

**THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ABORIGINAL DEPENDENCY:  
A CRITIQUE OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES**

**FRANCES WIDDOWSON**

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy

Graduate Programme in Political Science  
York University  
Toronto, Ontario

February 2006



Library and  
Archives Canada

Bibliothèque et  
Archives Canada

Published Heritage  
Branch

Direction du  
Patrimoine de l'édition

395 Wellington Street  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

395, rue Wellington  
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4  
Canada

*Your file* *Votre référence*  
*ISBN: 978-0-494-19791-2*  
*Our file* *Notre référence*  
*ISBN: 978-0-494-19791-2*

**NOTICE:**

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

**AVIS:**

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

---

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

  
**Canada**

## ABSTRACT

The continuing dependency of Canada's aboriginal population has resulted in widespread impoverishment and deplorable living conditions for Natives in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. This has prompted a number of initiatives to study the problem so that it can be understood and addressed. The most significant was the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, which produced a substantial *Final Report* analyzing the problem and providing numerous recommendations for its resolution. This report maintained that the solution to aboriginal dependency did not lie in encouraging aboriginal peoples to become integrated into the wider Canadian society, but in a strategy of revitalizing parallel aboriginal economies, political systems and cultures. Such advocacy of "parallelism", however, was based on a flawed approach to the study of history. Because of its preoccupation with symbolically recognizing the claims of aboriginal organizations, the Royal Commission failed to consider the differences in productivity, scale and complexity between aboriginal groups and the European nation-states that shaped aboriginal and non-aboriginal relations in Canada's historical development. This gap in development impacted the aboriginal population differently depending upon the evolving requirements of capitalism during Canada's history. In the early mercantilist phase of Canadian development, aboriginal peoples became integral participants because their hunting and gathering practices could be easily incorporated into the emerging economic system. Farming and industrialization, however, required much more productive, disciplined and organized forms of labour, necessitating a radical transformation of aboriginal cultures. And because the industrial revolution occurred relatively late in Canada, it was more profitable to import surplus skilled European labour than to actively facilitate native development. It was more cost effective to subsidize reserves than to devote the resources necessary to incorporate hunting and gathering/horticultural cultures into a more complex economy and society. This political economy of aboriginal dependency provides a serious challenge to the Royal Commission's recommendations for addressing the problem. It shows that the Royal Commission's strategy of building economies in isolated areas and restoring cultural traditions cannot be the solution for aboriginal dependency since it will impede native participation in the more productive and complex Canadian economy and society.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are a number of people who I would like to thank who made the completion of this dissertation possible. Firstly, I would like to thank my dissertation supervisor, Prof. Leo Panitch, whose intellectual integrity, professionalism, and dedication to teaching led him to spend a great deal of effort in providing the guidance needed to write such a challenging thesis. Prof. Greg Albo, Prof. Robert MacDermid and Prof. Malcolm Blincow also should be commended for their input, not to mention their courage in allowing such controversial views to be put forward for public debate. Prof. Alan Cairns also has shown me through his actions that it is important to state what one thinks is true, even if it provokes a hostile reaction.

A number of colleagues and friends also should be thanked. Tiziana Carafa, Darrel Furlotte, Tom Graham, Andrew Hodgkins, Dennis Pilon and Nancy Rempel all offered encouragement and important insights throughout the years. In addition, the Department of History and Politics at the University of New Brunswick at Saint John and the Division of Social Science at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College (Memorial University) provided stimulating intellectual environments for me to develop my ideas.

In terms of my family, I would like to thank my father and mother, Ann and Tom Widdowson, for putting up with endless discussions concerning what became the arguments in this dissertation. Tom Widdowson was particularly helpful in critiquing some of the ideas presented in various chapters.

Finally, special gratitude is owed to my husband, Albert Howard, who has provided me with the moral and intellectual support needed to strive for the truth. It is often difficult to prevent oneself from confusing popularity with validity in these postmodern times, and he was essential in enabling me to understand the difference. Without his input and encouragement, this dissertation could not have been written.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Abstract</b>	iv
<b>Introduction</b>	1
<b>PART I</b>	
<b>UNDERSTANDING THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC BASIS OF ABORIGINAL DEPENDENCY</b>	
1. The Royal Commission's Politicized Conception of Aboriginal Dependency	31
2. The Problem of History	75
3. Postmodernism versus Progress	135
4. Uneven & Combined Development and Canadian Political Economy	189
<b>PART II</b>	
<b>ABORIGINAL PARTICIPATION IN THE FUR TRADE, AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY INDUSTRIALIZATION</b>	
5. Mercantile "Cooperation" during the Fur Trade	245
6. Displacement and the Limits of Agricultural and Industrial Assimilation	324
7. The Failure of Aboriginal Farming and Native Proletarianization	386
<b>PART III</b>	
<b>THE CURRENT STATE OF ABORIGINAL DEPENDENCY AND THE POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH</b>	
8. Negotiating a Renewed Dependency	444
9. The False Promise of Parallel Aboriginal Economies	503
10. Laying the Foundations for Overcoming Aboriginal Dependency	586
<b>Conclusion</b>	656
<b>Bibliography</b>	688

## Introduction

One of the most distressing political problems in Canada today is the continuing dependency of its aboriginal population.<sup>1</sup> It is well documented that aboriginal participation in the Canadian labour force is proportionally far lower than that for the non-aboriginal population.<sup>2</sup> Aboriginals are far more likely to receive social assistance than other Canadians, and when employment is obtained, it is often in the form of seasonal or part-time work.<sup>3</sup> And because of native population growth, this problem will only increase unless drastic measures are implemented. It is estimated that 300,000 jobs will have to be created over the next fifteen years to bring native employment levels up to Canadian standards.<sup>4</sup>

The low level of aboriginal participation in the Canadian workforce has resulted in deplorable living conditions for natives in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. But impoverishment is not the only effect of this dependency. Because of the sense of

---

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this dissertation, references to "aboriginal people" or "aboriginal peoples" will be not be capitalized. This is because the term "aboriginal" is being used as an adjective or descriptive term in reference to people who have inhabited a land from the earliest times or before the arrival of colonists. Capitals, however, will be used for terms such as Mohawk, Cree or Dene because these names are derived from proper nouns such as languages, specific regions or nations.

<sup>2</sup> Menno Boldt, *Surviving As Indians: The Challenge of Self-Government* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1993); J. R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); and Vic Satzewich and Terry Wotherspoon, *First Nations: Race, Class and Gender Relations* (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Allan Moscovitch and Andrew Webster, "Aboriginal Social Assistance Expenditures", in Susan D. Phillips, (ed) *How Ottawa Spends, 1995-96: Mid-Life Crises* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples [Final Report]* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1996), 2(2), p. 773.

isolation that comes from not being involved in productive labour, social dysfunction plagues these isolated areas. High rates of violence, suicide and substance abuse are endemic in aboriginal communities across the country,<sup>5</sup> and even with a number of land claims, self-government and economic development agreements being signed, these problems show no signs of abating.<sup>6</sup>

It is the apparent intractability of aboriginal economic dependency and its associated social pathologies that has led to a number of government initiatives to study the cause of the problem. The most recent and extensive of these was the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Mandated to "investigate the evolution of the relationship among aboriginal peoples (Indian, Inuit and Métis), the Canadian government, and Canadian society as a whole",<sup>7</sup> the Royal Commission spent over four years studying the causes of aboriginal problems and proposing solutions.<sup>8</sup> In its *Final Report*, released in 1996, the main conclusion was that previous government policies attempting to absorb aboriginal peoples into the Canadian social fabric were wrong and had actually created the aboriginal problems that currently existed.<sup>9</sup> The elimination of aboriginal dependency, in the Commission's view, would not occur by encouraging aboriginal peoples to become integrated into the wider Canadian society, but largely through

---

<sup>5</sup> *Final Report*, 3, pp. 1-7.

<sup>6</sup> Noel Dyck, "'Telling it like it is' Some Dilemmas of Fourth World Ethnography and Advocacy", in Dyck and Waldram (eds), *Anthropology, Public Policy and Native Peoples in Canada*, pp. 192-212.

<sup>7</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 699.

<sup>8</sup> Phil Lancaster, "Politics of Renewal: A Comment on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", *Canadian Dimension*, Jan-Feb 1997 31(1): pp. 17-18

<sup>9</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. xxiii-xxvii, 5, pp. 1-4.

developing aboriginal cultures and economies on their "traditional territories".<sup>10</sup> To achieve this, the Commission proposed "honouring treaties and making new ones, implementing the right of Aboriginal peoples to self-determination and self-government, effecting a more just distribution of lands and the wealth those lands generate, and developing economic policies to revitalize Aboriginal nations and communities and enhance their self-reliance".<sup>11</sup>

Alan Cairns has referred to this political vision of the Royal Commission as "parallelism".<sup>12</sup> Parallelism is the view that aboriginal cultures and the wider Canadian society can exist separately from one another, and continuously reproduce distinctive economies, political systems and "world views".<sup>13</sup> Such a conception is opposed to the idea that cultural osmosis will eventually lead to aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples becoming part of a larger integrated whole because it is assumed that "individuals are born into [distinct] cultures, and they secure their personal identity

---

<sup>10</sup> Alan Cairns, *Citizens Plus* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), pp. 128-132.

<sup>11</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Cairns, *Citizens Plus*, pp. 70-3, 117, 132. The Royal Commission specifically uses this term in its discussion of health policy, where it maintains that "in a respectful independence model, traditional and bio-medical health and healing services are developed and offered separately, in parallel systems whose practitioners have respect for one another... Each system is considered to have value, and traditional healing is thought of as one specialty field among many others in health care. In this model, the choice to consult one or the other of the two systems — or both simultaneously — rests with the client". *Final Report*, 3, Appendix 3A, "Traditional Health and Healing".

<sup>13</sup> In a review of Cairns' book *Citizens Plus*, Michael Murphy notes that parallelism's "primary metaphor of a nation-to-nation relationship governed by treaties conjures up the image of a mini-international system of separate communities whose paths never converge". Michael Murphy, *Canadian Review of Sociology* 25(4), Fall 2000, p. 517.

through the group into which they are born. This is their birthright, and it demands the recognition and respect of all Canadians and the protection of the state".<sup>14</sup>

The Royal Commission's promotion of parallelism was largely adopted in response to the assertions of a number of aboriginal organizations.<sup>15</sup> These organizations espousing parallelism maintained that at the time of contact aboriginal peoples intended that their "territories were to be shared" but "parallel paths of European and indigenous cultures were to be followed in a peaceful and mutually beneficial way". This vision, also known as the "Two Row Wampum" conception of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations, is based on the metaphor of "two parallel rows of purple wampum [that] represent two vessels travelling upon the river", where "the river is large enough for the two vessels to travel together". It is maintained that one metaphorical vessel

---

<sup>14</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. xxiii-xxiv.

<sup>15</sup> These organizations consisted of four of the five national organizations extensively consulted by the Royal Commission – the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Taparistat of Canada, the Metis Council of Canada and the Native Council of Canada (the other national aboriginal organization involved in these consultations, the Native Women's Association of Canada, did not appear to have parallelist aspirations and put forward arguments opposing increasing aboriginal powers of self-government). These national aboriginal organizations, however, only constituted a small percentage of the number of native groups that provided input to the Royal Commission. According to the Royal Commission, over one hundred aboriginal organizations were consulted in its Intervenor Participation Program. In the public hearings held by the Royal Commission, a number of these organizations put forward arguments concerning the "Two Row Wampum" model of aboriginal and non-aboriginal relations. These organizations include the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, the Micmac Grand Council, the Union of Nova Scotia Indians, the Big Cove Band, the Bands of the High Level Tribal Council, the Council of the Huron-Wendat Nation, the Iroquois Confederacy, the Kanien'kehaka Raotitiohkwa Cultural Center, the Mohawk Trail Longhouse, the Women of the Longhouse, the Union of Ontario Indians, the London District of Council Chiefs, the N'Amerind Friendship Centre, the Huronia Area Management Board, the Community Health Review, the Native Solidarity Committee of the Resource Centre for Non-Violence, the Listuguj Mi'gmaq First Nation Government, and the Indian Association of Alberta. All these organizations' proposals are available in the transcripts of the public hearings on the CD-ROM, *For Seven Generations*.

(usually a canoe) will contain aboriginal peoples, and the other Europeans, each with different "laws, traditions, customs, language and spiritual beliefs". With this parallel development, "neither...shall intersect or interfere with the lives of the other. Neither side shall attempt to impose their laws, traditions, customs, language or spirituality on the people in the other vessel. Such shall be the agreement of mutual respect accorded in the Two Row Wampum".<sup>16</sup> Such a view assumed that aboriginal peoples and Europeans or "white people" would always remain separate from one another with different laws, beliefs and "ways".<sup>17</sup>

The Royal Commission's advocacy of a parallelist solution for addressing native dependency also stems from its own extensive historical analysis of the relationship between Europeans and Aboriginals. According to the Commission, this history has unfolded in four stages: 1) "Separate Worlds; 2) "Contact and Co-operation", 3) "Displacement and Assimilation", and 4) "Negotiation and Renewal".<sup>18</sup> In its historical analysis, the Commission maintained that both aboriginal peoples and Europeans had distinctive cultures and ways of governing themselves before contact that were shaped by "their traditions and the needs imposed by their environments", and, in the view of aboriginal peoples, because they were put in different areas by "the

---

<sup>16</sup> Cross, quoted in *Final Report*, 4, p. 120.

<sup>17</sup>Haudenosaunee Confederacy, quoted in *Final Report*, 1, p. 103. See also *Final Report*, 1, pp. 178, 694 for a discussion of this separateness. The "two row wampum" approach is also alluded to in a number of testimonials by aboriginal peoples recorded in the *Final Report*. See, for example, Patton, quoted in *Final Report*, 1, p. 663; and Mercredi, quoted in *Final Report*, 1, p. 692.

<sup>18</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 31-41.

Creator" to fulfill their role "in the harmonious operation of nature".<sup>19</sup> This autonomy, the Royal Commission asserted, was generally respected initially, but as Canada developed the "non-Aboriginal society was for the most part no longer willing to respect the distinctiveness of Aboriginal societies".<sup>20</sup>

Since it was during this later historical period that aboriginal peoples became dependent, the Commission inferred that the removal of aboriginal peoples' land base and the Canadian state's attempt to "obliterate their cultural and political institutions" must have caused these circumstances.<sup>21</sup> By the same reasoning, restoring aboriginal "homelands" and revitalizing aboriginal cultures as "sovereign nations" through land claims and self-government agreements were proposed as the mechanisms to end their dependency. These processes, in fact, were claimed to be central to current aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations. It was argued that the "interventionist and assimilationist approach" of the past had been recognized as a failure and there was now an attempt to restore the original co-operative relationship that existed in early Canadian history.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 37.

<sup>20</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 38.

<sup>21</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. xxiv.

<sup>22</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 39.

Although there have been many responses to the Royal Commission's *Final Report*,<sup>23</sup> there has been little criticism of its historical analysis. With the exception of classical liberals like Tom Flanagan,<sup>24</sup> it is not apparent that any Canadian academic has raised concerns about the Royal Commission's view of history. This is especially surprising with respect to the field of political economy, where one would expect many prominent scholars on the left to sharply disagree with the religious assumptions and anecdotal methodology used as the basis of the Commission's historiography. In fact, the only political economist who expressed an opinion on the *Final Report* has been Mel Watkins, who enthusiastically applauded it as "comprehensive, imaginative, elegantly written and presented".<sup>25</sup>

The absence of any criticism from political economists concerning the Royal Commission's historical analysis reflects a more pervasive omission in the tradition - a reluctance to develop a general theory of Canada's economic and political

---

<sup>23</sup> See Frances Abele, "The Importance of Consent: Indigenous Peoples' Politics in Canada", in James Bickerton and Alain-G. Gagnon (eds), *Canadian Politics* (Toronto: Broadview Press, 1999), pp. 443-462; Frank Cassidy, "The Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", *Policy Options*, March 1997 18(2), pp. 3-6; James S. Frideres, "Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: The Route to Self-Government", *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 1996 16(2), pp. 247-66; Peter Russell, "Research Program of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, Autumn 1995 2, pp. 277-83; and James Tully, "Aboriginal Peoples: Negotiating Reconciliation", in Bickerton and Gagnon (eds), *Canadian Politics*, pp. 413-442.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas Flanagan, *First Nations? Second Thoughts* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000).

<sup>25</sup> Mel Watkins, "Out of commission: when Ottawa decided to ignore the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", *This Magazine* July-August 1997, 30(1), p. 11.



development that examines the role played by aboriginal peoples.<sup>26</sup> This is especially true in the case of Marxist political economy,<sup>27</sup> where an explanation of Canada's trajectory as a "rich dependency" depends on an analysis of its specific "historically developed class structures". Since "the starting point for such an analysis rests on the perception that class is a contradictory social relationship between producers and non-producers, entailing mutual dependence but also entailing mutual power",<sup>28</sup> applying a Marxist perspective to native dependency would require understanding aboriginal peoples' historical role in the productive process. Very few works in Canadian political economy, however, have examined aboriginal peoples' circumstances in this context.

One exception has been the analysis of Ron Bourgeault,<sup>29</sup> where there was an attempt to understand aboriginal peoples' role in the fur trade in terms of Marxist political economy. Bourgeault, however, only examined one period in Canadian history.

---

<sup>26</sup> Frances Abele and Daiva Stasiulis, "Canada as a 'White Settler Colony': What about Natives and Immigrants", in Wallace Clement and Glen Williams (eds), *The New Canadian Political Economy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989).

<sup>27</sup> David Bedford and Dan Irving, *The Tragedy of Progress* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2001).

<sup>28</sup> Leo Panitch, "Dependency and Class in Canadian Political Economy", in Gordon Laxer (ed), *Perspectives on Canadian Economic Development: Class, Staples, Gender and Elites* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 273.

<sup>29</sup> Ron Bourgeault, "The Struggle for Class and Nation: the Origin of the Métis in Canada and the National Question", Ron Bourgeault et al. (eds), *1492-1992: Five Centuries of Imperialism and Resistance* (Winnipeg/Halifax: Society for Socialist Studies/Fernwood, 1992); Ron Bourgeault, "Race and Class Under Mercantilism", in B.S. Bolaria and P.S. Li (eds), *Racial Oppression in Canada* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1988); "The Indian, the Métis and the Fur Trade: Class, Sexism and Racism in the Transition from 'Communism' to Capitalism", *Studies in Political Economy*, 1983, 12(Fall), pp. 45-80; *Class, Race and Gender: Political Economy and the Canadian Fur Trade*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Regina, 1986.

Another more dated exception was Stanley Ryerson's interpretation of Canada's history,<sup>30</sup> but his work was too general to offer a deep exploration of aboriginal-European relations. And although there have been a few works that examine class structures within Canada's aboriginal population<sup>31</sup> and how native peoples have been influenced by global capitalist imperatives,<sup>32</sup> they tend to conceptualize aboriginal marginalization as resulting from the existence of racist ideologies in Canadian society. There has been little effort to understand how natives fit into the struggle between producers and non-producers.<sup>33</sup>

In their overview of the political economy literature, Frances Abele and Daiva Stasiulis claim that the lack of "synthetic works" on aboriginal peoples' role in Canadian development is due to the diversity of aboriginal pre-contact histories, the complexity of their relations with the Canadian state, and the belief that "generalizations tend to conceal more than they expose".<sup>34</sup> However, developing a theoretical framework for understanding historical development always involves unraveling complex social relations and a level of generalization. This has not

---

<sup>30</sup> Stanley Ryerson, *The Founding of Canada* (Toronto: Progress Books, 1960).

<sup>31</sup> Jeremy Hull, *Natives in a Class Society* (Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, 1982); Jeremy Hull, *Aboriginal Peoples and Social Classes in Manitoba* (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2001); and Terry Wotherspoon and Vic Satzewich, *First Nations*.

<sup>32</sup> Howard Adams, *Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View*. Rev. ed (Saskatoon: Firth House Publishers, 1989) and *A Tortured People: the Politics of Colonization* (Penticton: Theytus Books, 1999).

<sup>33</sup> Steven High, "Native Wage Labour and Independent Production during the 'Era of Irrelevance'", *Labour* 37 (Spring 1996), pp. 242-264; and Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Indian Labor in British Columbia 1885-1930* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1978).

<sup>34</sup> Abele and Stasiulis, "Canada as a 'White Settler Colony'", p.244.

prevented scholars from attempting to understand the role of different groups in global economic and political developments throughout history, so why should it be the case for attempting to understand the role played by aboriginal peoples in the trajectory of Canada's capitalist development?

Through a critical analysis of the Royal Commission's assumptions about the historical causes of aboriginal dependency, this dissertation will attempt to address this omission in the literature. It will be explained that, unlike blacks or the Québécois, who are also struggling against historical injustice, aboriginal peoples cannot be made to fit the Marxist categories of independent commodity producers or wage labourers.<sup>35</sup> In the fur trade they were not exploited for their labour, but were kinship oriented groups exchanging goods on terms that were disadvantageous. European fur traders “co-operated” with aboriginal peoples, not out of benevolence, but because they could use the practices, skills, and knowledge of native hunter-gatherers to maximize their profits. The transition from the mercantilist fur trade to industrial capitalism, however, led to the marginalization of aboriginal peoples because their cultures were not sufficiently developed to facilitate their success as independent farmers or craft producers. The profit orientation of the emerging Canadian state led it to import skilled European farmers and craftsmen rather than devoting the resources needed to prepare the native population for more disciplined

---

<sup>35</sup> Michael Howlett et al., *The Political Economy of Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 211.

and coordinated economic activity. Consequently, it was aboriginal lands, not their labour, which became significant for the development of industrial capitalism.

It is also important to note that, in the political economy literature, references to aboriginal dependency can take on two meanings. The first pertains to aboriginal participation in the fur trade, where hunting and gathering tribes were incorporated into the emerging global capitalist economy through unequal exchange with European mercantilists. Under this system, furs were bought from native trappers or middlemen and then sold at a higher price in more developed industrial countries like Britain and France. Aboriginal tribes were increasingly drawn into this system because they needed to exchange or purchase European goods like steel traps, and rifles to protect their hunting and trapping territories from rival native groups who had also obtained more advanced technology. This understanding of dependency has been extensively developed by theorists like Andre Gunder Frank for countries in Latin America, where the penetration of foreign capital causes "a drain of economic surplus from the satellite after its incorporation as such into the world capitalist system". According to Frank, this results in "the impregnation of the satellite's domestic economy with the same capitalist structure and its fundamental contradictions...[which] organize and dominate the domestic economic, political, and social life of that people".<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup>Andre Gunder Frank, *Lumpen-Bourgeoisie Lumpen-Development: Dependence, Class, and Politics in Latin America* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973), p.3.

The second usage, however, has a much different meaning. It refers to the Canadian native population's reliance on welfare. This kind of dependency is almost a polar opposite of the kind characterized by Frank since it does not arise out of the exploitation of labour or the "drain[ing] of economic surplus" from aboriginal groups. Instead, it occurs when consumption exceeds production - a circumstance that exists in most aboriginal communities across Canada.<sup>37</sup> It is this kind of dependency, not the first, which was the focus of the Royal Commission's *Final Report*. The Royal Commission, in fact, referred to the fur trade as being "cooperative" and "interdependent"; it was not until "the settler period", and especially the years between 1930 and 1960, according to the Royal Commission, that the history of aboriginal peoples entered into a "period of dependence".<sup>38</sup>

Since native participation in unequal exchange only occurred during the fur trade, and because the Royal Commission's *Final Report* focused on the large government transfers required to sustain the aboriginal population, the development of a theory of aboriginal dependency in the following chapters will largely concentrate on explaining the native population's continuing marginalization from modern production in the context of its consumption of highly developed goods and services. In opposition to the Royal Commission's parallelist vision, it will be argued that land claims and self-

---

<sup>37</sup> Menno Boldt, *Surviving as Indians: The Challenge of Self-Government* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 235-7; Cairns, *Citizens Plus*, pp. 128-32; Flanagan, *First Nations?*, pp. 166-191; and *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 800-02, 5, pp. 23-54.

<sup>38</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 782-90.

government will not be able to address the high rates of welfare dependency among aboriginal peoples. This is because these initiatives are intent on rejuvenating "traditional values" and "developing" isolated areas that are unconnected to the Canadian economy, providing no mechanism to make Aboriginals more productive. The only way that this can be achieved is to develop a strategy to facilitate aboriginal peoples' capacity to produce the goods and services demanded in the wider economy and society, which largely involves their participation across the full range of occupations that make up the Canadian labour force. As will be shown in the following chapters, however, such a development is inhibited by the kinship and subsistence basis of "aboriginal identities" that self-government and land claims are attempting to retain.

Understanding aboriginal dependency, therefore, requires an analysis of the circumstances that have led aboriginal peoples to be largely excluded from the Canadian labour force. In order to explore this area, the historical framework provided by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples will provide the structure for the analysis. The empirical observation of the Commission that aboriginal peoples' historical circumstances can be divided into the four stages appears to be generally accurate, and is consistent with a number of works analyzing the history of aboriginal-

non-aboriginal relations.<sup>39</sup> No one disputes that aboriginal peoples were separated from non-aboriginal people for thousands of years before contact and that they did have, on the whole, a relatively "co-operative" relationship with European merchants during the fur trade. There was also a period of displacement and an attempt at assimilation during Canada's transition from mercantilism to industrial capitalism through the Canadian government's reserve policy, residential schools, and enfranchisement legislation. And finally, it is accurate to say that we have entered into a new phase regarding aboriginal affairs since the Trudeau government brought forward its White Paper in 1969.<sup>40</sup> Since this time, the Canadian government has completely rejected earlier policies.<sup>41</sup>

Although the following chapters accept the demarcation of history into four stages that is developed by the Royal Commission, the analysis of *why* the relationship between aboriginal peoples and the Canadian state has developed thusly, and the political implications of these circumstances, will be very different from that which appears in the *Final Report*. Instead of arguing that a loss of aboriginal culture has caused native inequality in Canadian society, the opposite hypothesis is postulated - that it is the retention of cultural characteristics associated with hunting and gathering/horticultural

---

<sup>39</sup>See, for example, Olive Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*; J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*; and Robin Fisher and Ken Coates (eds), *Out of the Background: Readings in Canadian Native History*.

<sup>40</sup>Sally Weaver, *Making Canadian Indian Policy: The Hidden Agenda 1968-70* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981).

<sup>41</sup>Cairns, *Citizens Plus*, pp. 123-6.

modes of production in the capitalist context that explains aboriginal dependency.<sup>42</sup>

Cultural practices associated with a low level of productivity and the kinship forms of social organization that characterized aboriginal peoples' pre-contact existence has created obstacles to their "assimilation" into the Canadian labour force. As such, aboriginal peoples have been limited in their ability to exercise collective power to improve their social circumstances. The withdrawal of productivity in a strike has always been the most important tool of workers in their struggle for a better position in the social fabric and greater access to the goods and services available in society, exemplifying the essential role of labour in historical development. This tool is limited for aboriginal peoples, because of their under representation in the labour force.

In developing this historical and materialist response to the Royal Commission's analysis of aboriginal dependency, two minefields in the current scholarly literature will have to be negotiated. The first is the confusion that has occurred between culture and race, and the subsequent idea that identifying the lower level of economic development in hunting and gathering societies and the cultural obstacles to their

---

<sup>42</sup> It is important to stress that aboriginal peoples in Canada are no longer hunter-gatherers or horticulturalists. What has occurred is that these pre-contact modes of production have been combined with capitalism, dramatically altering aboriginal economies, politics and societies in the process. As a result, a number of cultural features associated with remnants of these previously existing hunting and gathering and horticultural economies, however, continue to persist and create obstacles to aboriginal participation in modern economic, political and intellectual developments. These cultural features will be elaborated upon throughout this dissertation.



entrance into the Canadian working class is somehow "mean spirited", "insensitive" or, more disturbingly, "racist". This, as well as the fact that natives were largely irrelevant to the Canadian economy after the fur trade, has led political economists to either omit aboriginal peoples in their discussion of capitalist development,<sup>43</sup> or insist that the subsistence practices of aboriginals must be assumed to be an important factor in understanding this history.<sup>44</sup> Any attempt to consider the economic and political implications of the fact that subsistence practices are less productive than capitalist ones leads to the accusation that one is "convert[ing] *differences* into *inferiorities*".<sup>45</sup> Such an imputation has made academics like Steven High anxious to claim that natives *were* participants in the development of Canadian capitalism, despite the paucity of evidence that is gathered to support this assertion.<sup>46</sup>

The semantic confusions that lie behind the promotion of hunting and gathering/horticultural practices, values and forms of social organization in the modern context are also related to another obstacle facing anyone who is attempting to

---

<sup>43</sup> Daniel Drache, "The Formation and Fragmentation of the Canadian Working Class: 1820-1920", *Studies in Political Economy*, Fall 1984, 15; Howlett et al., *The Political Economy of Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1999); David McNally, "Staple Theory as Commodity Fetishism: Marx, Innis and Canadian Political Economy", *Studies in Political Economy*, Autumn 1981, 6, pp. 35-64; Leo Panitch, "Dependency and Class in Canadian Political Economy", *Studies in Political Economy*, Autumn 1981, 6, pp. 7-33.

<sup>44</sup> Michael Asch, "The Economics of Dene Self-Determination", in Turner and Smith (eds), *Challenging Anthropology: A Critical Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited); P.J. Usher, "Evaluating Country Food in the Northern Native Economy", *Arctic*, 1976, 29(2), pp. 105-120; George W. Wenzel, *Animal Rights, Human Rights: Ecology, Economy and Ideology in the Canadian Arctic* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

<sup>45</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.45, emphasis in original.

<sup>46</sup> High, , "Native Wage Labour and Independent Production during the 'Era of Irrelevance'", *Labour* 37 (Spring 1996), pp. 242-264.

develop a materialist understanding of aboriginal dependency. This is the extent to which political advocacy has intermingled with the scholarship pertaining to the relationship between aboriginal peoples and the Canadian state.<sup>47</sup> Since the 1960s, there has been an increasing amount of government funding provided to a number of aboriginal organizations, consultants and lawyers to pursue land claims and self-government initiatives.<sup>48</sup> Part of the justification for these initiatives is that aboriginal peoples have unique "cultural insights" and "ways of life" that are beneficial to all Canadians.<sup>49</sup> Theorizing "aboriginal economies" as inherently dependent on the wider Canadian society in which they are embedded threatens the political goals of these parallelist aboriginal organizations and the academic and legal advocates that are associated with them.

This political tendency to orient scholarship towards the support for land claims and self-government has been extended by the analysis of a number of academics whose work can loosely be described as "postmodern". These academics maintain that a universal understanding of historical development cannot be developed because

---

<sup>47</sup> James A. Clifton (ed). *The Invented Indian: Cultural Fictions and Government Policies* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996); Noel Dyck, "Telling it like it is' Some Dilemmas of Fourth World Ethnography and Advocacy", in Dyck and Waldram (eds), *Anthropology, Public Policy and Native Peoples in Canada*, pp. 192-212; and Robert Paine (ed). *Advocacy and Anthropology: First Encounters* (Newfoundland: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1985). With respect to the discipline of history, this problem has also been identified by J.E. Rea, "The Historian as 'Hired Gun' ," *The Beaver* 73(2), June 1992; and J.R. Miller, "From Riel to the Métis", *Canadian Historical Review* 1(1), 1988.

<sup>48</sup> Cairns, *Citizens Plus*; Doug Daniels, "The Coming Crisis in the Aboriginal Rights Movement: From Colonialism to Neocolonialism to Renaissance", *Native Studies Review*, 1986, 2(2), pp. 97-115.

<sup>49</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. xxiii, 2(2), pp. 778-9.

research findings are shaped by the "ethnocentric" perceptions of the theorist. Therefore, no agreement about the relationship between aboriginal peoples and "Westerners" can be found since they have "different" yet "equally valid" understandings of their circumstances. The consequences of this view can be seen throughout Royal Commission's *Final Report*, where aboriginal "Creation stories" are given the same credence as theories based on evidence.

In contrast to the relativistic stance and idealism found in the *Final Report*, this dissertation's objective is to construct a historical and materialist theory of the relationship between aboriginal peoples and the Canadian state that strives for logical consistency and is based on the best evidence that is available. Before this is undertaken, however, it is first necessary to outline the circumstances that led to the formation of the Royal Commission. These circumstances will be outlined in Chapter One, where it will be shown that the Royal Commission came out of the flourishing of aboriginal organizations after the rejection of the assimilationist agenda epitomized by the Trudeau government's White Paper in 1969. The growing discontent of aboriginal peoples, the deeply entrenched character of their problems and the lack of representation of aboriginal political aspirations within the Canadian system, led to the perception that there was a need to initiate a Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

The political context of the formation of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, however, led to a contradiction within its mandate. This mandate was concerned with increasing the body of knowledge pertaining to the historical roots of aboriginal dependency, while at the same time giving aboriginal peoples a symbolic voice that had not been adequately heard in the past. Although it was assumed that these two goals would mutually reinforce one another,<sup>50</sup> the methods used by aboriginal peoples have often turned out to be contrary to those employed by social scientists to understand the past. As will be shown throughout this dissertation, the result was a relativistic and idealistic historical analysis that impeded the Royal Commission's understanding of aboriginal dependency.

While Chapter One is concerned with the political context of the formation of the Royal Commission, it is important to note that this dissertation is not an institutional study of the Royal Commission. It is for this reason that interviews with Commissioners were not undertaken and the public hearings of the Royal Commission were not analyzed in any detail (although they are referred to on occasion). The dissertation is concerned with the intellectual arguments put forward by the Royal Commission with respect to the causes of aboriginal dependency – arguments that are generally consistent with the understanding of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations in Canadian scholarship more generally. While there were undoubtedly disagreements

---

<sup>50</sup> Russell, "The Research Agenda...", p. 278.

between the Commissioners, and compromises made, as is indicated by the inconsistencies found within the *Final Report*, this dissertation is not concerned about which Commissioners pushed which position. It is interested in the *Final Report* as an authoritative account of aboriginal dependency – one that will greatly influence conceptions of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations in the social sciences for years to come.

The problems of the Royal Commission’s historical analysis will be detailed in Chapter Two. It will be explained that the aboriginal “conception of history” that the Royal Commission attempts to incorporate into its analysis cannot really be considered “history” at all, since the spiritual beliefs it contains rule out the striving for objectivity that must be the hallmark of the historical method. Chapter Three will show that this confusion of history with subjective opinions and native spirituality is part of a larger trend in the social sciences toward epistemological and cultural relativism – the trend referred to above as “postmodernism”. It will be argued that such a trend impedes an understanding of aboriginal dependency not least because it has been deployed to reject an important body of literature in the social sciences that aids our understanding of humanity’s trajectory on this planet – scholarly works that have developed conceptions of historical progress and provided evidence supporting theories of cultural evolution.

As Chapter Four will point out, perspectives assuming historical progress and cultural evolution provided valuable insights in anthropology, history and archaeology until the 1970s. They also informed a particular framework in political economy known as “uneven and combined development”. It will be argued that this framework greatly enhances our understanding of aboriginal dependency by exploring how capitalism combines with smaller, less productive and simpler societies. The postmodern turn in the social sciences, however, has also influenced political economy, leading it to neglect this framework. The result is an impoverished account of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations in Canadian scholarship – a circumstance that has negatively impacted the Royal Commission’s understanding of the historical and material causes of native dependency.

After analyzing the postmodern influences on Canadian scholarship, as well as showing how they have impeded the Royal Commission’s understanding of aboriginal dependency, the dissertation will provide a more specific critique of the three historical periods of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations the Royal Commission analyzes - "Contact and Cooperation", "Displacement and Assimilation" and "Negotiation and Renewal". It will be argued that the Royal Commission’s analysis of these historical periods was flawed because it provided an idealistic conception of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations. In contrast to the Royal Commission’s approach, it will be shown that these periods are actually connected to particular economic and

political developments associated with the emerging capitalist system. It is these economic and political circumstances, and their interaction with aboriginal cultures, that are the key for understanding native dependency.

In Chapter Five, the Royal Commission's analysis of "contact and cooperation" will be examined. This analysis largely attributes relatively harmonious aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations to the European attitudes that existed at this time, which it claims resulted in a respect for aboriginal cultures and recognizing native political autonomy. What the Royal Commission fails to stress, it will be argued, is that these respectful attitudes were rooted in economic and political factors. Because of the sparse population, harsh climate and lack of infrastructure during this period, the fur trade was the dominant activity. This was part of an economic and political system known as "mercantilism", which tended to incorporate less developed economic and political systems without transforming their internal dynamics. As a result, "cooperation" ensued during this period because it was profitable to accommodate aboriginal cultures and practices at this time.

In contrast to the period of "contact and cooperation", Chapters Six and Seven explain that the agricultural settlement and gradual industrialization that followed was characterized by "displacement and assimilation". Agricultural and industrial development required much more productive, disciplined and organized forms of

labour, necessitating a radical transformation of aboriginal productive processes and political structures. This resulted in the lack of “respect” for the autonomous aboriginal economies, political traditions and cultures – attitudes the Royal Commission maintained broke down the parallelism of earlier aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations. In addition, it was more profitable to transport the surplus populations of Europe to what is now Canada since these immigrants already had been transformed by the economic and political changes brought about by the emerging capitalist system. Such population surpluses meant that it was cheaper and easier to warehouse aboriginal peoples on reserves than devote the necessary resources for integrating the native population into a larger, more productive and complex economy and society.

After the Royal Commission's analysis of “contact and cooperation” and “displacement and assimilation” are examined, Chapters Eight and Nine of the dissertation move on to the current phase of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations that the Royal Commission identified - "Negotiation and Renewal". In this period, the Royal Commission maintained that there has been an attempt to restore the parallelist character of the era of “Contact and Cooperation”. This consisted of land claims and self-government initiatives, which would, according to the Royal Commission, enable aboriginal peoples to achieve some distance from the dominant society to work out their own solutions to their continuing dependency and social dysfunction.



“Culturally sensitive” policies were being developed to enable the native population to choose whether or not they would live a traditional or modern existence.

An analysis of the examples that the Royal Commission held up as successes in addressing aboriginal deprivation, however, shows that they were merely resulting in a “renewed aboriginal dependency”. This was because these processes did nothing to address the fundamental gap in size, productivity and complexity that continues to exist between aboriginal "nations" and modern societies. It is pointed out that the constitutional, legal and organizational factors that the Royal Commission focused on are incapable of addressing the problem of aboriginal dependency because these initiatives are intent on "rebuilding" unviable areas of the country and entrenching a number of cultural features that inhibit aboriginal participation in wider economic and social processes. Although the Royal Commission argued that traditional and modern practices can be reconciled, this view fails to consider the developmental gap that separates the two spheres.

The recommendations the Royal Commission made concerning future aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations is the subject of Chapter Ten. According to the Royal Commission, progress would involve both an acknowledgement of past injustices and a commitment to establishing a new relationship. Such a new relationship, argued the Royal Commission, involves increasing aboriginal autonomy in all spheres of public

policy as well as changing the attitudes of Non-Aboriginals so that they will respect aboriginal cultures and recognize the inherency of native nationhood and sovereignty. But, as will be elucidated in Chapter Ten, this will not result in a more balanced relationship between aboriginals and non-aboriginals, because the Royal Commission is trying to restore archaic economic, political and ideological forms that isolate the native population from the wider Canadian economy and society. A great deal of the *Final Report*, in fact, is intent on exaggerating the level of development associated with aboriginal traditions so as to shield the Royal Commission's parallelist vision from scrutiny.

Advocacy for parallelism enabled the Royal Commission to recommend increases in funding for programs and services that will actually maintain aboriginal dependency. Dependency will result from these initiatives because they require that the gap in economic development that is reflected in the contrast between aboriginal traditions and modern industrial societies. As will be pointed out in the following chapters, this denial is not due to a careful weighing of the evidence, but because of a dismissive attitude towards evolutionary assumptions and conceptions of development. What is needed, however, is not a politically inspired rejection of this scholarly tradition, but a new research agenda that seriously considers the valuable insights that it has to offer.

It is important to stress that statements about evolutionary differences in this sense are not arguments about the “superiority” or “inferiority” of various cultural features. As will be elaborated upon in Chapter Four, it is merely to argue that certain cultural features are prerequisites to others. Statements about “inferiority” and “superiority” are human judgments, and require asking questions about whether a particular development has enhanced human existence.<sup>51</sup> Is a nuclear bomb “superior” to a machine gun, and a bow and arrow “inferior”? Obviously, in terms of its capacity to wreak death and destruction, the nuclear bomb is “superior” to both the machine gun and the bow and arrow. But can a society that uses a nuclear bomb to kill thousands of people be considered “superior”? If so, the ultimate “superiority” of a society would be indicated by an act of aggression causing the destruction of the entire human species!

References to evolutionary differences in this dissertation concern increases in productivity, scale and complexity; they are not moral judgments about whether or not these developments are “good” or “bad”. Assertions about increases in productivity concern advances in technology and the organization of labour power that have resulted in more goods and services being produced per unit of labour time. Such developments have made larger and more complex societies possible. “Complexity”

---

<sup>51</sup> It is possible that criteria could be developed to determine if certain cultural features were objectively “superior” to others, but this is beyond the scope of this dissertation. One potential criterion is the extent to which certain cultural developments enhance human survival. Whether or not various values, attitudes and practices increase cooperation, for example, could be seen as more advantageous or “superior” to those that perpetuate social conflicts.

in this case is defined in terms of the development of structural differentiation and functional specialization. As will be elaborated upon further in Chapter Four, small and relatively unproductive societies in the above sense require a minimal division of labour. This is in contrast to highly productive industrial societies where there is an immense specialization of tasks and occupations.

It is interesting to note that there is a wide acceptance of the fact that there have been historical developments in labour power and technology, but at the same time there is much resistance today to the idea that these developments are linked to more general advancements in modes of social organization and increases in human knowledge about the nature of the universe. Little dented by this has been the large body of literature in comparative politics, which documents development from personal to legal-rational forms of authority in the history of political systems. It is argued that these developments are related to increases in the size and complexity of societies.<sup>52</sup> If these kinds of arguments are allowed to stand, why is there such emotional opposition to recognizing the developmental differences between aboriginal cultures (which continue to retain remnants of hunting and gathering modes of production) and industrialized societies?

---

<sup>52</sup> For a discussion of this literature, see Robert J. Jackson and Doreen Jackson, *An Introduction to Political Science: Comparative and World Politics*, Fourth Edition (Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2003), pp. 10-13, 79-80.

It was a recognition of these developmental differences that led the respected scientist Carl Sagan to remark that hunters and gatherers were “the childhood of our species”.<sup>53</sup> By making this comment, Sagan was not declaring that hunter gatherers were “inferior” to what he referred to as “high technology cultures”. He was merely pointing out that just as childhood is a necessary precursor for adulthood, hunting and gathering is required before “high technology cultures” can develop. In addition, recognizing that a child is a child does not to justify the exploitation of children by adults, although this is possible because of the vulnerability of the latter with respect to the former. By the same logic, recognizing hunting and gathering cultures as the “childhood of our species” does not justify the political mistreatment of the aboriginal population by those societies that are more developed.<sup>54</sup>

Sagan, in fact, referred to hunters and gatherers in terms of “our species”. This means that all our ancestors were at one time hunters and gatherers, and so to refer to peoples who have remnants of hunting and gathering cultures as “inferior” is a misanthropic

---

<sup>53</sup> Carl Sagan, *The Dragons of Eden: Speculations on the Evolution of Human Intelligence* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1977), p. 202.

<sup>54</sup> The concept of the “fiduciary relationship” between the Crown and aboriginal peoples, in fact, appears to have been an attempt to prevent such mistreatment by designating the native population as wards of the state (the idea of “fiduciary” in law is, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, an adjective “involving trust, especially with regard to the relationship between a trustee and a beneficiary”). Although aboriginal peoples were neglected and abused by governments historically, the relationship between “guardian” and “ward” does not, in itself, mean that there will be an abuse of power. Such a relationship is actually supposed to be governed by legal restrictions meant to protect a party that is recognized to be vulnerable. The original protective intent of this “fiduciary relationship”, however, is obscured by the Royal Commission when it argues that the designation of aboriginal peoples as vulnerable members of society was itself oppressive. The Royal Commission notes that “over the past century in particular, the relationship between partners gradually deteriorated into one between ‘guardian’ and ‘wards’”, as if this development were the cause, not the result, of native vulnerability. *Final Report*, 1, p.689

disparagement of human beings in general. Identifying hunters and gatherers as the “childhood” period of human cultural evolution raises questions about the ramifications of maintaining such traditions in the current era of “high technology”. Although it does not make sense to claim that childhood is “inferior” to adulthood, it also would be untenable to argue there should be no facilitation of the transition from childhood to adulthood because there is no developmental difference between these two periods of a person’s life. If hunting and gathering is a stage out of which most of the world’s peoples have emerged, why should aboriginal peoples be encouraged to cling to cultural traditions that are associated with this period and get in the way of economic development?

As well as recognizing the gap in productivity, scale and complexity between aboriginal and “high technology” cultures, it should also be recognized that European nations made the transition from feudalism to capitalism in a period spanning hundreds of years. This has created additional difficulties in assimilating aboriginal groups, since Canadians have expected the aboriginal population to make a much larger developmental leap in decades. How such a large gap can be bridged requires careful thought and a great deal of sensitivity; it is even possible that the process will take a number of generations. While questions about addressing the unevenness of cultural development in Canada are beyond the scope of the dissertation, it is

definitely a matter for public debate and policy development in the years to come. First, however, it must be recognized that there is a gap in scale, productivity and complexity between aboriginal groups and modern nation-states. The postmodern and non-materialist assumptions that fill current analyses of aboriginal problems, like those found in the *Final Report* of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, are intent on denying evolutionary processes associated with economic development, preventing Canadians from taking the first step in coming to terms with aboriginal dependency.

**PART I**  
**UNDERSTANDING THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC BASIS**  
**OF ABORIGINAL DEPENDENCY**

**Chapter One**  
**The Royal Commission's Politicized Conception**  
**of Aboriginal Dependency**

In the development of public policy in Canada, a significant role has been played by royal commissions, which have been appointed to conduct in-depth investigations of particular policy areas and to provide recommendations to governments. As Neil Bradford explains, in areas where there is no existing political dynamic to provide coherent solutions to complex and long lasting problems, "commissions can give voice to new ideas, interests, and identities not well represented in the political and state system".<sup>1</sup> As a result, these commissions are presented with "open-ended mandates from government that encourage sweeping analyses of problems and bold solutions", receiving substantial resources to conduct research and hold public hearings. The appointment of such commissions is especially likely if the policy area is "of critical significance to the political community and its future well-being".<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Neil Bradford, "Innovation by Commission: Policy Paradigms and the Canadian Political System", in James Bickerton and Alain-G. Gagnon (eds), *Canadian Politics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Toronto: Broadview Press, 1999), pp.549-550.

