. There was “practically no work” to be found at local fishing companies and little work in the lumber industry. The report writer editorialized that “I feel the only salvation for these people, in the winter, is to get a good trap line and devote their time to this work. To hang around the reserve offers nothing that I can see but want and starvation” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17).

Though starvation in Manitoba was widespread, it was often overlooked or rationalized away. Complaints of starvation often fell on deaf ears. The Inspector of Indian Agencies, A.G. Hamilton, wrote in 1940 that “The Indians of this Agency have a high standard of living and if they cannot provide almost on a par with the white man feel they are starving” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). The commonplace tone of the dismissal is especially telling, and the use of the “white man” as a reference category for what it means to be a good provider. In a later report, Hamilton found that

The outlook for these Indians for this winter is none too good. They no doubt can sell some wood, and the price should be higher than usual and perhaps some of the young men can get away to the wood camps. These Indians are not good rustlers and many are lazy. I find the band difficult to work with; in fact, they are continually quarrelling among themselves. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)
At the Fort Alexander reserve (now the Sagkeeng First Nation) east of Lake Winnipeg, it was noted that “the missionary now in charge does not wish to issue rations” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). Even when rations were given out, “the agent only brings slightly over one months’ requirements to the reserve and thus there is no waste and less trouble from the Indians” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). It appears that even though more than one month’s rations could have been provided, it was thought that one month was the correct amount to keep the population under control.

Relief could be hard to come by. The spatial isolation of the reserves meant that goods for the purpose of relief would often come from far away. Not only this, but the individualistic ethics of capitalism, when merged with racist colonial assumptions about the presumed (lack of) work ethic of indigenous peoples, left authorities who could have issued rations unwilling to do so. This assumption that relief would impede the ability of indigenous peoples to “learn to work for themselves,” when paired with the coerced spatial isolation and restriction of mobility, had genocidal consequences.

GARDENING

Beginning in the 1930s, a parallel effort at transforming the livelihoods of the communities near Lake Winnipeg occurred through the institution of garden plots. “Garden plots”—much like parallel movements that morphed into “victory garden” movements during the 1940s—denoted a situation in which family members did small-scale farming of vegetables, usually for sale in the produce market. The employment of small-scale garden plots were presented by the state as a solution to the incredible poverty facing indigenous communities across Manitoba:
I also realize to the fullest extent the difficulties of the Indian people on those reserves on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. Their lot in life will always be hard, the only thing they can do for a living being to hunt and fish. To do this they have to work hard, as hunting, I know, is not to be had on the reserve and I presume they very often have to travel a long way to find fur-bearing animals. However, this has been their method of earning a living probably for generations, and any change we might try to introduce now would only meet with disaster. Even two or three years’ work for the Indians in that part of the country does not help them any, as eventually they have to go back to fishing and trapping, and to keep them continually at it, I think, is the only salvation for these people. Gardens, of course, should be encouraged as much as possible and, at a couple of reserves you mention wild rice. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

Statements like “their lot in life will always be hard” speak volumes about the attitude that the Department of Indian Affairs held. Agents of the state, such as Indian Agents and administrators, seemed to acknowledge that their programs would not actually fix the hardships (that were created by the state in the first place). Even given this context, gardening was still advocated as a possible solution.

At first, it turned out that the push for garden plots was creating its own problems. The soil was not right, and pests were rampant. At Fisher River, in 1934, the plots were not producing well: “the potato crop did not turn out well. There seemed to be a lack of moisture just at the time when it was most need and I understand further that the potato bugs were very bad” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). A later report from 1937 echoes the problems of garden plots in the Fisher River environment. Many of the garden plots “were drowned out” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17) and the “community garden was a failure because of too much moisture” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). Perhaps it was the recurring failure of gardens to produce that led to the refusal of members of the Fisher River community to garden to the expectations of the Department of Indian Affairs, this in the year 1937:
The gardens were good, especially where any care was given. Unfortunately, the Indians are away most of the summer digging roots, picking berries, brushing, and gathering wild rice. Consequently the gardens are neglected. The community garden last year was on borrowed land and this year the Indian refused to give it for community purpose. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

By 1938, there were more promising reports: “The Indians have wonderful gardens. All have good potatoes. The onion crop is the best I have ever seen on any reserve. They also have carrots, turnips, cabbage, pumpkin, and vegetable marrow. The season was ideal for gardening” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). However, one of the goals of garden plots was to provide sustenance that was not from the rations list, which required Department funds to supply, and gardening had not made an impact on the need for relief. By 1939, a report stated:

The Indians have a good chief and I believe they try to secure a living. Their sources of income are all very uncertain and naturally they experience some very lean times. The chief gave his time helping to break garden land with a team loaned him by a white man. I was well impressed by the efforts made to increase the gardens. Undoubtedly these Indians are beginning to realize the value of a good garden. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

Later in the same report, the writer concluded that “This is not a farming country but with the equipment now on hand, no Indian should fail to have a garden” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17) and that hiring a certain Agent would be effective since “The Doctor as Agent could also render valuable service in promoting gardening and other enterprises” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). Since the land was not viable for farmland, it appeared that gardening would have to suffice.

Nearby, the reports on gardening at Brokenhead River conclude with the story of a man who would not garden:

One Indian just returned from East Kildonan. He, and his family worked for a gardener. He received his wages, and was told to take home his vegetables, which he did. This man said, “Why should I remain on the reserve all summer to do
some gardening, when I can get my vegetables for sacking them up.” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

From stories like this, it is evident that members of the indigenous communities in Northern Manitoba occupied a contradictory position in their relationships with capitalist work and the expectations of the Department of Indian Affairs. Work for pay was encouraged—whether hunting fur animals, fishing salmon, or gardening, the workers were expected to sell their products, not take them home. Working for a gardener rather than being a gardener, which was a form of capitalist work that seemingly would be seen as adequate by the state, instead was seen as inadequate because gardening was to serve dual purposes: both to work and train the workers how to “work for themselves.” If workers could not do that, they would starve.

FISHING

The state turned toward large-scale fishing to construct profitable labor for the members of the reserves. While people in these communities had engaged in fishing in the past, it was not to the degree expected by the Department, nor was it ever the sole focus of their livelihoods. While people fished for sustenance on Lake Winnipeg, fishing had never been their sole sustenance, but instead complementary to a forms of work. The corporatization of fishing (when paired with the land surrender process) meant that this was to change. A person who wanted to fish could not simply go to the lake and fish anymore; instead, a commercial fishing license was required. In 1934, the report stated:

I met the Chief and Council and they had their usual complaint in connection with fishing. They claim that Fisher Bay was never surrendered and that they should not oblige to purchase a fishing license for commercial fishing. They point out that they are supplied with a trapping license and should also be supplied with a fishing license. The Provincial Government, of course, state that the Indians must have a commercial license and that they cannot see their way clear to close Fisher Bay to outside fishermen. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)
The “usual complaint,” in other words, was that the state had interpreted the land surrender to include the bay area, while the Chief and Council argued that they had not surrendered the bay to the state. The same phrase was used to describe the situation at the Bloodvein Reserve in 1939: “These Indians hunt, trap and fish, but I received the usual complaints – (their few nets are always surrounded by nets belonging to the white men)” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17).

Later that year, a winter report stated that

These Indians have a hard life. They try to compete with the white fisherman who is better equipped and much better clothed. During the last few years, a number of Indians have given up fishing for themselves and work for the white men who then supply the nets and other equipment. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

Fishing had become a two-tiered environment in which indigenous people could not work for themselves and instead were forced to fish for encroaching white fishers. Other forms of labor did not prove adequate for sustenance, either, leaving indigenous communities such as Birch Point with “bare living” at best:

This year, as last, the returns are small and the majority are only obtaining a bare living. Fur is scarce; even rabbits are difficult to find. At Birch Point, some work can be obtained, but it is indeed a bare living. I understand they pay $1.50 per cord for chopping and, from this, deduct the cost of hauling it from the bush. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

Sustenance—“bare living”—was a struggle. By 1937, another report further discussed the problems facing the Fisher River fishermen, even in a comparably better fishing season:

The Indians were still mostly on the lake fishing. I was informed by the councilor…that the fishing this year was good and many of the Indians will return with more money than they have had for years. Fishing during the past three or four years has been most discouraging and generally the Indians returned in debt, either owing for nets or supplies. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)
Systems of debt only exacerbated the problems faced by these communities. White encroachment on reserve land was hindering their ability to fish. Not only were white fishermen on the lake, but there were concerns about the use of Rice Lake, as in 1939:

These Indians are concerned about Rice Lake, which they fear is being included in a game preserve. We hope to obtain a lease on this lake for harvesting the rice. Even if this area should be included in a preserve I think permission could be obtained to secure the rice. The Indians do considerable fishing and this should be encouraged. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

The same report echoes earlier concerns about fishing rights and the activities of white fishermen, with concerns across the reserves, including the reserve of the Hole River Band and the Bloodvein Band:

The Indians complain that the white man fishes all around their nets and it is almost impossible for them to secure any large catches. I do think we should provide, each year, a few extra nets and in this way the Indians will gradually be able to extend their fishing operations. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

For the Berens River Band, the report stated that

The Indians complain about the fishing areas being restricted. Under separate cover I am forwarding copies of letters now in possession of the Chief. The white fisherman certainly make conditions difficult and again I am convinced that more fishing equipment is needed. These people must depend largely on fishing, hunting and trapping...This is a large band and I have no doubt at times they experience considerable hardship. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

“Considerable hardship” was an understatement. Land surrender and white encroachment had constructed a scenario in which indigenous mobility had been restricted at the same time as better-off white-run industries stripped the land bare of the resources that indigenous communities needed to survive beyond “bare living.”

SOUTHERN MANITOBA
The establishment of reserves often was a consequence of the process of land surrender by which the state claimed land used by indigenous peoples as private property, often auctioned off to the highest (white) bidder. The logic of land surrender, however, could postdate the establishment of the reserve system. Existing reserves could be auctioned to bidders. In 1902, a substantial part of the Roseau River reserve (now Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation, a member of the Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council) was auctioned with the following justification (from a news article printed in the Dominion City Echo and reprinted in the Manitoba Free Press: “Here then is this large area of good land being occupied by a few indolent Indians; only 236 (Ojibway) on 14,150 acres” (Cherney, 2011a). In the same article, it was stated “How much better would it be for the district surrounding this reserve and for the Indians themselves, if the land were put up for sale and the money kept for them as a reserve fund” (Cherney, 2011a). When Indian Affairs reports showed that only 80 acres of land was at the time cultivated for wheat farming, the “small acreage under cultivation by a small number of people was emphasized as a reason for the reserve in part or in whole to be turned over to white agricultural exploitation” (Cherney, 2011a).

However, the justification of land surrender on the part of lack of cultivated acreage was based on invidious comparisons:

Aboriginals were at a considerable disadvantage when it came to cultivating land in comparison to their white neighbours as a result of a “peasant farming policy” developed in 1888 by Hayter Reed, the top bureaucrat in the Department of Indian Affairs (First Nations Land Surrenders, 1896-1911, by Peggy Martin-McGuire, Canada, Indian Claims Commission, 1998). The policy was based on the assumption that aboriginal farmers were not ready for modern machinery and would be better occupied in labour-intensive activities.

“Under the policy,” wrote Martin-McGuire, “money for farm machinery was withheld from Indians, reducing the Department’s costs as well as forcing the Indians to farm at subsistence levels...”

Although the policy was scrapped in 1896, it had left a legacy of under-utilized land. In addition, another policy had encouraged breaking reserves into
small plots for each family, which had the effect of checking modern agricultural practices and giving officials the wherewithal to deem portions of reserve land as “surplus.” (Cherney, 2011a)

In addition to these discriminatory farm programs, disease (particularly smallpox) and starvation had reduced the population of the Roseau River community from approximately 1100 in 1871 at the signing of the first treaty to only 236 in 1907 (Cherney, 2011a). At the signing of the first treaty, local indigenous leaders were “further promised plows and “harrons on each reserve to cultivate land. Many of the promises, such as the plows and harrows, horse and buggies for chiefs, schools and medical aid, were verbal and not written down in the final treaty document” (Cherney, 2011a). By 1907, the local paper claimed “under the existing circumstances the land is little more than a desert, so far as raising any profitable produce is concerned, and will never be a source of revenue either to the government or any towns in proximity to it so long as it is occupied by the Indians” (Cherney, 2011a). At the same time that agricultural use of land was central to determining whether land was “surplus” or being used (i.e. for farming), labor was advocated by the Department of Indian Affairs as the central method of “advancing” indigenous peoples. According to Indian Agent James McKenna,

I am “convinced that the Indians can only be advanced through labour (that is, being taught, and even virtually forced, to grow grain and raise cattle) and that I propose doing what I can to hasten the day when rations houses shall cease to exist and the Indians be self-supporting. That day will never come if officers continue the system of handling Indians through bribing them with food.” (Cherney, 2011a)

Relief was seen as bribery with food, and enforcing a certain division of labor (while at the same time failing to provide adequate equipment) was somehow “advancement.”

The push for land surrender was met with resistance by the indigenous community at Roseau River, who “declared that they would never consent to give it up as it was the only thing
that they and their children had to depend on for a livelihood (Indian Claims Commission report, December 6, 2007),” (Cherney 2011a) as well as the local Indian Agent, who “defended the band’s interests, reporting that declining wildlife necessitated the band possessing a reserve with excellent agricultural land, hay fields, fishing and timber. In 1895, it was noted that band members were planting crops” (Cherney 2011a). Even the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Clifford Sifton, contributed to the discussion, saying “The faith of the government of Canada is pledged to the maintenance of the title of these Indians in that land” (Cherney 2011a)—and the land was clearly in use. When Sifton became Minister of the Interior, this idea of reserve land as “maintained title” was in vogue.

At the time, pushes for land surrender still depended on the amended Indian Act of 1876, which held that permission for land surrender could only be granted from a ““majority of the male members of the band of the full age of twenty-one years, at a meeting or council thereof summoned for the purpose according to their rules” (Cherney 2011a). However, with the appointment of a new Minister of the Interior, Frank Oliver, in 1904, the idea of indigenous land title being maintained by the state gave way to an aggressive push to force indigenous communities into land surrender of what was deemed “surplus land”: “If it becomes a question between the Indians and whites, the interests of the whites will have to be provided for ...” (Cherney, 2011a).

Local politicians began to successfully lobby for the land surrender of acreage that would be good for farming. In the context of similar movements to take land in Saskatchewan and Alberta, a petition passed in 1900 for the government to auction off 160-acre tracts of land to white settlers (Cherney, 2011b). Soon, the Indian Commissioner, David Laird, was asked to investigate the possibilities of land surrender. An inspector reported back:
“My opinion is that they will not consent to surrender any part, or all of their reserve, in their own interest I think it would be to their advantage, as they are not making the best use of the reserve, and would do much better if assimilated with other bands which are removed from white settlements,” he told Laird in a December 21, 1900, communication. “But it will be hard to persuade them as they are very strongly wedded to the locality.”

Marlatt recommended that, if a surrender was obtained, it was in the best interests of the Roseau River Band that the land not be sold until “good prices can be realized.” Within five years, the inspector said, the land would probably double in value, since it was situated between two railways with stations within three miles of the reserve, which would intensify the demand for the land among settlers.

Marlatt said the petitioners from the Municipality of Franklin were motivated by self-interest rather than what was best for Roseau River Ojibway, which, of course, was an obvious inference. The residents of communities in Southern Manitoba articulated their self-interest in quite plain language. Reserve land could be better utilized by whites rather than aboriginals, they claimed.

In February 1901, Marlatt meet with the band, explaining their options in the event of a land surrender. Later, he reported that the members of main reserve at the mouth of the Roseau and Red rivers would consider selling, but the members of the rapids reserve some 20 kilometres to the east along the Roseau River were adamant in their refusal.

J.C. Ginn, the Indian Affairs farm instructor on the reserve, sent a reply to Marlatt that the proposal had been considered, but the two bands had decided not to sell. (Cherney 2011b)

In 1902, there was another unanimous resolution not to sell the reserve land by the indigenous communities. The land was not “surplus” or unused; in fact, it was used to store cattle when the other acres flooded (Cherney, 2011b). Finally, in 1903, the land was surrendered—“after 14 years and 10 prior refusals” (Cherney, 2011b), with no archival evidence why. However, instead of using their names, the signatures of the three chiefs were only “X”s (Cherney, 2011b). A follow-up interview in the 1970s found:

In an interview with Roseau River Anishinabe Elder Tom Henry in 1973, Roy Felix Antoine was told that no general assembly or vote was held by the band members (Roy Felix Antoine, Report on Research, prepared for the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, August 31, 1973). According to Antoine’s report of his interview with Henry, “The people weren’t informed on
what was taking place and he also states that the Agent (Marlatt) forced them to sell the land ...

He (Henry) also informed the chief and council at that time that they shouldn’t sell the land but was told he didn’t know anything.” (Cherney, 2011b)

Henry told Antoine that the “old people were crazy (not to hold a general assembly). They were promised that they would be rich.”

Rose Nelson, another elder, related to the 2002 Indian Claims Commission that her father told her that alcohol was used to obtain the surrender and a consensus for surrender had not been reached.

Elder Elsie Patrick said her grandfather told her those who signed the document felt it was “just like a lease or something, they were renting the land.”

The Indian Claims Commission in February 2009 found that the Crown, when pursuing the surrender of Roseau River IR 2, primarily acted “as the advocate for third parties” and “used its position of authority to exert influence on the band until the surrender was achieved.”

Marlatt wrote to Indian Commissioner David Laird on February 2 that the “surrender was obtained not by the desire of the Indians but by a strong wish of the Department, it was with great difficulty secured and only after a clear understanding that the 10% would be available almost immediately after sale.”

The percentage in question was a clause of the surrender, stating that immediately after the land sale, 10 per cent (Cherney, 2011b)

All in all, approximately 8000 acres were surrendered, with the expectation that it would be “but a short time until they are again asked to surrender the balance of the reserve, and unless they are generously and fairly treated according to their own ideas at this time they will be very slow to sign another surrender” (Cherney, 2011b).

When the land was auctioned off, prices averaged around 13 dollars an acre. The profit was huge:

In total, 12 of the 44 quarter sections were purchased by bidders from North Dakota.
The total amount realized from the sale was $99,822.50. One year later, two sections of land were purchased by the government and added to the Roseau River Rapids Reserve.

“I am pleased to say that the sale passed off most satisfactorily,” Graham wrote on June 3, 1903, to A.P. Collier, Sifton’s personal secretary, “and the lands brought fair prices and every person present congratulated the Department on the
fair manner in which it was conducted. I desire to thank Hon. Mr. Sifton and yourself for the assistance rendered me in connection with this matter.”

Subsequently, the Roseau River Band received $8,588.60 in cash or goods, but this wasn’t satisfactory and in the following years a dispute arose over the payments the band expected to receive.

The Roseau River Band received approximately 8600 dollars in cash from a sale that generated almost 100,000 dollars in profit, with additional profit from land ownership for years to come. This was not all: the land was in use as farmland already, with crops planted. A situation similar to sharecropping emerged for the next year: “A rather ironic provision was that where a “crop” remained on any land sold at the auction, “Indians were to be allowed to reap the crop at maturity, and in the meantime they would pay a small rent for the land.” In effect, the “Indians” became tenants on land they had previously owned” (Cherney, 2011b). Finally, in 2010, a restitution offer from the state surfaced after years of investigation into the wrongdoings:

The Roseau River First Nation received a written offer from the federal government in 2010 for $80.6 million to resolve the claim arising from 1903 land surrender, as well as the ability to purchase 7,952,78 acres of land to convert into a reserve — the amount of land surrendered in 1903. On February 8, 2011, band members voted to accept the offer from the federal government, with each member receiving $5,000 and the remaining $60 million placed in a trust fund. (Cherney, 2011b)

This history paints a grim picture. The Roseau River band was forced into “peasant” agricultural exactly during the time of the industrial revolution and the rise of large-scale agriculture, while agricultural practices were at once in use by indigenous communities and used to strip land away from them.

By the 1930s, agricultural practices were the focus of reports generated by Department of Indian Affairs staff. Farm animals, including cattle, pigs, and chickens, were often a source of
income for indigenous communities, though the Department of Indian Affairs regularly expressed dissatisfaction with the ways in which cattle were managed. A 1934 report says that the number of cattle was “impossible to report as they were roaming at large,” but by 1937 the number of cattle on the reserve was known. At the Roseau River Reserve, a Department of Indian Affairs report stated that

The cattle have decreased. The Indians sometimes purchase two or three calves and before a year has passed, these have disappeared. They have perhaps been traded off or killed for meat. The records show 11 head but this number is not correct as I understand some were sold without a permit. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

In 1938, a report updated the status of the division of labor: “The cattle returns showed 550 head, and there appears to be a fair crop of calves,” in addition to the occasional pigs, turkeys, geese, and chickens. The report noted that “we could encourage poultry keeping by supplying twenty five baby chicks.” By 1940, there were concerns about illicit cattle sales: “The Indians refuse to allow any branding [in the farm program] and I am firmly convinced this is one of the reasons” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17).

By 1941, the assessment of the “cattle situation” was even less optimistic:

The cattle situation, I fear, is not good. These Indians sell their stock without a permit and it is practically impossible to make any check on the truckers. We caught one calf being delivered during my inspection. Mr. McPherson laid a charge against the storekeeper and the case will be tried within a few days. The Chief and Councillors of the band claim they never see any trucks taking cattle but I cannot believe this. I am not on the reserve 2 hours before practically all the Indians know of my arrival. I therefore think they are fully aware of the illegal sale of cattle, but simply refuse to give any assistance. I am convinced that when a check is made by Mr. McPherson, after the cattle are taken in, we will find a decrease. It might be possible to prohibit trucks passing through the reserve, but this would not solve the problem because the Indians would then deliver the stock off the reserve to the buyer as was done in the case cited above. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)
The sale of cattle without a permit to sell was a problem that required the intervention of the state, one akin to the ongoing problem of cattle rustling, and a product of state sponsored modern projects like the building of good roads:

One of the most difficult problems we face in Manitoba today is now to prevent the disappearance of or decrease in our cattle. This has always been a problem but it has been made more difficult by good roads. Eight or ten years ago a truck could not reach many of our reserves. Today this is not the case. In years gone by cattle were shipped by train, but now all are hauled by truck and they can be loaded day or night almost at any point. Today prices are good and dealers watch their chances, and it is never hard to induce an Indian to sell, particularly if the price is attractive. Public highways pass through most of the reserves, consequently the truck drivers know they can operate free of interference. I have warned our Agents and Farming Instructors to give constant attention to the cattle situation, but the reserves are large and there is other work requiring their attention, so in spite of an earnest effort the cattle disappear, if not by day, by night, and of course the Indians will give no information. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

The report continues, remarking that the cattle were treated by the indigenous farmers as if they were their own, which was not the case:

In many cases the Indians claim the ownership of their cattle and refuse to have them branded. It is of course more difficult to trace stock not branded, and therefore we face another obstacle. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

Clearly, the effort to manage the transformation of the division of labor to promote the cattle industry had unintended consequences that the state did not expect. The cattle were being sold without sale permits by members of the community, without permission, as the immediate profit of the cattle sale was appealing to cattle owners in hard times. In turn, the Department of Indian Affairs regarded this practice as participating in the broader problem of the illegal sale of cattle, or cattle rustling. As a result, the behavior of the community at large was called into question, with remarks such as “it is never hard to induce Indians to sell” illustrative of the ways in which the indigenous communities were regarded as essentially suspect.
Beyond the “cattle situation,” the position of the community to the visits of representatives of the Department of Indian Affairs was made clear: “I am not on the reserve 2 hours before practically all the Indians know of my arrival” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). Goodwill and trust between the community and the Department of Indian Affairs are not evident in these reports. Efforts by Indian Agents to survey the communities seem to have been seen (quite accurately) as hostile by indigenous communities.

HARDSHIP, CONFLICT, AND MORALITY

Hardship, as the reports frequently note, was widespread. A cycle of poverty, debt, and relief was similar across the local contexts, where engagement in the new forms of labor encouraged by the state often led to a cycle of debt and inadequate relief. Furthermore, this system was made necessary by shifts in the amount of resources such as fish and game caused by white encroachment: The Fisher River community was not allowed to make purchases from funds allocated from land surrender without the permission of the Department: “This band has interest money and in December a payment will be requested and will be used to purchase food” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). When new markets were encouraged, the markets were often created through processes of encroachment by white industrialists, with the land was leased by the Department to indigenous communities after processes of land surrender.

Out of these situations, certain conflicts emerged. The issue of relief was thorny, with the Department disinclined to provide aid: the Inspector reported in 1937

I met the Chief and Councillors and although we discussed many subjects I found them to be quite reasonable. Naturally we received complaints but these mostly centred around the question of relief and destitute rations. I do not think there is any undue hardship and I made it clear to the Indians that the rations can not be increased and every able Indian must provide for himself and family. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)
This echoes the sentiment that there was a certain kind of work that fit within the expectations of the Department, and it was not simply capitalist work: instead, it had to reflect a certain patriarchal/liberal form. The dire situation of the indigenous communities that fell under the management of the Department, paired with racist and colonial assumptions, resulted in the construction of a certain kind of social problem that was the direct result of the gendered and racialized cultural expectations of self-sufficiency in colonial liberal states. These assumptions are reflected throughout the reports, such as in the following paragraph from a 1938 report:

The reserves of the bands of Indians who each summer wander off in search of a living, usually has few belonging [sic] and their homes appear neglected and ill kept. A good home can only be made by constant care and this means staying home. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

For people on these reserves, their existing mode of production—context-based subsistence, whether fishing, gathering, or hunting—was declining in the face of white encroachment. The Victorian ideal of a “good home” was used as an excuse to curtail the mobility of these peoples; quite convenient considering that white people and large corporations were leasing the lands in surrounding areas. The Department introduced farming, gardening, and industrial programs as a fix not only to this problem of the state’s construction but as a way to “get started” indigenous peoples in the “white” capitalist ways of life, replete with the gendered assumptions of breadwinning and colonial racialized assumptions about indigenous peoples:

However, we must make it possible for them to live while getting started. Breaking land will help. It might also be well to furnish a few nets, traps, and the odd team of horses, and some poultry. This program would naturally need careful planning and supervision. These Indians could also milk cows and ship cream but they appear to have no desire to do this kind of work. They are continually scrapping amongst themselves and it is almost impossible to reach an agreement on any community program. I am inclined to think many of the men are lazy and prefer a mere existence to hard work and a good living. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)
One way of introducing this shift in the mode of production and “getting started” was through the introduction of farm programs. For farm equipment to be provided to the communities, the Department required the entrance of a farm instructor, who would supervise the farm and garden work of members of the community:

We should try to encourage farming on this reserve. The chief stated that Mr. Hoey, when on the reserve, said they should have a tractor and of course the chief considers this a promise and wants a tractor. I do not know the conversation but I am sure no promise was made and I would not recommend a tractor unless we had a farming instructor. There are many of these Indians who do not hesitate to say they will not have a farming instructor. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

Another conflict that often emerged was between the Chief and Council and the Department of Indian Affairs. While the elections forced on the communities were partially designed to appoint Chiefs who would work with the Department, this did not always go as expected:

I met many of the Indians and must say that Chief Thompson can be the most disagreeable and disrespectful Indian I have met during my experience with Indians. He is moody, resentful, and bulging over with his own importance. I understand he is going to Ottawa shortly to present his troubles…I know the chief will have all the Indians starving and all needing clothes. He stated the other day that some clothing should be sent for every member of the band and was very upset because the clothing had not arrived. Generally speaking, the Indians were well dressed. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

The casual dismissal of clothing concerns was blamed on the Chief’s management and his being “moody,” “resentful,” and “bulging over with his own importance.” At Peguis Reserve, there was a different conflict with the Chief and Councillors there:

The chief pointed out that although lands were sold…, the band funds never seemed to increase and they would like a statement showing the disposition of funds. The statement, to give any clear explanation, should date back for a number of years. They point out that it is generally understand that at least $1,800.00 is collected each year from the sale of hay. In ten years this would total $10,000.00 and they can not understand why the funds do not show this increase. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)
The state managed the accounts, and often the way in which funds were allocated did not meet the expectations of the communities, or the promises that had been made during treaty and land surrender negotiations. Poverty and money were important issues, and the Chief and Councillors of each reserve acted as liaisons. These issues of poverty, clothes, and food, were not simply about starvation, though that was critical. Beyond this, the poverty of certain of the people on the reserves could also become mobilized by the Department for their purposes:

Henry Starr has a family of five children. They are under-nourished and have insufficient clothing, yet he refused to allow them to attend boarding school. The mother states she is quite willing, the children wish to go, but Henry is firm in his refusal and yet continually in need of help. This family is a real problem: but I hope in time to get the children to some school. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

The same poverty that was constructed by the state, Department, and white encroachment, and not fixed by attempted transformations of the division of labor or by relief programs, was used as an excuse to send children to boarding schools.

NORTHERN QUEBEC

Indigenous groups in northern Quebec, including Cree, Innu, and Inuit communities near Sept-Îles, Mingan (also Ekuantsshit) Escoumains, and Bersimis (today known as Betsiamites or Pessamit), faced problems similar to those faced by indigenous peoples in Manitoba, but differences in local contexts, cultures, and environments often resulted in different outcomes. Dominant industries were different, with the fur trade more central to the ways of life of working people. In addition, the nature of the environment also played a role, resulting in accelerated hardships of deprivation and starvation.