<sup>2</sup> Bradford, "Innovation by Commission", p.550.



Because of the deeply entrenched character of aboriginal dependency and its resulting social pathologies, as well as aboriginal "ideas, interests and identities" not being "well represented in the political and state system", it is not surprising that a royal commission was eventually appointed to study aboriginal deprivation and make recommendations to address it. The Royal Commission, in fact, was a response to a long series of developments in aboriginal politics that had been unfolding since the 1960s.

As will be shown below, these political developments have had an immense impact on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples' *Final Report*. So prevalent is the political consideration of giving aboriginal peoples "a voice" in the development of the Royal Commission's findings, in fact, that it has largely usurped one of the major functions of a royal commission – to increase the body of knowledge relating to the subject being studied. This is because aboriginal perspectives are often contrary to what would be considered "knowledge" in the social sciences. As a result, the political strategy to incorporate aboriginal perspectives has impeded the ability of the Royal Commission to understand the causes of native dependency.

## THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND TO THE FINAL REPORT

The political developments that led to the formation of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples were associated with the reaction of aboriginal organizations to the Liberal Government's assimilationist White Paper on Indian Policy, which was released in 1969. Although a comprehensive government report on aboriginal peoples completed during the 1960s had recommended that "in addition to the normal rights and duties of citizenship, Indians [should] possess certain additional rights as charter members of the Canadian community" and not be forced to "acquire those values of the majority society he does not hold or wish to acquire",<sup>3</sup> these ideas came into direct conflict with the liberal ideas of the Prime Minister at the time, Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Trudeau's fight against Quebec sovereignty led him to be hostile towards the political claims of cultural groups and reject any notion that aboriginal peoples were entitled to rights not shared by non-aboriginal Canadian citizens. Instead of "Citizens Plus", the Trudeau government's White Paper proposed the phasing out of aboriginal peoples' "special status" as a distinct legal category. It recommended eliminating the *Indian Act*, privatizing reserves and transferring the responsibility for aboriginal peoples to the provinces, arguing that this would provide natives with the same opportunities available to other Canadian citizens. The White Paper also argued that it was

---

<sup>3</sup>Sally Weaver, "The Hawthorn Report", in Noel Dyck and James Waldram (eds), *Anthropology, Public Policy and Native Peoples in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), pp. 77-9; and Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, p.384.

important to help the poorest aboriginal communities first, rather than giving blanket privileges on the basis of ancestry - a proposal that was vehemently rejected by the native elite.<sup>4</sup>

Trudeau's White Paper, however, was a turning point in Canadian aboriginal policy. The release of the White Paper "generated a storm of protest from aboriginal people, who strongly denounced its main terms and assumptions".<sup>5</sup> But while this proposal "left in its wake a legacy of bitterness" and a continuing suspicion that the government still had an assimilationist agenda, it "also served to strengthen the resolve of aboriginal organizations to work together for a changed relationship".<sup>6</sup> It resulted, for example, in Harold Cardinal releasing the Indian Association of Alberta's "Red Paper", which "described how Indian peoples, as peoples with distinct cultures, wished to contribute to Canadian society while at the same time exercising political

---

<sup>4</sup> Pauline Comeau and Aldo Santin, *The First Canadians*, Chapter One; Peggy Brizinski, *Knots in a String: An Introduction to Native Studies in Canada, Second Edition* (Saskatchewan: University Extension Press, University of Saskatchewan, 1993), p. 216.

<sup>5</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 201.

<sup>6</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 201. This role of the White Paper in generating a "political renaissance" for aboriginal peoples and changes in policy development is also present in the following research studies: Douglas M. Brown, "Aboriginal Peoples and Canadian Federalism", *For Seven Generations: An Information Legacy of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, RCAP Research Reports* (Ottawa: Libraxus, 1997); Roger Gibbins et al., "Domestic Governments and Aboriginal Peoples: The Alberta Case", *For Seven Generations*; Douglas M. Brown and Jonathan Rose, "Exercising Aboriginal Self-Government", *For Seven Generations*; Peter Russell and Roger Jones, "Aboriginal Peoples and Constitutional Reform", *For Seven Generations*; David Milne, "The Case of New Brunswick-Aboriginal Relations", *For Seven Generations*; David Cameron and Jill Wherrett, "New Relationship, New Challenges", *For Seven Generations*; G. Bruce Doern, "The Politics of Slow Progress", *For Seven Generations*; John Giokas, "The Indian Act", *For Seven Generations*; Stephen Aronson and Ronald C. Maquire, "Federal Treaty Policy Study", *For Seven Generations*; Cecil King, "The State of Aboriginal Education in Southern Canada", *For Seven Generations*; Gail Valaskakis, "The Role, Development and Future of Aboriginal Communications", *For Seven Generations*; and Peter Clancy, "Contours of the Modern State in the Territorial North", *For Seven Generations*.

and economic power at the community level".<sup>7</sup> It also led to the formation of the first Canadian aboriginal organization - the National Indian Brotherhood.<sup>8</sup> The increasing strength of these organizations forced the federal government to withdraw the White Paper the next year.<sup>9</sup>

But at the same time as the White Paper was withdrawn, the funding that had been made available to aboriginal organizations for its implementation had not. This generated further growth in aboriginal organizations, increasing pressure for land claims and self-government initiatives.<sup>10</sup> These demands were also buttressed by a number of favourable court decisions and the increasing prominence of international aboriginal organizations in world affairs. In addition, aboriginal groups were included as stakeholders in Canadian constitutional negotiations during the 1980s, where three conferences were held in an attempt to define and entrench the concept of the "inherent right" of self-government in the *Constitution Act of 1982*.

---

<sup>7</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 203.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of the development of aboriginal organizations during this time, see Bradford W. Morse and John Giokas, "Do the Metis fall within Section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867?", *For Seven Generations*; Peter Aucoin, "Relations between the Province of Nova Scotia and Aboriginal Peoples in Nova Scotia", *For Seven Generations*; Adrian Tanner et al., "Aboriginal Peoples and Governance in Newfoundland and Labrador", *For Seven Generations*; John Crossley, "Relations between the Province and Aboriginal Peoples in Prince Edward Island", *For Seven Generations*; Darcy A. Mitchell and Paul Tennant, "Government to Government: Aboriginal Peoples and British Columbia", *For Seven Generations*; Gurston Dacks, "Canadian Government and Aboriginal Peoples: The Northwest Territories", *For Seven Generations*; Antoine Mountain and Susan Quirk, "Dene Nation: An Analysis", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>9</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 203.

<sup>10</sup> Abele, "The Importance of Consent", p. 448; and Harold Cardinal, *The Rebirth of Canada's Indians* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1979).

It was the participation of aboriginal organizations in constitutional negotiations, in fact, that resulted in one of the main circumstances that spurred the government of the time, Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservatives, to appoint the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. In an attempt to have the Province of Quebec "sign on" to the Canadian Constitution, the Conservative government proposed the Meech Lake Accord, which had a clause stipulating that Quebec would be recognized as a "distinct society" within the Canadian Federation. Aboriginal leaders, however, objected to the fact that aboriginal groups, despite their own distinctiveness, were excluded from these negotiations. In an attempt to garner the aboriginal leadership's backing of the Accord, Mulroney promised to appoint a Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in exchange for their support.

In addition to Mulroney's unsuccessful attempts to curry favour with aboriginal leaders to push through the Meech Lake Accord, one other event was instrumental in the government's decision to appoint a Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. This was the Oka crisis of 1990, where an armed stand-off occurred between Mohawk warriors and the Canadian State over the expansion of a golf course onto an alleged sacred burial site. Although the uprising was eventually quashed by the Canadian army, aboriginal leaders warned that more violent conflicts were inevitable unless

native grievances were addressed. A royal commission, therefore, was proposed as the mechanism to quell the aboriginal discontent that was rising across the country.<sup>11</sup>

To write the Royal Commission's terms of reference, Mulroney appointed Brian Dickson, a former chief justice of the Supreme Court of Canada. After three months of consultations with aboriginal leaders and government officials, Dickson recommended that the following people be appointed as Commissioners:

- Allan Blakeney, a former Premier of Saskatchewan;<sup>12</sup>
- Paul Chartrand, a Métis lawyer and head of the Department of Native Studies, University of Manitoba;
- René Dussault, a Quebec Appeal Court Justice;
- Georges Erasmus, a former Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations;
- Mary Sillett, a former president of the national Inuit women's association, Pauktuutit, and vice-president of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada;
- Viola Robinson, a former president of the Native Council of Canada; and
- Bertha Wilson, a former Supreme Court Justice.

---

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of the circumstances that led to the formation of the Royal Commission, see James S. Frideres, "Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: The Route to Self-Government", *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 1996 16(2), pp. 247-66; Phil Lancaster, "Politics of Renewal: A Comment on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", *Canadian Dimension*, Jan-Feb 1997 31(1), pp. 17-18; Peter Russell, "Research Program of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, Autumn 1995 2, pp. 277-83; Jill Wherrett, "Research Agenda of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", *Canadian Public Administration*, Summer 1995 38(2), pp. 272-82; Frank Cassidy, "The Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", *Policy Options*, March 1997 18(2), pp. 3-6; Dara Culhane, "Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Social and Cultural Credibility", *Perception*, March 1993 17(1), pp. 31-2.

<sup>12</sup> Allan Blakeney was replaced by Peter Meekison, a professor of political science, University of Alberta and a former public servant, after Blakeney resigned in April 1993. Blakeney resigned because he felt that the Commission was spending too much time in hearing grievances and not enough in proposing workable solutions to aboriginal problems. For a discussion of Blakeney's views, see "Inaction fuels commissioner's resignation", *Windspeaker*, 11(2), p. 3.

It was also recommended that René Dussault and Georges Erasmus be appointed Co-Chairs of the Royal Commission.

In addition to recommending the above people as Commissioners, Dickson proposed a mandate that was very general and wide-ranging in scope. The Royal Commission was encouraged to "examine all issues which it deems to be relevant to any or all of the aboriginal peoples of Canada...",<sup>13</sup> thus paving the way for the most extensive study of aboriginal peoples in Canadian history. Almost immediately, Mulroney approved Dickson's recommendations, and in the fall of 1991, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was born.

Although the Royal Commission's mandate was very broad, Dickson pinpointed 16 areas for specific examination:

- the history of relations between Aboriginals and Canadians;
- affirming and implementing self-government;
- developing a land base for Natives, especially through land claims;
- the constitutional responsibilities of the Crown toward Aboriginals;
- processes for honouring, negotiating and implementing treaties;
- future changes to the Indian Act and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs;
- "special issues of concern to aboriginal peoples", especially those pertaining to economics, culture, education, and justice; and

---

<sup>13</sup>See Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples [RCAP], *The Mandate, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Background Documents* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1991), p. 1.

- the circumstances of particular segments of the native population - Metis people and Indians living off-reserve, northern aboriginal people, aboriginal elders, women and youth.<sup>14</sup>

Notably in the description provided in elaborating upon these areas, a number of specific references were made about the need to investigate and address aboriginal dependency. With respect to self-government, for example, the mandate stated that "the essential task is to break the pattern of paternalism which has characterized the relationship between aboriginal people and the Canadian government", and the Royal Commission was encouraged to "make recommendations concerning fiscal arrangements and economic development initiatives necessary for successful transitions to self-government". The mandate also referred to "the relationship between an adequate land base and economic development" in its discussion of land claims. In reference to the Metis and off-reserve Indians, the Commission was directed to "investigate [their] economic base", while "sustainable economic and social development" and "access to natural resources" were noted as key considerations for the north. Dickson's discussion of "special issues of concern to aboriginal peoples" also included the need to "improve the quality of life for aboriginal peoples" and address problems of "poverty, unemployment and underemployment". More significantly, "economic issues of concern" encompassed "the problems of developing a viable economic base for aboriginal peoples, unemployment, access to labour

---

<sup>14</sup>See, *The Mandate, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Background Documents*, pp. 8-9, for a description of these areas.



markets, discrimination in employment, taxation and custom duties", while one "cultural [issue] of concern" for the native population was assumed to be "the protection of traditional hunting, fishing and trapping ways of life". The terms of reference also advised the Royal Commission to investigate the "social and economic conditions of elders as a group" and aboriginal women's "access to the labour market".<sup>15</sup>

As a result of this mandate, investigating aboriginal dependency became one of the key concerns of the Royal Commission. In its attempt to understand the root causes of this problem, and to form recommendations to address it, there were two distinctive features that strongly influenced the Royal Commission's findings. First, it was understood from the outset that aboriginal peoples would be significantly involved. This was apparent in the consultations Dickson made in drawing up the terms of reference and proposing the membership of the Royal Commission. Thirty-six of the 57 meetings were with aboriginal peoples<sup>16</sup> and four of the seven Commissioners recommended by Dickson - Paul Chartrand, Georges Erasmus, Mary Sillett and Viola Robinson - also identified themselves as Aboriginal.<sup>17</sup> The concern to strike a "balance between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people" was evident throughout the life of the Royal Commission. As well, aboriginal organizations were to have a great

---

<sup>15</sup>See *Report of the Special Representative*, pp. 1-3, for a description of its mandate.

<sup>16</sup> See *Report of the Special Representative*, pp. 4-7 and especially Appendix 1, pp. 1-5.

<sup>17</sup>See *Final Report*, vol. 1, pp. 703-705, for the Commissioners' biographies.

deal of input into the Royal Commission's research and public consultations.<sup>18</sup> Such involvement was necessary, in the Royal Commission's view, to ensure that aboriginal peoples' "perspectives and understandings" were properly represented.<sup>19</sup> This was partly to overcome aboriginal peoples' distrust in any government initiated study, but also because they were thought to have important insights that would benefit all Canadians and humanity more generally.<sup>20</sup>

These efforts to involve aboriginal peoples and organizations, in fact, was part of the wider agenda of royal commissions identified earlier - to give "ideas, interests and identities" historically unrepresented more of a "voice" within the Canadian political system. The four Commissioners appointed, after all, had been involved in the resistance to assimilation that eventually resulted in the Royal Commission's formation. Georges Erasmus, for example, wrote an article as the Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations shortly before being appointed as a Commissioner advocating the vision of parallelism that the Royal Commission subsequently adopted. He argued that aboriginal peoples could "contribute enormously to the health,

---

<sup>18</sup> *Final Report*, vol. 5, pp. 297-304. For a discussion of the Royal Commission's policy of balancing aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples see Alan Cairns, *Citizens Plus*, p.132.

<sup>19</sup>Jill Wherrett explains that "the [research advisory committee of the Royal Commission] began as a small, mostly non-Aboriginal group of experts in different disciplines. However, at their first meeting, members of the research advisory committee decided that in order to facilitate the inclusion of aboriginal perspectives and knowledge, they wanted an equal number of Aboriginal representatives from various communities to serve on the committee. Among other tasks, the committee would have a role in developing research guidelines, peer review and publication policies for the Commission". Jill Wherrett, "Research Agenda of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", *Canadian Public Administration*, Summer 1995 38(2), p. 275

<sup>20</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. xxiii, 4-7, 301, 691.

effectiveness, and decency of Canada, benefiting every person who lives in this country” by “go[ing] back to the agreement made in the Two-Row Wampum Treaty signed” where aboriginal peoples had agreed to “allow Europeans to stay among us and use a certain amount of our land, while in our own lands we would continue to exercise our own laws and maintain our own institutions and systems of government”.<sup>21</sup> Giving leaders like Erasmus a prominent role in the Royal Commission and adopting his (and other aboriginal leaders’) vision of parallelism was one way for the Canadian state to show that it was listening to aboriginal concerns. Peter Russell maintained, in fact, that one of the most significant aspects of the Royal Commission was “the extent to which it has accommodated the Aboriginal voice and perspective. It is doubtful that any public inquiry in a society dominated by white settlers has ever provided its indigenous peoples an opportunity on this scale for recording their own understanding of their conditions and prospects”.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to its inclusion of aboriginal "ideas, interests and identities", thereby supposedly giving the native population a "voice" in the Canadian political system, the other distinctive feature of the Royal Commission was its extensive historical analysis. Such an analysis was necessary, according to the Royal Commission, in order to

---

<sup>21</sup> Georges Erasmus, “Twenty Years of Disappointed Hopes”, in Boyce Richardson (ed) *Drumbeat: Anger and Renewal in Indian Country* (Toronto: The Assembly of First Nations and Summerhill Press, 1989), pp. 1-2; see also Georges Erasmus and Joe Sanders. "Canadian History: An Aboriginal Perspective", in Diane Engelstad and John Bird (eds), *Nation to Nation: Aboriginal Sovereignty and the Future of Canada* (Concord: Anasi, 1992).

<sup>22</sup> Russell, “Research Program of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples”, p. 278.

understand the "relations between Aboriginal peoples, the Canadian government and Canadian society as a whole",<sup>23</sup> and the wider structural issues contributing to aboriginal dependency. The Commission stated that such a historical analysis is important because

it is impossible to make sense of the issues that trouble the relationship today without a clear understanding of the past...we simply cannot understand the depth of these issues or make sense of the current debate without a solid grasp of the shared history of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people on this continent.<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, in the Royal Commission's view, this relationship varied at different points in Canadian history. The Royal Commission argued that this history unfolded in four stages: 1) "Separate Worlds"; 2) "Contact and Cooperation"; 3) "Displacement and Assimilation"; and 4) "Negotiation and Renewal".<sup>25</sup> A historical analysis, according to the Royal Commission, "would facilitate an understanding of the factors that contributed to a relationship that has been more mutually beneficial and harmonious in some periods than in others". Studying these different historical periods, therefore, would enable the Royal Commission to pinpoint the contributing

---

<sup>23</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 699.

<sup>24</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 31.

<sup>25</sup> See Figure 3.3, "Stages in the Relationship", *Final Report*, 1, p. 69. This figure was adapted from Mark Dockstator, "Towards an Understanding of Aboriginal Self-Government", doctor of jurisprudence thesis, York University, June 2003.

factors to aboriginal dependency today and provide guidance for constructing a more balanced and equal relationship in the future.<sup>26</sup>

Such a historical analysis is related to a somewhat different function of the Royal Commission than its political character mentioned above. Unlike its attempts to give aboriginal peoples more of a "voice" in the Canadian political system, the Royal Commission's concern with history was to develop a better understanding of aboriginal circumstances so that it could propose effective solutions to native deprivation. The Royal Commission argued, for example, that "enormous gaps remain in our knowledge" about aboriginal issues, and it saw part of its task as to "fill in the gaps by conducting policy-oriented research in these areas".<sup>27</sup> The Royal Commission, therefore, was not just intending to be a political document; it also was striving to increase our knowledge about aboriginal circumstances, including their histories, cultures, and relations with non-aboriginals. As Peter Russell explained, "in the longer term, the Royal Commission's research product offers a pool of knowledge which can be drawn on over time not only by Canadians but by citizens, scholars and governments in other countries concerned with the same general problem"<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 32, 38.

<sup>27</sup> This view was expressed in the Royal Commission's "Integrated Research Plan", *For Seven Generations*. See also, Wherett, "Research Agenda of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", p. 277, for a discussion of this point.

<sup>28</sup> Russell, "The Research Program of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", p. 277.

Given the Royal Commission's understanding that reexamining the past was a prerequisite for improving the relations between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples, it is not surprising that a great deal of the Royal Commission's Report was devoted to an historical analysis. Almost the entire first volume of the Report and most of the second, in fact, either analyzed the history of aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples before and after contact, or applied this analysis for the purpose of "building the foundation of a renewed relationship".<sup>29</sup> All the other volumes also contained historical components that addressed the roots of aboriginal-non-aboriginal conflict and native deprivation.

#### HOW THE ROYAL COMMISSION FULFILLED ITS MANDATE

In November 1996, the Royal Commission released its *Final Report* to the public. Contained in five volumes comprising over 3,500 pages, the *Final Report* offered an analysis of, and made recommendations about, many circumstances pertaining to aboriginal dependency. Because of the magnitude of the *Final Report* and the scope of its analysis and recommendations, it has been widely recognized that it would inform public debates and policy development for years to come. As Alan Cairns points out, "the massive presence of the Commission's output, most notably the [Final] Report, will not, of course vanquish competing interpretations and policy

---

<sup>29</sup> See *Final Report*, 1, pp. 608-702 for the Royal Commission's analysis of how its historical framework can be used to build a new relationship.

prescriptions, but the latter will have to come to grips with the Commission's legacy".<sup>30</sup>

A huge body of information was obtained, selected and synthesized by the Royal Commission to reach an understanding of aboriginal dependency and a number of proposals for addressing it. This information can be categorized into two distinct types - expert research and citizen opinion.<sup>31</sup> Expert advice was solicited either through research commissioned or by relying on studies already in existence. Citizen opinion, on the other hand, was acquired through the Royal Commission's public hearings and its Intervenor Participation Program.<sup>32</sup>

In its acquisition of expert advice through an extensive research program, Commissioners and their staff "met with some 150 of Canada's most distinguished scholars" to identify the major issues on which to focus, and 65 of these scholars also wrote short papers for the Commission.<sup>33</sup> These meetings and papers formed the basis of the Royal Commission's Integrated Research Plan, which guided and shaped its

---

<sup>30</sup> Cairns, *Citizens Plus*, p. 117.

<sup>31</sup> These are characterized by the Royal Commission as the "research program" and "consultations" respectively. *Final Report*, 5, p. 297.

<sup>32</sup> Transcripts of the public hearings and an overview of the Intervenor Participation Program are both available on the CD-ROM, *For Seven Generations*, produced by the Royal Commission. See Intervenor Participation Program, *Final Report*, August 1994 (in "RCAP Publications") and "Public Consultations", in *For Seven Generations: An Information Legacy of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (Ottawa: Libraxus, 1997).

<sup>33</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p.300. These short papers have been filed in the Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Accession 1997-98/089, File 7040, Boxes 127-128, but these files are "closed" and cannot be viewed.

research.<sup>34</sup> The Royal Commission also selected the school of Public Administration at Carleton University to summarize the history of government policy and the previous reports written on aboriginal peoples, so that it could concentrate its efforts on those areas where research was lacking.<sup>35</sup> As a result, the Royal Commission decided to focus on four major research themes - "governance, lands and economy, social and cultural matters, and the North" - and these themes were "cross-cut by the particular perspectives of history, women, youth and Aboriginal people living in urban areas".<sup>36</sup> According to the Royal Commission, its research was "organized...around themes rather than traditional academic disciplines" so that it could "conduct research on the sixteen points of our mandate while also developing an integrated picture of all the issues on which to base recommendations that take account of the interconnections between and among the issues and the need for a holistic approach to policy".<sup>37</sup>

As well as producing an Integrated Research Plan to guide the content of its research, the Royal Commission also shaped the form of the information it received by developing "Ethical Guidelines for Research".<sup>38</sup> Such guidelines were needed, in the Royal Commission's opinion, because it

---

<sup>34</sup> "Integrated Research Plan", July 1993, *For Seven Generations*. For a discussion of this program, also see Peter Russell, "Research Program of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", pp. 277-83; and Jill Wherrett, "Research Agenda of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", pp. 272-82

<sup>35</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Public Policy and Aboriginal Peoples, 1965-1992*, 4 Volumes (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1993-1996).

<sup>36</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p.300.

<sup>37</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p.300.

<sup>38</sup> "Ethical Guidelines for Research", Integrated Research Plan, Appendix B, *For Seven Generations*.



recognized from the outset that one of the problems with much of the existing research was the difficulty of representing Aboriginal reality authentically. To ensure that all research sponsored by the Commission gave appropriate respect to the cultures, languages, knowledge and values of Aboriginal peoples and to the standards used by Aboriginal peoples to legitimate knowledge, we developed ethical guidelines to be followed by researchers under contract with the Commission. These guidelines were a significant step forward in encouraging culturally based approaches to research and stimulating research that represents Aboriginal experience, society and history in ways that are authenticated by Aboriginal people themselves.<sup>39</sup>

As a result of these attempts to "[represent] Aboriginal reality authentically", the Royal Commission "sought a balance of Aboriginal people and non-aboriginal people not only to conduct research but also to develop, plan and manage the research program...".<sup>40</sup>

These research considerations resulted in six published reports on issues of special concern - the arctic relocations, suicide, justice, treaty making, and self-government<sup>41</sup> -

---

<sup>39</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p.301.

<sup>40</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p.301.

<sup>41</sup> The Royal Commission notes "at various points during our mandate we were asked to express opinions on or to draw public attention to matters of urgency, with the goal of launching or focusing national debate", resulting in reports that "concerned a subject that requires urgent attention and is pivotal to establishing a new basis for relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada". *Final Report*, 5, pp.302-3. These Reports include, *The Arctic Relocation: Report of the 1953-55 Relocation and Summary and Supporting Information* (3 volumes) (July 1994); *Choosing Life: Special Report on Suicide Among Aboriginal People* (February 1995); *Bridging the Cultural Divide: A Report on Aboriginal People and Criminal Justice in Canada* (1996); *Treaty Making in the Spirit of Co-Existence: An Alternative to Extinguishment* (March 1995); *The Right to Self-Government and the Constitution: A Commentary* (February 1992); and *Partners in Confederation: Aboriginal Peoples, Self-Government and the Constitution* (August 1993).

and two compilations of essays by a number of legal scholars.<sup>42</sup> It also led to over 300 unpublished research studies that generally pertained to the Commission's four research areas and the particular perspectives it chose to cross-cut these themes.<sup>43</sup> The Royal Commission notes that this research "represented the efforts of about 365 researchers from most Canadian and a number of foreign universities and involving more than 100 communities and some 30 Aboriginal organizations across the country".<sup>44</sup> Besides influencing its recommendations, the Royal Commission argues that this research "made a significant contribution to advancing the state of Canadian scholarship" by "add[ing] significant new dimensions to the existing body of knowledge on Aboriginal affairs and culture".<sup>45</sup>

As well as acquiring a tremendous amount of new research from experts in various fields, an even more noticeable aspect of the Royal Commission was the extent to which it relied on citizen opinion to construct its understanding of aboriginal

---

<sup>42</sup> One concerned the legal and constitutional issues pertaining to self-government in the Indian, Metis and Inuit populations, with essays by Patrick Macklem, Wendy Moss, Morse and Giokas, Don McMahon and Fred Martin, and Peter Hogg and Mary Ellen Turpel. Royal commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Aboriginal Self-Government: Legal and Constitutional Issues* (1995). The other comprises two volumes on *Canada's Fiduciary Obligation to Aboriginal Peoples in the context of Accession to Sovereignty by Quebec*. The first volume pertains to the "international dimensions" of this subject with essays by James Anaya, Richard Falk and Donat Pharand, while the second examines the "domestic dimensions" and was written by Renee Dupuis and Kent McNeil. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Canada's Fiduciary Obligation to Aboriginal Peoples in the Context of Accession to Sovereignty by Quebec* (2 volumes) (1995).

<sup>43</sup> Two categories of research reports replaced "lands and economy" - "treaties" and "economy", while a section on statistics was added, for a total of ten research areas identified in its organization of research reports. Over 200 of these reports are available under the heading "RCAP Research Reports" on the CD-ROM, *For Seven Generations*; The others were sent to Library and Archives Canada, and are filed under Record Group 33, Accession 1997-98/089. Not all these files are open to the public, however.

<sup>44</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p.302.

<sup>45</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p.301.

dependency and its recommendations for addressing it. Because of the Royal Commission's political role of giving a "voice" to aboriginal organizations and ensuring that these views were given legitimacy, great efforts were undertaken to ensure that a large and diverse number of native opinions were obtained. So important was this component, in fact, that "Consultations" are mentioned before the research program in the Royal Commission's discussion of how it fulfilled its mandate.<sup>46</sup> The significance that it gave to these consultations is also apparent from the blocks of quotations from the hearings that appeared throughout the *Final Report*. The Royal Commission argued that these public consultations were very important because its "work was concerned largely with *people* - their lives, their goals and their dreams - so we wanted to pay particular attention to the voices and ideas of the people concerned [emphasis in the original]".<sup>47</sup> It also maintained that widespread consultations were necessary because "opinions and solutions had to emerge from consensus among aboriginal people if our eventual recommendations were to command broad support and acceptance".<sup>48</sup>

Because of these concerns with "the voices and ideas of the people concerned" and the need to obtain support from the native population, the Royal Commission held four rounds of public hearings across the country over 18 months. According to the Royal Commission, it visited 96 communities, held 178 days of hearings and heard from

---

<sup>46</sup> *Final Report*, 5, pp.297-300.

<sup>47</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p.297.

<sup>48</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p.298.

2,067 people, which generated 75,000 pages of transcripts. It also received close to 1,000 written submissions from presenters and other members of the public.<sup>49</sup>

Besides these general hearings, it also held special consultations on specific subjects, such as the Inuit relocations to the high arctic in the 1950s, residential schools, and the problem of suicide within the native population,<sup>50</sup> which informed its analysis of these subjects.<sup>51</sup>

To structure these public hearings Commissioners held "two brainstorming sessions with 20 distinguished Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal thinkers" and organized informal meetings with aboriginal organizations and government officials.<sup>52</sup> As well, it often hired a person nominated by the community in which the hearing was being held to identify important issues and line up presenters, and an elder or community leader was appointed to act as "Commissioner for the Day" to help Commissioners "understand the background and complexity of the issues being presented".<sup>53</sup> It also noted that "in some locations, community and regional representatives and Commission staff worked

---

<sup>49</sup> *Final Report*, 5, pp. 298, 302. Six documents were made available to frame issues that needed to be addressed and summarize what was heard at the hearings. These include, *Framing the Issues, Discussion Paper No. 1* (October 1992); *Focusing the Dialogue, Discussion Paper No. 2* (April 1993); *Overview of the First Round* (October 1992); *Overview of the Second Round* (April 1993); *Exploring the Options: Overview of the Third Round* (November 1993); *Toward Reconciliation: Overview of the Fourth Round* (April 1994).

<sup>50</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p.300.

<sup>51</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *The High Arctic Relocation; Choosing Life; Final Report*, 1, pp. 333-410, 411-544.

<sup>52</sup> *Final Report*, 5, pp. 297, 299.

<sup>53</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p.298.

with communities and organizations to support their efforts to develop solutions and recommendations for presentation".<sup>54</sup>

To further assist organizations in making submissions to the Royal Commission, an arms-length Intervenor Participation Program was developed so as to provide funding for well researched briefs. Close to \$8 million was made available, and almost two hundred organizations were invited to submit briefs and make presentations to the Commission.<sup>55</sup> Many of these briefs were then presented in the last two rounds of the Royal Commission's hearings.<sup>56</sup>

As well as the information gathered from expert research and citizen opinion, the Royal Commission used another forum – the round table – to inform its analysis and recommendations about aboriginal dependency. The concept of the round table was unique in that it was essentially a combination of researchers and citizens who "focus expert discussion on practical solutions and the steps necessary to produce positive change in the policies, programs and conditions affecting Aboriginal lives and

---

<sup>54</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p.302.

<sup>55</sup> See "Intervenor Participation Program, Final Report", August 1994, in *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>56</sup> "The Third Round of Hearings", *Exploring the Options: Overview of the Third Round* (November 1993).

communities".<sup>57</sup> In 1992 and 1993, the Royal Commission organized five round tables – on education, justice, health, economic development and urban issues.<sup>58</sup>

In these attempts to fulfill its mandate, the Royal Commission maintained that it went out of its way to ensure that it received information from a diversity of individuals and organizations. Both aboriginal and non-aboriginal citizens were consulted, and in the case of aboriginal groups, the Commission attempted to involve women and men, youth and elders, and different geographical regions (the north and south, urban and rural) and a variety of native cultures – Indian, Inuit and Métis.<sup>59</sup> It also tried to incorporate the experiences of Aboriginals in other countries by visiting the Dineh

---

<sup>57</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p. 299.

<sup>58</sup> Of these five roundtables, only four reports were published. These include: *Aboriginal Peoples and Urban Centres: Report of the National Round Table on Aboriginal Urban Issues* (May 1993); *The Path to Healing: Report of the National Round Table on Aboriginal Health and Social Issues* (October 1993); *Aboriginal Peoples and the Justice System: Report of the National Round Table on Aboriginal Justice Issues* (June 1993); *Sharing the Harvest: The Road to Self-Reliance, Report of the National Round Table on Aboriginal Economic Development and Resources* (December 1993). The roundtable that was not accompanied by a publication of the proceedings was the forum on education. Although the transcripts of this roundtable are on the CD-ROM, *For Seven Generations*, the discussion papers presented are not provided. These papers, however, are available at Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, 1997-98/089. The papers available are the following: Joyce Goodstriker and Marie Smallface Marule, "Treaty and Status Indian Perspective - Discussion Paper #3, Box 123, File 6008-11G2; Margot M. LeBrasseur and Rose-Alma McDonald-Jacobs, "Education Reform: Preparing for the Global Classroom – Discussion Paper #2", Box 123, File 6008-11L1; Louis Lamonthe, "Today's dream, Tomorrow's Reality – Discussion Paper #4", Box 123, File 6008-11L2; Rose-Alma McDonald-Jacobs, "Aboriginal Education: Respect for the Past – Confidence in the future - Discussion Paper #1", Box 123, File 6008-11M1; Brent Galloway and Steve Wolfson, "Education in Aboriginal Languages: Goals and Solutions for Canada - Discussion paper #6", Box 123, File 6008-11G1; Marie Battiste, "Maintaining Aboriginal Identity, Languages, and Culture in Modern Society – Discussion Paper #5", Box 123, File 6008-11B2; Mitchell Beer, "When the Mirror Doesn't Lie: Confronting Racism and Promoting Understanding in Non-Aboriginal Populations", Box 123, File 6008-11B1. A number of these papers are also available in Marlene Brant Castellano et al. (eds), *Aboriginal Education: Fulfilling the Promise* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000).

<sup>59</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p. 299. The Royal Commission notes that it also "held a special consultation with the Metis National Council and its affiliates and one with other Metis organizations recently affiliated in the Metis Confederacy, to examine and debate the history, current conditions and aspirations of the diverse Metis population of Canada".

(Navaho), Apache and Pueblo territories, as well as the Dakota-Lakota Summit in South Dakota, and the Inuit of Greenland.<sup>60</sup>

## THE ROYAL COMMISSION'S IDENTIFICATION OF NATIVE DEPENDENCY

As a result of both its research program and consultations, the Royal Commission's *Final Report* concluded that aboriginal dependency was a problem for native people all across the country and had existed for over 150 years.<sup>61</sup> It maintained that this was a problem that needed to be addressed since "a self-reliant livelihood and access to economic options should be within the grasp of every Aboriginal citizen"<sup>62</sup> and a "looming social crisis" made the need for reforms urgent.<sup>63</sup> The Royal Commission argued that "a fiduciary obligation exists on the part of all Crown institutions to reverse the condition of dependency and foster self-reliance and self-sufficiency among Aboriginal nations"<sup>64</sup> and therefore one of its major tasks was "to show what resources are needed to establish a renewed relationship and end dependency on government by greatly improving social and economic conditions for Aboriginal people".<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p. 299.

<sup>61</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 788-790, 800-801, 972-977; 3, pp. 5-7, 208-9; 5, pp. 25, 42-46. See also Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples, *People to People, Nation to Nation: Highlights from the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1996), pp. 39-40, 45-6.

<sup>62</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 828.

<sup>63</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 992.

<sup>64</sup> *Final Report*, 3, pp. 375-6. See also *Final Report*, 2(1), p.44 for a discussion of the same point.

<sup>65</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p.61; see also *Final Report*, 5, pp. 14-15, 12, and 70 for discussions of the same point.

One of the main results of aboriginal dependency the Royal Commission identified was the high rate of poverty in many aboriginal communities,<sup>66</sup> arguing that this was a major reason for embarking upon a new relationship with aboriginal peoples. It asserted that "the life chances of Aboriginal people, which are still shamefully low, must be improved",<sup>67</sup> referring to indicators such as low life expectancy, high rates of illness and substance abuse, greater incidences of violence and incarceration, low educational levels, and poor housing and sanitation.<sup>68</sup> According to the Royal Commission,

Aboriginal people in Canada endure ill health, insufficient and unsafe housing, polluted water supplies, inadequate education, poverty and family breakdown at levels usually associated with impoverished developing countries. The persistence of such social conditions in this country...constitutes an embarrassment to Canadians, an assault on the self-esteem of Aboriginal people and a challenge to policy makers.<sup>69</sup>

It also argued that these indicators have not improved significantly over the years despite government efforts.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, in the Royal Commission's opinion, "strong and effective measures need to be taken to address the often appalling inequalities that separate Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians in such sectors as health, housing,

---

<sup>66</sup> *People to People*, p. ix; *Final Report*, 2(2), p.802; 3, pp. 166-175; 5, pp.24, 32.

<sup>67</sup> *People to People*, p.1.

<sup>68</sup> *People to People*, pp.2, 68; *Final Report*, 1, pp.4-5, 7; 3, p. 108.

<sup>69</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p.1.

<sup>70</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.5.



income and overall living conditions".<sup>71</sup> These efforts, however, should enhance aboriginal peoples' "capacity to contribute to the whole", and not just involve "transfers that perpetuate relations of dependency".<sup>72</sup>

As well as being a government obligation, the Royal Commission asserted that addressing aboriginal dependency was necessary because it was a concern of both aboriginal and non-aboriginal people.<sup>73</sup> According to the Royal Commission, a persistent theme at its public hearings and in its research studies was that aboriginal peoples were "anxious to replace dependency with productivity".<sup>74</sup> This was so that they can be "free of the social stigma and sense of personal failure that go with dependence, and free of the debilitating effects of poverty", enabling them to "thrive as individuals and as nations and make their new governments a success".<sup>75</sup>

As well as improving native self-esteem and increasing the life chances of Aboriginals, the Royal Commission offered another reason for addressing aboriginal dependency - it would reduce the government transfers that are currently needed to sustain the aboriginal population. The Royal Commission pointed out that "unless economic conditions and welfare programs on reserves change radically and soon, the

---

<sup>71</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.688.

<sup>72</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.688.

<sup>73</sup> *People to People*, p.147.

<sup>74</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p.169; See also *People to People*, p.45 for a discussion of the same point.

<sup>75</sup> *People to People*, pp.38, 107 and *Final Report*, 2(1), p.5; 5, p.32.

bill for social assistance will reach \$1 billion by 1999 and \$1.5 billion by 2002".<sup>76</sup> It also noted that there are many other government transfers and subsidies associated with aboriginal dependency - everything from housing to health to justice services.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, the low earnings of the native population resulted in their being unable to contribute a fair share of goods and services to the economy or tax revenues to the government.<sup>78</sup> In its own words, the Royal Commission maintained that its

recommendations are motivated first and foremost by a desire for social justice and for a restoration of historical rights, dignity and self-reliance to Aboriginal people. From this perspective the strategy will be a good investment for Canada. But the strategy is also a good economic investment. Greater productivity, higher incomes and improved government finances will result from it. At a time when the economy is not performing optimally and government finances are under severe strain, the realistic prospect of ending the economic dependency of many Aboriginal people and communities provides a powerful argument in favour of the [Royal Commission's] strategy.<sup>79</sup>

It was because overcoming aboriginal dependency would be beneficial for all Canadians, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal, that the Royal Commission, in order to determine the causes of aboriginal dependency and propose workable solutions, put a "strong emphasis on understanding the historical picture, which helps to explain how the economies of Aboriginal communities reached their present state".<sup>80</sup> It also maintained that "larger structural issues...need to be resolved if economic self-reliance

---

<sup>76</sup> *People to People*, p.46.

<sup>77</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p. 415, 5, pp.24, 42-7; *People to People*, pp.136-7.

<sup>78</sup> *People to People*, pp.136-7.

<sup>79</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p.60; see *Final Report*, 1, p.6 for a discussion of the same point.

<sup>80</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.829.

is to be a realistic objective".<sup>81</sup> This historical analysis of aboriginal dependency and the larger structural issues involved in achieving economic self-reliance were two of the major concerns of the Royal Commission's Final Report.

## THE ROYAL COMMISSION'S ANALYSIS OF ABORIGINAL DEPENDENCY

Aboriginal dependency, according to the Royal Commission, was rooted in the assimilationist policies that have been in existence since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>82</sup> It maintained that this policy - "to absorb Aboriginal people into Canadian society, thus eliminating them as distinct peoples", and thereby attempting to eradicate "aboriginal cultures and identities"<sup>83</sup> - failed because aboriginal peoples "have an enduring sense of themselves as peoples with a unique heritage and the right to cultural continuity". Policies of assimilation, argued the Royal Commission, are "a form of cultural suicide urged upon [aboriginal peoples] in the name of 'equality' and 'modernization'", and as a result, they "have done great damage", leaving "a heritage of dependency, powerlessness and distrust".<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.829.

<sup>82</sup> The Royal Commission, in fact, maintains that all aboriginal problems largely stem from this policy. It maintains that even referring to the "aboriginal problem" is assimilationist since it "inevitably places the onus on Aboriginal people to desist from 'troublesome behaviour'". *Final Report*, 1, p.2.

<sup>83</sup> The Royal Commission maintains that there were three stages to this process - protection, civilization and assimilation. *Final Report*, 1, p.413.

<sup>84</sup> *People to People*, p.x; *Final Report*, 3, p.7.

The Royal Commission supported its argument with the fact that aboriginal dependency began during the period when attempts at assimilation were made. This period of Canadian history - "Displacement and Assimilation" - occurred as the fur trade declined, when aboriginal people were no longer needed as military allies, and after the aboriginal population had become a minority in relation to European settlers.<sup>85</sup> It was also characterized by the development of an ideology of "cultural and racial superiority", according to the Royal Commission, which assumed that Aboriginals were inferior and incapable of governing themselves.<sup>86</sup> During this period, it was believed that European ideas of progress and development could be imposed on the native population and the treaties signed with them could be used as an expedient mechanism for justifying the expropriation of aboriginal lands.<sup>87</sup> This was in contrast to aboriginal peoples' understanding that they had a "nation-to-nation relationship" with the colonial powers, where they would share their lands with Europeans while maintaining their political autonomy.<sup>88</sup>

During this period of history, therefore, the Royal Commission argued that there was a change in the relationship between aboriginal peoples and the Canadian state, which resulted in the aboriginal dependency that continues today. Such a changed relationship led to aboriginal dependency, according to the Royal Commission, for

---

<sup>85</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 38, 137-8.

<sup>86</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p.5. See also *People to People*, pp.11-12.

<sup>87</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 248-9.

<sup>88</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.140.

two reasons. First of all, it resulted in the destruction of aboriginal economies.<sup>89</sup> If the spirit and intent of the treaties had been honoured, and aboriginals were allowed to retain access to the resources on their homelands, the Royal Commission maintained that most aboriginal peoples would be self-reliant and some would be prosperous.<sup>90</sup> They could have continued with their "traditional ways of making a living" and profited from "a rich land and resource base".<sup>91</sup> Instead, however, they were pushed off their lands onto small reserves that lacked resources.<sup>92</sup> As a result, Aboriginals became isolated and impoverished.<sup>93</sup>

Secondly, the Royal Commission maintained that the suppression of aboriginal political autonomy, caused by paternalistic attitudes and notions of European superiority, also contributed to aboriginal dependency because it stopped Aboriginals from controlling their lives and fashioning institutions to work out their own solutions to problems.<sup>94</sup> Instead, there were a number of "laws, regulations and government policies that blocked the rebuilding of Aboriginal economies".<sup>95</sup> Also, the European doctrine of cultural and racial superiority meant that aboriginal cultures were stifled, ridiculed and not accorded the proper respect, lowering the self-esteem of the native

---

<sup>89</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.xxiv.

<sup>90</sup> *People to People*, p. 35.

<sup>91</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.790.

<sup>92</sup> The Royal Commission maintains that the Indian Act permitted the piecemeal undermining of the reserve land base. *Final Report*, 1, pp.282-85.

<sup>93</sup> *People to People*, p.12.

<sup>94</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. xxiv, 285-6.

<sup>95</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 790.

population and depriving them of the confidence needed to participate in new economic and social relations.<sup>96</sup> Even more significantly, these notions of superiority led authorities to develop residential schools for aboriginal children to civilize and Christianize the younger generation of Natives. This, along with the decrease in the native population caused by European diseases, resulted in aboriginal families and social customs being broken apart.<sup>97</sup>

To address these causes of aboriginal dependency, the Royal Commission recommended a process of "decolonization", where there would be a reversal of "the assumptions of assimilation that still shape and constrain Aboriginal life chances..."<sup>98</sup> More autonomy must be provided to aboriginal peoples, in the Royal Commission's opinion, as well as a rebalancing of political and economic power in the Canadian federation.<sup>99</sup> Instead of attempting to assimilate aboriginal peoples into the Canadian economy and society, the Royal Commission asserted that a new relationship should be developed based upon the principles of recognition, respect, sharing and responsibility.<sup>100</sup> This would involve recognizing that aboriginal peoples as nations

---

<sup>96</sup>*Final Report*, vol. 1, 601, 683; vol. 2(1), 328. The Royal Commission maintains that this was a prominent view expressed in its public hearings. It notes that "throughout the hearings there was a strong concern for Aboriginal culture, traditions and languages as cornerstones for the revival of Aboriginal self-esteem and the necessary healing and rebuilding of Aboriginal societies. This view came from every region and from every group, from the Innu in Labrador to the Saanich First Nation in Victoria, British Columbia". *Overview of the First Round* (October 1992).

<sup>97</sup> See *Final Report*, 1, pp. 251, 365; *People to People*, p. 12.

<sup>98</sup> *People to People*, p. x.

<sup>99</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. xxv, 5, p. 2.

<sup>100</sup> See *People to People*, 20-21; *Final Report*, 1, pp. 677-691.

having the right to self-determination,<sup>101</sup> respecting the validity of aboriginal cultures both for healing the damage caused and making a contribution to the wider Canadian society,<sup>102</sup> and instilling sharing and mutual responsibility in aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations through a more equal distribution of lands and resources.<sup>103</sup> As the Royal Commission pointed out succinctly in its highlights of the Final Report,

to bring about this fundamental change [in the relationship with the native population], Canadians need to understand that Aboriginal peoples are nations. That is, they are political and cultural groups with values and lifeways distinct from those of other Canadians...To this day, Aboriginal people's sense of confidence and well-being as individuals remains tied to the strength of their nations. Only as members of restored nations can they reach their potential in the twenty-first century.<sup>104</sup>

In order to bring about this process of rebuilding aboriginal nations, the Royal Commission proposed honouring the spirit and intent of the treaties and making new ones.<sup>105</sup> This would enable aboriginal peoples' political, economic and social order to be reconstructed, their cultures to be revitalized, and the healing process to begin.<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>101</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 609; 2(1), p. 327; 5, pp. 5-7. The Royal Commission maintains that it is important to recognize that aboriginal peoples are not just another interest group, but have a nation-to-nation relationship with the federal government based upon their original occupation of the land and their belief that they are caretakers of the land and have distinctive rights and responsibilities. *Final Report*, 1, pp. 252-253, 678. This view was expressed in a research study prepared for the Commission by G. Bruce Doern, "The Politics of Slow Progress", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>102</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 7, 690-1.

<sup>103</sup> The Royal Commission maintains that "a renewed relationship, self-determination, self-reliance and healing" are all "strongly interrelated concepts". *Final Report*, vol. 1, 696.

<sup>104</sup> *People to People*, p.x.

<sup>105</sup> See *Final Report*, 1, p. 3; 2(1), pp. 38, 44; 2(2), p. 829; 5, pp. 7-8. This view was also extensively elaborated upon in the Royal Commission's Report, *Treaty Making in the Spirit of Co-Existence: An Alternative to Extinction* (March 1995).

<sup>106</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 767-80.

Treaties are necessary to address aboriginal dependency, in the Royal Commission's view, firstly because they will provide aboriginal peoples with the lands and resources that are required for economic prosperity and self-reliance.<sup>107</sup> Although it maintained that additional government funding would be needed for business development, training and employment, and assistance for hunting and trapping,<sup>108</sup> lands and resources are the "central feature in the rebuilding of Aboriginal economies",<sup>109</sup> since "commitment to Aboriginal self-government will be hollow unless Aboriginal nations have access to an adequate land base, with resources to match".<sup>110</sup> Additional lands and resources, according to the Royal Commission, would "enable aboriginal peoples to be put on a stable footing through mixed economies that rely in part on traditional modes of harvesting renewable resources and through fuller engagement of Aboriginal individuals and institutions in wage and market economies".<sup>111</sup> Once such diversified economies begin to form, the Royal Commission argued, aboriginal governments would be able to fund services by taxing their own members/citizens and having the richer aboriginal groups assist the poorer ones, thus generally reducing native

---

<sup>107</sup>See *Final Report*, 2(1), p. 5; 2(2), p. 574; 3, p. 174. The Royal Commission argues that "a major objective of treaty making and treaty implementation and renewal is to facilitate Aboriginal economic self-reliance, cultural autonomy and self-government. To accomplish this, Aboriginal nations must have more territory and rights of access to resources than they do now under Canadian law. Without adequate lands and resources, Aboriginal nations will be pushed to the edge of economic, cultural and political extinction. This is as true for nations that have yet to enter into treaty with the Crown as it is for those that are party to historical treaties". *Final Report*, 2, p. 574. This results in recommendations 2.4.2 and 2.4.11-2.4.12 (*Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 574, 581).

<sup>108</sup> *Final Report*, 5, pp. 3, 14, 70-1.

<sup>109</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 850. See also, *People to People*, p. 38.

<sup>110</sup> *People to People*, p. 56.

<sup>111</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 4.



dependence on transfers from the Canadian state.<sup>112</sup> Such circumstances would enable aboriginal peoples "to be in a position to engage once again in genuine relations of reciprocity and sharing" with non-Aboriginal Canadians.<sup>113</sup>

Besides providing aboriginal peoples with more lands and resources, the Royal Commission maintained that negotiating treaties would also contribute to native self-reliance by changing the relationship between aboriginal peoples and the Canadian state from one of wardship/guardianship to that of a partnership.<sup>114</sup> This new relationship would enable aboriginal peoples to assert more control over their lives, thereby raising their self-esteem<sup>115</sup> and ensuring that they can develop "culturally sensitive/appropriate" solutions to the problems they face.<sup>116</sup> As the Royal Commission explained,

current social problems are in large part a legacy of historical policies of displacement and assimilation, and their resolution lies in recognizing the authority of Aboriginal people to chart their own future within the Canadian federation. Specific policies we recommend assume that this framework of authority will be put in place and that lands and resources will be redistributed to make self-government workable. Institutions to serve social needs will be established by Aboriginal governments and will reflect the cultural priorities of the population being served. Distinct Aboriginal institutions will play an important role in demonstrating how traditional wisdom can be applied to contemporary problems.<sup>117</sup>

---

<sup>112</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p. 281.

<sup>113</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 687.

<sup>114</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 689.

<sup>115</sup> See *Final Report*, 1, pp. 680, 682-3, 696; 5, p. 56.

<sup>116</sup> See *Final Report*, 1, pp. 4, 257, 616, 679-80; 4, pp. 13, 67, 69; 5, pp. 16, 110.

<sup>117</sup> *Final Report*, 3, pp. 5-6.

In its proposals for recognizing and reconstituting "Aboriginal nations",<sup>118</sup> the Royal Commission argued that broad powers of governance be provided to institutions developed by aboriginal peoples.<sup>119</sup> It also recommended that these powers be given to approximately 60 to 80 entities, which would emerge out some unspecified process of amalgamation of the 600+ aboriginal bands that are currently in existence.<sup>120</sup> This is because these larger units would be better able to exercise powers of self-government than smaller groups.<sup>121</sup> And although it was recognized that considerable state support would be required for some time to develop human resources in aboriginal communities and to stimulate their traditional and modern sectors,<sup>122</sup> the Royal Commission argued that aboriginal institutions should control how the funding is distributed so that "adaptations to the cultures and conditions of the people served can be made".<sup>123</sup>

To bring about these structural changes in the relations between Aboriginals and the Canadian state, the Royal Commission proposed a number of new institutions,<sup>124</sup> laws

---

<sup>118</sup> See *Final Report*, 2(1), pp. 177-183; 2(2), p. 1019; 5, pp. 5-7.

<sup>119</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 833. The Royal Commission maintains that aboriginal peoples have an "inherent right to self-government", which is derived from four sources - the Creator/political theory, international law, Canadian history and the constitution. *Final Report*, 1, p. 679.

<sup>120</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 166, 181.

<sup>121</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p. 179.

<sup>122</sup> The Royal Commission recommends that an additional \$1.5 to 2 billion be provided to aboriginal peoples each year for "a number of years". *Final Report*, 5, p. 56.

<sup>123</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 796, 3, p. 175.

<sup>124</sup> The Royal Commission maintains that this will include the development of aboriginal institutions and "adapting mainstream institutions". *Final Report*, 5, p. 12.

and bureaucratic processes, as well as an increase in federal transfers to fund these initiatives.<sup>125</sup> Most significantly, it recommended constitutional changes on a number of fronts,<sup>126</sup> a new Royal Proclamation with three major pieces of "companion legislation",<sup>127</sup> a forum for negotiating a "Canada-wide framework agreement" with which to establish processes for treaty making and the redistribution of lands and resources, and co-operative strategies with federal, provincial and territorial governments to stimulate economic development. It is largely through complex legal and bureaucratic mechanisms to settle land claims and institute aboriginal groups as a "third order of government" within the Canadian federation,<sup>128</sup> therefore, that the Royal Commission proposed to address aboriginal dependency.

Such proposals, however, flowed from the Royal Commission's analysis of wider structural factors that made no distinction between poorly executed assimilationist policies and assimilation more generally. In several parts of the Final Report, the Royal Commission recognized that throughout Canadian history Aboriginals were victims of discrimination, government incompetence and widespread neglect. It is noted by the Royal Commission, for example, that aboriginal veterans were not given

---

<sup>125</sup> See *People to People*, pp. 51-57; *Final Report*, 5, pp. 5-11, 17.

<sup>126</sup> These include recognition of the inherent right of self-government, processes for treaties, a veto for Aboriginals, recognition of the Metis, protection for the Alberta Metis Settlements Act, and the broadening of self-government jurisdiction. *Final Report*, 5, pp. 119-20.

<sup>127</sup> Recommendation 1.16.1 maintains that the four principles of recognition, respect, sharing and responsibility should be enshrined in the Royal Proclamation. *Final Report*, 1, p. 695.

<sup>128</sup> See *Final Report*, 1, p. 3; 2(1), pp. 163-68.

the same benefits as European veterans,<sup>129</sup> and that the native population was often excluded from new forms of economic activity since malfunctioning institutions and laws either constructed barriers to, or failed to help, Aboriginals taking up new occupations.<sup>130</sup> The Royal Commission also devoted numerous pages to documenting how residential schools were not up to standard, health care was inadequate, housing was poor, and little government assistance was provided to aboriginal groups that were uprooted and relocated.<sup>131</sup> In fact, the Royal Commission argued that the government's main concern was with reducing costs, not improving the social and economic conditions of the native population.<sup>132</sup>

#### THE PARADOX OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION'S *FINAL REPORT*

The Royal Commission used these examples of poorly executed assimilation policies to buttress its arguments that assimilation itself should not have been attempted. This view, however, did not consider another possibility - that assimilationist policies carried out sensitively and with greater resources could have prevented the widespread dependency and social pathologies that are visible today. If more resources had been made available for aboriginal education, housing and health care, and if these programs and services had been provided in a manner so as not to create a gulf

---

<sup>129</sup> See *Final Report*, 1, pp. 553-4, 603.

<sup>130</sup> See *Final Report*, 1, pp. 294-5; 2(2), pp. 487-90, 786-790.

<sup>131</sup> See *Final Report*, 1, pp. 247, 252, 266, 343-5, 353, 356, 360, 374-375, 412, 419, 461; 3, pp. 113, 434-5; 5, p. 24.

<sup>132</sup> See *Final Report*, 1, pp. 181, 289, 344, 347, 354.

between the generations (as occurred when the young were sent to residential schools),<sup>133</sup> it is possible that the social pathologies brought with cultural dislocation and family breakdown could have been avoided, or at least minimized.

All assimilationist approaches, no matter how carefully planned and sensitively executed, however, are not consistent with the Royal Commission's vision of parallelism, which it maintained was so essential for cooperative aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations. And as will be explained throughout this dissertation, it was this vision of parallelism that prevented the Royal Commission from considering whether aboriginal dependency could be explained by theories assuming the existence of cultural evolution and historical progress. Because the Royal Commission was compelled to focus on viewpoints that were consistent with its political agenda, it was difficult for the Final Report to achieve its other goal of striving to increase our knowledge of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations.

An adoption of the political strategy of aboriginal organizations prevented the Royal Commission from considering if its parallelist vision was actually possible. The political character of the Royal Commission brought it into conflict with its other function - to provide greater knowledge about the past so that the causes of aboriginal dependency could be understood. Uncritically accepting parallelism led the Royal

---

<sup>133</sup> See *Final Report*, 1, pp. 251, 341, 375 for a discussion of this problem.

Commission to interpret its mandate as "re-establish[ing] the association of equals that once characterized the relationship between Indigenous peoples and newcomers in North America",<sup>134</sup> without considering that the historical and material conditions that enabled this "association of equals" to form no longer exist. Although the Royal Commission did recognize that the early relationship between aboriginal peoples and Europeans was made possible by the fur trade, military alliances and larger numbers of aboriginal peoples in comparison to the settler population,<sup>135</sup> it maintained that a similar relationship could be reconstituted in the absence of these factors.

The result was that the Royal Commission embraced an understanding of the past that was ahistorical and dominated by idealism. The solution to aboriginal problems was largely seen as a matter of returning to the original principles that the Royal Commission claimed shaped relations between aboriginal peoples and Europeans at the time of contact.<sup>136</sup> This required that non-aboriginals change their "ethnocentric notions based on the claimed cultural superiority of the settler society" that led the relations with aboriginal peoples to become unbalanced. According to the Royal Commission, the factors that have prevented progress in aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations "are to be found in past assumptions and the shadows they have cast on present attitudes". It argued for a "transformation in consciousness" and "relations characterized by respect and reciprocity...in which Aboriginal people exercise their

---

<sup>134</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p. 296.

<sup>135</sup> See *Final Report*, 1, pp. 38, 102-5, 248; *People to People*, pp. 8-12.

<sup>136</sup> See *Final Report*, 1, pp. 6, 608-9, 617, 620 for examples of this view.

sacred gifts in the service of the whole community, and newcomers and their descendants come to value the wisdom of this ancient land as well as its wealth and beauty".<sup>137</sup>

But aboriginal dependency is not simply the result of what people think or how the government chose to relate to the native population; it reflects concrete political and economic realities that have changed dramatically over time, resulting in the marginalization of the aboriginal population. Understanding aboriginal dependency and working towards a solution, therefore, requires understanding how the emerging capitalist system has interacted with the native population, but the dynamics of this mode of production were largely neglected by the Royal Commission.

It was a neglect of these political and economic realities that shaped the Royal Commission's assumptions about the benefits of "mixed economies" that it claimed would "enable aboriginal peoples be put on a stable footing" by "rely[ing] in part on traditional modes of harvesting renewable resources and through fuller engagement of Aboriginal individuals and institutions in wage and market economies".<sup>138</sup> This view flowed from an acceptance of the views of aboriginal organizations, which maintained that preserving their traditional "ways of life" was necessary for their well-being today. While such an assumption justifies the current political demands of these

---

<sup>137</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 6, 263, 319.

<sup>138</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 4.

organizations for additional lands and political autonomy, it does not consider the large differences in productivity, size and complexity between the two types of economies and whether, in fact, they can be reconciled. But the Royal Commission's greater concern with giving aboriginal organizations a "voice" led it to largely ignore these pertinent questions about historical and material conditions, impeding the "solid grasp" of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations that it maintained was necessary for addressing native dependency and "moving forward together into the future".<sup>139</sup>

What needs to be stressed is that in order to "[move] forward together into the future", a certain amount of commonality and philosophical agreement must be established. Such common ground, however, is impeded by the Royal Commission's continual focus on "difference". As Alan Cairns points out, "rights employed in the service of difference, with little concern for solidarity or fraternity, may generate 'otherness' on both sides of the divide inherited from the past, and provide little of the sustenance and fellow-feeling that the carrying out of the task of healing and rapprochement requires".<sup>140</sup> The need to develop such feelings of solidarity and fraternity, in fact, explains why the Royal Commission extensively promoted "cross cultural communication" in the *Final Report*; such communication was necessary, argued the Royal Commission, so that a common understanding could be fostered.<sup>141</sup>

---

<sup>139</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 32.

<sup>140</sup> Cairns, *Citizens Plus*, p. 160.

<sup>141</sup> *Final Report*, 5, pp. 91-116.



The proper balance between “respecting difference” and fostering “solidarity”, “fraternity”, or “fellow-feeling” is one of the main philosophical questions explored in the “identity politics” approach embraced by the Royal Commission. Largely drawn from the works of Charles Taylor, this approach has dominated many discussions of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations.<sup>142</sup> The approach assumes that “we owe equal respect to all cultures” since they “have animated whole societies over some considerable stretch of time” and therefore “have something important to say to all human beings”. These cultures, it is argued, can “suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves”.<sup>143</sup> In the case of the Royal Commission’s understanding of aboriginal dependency, it is argued that

[aboriginal] people can be active and responsible members of their communities only if they have a sense of their own worth and the conviction that what they say and do in both the public and the private sphere can make a significant contribution. However, this sense of self-respect is based in part on society's recognition of the value of an individual's activities and goals. A multinational society that treats the culture of a member nation with derision or contempt may well undermine the self-respect of people belonging to that culture. Such treatment jeopardizes their ability to participate as active members of their communities and to function effectively as autonomous individuals in work and private life. The disastrous effects on Aboriginal societies of successive policies of cultural assimilation bear poignant witness to this message.<sup>144</sup>

---

<sup>142</sup> See James Tully, “Aboriginal Peoples: Negotiating Reconciliation”, in James Bickerton and Alain-G. Gagnon (eds) *Canadian Politics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1999), pp. 413-442 for an overview of some of this literature.

<sup>143</sup> Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 25, 66-7.

<sup>144</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 681.

At the same time, however, it must be understood that real “respect” and “recognition” can only occur if aboriginal cultures are perceived to offer something of value to the wider social fabric. If this is not demonstrated, then the promotion of cultural attributes is not, as Taylor himself points out, “a genuine expression of respect”, but amounts to “unsufferable patronizing”. As Taylor explains, “the supposed beneficiaries of the politics of recognition...know that they want respect, not condescension. Any theory that wipes out the distinction seems at least *prima facie* to be distorting crucial facets of the reality it purports to deal with”.<sup>145</sup>

In order for the Royal Commission's analysis of aboriginal dependency and its proposed solutions to be taken seriously by both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Canadians, therefore, it would be necessary to find a way to reconcile divergent "world views" on the subject so that a common understanding can be developed. But, as will be shown in the next chapter, the Royal Commission largely evaded developing a process for reconciling these different historical frameworks in its Final Report. It used a relativistic stance to uncritically support the romantic historical accounts of aboriginal peoples, enabling it to ignore evidence that would challenge these views.

---

<sup>145</sup> Taylor, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, pp. 69-70.

This relativistic stance is part of larger developments within the social sciences and humanities in universities today. As will be elaborated upon in the next chapter, these developments have resulted in a number of disciplines turning away from approaches that are based on evolutionary assumptions. So pervasive are such changes that they have even influenced political economy, which until very recently, has approached the relationship between economics and politics from a developmental perspective. The result is that the Royal Commission largely ignores the insights that evolutionary traditions can offer for understanding the political and economic roots of aboriginal dependency.

## Chapter Two The Problem of History

In the last chapter it was pointed out that the Royal Commission's analysis largely was driven by two objectives: to understand the causes of aboriginal marginalization and dependency and to give aboriginal perspectives a "voice" in the Final Report. These two objectives, however, were somewhat contradictory. As will be discussed in detail below, this is because aboriginal "perspectives and understandings" embrace spirituality and do not strive for objectivity, in contrast to the scientific methods that have been developed to aid human understanding. Symbolically recognizing "aboriginal perspectives" in the *Final Report*, therefore, often led to assertions that would not be considered "knowledge".

This problem was especially prominent in the Royal Commission's historical analysis. As was outlined earlier, the Royal Commission made an examination of history a major part of the *Final Report* because it maintained that in order to create a more just and balanced relationship between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples today, one first had to understand how injustices had emerged. According to the Royal Commission, this relationship had not always been unequal, and therefore it was necessary to examine how the interaction had unfolded historically to determine how aboriginal-non-aboriginal interactions had deteriorated; by understanding what had

happened at different periods in Canadian history, the Royal Commission argued, the causes of aboriginal dependency could be identified and then rectified.

At the same time, however, it also maintained that aboriginal and non-aboriginal historical perspectives differed in how they understood the past. It asserted that there were two “conceptions of history”, and both of these conceptions should be accepted as equally valid interpretations of the past. A possible consequence was that divergent views of history could become apparent, resulting in an unlimited number of subjectively determined historical interpretations.

But, if recognizing a different “aboriginal” perspective has the possibility of inhibiting the development of a common view of the past, how did the Royal Commission reconcile this with its goal to increase all Canadians' knowledge of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations? As will be shown below, the Royal Commission largely responded to this problem by ignoring what it described as non-aboriginal (i.e. “western”) perspectives when there was a conflict. It used a relativist stance to encourage the inclusion of aboriginal viewpoints, yet did not hold these perspectives up to scrutiny when they were inconsistent with other evidence. Viewpoints inconsistent with aboriginal conceptions, in fact, were often dismissed out of hand. This was especially true with respect to evidence that supported conceptions of

historical progress and societal evolution – frameworks that the Royal Commission asserted constitute a major part of the "western" historical tradition.

The Royal Commission's outright rejection of evolutionary perspectives and conceptions of historical progress was related to a wider trend within the social sciences referred to earlier as "postmodernism". Such a trend has been one of the major obstacles in recognizing the explanatory capacity of evolutionary/progressive conceptions of history that have much to contribute to our understanding of the historical interaction of aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples. As is discussed later in this chapter, an overview of this tradition indicates a much more coherent and satisfying account of aboriginal dependency than the relativism and idealism offered by the Royal Commission. One offshoot of this tradition – a framework known as "uneven and combined development" - is particularly useful for understanding aboriginal deprivation in that it explains both the differences in development between aboriginal and European societies at the time of contact, and the particular historical and material forces that integrated the Old and the New Worlds into a larger, more productive and complex political and economic system.

## TWO "CONCEPTIONS OF HISTORY"?

Although the Royal Commission maintained that "it is impossible to make sense of the issues that trouble the relationship [between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people] today without a clear understanding of the past", a number of areas in the *Final Report* argued that there are, in fact, two different "conceptions" of history. One is espoused by aboriginal peoples and another by non-native Canadians.<sup>1</sup> The main difference between the two, according to the Royal Commission, was that while non-aboriginal peoples see history as being "linear" in character, to Aboriginals it is "cyclical". As is summarized in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 of the Royal Commission's *Final Report*,<sup>2</sup> the linear view envisioned "time as an arrow moving from the past into the unknown future", where the present relationship between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians "grows out of the past...and can be improved upon". The cyclical view of aboriginal peoples, on the other hand, perceived "time as a circle that returns on itself and repeats fundamental aspects of experience". To avoid dealing with the problems

---

<sup>1</sup> The Royal Commission's analysis of these two different "Conceptions of History" is drawn from three sources: Julie Cruikshank, "Oral Tradition and Oral History: Reviewing Some Issues", *The Canadian Historical Review* LXXV/3 (1994), pp.403-418; Anthony F.C. Wallace, "Overview: The Career of William N. Fenton and the Development of Iroquoian Studies", in Michael K. Foster et al (eds), *Extending the Rafters: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Iroquoian Studies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984); and Bruce G. Trigger, "Indian and White History: Two Worlds or One?", in *Extending the Rafters*, pp. 17-33. Although not cited in its "Conceptions of History" chapter, the Royal Commission also obtained three research reports on "History" - Ted Chamberlin and Hugh Brody, "Aboriginal History: Workshop Report"; Lorraine Brooke, "An Inventory of Mapping Projects in Connection with Aboriginal Land and Resource Use in Canada"; and Julie Cruikshank, "Claiming Legitimacy: Oral Tradition and Oral History". All reports are available on *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>2</sup> Figure 3.1 "A Linear Perspective on the Historical Relationship" and Figure 3.2 "A Cyclic Perspective on the Historical Relationship", *Final Report*, 1, pp. 34-35.

of attempting to reconcile these two conceptions, the Royal Commission proposed to "present an account of past events that recognizes and accepts the legitimacy of the historical perspectives and traditions of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples".<sup>3</sup>

More specifically, the Royal Commission argued that these "conceptions of history" can be distinguished from each other in terms of four additional criteria: secularity, objectivity, conceptions of evolution/progress, and the sources that are used. In the non-aboriginal historical tradition, the Royal Commission maintained,

the goal has been to come up with an account that best describes all the events under study. Moreover, underlying the western humanist intellectual tradition in the writing of history is a focus on human beings as the centrepiece of history, including the notion of the march of progress and the inevitability of societal evolution. This historical tradition is also secular and distinguishes what is scientific from what is religious or spiritual, on the assumption that these are two different and separable aspects of the human experience.<sup>4</sup>

In contrast, the Royal Commission pointed out that the Aboriginal tradition in conceptualizing history "crosses the boundaries between physical and spiritual reality" and

is neither linear nor steeped in the same notions of social progress and evolution. Nor is it usually human-centred in the same way as the western scientific tradition, for it does not assume that human beings are anything more than one — and not necessarily the most important — element of the natural

---

<sup>3</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 35-6.

<sup>4</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 33.



order of the universe. Moreover, the Aboriginal historical tradition is an oral one, involving legends, stories and accounts handed down through the generations in oral form. It is less focused on establishing objective truth and assumes that the teller of the story is so much a part of the event being described that it would be arrogant to presume to classify or categorize the event exactly or for all time.<sup>5</sup>

There were two problems with the distinctions that the Royal Commission made, however. The first was that, however "legitimate" spiritual beliefs may be, they cannot be considered "history". It is one thing to say that aboriginal peoples think that their spiritual beliefs are important and that they should be "recognized" and "respected" as such, or that some things that they believe actually happened in the past; it is another to claim that these beliefs, in themselves, must be accepted as historical evidence. The discipline of history, which is distinguished from religion or theology, tries to document the past as accurately as is possible by relying on a wide range of concrete information that can be scrutinized by other historians.<sup>6</sup> Although it is true, as the Royal Commission pointed out, that history "is not an exact science" since "past events have been recorded by human beings who...have understood them through the filter of their own values, perceptions and general philosophies of life and

---

<sup>5</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 33.

<sup>6</sup> E.H. Carr makes a similar point when he rejects both mystical and cynical views of history and instead sees history as a "constructive outlook over the past". Carr rejects mysticism because "a serious historian may believe in a God who has ordered, and given meaning to, the course of history as a whole, though he cannot believe in the Old Testament kind of God who intervenes to slaughter the Amalekites, or cheats on the calendar by extending the hours of daylight for the benefit of Joshua's army. Nor can he invoke God as an explanation of particular events". For a further discussion of these points, see Carr, *What is History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), pp. 74, 109.

society",<sup>7</sup> this does not mean that all accounts of the past are equally valid.<sup>8</sup> As E.H.Carr notes, history is not "a child's box of letters with which we can spell any word we please";<sup>9</sup> in order to write meaningful history the historian must both ensure the accuracy of the evidence used and "bring into the picture all known or knowable facts relevant, in one sense or another, to the theme on which he is engaged and to the interpretation proposed".<sup>10</sup> The historian Keith Windschuttle also notes that

while it is true that historians often come to the task of writing history with the aim of pushing a certain kind of theory, of establishing a certain point, or of solving a certain problem, one of the most common experiences is that the evidence they find leads them to modify their original approach. When they go looking for evidence, they do not simply find the one thing they are looking for. Most will find many others that they had not anticipated. The result, more often than not, is that this unexpected evidence will suggest alternative arguments, interpretations and conclusions, and different problems to pursue. In other words, the evidence often makes historians change their minds, quite contrary to the claims of those who assert that the reverse is true. Although

---

<sup>7</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 32. This view also appears in a report provided by Ted Chamberlin and Hugh Brody, "Aboriginal History: Workshop Report", *For Seven Generations*. In this report, it is maintained that "good science has usually acknowledged the arbitrariness of its findings, and admitted that its discoveries are always in some sense inventions. Science finds (or does not find) what it is looking for, neither more nor less; and it misses (or does not realize that it is missing) all sorts of other, no less interesting, realities that are not identifiable--that quite literally do not exist--within its theoretical framework".

<sup>8</sup> Chamberlin and Brody evade this point when they argue that "many of these issues [about historical interpretation?] cannot--indeed must not--be resolved. They represent contradictions and paradoxes and problems that lie at the heart of history, and also of relations between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples in Canada. These tensions--or more positively, the dialogues they generate--need to be sustained, just as we need to maintain the uncertainty entrenched in a memorable story...about whether a geological core sample--or any other piece of evidence that carries with it the prestige of science, or the privileges of written documentation--verifies aboriginal oral history, or whether oral history verifies the core sample, or the journal entry of some more or less itinerant European, or the other routinely privileged non-aboriginal forms of evidence". Chamberlin and Brody, "Aboriginal History", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>9</sup> E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, p. 26. Carr draws this statement from A. Froude, *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, p. 21.

<sup>10</sup> Carr, *What is History?*, p. 28.

theories or values might inspire the origins of an historic project, in the end it is the evidence itself that determines what case it is possible to make.<sup>11</sup>

Whether or not historians think the past is "linear" or "cyclical", therefore, will depend upon their interpretation of all the evidence that is available, not on preconceived and unverifiable spiritual beliefs. This means that all the references the Royal Commission made to aboriginal peoples' beliefs in "The Creator", "prophecies" or "spiritual reality" to support their "cyclical conception of history" cannot properly be considered as "history".

Secondly, it was misleading for the Royal Commission to draw such a hard and fast distinction between the types of sources that are used in the study of history.

Historians, regardless of their ethnic identity, use a variety of sources in their attempts to reconstruct the past. Although aboriginal peoples did not have writing before contact, all native people today have been influenced by written texts. By the same token, non-aboriginal historians do not restrict their study of history simply to written sources.<sup>12</sup> Many different types of sources are used in the study of history - written documents, archaeological data, palaeontological evidence, linguistic comparisons, and oral accounts.<sup>13</sup> The Royal Commission even recognized that there was an

---

<sup>11</sup> Keith Windschuttle, *The Killing of History: How Literary Critics and Social Theorists are Murdering Our Past* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 1996), p. 220.

<sup>12</sup> This point is made by the anthropologist Alexander von Gernet in *Oral Narratives and Aboriginal Pasts: An Interdisciplinary Review of the Literature on Oral Traditions and Oral Histories*, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, April 1996, 12.

<sup>13</sup> This point is made by Tom Flanagan in *First Nations? Second Thoughts*, p. 159.

approach to studying the past in the "western scientific tradition" called "ethnohistory", which was pioneered by William Fenton in the 1930s. This approach, according to the Royal Commission, used "insights from contemporary accounts of Aboriginal persons knowledgeable in their culture, along with documentary records that are fragmentary and sometimes blatantly biased by the political or economic motives of the colonial participants, to achieve an in-depth understanding of early relations".<sup>14</sup> Such an approach was the one advocated by Ted Chamberlin, the Director of the Royal Commission's "General History Project", when he argued that the "'stories' and 'myths' of each [aboriginal] nation" must be "woven into history".<sup>15</sup> This, in fact, implied a recognition that such stories and myths were not, in themselves, history.

Although historians extract information about the past from both oral accounts and written sources (as well as from archaeological, geological, palaeontological and linguistic evidence), it is important to note that there are added difficulties in using oral testimonies because they cannot be "pinned down" and can change dramatically over the years. This is especially relevant when one considers that oral traditions have been passed down through a number of generations; the longer the passage of time between an event and a recollection, the more likely the memory will be distorted by other events. As the anthropologist Alexander von Gernet states

---

<sup>14</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 60-1. See also *Final Report*, 1, p. 40, note 4 for a discussion of a similar point.

<sup>15</sup> Hugh Brody, *The Other Side of Eden*, p.108. See also Ted Chamberlin and Hugh Brody, "Aboriginal History: Workshop Report", in *For Seven Generations*.

the fact that oral narratives must be 'frozen' to be analyzed as evidence suggests that, in at least one important respect, they are different from written sources. Scholars have noted that a written document, while often biased in its original formulation, at least becomes permanent as it is archived and 'subtracted from time'. The original biases may be compounded by the interpretations of the historian who makes use of the document, but at least the content remains unaltered and may be interpreted by other parties. An oral tradition has additional problems. A primary or 'original' version (if such existed to begin with) is lost to modern scrutiny since it is replaced by later versions. What is left may be multiple layers of interpretations which have accumulated over time and a content that may only vaguely resemble an 'original' oration.<sup>16</sup>

Oral accounts also present the additional possibility that they could have been completely changed from the original version after the fact (either consciously or unconsciously) to put forward a particular view of history. This makes their incorporation different from the historian's use of written documents since, as Keith Windschuttle points out, very little of the written record that is available for historical interpretation "has been deliberately preserved for posterity". According to Windschuttle, "the biggest single source of evidence comprises the working records of the institutions of the past, records that were created, not for the benefit of future historians, but for contemporary consumption and are thus not tainted by any present selectivity. Most of these documents retain an objectivity of their own".<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Von Gernet, *Oral Narratives and Aboriginal Pasts: An Interdisciplinary Review of the Literature on Oral Traditions and Oral Histories*, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, April 1996, p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> Windschuttle, *The Killing of History*, p. 221.

Bruce Trigger also makes a similar point with respect to archaeological data. According to Trigger, "the past...had, and in that sense retains, a reality of its own that is independent of the reconstructions and explanations that archaeologists may give of it. Moreover, because the archaeological record, as a product of the past, has been shaped by forces that are independent of our own beliefs, the evidence that it provides at least potentially can act as a constraint upon archaeologists' imaginations". Although Trigger recognizes that the "propensity of value judgments to colour our interpretations" must be taken into consideration in analyzing archaeological data, he notes that "the deliberate construction and testing of two or more mutually exclusive interpretations of data can...increase the capacity for the constraints that are inherent in the evidence to counteract the role played by subjective elements in interpreting archaeological data".<sup>18</sup> This capacity of both archaeological data and written documents to constrain interpretations is very different from oral testimonies, which are obtained specifically for the purpose of constructing history.

These problems with the accuracy and flexibility of a group's collective memory are why the anthropologist Morton Fried stresses the need for researchers to separate their own observations from the recollections of the people they are studying.<sup>19</sup> Fried explains that statements made by aboriginal groups about the past are often inaccurate because these recollections can be infused with mythology. This is especially

---

<sup>18</sup> Bruce Trigger, *The History of Archaeological Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 381, 400.

<sup>19</sup> Morton Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society* (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. 84-5.

pronounced when groups have been dislocated in the process of colonization, which results in "a demand for a new mythology that bridges the gap between the acculturating native society and its new master".<sup>20</sup> As Eleanor Leacock also has pointed out, "ethnohistorical studies of native North and South American societies... demonstrated that cultures reconstructed from interviews with tribal elders did not represent aboriginal times. To assume they did was to ignore the profound ways in which native peoples had been responding for centuries to Western trade and missionizing, and resisting invasion and conquest".<sup>21</sup>

The Royal Commission itself even seemed to recognize the problems with using oral accounts in its "Ethical Guidelines for Research". In its procedures for obtaining consent from "all persons and groups participating in research", the Royal Commission stated that "consent should ordinarily be obtained *in writing*. Where this is not practical, the procedures used in obtaining consent should be *recorded*".<sup>22</sup> The Royal Commission also recommended "protecting the oral tradition" and "preserv[ing oral] accounts" by writing down or videotaping the testimonials concerning residential

---

<sup>20</sup> Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, 94. Bruce Trigger also makes this same point when he recognizes that there is a "tendency for lore to be refashioned as circumstances change". Trigger, "The Historians' Indian: Native Americans in Canadian Historical Writing from Charlevoix to the Present", *Canadian Historical Review*, 1986 LXVII(3), p. 336.

<sup>21</sup> Eleanor Leacock, "Marxism and Anthropology", in Bertell Ollman and Edward Vernoff (eds), *The Left Academy: Marxist Scholarship and American Campuses* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1982), p.256. Leacock maintains that the following anthropologists found that interviews with tribal elders were inaccurate accounts - Esther S. Goldfrank, *Changing Configurations in the Social Organization of a Blackfoot Tribe during the Reserve Period*, 1945; Joseph Jablow, *The Cheyenne in Plains Indian Trade Relations 1795-1840*, 1950; Oscar Lewis, *The Effects of White Contact upon Blackfoot Culture*, 1942; Elman R. Service, *Spanish-Guarani Relations in Early Colonial Paraguay*, 1954.

<sup>22</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p. 326, emphasis added.

schools, relocations and traditional healing so that oral historians will "have the opportunity to tell their stories for the benefit of present and future generations".<sup>23</sup> Although these stipulations and recommendations indicated that the Royal Commission recognized that there were difficulties in preserving the accuracy of oral accounts over time, there was no mention of such problems in its Final Report. Instead, the Royal Commission implied that it was merely the biases of "a culture that relies heavily on the written word" that has led to skepticism towards the oral accounts of aboriginal peoples.<sup>24</sup>

What was needed in the Royal Commission's Report, therefore, was not blanket support for the inclusion of *all* oral histories, but a method for determining *which* oral accounts constituted valid historical evidence. Because of the added difficulties in incorporating oral accounts into history, there needed to be a mechanism proposed for determining the veracity of the various oral histories being put forward and reconciling contradictory viewpoints.<sup>25</sup> Although such a mechanism was never adequately discussed by the Royal Commission, one suggestion it made was to use the

---

<sup>23</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p.539.

<sup>24</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 40; 5, p. 325.

<sup>25</sup> This is now becoming a problem in court cases being pursued against the government in British Columbia in opposition to the settlement of the Nisga'a treaty. In these cases, the Gitksan and the Gitanyow are claiming that part of the Nisga'a settlement has involved the granting of lands that are on their traditional territories. The problem is that all of these claims are being put forward, in part, on the basis of each group's oral histories, which all contradict one another. Since not all of them can be true, questions must be raised about how to determine the accuracy of the conflicting claims. Ironically, Glen Williams, the Gitanyow's chief negotiator, and Neil Sterrit, a former Gitksan chief and negotiator, are attempting to settle this question by presenting various maps and other *written* documents in court. "Gitksan, Gitanyow against treaty", *The Province*, July 30, 1998.



methods of aboriginal peoples to determine the accuracy of their historical accounts. A "principle" of the Royal Commission's "ethical guidelines for research", for example, maintained that the "means of validating knowledge in the particular traditions under study should normally be applied to establish authenticity of orally transmitted knowledge". It also asserted that "appropriate respect" be given "to the standards used by Aboriginal peoples to legitimate knowledge".<sup>26</sup>

But an examination of the Final Report indicates that no such "standards" or "means of validating knowledge" were shown to exist. Instead, aboriginal "historians" appeared to expect that everything that they say should be accepted.<sup>27</sup> This was clear when the Royal Commission offered quotes from Chief Jake Thomas, a "highly esteemed historian and ceremonialist".<sup>28</sup> After stating that "the Haudenosaunee [Iroquois] have quite a different test for the authenticity and authority of the traditions that have been passed down orally and that they practise today", the Royal Commission provided the following statement from Thomas in support of this assertion: "That peace is

---

<sup>26</sup> See also *Final Report*, vol. 1, 237-8, which includes Recommendation 1.7.2 - "the right of Aboriginal people to represent themselves, their cultures and their histories in ways they consider authentic".

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, a quote provided from the testimony of Alice J. Wylie: "It is important to us that when we reminisce, the listeners will nod their heads and say, 'Yes, that is how it was. I remember'". *Final Report*, 1, p. 8. Also, testimony from a research report obtained by the Royal Commission is quoted to "[correct] distorted representations of the role of Metis people in history". This testimony includes the following: "When I was going to school people would say: 'It's written right here in the books.' And I'd say: 'Well that's not what my father told me' or 'My grandfather didn't say that's right and I'm going by word of mouth'. In this testimony, there was no indication of what evidence the aboriginal person used to determine if the father and grandfather had an accurate recollection of the past. Instead, the testimony just appeared to accept these views *on the basis* that they were offered by the person's grandfather and father. Kathleen E. Absolon and Anthony R. Winchester, "Cultural Identity for Urban Aboriginal People, in *For Seven Generations*, quoted in *Final Report*, 1, p. 618.

<sup>28</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 54.

supposed to work. It's the power of the words of the Creator where they come from, of unity, being of one mind, a good mind. That's what makes power".<sup>29</sup> The Royal Commission quoted Thomas again on the origins of the Iroquois clan system. The "means of validating knowledge" was merely the following: "we talk about the clan system. That's where it originated, from the time of the Creation". The Royal Commission then pointed out that Thomas "did not place a date on the origin of the practices sanctioned by the Creator and the Great Law [the constitution of the Iroquois confederacy], except to say that they existed long before the arrival of Europeans".<sup>30</sup> The Royal Commission explained that "the Haudenosaunee have less concern than non-Aboriginal scholars with establishing a date for the origin of the confederacy. They simply state that the League of Peace was in place before the arrival of Europeans on the eastern seaboard".<sup>31</sup> No "standards", however, were provided about how the Haudenosaunee came to the conclusion that the League of Peace existed "long before the arrival of Europeans"; it appeared to be just Thomas' unsubstantiated opinion.

In addition to the guideline that the "means of validating knowledge in the particular traditions under study should normally be applied to establish authenticity of orally transmitted knowledge", the Royal Commission also discussed some other

---

<sup>29</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 61.

<sup>30</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p 656.

<sup>31</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 53.

considerations for evaluating oral histories in its supplementary report on the Arctic relocations. In this report, the Royal Commission asserted that

it would not be appropriate to dismiss oral history simply because of an apparent conflict with the written record. Similarly, it would not be appropriate to accept oral history only if confirmed by written history — and the converse is equally true. The first question is whether, looked at as a whole, there is in fact substantial conflict between the oral history and the documentary record.

The challenge in understanding...is to open one's mind to the oral history and to read the documentary record in an inquiring spirit...The object is not to seek validation of the oral history in the written record. Rather, the first step is to ask whether the information...tells a substantially consistent story — taking account of the different perspectives — or whether there is substantial conflict. This involves asking, for example, whether the oral history...reflects what is found in the documentary record. It involves asking how the oral history might help us understand and interpret the documentary record. It involves understanding the broader cultural and institutional contexts from which the oral history and the documentary record come.<sup>32</sup>

This discussion, however, did not really address the problem of what would be done if the different accounts were contradictory after "the broader cultural and institutional contexts" were considered and scholars "open [their] mind to the oral history and...read the documentary record in an inquiring spirit". It was only in the *Final Report* that the Royal Commission tackled this problem. After discussing the different "conceptions of history" of aboriginal peoples and "westerners", the Royal Commission concluded that

---

<sup>32</sup> *The High Arctic Relocation*, p. 2; part of this section of the report is also cited in the *Final Report 1*, p. 41, note 4.

where different accounts and interpretations are held out by proponents of different cultures, on the basis of oral as opposed to documentary sources, we propose that peaceful coexistence of divergent histories is preferable to a contest over which history will prevail. Where differences in historical interpretation result in contemporary conflict of interest, we propose that the differences be resolved by mutually respectful negotiation.<sup>33</sup>

But the "peaceful coexistence of divergent histories" is not really very helpful if we are to develop a common and more accurate understanding of the past. It was also not clear if the Royal Commission's references to "mutually respectful negotiation" included the possibility of rejecting oral accounts if they were contradicted by a much larger body of written, archaeological, paleontological and linguistic evidence.

Although such difficulties were never addressed in the *Final Report*, guidelines were developed by one of its policy advisers, Alexander von Gernet. Von Gernet's views were never incorporated into the Royal Commission's chapter on "conceptions of history", but they appear in a report produced for the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs in April 1996.<sup>34</sup> These views have been refined and elaborated upon more recently in evidence von Gernet gave before the courts, where he stated that

the most useful approach [for evaluating oral traditions/histories] recognizes the legitimacy of self-representation and acknowledges that what people believe about their own past must be respected and receive serious consideration. At the same time, it assumes that there was a real past

---

<sup>33</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 40-1, note 4.

<sup>34</sup> Alexander von Gernet, *Oral Narratives and Aboriginal Pasts: An Interdisciplinary Review of the Literature on Oral Traditions and Oral Histories*, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, April 1996.

independent of what people presently believe it to be, and that valuable information about that past may be derived from various sources including oral histories and oral traditions. It accepts that both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal scholars can be biased, that various pasts can be invented or used for political reasons, and that a completely value-free history is an impossible ideal. Nevertheless, it postulates that the past constrains the way in which modern interpreters can manipulate it for various purposes. While the actual past is beyond retrieval, this must remain the aim. The reconstruction that results may not have a privileged claim on universal "truth," but it will have the advantage of being rigorous. The approach rejects the fashionable notion that, because Aboriginal oral documents are not Western, they cannot be assessed using Western methods and should be allowed to escape the type of scrutiny given to other forms of evidence...those who marshal Aboriginal oral histories and traditions and submit them as evidence about past events have at least one major hurdle to overcome--how to convince skeptics that documents generated in the present contain accurate information about the past.<sup>35</sup>

Instead of stressing the differences between oral and written sources, von Gernet argues that there needs to be a way to incorporate the most accurate information contained in both through the process of testing. This involves writing oral histories and traditions down so that they can be made comparable to written sources, and then subjecting them to external and internal tests.<sup>36</sup> Internal testing can be achieved by determining whether an oral account is self-consistent, while "external tests compare the narrative with other evidence such as written accounts, linguistic reconstructions or archaeological data".<sup>37</sup>

But to what extent did the Royal Commission's account of the past incorporate this kind of testing? If we assume that the Royal Commission was trying to more

---

<sup>35</sup>Alexander Von Gernet, quoted in *Benoit v. The Queen* [2003] F.C.J. No 923 (C.A.), p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> Von Gernet, *Oral Narratives and Aboriginal Pasts*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>37</sup> Von Gernet, *Oral Narratives and Aboriginal Pasts*, p. 17.

accurately understand the past - something that the Royal Commission itself claimed on a number of occasions - was it successful in meeting this objective? Did it ensure that aboriginal accounts were internally and externally consistent before accepting them as "history", or did it assume that native perspectives "cannot be assessed using Western methods" and therefore should "escape the type of scrutiny given to other forms of evidence"?

Because of the political character of the Royal Commission's mandate - i.e. to symbolically recognize aboriginal peoples by giving them a "voice" in the Final Report - a systematic approach for reconciling aboriginal conceptions with other forms of historical evidence was avoided. Stating that there were "two conceptions" of history, in fact, evaded the problem of weaving aboriginal viewpoints into history, preventing it from achieving its other objective - to develop a "solid grasp of the shared history of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people on this continent". The political strategy behind the Royal Commission's analysis also led it to dismiss out of hand conceptions of historical progress and societal evolution, despite its recognition that this was a "centerpiece" of "western" historical perspectives. A failure to engage with this research tradition made it possible for the Royal Commission to avoid acknowledging the huge gap in scale, productivity and complexity that separated aboriginal groups and European nations before contact. Its historical analysis tended to romanticize aboriginal cultures, while remaining silent on the developmental

distance between the “separate worlds”. As a result, no coherent explanation was provided as to why history unfolded as it did.

#### THE ROYAL COMMISSION'S ANALYSIS OF "SEPARATE WORLDS"

In an attempt to understand the development of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations, the Royal Commission maintained that it was first necessary to determine the differences between aboriginal groups and Europeans before contact. The Royal Commission pointed out that the former and the latter existed as “separate worlds” and that the differences between these worlds must be understood in order to explain their subsequent interaction. To ensure a certain amount of representativeness in its historical analysis, the Royal Commission selected a variety of aboriginal groups/regions from different parts of what is now Canada – the Mi’kmaq (the East), the Blackfoot (the Prairies), the Iroquois (central Canada/Eastern Woodlands), groups from the Northwest Coast, and the Inuit (the North) – and the European societies that interacted with them.