In the 1900s, the division of labor at Sept-Îles was focused on the fur trade. An early handwritten report states that “the Band appeared contented and happy having had a good hunt—
many receiving as high as $15.00 for their fur” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). In 1919, a report stated that “The Indians of the band had secured a successful fur catch during the past winter, the total value of their catch being estimated by the Agent at approximately $100.00, this high value being due not so much to the quantity and quality of the furs but to the unusually high prices that were being paid for all varieties of skins” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). At the time, the community hunted in the woods for fur. The same report conclude that

> They still follow the same pursuits of hunting, fur and fishing and are a law-abiding people, free from quarrelling among themselves, and have a veneration for their religion (Catholic) which in many cases almost amounts to religious enthusiasm. The younger generation are deriving great benefit from the education that is given them during a part of the year at their Reserve, and the entire band at the time of my last visit exhibited a lively appreciation of the policy of the Department in utilizing the funds derived from the sale of their timber for the benefit of their band. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

Just as with the other contexts discussed in this chapter, land surrender—the process by which the Department paid the communities for the use of their natural resources—was evident at the time in Sept-Îles. In contrast to this positive appraisal by the Department of the members of the community, the Indian Agent was apparently not well regarded by other representatives of the state, municipal government, and the fur corporations:

> An unfortunate state of affairs is in evidence on this Reserve owing to the fact of the Indian Agent being unable to live in peace and harmony with the other people on the Reserve including the Govt, telegraph agent, priest, postmaster, and the managers of the various fur companies and trading companies. I am of the opinion that until he is transferred to some other agency or replaced by a different type of man, the business of the department in so far as the welfare of the Indians is concerned will suffer a serious handicap. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

These difficulties existed at all scales, from the local to that of government. Early on, there were language difficulties with the Agent hindering the ability to know more information about the goings-on of the communities—the Indian Agent did not speak French and the communities did
not speak English (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). As a consequence of this lack of communication, when the Department requested of the Agent to report details on relief, supplies, and concerns about liquor trafficking, the Agent may not have been able to adequately do his job of surveillance and acting as liaison for state interests.

The process of land surrender that affected one indigenous community was detailed in a 1919 report, whereby the Bersimis Band “surrendered the timber of their Reserve on the understanding that with a portion of the funds accruing from the sale of the timber, the Department would secure … the exclusive fisher rights on the Bersimis River, and provide a church, school, hospital and other permanent improvements on their Reserve” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). Although they had previously engaged in the fur industry, a consequence of this land surrender would be a shift to the fishing industry, as the forests would be used for timber.

The Department regarded this as a positive change, and not just for their own interests but for the community itself: “The fishing rights on the Bersimis River are of great value to the Indians, and it is anticipated that the expenditure of $5000 wherewith to secure the lease from the Provincial Government of Quebec, and to place the industry on a commercial footing, will be repaid in the course of two years” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). The timber was sold to the Belgo-Canadian Pulp and Paper Company for $141,000, and $42,300 paid to the capital funds of the band, with the profits supposed to be used to build the infrastructure that was proposed as part of the agreement.

By 1925, the Bersimis Fishery sold 17,497 pounds of fish and caught an additional 20,000 pounds of fish for the use of the community. The Department suggested in its report from that year that not only was the industry “a source of cheap nourishing food, but constitutes a valuable
means of livelihood during the summer months, when the Indians would otherwise be idle” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). As is evident from this quotation, the Department clearly was of the sentiment that seasonal patterns of work were not as efficient as year-round labor.

By 1925, more land was surrendered to the state, with the Department remarking that “Steps have been taken to fence in the residential reserve so as to isolate the Indians from the white settlement” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). Fencing in the indigenous community would not only restrict their movements but their ability to access the resources to stay healthy.

While the Bersimis community was at least producing food for “bare living,” at Sept-Îles, off the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, the situation was grim. A report writer in 1925 noted

I arrived at Seven Islands on July 29th, experiencing foggy, cold, and rainy weather during my entire stay of four days. A number of the Indians were preparing to leave for their annual hunt, but I was able with the assistance of the agent and the missionary, to make an accurate census of the Indians of this agency, showing the number and name of the head of each family and the number of children of each sex. This census which is shown on File 74-68 shows that there is a total Indian population of 398 although agent Dr. Michaud had reported in July last that the number was 538. A copy of this census has been sent to the agent with a request that he keep accurate record in future of the births marriages and deaths so as to be in a position at any time to give an accurate return of the Indians of his agency. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

Between July, 1924, and July, 1925, the population at Sept-Îles had decreased from 538 to 398, a decrease of 140 people.

Meanwhile, the Department struggled with a system of debt which was the norm for how white fur companies worked with indigenous hunters: “Last year the Department decided to discontinue the practice of making advances to Indians at this agency to enable them to proceed to the woods for hunting and trapping purposes. This attitude has turned out to be correct, as all the traders of the vicinity resumed their usual practice of granting debt to the hunting Indians” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). This was not a fair system of debt: “It must be noted that
where a trader claims that Indians owe him a sum of $1000 this amount represents the selling
price of his goods, and as I discovered that in many cases a profit of 300% was made or at least
anticipated” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17).

At Mingan (or Ekuantshit), further north, an Innu community was suffering from similar
problems:

I arrived at the Mingan agency on July 24 th after being delayed by fog for three
days on the steamer. All of the Indians of the band were present at the settlement,
and I made a census in the same manner as at Seven Islands. This census (a copy
of which is on file No. 74-41) shows that there is an Indian population of 131
being 23 less than the previous year, owing to heavy mortality among children
and new born infants. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

In the midst of these deaths, the report writer noted people who were need of relief due to “their
disability,” making a list of candidates for aid. However, just two paragraphs directly below the
remark about the deaths of infants and children, he noted that “The agent in the past has possibly
been somewhat too generous in granting relief, but with this list to guide him, he is in a position
to adopt a firmer attitude with those Indians who are able to earn their living but who are too
indolent to do so” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17).

At the same time, the Department was more concerned with the problems of the system
of debt to white fur traders in which the indigenous hunters were enmeshed, however
problematically it was itself involved: “The losses sustained from this pernicious system of the
department making advances for hunting purposes, are due to the fact that the Indians are
constantly told by the traders that it is the duty of the government to make these advances as a
gift and not as a loan, and that the Indians do not need to worry about paying them back” (RG
10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17).

Soon, the Mingan reserve was created by the Department by purchasing land from the
Labrodor Co., as the Department was concerned that “as they have no title to this land, they
would perforce, in the event of a sale of the property...have to vacate” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17).

Though the community at Mingan was exploited by white fur traders and suffering from disease and starvation, H.F. Bury, the report writer, concluded

I impressed on the Mingan Indians the fact that the Department did not propose to grant assistance to them so as to encourage idleness, but that the sick and destitute would always be looked after, and that the Department was always prepared to help the Indians to help themselves. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

Granting relief hinged upon subjective perceptions of worthiness assessed by the Department of Indian Affairs. Those who were perceived idle would not receive aid, nor would those without work. Instead, the sick and destitute were promised aid, but everyone else was supposed “help themselves.”

In 1929, hunters in Bersimis requested that a white trader be ejected from the reserve “on the grounds that he was not giving any advances to the Indians.” The trader left the reserve. Another white trader, Phelippe Cote, went bankrupt in 1929, according to the Department, because the Bersimis hunters would not pay back their loans:

The fact is that Phelippe Cote failed in the fall of 1928 through the dishonesty of the Indians to whom he had given advances for a considerable amount and who failed to pay him back. A number of them believe that by having Mr. Cote ejected they will not have to pay their debts. The chief was emphatic in asking the ejecting of Cote; the reason I found was that he is one of the heaviest debtors of this trader. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

The Department went on to express concern that were enough traders ejected from the reserve land, it would infringe on the competition generated by a free market:

Should there only be four traders on the reserve, competition would be diminished and the Indians would be first to suffer from it. The Indians are not bright enough to see this point and they are evidently influenced in this opposition to traders by the Agent who would like to see every white person cleared off the reserve. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)
Once again, the racist assumptions about the intelligence of indigenous peoples came into play, paired with the Department’s dislike of the Agent. The system of debt was clearly disliked by members of the community to the point of such active resistance as ejecting people from the reserve land. However, the Department had an alternative explanation:

The Indians are living mostly on advances made to them by the residing traders; all these traders have lost money in the last three years as they could not collect their advances. The Indians complained that they were charged exorbitant prices for the necessities of life bought from the traders. It was explained by the traders that as the majority of the Indians were not trustworthy, they had to demand a larger price to cover their constant losses. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

The two narratives were in conflict: either the indigenous hunters were untrustworthy, or they were forced to take on debt to buy supplies necessary for hunting, which then would only partially repay the debt, creating a cycle of increasing debt. This alternate narrative continued:

The Indians do not keep faith with their backers, they often meet unlicensed buyers who go far into the bush to reach them and sell for ready cash and intoxicating liquor, a part of their winter hunt, and when they arrive at Bersimis they often hide part of their catch and play poor to obtain pity from the Agent and get new credit from the traders without, however, settling their old bills. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

The report concluded that this was not a strategy but a sign of innate unintelligence: “It is evidence that these Indians have a mediocre mentality. They are incline to be unscrupulous in more than one way” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). This use of Social Darwinist language was no coincidence; language this was used to justify pernicious generalizations about the “nature” of indigenous peoples.

This assumption of unintelligence was echoed in the Department’s assessment of the actions of the Chief in resisting this system of debt: “Chief Volaut expressed the opinion that they would gladly rid the reserve of white traders and is openly encouraged in this attitude by the Agent. This chief is not an outstanding character. He is weak in mind and judges matters in a
childish way.” Again, language like “weak in mind” and “childish” was mobilized against the chief as he tried to remove the traders.

Signs of unrest continued, with the Agent and Chief working together to protest the existing system: “The Agent had about thirty-two Indians gathered at his house to protest against Cote remaining on the reserve. I learned from an Indian that the majority of these owed money to Cote.” Eventually, Cote was removed from the reserve, but the Department forced the community to pay the white trader money for his losses.

However, all these struggles over hunting and debt began to give way to the stated goal of the Department (and Hudson’s Bay Company) of shifting the mode of production to that of industrial salmon fishing. The fishing license was costing several thousands of dollars a year and, accordingly, by 1929 the Department was working with the Hudson’s Bay Company to ensure that suitable profit was made:

The salmon fishing has just started and only a few fish have been caught so far. The manager of the Hudson’s Bay Company said the Indians were not much interested in this occupation…The manager of the Hudson’s Bay Company complained that the Indians were not reporting the number of salmon caught in an honest way. They often keep half of the catch for themselves and only bring the Company what they do not want…I told the Indians that they should be honest about this matter and not hide any fish away from the Company, and if they should need any to ask the manager for some and not serve themselves as they pleased. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

The fish that the workers were catching were not intended for personal use; instead, they were to be sold for profit by the Hudson’s Bay Company. Workers taking home fish for their personal consumption—even in the context of starvation and poor health—required Department intervention. At the same time, the timber company that was using the surrendered land had not paid the indigenous workers for two years.
There was also a suggestion by the missionary and Agent that a boarding school be built to “improve the moral of both boys and girls, eliminate sickness by teaching them hygiene,” and “it would alleviate the parents’ burden by leaving the children of school age on the reserve where they would be cared for and educated, while at present they have to follow the whole family to their hunting ground” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). There were approximately fifty children of schooling age at the time.

Another criticism of the Agent occurred in the report, which rapidly shifts half-way through the paragraph into a criticism of indigenous peoples more generally:

Dr. Barolet is acting among these Indians in the very same way as those primitive savage chiefs in the Western Prairies to which the Indian Commissioner is continually objecting. He wants to be the boss on the reserve…He seems very lenient with the Indians when the get drunk and always applies the minimum fine…His attacks against the white residents are not usually justified. There is no sense in wanting them to ruin themselves for the Indians who are spending their money foolishly when they have some and begging for credit when they are penniless. They are lazy and perch on a fence all the day or they gather at the different stores where they tell stories while they could be repairing their houses, some which are in a bad state, or rebuilding their fences, sidewalks, or improving their roads. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

The report writer, Henri Fabieu, concluded that “The Indians show little interest in fishing, lumbering or laboring on the road. They simply wish to use the summer as a holiday and have a good time or even a better time if they have some money to throw away. The Agent should tell the Indians to work during the summer” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). Fabieu rails against so many aspects of the indigenous community that it is difficult to pick out highlights, but his efforts to make sure that work is the priority at all times, even against story-telling, are remarkable.
At Bersimis, the debt problem continued. A 1932 report stated that “These Indians are hunters and trappers and depend upon this entirely for their living.” However, fur prices had dropped and traders were reluctant to outfit workers to hunt by giving out debt:

The situation here is very serious and I fear that similar conditions will be found at Seven Islands and other points down the Gulf. The question arises as to what is to be done. Unless the Indians are to be allowed to starve, we are faced with two options, i.e., to outfit them for the hunt, for which we will certainly never be reimbursed, or to keep them on relief until hunting conditions improve and the price of fur recovers. The latter, while maintaining the Indians in idleness will cost less than to outfit them to go to the bush. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)

The way the report tells it, it was the dishonesty of the indigenous hunters in reporting their gains, and in their refusal to pay back their debts, that created the problem that they were in. Business were suffering—and the report blamed the hunters for making white traders suffer by not paying back debts.

By 1939, at Bersimis, the salmon fishing industry had not taken off to the expectations of the Hudson’s Bay Company: “Salmon fishing has slightly increased, but not enough, as I told the Indians at a meeting; about 5000 pounds in all….I really feel that the lease should not be renewed at the end of its five year later” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). Since the profit was not good enough, the lease would be discontinued. In 1941, it was recommended that the lease be ended:

I checking over the amount of money paid for such fishing rights, and the quantity of fish sold, I question the advisability of keeping such lease in force much longer…Since 1936 the Indians have been warned, every year, that if they showed no more interest in salmon fishing that the fishing rights agreement would be stopped. (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17)
In 1942, the sentiment was expressed again in a report: “The Indians have not taken advantage of this lease for the last few years, as the amount of fish taken does not justify the annual payment” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17). By 1942, the fishing lease had been cancelled.

Eventually, in 1948, there were efforts once again to fish on the river, with the introduction of a new superintendent who pushed for the reintroduction of the fishing industry. By 1949, a report stated that the “Bersimis Indians are the richest Band in the Province. They derive a big revenue from their sale of timber which will last for many years to come. For the past few years a fishing project has been organized employing Band Funds for equipment and operating capital” (RG 10, Volume 8461, File 471/23-17).

Over the course of decades, through a process that resulted in starvation, discrimination, and the constriction of mobilities, the Bersimis community was an apparent model of success, with relative wealth and work. The division of labor had been changed. Other groups, such as at Sept-Iles, were not as fortunate.

CONCLUSION

The narratives of this broad period of time are important. Some of them have been told often enough that they have become part of contemporary discussions on indigenous rights today. The narrative of residential schools has constructed indigenous histories in Canadian sovereignty as histories of isolation, conversion, and exclusion, with the state’s focus on Christian assimilationist education—and its “accidental” consequences of disease and abuse—foregrounded to the point of erasing other aspects of the past that are critical to understanding the present, and how we can potentially shift the way we talk about the present, away from relegating the mistakes of colonial states to the past and instead we can see them as present problems that are important today.
Sometimes the agents of the state were well-intentioned, or seem to be so based upon their firsthand reports. Other times, and more often than not, the agents operated under malignantly racist colonial assumptions about the populations that were supposed to be under their control. They managed indigenous populations with little education, little authority, and poorly. Indigenous communities often refused to cooperate, actively and passively resisting the power of the state, but were affected by land surrenders, encroachments by white fishers and hunters, and the rapid spread of industrial capitalism, which eventually become the primary mode of work for indigenous men and women alike.

At times that data tells heartbreaking stories. Racist assumptions about indigenous peoples, for instance, played a role in minimizing the amount of aid allotted for the “relief” of communities who were cold, sick, and starving due to changes forced upon them by the state. If the Indians wanted to starve, the agents told their superiors, it was their choice and a product of their laziness and unwillingness to participate adequately in the white labor market and learn productive white behaviors.

In many instances, the communities were told to garden (another word for farming vegetables and grains on small plots). The produce as to be sold to industries, not to be eaten. Adequate equipment for gardening was only provided if the communities allowed the introduction of “farm programs,” which meant farming in a certain form of organization in which a white “expert” supervised the process. If they wanted to farm for themselves, they were left without adequate plots or equipment to sustain themselves.

In another context, a community that barely fished was forced to open salmon fisheries on nearby river, which replaced their existing mode of production. The community was given a fishing license for the river under the agreement that they would sell enough catch to the
Hudson’s Bay Company for profit. They did not want to fish, and when they did, they often kept a portion of the catch to themselves to eat. This angered both the Hudson’s Bay Company and the Department of Indian Affairs, who resented having to pay for a license that was not paying out. The license was revoked.

The local politics of these transformations was complex. Elections were forced upon the communities and new chiefs elected—often chosen for their seeming willingness to work with white agents who were to supervise.

These were only some of the shifts, but important ones. The forty years that are the focus of this chapter were forty years of trauma, hardship, and transformation. This illustrates an important point that has been mentioned by some (cite!) but not mentioned enough: in colonial contexts such as this one, to understand the capitalist incorporation of indigenous communities, it cannot be divorced from gendered and racist states. The removal of these communities was a primary purpose of the incorporation—those did not starve were left were to work for white industries.

In Seeing like a State, James C. Scott (1998) discussed the ways in which large “modern” state projects fail. In his telling, modern states have imperialistic visions which result in structural violence against the populations they seek to manage. Rather than improving the ways of life of the populations under their control, there are unintended consequences which adversely affect the lives of people, particularly vulnerable populations. However, in the context of indigenous communities, many scholars have begun to question if these unintended consequences (such as mass starvation and disease) were truly unintended. This chapter works as a corrective to the emphasis in the sociology of education on studying educational systems often without historical context: if we look to the historical context, it is evident that the negative
consequences of assimilationist structures were constructed out of contradictory logics of assimilation and exclusion, with indigenous populations enfolded into capitalist labor with boundaries drawn on relief due to racist assumptions about indigenous work ethics.
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CHAPTER FOUR
MAKING GOOD: VOCATIONAL TRAINING

INTRODUCTION

From the analysis of administrative archival documents, I investigate how indigenous students in residential schools underwent vocational training programs which taught male students certain state-sanctioned forms of labor (such as fishing and farming) and female students other forms of labor (usually public and private domestic service). The training of indigenous students was an effort to construct a particular moral colonial subject, reflecting the intersections of post-Victorian moralities, gender, and work. From data containing bureaucratic assessments of their (good/bad) behavior in the context of work, I investigate these issues while discussing how it was that both passive and active forms of resistance undermined the colonial project.

During the twentieth century, the gendering of work greatly affected indigenous groups in the Canadian colonial context, resulting in the construction of a division of labor in the mid-twentieth century that reflected global colonial contexts, particularly in the attempted construction of a service class of indigenous women employed by white families. This reflects the greater patterns of assimilation—evidenced throughout this dissertation—of how colonial states worked to construct subjects that followed racialized logics of behavior and morality, all the while maintaining boundaries of hierarchical difference.

Since the 1980s, the impact of the residential school system on indigenous communities and cultures in Canada has been recognized by scholars, the media, and indigenous activists as critical to understanding the ways that the Canadian state, Christian religious institutions, and
dominant white cultures have worked to oppress indigenous peoples. Similarly, tales of the horrors of boarding schools in the United States have been increasingly told. The stories are often similar: children were forcibly removed from their homes, taken to “total institution”-like schools which resembled prisons more so than educative sites, and in consequence were subjected to widespread disease, neglect, and physical and sexual abuse. While these problems are well documented and pervasive, they are the background to, and not the focus of this study. Instead, this chapter investigates the period of time following residential school in which the former students were expected to mobilize their training in order to conform to the expectations of the surveilling government officials known as Indian Agents. The data for this project comes from reports by Indian Agents on the working and behavioral statuses of former students in the years 1944 and 1945.

Between 1939 and 1944, the Department of Indian Affairs requested follow-up reports from its Indian Agents on the occupational and behavioral status of former students of Residential Schools. In a variety of ways, Indian Agents reported back the type of jobs that former students were working as well as assessments of their behavior, often in language of “good” or “bad” behavior, or whether or not the former student was “making good.” This idea of “making good,” or the endorsement of certain types of labor that reflected ideals of good behavior for former students, was a decision arrived at by Indian Agents in a context-based, racialized, and gendered manner. Often, when former students engaged in forms of labor sanctioned by the racialized Canadian state, such as farm work for men and domestic service for women, their behavior was reported as “making good.” By examining the judgment of the behavior of former students, we can learn more about what was happening behind the scenes as well as the immense scale of the process.
This is the first case study to use this archival data. It uses this new information on the colonial past to raise important sociological questions about the socio-cultural consequences of the coerced transformation of the division of labor of indigenous peoples in twentieth century. This project is three-pronged: first, it investigates what constituted the making of a “good Indian” or “bad Indian,” to use the words of the colonial bureaucrats. Second, it connects the vocational training programs during residential schooling with the subsequent emergence of a gendered division of labor that mirrored other colonial contexts, such as in colonial India. Third, this study contributes to contemporary discussions on the colonial present and past, and will assist activists in resisting efforts to “move beyond” contemporary social problems that are often refigured by the state as merely legacies from a regrettable past—and not problems of the present.

The Residential School system was a powerful process of transforming the body and mind, uprooting children from the homes of their families, and working to consolidate indigenous children for purposes of control, conversion, and assimilation. This process worked on several different levels, with distinct purposes. With its increasingly common treatment as functioning but misguided school systems, the story of residential schools becomes a narrative of trauma and healing: the state took indigenous children from their families and cultures and assimilated them, forcibly if necessary, which created psychological trauma which required further state intervention to heal.

However, where residential schools were not quite as pervasive as they are reported to be, industrial capitalism was far more wide-reaching. Whether former students of residential schools or not, indigenous peoples, like nearly everyone else, had to work to live, and working meant
enrolling in the colonial project. The normative narrative tends to overlook this obvious and yet critical aspect of this history.

This “woundedness” narrative, while important for conveying the devastating effects of the process to a generally uncaring (white) populace, takes for granted that the residential schools functioned as intended. Furthermore, it erases the countless acts of resistance by indigenous peoples in Canada to the assimilationist project. In addition, another (more covert) purpose of the residential school process was to force indigenous communities to leave natural resource-rich land which could then be exploited by capitalist corporations such as the Hudson’s Bay company. And crucially, particularly in regards to this article, this narrative ignores a major purpose of the schooling project: to train indigenous children, particularly women, to become a new service class to white Canadians.

LITERATURE AND ETHNOLOGICAL REVIEW

Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill’s (1986a, 1986b) divided the history of residential schools into six categories. First, they termed the era prior to the colonial invasion the “aboriginal era.” Next followed the early missionary era (1600s-1879), the era of assimilation (1879-1910), the era of retreat (1910-1945), the era of integration (1945-1971), and the era of self-determination (1971-the present). However, while helpful, these categories mischaracterize some of the most important changes in the state’s treatment of indigenous peoples. Of particular note is that during the so-called “era of integration,” the residential school system was expanded into the Northern Territories. This case study focuses on events between the era of retreat and the era of integration.

Residential schools were one of three major types of schools for indigenous students in the twentieth century, and are perhaps the most famous. In addition to residential schools, there
were day schools and integrated schools. While it was the manifest function of all three types of schools to educate indigenous children (and all three types of school were problematic for a variety of reasons), it was the residential schools that most obviously departed from the “white” model of school-based education.

In addition to mimicking classroom-based pedagogical models, residential schools held several latent purposes. First, by removing children from their communities, the intention was to sever children from their families and therefore cultures, resulting in what a form of what contemporary indigenous activists have called cultural genocide. Second, by disempowering indigenous children, generations of indigenous peoples lost access to their natural resources and lands, often with the land seceded to large corporations such as the Hudson’s Bay Company. Third, the schools focused on assimilating indigenous children to white and Christian lifestyles, often quite unsuccessfully: due to resistance to such schooling practices, (Adams, 1988: 99) and the high cost of school maintenance, the conversionist model of education gave way to new “academic expectations…reduced to the point of merely preparing them for survival in an increasingly white Canada” (Adams, 1988: 99).” In addition, government support for these missionary models of education was often reluctantly granted due to the high cost of the programs, as well as their ineffectiveness (Coates in Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill, 1986a: 142).

In this new pragmatic model, vocational training programs administered in the schools were designed to teach the boys to work in farms, fields, and fisheries, and girls to work in public and private service jobs, such as hospital drudgery and maid service. By the time that residential schools were finally shut down in the 1980s, they were regarded as colossal failures and embarrassments to the state, even resulting in a Truth and Reconciliation Committee that
formed and eventually disbanded. Ensuing discussions of the legacy of residential schools has accordingly focused on the traumas, diseases, and abuses suffered by the students.

While the residential school systems were indeed powerful processes of transforming the bodies and minds of indigenous children, uprooting them from their homes and families, working to consolidate indigenous children for the purposes of control, conversion, and assimilation, the manifest purpose of education has gone by largely unremarked and critically unexamined. When the story is condensed into a narrative of trauma and healing, the school systems become simply stories of the accidental consequences of misguided efforts on the part of well-meaning missionaries and teachers, stripping culpability from the state and lacking any real socio-cultural introspection.

This type of “woundedness” narrative works perniciously to construct a dialog that carries a certain narrative arc of diagnosis and healing. By focusing almost exclusively on the psychological trauma underwent by the students, the narrative centers on the experiences of one population—students in the schools—while largely ignoring the ripple effect of the schooling on indigenous cultures, families, and societies. Furthermore, by making the narrative center on the bodies of the students, any dialog on healing has a time limit: as the years go by, the number of former students dwindles, branding “healing” with an expiration date. Furthermore, residential schools were only one form of the assimilationist program—and crucially a majority of indigenous children never attended residential schools even when they were supposedly the dominant paradigm of indigenous education.
THE ROLE OF INDIAN AGENTS

Indian Agents had important roles as liaisons between indigenous communities within their control, their agencies, and Canadian government departments, particularly the Department of Indian Affairs and the Department of Mines and Resources. Although early government reports portrayed the archetypal Indian Agent as a “kindly mentor of Indian people” (Satzewich and Mahood, 1995: 45), in fact Indian Agents held considerable power. Satzewich and Mahood (1995) critique contemporary scholarship for portraying Indian Agents as “unquestionably able to impose their will, and that of the state, on Indian communities” (46). Pointing out that “Indian people have not been passive victims in the colonization process” (46), Satzewich and Mahood suggest that the relationship between Indian Agents and indigenous resistance was much more complicated than often presumed, especially when taking into account the non-homogeneous
power relations of politics at the local scale: “In carrying out their duties Indian Agents not only had to take into account the interests and resistance of Indian people, but also the varied interests of different social classes, corporate entities, municipalities, and church and missionary organizations” (46). The interests of groups and organizations, even when seemingly aligned, were often complex.

Indian Agents occupied a central but contradictory role as liaisons between indigenous communities and institutions of the Canadian government, specifically the Departments of Indian Affairs and Mines and Resources: “In carrying out their duties, then, Indian Agents were at the centre of a complex set of social relations where they had to take into account the policy objectives of their superiors at the regional and national level, the actions of Indian people who were engaged in complex acts of resistance and accommodation to Department policy and practice, and the actions and interests of group in the communities surrounding Indian reserves” (Satzewich and Mahood, 1995: 60).

In addition to their role as liaisons between indigenous communities and Canadian government institutions, Indian Agents occupied central positions as mediums of governance, as go-to authorities involved with “oil companies, farmers, ranchers, timber companies, and others who were seeking access to Indian resources via leases or surrenders; local merchants who provided goods and serves to Indian people and the Agency office; local employers who were in search of temporary or casual labor; and missionaries who ran residential schools and members of local school boards” (Satzewich and Mahood, 1995: 60). According to Satzewich and Mahood (1995), the role of Indian Agents can best be understood “dialectically, as a social position which was charged with fulfilling a contradictory mandate of representing and controlling Indian people” (60).
Indian Agents played a vital role in collecting information about indigenous families, communities, and students. They were not passive instruments of state apparatuses; instead, they “devised policies of assimilation as part of their day-to-day work” (Schreiber, 2008: 89), “using discretion in their routine administrative duties to discipline and subjugate native people” (Schreiber, 2008: 90). As fieldworkers whose duties were to report back to state departments, their reports and choices in data collections carried with them immense power on the local scale. In 1937, Indian Agents were first requested to provide follow-up reports of the vocational and behavioral outcomes of former students of Residential Schools.