In examining this interaction, the Royal Commission claimed to present a historical account that “recognizes and accepts the legitimacy of the historical perspectives and traditions of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples”.<sup>38</sup> After it made this

---

<sup>38</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 35-6; See also, *Final Report*, 1, p.608.

pronouncement, however, the Royal Commission went on to dismiss the theoretical framework that it maintained was "underlying the western humanist intellectual tradition in the writing of history" – what the Royal Commission referred to as "the notion of the march of progress and the inevitability of societal evolution". The Royal Commission conceded that "separate social, cultural and political evolution" occurred within aboriginal and non-aboriginal societies before contact,<sup>39</sup> but it dismissed more general theories assuming the "evolutionary development of human beings from lesser to greater states of civilization".<sup>40</sup> This was because the Royal Commission maintained that these theories were unacceptable politically; in the Royal Commission's words, they were inherently "racist", "ethnocentric", "intolerant", "contemptuous", "self-serving", "unflattering", and "demeaning".<sup>41</sup> According to the Royal Commission, such theories harboured "false assumptions that Aboriginal ways of life were at a primitive level of evolutionary development, and that the high point of human development was to be achieved by adopting the culture of European colonists".<sup>42</sup> Aboriginal groups before contact were not primitive, asserted the Royal Commission, and

were organized into societies of varying degrees of sophistication. Many practised and taught agricultural techniques to the new arrivals and had established intricate systems of political and commercial alliances among themselves. The forests were

---

<sup>39</sup> The Royal Commission, for example, maintained that "Aboriginal life is more complex [today] than it was in the village and the hunting camp". *Final Report*, 5, p. 16.

<sup>40</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 188.

<sup>41</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 260, 600-01, 695.

<sup>42</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 188.



not trackless; they were traversed by well-known trails created for trade and other social purposes well before the arrival of Europeans. Rivers and lakes served as highways and as natural boundaries between tribal nations. Many tribes were relatively large in population and had spawned smaller off-shoot tribes precisely because of population pressures. In short, there is an increasing body of evidence that Indian nations were far more subtle, sophisticated and numerous than the self-consciously 'civilized' Europeans were prepared to acknowledge.<sup>43</sup>

And although the Royal Commission recognized that "many Canadians may still maintain such beliefs [about societal evolution and historical progress]",<sup>44</sup> it looked forward to a day when it was no longer advocated "that Aboriginal societies follow the evolutionary path toward assimilation within non-Aboriginal society".<sup>45</sup>

Instead of examining aboriginal peoples and European societies within the framework of societal evolution and historical progress, the Royal Commission argued that all groups should be understood under the somewhat nebulous characterization of "diversity". It focused most of its historical analysis on "emphasiz[ing] diversity and local autonomy", which is the view that it claimed was held by most aboriginal peoples.<sup>46</sup> Aboriginal peoples were described as being "as different from each other as European countries were from each other" since "some Aboriginal nations were able to accumulate wealth while others were not; some were more hierarchical than others;

---

<sup>43</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 260.

<sup>44</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 260. At another point, the Royal Commission maintains that most Canadians reject evolutionary assumptions. *Final Report*, 1, p. 608.

<sup>45</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 235.

<sup>46</sup> The Royal Commission's concern with giving expression to this diversity, in fact, was what led to its devoting Volume Five of the *Final Report* to the different "Perspectives and Realities" of aboriginal peoples. *Final Report*, 1, p. 4.

some had matrilineal rules of descent while others were patrilineal or bilateral; and some developed sophisticated confederal structures that grouped several nations together".<sup>47</sup> The Royal Commission maintained that this indicated that there was "a vibrant richness, diversity and complexity to Aboriginal culture and social organization..." before contact. It also pointed out that "Aboriginal societies in North America evolved over thousands of years, interacting with their respective physical and social environments" resulting in "belief systems, cultures and forms of social organization that differed substantially from European patterns".<sup>48</sup> Although aboriginal groups "developed along separate paths, in ignorance of one another", the Royal Commission argued that "on both sides of the Atlantic, independent peoples with evolving systems of government – though smaller and simpler than the nations and governments we know today – flourished and grew".<sup>49</sup> By understanding and accepting the continuing existence of this diversity, the Royal Commission implied, current aboriginal problems, such as aboriginal dependency, could be addressed.<sup>50</sup> This view was related to its political strategy of asserting that the "ways of life" developed by different groups were "equally valid and should not be expected to change unless the group believes that a different model would meet their needs better".<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 44, 86.

<sup>48</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 86.

<sup>49</sup> *People to People*, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 46, 615, 617-620.

<sup>51</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 189-90.

But the problem with the Royal Commission's claim that aboriginal groups and European countries were "diverse" and "as different from each other as European countries were from each other" was that it is not very helpful for aiding an understanding of how the "separate worlds" came into contact with one another and the relations that followed. First of all, such a framework is incapable of clearly explaining how these groups came to be "different". Although the Royal Commission pointed to "differences in physical and social environments", the various "needs imposed by their environments",<sup>52</sup> "interacting with their respective physical and social environments", and each group's "particular relationship to lands and resources" as being related to their cultural distinctiveness,<sup>53</sup> it generally avoided explaining what it was about these environments that enabled some aboriginal groups to accumulate wealth, to develop hierarchies or establish "sophisticated confederal structures".

Besides, the Royal Commission's use of words such as "sophisticated" and "civilized" in the context of whether or not aboriginal groups had developed "confederal structures", "agricultural techniques", "systems of political and commercial alliances", extensive travel for trade, and large populations indicated that it did not just perceive

---

<sup>52</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 37.

<sup>53</sup>The Royal Commission argued that the "system of territoriality, governance and occupancy was intimately linked to [aboriginal groups'] particular relationship to lands and resources. Northern and western nations, including Dene and Cree, had very large territories, shaping their system of governance to make it easier for them to move in harmony with seasonal activities such as hunting, fishing and harvesting. By contrast, Pacific coast nations such as the Haida and the Tsimshian, whose sustenance and activities were tied to the sea and its resources, resided in settled villages with an elaborate system of governance".

aboriginal groups solely in terms of being generically "diverse". And if it saw these criteria as determining varying degrees of "sophistication" and "civilization", how did aboriginal groups compare with the European countries that crossed the Atlantic in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries? After all, analyzing the political institutions, agricultural techniques, trade and commercial alliances, and sizes of populations in England and France at this time indicates that these European countries were far more "sophisticated", "complex" and "civilized" (or urbanized, if this term is preferred) than any society in the New World. Although western scholars may have underestimated how "sophisticated and numerous" aboriginal tribes were, surely this does not change the fact that these societies were less productive, smaller in size and lacking in complexity or "sophistication" in comparison to their European counterparts. As will be discussed in more detail below, it was the much greater developments in agriculture, transportation and commerce in Western Europe, in fact, that enabled the "separate worlds" to come into contact at this time in history.

Perhaps because evolutionary views were rejected by aboriginal peoples in the Royal Commission's extensive consultations,<sup>54</sup> as well as in many of its research reports,<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> See, for example, *Final Report*, 3, p. 653; 4, pp. 523-4; These views are also prevalent at the Royal Commission's public hearings. For some examples, see Eva Courchene, Fort Alexander, October 29, 1992; John Novak, Transcripts, Public Hearings, North Bay, May 11, 1993; Doug Maracle, Transcripts, Public Hearings, Brantford, May 13, 1993; Marguerite Cardin, Montreal, May 26, 1993; Mary Ellen Turpel, Transcripts, Justice Round Table, November 26, 1992; Brenda Gedeon Miller, Restigouche, June 17, 1993; John Joe Sark, Charlottetown, May 5, 1992; Wallace Labillois, Kingsclear, May 19, 1992; Rod Soosay, Hobemma, June 10, 1992. All these testimonies rejecting evolutionary assumptions are available under "Public Hearings", *For Seven Generations*.

the Royal Commission's criteria for "sophistication" and "complexity" in making distinctions *within* the native population were never used to analyze the differences *between* aboriginal and European societies. Instead, when the two were compared, aboriginal societies were either conceptualized as being morally superior to Europeans, or the significant differences in development between the "separate worlds" were downplayed. Such views were buttressed by the Royal Commission's reluctance to adopt Carr's conception of the nature of history – to bring in "all known or knowable facts relevant...to the theme...engaged and...the interpretation proposed". The Royal Commission's tendency to uncritically accept the oral accounts of aboriginal peoples without examining them for internal consistency or their agreement with other types of evidence resulted in a view of history that was more concerned with making a case for parallelism than in presenting an accurate account of the past. Disregarding developmental differences made it easier to blame "Europeans"/"Westerners", "Whites" so the Royal Commission could advocate greater aboriginal autonomy. This was the major concern of the Royal Commission – a preoccupation that often impeded its understanding of the historical and material forces that resulted in aboriginal marginalization and dependency.

---

<sup>55</sup> These rejections generally dismiss evolutionary theories outright rather than offering a critique of them. For examples of this see Richard Spaulding entitled "Doctrines of Dispossession: A Critical Analysis of Four Rationales for the Denial or Extinguishment of Aboriginal Rights in Canada"; Thomas O. Hueglin, "Exploring concepts of treaty federalism"; Michael Jackson, "A new covenant chain"; Paul Joffe and Mary Ellen Turpel, "Extinguishment of the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples"; Anna de Aguayo, "Background Paper on Customary Adoption"; and Russel Lawrence Barsh and James Youngblood Henderson, "International context of Crown-Aboriginal Treaties". All reports are in *For Seven Generations*.

### *The romanticization of aboriginal traditions*

The first result of the Royal Commission's politicization of history was the tendency to offer romantic accounts of past aboriginal societies. One example of this was the claim that aboriginal groups, despite their diversity, shared an environmental consciousness before contact. It maintained that aboriginal peoples were distinct because they, unlike European cultures, had "cosmocentric belief systems" where "people are placed on the earth by the Creator along with, and in an equal relationship to, other natural elements that have also been endowed with the spark of life and are therefore worthy of respect". Aboriginal peoples had "a reverence for the natural order and a sense of wonder before natural phenomena" and a "spiritual relationship to the land".

According to the Royal Commission, "this arises not only because of dependence on the natural world for life itself, but also out of the belief that human beings were placed on the earth at Creation and given special responsibilities to serve as stewards of the natural environment".<sup>56</sup> It was these belief systems, the Royal Commission asserted, that prevented aboriginal societies from engaging in environmentally destructive practices while Europeans did.

Evidence for aboriginal "stewardship" before contact was drawn from the "oral histories" of aboriginal peoples. Blackfoot and the Mi'kmaq, creation stories, for

---

<sup>56</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 86-7, 658.

example, were offered as evidence that environmentally sensitive practices were adhered to by these groups before the arrival of Europeans. There are also accounts from aboriginal spokespeople such as George Manuel, Chief Edmund Metatawabin, George Blondin, Chief Crowfoot, Kanatiio (Allen Gabriel), Dennis Thorne, Chief George Desjarlais and Leroy Little Bear supporting the view that aboriginal peoples had a "spiritual relationship" to the land, and therefore were predisposed to act as environmental custodians. The account of one "Peigan elder" was even used as the Royal Commission's evidence for the claim that in the pre-contact period "the emphasis was on living in balance with nature rather than on accumulating economic surplus or wealth. This generally meant meeting the food needs of the group and sustaining the ability of the land and sea to continue to provide for its human inhabitants well into the future". It was pointed out more generally that this "responsibility is timeless" since

Aboriginal elders explained to the Commission...that the Creator placed them here with the responsibility to care for life in all its diversity...To make sound decisions today about the land and the environment, people need to look back to the wisdom of the ancestors as well as forward to the interests of future generations, as far as the seventh generation and beyond. At the core of Aboriginal identity is the unshakeable sense of responsibility to the spirit of life, which manifests itself in complex interconnected patterns in the natural world.

Aboriginal claims that their traditional philosophies and "wisdom" led them to "care for life in all its diversity" were also inferred from the historical fact that massive

environmental destruction did not occur until Europeans arrived in the area. What the Royal Commission rarely mentioned in relaying this fact, however, was that Aboriginal peoples usually lacked the technology to have a significant impact on the environment.<sup>57</sup> When they did, resources were overexploited like they were in Europe. As is indicated by archaeological evidence (which was rarely used by the Royal Commission), this was the case with the aboriginal groups that stampeded bison over cliffs leaving hundreds of carcasses to rot. There is also the palaeontological evidence that many species of mammals became extinct in the Americas when aboriginal peoples' ancestors were spreading across the continent, which suggests that these animals could not withstand the weaponry of aboriginal peoples' ancestors.<sup>58</sup> Similar depletions also occurred when Aboriginals acquired Iron Age technology from Europeans and began to participate in a profit driven economy.<sup>59</sup> All this indicates that aboriginal "environmental stewardship" was not due to some kind of ecological sensibility particular to native cultures, as the Royal Commission has implied, but to

---

<sup>57</sup> The Royal Commission offers two quotes from Andy von Busse that make this point, but it is never integrated into the Royal Commission's historical analysis. For von Busse's comments, see *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 438; 3, p. 189.

<sup>58</sup> Peter Farb, *Man's Rise to Civilization*, (New York: Avon Books, 1969), pp. 247-252; Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel* (London: W.W. Norton, 1999), pp. 45-49. This point was mentioned by one participant at the Royal Commission's hearings, but it appears nowhere in the Royal Commission's Report - see the testimony of Dennis Prince, Timmins, November 6, 1992, *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>59</sup> See, for example, Shepard Krech III, *The Ecological Indian: Myth of History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1999). Although Krech's work is in a minority position amongst ecological historians, his work appears to be the least tainted by romanticism. Two instances of wildlife overkill with use of rifles are also provided by the Royal Commission in the case of the Sayisi Dene and aboriginal groups in the Yukon. *Final Report*, 1, p.434; 2(2), p. 508. In the case of the Sayisi Dene, a research report prepared by the Commission claims that "what appeared to officials as slaughter had another explanation". This was that "it was customary for large numbers of animals to be killed at the onset of cold season so that they "could be used throughout the winter for dog feed and emergency feed". Virginia Petch, "The Relocation of the Sayisi Dene of Tadoule Lake", 1994, in *For Seven Generations*, cited in *Final Report*, 1, p.434.



technological and other economic factors. This relationship between economic factors and environmental destruction, in fact, was recognized in one area of the *Final Report* when the Royal Commission noted that

the traditional ways that once served to limit Aboriginal use of land and conserve resources are changing. Some Aboriginal people, especially among the young, have lost their sense of connectedness with the environment and their responsibility to it. Even those who retain this sense have access to technology designed to make exploitation attractive and easy — snowmobiles, high-powered rifles, electronic fishing gear, and so on. We were warned by a few speakers in public testimony that Aboriginal people are just as capable of destructive behaviour as anyone else.<sup>60</sup>

This argument seemed to contradict the view that aboriginal peoples' "care for life in all its diversity" was "timeless", showing the historical and material circumstances that have resulted in relatively environmentally sustainable societies. But because such views were contrary to the political strategy of promoting aboriginal traditions in the modern context, they were not given much play in the *Final Report*.

---

<sup>60</sup> This assertion is largely drawn from the testimony of Andy von Busse, a spokesperson for the Alberta Fish and Game Association. Von Busse argues that "there are some Natives who choose not to use [their hunting and fishing] rights in a responsible manner, and have little or no regard in the taking of wildlife. Some of them practise methods that can be best termed as unethical, and are often excessively detrimental to wildlife. There are many documented instances of night hunting, excessive netting at spawning times, the hunting of wildlife in the spring just before a new generation is being born, commercial-type hunting where refrigerated semi-trailers are brought into an area, often by status Natives that aren't residents of this province. There are many other types of these abuses...Natives are one of the fastest growing groups in Canada. Their numbers in many areas now exceed that [which] existed at the time the treaties were signed and it appears that that trend will continue. We feel wildlife couldn't cope with that pressure even if primitive conditions and methods were used, but with modern technology such as four-by-fours, rifles, off-road vehicles, quads, it can very negatively affect and quickly negatively affect game populations". Andy von Busse, Edmonton, Alberta, 11 June 1992, cited in *Final Report*.

In addition to its claims about aboriginal peoples' "timeless" environmental consciousness, romanticism coloured the analysis of the one other characteristic that the Royal Commission discussed as separating pre-contact aboriginal cultures from Europeans - their "elaborate social structures" that are "built around the nuclear and extended family". In these structures, according to the Royal Commission, "governance is decentralized" and "individuals are generally equal". Also, consensus was emphasized in decision making because of "an ethic that respects diversity and acknowledges that there are many different ways to accomplish a particular objective". Children were given autonomy and women respected, the Royal Commission argued, in contrast to their European counterparts. The Royal Commission implied that this egalitarianism only changed when Europeans imposed their patriarchal philosophies on the native population.

These views, once again, were connected to the political strategy of the Royal Commission. To promote the idea that aboriginal traditions should be restored today, the Royal Commission included those testimonials stressing that there was equality in native societies. Other sources, which challenged this view, including one report prepared for the Royal Commission,<sup>61</sup> were ignored. The characterization of native

---

<sup>61</sup>One of the sources the Royal Commission used to discuss Blackfoot governance in its "separate worlds" chapter also provided the following description of the punishment for adultery: "For the first offense, the husband usually cut off the offending wife's nose or ears. For the second offense, she was killed by the police society. Sometimes if her husband complained enough about his wife, the woman would be killed by her brothers or first cousins, or more usually, at the hands of the "all comrades" society. If he wished, the husband could have her put to death for the first". For the Siksika, therefore,

societies as "egalitarian" also was the result of taking modern ideals such as "equality" and "respect for diversity" found in liberal democracies, and grafting them on aboriginal cultures. What was not understood was that groups that are organized "around the nuclear and extended family", did not require the formal and coercive measures that came into existence with increasing productivity and the accumulation and distribution of larger social surpluses. This was why, as the Royal Commission pointed out, aboriginal leaders "do not exercise the authority to make unilateral decisions or to impose their will".<sup>62</sup> In addition, the Royal Commission failed to recognize that hierarchical relationships within the family on the basis of gender, age and status often existed in tribal societies.<sup>63</sup>

### *The exaggeration of cultural development*

Because of the Royal Commission's political agenda of parallelism, it also described the pre-contact cultures of native societies in a way that downplayed the gap in productivity, scale and complexity that distinguished aboriginal and European societies before contact. In the case of aboriginal economies, for example, the Royal

---

the charge of "adultery" appears only to apply to women, questioning ideas of equality between men and women. This, description, however, is omitted in the Royal Commission's discussion of the Blackfoot Confederacy. Andrew Bear Robe, "The Historical, Current and Legal Basis for Siksika Governance", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>62</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 87.

<sup>63</sup> Such hierarchies have been referred to by various anthropologists as "ranking", "lineages", and differences in status. At the same time, however, the extent of the inequality that can emerge has limits because no state exists to exclude some members of the society from accessing the resources needed for subsistence.

Commission was intent on using terminology indicating that native groups had similar levels of productivity as European societies at the time of contact. It made a number of references to aboriginal trade and "commerce",<sup>64</sup> generally used the word "agriculture" rather than horticulture to refer to the food production of Iroquoian groups,<sup>65</sup> and objected to the usage of the terms like "subsistence" and "nomadic" to describe the character of hunting and gathering economies and societies.<sup>66</sup> It also attempted to deflect attention from the relationship between the low productivity of aboriginal groups and their dispersed character by implying that the small populations that existed in North America were due to diseases brought by Europeans rather than their relatively inefficient modes of production.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> With respect to the Northwest Coast, for example, the Royal Commission maintained that "well-established trade networks throughout the coastal region and into the mountainous interior allowed for easy exchange of prized materials and manufactured goods" and that "extensive commercial networks also existed...where foodstuffs were transported between the coast and the interior". Such a characterization obscured the fact that "intertribal trade [of pre-contact aboriginal groups] was based on complementarity of economic structure and/or on the possession within tribal territory of some unique natural resource", where surpluses were traded because they were "incidentally derived from the operation of the subsistence economy, or that of luxuries coveted for their ceremonial and symbolic value and produced expressly for exchange". Naylor, *Canada in the European Age*, p. 36. These much less developed networks of gift exchange were very different from the "commerce" that existed throughout the Old World at this time.

<sup>65</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 52.

<sup>66</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 94, note 52; 2(2), p. 462. The Royal Commission objected to the use of the term "nomadic" in connection to the Blackfoot Confederacy because "nomadic means wandering or roaming, which is misleading, since plains people systematically harvested the land in cycles and moved from site to site, from season to season, to harvest but also to conserve natural resources". Such an objection obscures the fact that the term nomadic has been historically used to differentiate evolutionary differences in humanity's development, where lower levels of productivity require groups to move from place to place in contrast to those that remain "settled". The Royal Commission avoided the word "subsistence" in the context of Northwest Coast societies, because it maintained that it "is a western concept, which carries with it the negative connotation of a hand-to-mouth existence". Similar to its rejection of "nomadic", "subsistence" is avoided because the Royal Commission rejects the notion that aboriginal groups were less productive than the feudal economies that existed in Europe at this time.

<sup>67</sup> As the Royal Commission pointed out, "considerable debate among experts continues with respect to the size of the indigenous population at the point of first sustained contact with Europeans. In the area

The greatest exaggeration of aboriginal development, however, occurred in the Royal Commission's highlights of the *Final Report - People to People, Nation to Nation*. In its overview of the "separate worlds" analyzed in the *Final Report*, it is noted that "the Cherokee [in southeastern North America] were organized into a confederacy of some 30 cities – the greatest of which was nearly as large as imperial London when English explorers first set eyes on it". But nowhere in the scholarly literature are Cherokee settlements referred to as "cities".<sup>68</sup> Such a statement by the Royal Commission, in fact, appeared to equate small villages with much more dense and complex urban centres like London – a description that would result in a redefinition of the term "city" as we currently conceive it.<sup>69</sup> And since the existence of cities (i.e. urbanization) is an indicator of civilization, it is clear that the Royal Commission was using this unsubstantiated claim to call into question arguments that aboriginal groups

---

that was to become Canada, an early scholarly estimate is 221,000 people, a figure derived by compiling published reports, notes of European explorers and other sources to estimate the size of the various nations. This estimate has been criticized because it pertains not to initial contact but rather to initial extensive contact — a time when indigenous populations could already have been seriously affected by diseases spread through incidental contact with Europeans, or indeed through indirect contact via diseases spread through indigenous trading networks....Using different methodologies, other experts derive estimates that exceed 2 million people. Indeed, Dickason points out that estimates of the size of pre-contact populations in the western hemisphere have been increasing steadily in recent years... The figure of 500,000 for the indigenous population at the time of initial sustained contact with Europeans is perhaps the most widely accepted today, although many would regard it as a conservative estimate". It maintained that "Aboriginal population density was low — or fell precipitously as a result of disease after contact".

<sup>68</sup> Eric Wolf, for example, notes that "the basic unit [for the Cherokee] was the village, whose population was between 350 and 600...". Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, p. 284.

<sup>69</sup> It is estimated that London had a population of about 70,000 people in 1500. Carlo M. Cipolla, *Before the Industrial Revolution: European Society and Economy 1000-1700* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), pp. 273-4.

in North America at the time of contact were relatively small, simple and unproductive in comparison to their European counterparts.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to its attempts to obscure the level of productivity in aboriginal societies before contact, the Royal Commission downplayed the relatively undeveloped political institutions of hunting and gathering and horticultural societies in contrast to those that existed in Europe. Many areas of the *Final Report*, in fact, implied that both European and aboriginal societies had similar kinds of institutions. It is argued that, like European countries, "Aboriginal societies were self-governing nations and conducted themselves as such. Confederacies, leagues and alliances were formed...and rules of law governed within the nations". This assumption then formed a major part of the Royal Commission's political strategy that claimed that aboriginal rights to self-government are "inherent". Aboriginal self-government was an "inherent right", according to the Royal Commission, because "it finds its ultimate origins in the collective lives and traditions of Aboriginal peoples themselves rather than the Crown or Parliament. More specifically, it stems from the original status of Aboriginal peoples as independent and sovereign nations in the territories they occupied...".

---

<sup>70</sup>For a discussion of the character of Cherokee societies before contact, see Joseph R. Caldwell, "Eastern North America", in Robert J. Braidwood and Gordon R. Willey (eds) *Courses Toward Urban Life*; Melvin L. Fowler, "Agriculture and Village Settlement in the North American East", in Stuart Struever (ed), *Prehistoric Agriculture*; James A. Brown, "Spiro Art and its Mortuary Contexts" in Elizabeth P. Benson (ed) *Death and the Afterlife in Pre-Columbian America*.

Much of the support that the Royal Commission obtained for these claims is, once again, obtained from aboriginal oral accounts – “histories” often synonymous with native spiritual beliefs. It used the arguments from an aboriginal organization, for example, to put forward the view that "sovereignty" is "the original freedom conferred...by the Creator rather than a temporal power". The Royal Commission then asserted that

as a gift from the Creator, sovereignty can neither be given nor taken away, nor can its basic terms be negotiated. This view is shared by many Aboriginal people, whose political traditions are infused with a deep sense of spirituality and a sense of the inter-connectedness of all things. Such concepts as sovereignty, self-government and the land, which for some Canadians have largely secular definitions, all retain a spiritual dimension in contemporary Aboriginal thinking.

But was it really accurate for the Royal Commission to imply that aboriginal groups had obtained a comparable level of political development as Europeans before contact by maintaining that they both consisted of "sovereign nations" with "governments" operating according to the "rule of law"? Before the 1970s, for example, aboriginal

groups were generally referred to as bands or tribes, rather than nations,<sup>71</sup> since they were organized according to kinship not property relations and territory.<sup>72</sup>

The Royal Commission's assertion that aboriginal groups were "sovereign" would also have been challenged. This is because "sovereignty" generally has been perceived as an aspect of societies with states,<sup>73</sup> and there is no evidence that any such institution existed in North America before contact.<sup>74</sup> And glossing over the absence of state institutions in pre-contact aboriginal groups is not just omitting a minor detail in analyzing aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations. As Morton Fried explains, "a state is not simply a legislature, an executive body, a judiciary system, an administrative

---

<sup>71</sup> For a discussion of this point see Thomas Flanagan, "Native sovereignty: Does anyone really want an Aboriginal Archipelago?", in Mark Charlton and Paul Barker (eds), *Cross Currents: Contemporary Political Issues*, Fourth Edition (Toronto: Thomson-Nelson, 2002), pp. 82-85; and Frances Widdowson, "Inventing Nationhood: The Political Economy of Aboriginal Self-Determination in the Context of Quebec Sovereignty", Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, June 2004.

<sup>72</sup> The Royal Commission, in fact, often referred to aboriginal groups as "tribal nations", obscuring the fundamental difference between these two forms of political organization.

<sup>73</sup> Mark O. Dickerson and Thomas Flanagan, *An Introduction to Government and Politics: A Conceptual Approach*, Sixth Edition (Toronto: Nelson-Thomson, 2002), pp. 44-55. Dickerson and Flanagan note that "sovereignty is the authority to override all other authorities" and the "bundle of powers associated with the highest authority of government". They argue that "a state exists when a sovereign power effectively rules over a population residing within the boundaries of a fixed territory".

<sup>74</sup> This circumstance was glossed over by the Royal Commission, which maintains that there were "few pre-existing centralized state structures among the indigenous inhabitants" of North America before contact. The reference to "centralized" leaves open the possibility of state structures existing, but being decentralized. A state was not even present for those groups that made up the Iroquois Confederacy after an increased rate of development had occurred after contact. As Eric Wolf explains, "the bonds that tied [the Iroquois Confederacy] together were those of kinship and of ceremonial" where "cohesion was created by ritual means. Ritual could create politically viable ties as long as political interests worked in a common direction. It could not, however, furnish these populations involved in the contradictions of fur trade and politics with any mechanism for making the temporary consensus binding for all parties. Sophisticated as they were in council and warfare, the Iroquois had not succeeded in creating a state, and in competition with more centralized political entities they found themselves at a disadvantage". Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, p. 170.



bureaucracy, or even a government... a state is better viewed as the complex of institutions by means of which the power of the society is organized on a basis superior to kinship".<sup>75</sup> He goes on to point out that

to the extent that a stratified society lacks formal and specialized mechanisms of control it courts disaster, for in the face of weakening bonds of kinship, in face of the commonplace realization that the web of kin cannot contain the enlarged population or the increasing numbers of others, of non-kinsmen in the society, it becomes a question of developing formal, specialized instruments of coercion or reverting to a more easily maintained system of access rights to basic resources. It is the task of maintaining general social order that stands at the heart of the development of the state. And at the heart of the problem of maintaining general order is the need to defend the central order of stratification – the differentiation of categories of population in terms of access to basic resources. Undoubtedly...one means of doing this is to indoctrinate all members of society with the belief that the social order is right or good or simply inevitable. But there has never been a state which survived on this basis alone. Every state known to history has had a physical apparatus for removing or otherwise dealing with those who failed to get the message.<sup>76</sup>

Although the absence of state structures in aboriginal societies before contact challenges the notion that these groups could be "sovereign nations", the question of whether or not "governance" and "laws" existed at this time is more debatable. This is because these concepts are defined more loosely, and determining their existence (or absence) depends upon the criteria employed. Morton Fried has pointed out that the definitional problem has been compounded by the fact that a number of social scientists oppose any evaluation of different cultures and consequently "raise

---

<sup>75</sup> Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p.229.

<sup>76</sup> Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, pp. 230-231.

objections at the point at which some primitive cultures are said to lack one or more...institutional sectors". A number of these objections have centred around "assertions that specific cultures or societies of certain levels of developmental complexity lack law or state organization". According to Fried, "in recent years, those who view law as a universal complement of culture have tended toward philosophical idealism and cultural relativism, whereas those who would restrict the appearance of law to a more rigid set of criteria have tended to be philosophical materialists favoring some theory of cultural evolution".<sup>77</sup>

Attempts to define the nature of law and understand its emergence (i.e. the impetus for the formation of the subfield of legal anthropology) began with the jurist Sir Henry Maine's theory that social control evolved "from status to contract"<sup>78</sup> – a conception that stressed the personal, spontaneous and informal character of earlier forms of social control in contrast with later developments. Such a conception was adopted by the evolutionary anthropologist and lawyer Lewis Henry Morgan (and by extension Karl Marx and Frederick Engels),<sup>79</sup> who maintained that legal developments were associated with the transition from kinship-based societies to those organized according to property relations and territory. It was also elaborated upon extensively

---

<sup>77</sup> Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p. 15.

<sup>78</sup> Rebecca Redwood French, "Law and anthropology", in Dennis Patterson (ed), *A Companion to Philosophy of Law and Legal Theory* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), p. 397.

<sup>79</sup> For a discussion of the relationship between the ideas of Morgan, Marx and Engels, see Lawrence Krader, "The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx: A Commentary", in Stanley Diamond (ed), *Toward a Marxist Anthropology* (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1979), pp. 153-171.

by the jurist John Austin, who followed the English rationalist philosophers in arguing that law could not be separated from sovereignty, since it required “a paramount and determinate social locus of command with the power to enforce its directives”.<sup>80</sup> For Austin, “the important thing is that the sovereign enforces some rule”,<sup>81</sup> because without an ultimate source of authority, there would be no mechanism to ensure that the commands of the lawgiver were obeyed. This requirement in turn involved “the existence of an independent political society with primary access to power concentrated in the hands of an individual or group” that “constitutes the locus of sovereignty”.<sup>82</sup> These institutions constituted the formality and regularity necessary to ensure “the party who will enforce [the same sanction] against any future offender is...determinable and assignable”.<sup>83</sup> As Robertson (following Austin) pointed out, “we have all the elements of a true law present when we point to a community habitually obedient to the authority of a person or a determinate body of persons, no matter what the relations of that superior may be to any external or superior power. Provided that in fact the commands of the lawgiver are those beyond which the community never looks”.<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup>Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p. 18. Austin’s view was similar to Weber’s, which maintained that “a system of authority will be considered as *law* if it is externally guaranteed by the probability that unusual behavior will be met by physical or psychic sanctions aimed at compelling conformity or at punishing disobedience and administered by a group of men especially charged with the authority for that purpose”. Weber, quoted in Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p. 23

<sup>81</sup> Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p. 20.

<sup>82</sup> Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>83</sup> Austin, quoted in Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p. 152.

<sup>84</sup> Robertson, quoted in Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p. 19.

In the twentieth century, Austin's linkage of law with sovereignty, determinability and assignability was continued by E. Adamson Hoebel, who maintained that two requirements must be met before law could be said to exist - some kind of court no matter how remote from Western conceptions and "the legitimate use of physical coercion" to which the court must be subordinated.<sup>85</sup> Hoebel then used this "associat[ion of] legality with the application of threat of sanctions by a determinate social body" to claim that all cultures have law.<sup>86</sup> This assertion, therefore, differed from earlier developments in legal anthropology, which maintained that primitive societies lacked state institutions that asserted a monopoly over the legitimate use of force within a defined territory.

Hoebel's attempt to develop the universal characteristics of law was debated by a number of legal anthropologists, the most notable of whom was Leopold Pospisil.<sup>87</sup> Pospisil maintained that law was a "form of decision" with four attributes – legitimacy,<sup>88</sup> universal intention,<sup>89</sup> true *obligatio*,<sup>90</sup> and sanction.<sup>91</sup> These attributes,

---

<sup>85</sup> E.A. Hoebel, *The Law of Primitive Man* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 470.

<sup>86</sup> Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p. 17.

<sup>87</sup> French, "Law and anthropology", p. 400. The most significant work of Pospisil in this regard was *The Anthropology of Law: A Comparative Theory* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1971)

<sup>88</sup> With respect to legitimacy, Pospisil argued that "a decision, to be legally relevant, or in other words, to effect social control, must either be accepted as a solution by the parties to a dispute or, if they resist, be forced upon them. Such a decision, of necessity, is passed by an individual, or group of individuals, who can either persuade the litigants to comply or who possess power over enforcement agents or the group membership in general to compel them to execute the verdict, judgment of informal decision even over protests and resistance of either or both parties to the dispute. Individuals who possess the power to induce or force the majority of the members of their social group to conform to their decisions I shall call the legal authority. Whereas this authority is formalized and specialized on the state level in our own and in other civilizations, in tribal societies and in some of the state's subgroups it often

according to Pospisil, enabled anthropologists to distinguish law from politics and religion, thus aiding the task of cross-cultural definition.<sup>92</sup> In characterizing law thusly, Pospisil maintained that not all societies historically had developed law, although they usually had “law-like” processes for repairing social breaches where “one or more of the criteria of law are present and active, yet at the same time one or more of the criteria of law are absent”. Max Gluckman also attempted to make a similar distinction between formal, legal decisions and informal mechanisms for social control by differentiating between “multiplex relationships” and “single-interest relationships”.<sup>93</sup> “Multiplex relationships” were identified by their “diffuse,

---

coincides with the leadership of various groups that exercises several functions besides the legal one”. Leopold Pospisil, *The Anthropology of Law*, p. 44.

<sup>89</sup> This stipulation concerns “demands that the authority, in making a decision, *intend* it to be applied to all similar or ‘identical’ situations in the future”, and pertains to “genuine cases showing the repetitive application of uniform settlements and penalties”. Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p. 152. According to Pospisil, “repetitive behavior, based upon the decisions and choices of followers, which is not the subject of the authority’s decision is simply custom”. Pospisil, *The Anthropology of Law*, p. 79.

<sup>90</sup> Pospisil maintains that this concerns “that part of a decision which states the rights of one party to a dispute and the duties of the other. It defines the social-legal relations between the two litigants as they supposedly existed at the time of the defendant’s violation of the law. It also describes...how the relations became unbalanced by the act of the defendant”. According to Pospisil, true *obligatio*, is the “legal tie between two parties, a tie that manifests itself in the form of a duty on the part of one and a right on the part of the other to a contract or litigation”. Therefore, in Pospisil’s view, “a pronouncement of an authority which gives no one party a right while not stating the duty of the other one is not law even though the attributes of authority and of the intention of universal application are present. Such a statement becomes law only when a duty on the part of someone is implied or included in the decision”. Pospisil, *The Anthropology of Law*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>91</sup> Fried (following Pospisil) argues that sanction includes the following: “a threatened penalty for disobeying a law or rule”, “measures taken by a state to coerce another to conform to an international agreement or norms of conduct”, or “official permission or approval”. He maintains that “sanctions are distinctly social and usually cultural as well and must be consciously applied, which is to say that, during the course of their formulation or application, the party that applies them does so with awareness of the line of conduct that is to be approved or censured. Not that the sanction will necessarily accomplish its intended end or that it will have no other effects; but there must be a concept of breach or there cannot be a sanction”. Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p. 10.

<sup>92</sup> French, “Law and anthropology”, p. 400. French notes that Max Gluckman also “stressed the importance of generalized concepts for cross-cultural comparison”.

<sup>93</sup> French, “Law and anthropology”, p. 403.

multidimensional, and normative” character, and are “common in small face-to-face societies”. “Single-interest relationships”, on the other hand, are “specialized, functionally specific, instrumentalist, and goal-oriented” and “are common in large urban areas”.<sup>94</sup>

Differentiating law from law-like processes is useful, according to Fried, because it enables social scientists to “analytically distinguish legal institutions from those that fall short, thereby assisting in discovering what developments go with others in the evolution of general sociocultural systems”.<sup>95</sup> One of the most important distinctions to be made is between mechanisms of social control rooted in kinship and those that rely on the authority of the state. As Leslie A. White has pointed out,

in primitive society an injury or a death was avenged by the injured party or by his kinsmen. And in case the actual culprit could not be found for punishment, revenge could be inflicted upon members of his family. In short, in tribal society, vengeance was an affair among kin groups, a private right rather than a public, tribal prerogative. On higher cultural levels, where property is more abundant and is coming to be more significant in social relations, the rule of a life for a life, an eye for an eye, becomes commuted into money, and the wergild is established in a series of gradations corresponding to the seriousness of the offense...with the advent of civil society private vengeance becomes outlawed, and the state assumes an exclusive right to kill. This applies both to personal vengeance and private ‘wars’, such as used to be fought by Scottish clans...The outlawing of private vengeance and wars is one of the best indications that could be cited of the achievement of full status of civil society.<sup>96</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup> French, “Law and anthropology”, pp. 400-401.

<sup>95</sup> Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p. 145.

<sup>96</sup> Leslie A. White, *The Evolution of Culture*, pp. 316-17.

It is by making such a distinction between kinship-based vengeance and state sanctioned violence, in fact, which leads Fried to criticize Hoebel's contention that all cultures have law. Fried maintains that Hoebel's assertion is due to an incorrect interpretation of cases. In examining "cases such as describe the reaction of a community to recidivist homicide, which [Hoebel] asserts is the community imposition of a privileged sentence of death", for example, Fried comes to the conclusion that such a decision does not constitute law since "there is no legitimacy here, for those that carry out the killing of an offender cannot know that they themselves will not suffer the same fate for their act unless they liquidate all of the offender's relatives who might try to avenge him".<sup>97</sup> No distinction is made between violence meted out on the basis of "an unspecified, anonymous, undifferentiated aggregation of fellow tribesmen or citizens...or a special social or political mechanism, acting in the name of and by the authority of the society as a whole...".<sup>98</sup> As a result, Fried maintains that it "does not seem useful...to identify such action as law though it does clearly pertain to social control".<sup>99</sup>

In order for there to be true law, in Fried's view, there must be a form of authority that is "recognized by the malefactor or those who would avenge him". A recognition that a malefactor *might* be avenged, Fried argues, is an indication that those who impose a sanction do not have faith in its legitimacy, thus negating one of Pospisil's criteria for

---

<sup>97</sup> Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p. 90.

<sup>98</sup> White, *The Evolution of Culture*, p. 232.

<sup>99</sup> Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p. 90.

the existence of law. Fried points out that law must be distinguished from actions that are not “binding upon any of the parties except as they are members of a society carrying out the patterns of their culture”, as well as actions where individual cases appear to exist by themselves so that “the only precedents that may be formed are those advanced by outside observers”. It is also not sufficient to point to violence being carried out against an offender because “while law without sanction is chimerical, sanction itself cannot define law”.<sup>100</sup> As Pospisil points out, “sanction alone cannot define a social phenomenon as law for the simple reason that many political decisions which are made *ad hoc*, without the leader’s intention to apply them to future ‘same’ or similar situations, certainly are not laws, because they lack one of the most essential legal attributes, which I have identified broadly as the ‘intention of universal application’”.<sup>101</sup>

Fried argues that such a distinction between law and “law-like” processes has been impeded because “many distinguished writers have applied the term ‘law’ to customary actions or idealized versions of situations described by informants”. He points out that “Hopi law”, for example, also has been translated as “the way” of the Hopi, which is not really law at all but “the idealized-ideological self-image of the

---

<sup>100</sup> Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p. 91.

<sup>101</sup> Pospisil, *The Anthropology of Law*, p. 87. Marshall Sahlins makes a similar point with respect to groups in Fiji, where he notes that “given pervasive rivalry in the village, the private right to secure redress and the chief’s only limited command of force, the traditional chief’s peace was an uncertain business, depending largely on the willingness of contending parties to adhere to it”. Sahlins, quoted in Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p. 147.



culture in question” where “violations of such standards are more likely to be regarded as normal than would be adherence”.<sup>102</sup> Fried maintains that claims about the universality of law in all cultures, in fact, are based upon a relativized criteria that either equates law with social control or even goes further to “identify law with general cultural norms”.<sup>103</sup> This is part of a larger trend in anthropology, where “the profession of ideas went from the identification of custom as an important source and basis for law through the holding of legislation subordinate to custom, finally arriving at the point at which law was figuratively swallowed by custom”.<sup>104</sup>

This trend of “law [being] figuratively swallowed by custom” is a problem, in Fried’s view, because the definition of law becomes so broad as to be an unworkable tool for the ethnographer. For Fried, using a more restrictive definition “is not a matter of determining the ‘true’ meaning of a word but of stating clearly what that word is to mean in our usage and why it is advantageous to use it that way”.<sup>105</sup> Using Pospisil’s criteria is important, argues Fried, because it underlines “the terrible paraphernalia of law which ultimately intends the destruction of those who do not conform and possesses the physical means to carry it out and to prevent further vengeance”.<sup>106</sup> It is

---

<sup>102</sup> Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>103</sup> Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, pp. 149, 153.

<sup>104</sup> Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p. 16.

<sup>105</sup> Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p. 227.

<sup>106</sup> Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p. 150. There are, in fact, many examples in anthropological accounts of aboriginal groups in what is now Canada, where vengeance was the mechanism of social control between different kinship groups. In the case of the Northwest Coast, for example, Philip Drucker notes that “there were two courses of action open to an offended group. One was to exact revenge by slaying one of the adversaries, and it was deemed proper to take vengeance not

this coercive character of law and its capacity to bind all members of the community regardless of their kinship relations that is lost in conceptions that equate law and custom.

Such efforts by Fried and other anthropologists to develop a cross-cultural definition of law, however, did not continue beyond the 1970s. As Rebecca Redwood French notes, “by the 1980s, there were many comments about the futility of this area of inquiry and it gradually ceased to be a central concern of legal anthropology”.<sup>107</sup>

Instead, more relativistic and subjective conceptions of law began to take hold, where legal anthropology tended to define law from an “insider perspective” that used concepts from each society’s “legal folk culture” as the basis for analysis. She notes that the subdiscipline “takes as an initial premiss [sic] the assumption that the legal system of the developed Western world does not serve as an adequate model for comparative studies of legal systems”, which “has come at the expense of cross-cultural comparison and integration with Western legal terminology”. In addition, an

---

on the person of the killer but rather on a member of his group whose status was as nearly as possible equivalent to that of the victim...The second recourse, usually subsequent to blood vengeance, was to make a settlement through payment of valuables and wealth”. Within the kinship group, however, “in the rare instances in which blood was shed, usually nothing was done about it. The group would not take vengeance on itself, nor demand *wergild* of itself, and there was no higher authority”. Drucker, *Cultures of the North Pacific Coast* (San Francisco: Chandler Publishers, 1965), pp. 71-74. In a case where a “bully” was terrorizing a community, for example, Drucker notes that “there was no formal machinery to punish wrongdoers. People did not know quite what to do about the situation. They talked against [the offender] and refused to cooperate with him, but his rank gave him a certain immunity from physical harm. To the advice and pleas of his elders he turned a deaf ear. Finally the resentment became so obvious and unpleasant that thick skinned as he was he had to leave. Informants do not know what would have happened to a man of lesser rank who behaved [thus]; none ever did”. Drucker, quoted in Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p. 148.

<sup>107</sup> French, “Law and anthropology”, p. 400.

interest in “legal pluralism” has increased - a circumstance that is related to “the recent outpouring of works on indigenous claims, ethnic sovereignty and human rights”.

There also has been a “shift from the case method to a focus on narratives, practices, events and processes” and the development of “an interpretive and hermeneutic approach to law” that “advances a view of law as a distinctive way of ‘imagining the real,’ and focuses on discourse, translation, meaning and what law shows us about local culture, particularly the similarities between ordinary and judicial concepts”.<sup>108</sup>

The Royal Commission’s discussions of “law” in pre-contact aboriginal societies has been influenced by these developments. Although the Royal Commission uses the term “law” in association with the social structures of a number of aboriginal groups,<sup>109</sup> what is being referred to would be characterized by Austin, Pospisil and Fried as “custom” or “law-like” forms of social control.<sup>110</sup> The Royal Commission, in

---

<sup>108</sup> French, “Law and anthropology”, p. 402.

<sup>109</sup> See, for example, *Final Report*, 1, pp.600, 609, 639-40, 654, 668, 656 for the Royal Commission's application of the word law to aboriginal societies.

<sup>110</sup> The misapplication of the term law can be seen in the Royal Commission's references to the Mi'kmaq and the Dene. With the Mi'kmaq, for example, the Royal Commission refers to “the symbolic wampum laws of the Mi'kmaq alliances” (*Final Report*, 1, p.50). The following is provided as an explanation: “wampum was made traditionally of quahog (clam) shells, drilled and threaded into strings or woven into belts. Wampum of various colours carried different symbolic meanings. Wampum strings and belts were used as aids to memory and to validate the authority of persons carrying messages between communities and nations” (*Final Report*, 1, p. 91, note 8). But “aids to memory” and indications of status are not the same thing as “law”. No one is obligated to recognize the “symbolic meanings” of wampum or the “authority” of persons carrying it. In its analysis of “The Yamoria Law of the Dene”, the Royal Commission relies on a research study prepared by George Blondin (*Final Report*, 1, p.652) According to Blondin, the Dene have eight “laws”, but as can be seen from a shaded box appearing in the *Final Report*, these eight statements have nothing to do with “law”. Some, like “Law Number Two” - “Do not run around when Elders are eating, sit still until they are finished” - would be more accurately characterized as “good manners” or “ethics”. This would be a “habitual or usual course of action”, or custom, practiced by many families today. Others, such as “Law Number Eight” - “Be

fact, defends its use of the term law to refer to custom in a section on "the rule of law" in the chapter on governance. Drawing heavily on the testimonials of aboriginal peoples (i.e. Fried's "idealized versions of situations described by informants"), it is maintained that

the traditional laws of most Aboriginal peoples are customary and usually unwritten. They are embodied in maxims, oral traditions and daily observances and are transmitted from generation to generation through precept and example. This practice is often misunderstood. Some outside observers, accustomed to thinking of the law as rules laid down by legislatures and embodied in written statutes, have denied that custom truly can constitute law. They forget that, even in mainstream society, few individuals are familiar with more than a small portion of the written law; in practice, ordinary people conduct their lives in accordance with what amounts to a living customary system. Moreover, English common law, which is the basis of the legal system in Canada outside Quebec, originated as a body of customary law under the supervision of the courts. To this day, it is largely uncodified.<sup>111</sup>

But this conflation of custom with law relied on two incidences of faulty reasoning.

The first used the fact that many individuals in mainstream society are unfamiliar with

---

happy at all times because mother earth will take care of you" - is similar to many of the meaningless platitudes that adorn household kitsch.

<sup>111</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p. 120. This confusion of custom and law is also present in a chapter on "Aboriginal Concepts of Law and Justice - The Historical Realities", in its research report *Bridging the Cultural Divide*, pp. 12-25. In this chapter a relativist position is presented where it is claimed that the "culture-specific nature of western systems of law has blinded it to the existence of law in other societies. In the case of aboriginal peoples, not only in Canada but in other places in the world, this has led to a dismissal of complex Aboriginal cultural systems as not being 'legal' and to a denigration of societies bound only by 'primitive custom'". To "refute" this view, however, the Royal Commission uses a quotation from Francis Jennings that incorrectly conflates law with order, and then uses the fact that aboriginal societies were ordered by kinship relations where "every man bore arms" and "any man could be appointed to act guard or do executioner's duty" to show that "laws" existed. *Bridging the Cultural Divide*, pp. 12-13. Such a statement makes no distinction between kinship-based decisions and those sanctioned by the state. This action seems to flow from "an unspecified, anonymous, undifferentiated aggregation of fellow tribesmen or citizens" not "special social or political mechanisms, acting in the name of and by the authority of the society as a whole...".

laws and "conduct their lives in accordance with what amounts to a living customary system" to imply that there can be no distinction between custom and law. The second was the argument that since customs can become laws, customs must somehow *be* laws. But these assertions simply show that laws and customs can co-exist within a society, and that the latter can become the former. This does not mean the two are the same. The fact that we can state that customs can become part of a "legal system" that is "under the supervision of the courts", shows the difference between the two - one concerns sanctions that are "administered by a determinate locus of power", while the other does not since it is just a "habitual or usual course of action" or "established practice".

With respect to the aboriginal cultures being described, no evidence, besides the opinions of aboriginal peoples about their "inherent sovereignty", is provided of there being sanctions "administered by a determinate locus of power".<sup>112</sup> As noted earlier, the Royal Commission itself recognizes that aboriginal leaders act as "guides" or "counsel", since "they typically do not exercise the authority to make unilateral decisions or to impose their will"<sup>113</sup> - this means that there is no "sovereign" to ensure

---

<sup>112</sup> To illustrate the existence of pre-contact aboriginal "laws", the Royal Commission relies on research reports obtained by Paul Williams and Curtis Nelson. This report relies heavily on the opinions of "oral historians", resulting in contradictory and romanticized accounts of pre-contact Iroquois life. For example, at the beginning of this research report, Williams and Nelson state that "The Great Law is not based on precise words but on principles", but then they go on to argue that "in Haudenosaunee society there was a well defined set of constitutional and internal laws that the people as a whole would obey and enforce...". Paul Williams and Curtis Nelson, "Kaswentha", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>113</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.87.

that decisions are binding and commands are obeyed. Instead, "consensus" must be found to obligate members of the group to follow a designated course of action. Such a system is sufficient in small groups that rely on kinship reciprocity, but it breaks down as surpluses increase and larger groups form, requiring more impersonal and standardized procedures, supported by legitimate coercion, to enforce property relations and distribute social resources. Also, because of the greater social complexity brought about by an increased number of occupational groups and social strata, there is more of a need for impersonal and all encompassing rules to regulate behaviour.<sup>114</sup>

The Royal Commission's tendency to conflate law with social control or custom more generally inhibited its ability to understand how dispute resolution and forms of social control were much more developed in Western Europe than they were in North America during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. As the Royal Commission itself recognized, kinship was the basis of aboriginal societies before contact.

Understanding this is important, because it raises questions about whether or not forms of social control based on kinship are compatible with those that require legal-rational types of authority. As was argued above, the state came into existence as a result in increases in scale, productivity and complexity – including the development of stratification - that could no longer be reproduced on the basis of kinship alone. If this

---

<sup>114</sup> White, *The Evolution of Culture*, p.230.

is the case, how can aboriginal societies, which are now much larger and embedded within the complex network of economic processes and political relations with the wider Canadian society, “govern” themselves with kinship-based traditional values?

As well as attempting to downplay the economic and political differences between aboriginal societies and Europeans before contact, the Royal Commission also exaggerated the extent of knowledge that existed in North America at this time. It cited, for example, the anthropologist Robin Ridington when he "suggests that the technology of Aboriginal peoples at the time [before contact] was based on knowledge rather than tools; more than material technology, it was intimate knowledge of the ecosystem, developed over thousands of years, and ingenuity in using it to advantage that permitted Aboriginal people to survive". Although the Royal Commission did not elaborate upon the "knowledge" to which Ridington refers (and in fact did not even identify the work of Ridington that this assertion comes from),<sup>115</sup> such an argument ignored that all inhabitants of an area must develop an understanding of the local flora and fauna in order to survive. The important question was not whether such practical knowledge existed in North America, but how it compared to European conceptions at this time. As will be elaborated upon in more detail in Chapter Ten, the Royal Commission constantly exaggerated the "sophistication" and "complexity" of the

---

<sup>115</sup> On perusing the reports produced for the Royal Commission, this assertion appears to be drawn from the "Short Paper" that Ridington developed to shape the Royal Commission's research entitled "The First Nations Voice: Is Canada Listening". Short papers have been archived at Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Files 7020-3, 7020-4, 7040-1, 7040-2, 7040-3, Boxes 127-8, but they have been designated as "confidential" and are not available to the public.

intellectual development of aboriginal societies as part of its political agenda to promote the relevance of aboriginal traditions to the world today.

*Obscuring the differences between pre-contact aboriginal groups*

Besides failing to understand the most significant differences between the "separate worlds" inhabited by aboriginal peoples and Europeans, the Royal Commission's reluctance to distinguish societies on the basis of their productivity, scale and complexity also resulted in a lack of understanding of the differences *between* the five aboriginal groups/regions that it analyzed. This problem is clearly visible in the Royal Commission's overview of Inuit culture, when it used a quote from Robert McGhee's *Canadian Arctic Prehistory* to claim that the Inuit developed a "technology more complex than that of any other pre-industrial culture, which allowed not only an economically efficient but also a comfortable way of life throughout arctic North America".<sup>116</sup>

But the Inuit's "way of life", cannot be described as either "economically efficient" or "comfortable" in relation to other aboriginal groups. First of all, their technology was not "more complex". It was severely limited by the fact that they lived above the tree-line, which meant only an erratic supply of wood from which to construct important

---

<sup>116</sup> McGhee, cited in *Final Report*, 1, p. 79.



tools like the bow and arrow. The most elaborate technology of the "pre-industrial cultures" discussed was obviously that of the Iroquois, who were the only aboriginal group studied by the Royal Commission to have developed pottery. This was because they lived a relatively settled existence based on horticulture than those that had to carry their possessions constantly from place to place.<sup>117</sup>

The three technological features that the Royal Commission used to substantiate its claims about Inuit "complexity" are their clothing, kayaks and igloos. In the description of Inuit clothing, the Royal Commission again used the views of McGhee, who argued that "the transformation of animal skins into clothing is a complex process" since "the skin must be processed chemically...cleaned, dried, smoked and softened to produce a fur or leather from which clothing can be cut...". McGhee then went on to state that "working with bone needles and sinew thread, Inuit women made clothing that is still considered by many Arctic travellers to be finer than any produced by the weaving mills or the chemical factories of the south...".<sup>118</sup> But the clothing is "finer" because of its warmth. This had nothing to do with the Inuit's technological development, but was related to the fact that the Arctic was inhabited by animals that evolved in order to withstand the cold. The "complex process" to which McGhee referred was, in fact, much simpler than those used by cultures that made their own fabrics - i.e. the development of textiles. Although no aboriginal society in Canada had

---

<sup>117</sup> Although the Royal Commission does not mention pottery, it does state that Iroquois villages had to be moved every 10 to 20 years. *Final Report*, 1, p.52.

<sup>118</sup> McGhee, 1989, pp. 70-71, cited in *Final Report*, 1, p.84.

developed the loom before contact, there were rudimentary forms of weaving present in some Northwest Coast cultures.<sup>119</sup>

While the Royal Commission does not explain why it considered the kayak to be more "complex" than other forms of water transport found in aboriginal cultures before contact (i.e. the dugout and birch bark canoe), it is true that the igloo embodies certain architectural features that were not developed in other parts of North America. This is because the ease with which they could cut snow enabled the Inuit to develop the keystone - one of the elements necessary for building an arch. But since igloos would have been developed through trial and error by digging snow shelters and then gradually learning to cut and position blocks of snow, they did not develop the keystone from the much more elaborate and difficult process of building stone architecture. As a result, no abstract understanding of the engineering principles embodied in the arch came to be understood by the Inuit. Therefore, it is not surprising that the building of an igloo was described as a "spiritual experience as well as a feat of technology".<sup>120</sup>

---

<sup>119</sup> Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, pp 43, 62. As the archaeologist V. Gordon Childe points out, "it is...possible to produce a sort of cloth with the aid of a frame by a sort of glorified plaiting process similar to that employed in making mats. Blankets of dogs' hair were actually produced in this way by food-gathering tribes on the northwest coast of Canada last century [i.e. post-contact]. But in the Old World a true loom goes back to neolithic times. Now a loom is quite an elaborate piece of machinery...The invention of the loom was one of the great triumphs of human ingenuity". Childe, *Man Makes Himself*, p. 80.

<sup>120</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.81.

As well as there not being much in the way of "complex technology" in comparison to the other aboriginal cultures studied, in no way can the Inuit, because of their presence in such a harsh environment, be described as living a "comfortable existence". The Inuit, in fact, lived the most precarious existence of all the aboriginal groups studied. The low biomass of the area meant constant movement, living in small groups, and the constant danger of starvation. Elders were left on ice floes when they were too old or weak to be supported by the group, and cannibalism had to be resorted to in times of extreme famine.<sup>121</sup> In fact, this view about the Inuit's "comfortable" existence is contradicted by the testimony of an Inuit organization quoted by the Royal Commission, where it is noted that the Inuit do not "want to return to their old way of living" since they "still recall the privations and harshness of that life and have no wish to give up the relative comforts of community living".<sup>122</sup>

This was, however, not an isolated contradiction in the Royal Commission's *Final Report*. Throughout its *Final Report*, the Royal Commission's historical analysis was plagued by its attempts to disguise the crude technology, small size and relatively simple organization of prehistoric aboriginal societies in comparison to the European invaders. This was because of its political agenda of parallelism. As a result, the Royal Commission uncritically accepted the oral histories of aboriginal peoples, which tended to romanticize the past and exaggerate the degree of development found in pre-

---

<sup>121</sup> Boas, *The Central Eskimo*, p.172.

<sup>122</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 638.

contact native cultures. Evidence supporting evolutionary perspectives, on the other hand, was either ignored or unfairly dismissed, preventing the material roots of aboriginal dependency from being understood.

*An impoverished understanding of the historical roots of aboriginal dependency*

As can be seen from the preceding description of the Royal Commission's historical analysis, therefore, an idealistic and anti-evolutionary theoretical framework - i.e. aboriginal peoples' "cyclical" interpretation of history - and the uncritical use of "oral histories" as evidence has resulted in an inadequate characterization of the differences between aboriginal and European societies at the time of contact, as well as some of the key aspects of native diversity. Because the Royal Commission rejected "western" conceptions of societal evolution and historical progress, it avoided acknowledging that large developmental differences separated European and aboriginal "worlds". Such a rejection was not the result of a careful examination of the evidence, but part of the Royal Commission's political strategy of parallelism that was advocated throughout the Final Report. Adopting a cyclical view of history that rejected conceptions of evolutionary development and historical progress provided support for the Royal Commission's advocacy of the restoration of the "nation-to-nation" relationship and "partnership of equals" that it claimed existed at the time of contact. Denying that there was a developmental gap between aboriginal and European

societies prevented the Royal Commission from considering the argument that returning to this original relationship, even if this were possible, would result in dependent kinship groups being embedded within a much larger, complex and productive nation-state.

The Royal Commission's idealistic conception of history also gave undue credence to its contention that aboriginal dependency could be addressed if non-Aboriginals recognized and respected aboriginal "difference"<sup>123</sup> by providing the funding for Natives to autonomously develop their own economies, political structures and cultures.<sup>124</sup> To gain support for this proposition, the Royal Commission repeatedly attempted to convince Canadians that aboriginal cultures have much to offer the modern world. For this reason, it maintained that they

are not the dead artifacts of history, of value only to those who choose to study the past. Rather, they speak to the origins of cultural patterns that find (or seek to find) expression in contemporary times, in contemporary forms. These differences are at the heart of the present struggle of Aboriginal peoples to reclaim possession not only of their traditional lands, but also of their traditional cultures and forms of political organization.<sup>125</sup>

But the main features of these "traditional cultures and forms of political organization" that the Royal Commission identified were the spiritual beliefs and social structures that emerged out of the much less developed subsistence economies of hunter

---

<sup>123</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.612.

<sup>124</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p. 67.

<sup>125</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.46.

gatherers and horticulturalists. Aboriginal "traditional lifestyles" now require snowmobiles, powerboats and rifles that can only be provided by a much more organized and productive economy, and their political systems are not compatible with a liberal democratic and secular nation-state in the late stages of capitalism. Kinship reciprocity, while still existing in modern societies, is viewed as being corrupt when expressed in the Canadian political system, and "consensual decision-making" does not have the procedural mechanisms to reconcile the social divisions created by massive increases in social wealth and its unequal distribution.<sup>126</sup> It is also accepted that "freedom of religion" includes the rights of non-believers not to have religious beliefs imposed upon them, but this was never a consideration when the Royal Commission repeatedly argued that aboriginal "spirituality" should be integrated into public policy that affects non-aboriginals.<sup>127</sup> Recommendations that are intent on preserving hunting and gathering/horticultural features in the modern context,

---

<sup>126</sup> This point was illustrated in the Northwest Territories, which because it has attempted to accommodate native culture, operates without political parties and according to "consensus". What happens in this system, however, is that the electorate cannot hold the Executive accountable, because they vote only for an MLA, not the government. For a further discussion of this circumstance see Frances Widdowson and Albert Howard, "Corruption North of 60", *Policy Options*, January-February 1999.

<sup>127</sup> This problem of integrating spirituality is particularly pronounced in the areas of education and health care. In the case of health, the Royal Commission recommends that traditional "healing" practices based upon Animistic beliefs be integrated into contemporary health and social services (*Final Report*, 3, p.48) and that "governments protect and extend the practices of traditional healing and explore their application to contemporary Aboriginal health and healing problems" (Recommendation 3.3.21) and recognize and respect "traditional practices and practitioners" (Recommendation 3.3.23). In the case of education, it is argued that "education processes and institutions must address the intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical development of participants" (*Final Report*, 3, p. 445), involving "spiritual leaders" and integrating aboriginal "cosmology" and "ways of knowing" into the curriculum (*Final Report*, 3, p. 457-58). The Royal Commission recommends "collaborating with elders to determine how traditional Aboriginal knowledge can be made accessible in the education of all students, whether Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, in institutions under Aboriginal, provincial or territorial control (Recommendation 3.5.30, in *Final Report*, 3, p.529).

therefore, cannot be the solution for aboriginal dependency, since they do nothing to address the developmental differences in economic, political and intellectual circumstances that maintain the marginalization of the native population. In fact, as will be shown in Chapters Eight, Nine and Ten of this dissertation, the initiatives advocated so ardently by the Royal Commission - land claims and self-government - actually isolate aboriginal peoples further from Canadian society, entrenching their segregated dependency.

What is needed is a historical and material response to the Royal Commission. Providing such a critique is difficult, however, since most analyses of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations are putting forward non-materialist arguments that are similar to those of the Royal Commission. Since the 1960s, there has been a trend toward embracing epistemological and cultural relativism, explaining why such assumptions are so deeply entrenched within the *Final Report*. As will be discussed in more detail below, this orientation has even impacted political economy, despite the field's inclination to develop generalized historical and material explanations for social phenomena. Such a circumstance is due to the fact that political economy relies on scholarship from the disciplines of anthropology and history, where a strong opposition to the theories of societal evolution and historical progress has developed.

## Chapter Three Postmodernism versus Progress

The denial of societal evolution and historical progress found in the Royal Commission's Report is not unusual, since opposition to these concepts has existed as long as they have been formulated. Unlike biological evolution, which has gradually acquired widespread scientific acceptance, social or cultural evolution has traveled a much bumpier road. This opposition has been historically associated with romanticism, where disenchantment with existing social circumstances is manifested in a longing for an idealized state of human existence thought to exist in the past.

The archaeologist Bruce Trigger notes that the current opponents of evolutionary theories still have the "romantic tendency to idealize small-scale, low-technology societies as being affluent, peaceful, and ecological" - an extension of earlier criticisms that evolutionary views were devaluing meaningful traditions.<sup>1</sup> Like previous romantics, "critics of evolution...are reacting defensively and indiscriminately to what they perceive as the threat that sociocultural change poses to human values".<sup>2</sup> What is new about the current opposition to cultural evolution and historical progress, however, is that it is more pervasive and based on relativistic assumptions.<sup>3</sup> As Trigger points out, "sociocultural evolution is now under more

---

<sup>1</sup> Trigger, *Sociocultural Evolution*, p. 225, 229.

<sup>2</sup> Trigger, *Sociocultural Evolution*, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Windschuttle, *The Killing of History*, p. 26.



severe attack than at any time in its history" with many social scientists "embrac[ing] an extreme cultural relativism that makes it impossible to evaluate the respective merits of any social practice".<sup>4</sup> These relativist views, according to Trigger, characterize evolution as being "inherently ethnocentric, racist, and factually untenable" and "a fantasy that was invented to justify colonialism, social injustice, economic exploitation, slavery, gender oppression, cultural elitism, and almost any other abuse that can be imagined".<sup>5</sup>

These new philosophies opposing cultural evolution and historical progress are intertwined with two kinds of relativism - epistemological and cultural/ethical. With respect to the former, it is argued that there is no way to develop a methodology where the world can be objectively understood and consequently "there is no such thing as an objective observation, facts are political constructs, and science is an instrument of oppression and therefore must itself be oppressed and silenced".<sup>6</sup> As a result,

knowledge is [perceived as] culturally constructed, and culturally relative. There are no absolutes, no universals. Science itself should be treated as a cultural discourse, with an ideological purpose. Positivism is the dehumanizing ideology of a capitalist, imperialist, and patriarchal class. Its claims to objectivity and authority rest...on nothing more substantial than

---

<sup>4</sup> Trigger, *Sociocultural Evolution*, p. xi.

<sup>5</sup> Trigger, *Sociocultural Evolution*, pp. 223, 259.

<sup>6</sup> Napoleon A. Chagnon, "The Academic Left and Threats to Scientific Anthropology", *Human Behaviour and Evolution Society Newsletter* IV(1), May 1995. In making this claim, Chagnon refers to the book by Paul R. Gross and Norman Levitt, *Higher Superstition: The Academic Left and Its Quarrels with Science* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

rhetoric. Invocations of science are disguised power plays, strategies for the imposition of one set of values on the whole world.<sup>7</sup>

This epistemological relativism is related to a cultural/ethical relativism that stresses the importance of human differences over commonalities.<sup>8</sup> Cultural diversity is "valued for its own sake", and thus these philosophies "emphasize approvingly examples of the tenacious survival of ethnic identities and of traditional cultures despite colonial oppression. They also try to minimize the extent to which smaller-scale societies have been integrated into larger political and economic units...In effect they seek to protect other people from the dynamism and change that for better or worse has made their own way of life and their scholarship possible".<sup>9</sup> In conjunction with other relativist philosophies, the goal of objectivity is replaced with recognizing the various "world-views" of different cultures, since "subjectivism signifies intercultural equality and respect".<sup>10</sup>

This trend towards epistemological relativism and the promotion of cultural diversity is generally referred to as "postmodernism", but is also known under a wide variety of labels such as "deconstructionism", "poststructuralism", "political correctness", or "cultural constructivism". It is argued to be associated with a "world-historical shift in the terms of the cultural trade", whereby the secure cultural identities of the 1950s

---

<sup>7</sup> Adam Kuper, *Culture: The Anthropologists' Account* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 220.

<sup>8</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 220.

<sup>9</sup> Trigger, *Sociocultural Evolution*, p. 175.

<sup>10</sup> Gellner, quoted in Kuper, *Culture*, p. 221.

shifted with the end of colonialism and the globalization of culture.<sup>11</sup> Postmodernism also has been characterized as "a lament for the end of Marxism",<sup>12</sup> since its relativist assumptions were embraced by former Marxists such as Jean Francois Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard who "saw Marxism go out of fashion in the 1980s" yet "wanted to find an alternative position that remained critical of modern society".<sup>13</sup>

It is this tenuous association with Marxism, in fact, that led Norman Levitt and Paul R. Gross to refer to postmodernist factions in universities today as the "Academic Left". However, as the anthropologist Napoleon Chagnon has correctly pointed out, "[the Academic Left] is probably not the most appropriate catch-all phrase [for postmodernism], since the basic issue has more to do with the value and utility of research that is premised on the scientific approach versus that which is not".<sup>14</sup>

Associating postmodernism with left-wing assumptions also ignores those on the Left who are opposed to postmodernism. One of the most prominent critics of postmodernism, Alan Sokal, for example, confesses to being an "unabashed Old

---

<sup>11</sup> Kuper maintains that this is one of the three major changes in anthropology. The second is that "it is no longer possible (if it ever was) to construct objective accounts of other ways of life" and the third is that there is "a moral obligation to celebrate cultural difference, and to stand up for those who are resisting Westernization". Kuper, *Culture*, p. 218.

<sup>12</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 225.

<sup>13</sup> Windschuttle, *The Killing of History*, p. 26. The anthropologist Robin Fox also notes that "the old Marxist doctrine says: Knowledge is relative to one's class; the proletariat is the progressive class, so its knowledge is the truth. It sees the issue as truth all right; it just locates it in a particular social space, as it were. In the new radicalism, theoretically, truth is not an issue since there isn't any. I think a real Marxist should have trouble with this, but they seem ready to swallow any objections in the name of establishment bashing, with which it is easy to go along". Robin Fox, *The Challenge of Anthropology*, p. 376.

<sup>14</sup> Chagnon, "The Academic Left and Threats to Scientific Anthropology".

Leftist who never quite understood how deconstruction was supposed to help the working class".<sup>15</sup> Postmodernism has also been criticized by Marxists such as Eric Hobsbawm, Alex Callinicos and Ellen Meiksins Wood, who see the relativism and political fragmentation embraced by these philosophies as obstructing progressive change.<sup>16</sup>

Although some people who call themselves Marxists are postmodernists, the latter has much more to do with a framework known as "structuralism" than Marxism. Initially put forward as being a "science of the superstructure",<sup>17</sup> structuralism generally has been formulated in opposition to Marxism because it tends to separate "systems of ideas" and the "construction of meaning" from its historical and material context.<sup>18</sup> It focuses on symbols as being "a set of representations that shaped action and informed events", abstracting them from productive processes. Structuralism also differs from postmodernism, however, in that it perceives itself as a science, maintaining that there are universal characteristics of the human mind that "impose[d] invariant constraints

---

<sup>15</sup> Alan Sokal, "Transgressing the Boundaries: An Afterward", *Dissent* 43(4), Fall 1996, pp. 93-99.

<sup>16</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, "The new threat to history", *New York Review of Books*, December 16, 1993, pp. 62-4; Wood, *Capitalism Against Democracy: Renewing Historical Materialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 256-263; Alex Callinicos, *Against Postmodernism* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1990).

<sup>17</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 166.

<sup>18</sup> Windschuttle, *The Killing of History*, pp. 20-24; Carroll, *Evolution and Literary Theory*, pp. 245-6; Trigger, *Sociocultural Evolution*, pp. 178-9; Kuper, *Culture*, p. 169.

on all cultural phenomena".<sup>19</sup> Structuralism's purpose is to "establish a deep structure that all languages and cultures shared", and thus was not relativist in character.<sup>20</sup>

In the 1960s, however, structuralism lost its appeal and "gave way to a variety of 'poststructuralisms' of a decidedly relativist cast. Their adepts abandoned the scientific ambitions of classical structuralism, insisting upon the ultimate indeterminacy of words and symbols".<sup>21</sup> This development had its origins in Literary Theory - a circumstance that has been extensively documented by Joseph Carroll. Carroll points out that

structuralists...abstract from the individual human consciousness in order to invest cultural mediums such as language and myth with autonomous generative power. This strategic move is...a fundamental error, but its motive is a misguided rationalism. By isolating formal regularities in language, myth, or culture, structuralists hope to render these objects susceptible to formal analysis. Poststructuralists adopt as established fact the structuralist principle that linguistic or cultural structures have autonomous generative power, but they repudiate the structuralist motive for positing this autonomy. Post-structuralists seek not a formal regularity that can allow for a scientific treatment of culture but a necessary logical incoherence that can eliminate the authority of all science. The relation between structuralism and poststructuralism can thus be understood in part as a kind of disciplinary kidnapping.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, pp. 165-6.

<sup>20</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 18.

<sup>21</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 18.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Carroll, *Evolution and Literary Theory*, pp. 245-6.

Although postmodern philosophies have become fashionable throughout universities today, some disciplines have been impacted more than others.<sup>23</sup> Within the social sciences, one of the most seriously affected disciplines is anthropology.<sup>24</sup> Postmodern views began to assert themselves in association with third world struggles against colonialism, which formed the basis of a radical critique of anthropology encouraging anthropologists "to shape their research to serve the people they study rather than serving these people's rulers by buttressing ideologies of imperialism".<sup>25</sup> Instead of seeing the anthropologist's role as attempting to understand different cultures, it was now argued that there is a "duty...to give a privileged hearing to the muted voices of the downtrodden, to speak for the oppressed".<sup>26</sup> These views, along with the fact that "anthropology has always been tolerant of multiple theories of culture and has tended to attract self-selected individuals who...advocate Rousseauian ideas about the nature of Man", has resulted in an academic environment that is particularly predisposed to embrace the relativist ideas of postmodern philosophies.<sup>27</sup>

The significance of the postmodern turn in anthropology has been extensively documented by the anthropologist Roy d'Andrade, in an article entitled "Moral Models

---

<sup>23</sup> Chagnon, "The Academic Left and Threats to Scientific Anthropology".

<sup>24</sup> Trigger, *Understanding Early Civilizations: A Comparative Study*, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> Leacock, "Marxism and Anthropology", p. 259.

<sup>26</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 208.

<sup>27</sup> Chagnon, "The Academic Left and Threats to Scientific Anthropology"; Fox, *The Challenge of Anthropology*.

of Anthropology”.<sup>28</sup> In this article, d’Andrade argues that there have been “concerted attacks in anthropology on objectivity, science, the notion of truth, making generalizations of any kind, doing ethnography, and anthropology itself as a type of western colonialism”. D’Andrade notes that this is related to the “current trend in anthropology towards the development of a moral discipline with models of the world that contain explicit moral judgments”, rather than those that strive for objectivity (objective models). These moral judgments “emphasize oppression, demystification and denunciation”. According to d’Andrade, it is now possible to make a career in anthropology by being known for what one denounces.

Such a trend towards “moral models” in anthropology was identified by Robin Fox in the early 1970s. Fox argues that relativism is part of the heritage of anthropology, which is rooted in the work of Franz Boas. He notes that this heritage “was primarily a value relativism (‘each culture must be judged on its own terms’) rather than a cognitive relativism (‘one culture’s categories are just as valid as another’s)’”, but that the two have been confused, making it difficult for anthropologists “to be too critical of cognitive relativism even though it hits at the heart of the scientific enterprise”.<sup>29</sup>

Like Fox, Adam Kuper recognizes that “idealism has been in the ascendant more widely in recent decades, together with its handmaiden, relativism”.<sup>30</sup> The increasing

---

<sup>28</sup>Roy d’Andrade, “Moral Models in Anthropology”, *Current Anthropology*, 36(3), June 1995, pp. 399-408.

<sup>29</sup> Fox, *The Challenge of Anthropology*, p. 368.

<sup>30</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 19.

prominence of relativism led "postmodernist anthropology" to become a "school" in the 1980s with the release of the book *Writing Culture*.<sup>31</sup> Its roots in Literary Theory is indicated by the attempt to "introduce a literary consciousness to ethnographic practice by showing various ways in which ethnographies can be read and written".<sup>32</sup> This meant that "ethnography should represent a variety of discordant voices, never coming to rest and never... 'essentializing' a people or a way of life".<sup>33</sup>

In addition to relativist tendencies in anthropology, postmodernist trends have been documented in history and archaeology. While not being as pronounced as in anthropology, these developments are having a significant affect on how the past is studied. The Australian historian Keith Windschuttle, for example, notes that "[the belief that there are facts about history is no longer accepted as the starting point for debate, but is itself seen merely as one ideological position among several".<sup>34</sup> Instead of accepting that it is the "obligation [of] historians...to try to shake off their own values and pursue the truth", there is a tendency to see history as "*nothing more* than a form of literature" serving the personal and ideological agenda of its authors just as

---

<sup>31</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 206.

<sup>32</sup> Marcus, quoted in Kuper, *Culture*, p. 207. As Kuper explains, "...the Geertzians were consistently dismissive of any suggestion that there could be a science of culture. Culture was indeed rather like language, but their preferred model of culture was the text. Accordingly, they drew upon literary theory rather than linguistics. It was this approach that prospered, and interpretivism became the orthodoxy in mainstream American cultural anthropology...The postmodern anthropologists prefer to imagine the realm of culture as something more like an unruly democracy than a theocratic state or absolutist monarchy...mainstream American cultural anthropology, in short, is still in the grip of a pervasive idealism". Kuper, *Culture*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>33</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 208.

<sup>34</sup> Windschuttle, *The Killing of History*, p. 19.



legitimately as a novel.<sup>35</sup> As Windschuttle explains, "most historians over the last two hundred years have accepted the view that the truth about the past is something independent of themselves", but "quite a few historians today...believe that the past is not something we discover but something that each age invents for its own purposes". Such relativist tendencies are also linked to a movement known as "postcolonialism", which encourages "perspectives that differ radically from the literary traditions borne by the main nineteenth century imperial powers".<sup>36</sup>

Even more surprising than these developments in anthropology and history are the postmodern influences in archaeology.<sup>37</sup> While archaeology used to be one of the more rigorous social sciences, Bruce Trigger maintains that recently it "has been powerfully influenced by the attacks that relativists have launched against the concept of science as a rational and objective enterprise".<sup>38</sup> Known variously as "critical archaeology", "postprocessual archaeology" or a "contextual approach", these relativist frameworks maintain that "even basic archaeological data are mental constructs..."<sup>39</sup> and that "archaeological interpretations are determined entirely by their social context rather than by any objective evidence".<sup>40</sup> Trigger notes that the

---

<sup>35</sup> Windschuttle, *The Killing of History*, pp. 231, 227.

<sup>36</sup> Windschuttle, *The Killing of History*, pp. 30-32.

<sup>37</sup> Personal communication with Garrett G. Fagan, Associate Professor of Classics and Ancient Mediterranean Studies and History, Penn State University, August 5, 2004. At the time, Dr. Fagan was in the final stages of editing a book for Routledge entitled *Archaeological Fantasies: How Pseudoarchaeology Misrepresents the Past and Misleads the Public*.

<sup>38</sup> Trigger, *A History of Archeological Thought*, p. 13.

<sup>39</sup> Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, p. 14.

<sup>40</sup> Miller and Tilley, quoted in Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, p. 14.

archaeologist Ian Hodder, for example, maintains that "because each culture is a system of meaning that is the product of its own history and is based on unique assumptions, different cultures can be understood and evaluated only on their own terms" and that

because of the intervention of frameworks of culturally specific meaning there is no direct, universal cross-cultural relationship between behaviour and material culture. Rather than seeking to understand one aspect of culture in isolation from the rest, he maintains, anthropologists must try to discover how the different parts of a culture are cognitively linked to form a meaningful whole. Comparing agricultural production in different societies in isolation from other features of these societies is bound to be misleading and imposes an erroneous materialist interpretation on human behaviour. Agricultural production may be guided primarily by religious beliefs in one culture and by calculations of monetary profit in another...<sup>41</sup>

In addition to Hodder, such assumptions are also prominent in the works of archeologists like Michael Shanks, Christopher Tilley, Daniel Miller, and Matthew Spriggs.<sup>42</sup> Instead of increasing the accuracy of our understanding of the past, these scholars maintain that archaeological work should support the political aspirations of marginalized groups. It is argued, for example, that "archaeologists should aid subordinate peoples in interpreting the past the way they want it interpreted" and that they have "no moral right to interpret the prehistory of other peoples...".<sup>43</sup> Instead, these postmodern archaeologists assume that "their main duty should be to provide

---

<sup>41</sup> Trigger, *Understanding Early Civilizations*, p. 10.

<sup>42</sup> Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, p. 427; Lawrence Kuznar, *Reclaiming a Scientific Anthropology*, p. 165.

<sup>43</sup> Kuznar, *Reclaiming a Scientific Anthropology*, p. 165.

individuals with the means to construct their own views of the past..."<sup>44</sup> These developments have led Bruce Trigger to conclude that

prehistoric archaeology has shifted from a naïve positivism to a more far-reaching acceptance of relativism than at any time in the past. After several decades of positivist optimism, a growing number of archaeologists are prepared to believe that they can never achieve an objective historical understanding of the past. Some of the more radical relativists have concluded that because of this they have the right to use archaeological data for any purpose that they wish. They see them as a source of aesthetic pleasure or as providing material for fantasies about the past that offer personal or public satisfaction. This view reduces archaeology to the status of antiquarianism, which treats archaeological data as ends in themselves. There are also those who propose to use archaeological data as propaganda to promote political or social causes, which are usually identified as being of a left-wing or populist variety.<sup>45</sup>

Although such relativist developments in anthropology, history and archaeology have significantly influenced current scholarship on the past, including the Royal Commission's historical analysis, taken to their ultimate conclusion they will result in a destruction of these disciplines. This is because relativism provides no basis for distinguishing between history and myth, fiction and non-fiction, or "science and fables".<sup>46</sup> It only results in a "perverse negativity"<sup>47</sup> where "there is no past to study" and "a discipline in which one can only relive the past in one's own mind".<sup>48</sup> More

---

<sup>44</sup> Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, p. 345.

<sup>45</sup> Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, p. 381.

<sup>46</sup> Gross and Levitt, *Higher Superstition*, p. 210.

<sup>47</sup> Carroll, *Evolution and Literary Theory*, p. 467.

<sup>48</sup> Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought*, p. 380.

specifically, the historian Keith Windschuttle points to three qualities that make postmodern philosophies hostile towards historical analysis:

first, they reject those aspects of the scientific method of the Enlightenment that were based on observation and inductive argument. They consequently reject works of history that are based on the same principles. Second, they all hold a relativist view of the *concepts* of truth and knowledge. Most deny that we can know anything with certainty, and believe that different cultures create their own truths. Third, most deny the ability of human beings to gain any direct contact with or access to reality. Instead, they support a form of linguistic idealism that holds that we are locked within a closed system of language and culture, which refers not beyond our minds to an outside world but only inwardly to itself. Despite the urgings of those who claim that greater adoption of theory would enrich history, the widespread acceptance of any one of these last three points would be enough to kill off the discipline, as it has been practised, for good. The first undermines the methodology of historical research; the second destroys the distinction between history and fiction; the third means not only that it is impossible to access the past but that we have no proper grounds for believing that the past independent of ourselves ever took place. In other words, if historians allow themselves to be prodded all the way to this theoretical abyss, they will be rendering themselves and their discipline extinct.<sup>49</sup>

Perhaps postmodernists would celebrate such a state of affairs. There is, however, a striking contradiction between the epistemological relativism of postmodern philosophies and their political idealism. If, as postmodernists claim, there is no way to objectively understand reality, on what basis can cultural diversity be promoted?<sup>50</sup>

Support for cultural diversity assumes that a culturally diverse world is preferential to

---

<sup>49</sup> Windschuttle, *The Killing of History*, p. 36.

<sup>50</sup> As Joseph Carroll points out, "the elimination of truth, can of course take effect only if one believes that the central poststructuralist doctrines are in fact true. In this sense, poststructuralism undermines the ground on which it stands, but the larger poststructuralist position, deriving from the philosophy of Jacques Derrida, is that all propositions always undermine the ground on which they stand...within this framework, the self-cancelling nature of poststructuralist repudiations of truth appears as merely an exemplary instance of the general claim that incoherence and contradiction are the heir of an ultimate, linguistic reality...". Carroll, *Evolution and Literary Theory*, pp. 4-5.

one that is not, and if this cannot be substantiated, how would one convince others that this is an appropriate political goal to pursue? As Adam Kuper points out,

there is a...contradiction between the denial that objective knowledge can be achieved and the firm moral tone that these authors habitually employ. They may not know anything for sure, but they do know what they like. They are on the side of the peoples of the world who are resisting 'Westernization,' or 'modernization', or 'globalization'. But on what basis can they take sides at all? What warrants their political affiliation? In the name of what principles can they call us to arms?<sup>51</sup>

In the case of the Royal Commission's historical analysis, for example, one section of the *Final Report* notes that "until the story of life in Canada, as Aboriginal people know it, finds a place in all Canadians' knowledge of their past, the wounds from historical violence and neglect will continue to fester - denied by Canadians at large and, perversely, generating shame in Aboriginal people because they cannot shake off the sense of powerlessness that made them vulnerable to injury in the first place".<sup>52</sup> But if there is no possibility of objectively understanding reality, what is the rationale for claiming that the omission of aboriginal peoples' "story of life in Canada" will have the positive results for the native population? Maybe the opposite will occur - that accepting aboriginal peoples' "conception of history" will result in a further "sense of powerlessness".

---

<sup>51</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 221.

<sup>52</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 7.

If one does not uncritically embrace the relativistic assumptions of postmodernist philosophies, in fact, it is a definite possibility that accepting aboriginal peoples' "story of life in Canada" will result in maintaining their current "sense of powerlessness". This is because, as the Royal Commission itself admits, aboriginal perspectives about the past, as well as many other examples of aboriginal "knowledge", do not strive for objectivity, and are thus contrary to science. Encouraging aboriginal peoples to maintain these perspectives will therefore disadvantage native people in their attempts to become educated and make a contribution to the wider society.<sup>53</sup> As Robin Fox points out,

whether we like it or not, science with its objectivity (however this might be compromised in certain instances) and its openness to validation and

---

<sup>53</sup>Paul Gross and Norman Levitt make a similar point with respect to the forms of "knowledge" being promoted in the name of "Afrocentric science". In response to an "Afrocentric scientist"'s attempt to promote the theories of Euclid because he was supposedly "Black", Gross and Levitt note that "what is truly irresponsible in this piece, especially from a pedagogical point of view, is the failure to come to grips with the enormous conceptual gap between the systematic synthetic geometry of the Greeks and the clever but ad hoc mensural geometry of Egypt (and other civilizations). To set the one up as the equal of the other, for the sake of racial pride... is to deprive students of an indispensable mathematical insight, and moreover, to prime them to react with hostility to any attempt to convey it to them". According to Gross and Levitt, "blacks are said to need an approach that respects their singular cultural experience and that validates their sense of self-worth. Moreover, they need examples and role models that counter the presumed discouragement and disparagement that the white-dominated culture has inflicted upon them... whatever the value of such an approach in general, it would seem to be highly questionable when applied to the teaching of natural science, especially at the college level" since this involves "the flagrant falsification of science (and of history and ethnography as well ) in the service of Afrocentric chauvinism". They argue that "the inanities of Afrocentric 'science' now have free rein in a number of urban predominantly black school districts. Of course, simple charity urges us to see this as a desperate, if horridly ill-considered, response to a desperate educational and social situation; but that situation is not to be ameliorated by the teaching of nonsense". They maintain that "practical measures for making discussion of scientific issues effectively more democratic by what should be the straightforward process of extending scientific literacy are continually subverted by the intrusion of 'identity' politics' into the pedagogy of science. ....It is clear that black youngsters who aspire to scientific careers will be in deep trouble if their early education is dominated by Afrocentrism...". Gross and Levitt, *Higher Superstition*, pp. 207, 205, 247, 251.

refutation, remains the one international language capable of providing objective knowledge of the world. And it is a language that all can use, share in, and learn. It is also a language that can be improved; in particular, more thought can be put into its use and misuse. But it is not a language that can be abandoned in favor of a complete epistemological relativism that would decree all statements as of equal value. Those anthropologists preaching such relativism are way out of line with the people they think they are defending. The wretched of the earth want science and the benefits of science. To deny them this is another kind of racism.<sup>54</sup>

A similar point is made with respect to the study of history by Keith Windschuttle. He argues that

the attempt by cultural relativism and postmodernism to eliminate the metanarrative from history - that is, to eliminate the narrative of what really happened irrespective of whether the participants were aware of it or not - would deprive us all, no matter what culture we inhabit, of genuine knowledge of our past. This attempt is not only a theoretical delusion but is politically inept. Though used most often these days to assert the esteem of indigenous cultures, cultural relativism will never serve the real interests of indigenous peoples if it denies them access to the truth about the past...Just as...science is open to everyone, Western historical method is available to the people of any culture to understand their past and their relations with other peoples. It is by facing the truth of both our separate and our common histories that we can best learn to live with one another.<sup>55</sup>

Windschuttle points out that this agenda of postmodernism is related to an erroneous conflation of political equality with epistemological equivalence. He argues that

in the postcolonial era it has seemed natural to many brought up on liberal principles to go one step further than simple individual egalitarianism and to argue that it is not just all people that are equal but all cultures or meanings

---

<sup>54</sup> Fox, *The Challenge of Anthropology*, p. 367.

<sup>55</sup> Windschuttle, *The Killing of History*, p. 281.

systems as well...However, this extension of the argument should be recognised as illegitimate. The liberal democratic notion that all people are equal means equal in a legal and political sense...It has never meant that all people have equality of knowledge, ability or understanding. Similarly, all cultures or meanings systems are demonstrably not equal in terms of knowledge and ability. The inference drawn by ideologues...that the political liberation of colonial peoples should be accompanied by their epistemological liberation, does not follow. Indeed, those former colonies who want to expel Western thought in the way that they expelled Western imperialism should recognise that they would be throwing away the most valuable intellectual tools available to them.<sup>56</sup>

It is misguided political idealism, in fact, that leads the Royal Commission to reject the theory of cultural evolution and conceptions of historical progress, with the same detrimental effects. As has been pointed out earlier, the Royal Commission's reasons for its outright dismissal of these conceptions of history is that they are "racist" and "colonialist". But perceiving theories of cultural evolution as such is not only erroneous; it also deprives the Royal Commission from accessing one of the most powerful explanatory tools available in the social sciences. As Bruce Trigger has noted, the "preoccupation with the unique and idiosyncratic" has prevented a recognition that "human history does have a linear directionality", which "provides important insights into some of the most crucial processes that have influenced human behaviour. While the concept of general evolution has served to celebrate and justify Western accomplishments, it also sheds light on the nature and motivations of colonialism, economic exploitation, and other forms of oppression, which

---

<sup>56</sup> Windschuttle, *The Killing of History*, p. 280.



postmodernism ubiquitously deplures but does not seem equipped to understand".<sup>57</sup>

While postmodern philosophies are essentially a dead end, evolutionary explanations offer "a more complete and adequate theory of the development and nature of life, including human life, than any other theory currently available to us".<sup>58</sup> For this reason, Joseph Carroll "predict[s] that within twenty years the Darwinian paradigm will have established its dominance in the social sciences. It will have done so in spite of all prejudice and all entrenched interests, because of the irresistible force of its explanatory power".<sup>59</sup> In the case of anthropology, Robin Fox maintains the "master paradigm" holding the discipline together is the "evolution of social behaviour", and if this guiding framework is thrown out "what we are doing will not be anthropology but some branch of some other discipline masquerading as such".<sup>60</sup>

The Royal Commission's rejection of cultural evolution and historical progress on the grounds that these theories are racist and colonialist is ironic when one considers that a major part of this tradition is associated with Marxism. As will be elaborated upon below, the theories of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels did not reject these conceptions, but perceived them as an essential to understanding the development of

---

<sup>57</sup> Trigger, *Sociocultural Evolution*, p. 175.

<sup>58</sup> Carroll, *Evolution and Literary Theory*, pp. 467-468. Carroll points out that "a very large proportion of the work in critical theory that has been done in the past twenty years will prove to be not merely obsolete but essentially void. It cannot be regarded as an earlier phase of a developing discipline, with all the honor due antecedents and ancestors. It is essentially a wrong turn, a dead end, a misconceived enterprise, a repository of delusions and wasted efforts".

<sup>59</sup> Carroll, *Evolution and Literary Theory*, p. 468.

<sup>60</sup> Fox, *The Challenge of Anthropology*, p. xii.

capitalism and its influence on humanity. This tradition was not complicit in colonialism, but was using the evolutionary framework to understand capitalism so that an international movement could be built to move beyond it.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL EVOLUTION AND HISTORICAL PROGRESS

The Royal Commission's dismissal of the conceptions of "progress" and "societal evolution" as antiquated and/or pernicious concepts<sup>61</sup> does not consider that up until the 1970s these concepts were very influential in the social sciences across a wide ideological spectrum. Within anthropology, for example, Adam Kuper points out that "until very recently, there was..a high level of consensus" that "human culture has advanced" since "irreversible technical advances have been logged at an accelerating tempo" both in terms of the "spread and growth of the human population" and the "development of increasingly large-scale and complex social systems".<sup>62</sup> Progress

---

<sup>61</sup>The Royal Commission, in fact, maintains that "recent years have seen a spate of scholarly revisions of the simplistic and largely contrived story of the clash of 'civilization' and 'savagery' that was put forward by generations of narrow-minded clergymen, politically oriented propagandists and romantic frontier novelists". *Final Report*, 1, p.321, note 16. The Royal Commission does not elaborate on this, only citing two works - Francis Jennings' *The Invasion of America* and Robert A. Williams, Jr.'s *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought* - as "two particularly powerful debunkings of these conventional histories".