The scope of the reporting was limited to certain provinces. In more remote communities that were far from the regular purview of Indian Agents, little information was reported back to central authorities: in one instance, an Indian Agent (Lewis) reported: “Regarding the pupils of the Edmonton Indian Residential School, I never receive any reports from this school on discharges. I get lots of information regarding absences, but the rest of the school work is a deep, dark secret as far as this Agency is concerned” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). As for the more spatially isolated bands in northern regions of the lower provinces, reporting could be quite limited. An Indian Agent (Lovell) reported:

All these children belong to the northern bands. I can only visit these Reserves occasionally and my visits are necessarily of short duration. Even when I do visit the Reserves I see comparatively few of the Indians … and then I have so much work to do that it is impossible for me to get acquainted with the Indians individually. The Indians of the North live mostly in small family groups and we rarely see them at other times. It is therefore impossible for me to report on ex-pupils who live on those Reserves or belong to the remote Bands. When they return to their homes on the Northern reserves they generally resume the usual Indian mode of life. There is nothing else for them to do. The boys make their living by hunting and trapping and the girls assist in cooking, making camp or keeping house, helping to skin animals, etc. I have heard nothing detrimental against any of the pupils mentioned. It is therefore to be assumed they are getting along all right. (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033)
Additionally, there were no Residential Schools in the Northern Provinces until the 1950s, and any information on occupations in these regions was unavailable at the time.

DATA

![Map of Canada with data points](image)

Figure 2: Distribution of Data for Indian Agent Reports by Location, 1943-1944

There are two related opportunities for investigation within this data. First, the reported information on occupational status is worth examining in itself, providing the information for comparison between the forms of labor taught in Residential Schools with post-schooling labor for former students. Labor was an essential aspect of the schooling process. First, residential schools were underfunded by the Canadian government, leading to a need to “extract labour from Indian children in order to cover the costs of operating the residential schools” (Satzewich and Mahood, 1995: 50; See also Wotherspoon, 1991). Second, the forms of labor that were taught in residential schools contributed to the general assimilationist project.
Vocational training, after all, was a primary purpose of Residential Schools and a mode of assimilation. Scholarship dating as far back as the 1980s noted the importance of teaching forms of labor:

Europeans responded to the changing role of the Indian by developing an “Indian policy” that for the first time in Canadian history had a civil rather than military purpose. As this policy took shape between approximately 1830 and 1880, it increasingly acquired an assimilationist and coercive quality. Since Indians were an obstacle, they would be removed, not by extermination but by assimilation. They would be settled in compact communities, or reserves, where they could be proselytized by missionaries and taught Euro-Canadian ways by government and church alike. Above all else, they would be taught European occupations, especially farming, so that they could support themselves in ways that would not interfere with the economic activities of the now-dominant white population. (Miller, 1987: 3).

Early on, the goal of vocational training was, as an Indian Affairs bureaucrat noted, was “the extinction of the Indians as Indians” (Miller, 1987: 3). However, scholarship has only recently begun to understand vocational training and post-schooling labor as complex processes that were context-dependent. Unlike the sweeping portrayal of vocational training by Miller (1987), labor took on many forms, including work in fishing and timber (see Schrieber, 2008). Little focus has been devoted to the construction of domestic service roles for indigenous women, although this issue has been studied in depth in other colonial contexts (Stoler, 2002).

From this data on the occupational status of former students, it is possible to learn more about the relationship between schooling practices and the gendered division of labor for indigenous peoples post-schooling. The second opportunity for investigation is related to the connection between labor and “good behavior,” which is elaborated upon toward the end of this chapter. Both paths of investigation, while certainly related, provide unique ways of examining the effects of assimilationist vocational training during Residential School on indigenous communities.
The division of labor of former students of Residential Schools in the mid-twentieth century can be discovered based upon Indian Agent reports to the Department of Indian Affairs between 1939 and 1944\(^1\). Much of the information for this chapter comes from archival research. This research was collected from microfilm containing Indian Agent reports and related bureaucratic documents from the Library and Archives Canada. From this archival data, types of labor were coded and collapsed into categories.

**GENDER AND WORK: MEN**

Types of labor typically performed by men, such as hunting, trapping, day labor, and fishing, often were seasonal. The same man could work in several different industries throughout the year, working day labor during harvest season and then fishing during another season. According to one report from Indian Agent H.P. Ruddy in 1943, “During the past summer Edward worked with white farmers in this community and from fall until Christmas he has been in the lumber camp. He is at home now but I understand that he is going back to the camp after New Years” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033).

At the time of these reports, in many regions of Canada, the lumber industry was a major source of employment for men. Indigenous men were no exception. Participating in the industry could mean several distinct occupations—operating heavy machinery, harvesting timber for building, or harvesting pulpwood for the paper industry. Women sometimes worked peripherally for the industry—as cooks in timber camps, for instance.

\(^1\) Data from between 1939 and 1942 were largely handwritten. While data from 1943 and 1944 were occasionally handwritten, most of the information was standardized to a typewritten letter format, which made the process of manually coding the data much more possible. For this reason, the analysis focuses on the last two years (both handwritten and typewritten), reflecting information that would not have drastically changed between 1939 and 1944.
In 1944, Indian Agent Norman Paterson reported that Dave Paul was working in Kenora, Ontario, “Now working with George Folster, Pulp camp. Character—good” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). As with this brief report, men who worked in the lumber industry were considered to have good character. Participation in (white) capitalist labor was seen as a sign of good behavior, and possibly a positive outcome of the residential school system process. It seems that further explanation for why the character of Dave Paul—or a number of others like him—was seen as “good” was unnecessary. The pairing of character and labor was implicit in such assessments.

Unlike participation in the lumber industry, many indigenous peoples in more remote regions of Canada (particularly toward the North) were reported as either hunting, trapping, and guiding, or living the “Indian mode of life.” As discussed earlier, Indian Agent S. Lovell, reporting on a group of male and female former students from The Pas or Le Pas, in northern Manitoba, described the “Indian mode of life” as consisting of the following gender division: the boys hunted and trapped, while the girls cooked, made camp, and kept house.

Indian Agent Donald H. Cameron reported in 1944 that Cyprian Bighead of Onion Lake, Saskatchewan, “is at home with his father, Chief of Bighead's Band, and is living the Indian mode of life, hunting, trapping etc., He too was out harvesting last fall” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). In Ontario, Indian Agent F. Matters reported that Lawrence Matchequis was “Living at Mattice with parents trapping.” In Kenora, Ontario, agent Norman Paterson wrote that Harace Masters (Wagamese) was “Home with parents - Guiding and trapping” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). Often, these forms of labor were seasonal—a man who trapped during one season might harvest during another.

In other regions of Canada, fishing was the major source of industry, both within the “Indian mode of life” and capitalist labor. Men living in Bella Coola, British Columbia, fished
for themselves or their families, or for the industry. Indian Agent F. Earl Anfield reported in 1944 on Clarence S. Martin:

This young man received his military training call, and proceeded to Vancouver, but on request of his mother and the fishing company, application for a deferment was made at his behalf, and he was given exemption to July, 1944. He is at present engaged in herring fishing, and is going quite well. He is an industrious lad and well behaved. (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033)

Regarding George S. Nelson, another former student living in Bella Coola, Anfield reported that:

This young man fished all the summer, and did fairly well. For the past three months he has worked with his father, one of the Councillors of Bella Coola, on a construction job for the R.C.A.F., on which he has made $1000.00 in wages, with taxes deductible therefrom. He had one escapade in connection with drinking, but I had a good chat with him, and he signed a temperance pledge and has since been no worry to himself or his people. He is well spoken of by all the people of Bella Coola. (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033)

In Wiarton, Ontario, Indian Agent S.W. Suffrell reported in 1944 that “Charle Akiwenzie is at home living with his father he was fishing during the Fall months and at the present time is helping his father cut wood. His behaviour has been good” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033).

Many other reports followed similar patterns—of male former students fishing or working with their fathers with good character or behavior. Colonial capitalist economies, after all, focused primarily on shifting labor into the market. In many ways, this was a project of residential schools as well. The intrusion of industrial fishing industries into indigenous communities in the mid-twentieth century was widespread.

“Traditional” fishing for subsistence was in the process of being brought into industrial fishing, and the skillset for one was not far from the skillset for the other. Furthermore, often in these forms of work, the former students were men working at home with their fathers, which might have triggered the more romantic sympathies of the agents within a patriarchal society: the repeated linking of the phrases “fishing with fathers” and “good” behavior/character is no
coincidence. Perhaps for these reasons, regardless of the mode of production (capitalist vs. non-capitalist), fishing and other seasonal (male) forms of work were not imbued with perceptions of “bad” behavior or characters.

Critically, the ways in which indigenous men were enrolled in capitalist work were not wholly distinctive from the skillsets they already had acquired. While fishing for industry was not the same as small-scale family fishing, there were certain skills that transferred.

Ranching was a major occupation in many interior regions of Canada, particular in the province of Alberta. Often, indigenous men worked on ranches owned by white men, performing a variety of jobs: in one example from Gleichen, Alberta, Indian Agent G.H. Gooderham reported that

[Clarence McHugh] was a problem case until recently. His father is overseas and the mother is dead; the step-mother could not control him. He was employed at the Hospital farm and dairy, but ran off after a few weeks. Then arrangements were made to send him back to Crowfoot School, where he was to learn a trade, but again he ran away. Finally an old-time rancher who needed a boy to do chores agreed to take him: He has been with him now for two months, and it is reported that Clarence is happy and doing fairly well. He is fortunate in getting into a white home where he is treated as one of the family. McHugh is a fair haired Indian! (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033)

The reference to the “fair hair” of McHugh is dropped incongruously at the end of the Indian Agent’s report. The exclamation point underscores the importance of this seemingly trivial detail. It is clear from the report that between the lines the near “whiteness” of Clarence McHugh is of much interest and might have played a role in his transition from “problem case” to “doing fairly well.”

Most former students of residential schools in these reports worked multiple jobs, often in the course of a year, taking on seasonal work as necessary. In the earlier example of George Nelson, he fished during the summer and took on construction jobs once summer ended. Many
men worked in short-term jobs, whether construction projects or harvesting, and then returning to another form of work when the summer returned.

“GOOD” MEN

Narratives about what it meant for indigenous men to be considered a “good Indian” can tell us much about the intersections of the capitalist ethic, pernicious colonial assumptions about the indigenous peoples and the unique situation in which indigenous men found themselves in the specific context of mid-20th century Canadian governance. By foregrounding the data itself and the text of the reports, the precise tone of the report writers is not lost in favor of a more subjective interpretive approach, although I do discuss each quotation in the context of the themes that emerged as I read through the documents. I begin with the success stories, with examples chosen from the archival documents that reflect recurring outcomes and narratives, and are therefore emblematic.

The first, and quite common, type of positive behavioral assessment occurred when the surveilled worker was working well according to the expectations of the Indian Agent, J.T. Faunt of Alberta, 1943:

[Jack Buffalo] is a well behaved boy & during the summer he worked the Chief's farm & after he got through with that he went off the reserve & worked for white men & and has only recently returned to the reserve. In another year I would like to start him on a farm of his own. (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033)

What was Jack Buffalo doing well? First, he was following a course of action that led him from farm work at the Chief’s farm to work off the reserve for white men, presumably learning in the process, for which the Agent wished to reward him by providing him with his own farm.

Similarly, Matthew Wesley was found to be well behaved and given a job:

I may say that this boy was discharged from school last summer by the Department. Being an orphan he apparently had no definite home to which to go,
except that of Mrs. Esther Holland who wrote me regarding him. ... I suggested that he stay at the school for another year and help me with the farm and other work, for which I would pay him a fair wage. He agreed to this and has been with me all winter, doing chores and odd jobs -- Rev. J.F. Woodsworth, (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033).

There were other ways that male former students could be regarded as doing well both professionally and behaviorally, particularly when they were working for their fathers on the reserve. For instance, the report on Russell Kelly stated: “Soowahlie Band. This is a good boy. He is home helping his father on his farm.” (A.O.N. Daunt, New Westminster, B.C., 1944, RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). About Charles Akiwenzie: “Charles Akiwenzie is at home living with his father he was fishing during the Fall months and at the present time is helping his father cut wood. His behaviour has been good.” (S.W. Suffrell, Wiarton, Ontario, 1944, RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). On Frank Eastmen: “The above mentioned pupil was discharged from Brandon Residential School last June and has been living with his father. He assisted his father on his farm last fall, also went out harvesting and has been trapping this winter. He seems to be a quiet and well mannered boy.” (W. Young, Griswold, Manitoba, 1944, RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). James Handorgan was “With father at Big Island. Guding [sic] and fishing and of good character” (Norman Paterson, Kenora, Ontario, 1944, RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). Lastly, Alex Scalp Lock: “Lives with his parents; his father is delicate and Alec does most of the farm work, he has also worked in the coal mine. Alex is a pretty good boy.” (G.H. Gooderham, Gleichen, Alberta, 1944, RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). The behaviors of all of these men perhaps linked less to the goals of the vocational training programs and more to post-Victorian era ideals of filiality and therefore virtuous behavior.

“PROBLEM” MEN
However, not all of the male former students were well regarded by the report writers. For some, corrections were necessary. When the (unfortunately, unknown) reports on five students were seen as “not so encouraging,” the Department took on a plan of action:

However, as regards the under-mentioned 5 children, the reports [Indian Agent Lewis] submitted are not so encouraging…It has occurred to me that it might be a good idea to have one of the Missionaries visit these boys at an early date and encourage each of them to obtain employment and make an effort to make use of the training that they received at the residential school. Possibly you might be able to see some of them yourself. I feel you will agree with me that we should do everything possible to encourage the ex-pupils to get started in life as soon as they are discharged from school. This is to their own advantage and certainly to the credit of the residential school system. (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033)

This document illustrates the ways in which Christian institutional actors, the missionaries, could take on responsibilities of the state by following up on those who were not “making good” and “encouraging” them to work and use their training. If the students did not act as expected, they would not be performing “to the credit of the residential school system.”

Other men were not meeting the behavioral standards of the Agents. On Reginald Sickles, the Agent stated:

He is the son of Mrs. Christine Antone by a previous marriage. He is of a sulky disposition and whenever corrected on his behaviour shows signs of rebelliousness. He lacks a father's discipline. I had several talks with him and gave him work on the farms the summer months but he eventually ran away. We located him with a travelling rodeo that visited this district with the Fall Fairs. He became tired of this and came home. I again pleaded with him to be a good boy and help his mother. I also gave him a job helping Mr. Ryckman, the Farm Instructor. At present he is working on a farm near Listowel, Ontario. He has been there two months and his mother reports that he is doing much better.” (Geo. W. Down, Muncey, Ontario, 1944, RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033)

Sickles, who was apparently difficult for the Agent to control, was seen as lacking “a father's discipline,” which carries echoes of the colonial/ paternalistic role of the judgments of the Agent.

Another man, Ralph J. Young, was a similar problem:
Man is a dummy and quite a problem. He is a good worker but hard to direct. His parents are separated and he rarely stays with them; he wanders over the Reserve and into the small towns and becomes a nuisance; a brother-in-law is trying to keep him now. He may become a case for an institution” (G.H. Gooderham, Gleichen, Alberta, 1944, RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033)

What is meant by “dummy” is ambiguous—his mobility was greater than the Agent desired, with Young traveling through (white) small towns and becoming a “nuisance.” The Agent’s declaration that “he may become a case for an institution” could reflect one of two possibilities: it is possible that “dummy” was shorthand for the man having some kind of mental disability, or, the judgment was purely character-based. After all, institutionalizing could happen for a variety of reasons.

Gordon Solomon, for instance, “had been placed in St. John's Industrial School, Toronto, for theft of a bicycle.” (C.R. Johnston, Manitowa, Ontario, 1944, RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). Similarly, Benedict Shigwadjia: “was also committed to St. John's Industrial School in Toronto.” (C.R. Johnston, Manitowa, Ontario, 1944, RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033)

WOMEN
While men moved between seasonal jobs, women also could transition between jobs, though this was more discouraged. From a report by A. O’N. Daunt in 1944:
This girl [Alice Saunders, Katzie Band] is an orphan with no reputable near relatives. Upon discharge from school, we placed her as a maid at the Coqualeetza Indian hospital, where she has been ever since. She has not been particularly satisfactory. Recently she tried to join the Canadian Women’s Army Corps, but was turned down. She wishes to leave the hospital, and go to an aunt on Vancouver Island, but I do not think she would come to any good there. However, if she quits the hospital there is nothing we can do with her. In short, she is going to be a problem. (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033)

A. O’N. Daunt, the Indian Agent who reported Alice Saunders as a problem, included in the same report a brief description of another student who was behaving well: “Russell Kelly, Soowahlie Band. This is a good boy. He is at home helping his father on his farm” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). While varying degrees of mobility in work was regarded as good behavior for male former students, female mobility was discouraged and seen as a sign of bad behavior.

Hospital work was performed by several female former students, often in low-level “drudgery” positions. Students worked as maids and ward-aids. According to Indian Agent J.D. Caldwell, Meritt, B.C., former student Hazel Price was “Living with relatives at Port Simpson. Works as ward-aid at Port Simpson hospital. Giving good satisfaction” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). Similarly, Indian Agent F.J. Clarke wrote that Myrtle Spence was “Working as maid in Winnipeg General Hospital. Character, good” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). However, hospital work was not always judged favorable: in Norway House, Manitoba, P.C. Lazenby wrote that Marie Ress and Victoria Ross “Worked for some time as maids at the Norway House Hospital and have recently returned to their homes on the reserve at Cross Lake” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033) In Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Doris Solomon “was discharged on June, 1943 and then spent 8 months working in Water Street Hospital, Ottawa. She is now back at the Spanish Residential School until she finds other suitable work” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). Several others left
hospital work, or wished to leave. Other women were not working in hospitals but encouraged to do so: Indian Agent Alfred Barber reported that

A nice girl. Conduct, so far, good. Kept in close touch. Owing to conditions at home, resides with relatives. I am trying to get her to agree to taking a position as a maid at Coqualeetza Hospital and hope she will do this. Worked in the orchards during harvest. (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033)

In reports like these, the Indian Agents’ duty of reporting on and evaluating the working status of indigenous female hospital workers (and encouragement of women to work as maids in hospital or homes) is a manifestation of the gendered and racialized nature of the Indian Agents (white Canadian men) charged with supervising the work and actions of indigenous women. Hospital work for these female former students entailed a form of (public) domestic service, with the types of work conducted following similar lines.

A major occupation of female former students was domestic service in the homes of (white) families. Service work, whether public (in hospitals) or private (in white homes) was the outcome of female students’ training while in residential schools. Indian Agent Fre. Brisebois, a Catholic priest in Caughnawaga, Quebec, reported in 1944 that after being discharged from residential school, Belva Cree “immediately went to live with her mother Mrs. Willie Cree at Hogansburg N.Y., where is is [sic] presently staying. [Handwritten] Making in Ottawa as a domestic” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). Similarly, Agent G.H. Gooderham (Gleichen, Alberta) reported the same year that Margaret Cat Face “is at home; her mother has heart trouble and Margeret [sic] does most of the house work. She was employed as a domestic in a farm home North of the Reserve for a short time in 1943” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). Margaret Cat Face (Blackfoot) was a former student at Crowfoot Indian Residential School in Cluny, Alberta.

While the report does not specify why Margaret Cat Face left domestic service, there are several possible reasons: homesickness, or perhaps the type of work that she was supposed to perform.
Industries at the time included canning, laundry, and factory work. On Freda Morrison, Indian Agent J.D. Caldwell reported that she was “Living with her grandparents at Port Simpson and is employed at Crosby Girl's School laundry. Satisfactory work and is very well behaved” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). Morrison was a former student at the Crosby Girl’s Home and remained there after being discharged.

Agent F.J. Clarke reported in 1944 that Oliver Spence was “Working in a cold storage Plant in Wpg. Character -- good” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). Industrial work seemed generally linked with good behavior, but also was a punishment for bad behavior, perhaps in the spirit of reform. Industrial schools, after all, was the name used for residential schools for much of their history—the Davin report that prompted the building of residential schools was titled “Report on industrial schools for Indians and half-breeds” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). Industrial work was considered the core of schooling—later called vocational training—and was meant to prepare students for lives in industry, or, perhaps lives as “industrious” second-class citizens of a colonial capitalist state.

Many former students, after being discharged from residential schools, returned home to their families and communities. This did not imply a lack of work, of course: female former students often “kept house,” worked on farms, or married. Male former students often worked with their fathers or on nearby farms. Indian Agent J.D. Caldwell (Merritt, British Columbia) reported in 1944 that Walter Angus “has returned to assist his parents on their farm on the Lower Nicola I.R. No. 10, Canford” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). Agent P.C. Lazenby reported that Lazarus Mason “has been trapping with his father and doing well” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). Agent W.P.B. Pugh (Saddle Lake, Alberta) wrote “Rita Half daughter of John Half No.187, Seenum's Band. Discharged from Edmonton School, Personally know this girl and she is a hard
working girl, mostly outdoors looking after the livestock and works in the field. Parents very strict with her” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). Agent J.T. Faunt (Brocket, Alberta) reported that Julia Pard “is living at home with her parents. She is well behaved & doubt will be getting married, in which event I would suggest that she be given some help” (RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). Good behavior, then, such as marriage, had a possibility of some form of financial reward from the Indian Agents.

“GOOD” WOMEN

Colonial assumptions of whether or not indigenous women were “making good” prioritized different characteristics at the time of assessment. Women were not necessarily seen as income-generating workers, after all, post-Victorian virtues of home-making took the place of the breadwinning model seen in the archival documents for the men. Often, the women who worked were encouraged to take on domestic responsibilities, though for pay:

On Alice Saunders, the report stated:

This girl is an orphan & is living at her brother's home. She is an exceptionally fine girl; clever & clean, handy with a needle & a fair cook. I have tried to get her placed in a white home, but so far without success. She herself would like to get work off the reserve & I may yet be able to place her. (J.T. Faunt, 1943, RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033)
The goal was to “get her in a white home,” so far unsuccessful.

Similarly, Caroline Parker was

A nice girl. Conduct, so far, good. Kept in close touch. Owing to conditions at home, resides with relatives. I am trying to get her to agree to taking a position as a maid at Coqualeetza Hospital and hope she will do this. Worked in the orchards during harvest. (Alfred Barber, Okanagan, B.C., 1944, RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033)

Seeing Parker as a “nice girl,” the Agent strove to move her from work in the orchards during the harvest to working as a maid at a hospital.
Sometimes, good behavior on the part of the surveilled woman could lead to shifts in the outcomes for her husband, once again reflecting the ideals of female domesticity and male breadwinning. On Mary Crow Eagle,

This girl is now married to Charlie Provost. The father of her husband is farming on quite a large scale & has ready for crop this year 237 acres of land. He proposes turning over part of this acreage to the boy to give him a start & in the event of his making good, there is some more good land in the neighborhood which I propose to turn over to him after I get it cleaned up. The girl has some savings & I am putting through an application for the withdrawal of part of these to carry them through. The girl is an orphan. (J.T. Faunt, 1943, RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033)

Of particular note from this report is how the Agent was “putting through an application for the withdrawal” of Mary Crow Eagle’s savings—in other words, the woman had no control over her own savings account, which was in the hands of the Department at the Agent’s discretion.

“PROBLEM” WOMEN

For women, reports that indicated that they were not “making good” often spoke of the dangers of too much mobility, or the desire to leave the encouraged forms of work. However, sometimes even good behavior could raise red flags in the eyes of the Department. On Marian Lightning:

I beg to inform you that this girl has been out of the Edmonton Indian Residential School for quite a long time. She is 19 years of age and should have been discharged before this. I beg to report that Marian is a very well behaved girl, and since leaving school has lived with the widow of the late Chief Joe Samson. She is quite industrious and besides looking after the old lady made a fairly good weekly salary doing day work for the white people living in the village, she also worked at our Nursing Station two or three days a week. She was married on the 14th of this months to Joe Wolfe, ticket N. 249 Ermineskin Band. Her husband is a young progressive farmer, and unless they revert to type, as so many of them do, they have a bright future ahead of them. (Alfred G.B. Lewis, Hobbema, Alberta, 1944, RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033)
Although she was married to a “young progressive farmer,” which was presumably seen as a good outcome, the Agent worried that they both would “revert to type.” What is reverting type? I would suggest it is shorthand for the stereotypical assumptions that the Department’s staff held, which reflected colonial and racist assumptions about indigenous peoples.

Other women were seen as poorly behaved, a perception seemingly linked to their mobilities. Rita Jourdain was “Living with grandfather. This girl's behaviour is not satisfactory, she spends a good deal of her time in International Falls, Minn.” (J.F. Lockhart, Fort Frances, Ontario, 1944, RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033). Similarly, on Alice Saunders, the report stated:

Katzie Band, discharged from Sechelt Indian Residential School. This girl is an orphan with no reputable near relatives. Upon discharge from school, we placed her as a maid at the Coqualeetsa Indian hospital, where has been ever since. She has not been particularly satisfactory. Recently she tried to join the Canadian Women's Army Corps, but was turned down. She wishes to leave the hospital, and go to an aunt on Vancouver Island, but I do not think she would come to any good there. However, if she quits the hospital there is nothing we can do with her. In short, she is going to be a problem. (A.O.N. Daunt, New Westminster, B.C., 1944, RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033)

Just as judgments about intelligence (or lack thereof) were applied to certain of the men, this assessment was made about Alice Severight, who was “Working out on farms most of the time. Not very smart.” (A.G. Smith, Birtle, Manitoba, 1944, RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033).

Beyond these themes, there was evidence of resistance on the part of members of the community to even the idea of resistance schools, let alone vocational training within them. Eliza Shinawap, for instance, “On father's request left school for home at Trout Lake.” (G. Owen O'Neill, Sioux Lookout, Ontario, 1944, RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033)

The report on Victoria Manitowabi stated:

Victoria Manitowabi, who is included in the Departmental list is only 14 years of age, but refuses to attend school at Wikwemikong, although the principal has
noted that she was ready for Grade 5, and should continue school.” (C.R. Johnston, 1944, Manitowa, Ontario, RG10 150-60-B, Vol. 6033)

DISCUSSION

The ideal of “making good” is referenced not only in this chapter, but appears in the previous chapter, which discussed the disastrous consequences of the Canadian state’s project of transforming the indigenous people’s division of labor as part of the process of assimilation, centralization on reserves, and resource grabs. “Making good” involved the combination of behavioral approval from agents of the state – such as temperance – and the demonstration on the part of the indigenous person being surveilled that he or she was working in a manner that was deemed suitable. For men, this often meant involvement with work in natural resources or working for white landowners. For women, this seems to have been an effort to unilaterally train them to work either as private domestic servants for white families or in a public sector in what was effectively another form of domestic service, such as hospital work for long or work in industrial laundries.

The perceived character, behavior, and occupation of indigenous peoples were linked together by agents of the Canadian government. Using the assessments of character and behavior of former students of residential students, we can see how it was that, at the local scale, the administration of indigenous peoples took on colonial logics of supervision, charged with gendered and racialized ideas of morality. At the most basic, behavior that was deemed “good” was rewarded and “bad” punished—or, at the least, heavily supervised with the aim of correction.

Examples of good behavior illustrate the importance of intersections between race, gender, morality and work in this context. Jack Buffalo had been working for white men and the Agent recommended eventually giving him his own farm. Alice Saunders was regarded by the
Agent as good at domestic service and therefore to be placed in a white home as a domestic servant. Similarly, Caroline Parker was recommended for hospital work as a consequence of her good behavior, rather than working in the harvest. The Rev. Woodsworth recommended keeping Mathew Wesley at the school he had been attending in order to give him odd jobs for a “fair wage.” Since Mary Crow Eagle was seen to be marrying well, the agent recommended giving her husband farm land; not only that, but the agent recommended allowing Mary Crow Eagle access to her own savings—a sign that most in her situation were not allowed control of their bank accounts. Marian Lightning and her husband were doing well for themselves, but the Agent was concerned that they would “revert to type, as so many of them do.” Finally, several male former students were regarded as having good behavior and character as they were working with their fathers.

In contrast, “Bad” behavior took on a variety of types, depending on the context. In the first case, five former students were not seen as doing well enough, so missionaries were encouraged to go into their community and “encourage them” to use their training at residential school to obtain employment. In the section of the table titled “Mobilities,” it becomes evident that former students were discouraged from travel. If they moved around, they were seen as problematic individuals who behaved badly. Alice Saunders was discouraged from leaving hospital work to live with her aunt; Rita Jourdain had unsatisfactory conduct for living across the border in Minnesota; Reginald Sickles ran away from home and ended up at the rodeo; and Ralph Young was a “dummy” who wandered around town, and was a “nuisance” who was going to become institutionalized if he continued to be a problem. Two male former students were sent to penal Industrial Schools, one for stealing a bicycle and the other for unmentioned reasons. Two girls were regarded as having unsatisfactory conduct for either refusing to attend residential
school or leaving school. Others were “not very smart,” or “Very lazy and shiftless,” or concerns that an Agent had that a farming couple would “revert to type.”

The environment also played a role, but more so for the men and for the women. For the men in the survey, their region played a role in determining the form of labor they worked post-residential schooling. Fishing was a prominent occupation in British Columbia, hunting and trapping in Northern regions, farming and ranching in Alberta, and forestry in Ontario. Day labor was more widespread. Types of work performed by the men were generally tied to the natural resources located in each region.

For the women, however, the forms of work were far more uniform. Unlike the generally geographically disparate types of work performed by male former students, the work of indigenous women was not unique to geographic regions. In other words, the transformation of the division of labor for female former students appears to have been much more profound than for male former students—perhaps a sign that indigenous men were becoming incorporated in the rapidly expanding colonial capitalist mode of production in a vastly different way than indigenous women. The purpose of male enrollment was for labor for capitalist industries based on the exploitation of natural resources. Female enrollment, however, was based on either public domestic service (hospital work, for instance, or laundry) or private domestic service (maids and servants). This points toward the emergence of a greater purpose for the residential schools. For the women, it appears that the schools used vocational training as a method of constructing a new service class comprised of indigenous women.