<sup>62</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 227.

also was documented in the disciplines of history, sociology and archaeology, when humanity's development was examined over the long term.<sup>63</sup>

An outright rejection of these concepts also ignores current attempts to incorporate them. A clear definition of progress has been provided by Alex Callinicos, who maintains that this idea is found in theories proposing "directionality" in the historical process, where "each successive social form represents an increase in some property common to all kinds of society".<sup>64</sup> Eric Hobsbawm also notes that "directional change in human affairs....is observable and objective" when one considers "the persistent and increasing capacity of the human species to control the forces of nature by means of manual and mental labour, technology and the organization of production. Its reality is demonstrated by the growth of the human population of the globe throughout history, without significant set-backs, and the growth - particularly in the past few centuries - of production and productive capacity". According to Hobsbawm, "any genuine attempt to make sense of human history must take this trend as its starting-point".<sup>65</sup>

Conceptions of historical progress, in fact, continue to find expression in two broad theoretical traditions - the sociology of Max Weber and the political economy of Karl

---

<sup>63</sup> Such a view, in fact, has been adopted more generally in the Marxist tradition of political economy. For a discussion of this, see Eric Hobsbawm, *On History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997), p.150.

<sup>64</sup> Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives*, p. 102.

<sup>65</sup> Hobsbawm, *On History*, p. 31.

Marx.<sup>66</sup> Their conceptions are considered to be "theories", as opposed to mere "philosophies of history", because they attempt to provide a non-teleological conception of historical progress. According to Alex Callinicos, "both Marxist and Weberian theories discern a progressive directionality in the course of history - respectively, the development of the productive forces and the growth of social power". These conceptions, however, are not teleological because they acknowledge patterns that are separate from the explanations that they give for the specific transformation of society. In other words, "the nature of every social form" is not explained in terms of "the final state of affairs towards which it is a step, but on the basis of the powers and relations constituting it, which give that form its identity but

---

<sup>66</sup> It is often argued that G.W.F. Hegel is another figure in western philosophy who attempted to develop a theory of history. Hegel argued that humanity develops through a process which acts to increase human self-awareness and the formation of social institutions that encourage the expression of human freedom. This occurs at its utmost when humanity recognizes that "it is separate from and sovereign over nature, where 'nature' denotes both the external environment, and the natural inclinations of man himself which...is human destiny to form and control". This conception of history is embodied in "Hegel's concept of Spirit, which attains full self-consciousness when it recognizes its complete identity with its apparently alien object". Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives*, p. 86. Callinicos points out, however, that Hegel's conception of history is not really a theory of history because it is not empirical and gives a teleological explanation of progress - i.e. "the account [given] of the meaning of the historical process, and more particularly of the state of affairs in which it culminates, explains the succession of social forms making up the content of that process". Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives*, pp. 106-7. Hegel's conception of progress, in Callinicos' view, is one where "the beginning and the end of the process mutually justify one another". Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives*, p. 40. Bruce Trigger even argues that because of this, Hegel's conception of history is not evolutionary. According to Trigger, "Hegel's assumption that humans will eventually recognize themselves as spiritual and as one with God conceptualizes humanity as moving in accordance with a divine plan towards the regaining of the Absolute, which is the all-embracing totality of reality, through the negation of the former negation that had constituted the finite, differentiated universe". Therefore, "while Hegel may have conceived of human history as a developmental process, this mystical and romantic philosopher was thinking in a fashion that was essentialist, archetypal, and cyclical rather than evolutionary". Trigger, *Sociocultural Evolution*, p. 46. For other discussions of Hegel's conception of history, see Carr, *What is History?*, p.51; Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives*, p.106; and G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), p.10.

may threaten its survival".<sup>67</sup> Instead of being pulled towards a final destination that exists *a priori*, therefore, Marxist and Weberian theories examine the causal relationships and tendencies existing within societies that lead them to develop in a particular direction.

Despite their sharing a non-teleological approach to understanding historical progress, Marxist and Weberian theories differ in where they locate the source of historical progress. Weberians, unlike Marxists, "[posit] a multiplicity of mechanisms as the causes of historical change", stressing the importance of historical accidents in this process. As Callinicos explains, "all Weberian theorists are committed to giving an account of historical development which makes no appeal, overt or tacit, to concepts of predetermination or inevitability".<sup>68</sup> These approaches have been most clearly developed in anthropology and sociology by theorists such as Michael Mann, Ernest Gellner and Talcott Parsons. In their attempt to "reaffirm the claim of theory to comprehend the course of history", these approaches are opposed to Marxism in that they maintain that "forms of political and ideological domination [are] factors of explanatory importance coequal with that of class exploitation...".<sup>69</sup>

Marxist approaches, on the other hand, are more "deterministic" in that they pinpoint historical progress in productive processes and the exploitative relations connected to

---

<sup>67</sup> Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives*, p. 107.

<sup>68</sup> Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives*, pp. 107-8.

<sup>69</sup> Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives*, p. 7.

them. The source of progress is not to be found in a variety of accidental causes, but in the tendency of mankind's productive forces to develop.<sup>70</sup> In this view, increased control over nature to satisfy human needs through the social development of labour is paramount. Although this process involves the development of reason and increases in scientific knowledge and self-awareness, as well as "forms of political and ideological domination", these are the necessary result, not the cause, of historical progress. The Marxist concept of production, however, is not mechanical since it encompasses "the changing relations of humankind to nature, the social relations into which humans enter in the course of transforming nature, and the consequent transformations of human symbolic capability. The concept is thus not merely economic in the strict sense but also ecological, social, political, and social-psychological. It is relational in character".<sup>71</sup>

In comparing Weberian and Marxist approaches to progress, it is important to recognize that, as Bruce Trigger argues, "...the primary test of any historical interpretation is its ability to account for the broadest and most detailed array of historical evidence".<sup>72</sup> Marxist approaches are best able to meet this requirement because they can explain the breadth and detail of humanity's trajectory on this planet by linking historical development to our most basic activities. It makes sense to argue

---

<sup>70</sup> Callincos, *Theories and Narratives*, p.107; Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History*, pp. 28-62; and Eric Hobsbawm, *On History*, p. 163.

<sup>71</sup> Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, p. 21.

<sup>72</sup> Trigger, quoted in Georges Sioui, *Towards an Amerindian Autohistory*, p. xiv.

that human beings must first have basic necessities such as food, shelter and clothing satisfied before engaging in politics and developing ideologies.<sup>73</sup> And since certain institutions would cease to exist if they resulted in depriving a population of the materials it needed to survive and reproduce,<sup>74</sup> "it is quite obvious that the food supply must exercise a final control" and "the way people get their living should be expected in the long run to 'determine' their beliefs and institutions".<sup>75</sup> As Howard Selsam and Harry Martel point out, although the "human ..clash of...wills plays a great role in historical development", the question that needs to be asked is "what determines this clash of wills?" and "not to ask this question is to beg it". They maintain that "Marx's search for an answer led him to the conclusion that the will and the passions of men could be explained only by an investigation of the underling driving forces of social development" and that "these driving forces are, in the last analysis, society's productive powers and the relationship of man to man in the process of obtaining the necessities of life".<sup>76</sup>

Such a materialist view of history is supported further by examining human development over the long term, especially the emergence of humanity from pre-

---

<sup>73</sup> Frederick Engels, "Speech at the graveside of Karl Marx", in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), Volume 3, p.162.

<sup>74</sup>Wessman, *Anthropology and Marxism*, p.179; Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, ""The Cultural Materialist and Dialectical Materialist Traditions in Anthropology: A Critical Review", in Fluehr-Lobban (ed), *International Perspectives on Marxist Anthropology*, (Minneapolis: MEP Publications, 1989), p.41.

<sup>75</sup> V. Gordon Childe, "Prehistory and Marxism", *Antiquity*, 53(208), July 1979, p.93.

<sup>76</sup> Howard Selsam and Harry Martel, *Reader in Marxist Philosophy* (New York: International Publishers, 1970), p. 183.

human forms. As was shown by Engels in his essay "The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man",<sup>77</sup> and later by the sociologist Charles Woolfson in *The Labour Theory of Culture*,<sup>78</sup> the emergence of humanity was made possible through the gradual development of its productive forces. This is also indicated by the fact that progress began slowly and that the pace of this development has gradually accelerated. Such a trend in the rates of progress indicates that cultural evolution is a practical process, where a base of technological and social development is needed before further innovation and understanding are possible.

It was Marx and Engels' attempt to develop such a materialist and all-encompassing understanding of history, in fact, that led to their interest in the work of the ethnographer Lewis Henry Morgan, now known as one of the founding fathers of anthropology, resulting in a strong connection between Marxist political economy and theories of cultural evolution. Marx and Engels were trying to understand the development of productive processes that had led to the emergence of capitalism, and this influenced them to continuously stretch back their analysis further and further into the past. Already in *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels had briefly delineated the "various stages of development in the division of labour", arguing that "the existing stage in the division of labor determines also the relations of individuals to

---

<sup>77</sup> Frederick Engels, "The Part Played By Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man", in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works*, volume 3, pp. 66-77.

<sup>78</sup> Charles Woolfson, *The Labour Theory of Culture: A Re-examination of Engels's Theory of Human Origins* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982).



one another with reference to the material, instrument, and product of labor" and that these stages consisted of "many different forms of ownership". In this work, they proposed a transition from "tribal ownership" to "ancient, communal and State ownership" and then "feudal or estate-property" before the development of capitalism.<sup>79</sup> As Maurice Godelier explains, "for Marx in *The German Ideology*, had arrived at the same general hypothesis as Morgan...that is to say, that the social conditions of production of material life determine, in the final analysis, the content, form and evolution of society".<sup>80</sup> Marx also attempted to conceptualize how relations whereby human beings owned the product of their labour were dissolved and transformed. As a result, both Marx and Engels found in Morgan's work the "data which opened up to view developments within the enormously long period represented by 'tribal' ownership, as well as material that illuminated the steps where private property emerged".<sup>81</sup>

This connection between Marxism and the theory of cultural evolution began with the publication of Morgan's *Ancient Society*, which theorized humanity's "struggle for existence" through its active adaptation to the surrounding environment.<sup>82</sup> In this

---

<sup>79</sup>Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "The German Ideology", in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works*, volume 1, pp. 21-23.

<sup>80</sup> Maurice Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 76.

<sup>81</sup> Eleanor Leacock, "Introduction", in Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society*, p. 11.

<sup>82</sup> Eleanor Leacock, "Introduction", in Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Introduction and notes by Eleaanor Burke Leacock (New York: International Publishers, 1972), p. 10.

work, Morgan made two general hypotheses about the nature of humanity's evolution; first, he maintained that historical progress was rooted in enlarging the food supply through increases in efficiency of productive technology or the "arts of subsistence"; secondly, he argued that the development of economic efficiency was correlated to the increasing complexity of political institutions.<sup>83</sup> According to Morgan,

without enlarging the basis of subsistence, mankind could not have propagated themselves into other areas not possessing the same kinds of food, and ultimately over the whole surface of the earth...without obtaining an absolute control over both its variety and amount, they could not have multiplied into populous nations. It is accordingly probable that the great epochs of human progress have been identified, more or less directly, with the enlargement of the sources of subsistence.<sup>84</sup>

In putting forward these hypotheses, Morgan maintained that mankind had progressed as a whole through five "successive arts of subsistence" that were demarcated as follows: "(1) subsistence on available fruits and roots; (2) addition of fish with the use of fire, and slow addition of meat as a permanent part of the diet, particularly after the invention of the bow and arrow; (3) dependence on cultivated cereals and plants; (4) dependence on meat and milk of domesticated animals; and (5) 'unlimited subsistence' through the improvement of agricultural techniques, notably through harnessing the plow to domesticated animals".<sup>85</sup> These subsistence activities were then correlated, somewhat unsatisfactorily, with three "ethnical periods" - "savagery", "barbarism" and

---

<sup>83</sup> Leacock, "Introduction", in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, p. 11; and Leacock, "Introduction", in *Ancient Society*, pp. liv-v.

<sup>84</sup> Morgan, *Ancient Society*, p. 19.

<sup>85</sup> Leacock, in *The Origin*, p. 13.

"civilization". More specifically, Morgan outlined the development of political forms of social organization and private property out of earlier kinship relations that shared property in common - political institutions that only gelled with the emergence of civilization. Morgan also proposed different types of productive technology that were indicative of a society's stage of development. Technology such as the bow and arrow, pottery, iron, and writing, for example, were identified as important markers of historical progress and societal evolution, and the transition of humanity from one ethnical period to another.

When Morgan's "ethnical periods" are applied to the groups studied by the Royal Commission, the Iroquois and one of the groups that eventually became "The Blackfoot Confederacy"<sup>86</sup> would be classified as being in the stage of "barbarism"

---

<sup>86</sup> "The Blackfoot Confederacy", in fact, actually consists of a number of distinct cultural traditions that migrated to the plains from other areas, displacing the Siouian groups that originally inhabited the region. The Blackfoot includes three closely related Algonkian-speaking peoples - the Pikuni/Piegan, the Kainah/Blood, and the Siksika, or Blackfoot proper (often referred to as the Northern Blackfoot). They were among the first Algonkians in the westward movement from timberland to open grassland. Also included in the Blackfoot Confederacy are the Gros Ventre (or Atsina) and the Sarcee. The Gros Ventre were originally part of an Algonkian speaking people known as the Arapaho, who engaged in horticulture in the eastern woodlands. The Sarcee, unlike the Blackfoot and Gros Ventre, were originally part of the Athabascan language family and moved southward to the plains at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. All these groups were dramatically transformed with contact because of the introduction of horses and firearms. This increased, and perhaps even made possible, hunting buffalo on the plains. As is argued by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "some anthropologists have argued that Indians could not have lived on the Plains before the introduction of the horse. Others, pointing to the fact that Francisco Vázquez de Coronado's expedition in 1541 encountered fully nomadic buffalo-hunting tribes on the Southern Plains who lacked horses and depended on dogs for transport, claim that the acquisition of the horse produced only minor changes. One consequence of the horse was the creation of great differences in wealth. Horse stealing became a major motive for warfare. The man who had horses to give away or to offer as bride-price was at a distinct advantage in social prestige". "Plains Indian", *Encyclopaedia Britannica* <<http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=127688>>[Accessed June 18, 2002]. The one report prepared for the Royal Commission that documents the pre-contact history of the Confederacy does not mention

because of their development of pottery, while the groups of the Northwest Coast, the other groups forming "The Blackfoot Confederacy", the Mi'kmaq<sup>87</sup> and Inuit would be representatives of savagery. All would not be characterized as civilized because they lacked the technology of writing. The designation of these groups as such shows the unsatisfactory character of such a scheme since archaeological evidence shows that some groups that had not developed pottery - such as the groups on the Northwest Coast - had reached a similar level of size and complexity as others that practiced horticulture. Such a discrepancy, however, is largely due to exceptional circumstances

---

these pre-contact cultural origins, although it does argue that "the Blackfoot tribes moved from their previous occupation and residence on the Saskatchewan Plains, near the Eagle Hills, located about 400 miles east of the Rockies, during the early 18th century after they had acquired both horses and guns. Consequently they pushed other tribes, such as the Kutenais and Flatheads, southwestward and eventually arrived at the foothills of the Rockies which became their historic homeland". Andrew Bear Robe, "The historical, legal and current basis for Siksika Governance", *For Seven Generations*. For further discussions of the origins and development of "The Blackfoot Confederacy", see Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology*, p.4-5; Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, p.73; James Rousseau and George W. Brown, "The Indians of Northeastern North America", in R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith (eds) *Readings in Canadian History*, p. 6.

<sup>87</sup>There is an ongoing archaeological debate as to whether these groups were horticultural before contact, but most claim that the Mi'kmaq were hunters and gatherers at the time of contact. A report prepared for the Royal Commission actually alludes to this debate, but it is not discussed in the *Final Report*. For a discussion of the debate see William C. Wicken and John G. Reid, "An Overview of the Eighteenth Century Treaties Signed Between the Mi'kmaq and Wuastukwiuk Peoples and the English Crown, 1693-1928", note 56, *For Seven Generations*. Two other research reports produced for the Royal Commission maintain that the Mi'kmaq were hunters and gatherers. In a report by Adrian Tanner et al, "Aboriginal Peoples and Governance in Newfoundland and Labrador", *For Seven Generations*, it is maintained that the Mi'kmaq were nomadic hunters. A Report by John Crossley, "Prince Edward Island", *For Seven Generations*, states that "shellfish, game, and other products of nature provided food, clothing, and shelter" for the Mi'kmaq. For other similar assertions see Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, p.6 and a source used by the Royal Commission - Conrad et al., *History of the Canadian Peoples*, p.20 - that maintains the Mi'kmaq "did not establish permanent coastal settlements but lived according to a traditional migratory-subsistence cycle". Dickason maintains that the Mi'kmaq were "an agricultural people reverting to hunting and gathering" because "archaeology has confirmed a connection [of the Mi'kmaq] with the Adena and Hopewellian mound builders of the Ohio Valley" and therefore "Mi'kmaq social organization was more complex than that of their northern hunting and gathering neighbours". Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, p.73. There is some evidence that the Mi'kmaq had developed horticulture at some point in the past, but this had disappeared by time Europeans came. For a discussion of the same point see Ryerson, *The Founding of Canada*, p.30.

– the abundance of fish and shellfish in the area – that enabled usually large surpluses to be produced.

As well as putting forward hypotheses about the relationship between technology and social complexity, Morgan also proposed the underlying processes as to how such changes would have occurred. In Morgan's view, these changes did not occur from the sudden flowering of intelligence of a particular group or race; instead, he maintained that mankind as a whole had "worked himself up...through the slow accumulations of experimental knowledge" through the gradual process of trial and error. In this respect, Morgan differed from a number of his contemporaries in that he rejected the idea that different rates of progress around the world were due to the genetic or racial differences of peoples. As Eleanor Leacock explains, Morgan "saw evolution as involving the development of conscious control over nature, based on principles of thought which were universal to mankind. He referred continually to the unity of mankind, which enabled him 'to produce in similar conditions the same implements and utensils, the same inventions and to develop similar institutions from the same original gems of thought'".<sup>88</sup> Leacock goes on to point out that, in Morgan's view, "social diversity - or , 'inequality' - resulted from historical accident", which concerned the distribution of particular plants and animals around the world. Contemporary hunter gatherers and horticulturists were "paralleling stages of society

---

<sup>88</sup> Leacock, in *Ancient Society*, p. Iviii.

through which 'civilized' man himself had passed",<sup>89</sup> and their relative progress was also influenced by their proximity to groups that had discovered more developed productive technologies. Cultural evolution occurred at a faster rate when the borrowing of new technologies was facilitated, while being retarded in cases of geographical isolation.<sup>90</sup> As Eleanor Leacock explains,

Morgan's respect for early man was great. Rather than seeing him as blindly muddling through, his accomplishments outshone a thousandfold by the wonders of civilization - a not uncommon view - Morgan emphasized the fundamental importance of the first and basic inventions which were worked out slowly and painfully. Each earlier period showed greater relative progress than that following, as man with 'an amazing amount of persistent labor with feeble means' made the major discoveries which set him on the road to civilization.<sup>91</sup>

It was this attempt to understand history in terms of the most basic material factors that made his approach so appealing to Marx and Engels. As a result of the tendency of historical materialism to develop linkages with the past to understand how current circumstances arose, Marx turned his attention to the productive processes in pre-class societies, and began an intensive study of *Ancient Society*. Although Marx's investigation of these societies was cut short by his death, his notebooks were used by Engels to write the anthropological classic *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. According to Engels, Morgan "had discovered afresh in America the materialistic conception of history discovered by Marx forty years ago, and in his

---

<sup>89</sup> Leacock, in *Ancient Society*, p. Iix.

<sup>90</sup> Morgan, *Ancient Society*, p. 39; Leacock, in *Ancient Society*, p. Iix.

<sup>91</sup> Morgan, *Ancient Society*, p. 41; Leacock, in *Ancient Society*, p. Ix.

comparison of barbarism and civilization it had led him, in the main points, to the same conclusions as Marx". Engels goes on to argue that, in a materialistic conception of history,

The determining factor in history is, in the final instance, the production and reproduction of immediate life. This, again, is of a twofold character: on the one side, the production of the means of existence, of food, clothing and shelter and the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species. The social organization under which the people of a particular epoch and a particular country live is determined by both kinds of production: by the stage of development of labor on the one hand and of the family on the other. The lower the development of labor and the more limited the amount of its products, and consequently, the more limited also the wealth of the society, the more the social order is found to be dominated by kinship groups. However, within this structure of society based on kinship groups the productivity of labor increasingly develops, and with it private property and exchange, differences of wealth, the possibility of utilizing the labor power of others, and hence the basis of class antagonisms....<sup>92</sup>

As Eleanor Leacock points out, "it fell to Engels...to pinpoint the critical issues raised by Morgan's work, to define sharply the distinguishing features of the three major stages in early history, to clarify the relations between the subsistence base and sociopolitical organization in primitive and 'civilized' societies, and to focus on the critical steps in the emergence of class relations and the state".<sup>93</sup> Engels, therefore, brought to the forefront the political implications of Morgan's work by linking the latter's conceptions of the technological basis of "enlarging the basis of subsistence" to

---

<sup>92</sup> Engels, *The Origin of the Family Private Property and the State*, p. 72.

<sup>93</sup> Leacock, *The Origin...*, pp. 11-12.

the emergence of classes, commodity production and the state. In this way, Engels was able to use Morgan's arguments to map out the historical and material foundations of the exploitative relations between the owners of capital and wage labour in capitalist systems today.

While developments in understanding the relationship between economics and politics were hindered in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century because of McCarthyism in the United States and the linkage of cultural evolutionary theories with Marxism,<sup>94</sup> three evolutionary theorists came to the fore in the 1950s - Vere Gordon Childe, an archaeologist, and in anthropology, Leslie A. White and Julian H. Steward.<sup>95</sup> The increasing prominence of their works led Leslie White to make the optimistic pronouncement in 1959 that "there are numerous indications that the theory of cultural evolution is staging a comeback".<sup>96</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 160. Marvin Harris also has noted in *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* that cultural anthropology did not just develop independently of Marxism, but in "reaction to [it]". Leacock, "Marxism and Anthropology", p. 242. Lesser also recounts that in 1939 he had given a paper criticizing the taboo on the evolutionary study of culture sequences, where he had been "warned by social scientist who was by no means extreme in his view that 'evolution' was a dirty, dangerous word" and he was "urged to replace it by the word 'development'". Alexander Lesser, "Social Fields and the Evolution of Society", *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 17 (1961), quoted in Leacock, "Marxism and Anthropology", p. 255. Eleanor Leacock points out that "the specifically Marxist input into the refinement of evolutionary theory could still not be explicit", and that "the influence of Marxist theory upon neoevolutionary formulations was complicated by the fact that until the 1960s it was virtually impossible for an academic to discuss Marxism as such". Leacock, "Marxism and Anthropology", pp. 249, 255.

<sup>95</sup> Leacock, "Marxism and Anthropology", p. 255; Kuper, *Culture*, p. 159.

<sup>96</sup> White, *The Evolution of Culture*, p.viii.



Childe, White and Steward all shared common assumptions about the importance of productive technology in explaining historical progress, as well as following Morgan in avoiding the racist assumptions in other evolutionary theories,<sup>97</sup> but they differed in how they related technological development to environmental factors and social relations. Both Bruce Trigger and Eleanor Leacock, for example, regard Childe as the most sophisticated of the three since he avoided technological and environmental determinism<sup>98</sup> by stressing the role of "the social organization of production and distribution".<sup>99</sup> Although Childe, like Morgan, originally "attributed technological change to human beings consciously applying their powers of inventiveness to control nature more effectively and make their lives easier and more secure..." and generally followed Morgan in linking human progress to the "arts of subsistence", he later refined this position and conceptualized technological change "in a social and political context which was able to promote and to retard the process of innovation and the willingness of societies to accept new ideas".<sup>100</sup> As a result, Childe

insisted that technological change had to be understood as occurring within specific social, economic and political contexts. More specifically, he argued that in some societies at every level of development conservative religious beliefs and political systems have played an important role in impeding social change. Hence he viewed the superstructures of societies as being historically significant, but only in the negative sense that they can impede social progress.

---

<sup>97</sup> V. Gordon Childe, "Archaeology and Anthropology", *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 2, 1946, 243-51. Bruce G. Trigger, "Childe's relevance to the 1990s", in David R. Harris (ed), *The Archaeology of V. Gordon Childe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 11.

<sup>98</sup> Trigger, "Childe's relevance...", pp. 19-20.

<sup>99</sup> Leacock, "Marxism and Anthropology", p. 251.

<sup>100</sup> Trigger, "Childe's relevance...", pp. 14-15.

In particular, he saw superstructures being utilized by dominant groups and social classes as a means to protect their collective privileges. Yet he believed that, while in some societies high-status groups might succeed in doing this for long periods, such goals could be achieved only at the expense of weakening these societies vis-à-vis more flexible neighbouring groups".<sup>101</sup>

Childe also stressed the role of cultural diffusion in historical progress, leading him to conclude that historical antecedents and interactions with outside groups led a diversity of cultural expressions even when groups shared similar levels of productive technology.<sup>102</sup>

To a greater extent than Childe, Leslie A. White focused on the role of technology in determining evolutionary outcomes.<sup>103</sup> Adam Kuper explains that White followed in the footsteps of Morgan because he "argued that, taking the long view, human civilization had progressed. The more advanced a society became, the more complex was its organization. White believed that the level of energy consumption provided an objective measure of cultural advance".<sup>104</sup> In this regard, he made Morgan's hypothesis about "enlarging the means of subsistence" more precise and universal by grounding it in the more general process of "the efficiency with which a society harnessed energy".<sup>105</sup> White also greatly clarified the concept of evolution itself by distinguishing it from history and defining complexity as the process of increasing

---

<sup>101</sup> Trigger, "Childe's relevance...", p. 19.

<sup>102</sup> Trigger, "Childe's relevance...", p. 19.

<sup>103</sup> Leacock, "Marxism and Anthropology", p. 253.

<sup>104</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 160.

<sup>105</sup> Leacock, "Anthropology and Marxism", p. 253.

internal differentiation and functional specialization. White argued that history is concerned with the times and locations in which particular events take place, while "evolution is concerned with classes of things and events, regardless of particular time and place". According to White, "evolution may be defined as a temporal sequence of forms" where "one form grows out of another". This includes culture, which also "advances from one stage to another" when a feature of society emerges out of the one that preceded it.<sup>106</sup>

Steward differed from both Childe and White in that he focused less on Morgan's "arts of subsistence" and more on environmental factors. As Adam Kuper explains, Steward was also "more skeptical than White about traditional models of unilineal evolution. He urged the study of particular evolutionary processes within enduring culture areas, in which societies with a common origin were exposed to similar constraints".<sup>107</sup> Eleanor Leacock notes that this stress on "multilinearity" rather than "unilinearity" mostly led to his "assertion that the histories of individual societies followed varied courses rather than a set sequence of inevitable 'stages,' a fact neither White nor Childe (and certainly not Marx or Engels) had ever questioned".<sup>108</sup> Leacock also notes that Steward "attempted to systematize the analysis of

---

<sup>106</sup> White, *The Evolution of Culture*, p. 30.

<sup>107</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 160.

<sup>108</sup> Leacock, "Marxism and Anthropology", p. 250.

environmental influences on societies at various levels, thus initiating what was to become the important subfield of cultural ecology".<sup>109</sup>

This argument over the extent to which evolution was "unilinear" versus "multilinear" was addressed by Marshall Sahlins in his first theoretical article "Evolution: Specific and General".<sup>110</sup> Sahlins, a student of White's and one of evolutionism's "rising stars", attempted to construct "a dialectical synthesis between White's very generalized idea of universal, progressive evolution and Steward's preference for multilinear models that emphasized local processes of adaptation".<sup>111</sup> According to Sahlins, the approaches of White and Steward were not contradictory but complementary. He argued that evolution in response to local pressures was a "specific" kind of evolution, but there was a general tendency towards increasing efficiency and complexity. Therefore, "studies of 'specific', local evolutionary adaptations could be synthesized into larger narratives of 'general' evolution", which was "'the character of progress itself'".<sup>112</sup> Sahlins used this synthesis of White and Steward to analyze cultures of the Pacific Islands and New Guinea, where he documented the specific adaptations of different societies while at the same time placing each of them on a general continuum from small, egalitarian and kinship-based cultures to large and hierarchical states. Like White, he related increases in stratification to productivity, maintaining that there

---

<sup>109</sup> Leacock, "Marxism and Anthropology", p. 251.

<sup>110</sup> Marshall Sahlins, "Evolution: Specific and General", in Thomas G. Harding et al. *Evolution and Culture* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1960).

<sup>111</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, pp. 161-164.

<sup>112</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 161.

were two types of society with different kinds of economic systems. Band and tribal societies, which were organized according to kinship, had economic systems where production and consumption largely were confined to the domestic group and relations were relatively egalitarian. Economies in more developed societies, on the other hand were more productive, efficient and complex, but classes were present and a relatively wealthy minority exploited an impoverished majority.<sup>113</sup> Sahlins also argued that the "domestic mode of production" in band and tribal societies was gradually "undermined by the inexorable development of central leadership" when it "began to demand economic dues from the households, eventually forcing them to produce more than they required for their subsistence". Because of this development, "kinship would be replaced by class as the ruling principle of social organization, and the domestic mode of production would give way to a command economy".<sup>114</sup>

Despite these developments in materialist theories of cultural evolution and the apparent reconciliation of unilinear and multilineal approaches, these debates only played a minor role in the discipline of anthropology after the 1970s. Instead, with the increasing popularity of structuralism and then post-structuralism, "the Marxism that became fashionable among American social scientists was fastidiously distinguished from a 'vulgar Marxism' of class conflict and technological determinism".<sup>115</sup> Such a change is particularly evident in the case of Marshall Sahlins, who in the 1970s

---

<sup>113</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 162.

<sup>114</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, pp. 163-4.

<sup>115</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 205.

"converted from a Marxist-friendly evolutionism to a variety of cultural determinism".<sup>116</sup> During this time, Sahlins came to argue that "the great divide between primitive and civilized societies was... not caused by different modes of production" but the "orientation of their symbolic systems" and the fact "that they understood themselves in contrasting terms".<sup>117</sup> A similar development has also occurred in archaeology, where the materialist concerns of the 1960s with the "arts of subsistence", craft production, exchange and settlement patterns and political organization have been replaced with studies of religious beliefs and culturally determined perceptions.<sup>118</sup>

Structuralism has also influenced the development of Marxist anthropology in France, especially the works of Maurice Godelier.<sup>119</sup> Although applying the Marxist concept of "mode of production" to a wide range of precapitalist societies, this branch of French anthropology has been criticized for "treat[ing] societies ahistorically and apolitically and economically autonomous and isolated from outside sources" and "freez[ing] social processes into nondialectically conceived structures".<sup>120</sup> At the same time, however, French Marxist anthropologists have been commended for avoiding the "economic determinism" of a number of earlier evolutionary approaches. Maurice Godelier, in fact, accuses White and Steward of "reductionism" since they reduce

---

<sup>116</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 164.

<sup>117</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, pp. 170-171.

<sup>118</sup> Trigger, *Understanding Early Civilizations*, p. 59.

<sup>119</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 168.

<sup>120</sup> Leacock, "Marxism and Anthropology", pp. 265-66.

"economics to technology and to man's biological and energetical interaction with the environment" and "kinship and politico-ideological relations to...resources which are functionally necessary for this biological-ecological adaptation and which offer various selective advantages".<sup>121</sup> As a result, he claims that they fail to "perceive complex relations between economics and society", disregarding the significance of "the diversity of kinship relations" and "the complexity of ideological practices and ritual".<sup>122</sup> In contrast to such "technological determinism", Godelier maintains that while environmental factors and technology exercise constraints on cultural evolution, it is necessary to "show and analyse [the] specific structural causality" of different modes of production.<sup>123</sup> Because there is reversibility in history, whereby larger, more complex and productive societies break apart and become less efficient, Godelier argues that "there is no evolution 'in general', nor is there a 'general evolution' of mankind".<sup>124</sup> According to Godelier,

the central problem in a science of history is to explain the circumstances behind the appearance of different social structures, articulated in a determined and specific manner with the circumstances of reproduction, for change and for the disappearance of these structures and their articulation. At the same time this is the problem of analysing the specific causality of overlying structures, of their particular role and different meanings in the processes of the appearance, reproduction and disappearance of the various articulated entities, called social relations, which are the content of History, and, indeed, Man.<sup>125</sup>

---

<sup>121</sup> Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology*, p. 39.

<sup>122</sup> Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology*, p. 42.

<sup>123</sup> Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology*, pp. 43, 95.

<sup>124</sup> Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology*, p. 92.

<sup>125</sup> Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology*, p. 29.

But while Godelier raises important questions about the need to examine the particular dynamics of different modes of production and the complexities of their articulation within a social and economic formation, it is not clear how he relates "structural causality" to evolutionary processes. By rejecting the "general evolution" of mankind, Godelier is not able to explain the overall trend in human history in increasing productivity, scale and complexity. At times he maintains that undeveloped productive forces are connected to particular relations of production and points to the production of surplus as being an important variable in determining the degree of stratification in different societies.<sup>126</sup> In other instances, however, he states that surplus does "not automatically lead to an enlargement of the level of productive forces", maintaining that "the relationship between the development of productive forces and the development of social inequalities is not mechanical" and that "social competition in class societies provides the major incentive to surplus production, and in the long term, leads indirectly to progress in productive forces".<sup>127</sup> As a result, there is no clear exposition of the "laws" of "reproduction, non-reproduction and exchange" to which Godelier refers.<sup>128</sup> Godelier's work appears to be more of a critique of past theories, than an attempt to develop a more accurate and nuanced account of historical progress.

---

<sup>126</sup> Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology*, pp. 123, 88.

<sup>127</sup> Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology*, pp. 110-111.

<sup>128</sup> Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology*, p. 92.



Godelier's work, therefore, does not really advance the theoretical insights of Morgan, Marx and Engels with respect to historical progress through evolutionary processes. In order to undertake such a task, it is first necessary to take stock of what aspects of these theories have stood the test of time and continue to be supported with the evidence available. Then, work needs to be initiated in summarizing the major controversies still existing and working towards their resolution. These controversies largely involve the roles of the different components of "modes of production" - the forces of production, relations of production and the superstructure - and their articulation in facilitating or impeding historical progress.

This task was initiated in the 1960s and 1970s by Eleanor Leacock in introductory chapters to *Ancient Society* and *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. According to Leacock, while a few errors were made in the description and classification of certain cultures, Morgan's two general hypotheses about mankind's progression through "enlarging the basis of subsistence" and the linkage between economic evolution to the complexity of human institutions continue to be supported by a wide range of evidence. She notes that archaeological data provide an "undeniable picture of mankind's development from 'savage' hunters to 'barbarian' agriculturalists and finally to the 'civilizations' of the Ancient East", while ethnography has generally shown "that fundamental distinctions among societies at

different productive levels underlie the variations among individual cultures".<sup>129</sup> In Leacock's view, the fundamentals that Engels proposed for the "outline for history have remained valid"<sup>130</sup> and Morgan's "general sequence of stages has been written into our understanding of prehistory and interpretation of archaeological remains".<sup>131</sup> Regarding this outline, there is a "clear consensus" that fully developed agriculture with ploughs, iron, the cultivation of cereals, and domesticated animals (especially draught animals) "paved the way for civilization". There is agreement with Morgan's argument that with these productive developments "dense populations in limited areas now became possible" since "prior to field agriculture it is not probable that half a million people were developed and held together under one government in any part of the earth".<sup>132</sup>

More specifically, Leacock also examines the evidence available with relation to Engels' arguments about the differences in sociopolitical organization between tribal and civilized societies and the emergence of classes, commodity production and the state. She maintains that while a certain school of anthropology had once argued that "classes" have been present in all societies and that therefore "any type of social or political superstructure could be related to any type of economy", this claim "in due

---

<sup>129</sup> Leacock, in *The Origin...*, p. 17; see also Leacock, in *Ancient Society*, p. Ixvii.

<sup>130</sup> Leacock, in *The Origin...*, p. 7.

<sup>131</sup> Leacock, *Ancient Society*, p. Ixi.

<sup>132</sup> Morgan, *Ancient Society*, p. 27.

time ran its course".<sup>133</sup> With further research, it came to be understood that the "relations of production" in tribal societies were not class-based since property concerned only personal items and land was collectively held. And although there could be differences in status and inequalities existed, this differed from class relationships "in that virtually all able people contributed to the food supply, and no one group controlled the main sources of subsistence". It also came to be recognized in anthropology that "the state emerged as a qualitatively new institution associated with marked economic inequalities, a well developed division of labor, and sizable urban centers" and that "the use of coercive force to control a territorially based citizenry...[is] a central feature of state organization".<sup>134</sup> As Leacock explains,

Wherever there is data on the rise of complex societies, one finds that as increasing productivity made exploitation more profitable, the techniques that maintained communal relations and kept goods equitably distributed were eventually undermined by conflicting tendencies. Everywhere the function of priesthoods and chiefly families to maintain tribal reciprocity and integrity conflicted with the institutionalization of the power implicit in the goods and services they had at their disposal. 'Civilization' arose as the reciprocal exchanges of goods and services became transmuted into exploitative consumption by a budding upper class and state apparatus.<sup>135</sup>

It is also generally accepted that production is more oriented to use, rather than exchange, in tribal societies in comparison to those that are civilized. This occurs alongside the process of "urbanization and the rise of the contradiction between urban

---

<sup>133</sup> Leacock, in *Ancient Society*, pp. Ixvi-Ixvii.

<sup>134</sup> Leacock, in *The Origin*, p. 48.

<sup>135</sup> Leacock, in *The Origin*, p. 54.

and rural life", where commodity production increases in importance, breaking down earlier kinship relations.<sup>136</sup> Leacock maintains that understanding how such dissolution occurs is extremely important, but not one that has been extensively examined in anthropology.

Although these general parameters of historical progress and cultural evolution were accepted by anthropologists and other social scientists up until the 1970s when they were usurped by postmodernism, there were still major disagreements about the causes of social transformation. The most significant concerned the relationship between the "forces of production" ("resources, technology, skills, labor processes<sup>137</sup>"), "relations of production" ("organization of production, distribution, exchange, consumption, and ownership"), and the "superstructure" (socio-political organization) with respect to the determinants of historical progress. In the past, evolutionary theorists, following Morgan, tended to adopt the "forces of production argument" that "social change occurs when a threshold between technology and environment is reached, with either disaster and dissolution or greater social

---

<sup>136</sup> Leacock, *The Origin*, p. 56.

<sup>137</sup> There are disputes over the extent to which "labour processes" constitute "forces of production" or "relations of production". Generally the aspects of these processes that merely increase productivity (the division of labour between hunters and gatherers or food and craft producers in pre-class societies, for example) would be an aspect of "forces of production", while those that relate to the exploitative relations between owners and producers would be characterized as "relations of production". Such a distinction is necessary in order to understand that there is a certain amount of increased labour productivity that occurs in pre-class societies, but that this is greatly accelerated when appropriators of surplus have an interest in encouraging such developments.

stratification".<sup>138</sup> This is essentially the argument of Leslie A. White who, because of his focus on increasing productivity as the basis of evolution, has been accused of "economism" or "technological determinism". More recent works in evolutionary theory, on the other hand, have tended to argue that the "relations of production and social reproduction are central, shaping the techno-environmental connection, and thus, that political dynamics are central in the transformation of primitive communist societies".<sup>139</sup>

Associated with this dispute is the extent to which progressive change should be viewed "mechanically" or "dialectically". The former approach is associated most directly with the cultural materialism of Marvin Harris. In contrast to Marx and Engels and Childe, Harris attempted to develop a materialist theory of culture without the "Hegelian notion that all systems evolve through a dialectic of contradictory negations", because he maintained that the concept of dialectics was merely "ponderous double talk". While Harris has been commended for showing how economic needs motivate ideas that appear at the outset irrational, it is claimed that his abandoning dialectics has led him to neglect the "interaction between ideology and socio-economic structure, or the role of consciousness in the historical process". In Leacock's view, dialectics are essential for developing a comprehensive evolutionary

---

<sup>138</sup> Eleanor Leacock and Christine Ward Gailey, "Primitive Communism and Its Transformations", in Christine Ward Gailey (ed), *Dialectical Anthropology: Essays in Honour of Stanley Diamond* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1992), p. 100.

<sup>139</sup> Leacock and Gailey, "Primitive Communism and Its Transformations", p. 100.

theory because "until one has directly faced the problem of dealing with man's consciousness in material terms, as analyst as well as actor, one has not dealt with man, his history, his culture, or his science".<sup>140</sup> She goes on to point out that

by hindsight, mechanical materialism seems to work. The objective conditions - technological, economic, environmental - that preceded - hence 'caused' - later developments can necessarily and inevitably be located. The more remote the period studied, the more the role of internal stresses, alternative choices, and revolutionary versus conservative ideologies that defined precisely how, when, and where major changes were initiated are lost in the ambiguities and spottiness of archaeological and historical data. However, for understanding contemporary history, the nature of tensions internal to systems, and the role of understanding as well as misunderstanding are seen to be crucial.<sup>141</sup>

The role of consciousness and ideology in human development has been discussed by Bruce Trigger. Trigger notes that "because culture influences human behaviour, it has a constraining power analogous to that of the natural environment, although it is different in the way it operates. While the natural environment constrains as a result of the necessity for humans to allocate scarce resources among competing ends, culture constrains through the need to impose some sort of cognitive and psychological order on a potentially unlimited production of ideas".<sup>142</sup> This relationship between economic factors and cultural constraints is made even more complicated as inequalities develop since ideas are often used by those holding power to mystify their position of privilege within society. Therefore, while developments in

---

<sup>140</sup> Leacock, in *The Origin*, p. 66.

<sup>141</sup> Leacock, in *The Origin*, p. 66.

<sup>142</sup> Trigger, *Sociocultural Evolution*, p. 179.

labour productivity enable human beings to exert a greater control over nature and thus improve their understanding of the world, "cultures also create cosmologies and concepts of good and evil that on the one hand can disguise self-interest as altruism and on the other mobilize support against self-interested behaviour that threatens the welfare of the collectivity. By its very nature, culture provides great opportunities for deception and self-deception, but also for more far-sighted and objective understanding".<sup>143</sup>

But while the process of cultural evolution through the expansion of man's productive powers is complicated by the fact that increasing complexity leads to stratification and inequality,<sup>144</sup> resulting in either compulsion or resistance to increased productivity, hundreds of thousands of years of technological development and increasing cooperation and social complexity existed, from mankind's early emergence through to the chiefdoms of the neolithic period, before economic exploitation emerged.<sup>145</sup> It can be deduced, therefore, that a certain amount of development of the "forces of production" is necessary before there is sufficient social surplus for classes to form and be reproduced (i.e. before class "relations of production" can exist).<sup>146</sup> In this pre-

---

<sup>143</sup> Trigger, *Sociocultural Evolution*, pp. 178-9.

<sup>144</sup> Richard B. Lee, "Primitive communism and the origin of social inequality", in Steadman Upham (ed), *The Evolution of Political Systems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.235.

<sup>145</sup> See Irmgard Sellnow, "Theories of State-Formation: A Controversy between Marxist and Other Schools of Anthropological Thinking", in Fluehr-Lobban (ed), *International Perspectives on Marxist Anthropology*, p.101 for a discussion of this point.

<sup>146</sup> For a discussion of this point with respect to the example of Ancient Greece, see Childe, *Social Evolution*, pp. 49-50.

class period of human history, there still would be pressure to develop greater labour productivity through technological development and cooperative social relations so as to obtain a survival advantage in comparison to other tribes and non-human species.

In the 1970s, however, there was a significant challenge to this "forces of production" argument by Marshall Sahlins. Sahlins challenges understanding progress in terms of labour productivity by maintaining that the amount of energy harnessed per capita per year remained fairly constant until the industrial revolution, and therefore the historical rise in social product is "not necessarily" due to developments in the forces of production.<sup>147</sup> Instead, Sahlins maintains that "in the main" it was the increase in the population and the "stability of settlement" brought about by agriculture that enabled humans to produce more than they had in the past.<sup>148</sup> Sahlins also questions theories that assume a progression in the forces of production to better satisfy human needs by claiming that hunter-gatherers were the "Original Affluent Society".<sup>149</sup> He argues that these cultures did not need to develop their productive forces as much as others because their simplicity of wants meant that they "lived in a kind of material plenty", maintaining a leisurely existence by working, on average, only 15 hours a

---

<sup>147</sup> Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, p.6.

<sup>148</sup> Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, p.6; See also Woolfson, *The Labour Theory of Culture*, p.74 for a synopsis of Sahlins' argument.

<sup>149</sup> Hobsbawm, *On History*, pp.32, 110-11.



week.<sup>150</sup> On the basis of Sahlins' interpretation, it is asserted that hunting and gathering societies "fail to produce to their capacity...because they are weighed down by social constraints", which results in "the paradox of primitive affluence and reciprocity in humble surroundings".<sup>151</sup>

There are a number of problems with Sahlins' arguments, however. First of all, Sahlins' equation of the labour productivity of agriculturalists with that of hunters and gatherers has an ahistorical character. This is because he is unable to explain *how* agricultural societies became larger and achieved the "stability of settlement" in comparison to those that were preagricultural. This is a common problem in many anthropological accounts, where it is merely stated that population increase explains developments in social complexity and inequality, without showing what enabled a larger social unit to come into existence and reproduce itself.<sup>152</sup> A focus on the development of a society's productive forces, on the other hand, could be used to explain both of these circumstances – thus better meeting Trigger's "primary test of any historical interpretation" of being able "to account for the broadest and most detailed array of historical evidence". The domestication of plants and animals, for

---

<sup>150</sup> Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives*, p.127; Wessman, *Anthropology and Marxism*, p.52; Simon Brascoupé, "Strengthening Traditional Economies", in Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Sharing the Harvest*, pp. 103-4.

<sup>151</sup> Wessman, *Anthropology and Marxism*, p.202.

<sup>152</sup> See, for example, Lee, "Primitive communism and the origin of social inequality", p.237; and Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, p. 196-204.

example, involves "harnessing solar energy in non-human biological forms",<sup>153</sup> enabling yields to be increased. There are also a number of other advantages for human survival that come with domesticating plants and animals (such as not having to rely on the uncertainties of wild game and being able to use live animals continuously instead of just dead ones), but they all involve the ability to control nature to increase what is produced so that "more human need-serving goods and services per unit of human labour [can be produced] per capita".<sup>154</sup> This can occur either with independent technological development through a process of trial and error or from the diffusion of technology from one society to another. Such developments would have led to the larger populations and a greater "stability of settlement" to which Sahlins refers.

Sahlins' arguments are also idealistic in that they use modern concepts to make judgments about past developments. This can be seen in his preoccupation with the amount of "leisure time" that hunters and gatherers have, and his assertion that they are "affluent". Such an argument confuses leisure with idleness, so that idleness can be linked to affluence. In fact, the two are at opposite ends of the spectrum of social wealth. The leisure that emanates from affluence is the time consciously taken off

---

<sup>153</sup> White, *The Evolution of Culture*, p.45. See also Childe, *Social Evolution*, p.22 for a discussion of the same point.

<sup>154</sup> White, *The Evolution of Culture*, p.47. As Bruce Trigger explains, "complex societies manifest not only greater general complexity, organizational coherence, and an enhanced ability to deploy energy but also superior flexibility, self-regulation, communications potential, and adaptive skills". Trigger, *Sociocultural Evolution*, p. 172.

work for alternative pursuits; it is made possible by surplus accumulation. Idleness, on the other hand, is imposed by circumstances usually beyond the control of the subject, and is used for resting and sleeping, which was certainly the case for hunters and gatherers when life was dependent upon the vicissitudes of nature and the availability of prey or weather conditions determined their activities. When natural circumstances imposed inactivity, the result had as much to do with leisure as being unemployed does in modern society.

Assertions about the relative "affluence" of hunters and gatherers have been made possible, in part, because of the existence of class exploitation that occurs in more developed societies. While advancements in ploughs, iron technology, irrigation and domesticated plants and animals greatly improved the productivity of food producers, a portion of this surplus was appropriated by those who did not contribute their labour to the society. This meant that great disparities in affluence existed depending upon one's relationship to the means of production. Such divergences in affluence, however, do not refute assertions about the productivity of a society in its entirety. Developments in technology and the organization of labour greatly increase the affluence of the society as a whole, even though wealth is unevenly distributed amongst different groups. It is increases in productivity, in fact, that enable such an uneven distribution to become possible because surpluses can be used to sustain the coercive force necessary to maintain these inequalities.

Besides, even if hunters and gatherers did "eschew" social wealth because of their "low levels of need" as followers of Sahlins claim,<sup>155</sup> what would happen historically if neighbouring groups did not? These groups would have a technological advantage and, as a result, would be able to increase their numbers and military strength, displacing others that had "fewer needs". Sahlins' assertions seem to be derived from unusual circumstances in the modern era, where hunters and gatherers occupy marginal areas that modern states have not yet exploited economically because it is unprofitable for them to do so. This would be very different from other historical periods, where groups with similar levels of technology would be competing for access to resources in much more fertile areas.<sup>156</sup>

Sahlins' arguments, in fact, appear to be deduced from data that have been collected over a very short time frame, rather than the longer historical view that is needed to understand human progress.<sup>157</sup> As Richard B. Lee explains,

directional changes tend to operate on fairly long time scales, at a pace that is imperceptible to an observer within a lifetime. As a result, it may be difficult to document this kind of change with ethnographic case material. And in this century these kinds of slow internal evolutionary changes have been almost

---

<sup>155</sup> Brody, *The Other Side of Eden*, pp. 118, 325.

<sup>156</sup> Bloch, *Marxism and Anthropology*, pp. 68-9.

<sup>157</sup> As V. Gordon Childe notes, to understand progress "a long and wide view is essential. When short periods or confined regions alone are surveyed, the multiplicity of separate events is likely to obscure the underlying pattern". *Man Makes Himself*, p. 11.

everywhere preempted and obscured by the massive forces of Western imperialism.<sup>158</sup>

Lee's argument about the need to understand the "massive forces of Western imperialism", in fact, continues to constitute one of the major shortcomings in theories of cultural evolution and attempts to understand the character of aboriginal societies in Canada - a problem that also plagued the Royal Commission's *Final Report*. The Royal Commission's discussion of the "separate world" of aboriginal peoples before contact, often failed to consider the extent to which these circumstances came about because of their interaction with larger, more productive and complex states that had already developed private property and commodity production. Understanding these circumstances necessitates a much more detailed analysis of economic, political and intellectual developments that were occurring in Europe and how they incorporated aboriginal hunters and gatherers and horticulturalists into their orbit.

---

<sup>158</sup> Lee, "Primitive communism and the origin of social inequality", p. 237.

## Chapter Four Uneven & Combined Development and Canadian Political Economy

One of the main problems in anthropology today, is not just its postmodern turn and subsequent rejection of important explanatory frameworks such as the theory of cultural evolution and conceptions of historical progress; it is also that the current anthropological orientation towards "ethnographies of experience"<sup>1</sup> tends to conceptualize aboriginal societies as "economically autonomous and isolated from outside influences".<sup>2</sup> As the anthropologist Adam Kuper explains, "even the most sensitive and reflexive interpretivists may neglect issues of power and economic exploitation, and pass over the insidious spread of global capitalism". Probing these historical and material circumstances in anthropology requires the development of "political-economy ethnographies", which attempt to "provide a universal grand narrative" on how "the juggernaut of capitalism" has transformed different cultures around the world.<sup>3</sup>

The most ambitious political economy work in anthropology is Eric Wolf's *Europe and the People Without History*, which examines how economic and political development in Europe, starting in 1400, interacted with the modes of production in Asia, Africa and the Americas. In this book, Wolf maintains that "all pre-industrial

---

<sup>1</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> Leacock, "Marxism and Anthropology", p. 266.

<sup>3</sup> Kuper, *Culture*, p. 218.

societies must be viewed as having been transformed in significant ways by colonial encounters prior to the earliest ethnographic descriptions".<sup>4</sup> He is opposed to anthropological approaches that conceptualize cultures "as self-contained, self-reproducing and ideally self-stabilizing systems", arguing that "no tribe or community is or has ever been an island, and the world, a totality of interconnected processes or system, is not and never has been a sum of self-contained human groups and cultures".<sup>5</sup> Although, according to Wolf, "history consists of the interaction of variously structured (and geographically distributed) social entities, which mutually reshape each other", the intensity of this process was dramatically increased with the emergence of capitalism, which "affected the pre-capitalist societies it has integrated into its world system" but was also "in turn...modified and shaped through being embedded" within pre-capitalist social and economic formations.<sup>6</sup> Wolf's project "sets out a way of grasping...the manners in which [different societies] could and could not be modified by contact with capitalism".<sup>7</sup> For Wolf, the term "Europe", in fact, is actually "shorthand for the growth of [capitalism]". This is because it was capitalism that was "incubated in the European peninsula of the Eurasian landmass [and] then expanded its sway in widening circles over all the continents".<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Trigger, *Sociocultural Evolution*, p. 161.

<sup>5</sup> Hobsbawm, *On History*, pp. 165, 172.

<sup>6</sup> Hobsbawm, *On History*, p. 172.

<sup>7</sup> Hobsbawm, *On History*, p. 166.

<sup>8</sup> Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, p. x.

In attempting to document this complex interaction between Europe (i.e. capitalism) and different societies around the world, Wolf focuses on the various "modes of production" in existence - "the complex of mutually dependent relations among nature, social labor and social organisation" - leading him to maintain that "culture" occurs "within the determinate compass of a mode of production deployed to render nature amendable to human use". According to Wolf, there are essentially three different kinds of modes of production - kin-ordered, tributary and capitalist, each of which "tends to generate its own types of 'culture' or symbolic universes which, in their various versions, generalize the 'essential distinctions among human beings' that each mode entails".<sup>9</sup> The kinship mode is distinguished from the tributary and capitalist modes in that it is "a way of committing social labor to the transformation of nature through appeals to filiation and marriage",<sup>10</sup> as opposed to the two latter modes of production, which "divide the population under their command into a class of

---

<sup>9</sup> Hobsbawm, *On History*, p. 174; For Wolf's detailed discussion of these different modes, see Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, pp. 73-100.

<sup>10</sup> Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, p. 91. As Hobsbawm explains, kinship is "a way of ordering social labour and access to it. The ways of establishing such rights and claims vary widely, but are clearly simpler where resources are widely distributed and available to any able-bodied person (as in food-collecting 'bands') than where they are restricted, as is the case when nature is transformed by plant or animal cultivation". Hobsbawm, *On History*, p. 175. Food production requires a more complex social division of labour and there is "a transgenerational corpus of claims and counterclaims to social labor' through real or fictitious pedigrees, and the elements of an unequal politico-social order which threatens to burst the bounds of kinship. It can be contained so long as there is no other mechanism for aggregating and mobilizing labour apart from the particular relations set up by kinship, that is, so long as alliances and oppositions are not between classes of people and the potential rulers cannot call upon outside resources. It would seem that the kin-ordered mode turns into class society, and with it into societies possessing states, either by the transformation of 'chiefly' lineages into a ruling class, especially when such aristocracies 'bud off to conquer and rule foreign populations', or when kin-ordered groups enter into relations with tributary or capitalist societies, which may offer chiefs external resources and hence 'a possible following outside of kinship and unencumbered by it'. Hence, Wolf argues, the notorious readiness of chiefs to collaborate with European slave-hunters and fur-traders". Hobsbawm, *On History*, pp. 175-176.



surplus producers and a class of surplus takers" and "require mechanisms of domination to ensure that surpluses are transferred on a predictable basis from one class to another".<sup>11</sup> The tributary mode, in turn, is differentiated from the capitalist mode in that "surpluses are extracted by political or military means, not economically".<sup>12</sup> Whether or not labour in a society was organized on the basis of kinship or tribute extraction, in Wolf's view, influenced how a culture combined with the capitalist mode of production that was gradually emerging out of feudalism in Europe. This relationship, however, is asymmetrical since capitalism tends to influence other modes of production more than the reverse.<sup>13</sup> In fact, capitalism, unlike other modes of production, tends to break down other social and economic systems and eventually become dominant.

Although commended for emphasizing the relationships between different modes of production and regions of the world in the development of capitalism, Wolf has been criticized for focusing too much on connections while neglecting an examination of causes. As a result, Wolf does not explain how the developments in the material base and the division of labour transform modes of production.<sup>14</sup> It is also pointed out that he is concerned with "variability and combination" rather than developing a general

---

<sup>11</sup> Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, p. 99.

<sup>12</sup> Hobsbawm, *On History*, p. 175.

<sup>13</sup> Hobsbawm, *On History*, p. 176.

<sup>14</sup> Hobsbawm, *On History*, pp. 165-6.

understanding of human development<sup>15</sup> and "tends to take for granted the nature of the dynamism which has brought the world from pre-history to the late twentieth century".<sup>16</sup> Hobsbawm points out that

the long-term evolution of humanity, or the possible sequence of social formations, are irrelevant and remain undiscussed, except for remarks incidental to his argument. He is not concerned with the famous 'contradiction' between the developing material productive forces of society and the existing productive relationships...Marxian ideas are here employed primarily to explain the 'global interactions of human aggregates' in the past half-millennium, though they are evidently intended also to explain them for any other period.<sup>17</sup>

Wolf, therefore, "has re-thought the problems of the genesis and development of capitalism less fundamentally than those of the interconnections essential to it".<sup>18</sup>

These questions about humanity's evolution in general, however, are explored in another framework known as "uneven and combined development". Unlike Wolf's approach, this framework attempts to explain the causes of capitalist development as well as its connections with other modes of production. Originally formulated by Leon Trotsky,<sup>19</sup> and developed further by George Novack and Ernest Mandel,<sup>20</sup> this

---

<sup>15</sup> Hobsbawm, *On History*, p. 174.

<sup>16</sup> Leacock and Gailey maintained that he argues "that structural contradictions within modes of production leads to the inevitable transformation of economic and social formations". Leacock and Gailey, "Primitive Communism and Its Transformations", p. 100.

<sup>17</sup> Hobsbawm, *On History*, pp. 173-4.

<sup>18</sup> Hobsbawm, *On History*, p. 177.

<sup>19</sup> Leon Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, Volume 1 (London: Sphere Books, 1933), pp. 21-32.

framework amalgamates the idea of cultural evolution and different rates of progress - i.e. "unevenness"<sup>21</sup> - with Wolf's understanding of the connections, or "combination", of different modes of production.

Trotsky's conception of "uneven and combined development" was outlined in his *History of the Russian Revolution*, where he describes the "peculiarities of Russia's development". In this chapter, Trotsky maintains that

the laws of history have nothing in common with a pedantic schematism. Unevenness, the most general law of the historic process, reveals itself most sharply and complexly in the destiny of the backward countries. Under the whip of external necessity their backward culture is compelled to make leaps. From the universal law of unevenness thus derives another law which, for a lack of a better name, we may call the law of *combined development* - by which we mean a drawing together of the different stages of the journey, a combining of separate steps, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms.<sup>22</sup>

For Trotsky, "backwardness" is measured economically since history is perceived in terms of the Marxist idea of the tendency of the productive forces to develop. As Trotsky explains (following Marx), "the 'root' of every social organization is the productive forces" and therefore the slow rate of development of these forces results in economic backwardness and the "primitiveness of social forms and low level of

---

<sup>20</sup> George Novack, "Uneven and Combined Development in World History", *Marxist Essays* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972), pp. 82-129; Ernest Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory*, p. 91.

<sup>21</sup> Neil Smith and David Harvey also discuss "uneven development", although they do not refer to conceptions of "progress" and "evolution" that were explored by Trotsky. For these other discussions, see Neil Smith, *Uneven Development* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990) and David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

<sup>22</sup> Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, p. 23.

culture resulting from it".<sup>23</sup> Put another way, history is reduced to "nothing but a struggle for an economy of working time". All development "must guarantee to society a higher economy of time" than previous social and economic formations, otherwise "'want is generalized, and with want the struggle for necessities begins again, and that means that all the old crap must revive'".<sup>24</sup> As a result, according to Trotsky, "the strength and stability of regimes are determined in the long run by the relative productivity of their labor".<sup>25</sup>

At the same time as recognizing the difficulties associated with economic backwardness, however, Trotsky also argued that it had advantages ("the privilege of historic backwardness"). This "privilege" was due to the fact that backward societies had the opportunity to assimilate the technology, forms of social organization and ideas that had been developed by more advanced areas without having to go through all the developmental processes that were necessary for their initial formation. They also had more freedom to adapt these forms to present circumstances, rather than being stuck with the historical baggage that became a part of their original development. In the case of Russia, for example, Trotsky notes that later industrial development meant that it did not have to "repeat the development of the advanced countries, but inserted itself into this development, adapting their latest achievements

---

<sup>23</sup> Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (New York: Merit Publishers, 1965), p. 64; and Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, p. 21.

<sup>24</sup> Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 78, 56.

<sup>25</sup> Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 47-48.

to its own backwardness. Just as the economic evolution of Russia as a whole skipped over the epoch of craft-guilds and manufacture, so also the separate branches of industry made a series of special leaps over technical productive stages that had been measured in the West by decades. Thanks to this, Russian industry developed at certain periods with extraordinary speed".<sup>26</sup> Similarly, for aboriginal peoples, Trotsky pointed out that "savages throw away their bows and arrows for rifles all at once, without traveling the road which lay between those two weapons in the past".<sup>27</sup>

A faster rate of development also can be possible because the class relations that emerge out of increases in productivity are relatively undeveloped in backward countries, making them less equipped to contain these rapid developments in the productive forces. In Russia, for example, the late industrial development of the country meant that industry came under the control of foreign capital so that "between the capitalist leaders and the popular masses there was no hierarchy of transitional layers".<sup>28</sup> In addition, large industrial plants in Russia existed "amid vast pools of rural poverty", so that "the new proletariat, concentrated in a few major urban centres, could exert an influence quite out of proportion to its size".<sup>29</sup> It was this combination of uneven development, according to Trotsky, that enabled Russia to be the first country to attempt to jump to the more developed socialist mode of production,

---

<sup>26</sup> Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, p. 26.

<sup>27</sup> Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, p. 85.

<sup>28</sup> Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, p. 28.

<sup>29</sup> Callinicos, *Trotskyism*, p. 8.

despite its backwardness in comparison to the more industrialized countries of Europe and America.<sup>30</sup>

Trotsky's framework of uneven and combined development, therefore, did not view historical progress mechanically. Instead, it is recognized that "evolution is far from consisting...in a steady accumulation and continual 'improvement' of that which exists. It has its transitions of quantity into quality, its crises, leaps and backward lapses". As a result, "development does not proceed harmoniously, but in contradictions. Economic contradictions produce social antagonisms, which in turn develop their own logic, not awaiting the further growth of the productive forces".<sup>31</sup> While there is a general tendency for productivity to increase, the rate at which this occurs and the particular form that it takes will depend upon the modes of production combining with one another and the wider economic and political context in which these developments occur.

This framework of "uneven and combined development", in fact, can be used to explain why capitalism first emerged in Western Europe, and more specifically, England, since Europe's initial lower level of development made it possible to more easily assimilate the advanced cultural features that had emerged elsewhere. It is generally agreed that until the 10<sup>th</sup> Century in the Old World, the West was backward

---

<sup>30</sup> Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>31</sup> Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 48.

in comparison to the East.<sup>32</sup> As Naylor explains, "the indigenous wealth of the eastern empires, their control of the luxury trades from India, China and beyond, their monopoly control over the sources of gold and silver, and their scientific, commercial and cultural achievements stood in stark contrast to the stagnation of western Europe".<sup>33</sup> This was partly due to the fact that the European peninsula was almost completely surrounded by bodies of water that "could be turned into a major asset only when the shores could be held and defended against sea marauders from both north and south". As a result, it was only in 1000 A.D. that widespread cultivation could take place and the proximity to water could then be turned into an advantage.<sup>34</sup>

Carlo M. Cipolla locates this transformation in the second millenium A.D. in the technological progress that took place at this time, maintaining that "the gains which were achieved in Western Europe in the course of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance were conspicuous when compared to the productivity levels typical of the traditional agricultural societies".<sup>35</sup> More specifically, he points to the increasing productivity in agriculture during this period, especially the spread of four developments: the water mill (6<sup>th</sup> Century), the heavy plow (7<sup>th</sup> Century), the crop rotation system (8<sup>th</sup> Century) and the horseshoe and new methods of harnessing (9<sup>th</sup> Century). These developments, however, were not new inventions since they had

---

<sup>32</sup> Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, p. 104.

<sup>33</sup> Naylor, *Canada in the European Age*, p.4.

<sup>34</sup> Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, p. 31.

<sup>35</sup> Cipolla, *Before the Industrial Revolution*, p. 106.

been in use for hundreds of years in Europe and Asia. As Cipolla explains, "what the Europeans displayed from the sixth to the eleventh centuries was not so much inventive ingenuity as a remarkable capacity for assimilation".<sup>36</sup> Phrased in terms of the framework of uneven and combined development, it was the very backwardness of Europe that facilitated this "capacity for assimilation".

These assimilated technological developments led to increases in yields of agricultural products such as cereals, wine, milk, and beef.<sup>37</sup> Increases in food production also enabled larger numbers of people to be involved in producing other goods besides food, such as textiles and paper. Technological developments in these sectors also enabled more cloth to be woven and books to be made.<sup>38</sup> In addition, there were significant innovations in shipbuilding, navigational aids and weaponry during this period. Once again, technological developments such as the compass, the windmill, the spinning wheel and gunpowder were not European innovations, but imported from the Arabs, Persians and Chinese.<sup>39</sup> Assimilating these innovations and adapting them to new conditions, however, meant that "the levels of productivity prevailing in Europe at the end of the sixteenth century were considerably higher than they had been six hundred years earlier".<sup>40</sup> With such developments, Lynn White explains, "Europe built up the self-confidence and the technical competence which, after 1500,

---

<sup>36</sup> Cipolla, *Before the Industrial Revolution*, p. 138.

<sup>37</sup> Cipolla, *Before the Industrial Revolution*, pp. 101-105.

<sup>38</sup> Cipolla, *Before the Industrial Revolution*, pp. 105-6.

<sup>39</sup> Cipolla, *Before the Industrial Revolution*, p. 150; Naylor, *Canada in the European Age*, p. 5.

<sup>40</sup> Cipolla, *Before the Industrial Revolution*, p. 100.



enabled it to invade the rest of the world, conquering, looting, trading and colonizing".<sup>41</sup>

The "conquering, looting, trading and colonizing" that occurred after 1500 has also been linked to a period of economic crisis in Western Europe in the mid-fourteenth and the mid-fifteenth centuries.<sup>42</sup> Eric Wolf notes that by 1400 A.D. "an observer would have noted a very different Europe and a marked change in its relation to neighboring Asia and Africa. The many petty principalities had fused into a smaller number of effective polities. These polities were competing successfully with their neighbors to the south and east and were about to launch major adventures overseas".<sup>43</sup> At this time, there were "shifts in long-distance trade which changed the position of Europe from that of a dependent fringe of Asia into a key area of commercial development" and the consolidation of principalities enabled the newly formed states to seek "new frontiers, in a collaboration between war-making rulers and the merchant class". These developments resulted in "diminishing surpluses [that] drove the Europeans to seek resources abroad, especially as increased wealth was required to finance the emergent states".<sup>44</sup> Naylor also points out that eastern Mediterranean trade routes were blocked after Constantinople fell to the Turks, providing a further push to search for new acquisitions. In addition the end of the One

---

<sup>41</sup> Lynn White, quoted in Cipolla, *Before the Industrial Revolution*, p. 138.

<sup>42</sup> Naylor, *Canada in the European Age*, p. 20.

<sup>43</sup> Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, pp. 101, 123.

<sup>44</sup> Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, p. 129.

Hundred Years War in Europe meant that "England and France were left politically and commercially divorced, but each equipped with centralized monarchies seeking wealth through overseas expansion to maintain and expand their power. From both the Mediterranean and North Atlantic, European states were soon poised for overseas commercial expansion".<sup>45</sup>

In the same way that the increasing prominence of Western Europe can be explained by its previous backwardness in comparison to the East, the same process can be discerned in the case of England. England, because it was an island, was originally disadvantaged by its isolation from economic and political developments occurring on the mainland. This "privilege of economic backwardness" eventually turned out to be an advantage. The relatively unproductive character of the area meant that the population was dispersed and it had a less complex and hierarchical political system. As a result, after the Norman Conquest in 1066, it was possible for a "unified fiscal and judicial system" to be imposed since the previous system of surplus extraction was weaker. In addition, "because of its insular position, England was relatively immune to attacks from the continent, and after the English kings were pushed out of France the country was spared the large expenditures for war on land and sea that plagued its later continental rivals".<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Naylor, *Canada in the European Age*, p. 6.

<sup>46</sup> Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, p. 120.

The circumstances that led certain European nations to cross the Atlantic and interact with aboriginal groups, therefore, were not just an accidental occurrence or an arbitrary process, as was put forward by the Royal Commission.<sup>47</sup> They were the result of a long process of uneven development, whereby the forces of production in different areas of the world progressed at different rates depending upon environmental factors and a division of labour, and the systems of surplus extraction with which they were intertwined. At the same time, these unevenly developed areas then "combined" in varying degrees with the economic and political systems of other groups, further influencing their development. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the rapid development of the productive forces in Europe facilitated by the previous relative backwardness of this area, and the resulting increase in surplus extraction that followed, led to a dramatic transformation. Increasing control over long distance trade routes and political centralization resulted in a greater intensity of warfare and economic and political crises. In an attempt to resolve these crises through further developments in productive forces, new frontiers were sought, and expansion

---

<sup>47</sup> While 40 pages are devoted to examining the distinctive pre-contact circumstances of the five aboriginal tribes/regions - the Mi'kmaq, the Iroquois, the Blackfoot Cree, the Northwest Coast (consisting of the Tlingit, Tsimshian, Haida, Nuxalk/Bella Coola, Kwakw̓ka'wakw/Kwakiutl, Nootka and Salish), and the Inuit (*Final Report*, 1, pp. 43-85), all the nations in Europe are lumped together at the end of the chapter (*Final Report*, 1, pp. 87-90). In this simplistic and obtuse historical sketch, the Royal Commission maintains that Spain used its conquest of the Americas as "an outlet for adventure and aggression"; it also chooses to cite a claim from D.K. Fieldhouse's *The Colonial Empires: A Comparative Survey from the Eighteenth Century* that the motivations of Europeans at this time are "difficult to know and impossible to generalize. In most cases one thing led to another, and initial intentions changed according to new circumstances" Besides Fieldhouse, only two other sources are used for its analysis of European history. These include Thomas R. Berger's, *A Long and Terrible Shadow* and Margaret Conrad et al.'s, *History of Canadian Peoples*. This is in contrast to its overview of aboriginal cultures before contact, where 36 authors are cited.

to the Americas was part of this process. This expansion then created further increases in productivity and surplus extraction in the Old World, resulting in the transformation of economic and political relations.

These further developments in productive forces made possible by surplus extraction from the New World, in fact, created an additional impetus on the dissolution of feudalism in Europe, and its eventual transition to the capitalist mode of production. This transition has been mapped out in a variety of ways in political economy. George Novack, for example, maintains that the expansive pressures brought about by developments originating in Europe resulted in three different stages of capitalist development: "commercial", "industrial", and "monopoly" capitalism.<sup>48</sup> Commercial or "mercantile" capitalism<sup>49</sup> was dominant between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries. This stage of capitalism is characterized by the fact that "the merchants were the dominant class of capitalists because trade was the main source of wealth and accumulation. Under commercial capitalism, industry and agriculture, the pillars of production, were not usually carried on by wage labor but by means of small handicrafts, peasant

---

<sup>48</sup> George Novack, "The Long View of History", *Understanding History – Marxist Essays*, p. 48.

<sup>49</sup> Samir Amin maintains that the term "mercantile capitalism" is misleading because the capitalist mode of production was not really in existence at this time. Although the mercantilist period led to the formation of the capitalist system, defined by the establishment of the concentration of money-wealth and proletarianization, it was a period of transition. This was because "on the one hand, the law of value was still expressed in its simple form, in the sector of petty-commodity production, but on the other the concentration of money-wealth was already taking place in a sector that was not governed by the law of value - that of the large-scale Atlantic trade organized in monopolies". Amin, *Unequal Development*, p. 67.

farming, slave or serf labor".<sup>50</sup> Mercantile capitalism "merely *exchanged* the surplus products of prior forms of production",<sup>51</sup> instead of extracting greater surpluses through increasing the efficiency of the labour process.

Industrial capitalism, according to Novack, came to the fore in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with the application of steam power to mechanized processes.<sup>52</sup> It also was characterized by large numbers of wage workers entering into factory production from the cottage industries and the putting out system, as well as the development of market-based rather than subsistence agriculture. During this period, Novack argues that the owners of factories, rather than merchants, became the main social and political power, and capitalism was characterized by the following attributes: "vigorous, expanding, progressive, confident, competitive".<sup>53</sup> This changed in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (around 1880) with the development of monopoly capitalism, which has since dominated the world. Novack explains that this phase "has carried all the basic

---

<sup>50</sup> Novack, "The Long View of History", p.48.

<sup>51</sup> Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York: 1974), p. 52.

<sup>52</sup> These developments are conceptualized somewhat differently by Naylor, who distinguishes between the "Age of Industry" (approximately 1793-1841), the "Age of Steam and Steel" (approximately 1841-1873), and the "Age of High Imperialism" (approximately 1873-1914).

<sup>53</sup> Novack, "The Long View of History", p.48. Samir Amin also argues that the money wealth accumulated and the producers "released" during the mercantilist period made possible both the capital and commodified labour power needed for capitalism. In this stage, according to Amin, "the predominant form of capital was industrial capital, made up of independent units corresponding, as a rule, to separate enterprises, which were largely family businesses". Amin, *Unequal Development*, p. 68.

tendencies of capitalism, and especially its most reactionary features, to extremes in economic, political, cultural and international relations".<sup>54</sup>

Eric Wolf, however, would object to Novack's reference to "mercantile capitalism". In understanding how capitalism came to dominate all other social and economic systems, Wolf maintains that a distinction must be made between the pursuit of mercantile wealth and the capitalist mode of production.<sup>55</sup> The capitalist mode of production, according to Wolf, did not really come into existence until the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>56</sup> Before the emergence of capitalism, there was only a "vast network of mercantile relations anchored in noncapitalist modes of production" where the "worldwide movement of commodities generated prices and money-begetting money, without as yet subsuming both means of production and labor power under capital".<sup>57</sup> This, according to Wolf, differs from capitalism, which "controls means of

---

<sup>54</sup> Novack, "The Long View of History, p.48; for a discussion of a similar point see Naylor, *Canada in the European Age*.

<sup>55</sup> Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, p.23 Like Wolf, Naylor also sees the pursuit of mercantile wealth as being a distinctive stage of economic and political development that occurred before the development of capitalism. Naylor also maintains that an economic philosophy known as "bullionism" had preceded mercantilist policies. Unlike mercantilism, which was concerned with establishing a favourable balance of trade for a particular state by developing "national industry through state interventionism", Naylor argues that "bullionism was content to tap the profits of the luxury trades of different parts of the globe". According to Naylor, "bullionism as an economic philosophy had been appropriate to an alliance of a territorial prince or king with the merchant elite at the expense of the feudal nobility. The merchant elite, which needed the power of the state to promote its economic interests and create a climate conducive to the accumulation of capital, had cash to lend to aid the state, which needed money to support a growing range of state functions. Together they undermined the power of local nobility and local urban authority alike, and set in motion a process of centralization of power and standardization of economic conditions". Naylor, *Canada in the European Age*, pp. 45-6.

<sup>56</sup> Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, p. 298.

<sup>57</sup> Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, p. 298.

production, buys labor power, and puts it to work, continuously expanding surpluses by intensifying productivity through an ever-rising curve of technological inputs". As Wolf explains,

capitalism must lay hold of production, must invade the productive process and ceaselessly alter the conditions of production themselves. As long as wealth remains external to the process of production, merely skimming off the products of the primary producers and making profits by selling them, that wealth is not capital. It may be wealth obtained and engrossed by overlords or merchants, but it has not yet entered what Marx called 'the really revolutionary road' of appropriating and transforming the means of production themselves...Only where wealth has laid hold of the conditions of production in the ways specified can we speak of the existence or dominance of a capitalist mode. There is no such thing as mercantile or merchant capitalism, therefore. There is only mercantile wealth. Capitalism, to be capitalism, must be capitalism-in-production.<sup>58</sup>

The pursuit of mercantile wealth, in fact, was a transitional form, differing from fully-fledged capitalism in a number of important respects. Most importantly, it was a system that acquired profits not through the productive process, but in the circulation of commodities - by buying goods cheaply and the selling them dear. As Rennie Warburton and Stephen Scott explain,

merchant and industrial capital are distinguished from each other by the unique means by which each form acquires surplus value. Industrial capital creates and retains its' [sic] own surplus in the production process as wage labourers produce more new value in the form of commodities than they consume in wage goods...Merchant capital acquires surplus in the circulation process by means of the exchange of commodities. This surplus is created during a

---

<sup>58</sup> Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, p. 79.

production process which precedes circulation: merchant capital is by definition not productive. It does not involve itself in the process through which value is created. Its sole purpose is to facilitate the exchange of commodities. The merchant buys commodities not for his own use but in order to sell them again. His goal is to increase his monetary wealth through a process of unequal exchange.<sup>59</sup>

Although trade is an important aspect of both industrial capitalism and the pursuit of mercantile wealth, therefore, trade in the latter is qualitatively different in that it consists largely of long distance or "carrying" trade, which is more "complementary" than "competitive". Instead of being used to provide cheaper goods within an integrated market, it "move[s] goods from one market to another".<sup>60</sup> This led merchants to concentrate on providing luxury goods to the wealthy or "scarce goods for which substitutes could not be found", so that they could "hold a monopoly position from which they profit".<sup>61</sup> Monopolies were also maintained by government regulations and other mechanisms for limiting the competitiveness of trade.<sup>62</sup>

Besides questioning assertions about "mercantile capitalism", there also has been an extension of Novack's periodization of monopoly capitalism. This has been undertaken by a number of analysts of uneven and combined development, who argue that another stage of economic development - "late capitalism" - emerged in the

---

<sup>59</sup> Rennie Warburton and Stephen Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia", *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 5 (1985), p. 28.

<sup>60</sup> Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism*, p. 21.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 72; Samir Amin, *Unequal Development* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), pp. 17-18.

<sup>62</sup> Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism*, pp. 72-3.



1960s. The initial elaboration of this phase was described by Ernest Mandel, who maintained that it was connected to the downward turn of a fourth “long wave” of capitalist development that began in 1940. This long wave is related to both increases and decreases in the rate of growth of industrial output and exports in the global capitalist economy – a circumstance determined by increases and reductions in the rate of profit.<sup>63</sup> Like others, this long wave is characterized by a technological revolution and a radical change in labour organization, in this instance, the “continuous-flow production machines integrated into semiautomatic systems made possible by electronics”, especially microprocessors.<sup>64</sup> In its upturn phase (1940-68) this fourth “long wave” of capitalism exhibited an increased rate of profit with the introduction of these new forms of technology and labour organization, but as innovations became generalized, rates of profit and economic growth declined, resulting in the downturn phase (from 1968 to the present). Such a downturn is also associated with the disintegration of the Fordist regime of industrial production, capital accumulation and state intervention that existed in the post-war era. According to David Harvey, the period identified by Mandel as “late capitalism” is characterized by “flexible accumulation, productive specialization, and state deregulation in loosely coupled

---

<sup>63</sup> Ernest Mandel, *Long Waves of Capitalist Development* (London: Verso, 1995), pp. 1-2, 10-11. Mandel maintains that there are three main determinants in the rate of profit: “fluctuations in the organic composition of capital, the fluctuations in the rate of surplus value, and the fluctuations in the turnover rate of capital (the rate of surplus value being itself no linear function of the fluctuations in real wages)”.

<sup>64</sup> Mandel, *Long Waves of Capitalist Development*, pp. 33-36.

transnational alliances of market centres, factory concentrations, technology generators, capital suppliers and public administrators”.<sup>65</sup>

Such a transformation in the “regime of accumulation” that has occurred in late capitalism has been linked to a particular “cultural logic”.<sup>66</sup> Instead of the “optimistic faith in rationalism, the natural sciences and human progress” that existed during the period of 1940-1968 where the rate of profit and growth was increasing, “late capitalism” is characterized by “irrationality and mysticism”.<sup>67</sup> As Mandel explains, “the ‘new philosophers’ in France” that appeared during the 1960s “are but an example of a more general reversal toward the skepticism, irrationality, and mysticism that again prevail in many intellectual circles”. Mandel also points to the “powerful upsurge in irrational, human-despising, and degrading trends in popular ‘subculture’”, which is part of this current period in capitalism’s development.<sup>68</sup>

Such a trend has been referred to by David Harvey as the “condition of postmodernity”. This condition, according to Harvey, is related to a crisis of overaccumulation within capitalism, where social and political regulation has become

---

<sup>65</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), pp. 294-6.

<sup>66</sup> Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).

<sup>67</sup> Mandel, *Long Waves of Capitalist Development*, p. 79.

<sup>68</sup> Mandel, *Long Waves of Capitalist Development*, p. 80.

increasingly disorganized and fragmented.<sup>69</sup> It is also characterized by “a period of rapid change, flux, and uncertainty” where

the confidence in the association between scientific and moral judgements has collapsed, aesthetics has triumphed over ethics as a prime focus of social and intellectual concern, images dominate narratives, ephemerality and fragmentation take precedence over eternal truths and unified politics, and explanations have shifted from the realm of material and political-economic groundings towards a consideration of autonomous cultural and political practices.<sup>70</sup>

Harvey maintains that the “postmodern turn” in the social sciences mentioned earlier (i.e. epistemological and cultural relativism) acts to reproduce the fragmentation and disunity of late capitalism by not attempting to “transcend it, counteract it, or even to define the ‘eternal and immutable’ elements that might lie within it”. Postmodernism, according to Harvey, “swims, even wallows, in the fragmentary and chaotic currents of change as if that is all there is”.<sup>71</sup> It also “emphasizes the fragmentary, the ephemeral, and the chaotic side [of capitalism] while expressing a deep skepticism as to any particular prescriptions as to how the eternal and immutable should be conceived of, represented, or expressed”.<sup>72</sup> This leads postmodern philosophies to be characterized by an “intense distrust of all universal or ‘totalizing’ discourses”, placing an “emphasis on discontinuity and difference in history” and “polymorphous

---

<sup>69</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, pp. 121, 174, 327. This transition is also referred to as the transition from fordist to post-fordist forms of production where there is decreasing employment in agriculture and industry and increasing employment in services.

<sup>70</sup> Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, pp. 124, 177-179, 328.

<sup>71</sup> Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p. 44.

<sup>72</sup> Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p. 116.

correlations in place of simple or complex causality”.<sup>73</sup> It also has resulted in the “reemergence of concern in ethics, politics, and anthropology for the validity and dignity of ‘the other’”, representing a “widespread and profound shift in ‘the structure of feeling’”.<sup>74</sup>

In attempting to understand economic and political developments in the second millennium, therefore, the framework of uneven and combined development conceptualizes capitalism as progressing through a number of periods. Such an analysis of capitalism was almost completely absent from the Royal Commission's *Final Report*, resulting in an impoverished understanding of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations. As will be argued throughout this dissertation, it is this conceptualization of the developments within capitalism that is most necessary for understanding the history of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations in what is now Canada and the emergence of native dependency.

More specifically, understanding the different periods of capitalism in the context of the emerging Canadian state is essential for explaining the changes in aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations that the Royal Commission identified - "Contact and Cooperation", "Displacement and Assimilation" and "Negotiation and Renewal". The period of

---

<sup>73</sup> Foucault, cited in Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p. 9.

<sup>74</sup> Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p. 9.

"Contact and Cooperation" was dominated by the mercantile relations of the fur trade, whereby the imperatives of European "carrying" trade combined with the hunting and gathering and horticultural modes of production of aboriginal groups. The fur trade was a quintessential example of the pursuit of mercantile wealth, and it only developed after beaver felt top hats - a luxury good demanded by the wealthy - became popular in Europe. And because beaver could only be obtained from North America, the French who colonized the area originally had a monopoly on this trade, and they, as well as the British merchants who arrived later, tried to maintain this monopoly through various "extra-economic" conditions. Aboriginal groups, on the other hand, could only obtain iron products such as guns and traps from Europeans. In this way, the pursuit of mercantile wealth acted to connect two separate circuits of exchange in the fur trade - one in Europe and the other in what is now Canada.

At the same time as acting to "carry" goods from one area to another, the fur trade also linked different modes of production. Warburton and Scott point out that this is a feature of merchant capital in "less developed contexts". In such contexts, it "operate[s] in conjunction with...pre-capitalist modes of production generating the exchange of commodities no matter how they are produced. In those regions where such modes persist...merchant capital serves as a bridge or link between different modes of production".<sup>75</sup> This means that unlike the emergence of industrial capitalism

---

<sup>75</sup> Warburton and Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia", p.29.

in what is now Canada, which required a radical reorganization of society to extract surplus by increasing the efficiency of the labour process, the fur trade did not destroy less developed modes of production. Profits were extracted through extensive development, rather than increasing the coordination and productivity of human labour.<sup>76</sup>

In the case of the fur trade in British Columbia, for example, Warburton and Scott explain that aboriginal economies and societies were kept relatively intact. Despite producing for exchange rather than for use, as they had before contact, and the fact that this exchange was unequal, "the impact of the fur trade...involved minimal disruption because the indigenous modes of production were easily articulated with mercantile capitalism".<sup>77</sup> This was because "European traders, as agents of merchant capital, had no direct interest in the territories occupied by the native population, nor did they seek to directly organize their production. In general they made no attempt either to seize these lands or to change native culture". It also occurred because "commodities were produced in the traditional ways...new techniques were introduced but the organization of production remained the same. Access to resources continued to be allocated through the kinship system. Power and authority remained

---

<sup>76</sup> Richard Pomfret defines extensive growth as "an increase in the total amount of goods and services produced", while intensive development concerns "an increase in output per head of population". For a further discussion of this distinction, see Pomfret, *The Economic Development of Canada*, p. 4.

<sup>77</sup> Warburton and Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia", pp. 27, 29.

vested in the leading families of native groups".<sup>78</sup> More specifically, aboriginal groups did not need to be separated from the means of production in the pursuit of mercantile wealth, and therefore they could retain a certain amount of control over the labour process.<sup>79</sup> The fur trade also existed alongside production for subsistence needs and so aboriginal peoples lived relatively autonomously. They "were not compelled to enter into exchange in order to acquire the necessities of life" and could "restrict commodity production if they felt that the terms of trade offered by the fur traders were disadvantageous to them".<sup>80</sup>

But the increasing productivity required by the emerging capitalist system was a problem for aboriginal peoples' continued existence as hunters and gatherers,<sup>81</sup> and it was this circumstance that contributed to the period of "Displacement and Assimilation". With hunting and gathering, there is no way to increase yields as occurs with domesticated plants and animals, and so an increase in productivity is followed by a depletion of species (as occurred with beaver, buffalo and whale populations).<sup>82</sup> At the same time, the introduction of a number of new diseases, to

---

<sup>78</sup> Warburton and Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia", pp. 40-1.

<sup>79</sup> Warburton and Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia", pp. 28-9.

<sup>80</sup> Warburton and Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia", p. 37.

<sup>81</sup> Naylor, *Canada in the European Age*, pp. 36-7.

<sup>82</sup> For a further discussion of this point in the context of prehistory, see Childe, *Man Makes Himself*, p. 61. The Royal Commission recognizes these depletions in a number of areas. For some examples, see *Final Report*, 1, pp.256, 267. At one point, it maintains that "growing scarcity in the resources that supported the traditional hunting and gathering culture...provided both the need and the opportunity for a new life". *Final Report*, 1, pp.. 352-3.

which aboriginal peoples had no immunity, drastically reduced the native population and weakened their resistance to European settlement.<sup>83</sup> They were also becoming increasingly dependent upon goods that were being produced by economies that were much more highly developed. Although Aboriginals could supply furs and food to European traders, hunters and gatherers did not have the skills or level of organization that was required to produce the Iron Age technology that they now depended upon for survival.<sup>84</sup> This meant that, with the retention of their unproductive modes of production and tribal social relations, the seeds were sown for aboriginal dependency.

The emergence of aboriginal dependency is also related to the different requirements of industrial capitalism, in contrast to the pursuit of mercantile wealth. Unlike the mercantile period, which involved incorporating the primitive modes of production of aboriginal groups into the existing system without substantially changing them, the development of industrial capitalism eventually required that they be destroyed. Industrial capitalism had to completely transform the economy of what is now Canada, since profits were obtained by increasing productivity through capitalist agriculture and the exploitation of wage labour. As will be shown in Chapters Six and Seven, this

---

<sup>83</sup> This circumstance is due to the fact that a number of diseases arise with the domestication of animals, which had not yet occurred in what is now Canada. For a detailed discussion of this process see Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel*, pp. 193-4.

<sup>84</sup> As George Novack explains, "it is possible for people living under Stone Age conditions in the twentieth century to possess a radio, though not to manufacture one". This is why it "would be categorically impossible to find such a product of contemporary electronics buried with human remains in a Stone Age deposit of twenty thousand years ago". Novack, "Uneven and Combined Development", p.92.



meant displacing aboriginal groups if they were not "improving" the land, or moving them to more economically viable locations,<sup>85</sup> and educating and civilizing the native population so that they could be incorporated into more productive activities.<sup>86</sup> The decline of the fur trade, in fact, meant that many aboriginal peoples became dependent on government relief for sustenance,<sup>87</sup> and to aid settlement the reserve system was instituted to contain Aboriginals.<sup>88</sup>

The important question that needs to be asked, however, is why did Aboriginals become marginalized with the decline of mercantile capitalism and the rise of industrialization, while the rest of the country developed? Since labour shortages existed in Canada during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and farming was encouraged, why weren't the natives proletarianized and integrated into the emerging economy, instead of being sidelined by workers from Europe? Why didn't they take up farming in large numbers like other European settlers? And why do they continue to be dependent on government transfers despite significant efforts to increase their numbers in the Canadian labour force? The answers to these questions can be found in examining the requirements of industrial capitalism, and its combination with hunting and gathering/horticultural modes of production.

---

<sup>85</sup> This is one aspect of what the Royal Commission refers to as "administrative relocations". *Final Report*, 1, p.414.

<sup>86</sup> The Royal Commission, for example, notes that in 1828, Major General H.C. Darling recommended establishing fixed locations for aboriginal peoples so that they could become economically self-sufficient. *Final Report*, 1, p.265.

<sup>87</sup> Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), pp.166-81.

<sup>88</sup> James S. Frideres, *Native People in Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1983), pp.34-5.

These requirements of capitalism have not disappeared in the current period of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations referred to as “Negotiation and Renewal”. In fact, they are even more pronounced in “late capitalism”, where Fordist regimes of production have been usurped by a more “flexible” regime of accumulation. Although still a form of intensive development that is dependent upon increasing the productivity of labour, this period can be distinguished from earlier capitalist phases by its increasing instability, fragmentation and uncertainty. As was pointed out above, these particular characteristics have led to a distrust of universal claims, resulting in the celebration of cultural relativism and “difference” that has come to be known as “postmodernism”. It is these developments, in fact, that provide the material basis for the Royal Commission’s advocacy of different “conceptions of history” and its political strategy of parallelism.

Advocating different “conceptions of history” and the political strategy of parallelism is connected to the fragmentation that is occurring in “late capitalism” since they act to justify the marginalization of aboriginal peoples from wider economic, political and intellectual developments. As the rates of profit and growth decline in this phase of capitalism, it becomes more and more difficult to sustain the presumption that all will eventually benefit from integration into the capitalist system. It becomes more feasible to offer aboriginal leaders increased funding and to justify native separation

from wider developments and universal standards rather than articulate and develop a strategy as to how aboriginal peoples can become full participants in Canadian life.

The impact of these different political and economic stages on aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations has generally not been understood because political economy in Canada shied away from historical and material analyses of this subject in the 1970s. Although aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations were analyzed by political economy from this perspective before the 1960s, this trend did not continue. Like the Royal Commission's *Final Report*, political economy also has been influenced by postmodern tendencies. As a result, there is a reluctance to examine the differences in scale, productivity and complexity between aboriginal groups and European nations, and how these evolutionary differences have impacted native dependency.

#### POLITICAL ECONOMY AND ABORIGINAL PEOPLES IN CANADA

Within political science, political economy is an approach that attempts to understand the linkages between economics and politics.<sup>89</sup> Wallace Clement has characterized it as “a holistic approach to understanding society from a materialist perspective” that

---

<sup>89</sup> Michael Howlett et al., *The Political Economy of Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 1-2; Paul Phillips, *Inside Capitalism: An Introduction to Political Economy* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2003), pp. 1-5.

"connects the economic, political, and cultural/ideological moments of social life".<sup>90</sup>

Rather than examining political institutions, cultural features and ideologies in abstraction, political economy attempts to explain these phenomena by indicating how they have historically emerged in association with the development of productive and distributive practices.