The Residential School system was indeed a powerful process of transforming the body and mind, uprooting children from the homes of their families, and working to consolidate
indigenous children for purposes of control, conversion, and assimilation. This process worked on several different levels, with distinct purposes.

In summary, the kind of work that people performed influenced the assessment by the Department on whether the person was “making good.” The behavior of the surveilled person was also important. There is evidence in the archival documents that indigenous persons who were seen as “good” could be rewarded by the Department with farms or jobs, while those who were behaving unacceptably were not similarly rewarded. All of this took place in the context of communities being centralized onto reserves and forced into jobs that produced goods and services for white people within industrial capitalism at a larger scale. Those who resisted, such as through travel or personality conflicts, were labeled as “bad.”

The major themes from these archival documents were the ways in which work for men was related to the regional environment, such as fishing or the timber industry, while the work for women was less regionally distinct, with widespread training in public and private domestic service. Men were to take on “breadwinner” roles, while women’s work reflected their perceived roles as within the domestic sphere, though translated to work for income.

Even when there was indeed income gained by the women, there is little indication that they had control over their savings—in fact, in one of the documents, the Agent controlled the woman’s savings. This control over the savings accounts is reflective of a larger theme, which speaks across colonial contexts: that the attempt to assimilate indigenous men and women was often through processes of capitalist incorporation, with distinctively different manners for men and women, and women’s lives more unilaterally transformed.

In other words, it seems from the archival documents that women and men were trained to provide different roles, both in a process of the state attempting to construct an indigenous
“under class.” Women’s roles were particularly telling, with their jobs as public and private domestic servants. Men, on the other hand, were coerced—through the structural shifts in the division of labor discussed in the previous chapter, as well as through vocational training programs in residential schools—to work in low-pay, exploitative manners for white-run industries.

I suggest that the particular focus on women—which seemingly contradicts the ideals of enfranchisement—is indicative of the Canadian state’s use of British colonial models from other contexts. Clearly, there was passive and active resistance on the part of the people who were targeted by these forms of state management. Students refused to attend school; parents refused to send their children to school; and beyond this there was passive resistance such as people traveling against the recommendations of the Department. Furthermore, it is possible that existing colonial models simply did not fit the local context.

Vocational training during residential school—with the goal of constructing indigenous male laborers and indigenous female domestic servants—illustrates ways in which gender, work, and morality intersecting in ways in which Canadian state and sovereignty attempted to manage indigenous subjects. Education—as an ideologically “good” way of transforming subjects—was the logical choice for framing the vocational training of indigenous peoples as helpful and necessary, which echoes back to Brown’s (1995) assertion that the role of the capitalist state as a site of domination often goes overlooked.
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CHAPTER FIVE
THE BUILDING OF THE MATTAGAMI DAY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

In the context of the Canadian state’s history of indigenous dispossession, a handful of narratives became popularized, mostly centered on the history of residential schools, a failed project of state assimilation. However, the dynamics and techniques of dispossession in an everyday sense did not always follow the patterns that we might expect from such narratives. By examining the case of the forced relocation of one indigenous community and its ensuing decade-long campaign for compensation, with special attention paid to the individual patterns of community and state actors—their places, logics, and rhetoric—and even when community members usurped state logics to force the state to honor its promises to build a school, there was still room for resistance for the contradictory logics of dispossession to work.

The indigenous community (largely Oji-Cree) in Gogama, Ontario, had been coercively relocated to the Mattagami Reserve in the early 1930s, as part of a land surrender process that was commonplace at the time. The relocation resulted in a move from a mineral-rich area next to a town to an isolated area lacking in infrastructure, with one major consequence the loss of schooling for children in the community. Before the forced relocation, the children had received integrated education at the public school in Gogama alongside white children. Afterward, there was no schooling available at all. The government promised the Mattagami community a school in exchange for their dispossession. This chapter examines the process by which local actors (both indigenous and white) campaigned for the building of the promised school, which was eventually finished in 1939.
Between 1934 and 1939, community and state actors campaigned for the building of the school for distinctive reasons. For the local missionary, the school was to be a site of conversion. For the local government agent, it was a way to keep families in one place so that control would be easier to maintain. For the local community, the school was promised in exchange for the coerced relocation. Throughout the process, the community at Mattagami struggled against the state, for instance when they went on an informal strike rather than work without pay in the construction of the building.

In the context of contemporary discussions within indigenous studies on logics of dispossession and movements for compensation, this chapter investigates the reasons why a day school was desirable for a variety of actors, including the Mattagami community, the Canadian state, the Hudson’s Bay Company, missionaries, and Indian agents. The process by which the school came to be built is illustrative of the complex nature of relationships between indigenous actors and the Canadian state, and also of the ways in which the Mattagami community--the only labor force in the remote reserve far from adequate means of transportation--used labor as a means to resist exploitation in small-scale, everyday ways.

The history of indigenous schooling in Canada was much messier and much more complex than it has been made out to be, with the structures of colonialism gradually deepening over time in correspondence with the development of the Canadian state in which the interests of the government, religious institutions, and corporations co-determined each other. By the examining the formation of a single day school in a region of contested sovereignty–Northern Ontario—it is possible to learn more about how an educational structure was set in place through the communications of Indian Agents, indigenous actors, missionaries, and the Canadian government in the early- to mid-20th century.
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Mattagami First Nation—part of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation—is located on the Mattagami 71 Reserve, with a largely Oji-Cree population of approximately 200 residents on-reserve and 224 residents off-reserve (Neegan Burnside Report, 2002: 45). The reserve is located in Northern Ontario near the small town of Gogama. Today, Gogama’s major source of industry is gold mining, although for much of its history its primary industry was in mills for mining timber. In the early twentieth century, the Oji-Cree population of Gogama was relocated to the Mattagami Reserve as part of a treaty, with the population offered a day school in exchange for removing themselves to a more isolated and less mineral rich region. The spelling of the word “Mattagami” had not yet been standardized: most government documents during the time of this case study instead use the spelling “Metagami.”

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 allowed that Upper Canada—including Northern Ontario—was part of Indian Territory and the lands were reserved “for the Use of the … Indians as their Hunting Grounds” (Surtees, 1986: 2). In other words, indigenous groups in Upper Canada had legal claim to title and use of land granted by the government. As the mining and timber industries grew—the Hudson’s Bay Company was the major player (Surtees, 1986: 2)—a coercive treaty system was developed by the Canadian government in order to regain the rights to use the land (mostly for mining and timber). Annuity payments—yearly payments (first in trade goods and later in cash) for the land—were given to the communities within the boundaries of Upper Canada beginning in 1818 (Surtees, 1986: 2). In the words of the treaty commissioners, in Ontario, formerly Upper Canada, the rule laid down by the British government from the earliest occupancy of the country has been followed, which recognizes the title of Indians to the lands occupied by them as their hunting grounds, and
their right to compensation for such portions as from time to time been
surrendered by them. (Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, 298)

A passage in the initial quotation in this section referring to the indigenous population as
“stragglers” (Annual report of the Department of Indians Affairs, 1908) from other bands is quite
important to the processes of removal to reserve that followed. Land claims by many small bands
in Upper Canada were rejected “on the grounds that those bands had occupied their lands only
since the conquest in 1763 and were not, therefore, the original inhabitants” (Surtees, 1986: 6).
Furthermore, the bands were spatially isolated from each other, leading the Commissioner of
Crown Lands to claim in 1847 that “the scattered bands did not constitute a nation sufficiently
organized to claim territory” (Surtees, 1986: 6). In time, isolated bands that had not actually
signed early treaties such as the Robinson treaties were treated as if they had signed the treaties.
Rather than negotiating the surrender of the lands without compensation, as the Commissioner of
Crown Lands recommended in 1847, the lands were surrendered in exchange for some
compensation, though without taking into account the wealth that would be drawn from natural
resources.

Reserve lands were allocated to indigenous communities within the boundaries of Upper
Canada that were in writing intended to allow communities to remain in their villages and use
their traditional fisheries, but in practice led to the forced relocation of the communities to land
without valuable resources (Surtees, 1986: 3). Like most of the communities that lived in the
lands that fell under the Robinson Treaty in 1850, land use claims by the mining and timber
companies were given priority over land use by indigenous groups.
From archival documents, it is telling that major issues in schooling for the community that made up the Mattagami population did not emerge until their forced relocation to the spatially isolated reserve. From the relocation until today, a day school, in one form or another, has been located on the reserve. As of 2002, a Housing & Infrastructure Database and Regional Capital Plan developed by an engineering contractor notes that community buildings on the reserve include a Youth Centre, a Health Clinic, and a Day School (Neegan Burnside Report, 2002: 44). Today, the Mattagami First Nation provides primary schooling on the reserve at Mary Jane Memorial School and secondary school students are bused to Timmins, Ontario, approximately an hour’s drive away (Mattagami First Nation, 2013).

THE BUILDING OF THE SCHOOL

In 1934, Indian Agent T. J. Godfrey, of the Chapleau Agency, and Rev. Canon Prewer, Special Missionary to the Western Moosonee Mission (Anglican), sent letters to the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa, Ontario, urging the department to consider building a day school for the children in the Mattagami Reserve. Their reasons for requesting the school to be built differed. According to Godfrey,

These bands have become fairly well established and the move towards a school would encourage them to remain on the reserves instead of scattering all over the North country as they have been in the habit of doing for a number of years and getting broken up in several small little groups with a self-appointed leader, and which is very bad practice both morally and otherwise for the different bands, and were a small school erected for them and a suitable teacher to teach the children it would be an incentive for them to remain unreserved and allow the men to go out and trap and hunt, which is the only matter of making a living with these Indians in this Agency seem to know. (NAC, RG 10, c-7921)

Godfrey emphasized the importance of the day school in keeping the children--and therefore their families--on the reserves. His reasons for suggesting the building of the day school were not
to educate the children but to prevent the population on the reserve from “scattering,” becoming decentralized with self-elected leadership, which would be much harder to control. In contrast to Godfrey’s more instrumental reasons, Reverend Canon Prewer’s reasoning was more in line with that of a spokesperson for the wishes of the population of the reserve:

The Indians on the Matagamah Reserve, situated 17 miles north of the village of Gogama, on the C. N. Railway, ask for a building to be erected to serve as a school-house, with a room attached for the accommodation of a teacher, as expeditiously as possible. They point out the fact that they have quite willingly conformed to the Department’s regulation and have moved back on to the reserve, not without a good deal of labour and sacrifice, and that in the very near future there will be something like 20 families settled there, where most of them have already constructed tidy little log houses and cleared and planted their gardens. (NAC, RG 10, c-7921)

Prewer continued on to write that the community on the reserve had agreed to do the work to build the school voluntarily if the Department would pay for the building supplies. He expressed the wish of the community to build the school before the weather became too cold and the men would have to leave to set their trap-lines. The request of the missionary indicates an awareness of the need for the community on the reserve to continue their ways of life of hunting and fishing, even if he chose to emphasize the tidiness of their log houses and their use of garden plots—gardening being a state-encouraged “civilized” mode of cultivation. In addition, he noted that the community expected the building of the day school as compensation for being forced to relocate to the reserve. The community believed that a log house (which they can build themselves) would be adequate for the purposes of educating their children.

Both the Indian Agent and the missionary estimated that there would be approximately 30 students attending the day school. They estimated the cost of building the school to be approximately 750 dollars. The proposed school would be under the management of the Chapleau Agency. A memorandum written by S.W. Sutherland, an administrator at the
Department of Indian Affairs, amends the request by the community on the reserve to build the school themselves: “[Godfrey] would also arrange with the Indians to do the greater part of the labor. It might be necessary to use the services of the White format” (NAC, RG 10, c-7921). A.F. MacKenzie, an administrator at the Department of Indian Affairs, requested Godfrey to inspect the site of the proposed school during his next visit to the reserve to pay treaty. During this visit, Godfrey elaborated on the perceived ability of the Mattagami community to work as well as reasons to build the school:

The Indians have agreed to do all the unskilled labour and it would be necessary to have a skilled workmen to do the necessary work to be done by a good carpenter, there is also the matter of certain regulations laid down by the Educational Department and which will have to be complied with, this necessarily will increase the cost, there is also the teachers [sic] quarters which have to be taken care of as there is no suitable place for the teacher to live as it would be impossible for to secure a teacher who could live at one of the Indians [sic] homes … The Indians are very anxious to have the work go ahead in fact so anxious are they that they are now at work clearing and stopping the grounds… (NAC, RG 10, c-7921)

Although the Mattagami community had requested to build a log house that would serve as a school for their children, it is clear from Godfrey’s letter that a log house was not within the guidelines of the Department of Indian Affairs’ formalized rules and regulations for school architecture, even if members of the community had already begun to make a clearing for a log house voluntarily. Furthermore, from this letter, it is evident that the state of the housing for the population of the reserve did not meet the standard of living expectations of the educated white Canadians of the time who would be serving as potential schoolteachers. The initial 750 dollar sum estimated by Sutherland in his memo was increased to 1400 dollars by Godfrey in order to cover a school building that would conform to the regulations of the Educational Department.
By the fall of 1935, it looked like the school would be built. Administrators from the Department of Indian Affairs had agreed to set aside funding for the building of a schoolhouse on the Mattagami Reserve for construction beginning the next year. Construction began locally. The Mattagami community obtained heavy timbers for the foundation of the building and obtained permits from the Forestry branch to burn brush at the site of the school. Estimated costs increased to 1500 dollars once the services of a local carpenter had been added to the cost. By the time preparations had ceased, the administration of the Department of Indian Affairs decided that it was too late in the season to build a school and that consideration for funding the building of a day school would have to wait until the next fiscal year. This delay was interpreted by both the missionary and the Mattagami community as a sign of unwillingness of the Department of Indian Affairs to follow through on the promise made during the signing of the treaty that forced the relocation of the community. The missionary, Prewer, wrote a letter in protest to the administration:

The Indians on the Matagamah Reserve…claim that these schools and teachers were promised them when they were asked to move on to their Reserves, and that they had left centres, where their children were attending the Public Schools, and, now, as a result of their action, and the Department’s neglect to provide the education facilities promised, their children are being deprived of the opportunity of attending school. (NAC, RG 10, c-7921)

Before their forced relocation to the reserve, the children of the community on the reserve had been educated alongside white children. It was not until their removal to the reserve that schooling practices became segregated in theory--and non-existent in practice. After the Indian Agent Godfrey sent a letter of inquiry as well, they were informed that there would not be funds for a school in 1936. The building of the school was still discussed, however, with the estimated cost of the materials rising to 1750 dollars when the only local mill burned down. In 1937, James
Ward, the Chief of the Mattagami community, wrote a letter reminding the Department of Indian Affairs of their promise to build a school:

I and the Metagami Indians would be interested to learn just what the Department of Indian Affairs intends in regard to the erection of an Indian School on the Metagami Reserve. Some years ago, when the Indians were instructed to remove themselves from Gogama and to take up residence at Fort Metagami, the Department promised that school will be constructed on the reserve. The Indians accepted this arrangement and left Gogama. They prepared a site for the school and constructed a foundation. So far nothing has been done about the school and, in the meantime, quite a number of children are growing up without the benefit of schooling… The Indians have kept their part of the bargain and it is up to the Department to keep its part. (NAC, RG 10, c-7921)

By the time James Ward wrote and sent this letter to the Department of Indian Affairs, three years had passed since the initial request to build the day school. Ward’s letter was enclosed within a letter from the Indian Agent which softened Ward’s argument. Godfrey writes that “these Indians have settled on the reserve and are very contented except that the lack of a school for the children is causing them some worry” (NAC, RG 10, c-7921). The Department of Indian affairs responded that funds are not available at the time and that Godfrey should inspect the site of the proposed school to see if it would be adequate for future building efforts. Godfrey responded that the foundation was not suitable for such a school in that it was not the correct dimensions, did not face west or south, and that it needed a cement basement for a wood furnace so that the teacher’s quarters could be heated. In this letter, Godfrey reminded the Department of Indian Affairs that building a day school would work to keep families centralized on the reserve: “There are about 30 children at present time of school age, this might increase once the school as erected [sic] as there are families living off the reserve who would return once the school was established” (NAC, RG 10, c-7921).
From the letters, there was a calculated shift in the reported occupation of the men on the Mattagami Reserve: whereas in 1934 the men were reported as following traditional seasonal hunting and fishing patterns by the missionary Prewer, in 1937 Godfrey stated that the men who would build the day school “are mostly all employed with the Timber Company and were operating on the Reserve” (NAC, RG 10, c-7921) and would be able to adequately scale the logs to build the school. Due to the relatively small span of time between the two reported occupations, this indicates that the abilities of the men on the reserve to work were reported in different ways to the Department of Indian Affairs depending on the goal of the actors. While the missionary sought to emphasize the ways in which a day school would transform the children from identities that revolved around occupations that were regarded as traditionally “Indian” in order to justify the building of the school, when it came to be time to build the school the Indian Agent emphasized the experience that the men on the reserve had with the logging industry in order to demonstrate that a school could actually be built as cheaply and efficiently as possible.

The proposed day school would have a basement, a classroom for 30 to 40 students, separate entrances for the boys and girls, two storage rooms that could be converted to washrooms if necessary, a section for the teacher to be heated by a wood stove, two outdoor toilets, and well water as the water supply. Building materials would have to be shipped to the reserve by water. By 1938, the cost of building a school that would conform to the regulations of the Department of Indian Affairs would cost between 5,800 and 6,400 dollars, not including the labor of the men of the Mattagami community which was assumed to be donated voluntarily. However, out of the $56,000 budget for the day schools in 1938, only 1,500 dollars were set aside for the building of the school, leaving 5,500 dollars not yet procured. For this reason, the Acting Director of the Department of Indian Affairs recommended that the school not be built.
that year and instead that the building of the school be deferred until 1939. That year, the men on
the reserve cleared more space for a day school that would conform to the regulations and in
1939 there was enough funding to build the school, though whether or not the school would
actually be built that year was not certain.

Throughout 1939, the Gogama Board of Trade campaigned for the building of a day
school for the children on the reserve, arguing that “it is very unfair to these children that they
should be raised illiterates and without moral training through no fault of their own” (NAC, RG
10, c-7921). The Board of Trade emphasized the ethical nature of the social problem of
indigenous children without schooling and blamed the Department of Mines and Resources
(rather than the Department of Indian Affairs) for not fulfilling its obligation to the community
on the reserve: “Until four or five years ago, some of these Indian families were living in
Gogama, where their children were privileged to attend our schools here, but since they have
been compelled to reside on the Reserve, they are deprived of this advantage” (NAC, RG 10, c-
7921). The Department of Mines and Resources was responsible for relocating the indigenous
population to the reserve in the first place, as well as for the building and maintenance of Indian
Schools at the time. An internal letter between R.A. Hoey, Superintendent of Welfare and
Training, and Indian Agent Godfrey reveals the effect of the letter from the Board of Trade:
“This information has not previously been supplied to us from your office and in view of the
rather definite statement made by the President of the Gogama Board of Trade the Department
wishes to receive from you a complete report outlining your views on the matter” (NAC, RG 10,
c-7921). Shortly, the building of the day school on the Mattagami Reserve was slated to happen
in the summer of 1939.
In order to build the school, the site of the school building would have to be cleared once again. Not only was the site overgrown in the years between the initial clearings and the eventual approval of the project but more land would have to be cleared for the regulation-sized building. The Chief of the Mattagami band agreed to sketch the lot and that the men of the Mattagami community would clear the site for the school once the snow melted. In August, Indian Agent Godfrey returned to the Mattagami Reserve to find that the voluntary work done by the men in the community was inadequate for the building of the school:

I beg leave to report that I visited the Metagami Indian reserve in company with the Engineer Mr. McKnight of the Department, and we chose a site for the new school, but Mr. McKnight and myself both felt that there is not sufficient clearing around the site for proper protection. I talked the matter of clearing more land for proper protection for the school and the Indians do not wish to do this work unless they are paid as they would have to give up other work that might be procurable to do this clearing. (NAC, RG 10, c-7921)

Godfrey concluded by recommending that 150 dollars be allocated by the Department of Mines and Resources to fund the clearing of the site. The Department of Mines and Resources declined, recommending that Godfrey seek funding from the Department of Indian Affairs in the amount of 300 dollars. The Department of Indian Affairs eventually funded the work, paying 150 dollars to the men on the reserve to clear the ground on the site of the proposed school. Once this was done, the building began and the school was completed in October 1939. In the photograph below, note the separate entrances for boys and girls:
The men of the Mattagami community withheld their labor until they were paid, contesting the assumption that the missionary, Indian agent, Department of Indian Affairs, and Department of Mines and Resources had held for years that they would work voluntarily. The men did indeed work voluntarily on clearing the site between the initial requests for the building of the day school in 1934 in order to demonstrate their commitment to their goal of having a school on the reserve. Although it was necessary to voluntarily clear the grounds in the years before the building began, the men used what they could control--the quality of the clearing--as a way to force the Department of Indian Affairs to compensate them for their labor. Their work to build the school, after all, would conflict with their usual occupations of working for the timber companies. Inaction when faced with “voluntary” work and action once compensated was a means of resistance for the Mattagami community.
While the focus of this case study is on the construction of the day school, there was one event after the building was completed that elaborates on the labor of the Mattagami community and ways in which the labor was gendered. In 1941, there was a forest fire that nearly burned the school down. According to the Indian Agent F. Matters, “it is simply due to the good work of the Indians that [the school] is standing at all, the fire went all around it, and by carrying pails of water from the well the Indians kept the building from any other damage than that caused by smoke and heat” (NAC, RG 10, c-7921). The clean-up work was done by women on the reserve, who were compensated for their work: “It had been well cleaned up by some of the Indian women and I am enclosing some small accounts in their favor” (NAC, RG 10, c-7921). Most of the women were paid between two and three dollars for their labor in cleaning up the fire damage. After the clean-up, men from the community repainted the school and were paid between five and ten dollars for their labor.

SCHOOLING, LABOR, AND RESISTANCE

The indigenous community that ended up at the Mattagami Reserve initially in the early twentieth century had access to schooling in the same time and place as the white students who were in Gogama. This was a rural area and the quality of the schooling was probably inadequate for all students, but it was still integrated. It was only with the forced relocation in the 1920s of the indigenous people to a more isolated and less mineral-rich area on the reserve that the community ended up without any schooling. With the relocation, they moved from having integrated schooling to no schooling in a very short period of time. The agreement to relocate, coerced as it was, was that in exchange for the relocation, the community on the reserve would
be given a day school for the children. After the relocation, there was no evidence that the Canadian state would fund the school even though it was promised.

The local actors—including the community on the reserve, the Indian Agent, and the missionary—had to campaign to get the school to be built. While the building of the school was clearly problematic—similar to residential schools, such schools were assimilationist, Christian, and were in fact systems of incarceration—but day schools differed from residential schools in significant ways. For the local indigenous community, the lack of a school was worse than the existence of the school. The chief of the Mattagami community fought for the building of the school because it was promised to the community. It was the only material gain that they knew they could obtain from the Canadian government from the forced relocation, even though it was a compromised and problematic gain. The Indian Agent campaigned for the building of the school because he argued that the families on the Mattagami Reserve would scatter and be harder for the state to control if they had no motivation to stay on the reserve. With the children at school on the reserve, the families would stay. The missionary argued that the school would be the best way to teach the children (and therefore future families and communities) to be good Christian workers. For a variety of reasons that differed politically, the local actors campaigned for the school to be built against a Canadian state that was very unwilling to provide staff or funding.

The Department of Indian Affairs, working in collaboration with the Department of Mines and Resources, was unwilling to fund the building of a log school house, which was the initial goal of the Mattagami community. A log school house was within the capabilities of the community to build: the houses on the reserve were constructed similarly. Instead, while refusing to pay for the building of a more architecturally advanced school house, the Department of
Indian Affairs would not fund a log school house because it did not conform to the requirements of its regulations: a day school was supposed to follow predetermined architectural plans. Even though the local community was willing to construct the school house themselves with their own funds and labor in exchange for staffing, the Department of Indian Affairs disallowed the building with the argument that—even though they would not fund the construction—the day school must be constructed with the supervision of the department, with department-approved (non-indigenous) builders and architects and following its architectural regulations. It was a dual problem to overcome: this institutionalized knowledge of the type of school to be built was used to prevent a school from being built. If the school was not funded by the department according to its architectural plans and constructed by adequate carpenters, it could not be a school.

“Adequate,” of course, was a coded word for white.

For several years, local actors had to work hard to gain funding for the school. One way in which they were able to finally obtain this funding was through the missionary’s promise that the men on the reserve would build the school voluntarily and without compensation. This was reinforced through letters from the missionary, Indian Agent, and chief, sent to the department that maintained that the local men were periodically clearing the brush around the site of the proposed school building. This periodic clearing was to be taken as a promise of good intent. Once the funding was finally obtained, against the promise of the missionary, the men refused to continue work until they were paid. This everyday form of resistance is quite illustrative. While they had been willing to clear the brush voluntarily during the campaign to obtain funding, once funding had been obtained their voluntary work ceased. This is one way in which the men were able to be paid for their labor for the building of the school.
Local actors on the Mattagami Reserve campaigned for the institution of a day against the interests of the state. The building of the Mattagami Day School was a limited gain, compromised as it was, and is evidence that the goals of the state did not match the interests of the local actors, even if the interests were seemingly aligned. As with non-action as a form of resistance by the indigenous men building the school, resistance was possible. Unlike residential schools, which attempted to transform indigenous childhood, cultures, and identities through spatial isolation and removal of the children from their families, day schools operated in a different fashion, while remaining in many ways systems of incarceration. Operating primarily in more remote regions of Upper Canada, day schools consolidated communities on reserves and were supposed to provide enough perceived benefit to indigenous communities to prevent scattering, which would make the communities harder to control. These two systems of education and incarceration operated simultaneously. The purpose of residential schools was to remove children from their homes to change them; in contrast, the purpose of the day school was to keep children and families in one place for purposes of control. From this case study of the building of one day school, we can learn more about how resistance took place at the local scale and also how such a schooling system was less than “total.”

The school was built after countless acts of resistance, yet the resistance was compromised throughout. Though it took acts of resistance and an unlikely alliance between “local” state actors (the missionary and the Indian Agent) and the indigenous community against corporate capitalist interests to successfully build the school, building the school was not as simple as a “victory” against the state. Schools, after all, were tools of colonial control and assimilation. However, a day school had been promised and not been built, so achieving the building of the school was in a small way successful. The state did not want to spend resources
on building it, but in the end it was built. One could debate which local actor was most effective—was it the indigenous leaders who demanded that the promise be fulfilled, the missionary who argued in moral terms, or the Indian Agent who argued that building a school would centralize the families and make them easier to control? It was likely the Indian Agent, who was the only liaison for communication, but in hindsight it would be impossible to learn how exactly success was obtained behind closed doors. Local actors campaigned together against an unwilling corporate colonial state in an act of compromised resistance, helping us learn more about how the abstract interests of the “state” were not always fully in agreement, and that this lack of internal agreement could be a tool for (albeit compromised) resistance for disenfranchised communities.

Perhaps this type of resistance—demanding that a school would be built since it had been the only promised benefit of forced relocation—only worked to further the power of the corporate colonial state. Only time would tell, but forced relocation with no school was seen by the local actors as an inherently worse situation than forced relocation with a school. To achieve the goal of having a school for their children, indigenous actors had to campaign for the state to provide it, which worked as an acknowledgement of the power of the state.
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CHAPTER SIX
WORKING THE RACIAL RATIO: INTEGRATED SCHOOLS

By the 1950s, there were three major types of schools that ostensibly served indigenous children: residential schools, day schools, and integrated schools. The fact that these three forms of schooling operated simultaneously has been overlooked in scholarship on the subject, clouding any possibilities of connecting together all the different ways in which the micro-scale systems (such as individual schools, or the families of children) with the mezzo (school boards, local governments, and state departments) and macro (the state itself). This chapter discusses the three forms of schooling, but focuses on the phenomenon of integrated schools, particularly because of their relative dearth in contemporary literature on assimilationist schooling practices.

Literature on indigenous schooling in Canada has focused primarily on residential schools, boarding schools for indigenous children run by missionaries to break apart indigenous culture and community through spatial isolation, Christian conversion, and the transformation of identity. For much of the past thirty years in research on assimilationist educational systems in Canada, the discussion has been largely trapped in the “woundedness” narrative, with indigenous peoples in Canada required to demonstrate the existence of certain sanctioned traumas to campaign for indigenous rights causes within the legal frameworks of the Canadian state. These traumas tend to be individualist and focused on survivors’ narratives, with scholars and activists attempting to demonstrate the existence of trauma, abuse, and disease to a Canadian public that has historically been largely unwilling to engage in a serious reflection about how practices of indigenous schooling might have meaning for contemporary society beyond the rhetoric of truth and reconciliation.
The history of residential schools that has been narrated by scholars and activists has followed a certain linear path: residential schools were developed through the cooperation of missionaries, corporations, and the Canadian state in the late 19th century, replacing day schools, which were located on the reserves and allowed for institutional adjustment for indigenous hunting and fishing practices. In this linear history, residential schools replaced day schools and were much like what Erving Goffman (1961) called “total institutions,” institutions that merged together all aspects of everyday life in order to remake individuals. The timeline of this linear history goes as follows: the height of the residential school system (standing in for all systems of indigenous schooling in Canada) was from the late 19th century until around 1945, followed by a period of decline leading into a contemporary period of integration and self-determination (Adams, 1988; Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill, 1986). Although much of the focus of the media and scholarship has been on residential schools, the coexistence of day schools has been generally overlooked, even though they existed simultaneously with residential schools for much of the history of indigenous schooling in Canada.

Canada has been of late depicted in scholarly research and indigenous studies as a settler colonial state (Goldstein, 2008; following Patrick Wolfe’s (2006) suggestion that colonialism is a structure and not an event), with educational systems one of several logics of elimination used by settler colonial states to eliminate indigenous populations. If indeed settler colonialism is deeply structural, there is a certain implication that the success of the logics of elimination was responsible for the emergence of the colonial structure.

If we follow the conventional linear narrative of the residential school system in Canada, stories of trauma, abuse, spatial isolation, disease, and Christian conversionism dovetails nicely with settler colonial theory. However, the history of the schooling of indigenous children in
Canada is not nearly as simple or linear as the conventional narrative has portrayed it. In the Yukon and Nunavut, for instance, residential schools were not implemented until the mid-20th century (Coates, in Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill, 1986). In Northern Ontario, day schools for indigenous children are still being built and maintained on reserves throughout the 20th century until today. In other words, day schools coexisted with residential schools, especially in the more remote regions of Canada. Furthermore, not all children were sent to schools by their parents, even when required to do so (Glenn, 2011; Coates in Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill, 1986).

The history of indigenous schooling in Canada was much messier and much more complex than it has been made out to be, with the structures of colonialism gradually deepening over time in correspondence with the development of the Canadian state in which the interests of the government, religious institutions, and corporations co-determined each other. It is time to reevaluate the status of the Canadian state in the context of this relationship to indigenous peoples, questioning whether or not settler colonialism is the best label. By examining the formation of a single day school in a region of contested sovereignty -- Northern Ontario -- it is possible to learn more about how an educational structure was set in place through the communications of Indian Agents, indigenous actors, missionaries, and the Canadian government in the early- to mid-20th century.

Day schools have been generally ignored in scholarship, as have integrated schools. By 1963, according to the Department of Indian Affairs, they had “integrated some 15,000 Indian children into the non-Indian schools across Canada” (125/25-11). Residential schools proved the source of such trauma to indigenous communities that it is understandable that the other forms of schooling have been overlooked. However, since all three forms of school often existed in the same periods of time, it is best to understand them not as archetypes that replaced each other in a
teleological manner but instead as forms in a “toolkit” of assimilative education chosen by the state depending on the local context and need for control.

I constructed charts that show the ways in which the interests of the various actors at all relevant scales interacted. The conceptual influence charts (from macro to micro) below aid in illustrating how complex the situation for indigenous children was at the time:

Figure 5: Day Schools

Figure Six: Residential Schools
Arranged in terms of organizational simplicity, residential schools were the most simple and linear in their hierarchies. Residential schools are quite famous these days for a variety of atrocities against the children purportedly in their care, including abuse, neglect, death, disease, spatial isolation, and starvation.

While the United States government instituted the first boarding schools for indigenous children, the Canadian residential school system was a site of focused long-term institutionalization. Due to a series of treaties signed before the 18th century, indigenous land title in Canada was formally recognized by the Canadian government from the mid-18th through the late 19th centuries (Barron, 1984: 1). Unlike the United States, the Canadian government before the mid-18th century formally recognized that indigenous groups had legitimate claims to the land. It was not until the late 19th century—a period of starvation for indigenous groups stemming from Canadian settlers' ecologically devastating hunting and fishing practices (Barron, 1984: 1)—that the Canadian government began to control indigenous territories. In the treaties the Canadian government negotiated with the tribes, the tribes were to be allowed hunting and fishing privileges in exchange for the Canadian government's assistance in transitioning to
Western agricultural practices (Barron, 1984: 2). After the treaties were signed, the Canadian government interpreted this exchange as incorporating indigenous and Métis peoples within its sovereignty as wards of the state, with education the primary method of assimilation.

DAY SCHOOLS

Day schools were conceptualized by the Department of Indian Affairs as on-reserve schools (in contrast with boarding schools). This conceptualization was flawed, however, due to the Department’s unwillingness to acknowledge the existence of socio-cultural differences in mobilities between indigenous groups; or, perhaps, that if groups were mobile throughout the year, this was yet another reason for intervention and assimilation.

Two cases from the data highlight the differing roles that day schools played in indigenous communities. The first case, discussed in detail during the previous chapter, is the Mattagami Day School, in which local actors campaigned for the building of a day school that had been promised as a benefit for the indigenous community going along with a forced relocation. The case of the Mattagami Day School—especially from the perspective the Indian Agent who was responsible for liaising between the community and the government—illustrates the role that schools could play in centralizing families and thereby making them easier to control.

Day schools, while at times reluctantly constructed by the state, would be seen as opportunities for moral/behavioral control of indigenous communities as part of the forced centralization that resulted from land surrender, the formation of reserves, and the establishment of schools. The second case is that of the Redstone Day School, which existed for only five years, but demonstrates how it was that the seemingly innocuous concept of the ordinary-
seeming school—not even the more famous model of residential schools—could be used to substantially change indigenous ways of life.

REDSTONE DAY SCHOOL

Little has been written about Redstone Day School. It did not exist for long, opening in 1960 and closing in 1965. It was located in British Columbia and there were never more than thirty indigenous children attending it at a time. The data that are the focus of this section are administrative reports on school attendance for the years the school was open.

Much has been said about how states mismanage colonial subjects. However, any real theoretical framework for understanding the intricate relationship between 20th-century colonialism and the simultaneous spread of industrial capitalism has yet to be adequately developed. The role of this work is to critically examine the relationships between colonialism and capitalism, particularly in the context of indigenous peoples, and how the two seemingly different processes of incorporation into both systems can lead to outcomes that on the surface might seem contradictory but in reality are almost heartbreakingly consistent with within both frameworks.

The forcible enrollment of indigenous peoples in industrial capitalism resulted in exploitation, as I find is the case with the men who worked for the fishing and timber industries, or for the women trained to be public and private domestic servants. However, in the context of colonialism, there may well have been two possible “positive” outcomes, if imagined from the perspective of the racist and colonial state and its complicit subjects. First, the intended integration of indigenous peoples into the white population in an exploitative manner, coinciding with the racialization of their identities over the course of generations in the Social Darwinist sense, and second, the genocide of indigenous peoples, which in the 20th century took on the form of disease and starvation in combination with centralization of populations on reserves, the
destruction of natural resources, and the consequences of the state’s reluctance to provide relief
due to the starvation being blamed on the inherent “laziness” of indigenous peoples who were
trapped in this context.

However, the unique situation created by these techniques of power are separated from
their contexts. This is particularly important to remember, considering that power works not just
through the macro-scale of the state but in everyday contexts as well, as seen from the case of the
Mattagami Day School. This oversight on the nature of power is especially evident in the study
of education — and day schools could certainly be purported to exist within the broad category
of educational institutions.

Rather than the purported goal of providing education to indigenous children, the latent
goal of day schools was the centralization of the indigenous communities whose children were to
attend school. The sentiment among the Department of Indian Affairs was that by centralizing
the children at school throughout the year, the families would necessarily follow their children.
This was no small thing. The mobility of many indigenous communities, particularly those
whose livelihoods revolved around hunting and trapping in the more remote regions of the north,
would be profoundly affected by this change. Furthermore, as indigenous peoples did not have
claim to land ownership through the British Common Law notion of land title, during the spread
of white-owned industries and, subsequently, white settlements throughout the 20th century, the
mobility of indigenous within Canadian sovereignty was undesirable by the state.

The division of labor for indigenous peoples transformed throughout the 20th century,
often with devastating consequences. Echoes of these changes appear in the mid-1960s in the
case of the attendance records at Redstone Indian Day School. Evidence of these shifts is visible
Between 1960 and 1965, a trend emerges in the attendance records for Redstone Indian Day School. Most generally, the attendance rates increase over time, with attendance rates reaching nearly 100 percent by 1965, compared to more fluctuating rates at the beginning of the decade. Beyond this, in late summer and early fall of each year there is a dip in the percent attendance which corresponds with the season in which the families left the site of the school, often bringing their children with them, to engage in other forms of work which required travel. Over the course of five years, the percent attendance not only increased but stabilized, reflecting the ways in which the division of labor for the families changed as they moved to new forms of work which were often site-based and in the service of industries such agriculture.
The term *integrated schools* denotes the presumed effect of integration. In other words, the integration of children of “Indian” status and white children. This form of integration reflects the complex realities of race and indigeneity in the Canadian context. Not all “white” children in areas near children of “Indian” status considered themselves white, nor were considered white by their communities. However, for the most part, the archival documents rarely reflect this reality. Instead, white children were *white* and children of “Indian” status were termed *Indian*. Indian was a legal status, and still is, just as (given the binary nature of such things), in effect being white was also a legal status, though a relatively unseen one (to white people). As always, being white was seen by most (but not all) people of white status as *being white* rather than it being a legal category like being of “Indian” status.

The term *integrated schools* was shorthand for integrated (public) schools. It usually fell to the school boards and white communities to push for integration, with the cooperation of the Department of Indian Affairs and indigenous communities. This might seem surprising given the fraught history of school integration in most contexts, including the histories of black-white integration in the U.S. public schools post-*Brown v. Baltimore*. However, the (generally poorer) rural white communities were aware of the material benefits from integration: cost sharing and grant money from the Department of Indian Affairs on the expectation of the admittance of children of “Indian” status.

At the administrative level, the story of school integration is the story of the *bureaucracy* of integration. At the micro-scale of families and the lives of individual children, this was instead a story in which vulnerable groups were used for material and political gain, often forced into situations and into choices with no good option, presumably hoping for the best, though the best did not often happen. Regardless of racial status, children in the rural communities at the time
did not receive comparably good education. This applied especially to indigenous children, who
had to surmount many barriers, such as learning English as a second language, or the difficulties
of busing, or curricula that amounted to teaching girls to be domestic servants and boys to be
menial laborers.

Integrated schools were a partnership between school districts and the Department of
Indian Affairs. The ostensible goal was to construct and maintain schools that accommodated
both statuses of children. However, in reality, there was considerable disagreement on nearly
every aspect of the topic, particularly in regards to indigenous children. How to achieve the
integration was up for debate. Indigenous children were not taught the same material in classes
as white children; indigenous children were seen as “slower” in class than white children; and
often indigenous children were struggling to learn English while trying to keep pace with native
English speakers.

Unfortunately for the children of “Indian” status (hereafter generally I will refer to as
indigenous children for the sake of brevity), their education was not really the purpose of most
efforts at integration. (This is not taking into account the problems of what entails a good
education in the first place, given that educational systems are themselves products and
producers of colonial ideologies and social structures. Instead, it was the cost sharing between
the Department of Education and its subsidiary agencies (down to local school boards) and
Department of Indian Affairs that was appealing to local (white) governments. By pushing for
integration, grant money (and payments by check) were issued by the Department of Indian
Affairs to school boards under the assumption that education would be provided for indigenous
children who lived near the white communities, along with busing and other necessary
arrangements.
The ways in which money was awarded followed a racial ratio: the percentage of the school maintenance and construction costs that were expected to cater to indigenous children was calculated, and a check followed. When school boards desired a new high school to be built, they regularly turned to the Department of Indian Affairs to propose integrated schools. Legal documents for cost sharing were drawn up, following similar formats. For instance, in Vancouver, B.C., in 1964, the proposal for Masset Joint School read (in part):

In three years –September 1966 –an enrolment of 90 pupils … is anticipated, one-half of these are Indian Affairs Branch responsibility. The Board is considering construction of an Industrial Education shop and a Home Economics Lab. This will have Dept. of Education approval but it appears financing will be done by the Board. Will Indian Affairs Branch agree, in principle, to contribute 50 percent of the cost? (157/15-11)

The Board, being forced to finance its own construction costs, agreed to integrate in three years in exchange for Indian Affairs playing a ratio of cost following the expected admission of 50% indigenous children. The document continues:

In the present facilities extra funds are required for provision of Commercial Course equipment. This does not involve construction cost but the special equipment was not provided in the last new construction referendum. Will Indian Affairs Branch agree, in principle, to share in cost of this equipment (typewriters, business machines, etc.) in the present school? (157/15-11)

The integration was a material affair, grounded in the need for rural school boards to improve their infrastructure, effectively the seeking of outside funding by another government agency. This seeming exploitation of Indian Affairs funding did not go unnoticed by the Department of Indian Affairs. The draft of the agreement has a P.S. and P.P.S. that are enlightening:

P.S. In lieu of the duplex teacherage in No. 5 the Board may accept the use of our teacherage in the Masset Reserve.
P.P.S. I think we can “sell” the package deal if the Branch gives approval, in principle. The Masset “white” ratepayers really want the Industrial Education and Home Economics shops but cannot get them without our participation. The same goes for the Commercial training equipment. We, of course, want the
The Masset “band” agreed to support total integration, moving the project along. The Indian Affairs branch wanted to consolidate their primary schools and used the integration to their advantage, just as the white ratepayers wanted to build new shops for their children, using the Department of Indian affairs funding to their advantage.

The only group that did not receive a material advantage out of the deal (and was not involved in the drafting of the legal documents) was the indigenous community at Masset, who were simply asked if they supported integration. By the time the legal documents were signed, the agreement stated that the Indian Affairs branch would pay “cost of site, three classrooms, and furnishing, and a duplex teacherage,” and a fourth classroom and a new elementary school. (157/25-11). It was agreed that there would be “no segregation of pupils.”

The sites for integrated schools were chosen for a variety of reasons. At Terrace, B.C, (with boarding facilities built for indigenous children), the rationale for an integrated school was:

The reasons for choosing Terrace for this hostel and joint school are that Terrace provides a healthy social atmosphere for Indian students, the school system is large enough to absorb 250 high school students, Terrace has a vocational school, and there is considerable industrial development in this vicinity, particularly at Kitimaat, which will provide employment opportunities for the graduates of the high school (170/25-11 (E.10)).

At Hazelton Indian Day School in Hazelton, B.C., the process of negotiating cost sharing was clearly laid out: “if the school costs $60,000.00 and one half the children of school age are Indians, then we should be prepared to pay fifty per cent of the cost of construction” (814-1/170/25-11).

At the inauguration of the Hazelton Consolidated School (also referred to in later documents as Hazelton Joint or Hazelton Amalgamated School), Charles Clifford, the Chief of the Hazelton Band was invited to speak. Since Clifford “spoke in his native tongue,” the speech
was translated. In it, Clifford was targeting “the native population of Hazelton and outlying villages.” In this translation of the speech, Clifford is reported to have stated the purpose of the school:

The school was constructed to give equal privileges and opportunities to both the white and native population of this district. It was built especially for that purpose and as far as I know, it is the first of its kind in this locality. As a result, it will give our native children the necessary and proper education and prepare them to go out into the world and compete in whatever trade or profession they choose. In this way only, can we raise our own standard of living, and some day in the near future, we will be able to stand beside our white brethren and share our full responsibilities as citizens of Canada. (157/15-11)

This aspirational language was optimistically situated within the workings of citizenship, race, and capitalism. Clifford emphasized the need for education to provide equality between indigenous and white peoples, and centered the responsibility firmly on the indigenous students who would be attending the school, as well as their families:

I would like to say this to all the native mothers and fathers present here today. We have been given a great opportunity to better ourselves and our surroundings. Let’s make good use of this opportunity....The whole building throughout is provided with the latest sanitary improvements for the welfare and health of your children. Qualified teachers will be provided with all subjects your children wish to take. Nothing will be lacking in the way of proper guidance and instruction. What more can we ask for? All that is needed is initiative on the part of our children. Education starts at home, so instruct your children to acquire clean habits. See that they are home and in bed at the proper time each night. Make sure that they are never late for school in the morning and be present every school day except in cases of sickness or accident. It is up to you to set a good example for them. Do not fail them, for by failing them you endanger their chances of becoming upstanding men and women and a credit to the native race. (157/15-11)

The discussion of hygiene was no accident. In the push to integrate schools, there were worries and complaints from white communities, particularly in the context of health/sanitation: soon after integration became a project near Hazelton, Col. Fairey, Deputy Minister and Superintendent of Education, wrote:
I beg to inform you that I had an interview with … the Minister this morning, and I mentioned to him the possibility of a joint effort in the matter of buildings at Hazelton. It was the Minister’s feeling that such a project would be desirable, provided the local attitude with regard to health matters could be satisfactorily resolved. (984/25-11-4, pt.1)

In contrast, W.S. Arneil, Indian Commissioner for B.C., claimed that “there is considerable enthusiasm both on the part of the Indians as well as the White population” for the building of the Hazelton integrated school. When the legal documents were amended, in addition to the statement that both indigenous and white children would achieve the same standards of education, there was the added paragraph:

The Minister shall endeavor to maintain a standard of health, cleanliness and clothing among these Indian pupils such as would be comparable to that of White children attending the school. (157/15-11)

Clothing and healthiness could have been legitimate issues considering the histories of forced relocation, restricted mobilities, and cheap labor under the auspices of industrial capitalism which led to starvation and neglect. However, “cleanliness” itself was a colonial concept which focused blame and stigma on indigenous children, hand in hand with assumptions about hygiene and morality that stemmed from the Victorian era.

Soon after school had begun at Hazelton, problems arose. In 1954, a motion to split the classes inside the schools was passed by the local government, requesting the Department of Indian Affairs to allow the splitting of indigenous and non-indigenous students into distinct classroom groups:

Whereas the many Indian children entering grade one in the Hazelton Amalgamated School are retarded because of their inability to speak English well;
And Whereas the Grade One Teacher is therefore required to devote much time to teaching the Indian Children to speak English, thereby depriving the English speaking children, both Indian and White, of the attention which they would normally receive in grade one;
And whereas there is much need for remedial work among the Indian children throughout the Amalgamated School;
Therefore be it resolved that
The Hazelton Community Association request the Indian Affairs Branch
to give earnest consideration to the suggestion that the department provide the
Indian children with a kindergarten, or pre-school teacher, who could devote part
of the teaching day to an Indian kindergarten class and the remaining part of the
teaching day to remedial work among the Indian children in the elementary
school.² (157/15-11)

The goal was to construct a separate kindergarten for indigenous children which would
effectively de-integrate the school, using the perceived language barrier to argue that English
speaking children (read: white) were being deprived of a “normal education” as a result of the
inclusion of indigenous children.

The issue was brought before the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, who
summarized the situation as “the problem of the Indian child possessing an inadequate
knowledge of the English language and attending the same schools as children brought up in
English speaking homes” (157/15-11). The Hazelton Community Association, the main
proponents of the motion, argued that the “Indian children who enter the Hazelton Amalgamated
School are at a great disadvantage because they know little English, and because they have no
knowledge of what will be expected of them regarding discipline, routine…In many cases these
Indian children are unable to make up for this bad beginning, and are, to all intents, beaten before
they start.” From this statement, it was clear that perceived lack of English-speaking ability was
only one of several factors that drove the wish to de-integrate the newly integrated school.

The Indian Affairs Branch agreed to investigate the matter, though suspicious of the
motives of the local white organizations. Finally, at the end of the year, the investigation
concluded with the Indian Commissioner once again expressing concern with the request:

The contents of the aforementioned resolution were rather difficult to understand
since on the occasion of his visits to Hazelton School Inspector Parminter has

² This paragraph was originally in all caps in the source text, but for the sake of ease of reading, I have altered it to
sentence case.
called at the Joint School, interviewed the teachers and Principal, and has never received any reports other than encouraging ones during these visits. Moreover, our Indian Superintendent who lives in the community of Hazleton and who is in close touch with many of the parents of white children in this community, has never intimated either in correspondence or in personal visits to this office, that there is a feeling among white parents that there is a need for kindergarten work with Indian children. (157/15-11)

The letter went to ascribe blame to the new teacher at the school:

I suspect that since this matter has been brought to our attention after several years of operation of the Joint School, that there may be a new Primary grades teacher at the school and that she has succeeded in exciting the sympathies of P.T.A. and other local groups by describing her classroom problems to them. (157/15-11)

Not only that, but the Commissioner commented that the phenomena of students needing to learn English during school was not unique to indigenous children; in fact, it was commonplace throughout Canada and should not be considered cause for concern: “Certainly there are many classrooms in this province enrolling new Canadians where large numbers of children know very little English and as yet the Provincial authorities have not deemed it necessary to establish kindergarten classrooms on a large scale” (157/15-11). There was something uniquely alarming to the white associations about the presence of indigenous children in the classroom, even in the context of increasing numbers of immigrants who also did not always speak English fluently. Language—though a rational-sounding excuse for the white-run associations—was merely an excuse for re-segregation. Even the Board of Trustees at the school did not support the kindergarten plan, for reasons of (lack of) space: “The Board of School Trustees, which likewise received representations for the establishment of kindergarten classes for Indian children, has written our Superintendent of Education that the Board ‘cannot either incorporate it in the present school as the whole eight rooms are full…” (157/15-11).
In fact, by 1955, there were 101 students at Hazelton Joint School, with the frequencies of students in each class summarized in the table below:

![Table of Students by Grade](image)

Figure Nine: Hazelton Amalgamated School (157/15-11)

As a response to the statement that the eight rooms were full, in 1955, the Hazelton integrated school administration requested a gymnasium for the students, with funding partially coming from the Department of Indian Affairs due to the presence of indigenous students. A letter from the Hazleton Secretary-Treasurer read:

> The people of Hazelton are suggesting, now that the whole of the eight-roomed school is being used for class-rooms, that there is a need for an activity room or gymnasium. We have contacted the provincial Department of Education who feel that there is justice in the request…, but as the costs of this school are split three ways, between the Provincial Government, ourselves and the Indian Department, we would like to know if your Department is in accord with this request, and if they would contribute in ratio in the costs of such a room, as was one on the building erection costs. (157/15-11)

The Regional Inspector of Indian Schools for British Colombia, A.V. Parminter, responded, turning down the request while agreeing that the idea of proportionally funding the gymnasium or activity room would be worthwhile.
This office has received a number of such requests from School Boards with whom joint agreements have previously been arranged. We are very much in favour of Activity Rooms and Gymnasia for all school children and would like to wholeheartedly endorse such requests. Further, it seems only fair that if a School Board provides such facilities to schools where a large number of Indian status pupils are enrolled, our Department should contribute a fair share of the cost.

The fact remains, however, that most of our large Residential Schools in which pupils are enrolled for 24 hours a day do not have proper gymnasium facilities. Also, such large Day Schools as the Alert Bay Indian Day with eight classrooms operating, the Bella Bella Indian Day with five classrooms operating, and other four classroom schools have no facilities of this type. It does not seem reasonable that we should contribute to the provision of said facilities in joint schools when we are not providing our own schools with these amenities which are so urgently required...owing to our own program of expansion and the resultant drain on our funds available for new construction, we are unable at this time to consider a contribution to additional facilities at the Hazelton Joint School. (157/15-11)

The Indian Affairs Branch’s inability to adequately fund its own day and residential schools was used as an excuse to justify lack of participation in proportionally funding the integrated joint schools.

By the spring of 1955, the problem of whether or not to create a separate kindergarten for indigenous children had been temporarily solved through the use of a process known as “homogenous grouping” in the classroom, during which the Regional Inspector was cautioned by a teacher to be careful not to segregate based up on Indian status through the construction of a kindergarten:

Miss Cook has her class divided into four homogenous groups. All the pupils in her top group are non-Indians while the other three groups all have mixtures of both Indian and non-Indian pupils. The fourth and lowest group has three Indian status pupils out of a total of four. The written and oral work of these children was observed carefully and I believe that Miss Cook has grouped her pupils properly. All pupils, both Indian and white, were clean, well groomed and apparently enjoying good health. There was a fine spirit of co-operation throughout the classroom.

From discussions with teachers of the Elementary grades, particularly with Miss Cook, I discovered there was no feeling that Indian status pupils were causing appreciable retardation of white children. Homogenous grouping has prevented such retardation to a large degree. The idea of the formation of a
Kindergarten, however, has appealed to these teachers for some time although the subject was not aired until relatively recently. The teachers consider that most of the primary children could benefit from kindergarten training. One teacher was most emphatic in stating that it would be unfortunate to segregate Indian status children for a kindergarten specifically for them. There seems to be general agreement that a kindergarten would be a valuable asset to this school but since a number of non-Indian status pupils have language difficulties, any kindergarten should be open to all pupils regardless of status…

In summary, then, I am of the opinion that a kindergarten class would be of value to the Hazelton Joint School as it would be most schools in this province. Such a kindergarten, however, should be open to both Indian and non-Indian pupils and should therefore be commenced and operated by the local School Board. (157/15-11)

By April 1955, the push for an activity room had the support of the Superintendent of Education, who argued that cost sharing would be reasonable because “It is evident that additional facilities are required at the Hazelton Joint School and that this need arises partly from the increase in Indian enrollment…this contribution should be based on an increase of approximately twelve Indian children” (157/15-11). The activity room would be used as both gymnasium and classroom. Later that month, the Indian Superintendent, M.G. Jutras, agreed to the cost sharing plan, requesting that the room be large enough to accommodate “organized sports such as basket-ball” (157/15-11). Once the costs had been calculated, the Superintendent noted that the construction would have to wait until the next year, and “the increase in Indian enrolment over the number on which the original agreement was made was so slight it is hardly likely that the department be expected to make any substantial contribution” (157/15-11).

Three distinct bureaucracies now had to come together to build an activity room at Hazelton Joint School, with the fiscal details of cost sharing being the subject of frequent communication. The first estimated cost of construction would be between $40,000 and $45,000. According to the Indian Commissioner of B.C., in February 1956, based on this first estimate of the total construction costs, the Indian Affairs Branch would contribute $20,000 “since the
the proportion of Indian children to white children at this school has decreased” (157/15-11).

However, soon the costs grew, and the ratios shifted once more. The exact equation was as follows:

… the cost of this structure, fully equipped, would be $91,225.00. Since there at present 95 Indian status children and 105 non-Indian children enrolled at this school, this Department’s share of the total cost would be 95/201 x $91,225.00, or $43,116.00, an amount considerably in excess of our estimate. Figures concerning pupilage have been confirmed by the Terrace School Board and apparently they are hoping that this Department will contribute in the aforementioned proportion. (157/15-11)

At the time, the Indian Affairs Branch was doubtful it could come up with the funds to match the $43,116, instead relying on an estimated contribution of $35,000. Construction was delayed that year by the School Board. By 1957, the amount contributed would go up to an estimated $47,264 out of a total of approximately $100,000, with the Indian Affairs contribution “assured” by the department.

Figure Ten: Terrace School Board (157/15-11)

The estimated cost of construction continued to rise into 1957, reaching approximately $108,000, with Indian Affairs to pay their portion based up on the incrementally shifting ratio of Indian status to non-Indian status schoolchildren. By March that year, the ratio had become 92 Indian status to 111 non-Indian status children at the school. The new costs rose once more, now at $153,285 for the construction of an addition that would accommodate the activity room. With the expected contribution rising with the total costs, the Department would have to delay the payment to the next year.
Indian Affairs once more explained that they were reluctant (though in agreement) to invest such funds in the Hazelton Joint School since it established precedent for building similar rooms at day and residential schools: “Any hesitation which we might display in asking for large sums of money to be used for the joint construction of such buildings as gymnasia is caused only by our own realization that we must soon be expanding similar amounts for much needed gymnasia and activity rooms in our Indian Day and Residential Schools” (157/15-11). Soon, the Indian Affairs Branch agreed to pay approximately $55,000. The new room was built.

By 1959, the ratio of Indian status to non-Indian status children had dropped from 92/111 (45%) to 26/182 (14%). However, it seems unlikely that the ratio had ever actually been 92/111—the School Board may have been overstating the ratio in order to obtain larger amounts of funding through cost sharing. The reasons are not specified in the archival documents. In 1959, though, the local Secretary-Treasurer wished to build another expansion, so the requested cost sharing from Indian Affairs was based upon their expectation of admitting more Indian-status students:

The total cost to the Department based on a ratio of 135 Indian children to 200 non-Indian children will be in the neighborhood of $41,000.00. Having in mind the aforementioned pupilage figures, we anticipate little difficulty in enrolling the proposed quota of 135 Indian children. (157/15-11)

To further the incentive for cost sharing, the Secretary-Treasurer added that they would be adding curricula that would appeal to the Indian Affairs Branch:

The Hazelton school will be enlarged to provide Home Economics and Industrial Arts facilities. Also planned are library facilities, additional lavatory facilities and an extra classroom. As we are aware of the Department’s interest in providing Home Economics and Industrial Arts training to Indian students, we intimated to the School Board officials that the Department would probably view favourably the proposal that we participate in this expansion progress. (157/15-11)
The Indian Commissioner for British Columbia requested that the main Indian Affairs office approve the cost sharing measure.

The enrollment of Indian-status children was capped: as part of the agreement to expand the Hazelton Joint School, the legal documents stated that the “total Indian enrolment” was “not to exceed 135.” The number 135 was settled on by school administrators throughout the year in cost sharing efforts without that being the actual number of indigenous children in the school, which was still below 100. Even by 1961, the total enrollment of indigenous students at Hazelton had not reached 135. The Regional Superintendent of Indian Schools stated:

As you know, by agreement with the Board of School Trustees of School District #53 we are entitled to enrol up to 135 Indian children in the Hazelton Joint School. To date we have not reached this total, the present enrolment being slightly under 120….We at Regional Office, of course, are anxious to integrate as many youngsters as possible and to cut down on the overcrowding at Kispiox Indian Day School which during the coming year could be serious. (157/15-11)

In other words, even though cost sharing ratios that were based on admitting 135 indigenous students had been established in the agreements, the number in reality had not been attained. There were far more students than 135 that the Regional Superintendent wished to place in the joint school due to overcrowding, but there were likely several issues that raised barriers, one of the major being transportation. However, the same issue of overcrowding and cost sharing (this time at Hazelton Joint School) was used to reject that admittance of indigenous students from Kispiox Day School in 1961:

Without bringing the Grades V and VI Indian children from Kispiox to the Hazelton Joint School, the anticipated enrolment at the Hazelton Joint School for the 1961-1962 school year is 353. Of this number 153 will be children of Indian status. This is 18 Indian status children over and above the 135 which the Board is under agreement with the Department to accept. It is for this reason that the School Principal … came to the conclusion a month or so ago that the Hazelton Joint School was now overcrowded and will be unable to accept the additional children (Grades V and VI) from Kispiox I.D.S. for the school year 1961-1962. (157/15-11)
This rejection was based on expected enrollment and not actual enrollment, which once again did not have any evidence of having over 135 indigenous students. The “overcrowding” problem was not over: instead, the school administrators requested another cycle of cost sharing to build a separate building that would accommodate the rejected students from the day school. The request was supported by the District Superintendent of Indian Schools. By September 1961, cost sharing discussions continued with an expected “admissions quota” of indigenous students of 40%, with the statement that “the Board feels that bringing in more Indian pupils would upset the desirable ratio, as defined by the Commissioner and added to by the Board” (157/15-11).

The Board pushed for a “rigid adherence to an established ratio,” while the Indian Affairs branch hoped to eventually make the ratio even between Indian status and non-Indian status students. Eventually, it was hoped that the joint (or amalgamated) school would include indigenous students from the following reserves: Glen Vowell, Kispiox, Kitsegukla, and Tsitsk. By March 1962, the demographics were as follows:

![Figure Eleven: Demographics (157/15-11)](image)

At the present time the enrolment of Indian pupils in the Hazelton Joint School is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reserve</th>
<th>Grades Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hazelton</td>
<td>I - XI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen Vowell</td>
<td>VII - XXI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kispiox</td>
<td>VIII - XIX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitsegukla</td>
<td>IX - XII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsitsk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enrolment by status is as follows:

- White: 200
- Indian: 140

In actual fact there are only about 50 pupils who are “White”, and the remaining 150 of the white status pupils are Indian and Indian-white blood. This makes the school population predominantly Indian in character, and it is for this reason that the Board were not prepared to continue to enrol in the Joint School elementary-school Indian pupils residing on Reserves outside of Hazelton.
The School Board was clearly resisting full integration of indigenous students from outside of Hazleton proper, carefully noting that of the 200 students reported, even some of the “White” students were of “Indian-white blood” (157/15-11).

Efforts to integrate the so-called integrated school were problematic both theoretically and practically. The local School Board, white administrators, and white community leaders wanted the funding that arose from cost sharing agreements with the Department of Indian Affairs, but there were perceived issues with actually having indigenous students in the school—concerns with hygiene, behavior, and the school becoming too “Indian in character” were plentiful. Beyond this, while it appears that indigenous community members near Hazelton supported integration, the act of integration was also an assimilationist goal, albeit one that was met with much resistance.

These assumptions that indigenous children were not as clean as non-indigenous children were found in other cases, especially at the Roseau River reserve, near Dominion City, whose history of land surrender, illicit auctioning of farm tracts, and white encroachment was discussed in the second chapter. Unlike the Hazelton Joint School, which was an early site for integration efforts, the push for admittance of indigenous students began in the 1960s.

The official explanation for integration efforts was based on ideals of pragmatic assimilation. According to J. Slobodzian, Regional Superintendent of Indian Schools, in 1961,

The purpose of integration is to give Indian children an opportunity to attend school with non-Indian children. The object is to help develop the child’s confidence in associating with people of the non-Indian community. As there is always a danger that the Indian child may not be accepted and that resistance may come from non-Indian parents, our initial step in the integration process is generally taken by requesting the School Board to admit a limited number of Indian pupils into the school. (157/15-11)
A total of 14 indigenous students had attended the Dominion City Public School for the 1962-1963 school year (125/25-11); however, later documents indicate that this reported figure is an intentional overestimation, with the actual number of indigenous students a total of six.

Attendance appeared to be an issue:

…every effort should be under taken to assure a good attendance particularly during the month of June when the students are writing their examinations. I might suggest that next year, when Agency Staff are attending the annual Sugar Beet Meeting in Winnipeg that we or the company circularize to beet growers in Southern Manitoba, advising them that is unlawful to hire school age children for employment in the beet fields. (125/25-11)

The nature of the presence of children in the fields was unclear, with it possible that parents brought their children along out of necessity as a form of child care:

This might have some effect on the students remaining in the school, but on the other hand the children might not be working in the fields but were merely
brought along by the parents as they have no place to leave them on the reserve while they are employed by the famers (125/25-11).

The problem of field work getting in the way of education was faced by both indigenous and non-indigenous children in this rural area. However, it appears that indigenous students were particularly noted for their absences:

Mr. Gerard—Principal of the Dominion City Public School—telephoned this office to inform us that some students would fail their year, and that others had left early to work on farms in the surrounding district thus missing the final examinations. (125/25-11)

This situation was so commonplace that administrators were forced to make accommodations for many of the students who were absent:

The normal procedure in this case would be for Mr. Gerard to fail these latter students, but they have given the Indian students special consideration in this matter and are prepared to promote those who obtained adequate marks on the Christmas and Easter examinations. Mr. Gerard, however, wished us to understand this will be an exception made for this year only and that next year Indian children will have to compete on an equal basis with the non-Indian students in regard to attendance and writing of examinations. (125/25-11)

The Principal further pushed for truancy officers to “take action against the famers who employ the students of school age” (125/25-11) of both Indian and non-Indian status. The same document noted “It is realized that the employers may be engaging in some case just the parents and that the children are brought along by the parents as they have no place to leave them on the reserve.” The nearby reserve was the Roseau Rapids Indian Reserve, which by 1963 had six indigenous students which Indian Affairs tentatively planned to enroll:
The demographics of the region were largely agricultural. The white-run town, Dominion City, “is an agricultural village which is not likely to increase in population” (125/25-11). The Indian Affairs branch reported that among the local indigenous populations, “There are presently a total of 27 United Church children in residential school from the two parcels of reserve land--19 from Roseau River and 8 from Roseau Rapids. Among this band there are approximately 36 common law unions, most of which are of a transient nature, and there are about 130 children resultant of these unions or completely illegitimate” (125/25-11). In other words, beyond the six children who were planned for admittance to the newly built integrated school, there were at least 151 other children in a variety of other schooling situations ranging from residential school to no school at all. Furthermore, the moral-legal standing of the children was in discussion, with children of “legitimate” marriages—particularly those aligned with the United Church (Protestant)—seemingly valued more so than the “transient” children of common law unions and out of wedlock. From the perspective of the indigenous families, they were sometimes more interested in obtaining adequate schooling/child care than choosing a school of the appropriate religious affiliation:

These very confused family situations mean that one family group may include children of both the United Church and Roman Catholic faith. Some of the Roman Catholic children attend the United Church Indian Day School because it is closer and 2 of these have already accompanied United Church children to
Dominion City under the integration program commenced in September, 1962. The few remaining Roman Catholic pupils in the United Church Indian Day School will very probably follow the same pattern. (125/25-11)

In other words, indigenous families often adopted a more instrumental approach to obtaining education and child care for their children, while the Indian Affairs branch was inclined toward using joint school as a newer and better model of education which would shift children away from day and residential schools. Between the lines, it appeared that child care was a major issue for poor agricultural families in the area—both indigenous and non-indigenous—and of the two available sites of care—school and work—school seemed the better option.

Administrators at the joint school were advised to “move slowly on integration” (125/25-11), and at a 1962 ratepayers meeting, “only a small minority opposed integration” (125/25-11). Over the course of six years—1962 to 1968—the plan was to increase the enrollment of indigenous students in the Dominion City Public Elementary School (officially titled the Dominion City Consolidated S.D. #45) from an expected 10 students (6 of whom were actually enrolled) to 54 in 1968. The ratio of Indian-status to non-Indian status students at the time of consolidation was expected to be 60/180; however, the plan of expected enrollment of 10 indigenous students clearly contradicts the logic of cost sharing at this instance.

The motion to admit ten indigenous students emphasized tuition and cleanliness:

"Resolved that, by Motion of Mr. W.R. Kyle and seconded by Mr. J. Lamont, that the Dominion City Cons. School District No. 45 hereby accept (ten) 10 Indian Pupils from Grades 4 to 8 to our school, and that they hereby adhere to the Public Schools' Act, as to regular attendance, cleanliness, and that the pupils be medically fit, and that the Tuition Fees be $12.00 per month per child, on a monthly basis. That Tuition Fees be based on Enrollment, and that attendance has nothing to do with enrollment. That Indian Affairs Education Div. provide their own transportation. This agreement is only for one year 1962-63 school term."  

Motion Carried.

Figure Fourteen: Motion (125/25-11)
For the 1962-1963 school year, rather than the 10 expected students or the 60/180 ratio, the six actual students were admitted on a trial basis pending approval from the Department of Education: according to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Dominion City Consolidated School, “We still have to get permission from the Department of Education to admit Indian children to our school. Last year this was done on a trial basis for one year only, contracts or agreements have to be renewed for 1963-1964 term again” (125/25-11). In the same document which discussed the details of the trial admittance, the Secretary-Treasurer stated that “When we get permission from the Department of Education we will continue as before, and admit approx. 12 or 13 more for next term.” This would increase the total to 18 or 19 students, which was near the goal of 20 Indian-status students for the 1963-1964 school year. The number 13 was important because it would “allow [the school] to have an extra teacher” (125/25-11).

Administrators were pleased with the results of integration for the 1962-1963 school year and wished to increase enrollment: “I wish to note that Dominion City has expressed an interest in taking in more pupils next year. I believe that we could, if there are no drop-outs, send in all grades above grade 3. This would leave only 6 pupils [in the day school] which is a light teaching load, but, I believe that the more pupils we are able to integrate the better for the Indian-non Indian relationships in this area” (125/25-11). At least rhetorically, there was mention of using integration to improve “Indian-non Indian relationships,” which is evidence that there were certainly problems at the time.

Hygiene—particularly the perceived lack of hygiene for indigenous children as a framed political colonial topic—was a contentious issue and used against integration efforts. In 1962, the Principals of Dominion City and Letellier Schools requested regular visits from the Indian Health Services Nurse that “would include checking the Indian students for health and
cleanliness” (125/25-11) at the reserve and not in school in order to “prevent embarrassment for the Indian students in having been dealt with separately” (125/25-11). Extra inspection—and racialized inspection at that—was in order. In response, the Regional School Superintendent wrote that in his opinion “the Letellier public appear to believe that the Indian people are more lacking in cleanliness than is actually the case” and instead of supporting the idea of reserve-based inspections, supported the idea of the Principals helping with “the dissemination of correct information on this matter” (125/25-11) to help work against the pernicious stereotypes rather than propagating them. However, the on-reserve health inspections were authorized: “The Indian Health Services has now based a nurse at Portage la Prairie and she will be visiting the reserve four times a month” (125/25-11). To assuage the concerns of the principals, the superintendent noted “the medical care mentioned above is considerably beyond the average and should soon eliminate any cause for comment by the public” (125/25-11).

Complaints about the (lack of) hygiene of indigenous students were pervasive. One source of complaints was of the presence of pediculosis among the indigenous students (pediculous being louse infestation). According to the Superintendent,

Last week I received a telephone call from Mr. Gallant of Letellier informing me that the Letellier Home and School Association had a meeting, during which was mentioned that the Indian students attending the Inverness Consolidated School were not too clean, with several reported to have pediculosis. This was brought to the attention of the Nurse, who examined the children. It should be noted that, with the exception of three, all were quite clean. The three exceptions could have been cleaned up in one night with treatment. The nurse can not understand why there have been so many complaints on the subject. (125/25-11)

There was no evidence to show that indigenous students were less clean than white students, yet the complaints were strong enough that administrators feared that integration would fail unless they were eased:
In discussing it by phone with Miss Keith she and I believe that there might be unfavourable remarks about cleanliness, school and home life of the children and their parents on the reserve, reaching the Home and School Association and the teachers at Letellier from our own two teachers on the reserve. They both live in Letellier. Miss Keith and myself have nothing factual to substantiate this. The writer however feels it may exist, by the general attitude of both. If integration is not promoted by our own teaching staff, particularly in an area like Lettelier, I fear it may collapse, if sufficient complaints are made to the authorities…With frequent visits to be made by the nurse, no doubt the situation will be rectified. (125/25-11)

Despite the nurse’s statement that “I really can’t understand why there have been so many complaints” (125/25-11) it was clear to the administrators that they were the result of coordinated hostilities aimed at ending integration efforts. The assumption that indigenous peoples were unclean was even found in reports by allies to integration, such when the Zone Superintendent of the Department of National Health and Welfare remarked:

I cannot help but feel that the school Board Secretary at Latellier is being unduly critical, but I assure you I will do whatever possible to arrange ease of medical examination. Parental compliance with instructions and advice which both our services offer and their aversion to soap and water is, as you will agree, something only time will cure. (125/25-11)

Comments on “aversion to soap and water” aside, this statement was in fact arguing that the complaints were “unduly critical.” However, if even the supposed (white) allies to integration thought of indigenous peoples as unclean, the stereotypes were clearly widespread enough to be assumed to be factual.

Among continuing complaints, the Zone Superintendent later argued the (perceived) problem of unhygienic indigenous students was not “an Indian Health Services problem. We may provide facilities and set up procedures, but we cannot usurp parental responsibility in ensuring that children are sent to school clean or that treatment prescribed is followed” (125/25-11). The colonial construction of the social problem of indigenous hygiene once again landed itself at indigenous bodies and homes: “Opinion in general holds that the Indian pupils would be
acceptable if kept clean” (125/25-11). At nearby Greenridge, when the consolidated school was built, “Superintendent Nield wrote them a few years ago asking them to take 6 pupils. Local doctor told the board he had no authority to go to the Indian homes and the board felt children could not be cleaned up and they voted no” (125/25-11).

In April that year, a letter purportedly from Chief John James of the Roseau River reserve was sent to the Superintendent of the school stating “I can’t let even ten children go to the White school. They wouldn’t have the clothes or school lunches that would allow them to associate with the white children” (125/25-11). When the letter was brought to James’s attention, he denied writing the letter and asked for an investigation to see who made the “false statement.” James argued that he actually supported integration, though he supported a Band Resolution that campaigned for the School Board to accept greater numbers of indigenous children. In response, the Board agreed to accept a “maximum of six Indian pupils on an experimental basis,” ideally between four and six students. It appears that a member of the School Board fabricated the letter from Chief John James to undermine integration efforts, as the Chief and leaders of the Roseau River reserve were in fact cautiously in support of the move to integrate schools.

Another cost sharing effort went ahead in 1963, with the School Board requesting funds from the Department of Education as well as Indian Affairs for three classrooms and a gymnasium; the funding for the classrooms was denied by the Department of Education, leading to some concern that integration would slow as a result: the District School Superintendent expressed “I am wondering what this action will mean to our integration project at Dominion City and if perhaps there is not some way of overcoming this apparent difficulty concerning construction.” In other words, for school administrators, the success of integration hinged upon successful cost-shared expansion of school infrastructure.
Throughout 1962-1965, of concern to administrators was both the (perceived to be poor) attendance and (perceived lack of) hygiene of indigenous students. On one particularly absent group of siblings, the Principal noted: “Because this kind of truancy is, no doubt, detrimental to the attendance of the other Indian children as well as our general attendance, we are prepared to take steps to remedy this problem. I hope it will not be necessary, but if this attendance does not improve sufficiently within the next month, I will suggest expulsion of these students because they are detrimental to the integrity of the school” (125/25-11). Handwritten under this paragraph was the statement “These pupils have been absent from school for the last 7 consecutive school days” (125/25-11). Talking to the family had not helped; according to the principal, they did not want to “cooperate.” While the reasons were not available for the “truancy,” perhaps their situation was similar to another family with absent schoolchildren at the same school, whose parents “usually leave the reserve early each spring and return late in the fall. Employment is usually on a casual farm basis.” The ways of life of migrant farm labor were getting in the way of children being able to attend school.

In May, 1964, a letter of warning was issued to parents of “truant” school children, CC’d to “parents of 22 students”:

Dear Parents,
I am writing to inform you that the Dominion City school is concerned about students who miss too many school days.
The Manitoba Schools’ Act stipulates very clearly that a student who is deemed injurious to the general welfare of the school may be expelled from school permanently. Any student who fails to attend school regularly is obviously detrimental to the welfare of the school and is therefore in danger of expulsion.
If it should be absolutely necessary for your student to be absent, include a note of explanation for the teacher on the student’s return to school.
We hope you will understand that these precautions are in your interest as well as that of the school.
Yours truly,
G.J. Girard, Principal (125/25-11)
In 1965, the School Board agreed that any Indian-status student who had a recurring absence for health reasons from school (with lice as the primary focus)—even with a certificate from a doctor or nurse—would be suspended “for the balance of the school term” (125/25-11). Absences for any reason, therefore, were linked to suspension. In addition, the suspension of the students triggered a “suspension of family allowance”—a form of child welfare—as a further “corrective measure” until the absent children were un-suspended. Soon, nine children were suspended. In the words of one School Board member,

> While this procedure may seem harsh, there is no excuse for this [truancy]. In all fairness and to protect the children of non-Indian parents attending the Dominion City School and the Indian Children attending our schools on the Reserve, some corrective measure is considered very necessary. As of January 1st, there has been nine Indian students sent home for this reason, resulting in the suspension of family allowance, which will not be reinstated until the attendance of the students is again satisfactory. (125/25-11)

This school environment was clearly hostile to indigenous schoolchildren—not only were they targeted for absences due to ways of life revolving around migrant farm work, but child welfare was withheld as punishment.

By July 1965, withholding of family allowances became standard practice as punishment due to the “attendance problem.” In addition, the Clandeboye Indian Agency began to consider “legal action against the parents concerned,” (125/25-11) but were worried that “this might have a detrimental effect on the program” (125/25-11). Soon, they began to target the farms that employed indigenous families:

> The employers in the sugar beet industry are not to take on employees who bring their families to the sugar beet field. However they may disregard these instructions, while some employers are not aware that the employee has brought his family with him. Also, many families migrate to the United States for seasonal employment because of the earlier growing season, which makes it possible to obtain work at an earlier date. (125/25-11)
With the indigenous laborers following cyclical migrant work patterns even across national borders, it was difficult to control the location of the children who were supposed to be in school: “It has been suggested that the children remain on the Reserve with relatives until the end of June, but at present this is not feasible due to the fact that most of the families are away from the Reserve by June” (125/25-11).

The social problem of indigenous attendance found its way to the local M.P, W.H. Jorgenson, who wrote a letter in support of the principal’s efforts to the Indian Affairs Branch, framing the failure of students to attend school regularly in light of Dominion City as a “pilot area for the integration of Indian students into local schools” (125/25-11):

The principal of the Dominion City School is concerned that children who have been attending school regularly for nine months fail to complete their year in the regular manner of other students. Unless there is an exceptional reason, students are not excused from writing final examinations. Those who do not write are usually judged on their year’s work year after year because of employment in the beet fields, it will create dissension among the non-Indian and the Indian, as it may be considered that the Indian is receiving special privileges….

The principal of the Dominion City School wondered if there was any way that Indian parents could be encouraged or compelled to have their children complete their year’s studies and whose responsibility it is to see that this is done. We understand that the School Attendance Act is a provincial matter but do not know if it also covers Indian families. If this is a federal matter, would you be able to check what steps are being taken to remedy the situation? If the education of Indian children is strictly a federal matter and there are no laws governing their attendance at school, would you be able to initiate a measure to ensure that the efforts of teachers and children are not wasted by the removal of these students from school by their parents?

The program of integration cannot be a complete success unless the Indian receives the same treatment as the non-Indian. (125/25-11)

Within a year, the integration effort failed, with all Indian-status students expelled from the Dominion City joint school. The School Board’s reasons for expelling the indigenous children were their purported “lack of cleanliness,” “irregularity of attendance,” and a detrimental
proportion of Indian-status to non-Indian status schoolchildren. According to R.M. Connelly, Regional Director of the Indian Affairs Branch,

It will be noted that the Board’s decision to discontinue acceptance of Indian children was precipitated primarily by administrative problems resulting from pupil count in support of teacher grants. This seems to be confirmed by the lame excuses introduced by some of the Board members who cite lack of cleanliness and irregularity of attendance as a reason for their action. The support of the principal and teachers of integrated schooling would seem to refute these arguments by citing the conditions which may have been the cause of problems in the past, but which have largely been overcome by the withdrawal from school of those children who may have given justification for such complaints.

As only 22 pupils are enrolled at Dominion City, there can hardly be any validity in the claim that the proportion of Indian children is detrimental to the progress of Non-Indians. (125/25-11)

Furthermore, Connelly reported that “the Indians are not too excited about the Board’s move, except perhaps being annoyed and resentful of the statements made to the press by certain Board members” (125/25-11).

Potential reasons for the expulsion were discussed by administrators, with evidence to suggest that the expulsions were actually the result of problems (unfortunately, only vaguely referenced in the archival data) due to land lease endings:

While these considerations may be acceptable as justification for the Board’s action, there is still the factor that there have been poor relations between Dominion City and the Roseau River Reserve people, which has resulted in further hostility that has been kindled by the recent unilateral decision of the Board to take the resultant action without prior consultation either with the Chief and Band Council or Indian Affairs Branch officials. The enclosed press clipping headed “Lease Endings Blamed” throws another and a very important factor into this issue that could, more than any other reason advanced so far, be the cause which has precipitated the Board’s action.

At a meeting on May 20 in the Regional Director’s office with Chief Henry and Councillor Steve Seenie, both denied making any statements to the press about boycotting the town. They are quite annoyed with Mr. Lloyd Lenton, self-appointed champion of the Indians on this issue, on his urgings to stage a protest march on Dominion City. The Chief and Council see no purpose in such action and are not interested in restoring the agreement with the Board for next year, while the tensions which have developed within the town and the Indian community continue. Rightly, they feel that their children would be exposed to
possible reprisals or other reactions when community feelings are not harmonious. They therefore did not appreciate the use of force suggested by Mr. Lenton for the restoration of previous arrangements in regard to integrated schooling at Dominion City. (125/25-11)

In other words, while the Chief and Band Council denied involvement in boycotts and marches, disagreement on next steps revolved around “use of force” (social movements) vs. fear of reprisal against the children. Meanwhile, the Indian Affairs branch began to make plans to try integration once more, this time at the nearby Altona school district.

When questioned about the legality of the expulsion, J. Slobodzian, Regional School Superintendent, stated that the School Board’s actions were legal. One reason was that the School Board could argue (following the School Act) that they did not have enough teachers to accommodate the students. Another, more potent, reason, was the question of hygiene: “Unfortunately, the Board has other recourse to the School Act which relates to cleanliness, health, and attendance. If the Roseau people were more sophisticated, there would be more concern for the conditions to which their children are constantly exposed at their homes” (125/25-11). In this manner, blame for the expulsion could easily be aimed at the families affected by the School Board’s decision.

The Children’s Aid Society of Eastern Manitoba wrote a letter in support of the expelled children stating:

We feel that the action is against the basic rights of the children to a public school education. We feel that everything should be done to help the Indian children mingle with their neighbors in the communities surrounding the Reserves and that this is the way these children will eventually have the same opportunities as other boys and girls.

We also understand that there was no basis in fact for the allegations made by the School Board and no real reason why these children should not be attending the school. (125/25-11)
In response to this letter, R.M. Connelly, the Regional Director of the Indian Affairs Branch, wrote:

Without being judgmental about the School Board’s decision, I want to let you know that the interest and active support evidenced by organization such as yours is most encouraging and I know it is most appreciated by the Indian people also. The so-called “problems of Indians” will not be solved only by an infusion of money from government but rather through a growing awareness and appreciation by society at large of the responsibility we all have for helping Indian people feel at home in their own land. We can study and analyze the “behavior patterns” of Indians all we like; unless we’re prepared to study our own also, and sometimes reorient them, we’re only compounding the problem, which is ours as much as the Indian’s. There must be commitment from both groups. Real and meaningful dialogue can’t take place until this is done. (125/25-11)

Connelly went on to write that parents of indigenous children who were expelled did not want to send their children back to Dominion City the following year even if they were readmitted, and that “If I were a parent on Roseau River Reserve, I would probably have reacted no differently” (125/25-11).

DISCUSSION

The study of schooling has been complex within the field of sociology. If we were to narrow the study of assimilationist schooling to one branch of the field, we might turn to neo-Marxist perspective schools as most helpful (and yet inadequate) to understanding how and why schools were necessary. While theorists in the 19th century such as Marx and Engels were relatively unconcerned with the role of educational systems in reproducing social order, Neo-Marxist scholars have long suggested that a primary role of educational systems is to construct cultural hegemony in order for dominating classes to control dominated classes and cement the status quo.
Gramsci argued that the state is one of two levels of the superstructure organized to contribute to hegemony of one class over the other. The second level is civil society. Both the state and civil society construct the consent of the dominated class through the production of certain forms of knowledge that are taken for granted as “common sense” by the exploited. Knowledge creation by civil society is central to the manufacturing of consent: “The intellectuals are the dominant group’s “deputies” exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government” (Gramsci 1971: 145). This active superstructure functions as an “apparatus of state coercive power” (Gramsci 1971: 145) that operates through the production of consent through legitimation.

A somewhat overlooked—but critically important—factor in the production of consent is the coercive nature of the apparatuses of state power. Consent to domination by the dominated is not merely blindness to oppression or false consciousness. Instead, people consent to domination with the awareness that coercion and even violent force will replace ideological domination if necessary. The state will reproduce social order using the legal system if groups do not consent: “This apparatus is, however, constituted for the whole of society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command and direction when spontaneous consent has failed” (Gramsci 1971: 145).

Following Gramsci, Althusser asked: how does the state reproduce the means of its existence? Althusser reconciled contested forms of Marxist theory by suggesting that the mode of production produced both the economy and ideology, moving beyond arguments over the relationship between base and superstructure. Althusser (1971) introduced the concept of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs), with educational institutions working as repressive apparatuses: “The State is a ‘machine’ of repression, which enables the ruling classes … to
ensure their domination over the working class, thus enabling the former to subject the latter to the process of surplus-value extortion (i.e. to capitalist exploitation” (Althusser 1971:11).

Arguing that control over the state apparatus is what is ultimately contested in class struggle, Althusser suggested that “the State (and its existence in its apparatus)” has no meaning except as a function of State power” (Althusser 1971: 14). Influenced by Gramsci’s claim that “the State could not be reduced to the (Repressive) State Apparatus” (Althusser 1971: 16), Althusser claimed that ISAs function to reproduce state power in everything from institutions to everyday life, bridging the public and private.

Foucault (1995) argued that we had entered into a stateless society in which individuals self-regulate through disciplinary micropower and in which the state regulated through forms of power that were not at the level of the state. This theory of disciplinary power did not fit well within neo-Marxist thought. Poulantzas (1978) integrated Althusser’s work with aspects of Foucault’s theories of disciplinary power, suggesting that class inequality comes not just from the mode of production but from other means as well. In addition, state power cannot be understood through theories of repressive/ideological state apparatuses. Instead, the state is a set of material practices.

Following both Foucault and Althusser, Poulantzas incorporated concepts of discourse, power, knowledge creation, and discipline into a theory of state power as material practices. The state, therefore, is not a passive instrument serving the logic of capitalism but an organized actor with material practices of class dominance—and distinct interests in retaining power. However, the presence of indigenous peoples complicates these easy narratives of educational systems as apparatuses of a self-interested abstract state—perhaps even revealing fundamental paradoxes in the supposed purpose of educational systems in general. At the very least, arguments such as
those made by Willis (1981) that educational systems work to reproduce social order, become fundamentally destabilized by the introduction of day, integrated, and residential schools into the narrative.

At Hazelton, school administrators used integration as a method of building infrastructure through cost sharing agreements with the Indian Affairs Branch, at that time a branch of the Department of Immigration & Naturalization. They were careful to limit the amount of actual indigenous students enrolled to below their estimations in the cost sharing documents, cautious to make sure that the school did not become too “Indian in character.” Racist colonial stereotypes of the “nature” of indigenous schoolchildren were pervasive, while Indian Affairs staff took the approach that any integration would necessarily improve relations between indigenous and white people in the area.

At Dominion City, this cycle of (limited) integration and ensuing resistance by the School Board points to many of the problems facing indigenous families on reserves. Seasonal cycles of work were the only livelihoods available; yet, allegations of uncleanliness and bad behavior that fell under the umbrella category of the “problems of Indians” were mobilized against them, resulting in outcomes that were quite negative, as well as lived environments in which any sign of resistance could lead to “fear of reprisals” from nearby white people. School boards were motivated to integrate schools because of the benefits of cost sharing to build infrastructure, yet the realities of integration were in conflict with racist, colonial attitudes toward indigenous peoples, paired with the necessities of ways of life dependent on migrant farm work.

The three forms of schooling, when examined together, paint a contradictory picture of colonialism at work. Day schools, while largely a 20th century phenomenon, were (purportedly) on-reserve sites for centralizing indigenous students and therefore their families (and by
extension, communities). They were often promised to indigenous peoples in exchange for forced relocation to the reserves away from white-run towns and resource-rich areas. Occasionally, there were indigenous instructors, though this was frowned upon by the Department of Indian Affairs. Students at the schools were inspected by Indian Agents, who for decades were employed by the Department of Mines and Resources. They were understood by state actors to be part of the assimilation/de-mobilization process targeted at indigenous peoples, often in regions far from infrastructure run by white state actors. The logic was that where the children go, the parents would follow. Day schools seemed to operate on a conceptual logic that control could be a micro-scale power/knowledge production.

In contrast, the more (in)famous residential schools operated on a colonial logic that followed the phrase “Kill the Indian, save the man.” In addition to the forced spatial isolation that was inflicted upon students at the schools, the children were subjected to abuse, neglect, and disease. The process was one of genocide in the name of assimilation, with most schools operated by Christian religious institutions of both Catholic and Protestant denominations. From the start, there was resistance from indigenous groups, with protests at the building of residential schools dating to the 1920s. Disliked by the state for their obvious ineffectiveness but strongly promoted by white-run Christian religious institutions, widespread resistance as well as funding problems led to bad publicity and their eventual dissolution. By the 1990s and 2000s, the symbol of residential schools had been constructed to represent an archetype of state oppression as well as a social problem to be fixed.

Gramscian understandings of the consent to be dominated by those dominated by the state fail to take into account the complexities of local-scale colonial/racist power relations, as well as the notion that there is a governmentality at work in which government arises out of
particular socio-historical conditions in which it is really a code of conduct having to do with “problems of self-control, guidance for the family and for children, management of the household, directing the soul” (Lemke, 2002: 2). In my opinion, Foucault’s theories of power and the state generally fail to take into account the multiple levels of scale that worked simultaneously, but in often contradictory ways, to produce and reproduce a racist and colonial state. While Althusser and Poulantzas both provide excellent food for thought on how schools are actually tools of the state, the nature of indigeneity (as well as the ways in which the category of “Indian” has been racialized) poses a problematic to all of these various paradigmatic theories.

The realities of the schooling of indigenous children were far too complex for any one theory to be fully tenable. Schools held contradictory status for indigenous communities. While they were at times campaigned for, they were also systems of control that at once limited the socio-spatial mobilities and life attainments of their students, contributing to a racialized colonial social structure which provided rationalization for ongoing racist assumptions about “the problems of the Indians” which justified the incredible poverty that they faced in their lives of migrant farm labor. Synthesizing these approaches, I suggest that the ways in which educational systems are state-sanctioned producers of subjects is different for indigenous peoples for many reasons—among them, the ways in which racial formation does not account for historical contexts of genocide, exclusion, and differences, and perhaps most critically the ways in which schools could render invisible the indigenous subject.
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CHAPTER SEVEN
THE WHITE PAPER AND INDIGENOUS SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

After decades of resistance to the assimilationist policies of the Canadian state, indigenous peoples within Canadian sovereignty found themselves facing the seemingly greatest threat to date: the so-called White Paper of 1969. The more institutionalist branches of scholarship—including sociology—have typically linked together educational systems with the production of resistance through what I refer to as the “new leaders” model. In this framing, schools bring together people from different areas who did not know each other prior to entering schools, and during the schooling process they come to know one another and leave school with broader social networks. As they age, the former students become the next generation of leaders, who all know each other from school networks. I suggest that this “new leaders” approach does not paint the whole picture and in fact gives short shrift to the role of activists and community organizations in producing resistance and helping knowledge travel.

While the term “white paper” is general, referring to any Canadian legislative policy paper (Chretien, 1969a). What little gains had been made against the state largely centered on the legally unique “Indian” status that had been ascribed to many (if not most) indigenous peoples, with the successes often only benefiting those who were legally “Indian.” While this was a flawed situation in that demonstrative proof of “Indian” status was necessary for indigenous peoples to access these gains, it was only through centuries of resistance that “Indian” status had become anything but oppressive and genocidal.
The White Paper sought to remove Indian status from Canadian law, a form of legal assimilation, and were met with massive opposition from indigenous peoples: “The federal government’s intention, as described in the white paper, was to achieve equality among all Canadians by eliminating Indian as a distinct legal status and by regarding Aboriginal peoples as citizens with the same rights, opportunities and responsibilities as other Canadians. In keeping with Trudeau’s vision of a ‘just society,’ the government proposed to repeal legislation that it considered discriminatory. In this view, the Indian Act was discriminatory because it applied only to Aboriginal peoples and not to Canadians in general” (UBC, 2016).

Jean Chrétien, then-Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (and future Prime Minister of Canada), introduced the White Paper, couching his words in language of freedom and rescuing the “Indian component” from historical oppression through assimilation. The introduction, in full, reads:

To be an Indian is to be a man, with all a man's needs and abilities. To be an Indian is also to be different. It is to speak different languages, draw different
pictures, tell different tales and to rely on a set of values developed in a different world.

Canada is richer for its Indian component, although there have been times when diversity seemed of little value to many Canadians.

But to be a Canadian Indian today is to be someone different in another way. It is to be someone apart - apart in law, apart in the provision of government services and, too often, part in social contacts.

To be an Indian is to lack power - the power to act as owner of your lands, the power to spend your own money and, too often, the power to change your own condition.

Not always, but too often, to be an Indian is to be without - without a job, a good house, or running water; without knowledge, training or technical skill and, above all, without those feelings of dignity and self-confidence that a man must have if he is to walk with his head held high.

All these conditions of the Indians are the product of history and have nothing to do with their abilities and capacities. Indian relations with other Canadians began with special treatment by government and society, and special treatment has been the rule since Europeans first settled in Canada. Special treatment has made of the Indians a community disadvantaged and apart.

Obviously, the course of history must be changed.

To be an Indian must be to be free - free to develop Indian cultures in an environment of legal, social and economic equality with other Canadians.

(Chretien, 1969a)

Chrétien’s statement is rich for critical dissection. Part-by-part, the opening sentence “To be an Indian is to be a man, with all a man’s needs and abilities” must have been an attempt by the Minister of Indian Affairs to establish (for the sake rhetorical argument) between an abstracted “Indian” (male, able, with certain needs) and an abstracted non-“Indian” (male, able, with certain needs). It is especially interesting that this logic that Indian==male is not even in the usual patriarchal mid-century language of “mankind”; no, in this instance, male is the descriptive word. This echoes the complicated histories of gender and indigeneity in the Canadian colonial context, in which the “Indian” status was targeted toward indigenous men, while indigenous women were seen as not inherently “Indian,” and could lose Indian status through marriage to non-Indian status men.
Chrétien likens his ideas of the difference on Indian (men) – “To be an Indian is also to be different” – with their purported powerlessness – “To be an Indian is to lack power - the power to act as owner of your lands, the power to spend your own money and, too often, the power to change your own condition.” Difference is equated with powerlessness and subsequently blamed for the “condition” of the “Indian,” meaning the perceived lack of sovereignty, capital, and social contacts. The forms of utter isolation that Chrétien ascribes to his abstracted “Indians,” therefore, are blamed on their difference, with the posited solution to change “the course of history” to remove the “special treatment” of indigenous peoples that had, in his argument, resulting in making “the Indians a community disadvantaged and apart”—in other words, unassimilated. The call to dignity in the middle paragraphs echoes usual liberal individualist language of self-help, with the “common sense” argument that the changes to Indian status were necessary, for “a man must have if he is to walk with his head held high.”

The white paper was influenced by research from the 1960s, particularly a report from anthropologist Harry B. Hawthorn that found that indigenous peoples in Canada were “citizens minus,” and Canada’s “most disadvantaged and marginalized population” (UBC, 2016). Hawthorn argued that “Indians should be regarded as ‘Citizens Plus’. In addition to the rights and duties of citizenship, Indians possess certain additional rights as charter members of the Canadian community” (Indian Chiefs of Alberta, 1970). In the wake of this report, the story goes, this situation needed attention, especially given the popularity of the civil rights movements of the 1960s, which “brought public attention to the intense racism and discrimination experienced by African Americans and other minorities. The movement also led many Canadians to question inequality and discrimination in their own society, particularly the treatment of First Nations” (Chretien, 1969a). However, this account of the newfound public
resonance of the social problem of the situation of indigenous peoples in Canada fails to take into account the protests and efforts by indigenous activist groups.

The consequences of the white paper were drastic. The legislative shift would:

- Eliminate Indian status
- Dissolve the Department of Indian Affairs within five years
- Abolish the Indian Act
- Convert reserve land to private property that can be sold by the band or its members
- Transfer responsibility for Indian affairs from the federal government to the province and integrate these services into those provided to other Canadian citizens
- Provide funding for economic development
- Appoint a commissioner to address outstanding land claims and gradually terminate existing treaties (Chretien, 1969a)

Most of these points explicitly worked to undermine indigenous sovereignty. The language of individual assimilation clouded the more material goals of the white paper, such as breaking reserve land into private property, and abolishing the Indian Act. All the efforts that indigenous communities had made for decades to keep their land and communities were at risk. The loss of the reserves was phrased as the transfer of lands to the Indian people, and Civil Rights language of equality was the rationalization: “True equality presupposes that the Indian people have the right to full and equal participation in the cultural, social, economic and political life of Canada” (Chretien, 1969a).

A “counter policy” entitled “Citizens Plus” was proposed by the Indian Chiefs of Alberta, led by Harold Cardinal, which addressed point-for-point the white paper. An excerpt reads:

The White Paper Policy said, “that the legislative and constitutional bases of discrimination should be removed.”

We reject this policy. We say that the recognition of Indian status is essential for justice…

The legal definition of registered Indians must remain. If one of our registered brothers chooses, he may renounce his Indian status, become “enfranchised”, receive his share of the funds of the tribe, and seek admission to ordinary Canadian society. But most Indians prefer to remain Indians. We believe
that to be a good useful Canadian we must first be a good, happy and productive Indian. (Indian Chiefs of Alberta, 1970: 192, 193)

In other words, the colonial history and genocidal efforts on the part of the Canadian state to erase indigenous peoples (and their cultures) could not be used as an excuse to construct a false “equality.” Instead, the history was a justification (at the least) for a different version of equality that would somehow allow for indigenous peoples to “remain Indians” while also existing within some form of Canadian sovereignty.

While indigenous resistance movements in Canada had certainly existed in decades past—and make cameos in earlier chapters of this dissertation—, the threat of the White Paper of 1969 was the starting point of the rise of a resistance movement that remains influential today, with traces seen in the contemporary Idle No More movements, as well as longstanding cooperation with the American Indian Movement, black power movements, and a loose affiliation of sympathetic leftist groups. The rise of low cost printing presses made for an ideal situation for making known the meetings of these groups, as well as pertinent events and issues, without having to rely as much on the censorships of the mainstream presses.

In the process of mobilizing resistance to the white paper and related forms of ideology and governance, there was a notable transition in the language used by indigenous peoples to describe themselves and their situation in the world. Words like “indigenous,” “race,” and “colonialism” became more frequent. People began to see that the situations they were in—such as fighting to keep fishing rights in local rivers—were not unique and were in fact common throughout colonial rule of indigenous peoples world-wide, with indigenous newspapers beginning to focus on the struggles of indigenous peoples throughout the world. This jumping of scale of ontological focus from local to both local and global made for a strong jumping-off point for the new social movements.
Newspapers were the form of media that were at the heart of the resistances. At the lowest end, the mimeograph machine was the “social media” of the 1960s (Klumpp, 2015) and served as a low-cost printing press:

The advent of relatively low-cost office spirit duplicators and mimeograph machines [4] democratized the lowest end of printing, and made it possible for unions, churches, and community groups to produce crude flyers composed on typewriters. But the trickier and larger jobs were still in the domain of professionals who had the skills and equipment. Occasionally a sympathetic shop or press operator could slip out a surreptitious tract, but for all intents and purposes public printed agitational documents like posters vanished from the landscape. It’s a remarkable fact that the Civil Rights movement and the Free Speech Movement of 1964 relied on almost every medium but posters. (Cushing, 2011)

Other newspapers used higher quality printing techniques, but no matter the technology, it was through the dissemination of newspapers (both “above ground” and underground) that people all over Canada learned of the struggles of indigenous resistance movements. Given the White Paper of 1969 as the driving force, the rest of this chapter focuses on how this critical historical moment emerged, and how reaction against it was used in indigenous news media to build and bolster resistance movements, all in the context of a shift in scale of understanding of what it meant to be “indigenous.” The subject of news media and indigenous resistance could be a book-length project in itself, so this chapter focuses rather narrowly on five newspapers: the Calumet, Kenomadiwin News, Midnight Sun, the Native People, Akwesasne Notes, and Micmac News, from approximately 1968-1975.

METHOD

This chapter draws on data from six newspapers of varying scopes, regions, and funding. While these journals clearly do not act as a culturally or geographically comprehensive stand-in for the perspectives of all indigenous peoples in Canada, they at the least provide an estimate for
the topics being discussed, and letters from/to the editor provide us with an idea of what was on the minds of many people. The journals are:

1) *Akwesasne Notes*, released sporadically from 1968-1995, “A Journal of native and natural peoples.” In the 1960s, this was an underground journal from the Akwesasne Indian Reserve and its associated reserves/reservations, which was located on both sides of the US/Canada border (New York/Quebec/Ontario). Officially, these made up distinct territorial spaces known as the Saint Regis Mohawk Indian Reservation, the Akwesasne Indian Reserve, and the Canada Akwesasne Indian Reserve.


3) *Calumet*, released from 1968-1972, was the journal of the Union of Ontario Indians.

4) *Micmac News*, 1970 until 1974, was the journal of the Union of Nova Scotia Indians.


The journals (in the form of unindexed microfiches and microfilms) were obtained through a request process at the Library and Archives Canada, in Ottawa. I requested the journals that were available in the system, and while several did not have information, my data consisted of the information that remained in the microfilms and microfiches. One saving grace of the process is that most of the newspapers reused articles from other journals that were not available, so articles from variety of contexts beyond the six news media sources frequently were available for study.

CONSULTATIONS OF 1968

In 1968, Pierre Trudeau campaigned for Prime Minister under the platform of the “Just Society,” one in which “the rights of minorities will be safe from the whims of intolerant majorities” (Trudeau, 1968). Trudeau’s status as Quebecois made him seem an outsider and minority himself to many voters, which included sympathetic portrayals in some newspapers intended for indigenous audiences. Chrétien was also Quebecois and portrayed similarly. On
election, there were certain hopes in the papers that the new liberal administration would revise the Indian Act in a way that would improve the lives of indigenous peoples.

Figure Sixteen: Cartoon (Cardinal, 1969)

Indian Affairs, under the leadership of Chretien, announced that it would soon make changes to the Indian Act, among other things, and would undergo a series of consultations with different indigenous groups. The newspaper *Native People*, which was at the time funded by the provincial government, introduced the consultation program:

The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has announced that consultation will take place in coming months on revisions to the Indian Act. At this state the Indians want to be consulted about what is being done and what has to be done if they are to progress and look after their own community affairs. These meetings will discuss the 34 questions set out in the recently issued discussion handbook, Choosing a Path, issued by the department to all Indian families in Canada. Bands are now selecting spokesmen who will represent them
at the meetings. The question of more independence for the people to run their own affairs depends on how much freedom and opportunity will be granted to enable them to compete and play a meaningful role within the rest of the Canadian Society in the future. Generally, the awareness that Indians had to survive through perseverance in a reserve system has become widespread, and a concern to many Canadians. (Native People, 1968a)

With the acknowledgement that indigenous peoples had to “survive through perseverance” blamed on the reserve system, and language of “independence for the people to run their own affairs,” it harkens back to the usual rationale that the role of the state was to ‘help indigenous peoples help themselves.’

The Indian legislation, constituted almost a century ago to protect the Indians from a progressive society, is now regarded as outdated, and from time to time it has hindered the initiative of the Indians to progress with the rest of society. (Native People, 1968a)

This new brand of leadership which was framed by the paper as a step toward constructing independence for indigenous communities from seemingly outdated anti-progressive measures that indigenous leaders were putting forward in their resistance to Indian Affairs policies:

“In this decade, Indian leadership is emerging across Canada, and Indian spokesmen are expressing concern regarding their rights and requesting better opportunities for their people. It is saddening to state that many of these Indian leaders have rebelled, and because of the past they have labelled the Indian Affairs Branch an enemy which is intended to serve them. The old-hand approach and attitudes of some personnel toward Indians whom they must serve must change, and a more meaningful way of dealing with Indians at their own level must be carried out. It is true that some drastic changes in areas within the Indian Affairs Branch have taken place in which the Indian people are allowed the freedom to set up their own conferences plus other responsibilities with assistance of federal-provincial departments. As the old hand of paternalism toward the Indians weakens and new attitudes prevail, this kind of assistance…” (Native People, 1968b)

At this time, Native People was politically relatively pro-government, finding it “saddening to state that many of these Indian leaders have rebelled” against government policy in their efforts
to improve the lives of indigenous peoples. On the emerging “Red Power” movements, the writer stated “I hear when I go among them – and I go among them often, no talk of ‘Red Power.’ They are not looking for any sort of violence whatsoever to bring their problems forward” (Native People, 1968c). The consultations were framed by the paper as a peaceful way for indigenous leaders to advocate for their communities—while acknowledging that Indian Affairs was a consequence of (in their opinion) outdated efforts by the government “to protect the Indians from a progressive society”—perhaps progressive in the Social Darwinistic sense.

In contrast, the October 15, 1968 issue of *Kenomadiwin News* had the headline “Indian Act Renewed,” and discussed a three-day session on changes to the Indian Act held in August:

The meetings were arranged by R.K Andras Minister Without Portfolio in the Trudeau Government. Mr. Andras has been charged with the task of meeting with Indian people to find out their desires in this matter. The Fort William sessions are part of a series of similar meetings being held coast to coast, to give Indian people the opportunity to express their voices before any changes to the Act are made. *(Kenomadiwin News, 1968a)*

While arranged by a government minister, the country-wide community meeting was an attempt at being a survey of public opinion while the new liberal government looked to revise the existing Indian Act and relevant policies.

Hunting and fishing rights were the main subject of concern for most of the spokesmen for Indian people present. These ancient rights have been abrogated by provincial regulations, and this issue has caused much concern among many Indian Bands in N.W.U.

So strongly do Indian people feel about this matter that the representatives of the Big Trout reserve presented a letter to the meeting which stated flatly that they intend to fish and hunt in accordance with their Treaty rights, regardless of provincial game laws. Mr. Andras, in his opening address, told the meeting that “Hunting and Fishing rights on reserves must be returned.” *(Kenomadiwin News, 1968a)*

The optimistic tone was notable, from the statements of the visiting official, who promised the return of hunting and fishing rights, to the language of the article, which highlighted the ways in which the voices of people at the meeting were being heard by the government. Credit for the
impetus varied. In historical summaries of the events of the White Paper of 1969, it is the actions of white anthropologists like Hawthorn that made the “disadvantage” and “marginalization” of indigenous peoples known. However, there were others stories that shed light on the situation from the perspectives of indigenous activists. Unlike more official histories, credit for the government initiate to address the situation was not given to anthropologists; instead,

*Kenomadiwin News* gave credit to local indigenous activists:

> It’s over, but not over…The Indian-Eskimo Association Conferences, held in September, have lit a fire that is scorching both the Federal and Provincial Governments, and warming the hearts of Indians from coast to coast…

(Kenomadiwin News, 1968b)

The article continued, giving credit to a local leader, Yvonne McRae, for starting a push for the state to pay attention to problems of poverty, schooling, and housing.

> It started right here in Northwestern Ontario. Mrs. Yvonne McRae, the delegate from the Lakehead Chapter of the Indian Eskimo Association, blew the lid off the story of the Indian people in Armstrong. Mrs. McRae told of the problems the Armstrong people have in getting their children into the public school, the bad housing, and the poverty. She scored the Indian Affairs Branch for its callous indifference to the misery [of] Indian people not only in Armstrong, but all over Northern Ontario. (Kenomadiwin News, 1968b)

In this telling of the story, change began locally and then had momentum, gaining nationwide attention, with attention paid to the issues by dignitaries from Andras to Jean Chrétien.

> That started it. Since then; newspaper headlines, television interviews, statements, chargers, counter-charges, & suggestions; have flown thick and fast between Ottawa, Toronto, Armstrong, and all points east and west. The Ontario Indian-Eskimo Association met in London Ontario on September 20-23. The National IEA met a week later in Toronto. The National Indian Brotherhood held its meetings in conjunction with these conferences. The meetings were addressed by Mr. J. Chretien, Minister of Indian Affairs, Mr. R. Andras, M.P. for Port Arthur, Mr. M. Dymond, Minister of Health for Ontario, and other dignitaries.

> Indian and Eskimo people from all over Canada took advantage of this opportunity to speak plainly about the problems of Native people. (Kenomadiwin News, 1968b)
The article continues, lauding the historical importance of the events and the chain reaction that followed:

This was probably the most open, frank, exchange that has ever taken place between Government officials and Indian leaders, in public. The press, radio, and TV were ‘in on’ most of the sessions, with the result that there has been a blast of publicity about Indian and Eskimo problems.

The important thing in all this is that at last, the Indian Affairs Branch is being exposed to public scrutiny and criticism.

For 100 years the Indian Affairs Branch has been entrusted with the responsibility for the lives of Canadian Indians. The record speaks for itself. Poverty, disease, rotten housing, poor education, social misery of every kind, has been the lot of most Canada’s Indian People. (Kenomadiwin News, 1968b)

What followed was a call to action:

The time has come for action to change all this. Indian people are not going to be fooled by a little re-shuffling of people in Branch offices, or the moving of desks from one office to another in Ottawa.

Much greater things are required and expected now. Indian people must be consulted, seriously, about any changes that take place. Indian leaders must be involved in the planning and development of new policies. If Indian Affairs Branch cannot bring itself to become the servant & spokesman of Canada’s Native people, then it should be scrapped; and a new, better type of organization built in its place. (Kenomadiwin News, 1968b)

Political and social organizations that were run by indigenous peoples for indigenous peoples were quite popular at the time, and were often called “brotherhoods.” One of the earliest such organizations (and largest) was the National Indian Brotherhood, which started out first as the League of Indians of Canada in 1919, splitting to become the Indian Association of Alberta and the Protective Association of Saskatchewan Indians in 1938 (Joseph, 2014).

In 1970, the Protective Association of Saskatchewan Indians became the National Indian Brotherhood. These larger-scale organizations—which advocated for the “the needs and rights of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada” (Joseph, 2014)—was also mirrored in the development of smaller-scale local organizations for indigenous communities. For instance, in 1969, a news
article in the *Kenomadiwin News* described the formation of the Northwestern Ontario Native Brotherhood, which “hopes to act as a coordinating body for all Indian and Metis Associations in the region” (Kenomadiwin News, 1969a), which included the Aroland Indian Association, the Red Lake Indian Association, the Armstrong Indian Association, and the Lake Nipigon Metis Association. The article continued, stating the goals of the new organization: “In an interview with Kenomadiwin News Mr. Kelly said that the organization would try to serve all Indian people, young and old, who live in the Lakehead. He hopes to get Omer Peters, Head of the Ontario Union of Indians to attend a meeting of the Brotherhood and to establish close relations with the Union” (Kenomadiwin News, 1969a). That same year, the Edmonton Native Brotherhood Society Women’s Group was formed by female members of the Edmonton Native Brotherhood:

Early in May, a number of women members of the Edmonton Native Brotherhood Society, met to form a Women’s Group….Activities to date include a Father’s Day picnic at which there was a good attendance of families…The group also organized a chartered bus service to the Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage. They were instrumental in bringing about the “Y Neighbors” Program at the Bissell United All People’s Mission, sponsored by the Y.W.C.A…These programs have been gratefully received by the women as an excellent type of recreation and means of getting together. (Native People, 1969a)

An organized event for women in Alberta happened that year, with the Second Annual Conference of Alberta Native Women held for three days, with a slogan “Success with Unity, We are Responsible” (Native People, 1969b). The goals of the conference were summarized in the article:

The ladies have been quietly going about their business, fulfilling their major objectives of: providing a communications organization to the native women; exchanging information amongst various women’s groups and organizations throughout the province; focusing on certain problems and attempting to obtain solutions. They may be summarized by stating that the native women have, in the past year, been organizing at the grass roots level. (Native People, 1969b)
The article tried to place these goals in perspective by emphasizing the conference was still growing:

Being a ‘young’ organization, the Voice of Alberta Native Women cannot boast of a long list of major accomplishments like many firmly established native organizations; however, realizing this, the women are doing first things first, and this point their prime concern is the Second Annual Conference. (Native People, 1969b)

The speakers at the conference illustrate that the conversations that these organizations were having—and the people in them—were already globalized, reflecting shared experiences of indigeneity:

The highlight on the second day is an address by Dr. R. Roessel Jr. of the Navaho Community College in Arizona, who whose topic will be “Education and the Navaho Tribe.” In addition, Mary Ann Lavallee from Broadview, Saskatchewan will speak in the morning on the general topic of native Women, and Frank Belyea from A.R.D.A. will speak on organizations. The keynote speaker for the afternoon will be Mrs. Roessel who will relate her experience with “Navaho Women,” which may give us a chance to compare with the southern native ladies, and she may give constructive ideas that may be implemented in Alberta. (Native People, 1969b)

The “chance to compare with southern native ladies,” while a gendered phrase (just as the earlier phrase that “the ladies have been quietly going about their business”), illustrates the level of scale at which these seemingly local groups were operating. Organizations could be both social and political. Kenomadiwin News, in 1969, wrote an article on the formation of the Aroland Indian Association discussed how the organization formed in response to concerns that the newly formed town of Aroland—which was not officially recognized by the state as a town—would lose rights to the land:

Another Indian community has joined the rapidly – growing ranks of organized Indians in Northwestern Ontario. Aroland, 40 miles north of Geraldton, is unique in this area. It is a village of about 300 people, from various bands in the district. Some are treaty, some non-treaty, some are Metis. The village was started as a result of the people coming into the area to work for Kimberley Clark timber
operations. The land the village occupies is crown land and the people have built an attractive close-knit community there. But they have no Post Office, no electricity, no sewage system, and no central water supply. Actually, the town has no legal status, either as a reserve under Federal jurisdiction, or as a municipality under the Province. The concern that this lack of legal status might result in the loss of their homes, even the loss of their community, brought about the formation of the new Aroland Indian Association. (Kenomadiwin News, 1969b)

An attendee of the meeting of the organization was quoted as saying: “These people are the greatest. They aren’t looking for handouts, but they sure as hell want the services they are entitled to, and they want reserve status for the community they have built. It is up to us to see that they get these things” (Kenomadiwin News, 1969b).

Organizations like this was necessary, especially in times of crisis, and with the colonial state frequently seeking to adjust policies to aid its own interest. For instance, in the context of a struggle between a Mohawk community that was split by the Canada / U.S. border into a reserve on the Canadian side and a reservation on the U.S. side, indigenous news media played a role in publicizing the issue. In an article in Kenomadiwin News titled “Mohawks vs. Canadian Gov’t,” the article summarized the situation as it was happening.

The Mohawk Indians of St. Regis Reserve near Cornwall, Ontario are still in the middle of their fight with the Canadian government. On Dec. 18, they blockaded the international bridge which spans the St. Lawrence River between Reserve lands in Canada and the United States. The reason for their action was that the customs officials had recently begun to charge import duties on the goods purchased in the United States by St. Regis Indians. The Jay Treaty, which the Mohawk nation signed in 1794, guaranteed that Indians would never be required to pay custom duties. First, the Mohawks blockaded the bridge by parking their cards in the roadway. When police tried to tow them away, the Indians linked arms and forty of them were arrested. After four hours the bridge was open but the whole country knew why the Indians had acted. They were not going to be cheated again. (Kenomadiwin News, 1969c)

After describing the conflict over the customs office, the newspaper went into the historical context:
The Supreme Court of Canada decided in 1956 that the Jay Treaty, upon which the Indians base their claim, was not official because the government had not ratified it. Then, the Revenue Department waited 12 years before it ordered border guards to enforce the “law”. Like many other treaties which have been broken by the whiteman, the Jay Treaty was signed by the ruling monarch of England and by the Mohawk chiefs. It was supposed to be effective “as long as the sun still shines, the rivers still flow, and the grass still grows”. But now the white man wants to forget about his side of the bargain. He also wants to forget that it was the Mohawks who prevented the capture of Canada by the United States in the War of 1812. (Kenomadiwin News, 1969c)

This description of the past which led the moment of struggle over the border customs office was definitely political in bent, with the issue placed in context of broken treaties by “the white man.” Furthermore, the article played toward nationalist sympathies with its reference to the Mohawk defense of the U.S. invasion in the War of 1812. Included in the article was the following photo of a police officer, captioned “Police ‘Pacifying’ Indians at Cornwall”:

![Figure Seventeen: Police “Pacifying” Indians at Cornwall](image)

Speaking broadly, the article writer editorialized:

The Indians will not forget these things – and they will not be kicked around. At last report many white men were coming in on the side of the Indians and saying
that the law must be changed and that the treaty must be honoured. All this has
happened because some Indians took it on themselves to block a bridge and to get
arrested. “We are born free, we may go where we please, and buy and sell where
we please,” insisted the Mohawk leader Garangula 200 years ago. Today, his
people still say the same thing. (Kenomadiwin News, 1969c)

One of the newspapers in these data, Akwesasne Notes, formed in response to this border crisis.

It was based out of the St. Regis reserve. With headlines such as “Police Break Cornwall Island
Siege, At Least 40 Indians Arrested” (Akwesasne Notes, 1969a), the newspaper was a strong
advocate for the activists who were pushing against the new customs office. Handwritten at the
bottom of the article, in marker, was the phrase “…so we act, and the world hears.”

![Handwritten Image]

Figure Eighteen: Handwritten (Akwesasne Notes, 1969a)

Even before the White Paper of 1969, it is evident from these data that indigenous activism and
the formation of associations had a rich history of resistance. In the context of the consultation
meetings that were ongoing throughout 1969, perhaps indigenous activists were strongly
positioned enough in the public dialog that visibly engaging with them during the process of
revising the Indian Acts was seen as politically necessary in the court of public opinion.

The following submission from the Alberta delegates (led by Cardinal) summarized the
opinions of many of the activists:

Delegates representing all Indians in the Province of Alberta attending this
conference do hereby resolve and proclaim that to be satisfactory to them, the
revised Indian Act must contain under the heading, Legal Rights, a new Section
which will make clear for all time, Her Majesty’s determined resolutions to
remove all reasonable cause for discontent by providing adequate and permanent
safeguards related to the promises contained in our Treaties under the following sub-headings:

1. Hunting, Trapping & Fishing
2. Education
3. Medical Services
4. Land and furthermore
5. Economic Development (Native People, 1969c)

They argued that indigenous peoples in Canada to be allowed to hunt according to the initial treaties and not according to provincial or local law, that education should be free and representative, that health care should be free and accessible, and “That Indians living on a reserve shall be given one square mile of land (640 acres) for every family of five” (Native People, 1969c). The strong position of these delegates reflected the concerted efforts by activists to use the state’s goal of revising the Indian Act to increase indigenous self-determination and sovereignty. The article in *Native People* that discusses these statement concludes:

> It was interesting and encouraging for the Indian spokesman to hear the comments made by the Minister. It appears that the Indian people will have to wait and see over the next few months whether action will follow the new thinking and the new attitude of the Trudeau government. (Native People, 1969c)

Even in a newspaper that had a year earlier expressed that it was “saddening to state that many of these Indian leaders have rebelled, and because of the past they have labelled the Indian Affairs Branch an enemy which is intended to serve them” (Native People, 1968b) was by this point expressing skepticism that the government would follow through, instead arguing that “the Indian people will have to wait and see.”

**REACTIONS TO THE WHITE PAPER OF 1969**
When the White Paper of 1969 was issued by the Trudeau administration, indigenous activists and associations mobilized in reaction. The Union of Ontario Indians, for example, responded with a lengthy “Statement to the Hon. Jean Chretien,” which read (in part):

Due to the strongly-expressed concern by Members of the Union of Ontario Indians to the proposed Policy which you submitted, Mr. Minister, the Union of Ontario Indians wishes now to express some alternatives which we, the Indian people of Ontario, believe would be more in tune with the hopes and wishes of our people. The past policies were in no way conducive to our development, and as a result the Indian people have suffered poverty and deprivation. This cannot be allowed to persist, and your Policy Statement holds no more hope for the future your government cannot legislate the Indian out of existence no more than you can legislate bigotry and racism out of the non-Indian population. (Calumet, 1969)

The Union of Ontario Indians suggested alternative to the white paper, including restoration of indigenous land rights “At no time must the jurisdiction of Indian Lands be allowed to be transferred to the provincial governments” (Calumet, 1969). In contrast to the attempt by the state to use language of freedom and equality to removed indigenous rights completely from the legal system, the Union suggested that they obtain actual freedom to self-determination. Similarly, the Kenomadiwin News summarized a meeting about the white paper attended by Chretien: “Angry Ontario Indians accused Indian Affairs Minister Jean Chretien to his face of trying to exterminate their race thru his proposed policy to give Indians equality with other Canadians” (Kenomadiwin News, 1969d).

The President of the Union of Ontario Indians, Wilmer Nadjiwan, was quoted as saying the white paper was a “divisive action to get rid of Indian people” and “an extermination sentence” (Kenomadiwin News, 1969d). At the meeting, Chretien responded to these claims saying that the structures of lies, incompetence, and white supremacy were indeed in existence, but perpetuated by the Indian Affairs office—which was “why [he] want[ed] to end it,” with it being government “say in Indian affairs” (Kenomadiwin News, 1969d). In an article that gave
voice to Chretien’s views, he was quoted as saying that the white paper emerged out a goal to end the “trustee relationship developed between the central government and the Indian people of a highly paternalistic nature” (Kenomadiwin News, 1969e) and that “The policy is founded on the belief that Canada should be free of discrimination, People must not be kept apart from one another by artificial barriers” (Kenomadiwin News, 1969e).

The official goal of removing the so-called “artificial barriers” could be regarded an early example of “colorblind” policy being used to erase indigenous gains in the legal system, as well as hard-won claims to land rights and title. This language could also be found in smaller-scale interactions. At a community meeting in Igloolik, located in what is now Nunavut,

The outspoken Gordon Gibson, appointed Member of the Council from Vancouver said the motion, if approved could have bad effects in that it divided people into groups. “We are all Canadians,” he said, “and we are all entitled to the same treatment.” In Hawaii, where he interests, Mr. Gibson said there was no division between the races—and this, he hoped, would be the outcome in Canada. All Canadians, no matter what colour their skin, should share in the development of resources. “We must find a way to give our Native people equal opportunity with all Canadians, no more and no less,” the Vancouver lumberman insisted. “We can not ask for a separate set of books to be kept for each of our races.” (Midnight Sun, 1969)

This type of argument against “separate books” overlooked the ways in which state treatment of indigenous peoples was invidiously different than white people in the Canadian colonial context. The call by Gibson to the Hawaiian context is especially interesting, giving how far from true such claims were, but their purpose was clear—the idyllic false portrayal of another setting of colonial treatments of indigenous peoples (this time in Hawaii) worked to ignore the past in favor of a perniciously framed “equal opportunity” in the present.

The newspaper Native People released a statement from Chretien in an article titled “Chretien Defends Policy statement.” In this article, Chretien claims:
For a long time now Indian people have been asking for the right to manage their own affairs in the same way as other Canadians, for equal treatment and opportunity with other Canadians. They have asked for an end to bureaucratic control of their lives, for an end to paternalism. Other Canadians have said the same things on the Indians’ behalf. This is why the Government has proposed to end the federal trusteeship of Indian land, to return the land to the Indian people, to phase out the Department of Indian Affairs, to repeal the Indian Act and to work with the provincial government to ensure that Indian people are treated as full Canadian citizens by being treated as citizens of the province in which they reside.

We as a Government were faced with a basic choice: We could keep on with the existing framework, knowing full well that this set Indian people apart and hindered their development, or we could change the existing framework to enable Indian people to be free—free to develop Indian cultures in an environment of legal, social and economic equality with other Canadians. (Chretien, 1969b)

He suggested that the new policy was the result of the consultations that had happened across the nation, with the goal to reconcile mistakes of the colonial past with the acknowledge that indigenous peoples wanted control over their own lives—which, in this framing, was not the same as true self-determination:

The Government chose to try to break the pattern of 200 years and change the existing framework. It did so knowing that the proposals would be controversial. It did so knowing that the proposals were not the solution to the so-called "Indian problem," knowing that the only real solutions would be those which came from within the Indian community itself. It did so knowing that if it did not make these proposals and did not try to break the existing pattern it would be avoiding the basic Issues. After a year of intensive consultations and review of past policies, it became clear that the existing framework under which Indian people were governed was wrong. It was wrong because it discriminates against people on the basis of race and set them apart. It was wrong because it denied one group of citizens in this country the same freedom to manage their own affairs as other Canadians have. (Chretien, 1969b)

Use of the word “Canadians” set a framework in which the goals of sovereignty were not part of the discussion. In that same issue, Native People included a rebuttal from Leroy Little Bear of the Blood Reserve titled “When? When…A reaction to the Proposed New Indian Policy.” In it, Little Bear wrote
When will you stop kidding yourself that my lot will be Improved if I become a white man? That I am hindering my own progress by remaining Indian? You are telling me that out of a clear blue sky you finally got the answer to all these 'problems' that you have made for me . . . the answer being so worthwhile and all-solving that all past experience can be disregarded ... the answer being "shoving responsibilities on somebody else ... erasing the Indian from your conscience." I will consider your policy only, and only when, in proportion, to the amount of correction of past Injustices. (Little Bear, 1969)

That issue of *Native People* also included a reprint of an article by Don Taylor, editor of the journal *Tapwe*, titled “The White Paper for White People from the White Elephant.” In it, he states:

The particular "road to hell" along which Canada's Indian people have been prodded over the years may have lacked many things. But there was never any shortage of "good intentions" in the composition of its pavement. I don't mean to suggest that bad intentions are preferable. Good intentions are fine... provided there is satisfactory resolution of the questions: Good for whom, and good by whose standards? ...One only has to read through the white paper to recognize it as the creation of the Department's public relations councillors, its Image purifiers and its dialectical acrobats who endeavour (with little success) to convince all and sundry that the benevolent government is about to give the native people something which they have not possessed before. They are to receive equality ... on one condition. They must give up all they hold worthwhile and "participate" in the cultural, Social, economic and political life that is designed for them by Ottawa. In other words, they are to be booted into the mainstream of the Canadian rat race. At the same time, they are being told, they are to be allowed to cling to and preserve their own cultural heritage. (Taylor, 1969)


It is apparent to us that while there was a show of consultation, neither the Minister nor his Department really heard and understood the Indian people. On having heard and understood, they chose to follow the well beaten trail of the past decades and ignore our views. The Hawthorn-Tremblay Report, which was commissioned by the Department of Indian Affairs, stated that the position of the Indian people was unique in the Canadian society; that by aboriginal, residual and statutory rights we were more than just citizens of Canada— this too the Department chooses to ignore. The policy statement was prepared unilaterally. There was no negotiation with Indian people, not was any part of the policy discussed with Indian people while the Minister's office was preparing it... Throughout the consultation period we reiterated that the Government must afford constitutional recognition of existing Treaties and obligations at
which time the Indian people would meet in good faith with the government to clarify the meaning and intent of existing agreements. This would create a mutual sense of crust and respect so long missing in Indian-Government relations, and would enable us to proceed with the evolution of a new policy. The Minister’s policy statement appears to be a departure from the year’s consultations. We view this as a policy designed to divest us of our aboriginal, residual and statutory rights. If we accept this policy, and in the process lose our rights and our lands, we become willing partners in cultural genocide. This we cannot do. (National Indian Brotherhood, 1969).

This idea that the white paper would lead to cultural genocide was a popular argument against the new policy. Harold Cardinal, in his book *Unjust Society*, wrote “In spite of all government attempts to convince Indians to accept the white paper, their efforts will fail, because Indians understand that the path outlined by the Department of Indian Affairs through its mouthpiece, the Honourable Mr. Chrétien, leads directly to cultural genocide. We will not walk this path” (UBC, 2016). Similarly, in the *Calumet*, an article from 1970 claimed “With equality, all that will be owned and controlled by the white man, he will then be benevolent to us until all traces of our race have vanished. With Racial Equality, there will be total genocide of the aboriginal peoples. All this being done without physical force or bullets” (Calumet, 1970).

The organizations that united against the white paper found themselves successful as the government retracted the policy. A “younger generation of leaders” (UBC, 2016) including Cardinal, Rose Charlie of the Indian Homemaker’s Association, and Don Moses of the North American Indian Brotherhood, wrote a paper they titled the “Brown Paper” which rejected the claims of the white paper at a national conference (UBC, 2016):

The White Paper versus Red Paper dispute contributed to the mobilization of the contemporary Aboriginal rights movement. Four national Aboriginal associations and thirty-three separate provincial organizations emerged in the aftermath of the controversy. Many of these groups were pioneers in organizing Aboriginals beyond the local level for the first time. The Alberta Native Federation, Alberta Native Youth Society, Treaty Voice of Alberta, and the Native Human Rights Association alone were formed between 1968 and 1972. Indian friendship centres multiplied across the province and the country. (Canada’s Rights History, 2016)
This mobilization was part of the growth of a worldwide indigenous rights movement in a host of colonial contexts, including AIM in the United States and Aboriginal rights movements in Australia and New Zealand.

AFTER THE WHITE PAPER
This increase in the number of organizations that began in the 1960s reflected a shift in which the socially constructed category of “indigenous” became a clearly global category, with news media focusing on right issues in a multiplicity of contexts.
Kuletz (1998) noted how gatherings of indigenous activists—forming “networks at the margins”—offered “a chance [for them] to make contact with one another” (156) in ways which help overcome the at times vast differences between the allied people, both racially and concerning overall goals. There are multiplicity of goals and voices among seemingly like-minded groups of people, in this case indigenous activists in the process of organization, and the act of meeting and organizing helps bridge boundaries between people.
Through these shared processes of differentiation across the world, there emerged what Chad Allen (2012) calls the *transindigenous*, or shared indigenous knowledge, histories, and practices that reflect the "realities and representations" of indigenous "movements, connections, identities, and representations that are not simply tribal, intertribal, and inter- or transnational" but jump across scales and histories in contradictory and co-determining ways (Allen, xxxiii). This leap can be summarized by a word cloud containing a variety article titles sampled from headlines from *Akwesasne* Notes from 1969-1970:

Figure Twenty: Word Cloud

Words like “liberation,” “overcome,” and “red/power” provide a sense of the mobilization that occurred. Other words—“genocide,” “dead,” and “massacre” provide a sense of the struggles
that still would go on. And words like “America,” “Amazon,” “Michigan,” and “Peru” speak to the transindigenous scale that—though it had perhaps always existed in the periods before 1969/1970—become codified and structurally more distinctive as the struggle against the White Paper mobilized indigenous activists and associations.
REFERENCES


CHAPTER EIGHT
CONCLUSION

This thesis examined the relationship between (often coerced) indigenous participation in Canadian schools and the emergence of transnational indigenous social movements in the 1960s and 1970s. Before the 1960s, social movements were predominantly local, consisting of informal strikes or parents’ withholding of children from school. Education and work were the primary modes of assimilation, with school systems remained a locus of contestation. Efforts by the government to integrate schools were criticized by activists for abuse, neglect, and cultural genocide. By the 1970s, indigenous activists had organized, building alliances with global actors, including Black Power movements, feminist movements, and U.S. community organizers. Contemporary indigenous politics in Canada was rooted in a century of contested assimilationist efforts in the everyday sites of school and work.

From the late 19th-century until the present, education became the primary vehicle for assimilation and social control. The “life process” of indigenous people became regulated at the scale of the body, with an emphasis on transforming childhood through systems of education, beginning with residential schools. There was still a focus on childhood as the beginning of these processes of control, with children taken from their homes and placed in assimilationist residential schools that emphasized vocational training and Christian conversion.

By using schools as the primary mode of assimilationist efforts, the Canadian state emphasized the social construction of childhood as a means to transform indigenous children. Indigenous adults were seen as lazy while the children were seen as possible to transform—both their bodies and their minds—at school. In most cases, these schools and systems resembled
“total institutions,” in which the body itself was remade in a new likeness, with the mind presumably to follow. These total institutions had mechanisms of punishment as well as reward. Fundamentally, childhood was seen as a way to erase such things as indigenous language, culture, and appearance and replace them with “European” and especially British ideals. These school systems often resulted in death by disease—especially tuberculosis—, physical and sexual abuse, beatings, physical isolation, and long-term structural violence effects of mental illness and alcoholism. Childhood itself became a contested form of knowledge, where indigenous childhood was seen as pagan and wrong while British childhood was seen as Christian and right.

Rather than attempt to cover the whole of experience for indigenous peoples in North America during the 20th century, I limited the scope of my research to the struggles of indigenous peoples within the context of the Canadian state, particularly in regards to the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which formed in 2008 and completed in 2015. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission focuses on the impact of Residential Schools on indigenous children, who—in the name of assimilation and conversion—were removed from their families and subjected to abuse, disease, Christian conversion efforts, and spatial isolation in schools which were usually run by Christian organizations.

When I initially developed this project, I expected that the project would stay loosely within the discipline of the sociology of education. I saw myself primarily as an education scholar whose aim was to follow theorists such as Althusser and Poulantzas in investigating the coercive role of the ideological state apparatuses that we casually refer to as schools. In the process of doing research, I ultimately concluded that one could not separate schools from the colonial contexts that gave rise to them, and that even with educational systems being a primary focus of this research project. Current discussions of these issues has constructed a “forest from
the trees” situation whereby current debates focused on addressing the rights of indigenous peoples in Canada has centered around residential schools and how these institutions mistreated students instead of examining the situation in historical context.

With this centering on the harm done to the bodies and minds of individual students, a “woundedness narrative” emerges. This narrative requires proof of injustice to individuals within a legal system based upon British common law, which takes attention away from other ways in which indigenous peoples were harmed, such as the social and material ramifications of land use and land rights which so often were the major focus of indigenous resistance efforts. Indeed, this is where a sociological approach is most helpful, since sociology is one approach that studies ways in scales collide, and ways in which the agencies of individual peoples (the “trees”) intersect (often in asymmetrical manners) with the “forests” of institutions, whether hegemonic cultural ones such as whiteness, or more material ones such as the Anglican church. In addition, this process extricates (with surgical precision) the issues of harm done to indigenous bodies from larger scale issues that are important to not just the historical context but to the goals of indigenous activists and social organizations: indigenous rights and sovereignties, which are not part of the solution-making process given the process has to be “legal” and therefore within systems of colonial sovereignty.

While narratives of the residential school experience have focused largely on trauma, abuse, and the ways in which indigenous cultures were lost in the schooling system, the actual experience of students was much more complex. Such contradictions should not be overlooked; at the least, they should be critically examined. First of all, by some counts only half of children of age to attend residential schools actually were enrolled in the schools, even in their prime in the 1930s (Glenn, 2011: 79). Going against claims that the residential schools diluted indigenous
cultural identities, or broke apart indigenous families, Glenn (2011) discusses how in fact there were “overlooked benefits” (79) that accompanied these efforts on the part of the Canadian state to control indigenous identities: children made friends with children in other tribes, contemporary Indian and First Nations cultural events were created by alumni trained in musical instruments, and the breaking down of tribal differences in fact contributed to the pan-tribal indigenous social movements that began in the 1960s and into today (Glenn, 2011: 70-80). This argument is an example of the institutional argument that ties the emergence of broad indigenous self-identification with the successful breaking down of local tribal identities.

Furthermore, some students appreciated the education that they received, claiming “the attitudes and skills associated with working hard, and working well, did carry over into adult life” (Glenn, 2011: 80). From the 1940s-1980s, the leadership in First Nations political groups were largely graduates of residential schools (Glenn, 2011: 80). That said, some of these counter-claims might not hold up to scrutiny. Glenn admits that the Canadian residential schools were more poorly funded and more unilaterally Christian conversionist than their American counterparts (78). In my opinion, the existence of post-residential school leadership and social movements does not necessarily confirm the success of the system but at the most is a portrayal of these schools as sites of resistance as well as domination.

It seems with the case of day, integrated and residential schools that any single literature is necessarily inadequate: by foregrounding a certain aspect of such a complicated and at times contradictory system of both education and incarceration, other factors become sidelined. Just as the sociology of education does not take into account the residential schools as systems of incarceration, the sociology of incarceration makes little room for the complexities of residential schools as systems of vocational education. Neither approach takes seriously the role of
culture—especially in the case of the work of the missionaries—and neither connects discussion of the state as a racialized and gendered colonial project that instituted total institutions, sites of subjectification, the microtechniques of rule, and everyday practices. The narrative of residential schools shifts depending on which actors are telling the story, from educators and missionaries who often seemed truly convinced that what they were doing was good, to narratives of death and abuses told by students and activists, and other students who felt that day and residential schools had been adequate in the education that they offered. From the very beginning the situation has been both materially and culturally complex: day and residential schools came into being in the context of a food crisis in indigenous communities, a global British Commonwealth, and Canadian expansionism.

Contemporary research on residential schools has focused more on demonstrating the existence of trauma in the student experience than any methodical study of the relationship between student experience, the institutions and policies governing it, and indigenous identities. This focus on trauma is a refraction of the institutionalist approach: by focusing only on acts committed to the bodies and minds of students, there is little discussion of indigenous agency in identity formation. Equally lacking in the sociologies of education, incarceration, and the state is much room for indigenous theoretical perspectives, or much effort to tie the study of day and residential schools together. These perspectives (including current research on residential schools) paint an incomplete picture with omissions of power and colonialism and perhaps most tellingly the way that the focus on trauma and accountability reifies the nation-state without connecting to broader structures and practices of colonialism. Even when colonialism is discussed, it is assumed to exist in the form “salt water doctrine” colonialism: colonialism is assumed to exist across bodies of water, in the traditional European sense, and foremost a
capitalist system, rather than as a system of domination, exploitation, and shared practices between colonial states and subjects. The reality is much more complex than existing paradigmatic explanations.

According to Glenn (2011), the forced spatial isolation and breaking down of identities by institutions was responsible for the dissolution of “band” identities and therefore responsible for emergent social movements that hinged on recognizance of shared indigeneity. The subsequent decentralization of residential schools post-1945 might have also played a role, spreading the shared knowledge of the residential school experience across Canada. An alternate explanation, following Lyons (2010), might be that indigenous students and communities might have had an agentic role in this transformation of their personal, family, and tribal identities. Identities might have been negotiated rather than truly broken apart and rebuilt. The construction of residential schools as a social problem in the latter half of the twentieth century might have been an outcome of this negotiation.

This dissertation focused on Canadian day, integrated and residential schools in three periods, primarily their mid-twentieth century transition from “total institutions” during the era of retreat (1910—1945) to more contradictory decentralized educational systems during the post-war “era of integration” (1945-1971), in connection to the “era of self-determination” of the contemporary period (1971-the present). I tied together the broad and often contradictory processes of assimilation, conversion, isolation, and eventual decentralization that made up 20th century indigenous and settler colonial history, bringing together the role of teaching in constructing subjectivities, the evolution of contemporary politics of recognition, the failure and eventual scrapping of the “total institution” model of education, and the three-tiered intersection of student experiences with institutional processes of vocational training, diet, pedagogy, policy
and at the broadest state policies of assimilation, and later, integration.

Before the era of integration, vocational training was the most important institutional aspect of residential schooling. At Blue Quill, for instance, students had a half-day work system that was abandoned by the 1950s (Adams, 1988: 100). The purpose of such a heavy emphasis on vocational training was to prepare indigenous children for assimilation into white society (Coates in Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill, 1986a). By the era of integration, this emphasis on vocational training began to lose its luster for government officials: it was clear that what little idealism was left by educators and missionaries to construct equality between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples through educational systems and assimilationist training was fading. Equality through assimilation had failed; instead, during the era of integration there was a push to decentralize school systems for indigenous children, which led to the emergence of two contradictory patterns. For the state, there was a more explicit focus on remaking indigenous family and social structures, and for indigenous communities there was a broad social movement that pushed for self-determination and relative autonomy in schooling, amidst a growing debate on who was to control the educational process.

In addition to critically examining the relationship between the joint educative/carceral structure of residential schools and the ensuing reconfiguration of indigenous identities in the context of an emergent transimperial indigenous politics, by investigating these three periods I will examine a theoretical question integral to the study of settler colonial educational systems but relatively unexamined in case studies of boarding school systems for indigenous children in settler colonial states: why do we take for granted that the solution to social problems caused by educational systems lies in altering or fixing problem systems? Can schooling practices be anything other than coercive? Education has generally been understood to be an answer to
inequality in work, health, and the life process; by improving access to education, it has been understood that we can improve the lives of people. Research on residential schools has uncritically taken for granted the necessity of educational systems. Part of this lies in the construction of the residential school as a “social problem” (Marres, 2012) with a limited set of possible solutions in liberal states: a shift in school structure, perhaps, or of late the introduction of talk of healing rather than government accountability following the 350-million-dollar settlement agreement.

The social problem of how to fix schools mirrors the policy-oriented nature of the sociology of education and incarceration, with a concern to produce usable research in an environment where policy recommendations are what policymakers want to hear. Policy moves within the bounds of the possible and the permissible. Instead of questioning the underlying purposes of social institutions, research on systems of education and incarceration focus on altering how schools work—small alterations of existing practices are much more possible than any calls to excise colonial practice from indigenous education, especially with the pervasiveness of capitalist systems of work. Not only does policy deal with the possible, but (omitted in much of the literature) policy-oriented studies speak to those who write policy, which in this case are a largely white audience with a limited interest in the subject to begin with, and no interest in wholly dismantling forms of government. This concern with certain kinds of research echoes concerns in Brown’s (1995) work on “states of injury,” or how movements to make life better for marginalized populations within liberal states works to further solidify the types of subjectivities that are being contested, overlooking the role of the capitalist state as a site of domination. Across scholarship on indigenous studies, demonstrations of “woundedness” are required for actors to successfully make rights claims.
Colonial knowledge systems are hierarchical, with cultural constructions of what has value and what does not, and what is visible and what is not. According to Kuletz (1998), the politics of (in)visibility speaks to larger cultural politics at play in which colonial systems of knowledge require that indigenous groups appoint leaders to represent community interests; however, this leader-based approach not only constructs expectations of certain forms of “expert knowledge” imbued with value, but fails to make visible resistance in the form of non-participation, which is a common form of resistance. Crucially, there is an “evidential politics of presence” at work in which colonial knowledge systems interpret the “visible” with the “valuable,” and if there is not enough visibility, the presence of counter-claims such as indigenous rights and sovereignties are not given equal attention by the state. Following Kuletz (1998), it is critical that anyone engaging in the process of knowledge production—myself included—acknowledge that there are subjectivities at every scale of analysis, and that “our representations of the world have great power” (287). Furthermore, the “evidential politics of presence” often requires framing resistance in ways which allow negotiation with state actors, which requires the resisting subject to give in to state power.

In this work, I brought to light one way in which colonial states construct a cycle of circular logic in which educational systems (and other institutions) are seen as the givers of solutions to colonial problems, which becomes justification for further colonial intervention. The past of assimilationist schooling was made into a social problem to be fixed through the alteration of existing practices of education rather than by other means. This social problem—and its related symbols, meanings, and cultural objects—was mobilized by indigenous groups and activists, the Canadian and regional governments, and Anglican and Catholic churches in the ongoing contemporary debate about healing and accountability. Eventually, these shared
symbols contributed to the emergence of transindigenous identities and politics in the context of resistance in the wake of the White Paper of 1969.

Wolfe (2006) suggests that though European settler colonialism and genocide have often gone together, the genocidal outcomes of settler colonialism did not develop “evenly” (387). Instead, each context brought about a set of circumstances that were different from other contexts, and each set of circumstances had “logics of elimination” (Wolfe, 387). In Canada, the logics of elimination took several forms, from systems of indentured work to material exploitation to the education of indigenous children.

Canadian policies toward indigenous populations are situated within a greater context of a two-sided settler colonial structure in which a new European social structure was brought into a region while purposefully seeking to eradicate the existing social structure: “invasion is a structure not an event” (Wolfe, 388). For the most part, the attitude of Canadian policy-makers and elites in the late 19th and early 20th century was rooted in an idea of “progress” that assumed that the indigenous populations within their sovereignties were fading and doomed to extinction. If the settler states just waited long enough, they would be rid of the problems of managing these “unfit” indigenous populations. Disease, intermarriage, sterilization, and isolation were supposed to effectively remove the issue (and the people) entirely following Social Darwinist logics. For these reasons, the processes of invasive settler colonialism corresponded with processes of genocide, while furthering goals and processes of material exploitation, such as taking away land or the construction of an indigenous worker class.

Schools for indigenous children often were coercive systems of education and incarceration that worked to break apart families, identities, and cultures. Positioned at the intersection of the sociology of education and incarceration, the state, and critical indigenous
theory, this thesis critically examined the consequences of these assimilationist systems and
policies—intended and unintended—, namely the emergence of transindigenous identities and
politics during the mid- to late-20th century. By linking together schools and histories of
indigenous resistance (from the quietly everyday to the very public) were linked together, I
investigated how schools became symbols of shared history and sources of mobilization for
contemporary First Nations communities and transindigenous social movements.
The goal of this thesis, most broadly, was to assist in telling a more accurate story—providing
archival data that relates to the emergence of contemporary issues of indigenous sovereignty and
resistance, mostly (but not exclusively) in the context of interactions with the Canadian state. If
anything, while my methods were historical-archival, the goal of the research process was to
provide data to help mediate between the general public, activists, and policy-makers.
This thesis linked together the studies of education with broader issues of sovereignty,
assimilation, and oppression, while placing the education of indigenous peoples in the context of
processes of genocide, assimilation, and the emergence of transindigenous resistance
movements. Ultimately, it placed assimilationist schooling in historical context, painting a better
picture of the contradictory logics of the capitalist colonial state and how indigenous actors
engaged in lifelong processes of assimilation and resistance.
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