Political economy's recognition that various economic and political forms have existed at different times in humanity's development has resulted in the study of history being central to its analysis. A historical sequence of events is constructed and analyzed to determine a materialist chain of causes and effects. As was explained earlier, in opposition to idealist theories that perceive history as the outcome of a "clash of wills" that arise spontaneously and inexplicably, political economy asks how human ideas and actions are "*ultimately*" socially determined by the "production and reproduction of real life".<sup>91</sup>

As will be shown in Chapter Five, a focus on the historical development of production and exchange has meant that studies of indigenous peoples in Canadian political

---

<sup>90</sup> Clement defines "materialist" as "a perspective that begins with the assumption that the relations between people are fundamentally shaped by the way a society reproduces itself. How people make a living - for example, as use-value producers, commodity producers for sale, or wage earners - strongly influences how they are formed as social beings". For a further discussion see Wallace Clement, "Introduction: "Whither the New Canadian Political Economy?", in Wallace Clement (ed), *Understanding Canada: Building on the New Canadian Political Economy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), p.3

<sup>91</sup> Letter from Frederick Engels to J. Bloch, *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works*, Volume 3 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), p. 487 (emphasis in the original).

economy have tended to concentrate on the fur trade era because aboriginal peoples were integral participants as fur harvesters and middlemen. These studies originated with the "staples thesis" of Harold Adams Innis,<sup>92</sup> and debates about aboriginal peoples' participation in this activity largely have been a response to his work.<sup>93</sup> Essentially, the debate concerned whether aboriginal peoples were largely motivated by factors such as the need to acquire European trade goods, or "political" considerations like maintaining alliances with other native tribes.<sup>94</sup>

The political economist Ron Bourgeault has also theorized the fur trade in terms of the confrontation of different modes of production, caused by the need for expansion created by the speeding up of capital accumulation in Europe.<sup>95</sup> His analysis, however, did not clearly distinguish between the developments in the pursuit of mercantile wealth in comparison to those of industrial capitalism. He also argued that the relations between aboriginal peoples and European traders were "feudal",<sup>96</sup> even though aboriginal peoples traded furs voluntarily in order to obtain more technologically advanced European goods and were not obligated to work the land and

---

<sup>92</sup> Harold Adams Innis, *Essays in Canadian Economic History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973); *The Fur Trade in Canada* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1975); and *Empire and Communications* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972).

<sup>93</sup> Bruce Alden Cox, "Natives and the Development of Mercantile Capitalism", in John H. Moore (ed), *The Political Economy of North American Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), pp. 60-86; H.A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada*. Rev. Ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970); Deborah Lee Simmons, *Against Capital: The Political Economy of Aboriginal Resistance in Canada*, Ph.D. Dissertation, York University (1995).

<sup>94</sup> For an overview of such studies see Arthur J. Ray and Donald B. Freeman, *Give us Good Measure* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), pp. 3-9.

<sup>95</sup> Bourgeault, "Race and Class Under Mercantilism", p. 42.

<sup>96</sup> Bourgeault, "The Indian, the Métis and the Fur Trade", pp. 52-54.

provide surpluses to landowners as peasants/serfs were in Europe.<sup>97</sup> Trading companies did not own the land and their control over aboriginal production was largely dependent upon their monopoly position in acquiring and trading furs. And because of this character of the fur trade, a radical reorganization of aboriginal societies was not required to increase productivity, and the native population's social relations remained relatively intact before agricultural development and then industrialization.

Chapter Five will also point out that political economy's focus on production and exchange has resulted in aboriginal peoples being largely ignored as a subject of Canadian political economy as the fur trade declined and Canada began to industrialize. Since aboriginal peoples were displaced from their traditional territories and contained in unviable areas of the country to facilitate development, they were not significant players in the production of value during this time, and as such, were deemed as "irrelevant" to Canada's political and economic development. It was assumed that because of the low productivity of subsistence practices and the simplicity of tribal cultures, aboriginal peoples would be gradually assimilated into the larger, more productive and complex society in which they were embedded.<sup>98</sup> A number of works constituting what has been referred to as the "Chicago School" also maintained that aboriginal peoples were marginalized during the "contact and

---

<sup>97</sup> Pentland, *Labour and Capital in Canada*, p. 23.

<sup>98</sup> Trigger, "The Historians' Indian", pp. 323-5.

cooperation” period because of the incompatibility of aboriginal and non-aboriginal cultures. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven, this school relied on the problems of "unreliability", the retention of kinship ties, and difficulties in mastering abstract reasoning that were extensively documented by government authorities of the time and in the scholarly literature. After the 1970s, however, there has been an attempt to refute the validity of these claims.

Because of its focus on native participation in the pursuit of mercantile wealth and/or capitalist production and exchange, in fact, traditional political economy generally has been seen as inadequate for analyzing the circumstances of aboriginal peoples.<sup>99</sup> It is accused of failing to understand what is perceived as the flourishing and renewal of aboriginal cultures and the “political agency” that has enabled the native population to resist colonialism. There is criticism that aboriginal peoples are portrayed as an "historical relic" and that their societies are “dead or doomed”.<sup>100</sup> It is now asserted, to the contrary, that native economic, political and intellectual traditions are viable in the modern context and their promotion will benefit aboriginal peoples and society more generally.<sup>101</sup>

---

<sup>99</sup> Wotherspoon and Satzewich, *First Nations*, p. 12.

<sup>100</sup> Frances Abele and Daiva Stasiulis, “Canada as a ‘White Settler Colony’: What about Natives and Immigrants”, in Wallace Clement and Glen Williams (eds), *The New Canadian Political Economy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989), pp. 254, 269.

<sup>101</sup> Frances Abele, for example, approvingly quotes Kerry Abel “whose purpose in writing Dene history is explicitly practical and political”. As part of this “practical and political” agenda, Abel maintains that “small but dynamic aboriginal societies continue to exist among us; we need to recognize that fact and attempt to understand the aspirations of those who want to safeguard a future of continuing choices for

These assertions have initiated a shift in Canadian political economy. Instead of perceiving the task of political economy as developing a general theory to explain “what happened” in history and how current economic and political structures emerged, and incorporating previously ignored evidence to enhance this understanding, it is now asserted that the field should incorporate aboriginal “conceptions of history”. This will require a transformation of political economy itself because, as Frances Abele points out, “the reality of history itself, as an enterprise, is conceived differently by historians of at least some Indigenous nations”. Therefore, “integrating the historical knowledge and analysis of...[aboriginal peoples] is not simply a matter of including the information they provide; it is a matter of understanding history in a different way and of finding some means to include a quite different view of the individual in society, and in history, from that now common [emphasis added]”.<sup>102</sup> Such a transformation, it is maintained, will increase Canadians’ understanding of the past, as well as being consistent with the aspirations of aboriginal peoples.<sup>103</sup>

---

their children”. Kerry Abel, *Drum Songs: Glimpses of Dene History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), p. 269, in Abele, “Understanding What Happened Here”, p. 123-4.

<sup>102</sup> Frances Abele, “Understanding What Happened Here”, pp. 124-5.

<sup>103</sup> Wotherspoon and Satzewich explain also maintain that “for an increasing number of scholars, expressing their voices as Aboriginal people is vital not only for making sense of a colonial past but also, and more importantly, as a critical precondition for developing effective strategies for a post-colonial world”. Wotherspoon and Satzewich, *First Nations*, p. xxiv.



But what does it mean to “[understand] history in a different way” and “include a quite different view of the individual...in history”, and what impact will this have on Canadian political economy? Although Abele does not provide specifics on what this would entail,<sup>104</sup> it appears to be similar to what is proposed by the Royal Commission – that political economy should incorporate accounts of the past that are subjective, spiritually-based and anti-evolutionary. The purpose of incorporating such “Aboriginal perspectives” into political economy is not to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the past, but to support the political agenda of parallelism that is so prominent in the Royal Commission’s *Final Report*. Such a conception is opposed to the idea that cultural osmosis and horizontal evolution<sup>105</sup> will eventually result in all cultures merging into a larger integrated whole. It is maintained that aboriginal traditions can be restored and co-exist alongside modern economic processes and political institutions, but this requires that the evolutionary assumptions that underpin traditional political economy be silenced. Political

---

<sup>104</sup> Abele refers to just three sources – Julie Cruikshank, *Life Lived Like a Story* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990), George Blondin, *When the World Was New* (Yellowknife: Outcrop, 1991), and Charlie Snowshoe “A Trapper’s Life”, in Mel Watkins (ed) *Dene Nation: A Colony Within* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977). Abele argues that she does “not mean to suggest that Indigenous ways of conceiving and communicating historical knowledge are homogenous, nor that they are totally different from any traditions of other civilizations, such as the European or Asian ones. There are many degrees of overlap and continuity among all these civilizations at different times in their development. But certainly the approach to history practised by Blondin and by Cruikshank’s three collaborators is quite different from the work of most historians practising in Canada today”. Abele, “Understanding What Happened Here”, note 32, p. 134.

<sup>105</sup> Freeman Dyson notes that, unlike biological evolution, “cultures spread through horizontal transfer of ideas more than genetic inheritance”, which has led cultural evolution to progress “a thousand times faster than Darwinian evolution, taking us to a new era of interdependence we call globalization”. By “horizontal”, he means that evolution can occur synchronically (between different peoples at the same time), instead of diachronically from one generation to another (as occurs biologically). For a further discussion, see Freeman Dyson, “The Darwinian Interlude”, *Technologyreview.com*, March 2005, p. 1. [www.technologyreview.com/articles/05/03/issue/megaphone.asp](http://www.technologyreview.com/articles/05/03/issue/megaphone.asp).

economists cannot put forward evolutionary perspectives because this would mean ignoring or “disrespecting” the beliefs of “aboriginal historians”.

Advocates for incorporating “Aboriginal perspectives” into Canadian political economy, in fact, strongly object to theories that assume that there is such a thing as historical progress. Recent overviews of political economy and aboriginal peoples raise similar concerns; Joyce Green refers to ideas envisioning “human development [as] an ineluctable trajectory of beneficial improvement correlated with ‘our’ mastery and exploitation of nature” as the “shared myth of liberalism and socialism”,<sup>106</sup> while Daiva Stasiulis and Frances Abele conclude that “there is no particular virtue in seeking a replication of European stages in the evolution of social formations everywhere...”.<sup>107</sup> Peter Usher even offers the following caricature of the “deeply rooted notions about hunting peoples” to show how evolutionary theories are misguided:

[hunting peoples], after all, supposed to be at the other end of man’s evolutionary scale, living a primitive, barbaric, and unpleasant life that we of European ancestry abandoned thousands of years ago. Since the long march to civilization has allegedly brought us wealth, security, and ease, it follows that peoples so unfortunate as to remain hunters in the twentieth century must lead lives of poverty, insecurity, and hardship, as indeed the very word subsistence implies. We imagine the northern hunter to be balanced precariously at the top of the food chain, entirely at the mercy of biological cycles, migration changes, and climatic catastrophes. In his primitive state, he must resort to infanticide

---

<sup>106</sup> Joyce Green, “Decolonization and Recolonization in Canada”, p.55

<sup>107</sup> Abele and Stasiulis, “Canada as a ‘White Settler Colony’”, p. 250.

and forced marches to avoid starvation, yet given the least advantage over his prey, like a rifle or a fishnet, he will destroy his balance with nature, by overexploiting the very resources on which his life depends. The hunter exists in a classic Malthusian trap, from which only a civilized political economy can save him. Hunting, fishing, and trapping are thought to produce such meager returns for such strenuous and unremitting effort as to be akin to the task of Sisyphus. Constantly stalked by hunger, the hunter, during his nasty, short, and brutish life, is condemned to spend his every waking moment scrabbling for his next mouthful; he has no civilization because he has no leisure time to develop it. Moreover, the hunter experiences such personal discomfort, risk, and unpleasantness that he must be only too ready to seize the first opportunity to escape his predicament of grinding poverty and hardship.<sup>108</sup>

Usher concludes that such developmental assumptions are based on an “underlying mythology that has contributed to our ‘scientific’ misconceptions about the Native economy of the North, to say nothing of the ideological justification for removing hunting peoples from the path of industrial development”.<sup>109</sup>

It is important to note, however, that works in political economy criticizing evolutionary conceptions of history make no attempt to evaluate its logic and evidence (they just dismiss the theory as a “myth”, which is ironic when one considers the actual mythological character of aboriginal “conceptions of history”). Instead, their objection is *political* – they maintain that evolutionary theories are demeaning to the native population and delegitimize their parallel aspirations. This *political objection* is then used to claim that such theories must be *scientifically invalid* (i.e. “false”). No distinction is made between facts and values, since it is assumed that no

---

<sup>108</sup> Peter J. Usher, “Staple Production and Ideology in Northern Canada” in William H. Melody et al., *Culture, Communication, and Dependency* (New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1981), p. 181.

<sup>109</sup> Usher, “Staple Production and Ideology in Northern Canada, p. 181.

“metanarrative” in history can be objectively determined. On the contrary, the claim that there are different “conceptions of history” is to assert that views of the past are culturally relative and so it is the responsibility of political economists to “[emphasize] the salience of Native ways of being”.<sup>110</sup> Attempting to “understand the reality of differing perceptions [of aboriginal peoples]”, in fact, is seen by one Canadian political economist as being “basic to the development of healthy political institutions for resolving the problems of the present”.<sup>111</sup>

Concern with incorporating “Native ways of being” and the “differing perceptions” of aboriginal peoples has led Canadian political economy to move away from analyzing aboriginal peoples in the context of “the actions of capitalism and the state” since this “fails to account for the ability of aboriginal peoples to respond creatively to the challenges to their ways of life and their determination to struggle to maintain autonomy against pressures to assimilate them into a national norm”.<sup>112</sup> As a result, aboriginal cultures have been abstracted from their economic foundations, justifying the argument that any “way of life” can be retained even if inconsistent with current social requirements. There is now an emphasis on aboriginal “political agency” that

---

<sup>110</sup> Abele and Stasiulis, “Canada as a ‘White Settler Colony’”, p. 251. This is related to arguments claiming that political economists should “marshal evidence and explanation so as to ‘help to mobilize forces of change’” through “disruption” and “seek[ing] to trouble conventional social science and traditional political economy”. Wallace Clement and Leah F. Vosko (eds), *Changing Canada*, pp. xii, xv.

<sup>111</sup> Abele, “Understanding What Happened Here”, p. 130.

<sup>112</sup> Michael Asch, “Native Peoples”, in Daniel Drache & Wallace Clement (eds), *The New Practical Guide to Canadian Political Economy* (Toronto: James Lorimar & Company, 1985), p. 152.

can operate in isolation from wider economic and political forces. Similar to the Royal Commission's *Final Report*, the past is romanticized and aboriginal cultural development exaggerated to give credence to the political agenda of parallelism.

This romanticization of the past and exaggeration of aboriginal cultural development can be seen in Frances Abele's most recent review of the literature pertaining to aboriginal peoples and political economy. In this article, Abele notes that the "great, complex question of Canadian history", and consequently the new Canadian political economy, is

how did the northern part of North America pass from the control of Indigenous nations possessing several languages, that farmed, fished, hunted and gathered in relative environmental balance, that were allied, federated, and sometimes at war, and that were internally organized in a variety of ways, to become a modern nation-state, in which a majority population, dominated by the languages and traditions of Europe, farmed and built factories, highways, and huge cities while they entirely reorganized the political map of the continent – literally as well as ideologically pushing the original landholders to the margins?<sup>113</sup>

The way the question is worded equates pre-contact "Indigenous nations" with the "modern nation-state" that Canada became, thereby mystifying how the "majority population...entirely reorganized the political map of the continent...pushing the original landholders to the margins". It also perceives the most significant political cleavage in Canadian history as being between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples.

---

<sup>113</sup> Abele, "Understanding What Happened Here", pp. 118-19.

This conception of history cuts across class lines, creating the impression that all non-aboriginals benefited equally from the marginalization of aboriginal peoples, and all Aboriginals were equally marginalized.<sup>114</sup> It focuses on the alleged violation of ancestral and/or legal rights,<sup>115</sup> rather than linking aboriginal marginalization to the most significant causal variable in political economy – the organization of labour. There is no interest in understanding how aboriginal peoples fit into Canada’s “historically developed class structures...and class struggles” – i.e. the “contradictory social relationship between producers and non-producers, entailing mutual dependence but also entailing mutual *power*”.<sup>116</sup> Legal arrangements developed hundreds of years ago are seen as being eternally existing “sacred covenants”<sup>117</sup> rather than a result of productive processes and “the specific economic form, in which unpaid surplus-labour is pumped out of the direct producers”.<sup>118</sup>

The assumption that the aboriginal-non-aboriginal cleavage trumps the development of society’s productive powers and class conflict as the driving force of history has led

---

<sup>114</sup>For a discussion of this point see Wotherspoon and Satzewich, *First Nations*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>115</sup> Joyce Green, for example, maintains that “decolonization implies wealth sharing with those who had their lands and wealth appropriated”, where “wealth sharing” is to be derived from non-aboriginals and all Aboriginals are perceived as having their “lands and wealth appropriated”. Green, “Decolonization and Recolonization in Canada”, p. 54. See also Deborah Lee Simmons, “Against Capital: The Political Economy of Aboriginal Resistance in Canada”, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, York University, p. 43 for a discussion of this point.

<sup>116</sup> Leo Panitch, “Dependency and Class in Canadian Political Economy”, in Gordon Laxer (ed), *Perspectives on Canadian Economic Development: Class, Staples, Gender and Elites* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 273

<sup>117</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 119-122, 130; 2(1), p. 18, 29-30, 75.

<sup>118</sup> Marx, *Capital*, III (Moscow, 1959), p. 772, cited in Panitch, “Dependency and Class in Canadian Political Economy”, p. 273.

to the increasing prominence of the “internal colonial model” in Canadian political economy.<sup>119</sup> This model compares aboriginal groups to colonized areas of the third world.<sup>120</sup> Aboriginal peoples, it is argued, were subject to the same processes of domination that occurred in these areas. The only difference is that the native population remains “inside the boundaries of the state which colonized it”, and as a result, the colonizer cannot be expected to “go home”.<sup>121</sup>

Using this model of “internal colonialism” for understanding aboriginal circumstances, however, fails to understand that, unlike a number of third world colonies, aboriginal peoples’ historical role was not as exploited labour, as is commonly asserted,<sup>122</sup> but as kinship oriented groups exchanging goods on “extremely

---

<sup>119</sup> For examples of this approach see Mel Watkins, “Preface”, *Dene Nation*, p. xi; Gail Kellough, “From Colonialism to Economic Imperialism: The Experience of the Canadian Indian”, in J. Harp and J.R. Hufley (eds), *Structured Inequality in Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1980), pp. 343-373; Joyce A. Green, “Towards a Détente with History: Confronting Canada’s Colonial Legacy”, *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 12 (Fall 1995), pp. 85-105; Norman Zlotkin and Donald R. Colborne, “Internal Canadian Imperialism and the Native People”, in John Saul and Craig Heron (eds), *Imperialism, Nationalism and Canada* (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1977), pp. 161-185; and Rennie Warburton, “Status, Class and the Politics of Canadian Aboriginal Peoples”, *Studies in Political Economy* 54 (Fall 1997), pp. 119-141.

<sup>120</sup> John Loxley characterizes the northern areas inhabited mostly by aboriginal peoples as a “divergent economy”, which “like most underdeveloped national economies of the world...lacks internal linkages because what is produced locally is not consumed locally and what is consumed locally is not produced locally”. According to Loxley, imports constitute a large part of the native communities and there is a “high dependence...on state transfer payments from outside the region”. John Loxley, “The ‘Great Northern’ Plan”, *Studies in Canadian Political Economy* 6 (Autumn 1981), p.158.

<sup>121</sup> Jack Hicks, “On the Application of Theories of ‘Internal Colonialism’ to Inuit Societies”, Presentation for the Annual Conference of the Canadian Political Science Association, Winnipeg, June 5, 2004, p. 1; Green, “Decolonization and Recolonization in Canada”, p. 53.

<sup>122</sup> Ron Bourgeault, “Race and Class Under Mercantilism”, in B.S. Bolaria and P.S. Li (eds), *Racial Oppression in Canada* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1988), p. 42; Abele and Stasiulis, “Canada as a ‘White Settler Colony’”, p. 252-3.

disadvantageous terms”.<sup>123</sup> And because Canadian fur traders were able to use the practices, skills and knowledge that aboriginal peoples already possessed as hunters and gathers to realize large profits in Europe, it was obviously in the interest of British and French merchants to ‘co-operate’ with the native population. But when the profitability of the fur trade declined, and Canada was making the transition from mercantile to industrial capitalism, it was more profitable for the emerging Canadian state to import farmers and craftsmen from Europe, where the skills had been accumulated over a number of generations, than to spend the time and financial resources needed to provide Aboriginals with the cultural prerequisites for participation in disciplined and coordinated economic activity. The impracticality of plantation agriculture, as well as the sparse populations of aboriginal peoples in early Canadian history, also created conditions where they were “eliminated, assimilated or pushed into distant corners of the hinterland” since the lands that natives occupied, not their labour, was sought in the transition to industrial capitalism.<sup>124</sup>

These particular circumstances in Canada have been made clear by Erik Olin Wright when he makes the distinction between exploitative and non-exploitative oppression in his analysis of colonization. Wright notes that in the case of exploitative oppression, the exploiter needs the exploited for their effort (i.e. labour). He points out that this

---

<sup>123</sup> H. Clare Pentland, *Labour and Capital in Canada* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1981), p. 23.

<sup>124</sup>P. Ehrensaft and W. Armstrong, “The Formation of Dominion Capitalism”, in A. Moscovitch and G. Drover (eds), *Inequality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), pp. 140-4.



kind of colonization did not occur in the case of North American Indians, and policies of genocide or “displacement” often ensued because aboriginal labour was not required by European conquerors.<sup>125</sup>

As a result of these circumstances, aboriginal peoples have not been integrated into the Canadian labour force, remaining marginalized from productive processes on unviable reserves and isolated northern communities. The lack of economic potential in these areas has meant that they are heavily subsidized by the Canadian state. As will be discussed further in Chapter Nine, any “economic development” that occurs largely takes the form of a rentier economy, where royalties, subsidies and various forms of welfare are distributed in traditional kinship networks.<sup>126</sup> The surpluses used to reproduce aboriginal communities are not generated internally, thereby making the native population perpetually dependent on the wider society for funds.

The focus on aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations as the primary cleavage in Canadian history, however, has prevented political economy from coming to terms with the unviability of these areas. The tendency to see the native population as having a

---

<sup>125</sup> Erik Olin Wright, *Class Counts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 11. For similar views see David Bedford and Dan Irving, *The Tragedy of Progress* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2001) p. 25; and Peter Kulchyski, “Socialism and Native Americans”, *Rabble*, December 11, 2003.

<sup>126</sup> In the case of aboriginal groups in the north, in fact, Mel Watkins notes that it is aboriginal land, not labour, that is sought since “non-native labour is generally readily available from the South” since it is “trained” and “disciplined” in comparison...”. Watkins, “From Underdevelopment to Development”, *Dene Nation*, pp. 88-91. He maintains that, in any event, this is not a significant problem since aboriginal peoples may not want to become wage labourers since this would “deny them their role as the land-owners who should be entitled to appropriate the rents from projects which they choose to let proceed on their land”.

completely distinct and separate identity from non-aboriginals has led political economists to assume that it must be possible to develop autonomous and self-reliant aboriginal economies and political systems. Attempts to understand the "material basis of the persistence of an aboriginal sense of collective identity",<sup>127</sup> in fact, has resulted in a large body of literature in political economy documenting what has been referred to as the "domestic mode of production", "mixed economy" or "dual economy" in native communities. Stemming from the works of Peter Usher,<sup>128</sup> this research stresses the "continuing importance of Native land-based productive activity for northern Native survival".<sup>129</sup> According to Usher, in the north there are two modes of production - "domestic" and "capitalist" where "the capitalist mode has been superimposed on the pre-existing domestic mode, but the latter survives in modified form. The two coexist not as isolated, unconnected enclaves, but rather as interrelated parts of a larger social formation, that of industrial capitalism on the frontier".<sup>130</sup> Usher maintains that while industrial capitalism is dominant, the domestic mode continues to reproduce itself and the distinctive character of aboriginal societies. As a result of this research, political economists point out that this kind of economy "has

---

<sup>127</sup> Simmons, "Against Capital", p.151.

<sup>128</sup> This work was largely initiated by Peter Usher. See for example, "Staple Production and Ideology in Northern Canada,"; "The Class System, Metropolitan dominance and Northern Development in Canada", *Antipode* 8:3 (1976); "The North: One Land, Two Ways of Life", in L.D. McCann (ed) *Heartland and Hinterland: A Geography of Canada*; and Peter Usher et al., "Reclaiming the Land: Aboriginal Title, Treaty Rights and Land Claims in Canada", *Applied Geography* 12:2 (April 1992), pp. 109-32.

<sup>129</sup> Abele and Stasiulis, "Canada as a 'White Settler Colony'", p. 254.

<sup>130</sup> Usher, "The North", p.491. See also Usher, "Evaluating Country Food", *Arctic* 29(2), pp. 105-20; Usher, "The Class System", pp. 28-32; Usher, "Staple Production"; and Watkins, "From Underdevelopment to Development", *Dene Nation*, p. 94.

proved viable and relatively stable over several decades” since it is able “to make the best use of all available economic opportunities in areas where wage employment is scarce and unreliable...”.<sup>131</sup> Melville Watkins even argues that the welfare component of these transfers has “hidden dimensions” that should be “appreciate[d]” since “it avoids integration into the wage economy, and is therefore a form of resistance [to capitalism]”.<sup>132</sup>

But the “viable” and “stable” character of this kind of economy mostly involves just providing food for the local population, which is a very small amount of what it costs to maintain native communities. Today aboriginal peoples expect all the amenities and infrastructure required to live a modern existence – running water and central heating, roads, schools, hospitals, recreation centres, and so forth. Even hunting and fishing must be subsidized because modern technology such as rifles, snowmobiles and powerboats are used to acquire the “country food” needed for aboriginal peoples’ “subsistence lifestyle”.<sup>133</sup> This “way of life”, therefore, cannot be considered to be “viable”, “stable” or even a “mode of production”. It is actually a form of distribution

---

<sup>131</sup> Abele, “Understanding What Happened Here”, pp. 128-9.

<sup>132</sup> Watkins, “From Underdevelopment to Development”, *Dene Nation*, p. 92. See also Simmons, *Against Capital*, p. iv and Kulchyski, “Socialism and Native Americans” for a similar viewpoint.

<sup>133</sup> For a discussion of the subsidization required, see Edmund Searles, “Fashioning selves and traditions: Case studies in personhood and experience in Nunavut”, *American Review of Canadian Studies* 31:1-2 (Spring-Summer, 2001), pp. 21-36 and George Wenzel, “Inuit Subsistence and Hunter Support in Nunavut”, in J. Dahl and J. Hicks (eds), *Nunavut: Inuit Regain Control of their Land and Lives* (Copenhagen: International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2000), pp. 178-88.

or “allocation”,<sup>134</sup> since it consumes far more than it produces and exists as a parasitical appendage on the wider society. As a result, it does not constitute “resistance” to capitalism because it is completely irrelevant to its existence.

The mystification of the inherent dependency of the “domestic mode of production”, caused by focusing on “rights” rather than productivity and class, is related to another problem in Canadian political economy. This is the exaggeration and romanticization of aboriginal cultural development that constantly occurs – a circumstance accelerated by the demands to include “Aboriginal perspectives” in the field. There is a general denial of the gap in productivity, scale and complexity that differentiates aboriginal groups from modern nation-states. It is not understood that the “domestic mode of production” essentially consists of the remnants of hunting and gathering practices that existed historically, for all cultures, in the context of Stone Age technology and the production of very small surpluses. Therefore, preserving such economies today means that they must rely on an external mode of production with much more efficient labour processes, preventing aboriginal communities from ever becoming “self-reliant”.

---

<sup>134</sup>Giacomo Luciani, in fact, calls states associated with this type of economy an “allocation” or “exoteric” (as opposed to “production”) state because these economies are “predominantly based on revenue accruing directly from abroad”. The circumstances that he describes are very similar to the dynamics of distribution that occur in aboriginal communities that lack an economic base. For a further discussion see Giacomo Luciani, “Allocation vs. Production States: A Theoretical Framework”, in Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani (eds), *The Rentier State* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 63-82. See also, Frances Widdowson, “The Political Economy of Nunavut: Internal Colony or Rentier Territory?”, Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, June 2005, for the application of the concept of a “rentierism” to aboriginal communities.

This denial of the developmental gap between traditional aboriginal societies and modern nation-states can be seen in Abele's quotation provided at the beginning of this section. Abele notes that "Indigenous nations possessing several languages, that farmed, fished, hunted and gathered in relative environmental balance, that were allied, federated, and sometimes at war, and that were internally organized in a variety of ways" had lands in what is now Canada "pass from [their] control". In this passage, Abele implies that the level of development present in North America before contact was similar to the European countries that settled the area, making it difficult to comprehend why Europeans "entirely reorganized the political map of the continent" and "push[ed] the original landholders to the margins". But what is not made clear is that the features of "Indigenous nations" that Abele points to are indicative of the lower productivity, smaller scale and simple organization of aboriginal groups relative to European immigrants. The socially fragmented "several languages" that existed, for example, were indicative of the lack of political integration in North America (i.e. it consisted of several tribal groupings, not "Indigenous nations"),<sup>135</sup> while the "relative environmental balance" reflected the unproductive Stone Age technology and subsistence economies of hunter-gatherers

---

<sup>135</sup> One work in political economy even maintains that "the depiction of indigenous peoples as preliterate has devalued the rich and varied forms of literacy that have long been central to many First Nations cultures". Wotherspoon and Satzewich, *First Nations*, p. xxiv. The sources used to make this claim is Battiste, 1986 ["Micmac Literacy and Cognitive Assimilation", in J. Barman, Y. Hebert and D. McCaskill (eds), *Indian Education in Canada: Volume 1: The Legacy* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1986), pp. 23-44].

and horticulturalists (who used less efficient slash and burn methods in comparison to the European system of field agriculture with draught animals and ploughs).<sup>136</sup> These differences in development, in conjunction with the exploitative character of capitalism, clearly explains why European governments were capable of “literally as well as ideologically pushing the original landholders to the margins”.

But if there is a great deal of evidence to support the argument that large differences in productivity, scale and complexity between aboriginal societies and modern nation-states exist, why is there such a reluctance to incorporate this into a political economy of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations? For the same reason that the Royal Commission dismissed these perspectives – it is not consistent with the political objectives of those undertaking the analysis. Evolutionary theories undermine the agenda of parallelism, and therefore it is deemed that evolutionary perspectives are insulting to aboriginal groups. Most of the political economists studying aboriginal issues, in fact, were also involved in the development of the Royal Commission’s *Final Report*.<sup>137</sup> The result has been an impoverishment of our understanding of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations – an impoverishment that is apparent in the Royal Commission’s conceptualization of aboriginal dependency.

---

<sup>136</sup> In subsistence and pre-market economies the surpluses produced are very small and consumed communally, which explains how aboriginal peoples alleged ecological sensitivity. For a further discussion of the unproductive nature of pre-contact aboriginal economies see Phillips, *Inside Capitalism*, p. 9.

<sup>137</sup> The following political economists (or those who claim to have some allegiance to the field) were involved in providing research/guidance to the Royal Commission: Frances Abele, Michael Asch, Mel Watkins, Peter Usher, John Loxley, Howard Adams, Peter Kulchyski, and Peter Douglas Elias.

## WHAT ARE WE AFRAID OF?

Besides the postmodern turn in the social sciences, there are two main reasons for this absence of analyses of uneven and combined development with respect to understanding aboriginal dependency - one scientific and the other political.

Scientifically, this theoretical perspective is perceived as inadequate for explaining aboriginal dependency because it is assumed to rely on the "culture of poverty" concept, which maintains that certain cultures have characteristics that result in their impoverishment. As Eleanor Leacock explains, such an explanation is generally rejected for "distorting the realities of both class structure and ethnic identity" and glossing over the oppressive character of colonialism.<sup>138</sup> Such criticism is particularly pronounced when claims about unevenness in development are erroneously assumed to be always linked to racial characteristics.

As well as this scientific objection, the framework of uneven and combined development is also criticized politically for "blaming the victims of discrimination and exploitation for their own oppression".<sup>139</sup> Conceptualizing the economies and

---

<sup>138</sup> Leacock, "Marxism and Anthropology", p. 268; Rodolfo Stavenhagen, "Decolonizing Applied Social Sciences", *Human Organization* 30 (1971).

<sup>139</sup> Eleanor Leacock, "Education, Socialization, and the 'Culture of Poverty'", in Annette T. Rubinstein (ed), *Schools Against Children* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970); Anthony Leeds, "The Concept of the 'Culture of Poverty'", in Eleanor Leacock (ed) *The Culture of Poverty* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971). In the case of aboriginal peoples in Canada, John Loxley, following Peter Douglas Elias, argues that "such stereotype 'Indian problems' as 'slowness to adjust or adapt to change', 'difficulty of keeping time', have no basis in historical fact... and do not represent cultural barriers but simply another form of blaming the victim". John Loxley, "The 'Great Northern' Plan", p. 159.

political systems of those societies that retain remnants of hunting and gathering and horticultural features as less developed than capitalist nation-states is largely seen as an ideological ploy to justify the marginalization of indigenous peoples.<sup>140</sup> This is similar to the Royal Commission's argument that it should not make proposals to resolve the "so-called 'Aboriginal' problem" since "identifying it as an Aboriginal problem inevitably places the onus on Aboriginal people to desist from 'troublesome behaviour'".<sup>141</sup> As a result of these political concerns, there is increasing pressure to combine advocacy with social science, and to shape research so that it supports the goals of indigenous movements.<sup>142</sup>

---

<sup>140</sup> John Loxley, for example, maintains that approaches that "divide the north into a white, industrial, modern north and a native, backward, traditional north" because of the latter's "absence of skills, failure to adjust to job opportunities, excessive population growth rates, lack of leadership and remoteness", as well as its "traditional value systems" that inhibit progress are "at worst racist and at best oversimplified, static and ahistorical". According to Loxley, "it is racist to the extent that it equates white northerners with industrialisation and progress and native people with backwardness" since "it is at a loss to explain the existence in the north of native workers or native business people" or success stories where certain native communities, such as Matheson Island, "which is largely self-reliant with a high standard of living and little unemployment or welfare". He also asserts that "it is static and ahistorical in that it treats the problem of the poverty of native people as being almost that of an original state i.e. as a problem of undevelopment, as if native people had no history and are living now more or less as they have done since earliest times". Instead, Loxley advocates the use of a Marxian variant of dependency theory "which acknowledges the vital importance of world exchange relationships in the shaping of the economies of underdeveloped regions but which, at the same time, subordinates these to the social relationships of production which underlie them". Loxley, "The 'Great Northern' Plan", p. 155. Approaches that divide the north into "industrial" and "traditional" and those that focus on "world exchange relationships", however, are not mutually exclusive explanations as the above discussion of the framework of Uneven and Combined Development has shown.

<sup>141</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 2.

<sup>142</sup> Leacock, "Marxism and Anthropology", p. 259; Kathleen Gough, "New Proposals for Anthropologists", *Current Anthropology* 9 (1968); Robert Paine (ed). *Advocacy and Anthropology: First Encounters* (Newfoundland: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1985); Noel Dyck, "Telling it like it is' Some Dilemmas of Fourth World Ethnography and Advocacy", in Dyck and Waldram (eds), *Anthropology, Public Policy and Native Peoples in Canada*, pp. 192-212.



Both of these objections, however, rely on a misrepresentation of the theory of uneven and combined development. A fundamental tenet of this perspective is that combination is equally as important as unevenness. In the case of the combination of the capitalist mode of production with pre-capitalist modes, in fact, it is more important, because, as was explained earlier, capitalism acts to draw other systems into its orbit and break them down. This means that, in the contemporary economy, capitalism is at the root of all poverty. This being said, however, it is clear that different economic and political characteristics can predispose both success and barriers to accomplishment in this system, since capitalism doesn't make everyone poor. Because of the different success rates of various ethnic groups between and within nation-states dominated by capitalism, an explanation in addition to the exploitative and oppressive character of this mode of production is required.

This more comprehensive explanation can be found in the unevenness of development that exists both between and within different societies. Pre-capitalist cultures that are integrated into capitalist systems face the disadvantage of not having developed the skills, values and attitudes that are required in a more productive and complex global economy and society. With respect to aboriginal peoples, for example, three characteristics of their traditional modes of production will be discussed in Chapters Six and Seven - a task orientation instead of working by the clock, the predominance of kinship relations, and resistance to absorbing abstract forms of instruction.

Recognizing this unevenness in development, however, is hindered by the confusion of culture and race,<sup>143</sup> and the fear that identifying the unproductive, tribal and unscientific character of aboriginal traditions is somehow "racist".<sup>144</sup> The rejection of the ideas of historical progress and cultural evolution in Canadian political economy, as well as the avoidance of any analysis examining productivity and surplus extraction, can largely be explained by the confusion of culture and race, and the fear that the identification of the pre-class and unproductive character of aboriginal cultures is somehow "racist".

It is erroneously assumed that a recognition of the undeveloped economies, political systems and "world views" of aboriginal peoples must mean that there are some physical or genetic characteristics that distinguishes them from "Whites", even though, as has been explained earlier, race (based on genetic characteristics) is separate from culture (learned attributes). Although racist attitudes have been used throughout history to justify both exploitative and non-exploitative forms of oppression, this was

---

<sup>143</sup>This can be seen in the use of words like "cultural genocide" and "cultural racism" to criticize attempts to develop aboriginal cultures, when "genocide" and "racism" are generally used to refer to the extermination of, or discrimination against, a race of people. For an example of this see Bedford and Irving, *The Tragedy of Progress*, pp.11-12; and Adams, *A Tortured People*, p.29.

<sup>144</sup> Such a fear, in fact, is completely justified. In response to a paper that I presented at the 2003 Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association – "Separate but Unequal: The Political Economy of Aboriginal Dependency", which took great pains to distinguish between racist and non-racist evolutionary theories, the following comment was put forward: "from Widdowson's racist evolutionary perspective, the rhythms of hunting and gathering cultures could not adapt to the abstract conceptions of time necessary to coordinate production – hence aboriginal dependency". Albert C. Peeling with the assistance of Val Napoleon, "Aboriginal Governance: An Annotated Bibliography", Prepared for the First Nations Governance Centre, University of Saskatchewan.

an incorrect interpretation of historical circumstances due to the aforementioned confusion between culture and race. The ideological requirements of capitalism have historically prevented a recognition that it was environmental circumstances, not genetic factors, that retarded the economic and political development of hunter-gatherers and horticulturalists before contact, and their subsequent difficulties integrating into the capitalist mode of production.

The fact that incorrect racial interpretations of unevenness were used to justify the exploitation and oppression of less economically and politically developed peoples, however, does not mean that 1) unevenness does not exist or 2) that a recognition of unevenness, in itself, will lead to oppression. The latter assertion, in fact, is what Jared Diamond has referred to as acting to "confuse an explanation of causes with a justification or acceptance of results". As Diamond explains, "what use one makes of a historical explanation is a question separate from the explanation itself". He also notes that

understanding is more often used to try to alter an outcome than to repeat or perpetuate it. That's why psychologists try to understand the minds of murderers and rapists, why social historians try to understand genocide, and why physicians try to understand the causes of human disease. Those investigators do not seek to justify murder, rape, genocide, and illness. Instead, they seek to use their understanding of a chain of causes to interrupt the chain.<sup>145</sup>

---

<sup>145</sup> Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel*, p.17.

In other words, recognizing the unevenness in development that led to European conquest does not necessarily mean condoning the terrible harm wreaked upon the aboriginal population. Actually, such a justification is only possible when unevenness is erroneously interpreted in racial terms, where it is incorrectly assumed that less economically and politically developed peoples cannot, because of their race, integrate into capitalism. Understanding the unevenness in development between hunting and gathering/horticultural features and industrial capitalism as cultural, on the other hand, can help us "interrupt the chain" by addressing the roots of aboriginal dependency.

What needs to be stressed is that there is nothing about integrating societies with hunting and gathering or horticultural traditions into more developed modes of production that makes their dependency inevitable. Cultural characteristics, unlike genetic factors, can be transformed through the process of learning. This is why aboriginal cultures have changed dramatically in only a few generations, when such a transformation took thousands of years in other areas in the world. It also explains the success of a number of natives in the broader social context. This process of combination, however, is inhibited by isolating aboriginal people from economic, political, and scientific developments occurring in the wider society. As will be argued later on in the dissertation, any solution for aboriginal dependency requires transitional programs that bridge the gap in cultural development, not a denial of its existence.

The Royal Commission made these assumptions, resulting in its advocacy for funding and promoting various programs and services that make it difficult for Aboriginals to participate in modern society. As will be shown in the following chapters, the historical analysis of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples obscured the unevenness in economic and political development that exists between hunting and gathering/horticultural tribes and capitalist nation-states, maintaining that they are just "different". As a result, initiatives that it supported, such as land claims and self-government, will retain skills and attitudes that are associated with obsolete modes of production. This will maintain and perhaps increase the dependency of the aboriginal population for which the Royal Commission claimed that it was attempting to find solutions.

**PART II**  
**ABORIGINAL PARTICIPATION IN THE FUR TRADE,  
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT  
AND EARLY INDUSTRIALIZATION**

**Chapter Five**  
**Mercantile “Cooperation”  
during the Fur Trade**

In previous chapters, it was noted that the Royal Commission divided history into four distinct periods. After discussing the first historical period (the "Separate Worlds" that existed before contact), the Royal Commission goes on to identify and describe the next three - "Contact and Cooperation", "Displacement and Assimilation" and "Negotiation and Renewal". It maintained that the period of contact and cooperation was a time when "peaceful coexistence and non-interference" prevailed.<sup>1</sup> This period, according to the Royal Commission, lasted longer in some parts of the country than in others. It is maintained that in the Maritimes, for example, "cooperation" continued to about 1780,<sup>2</sup> while in Ontario and British Columbia it remained until 1830 and 1870 respectively.<sup>3</sup> And although not specifically mentioned in its historical periodization,

---

<sup>1</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p.4.

<sup>2</sup> This view is consistent with one of the studies prepared for the Commission by Clare Brant, where it is maintained that, in the case of the Mi'kmaq, a second period of history took place "from the early 1500s to 1783, which was characterized by early contact with Europeans and increasingly by the exploitation of the fur trade". Clare Clifton Brant, "Suicide in Canadian Aboriginal Peoples", *The Path to Healing* (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1993), p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.40. It is also noted in a few studies prepared for the Royal Commission that 1870 begins the period during which the aboriginal groups of the Plains started to become dependent because it marked the depletion of buffalo herds and the dramatic reduction of hunting. For a discussion of this, see Andrew Bear Robe "The Historical, Legal and Current Basis for Siksika Nation Governance,

the Royal Commission argued in other parts of the *Final Report* that the Arctic largely remained left to its own devices until World War II and there were relatively few attempts at assimilation.<sup>4</sup> It can be inferred, therefore, that the "Contact and Cooperation" period lasted up to the 1950s in this area.<sup>5</sup>

Understanding the factors that led to these cooperative relations is important, the Royal Commission argued, because it will indicate what is required to build a more respectful and reciprocal relationship between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples in the future. Because aboriginal peoples were not dependent during this period, and more cooperative relations prevailed, the Royal Commission implied that examining the circumstances that made this possible can help to restore a more equal and balanced relationship today.<sup>6</sup>

---

Including its Future Possibilities within Canada", *For Seven Generations* and Ken Rasmussen, "The Case of Saskatchewan-Aboriginal Relations", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>4</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 454-44, 2(2), pp.513-14; 4, p.20. This is also the opinion of a few studies prepared for the Royal Commission, such as Ken Coates, "'Hardly a Grand Design': Aboriginal Resettlement in the Yukon Territory After World War II", *For Seven Generations* and Jon Pierce, and Robert Hornal, "Aboriginal People and Mining in Nunavut, Nunavik and Northern Labrador", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 179, file 7474-4.1, volume 5.2.4.3..

<sup>5</sup>This period probably ranged from the 1940s to the 1960s. In studies prepared for the Royal Commission it is noted that Labrador's "economic problems had reached a crisis" by the early 1940's (Sinaaq Enterprises Inc., "Community Economic Case Study: Nain, Labrador", *For Seven Generations*), while it is maintained in the case of the Cumberland Sound Inuit that they maintained relatively independent until the 1960s (Praxis Research Associates, "A Case Study of the Inuit Economy: Pangnirtung, Northwest Territories", *For Seven Generations*). Another report notes that, in the case of the southern and central Yukon, all but one trading post closed in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Martin Weinstein, "The Ross River Dena" A Yukon Aboriginal Economy", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>6</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 31-2.

In explaining why this cooperative period remained longer in the more western and northern regions of the country, the Royal Commission offered two explanations. The first was historical and materialist, arguing that native involvement in the fur trade,<sup>7</sup> the large numbers of aboriginal peoples in comparison to Europeans that existed until the 1700s,<sup>8</sup> and the need to form alliances with aboriginal tribes to carry out their wars in North America,<sup>9</sup> all facilitated cooperative relations with the native population and respect for their cultures and "ways of life". As the Royal Commission pointed out,

relations were established in a context in which Aboriginal peoples initially had the upper hand in population and in terms of their knowledge of the land and how to survive in it. These factors contributed to early patterns of co-operation and helped to overcome the colonial attitudes and pretensions the first European arrivals may originally have possessed. The newcomers, far from their home ports and scattered in a vast land of which they had little practical knowledge, of necessity had to develop friendly relations with at least some original inhabitants.<sup>10</sup>

This relationship was cemented further with additional economic and political developments. These developments were summarized in a quotation of historian J.R. Miller's provided by the Royal Commission describing the early relationship between the French and aboriginal groups. According to Miller,

from the time of Champlain's voyages till the dawn of the eighteenth century, the French came for fish, fur, exploration, and evangelization. The Indian was an indispensable partner - frequently a dominant as well as a necessary partner - in all these activities. To preserve fish, to gather fur, to probe and map the land, and to spread the Christian message, cooperation by the Indians was

---

<sup>7</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.105.

<sup>8</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp.100-2.

<sup>9</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.102.

<sup>10</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp.100-1.



essential. For their part the Indians found it acceptable, and occasionally desirable, to humour the newcomers. To a minor degree the explanation could be found in Indian traditions of sharing and avoiding coercion of others. A more important reason for their toleration of and cooperation with the French was that the newcomers' activities were compatible with the continuation of Indian ways. Fishing boats were no threat, given the rich stocks of fish and the brief landfalls by fishermen. Fur traders were a source of valued goods, and their activities did not require much change in Indian economic activities. Explorers and cartographers were less obviously useful...[b]ut cooperation with them was necessary to maintain the commercial relationship. The same consideration explained the grudging acceptance of missionaries in Indian villages.<sup>11</sup>

At the same time as providing support for this historical and materialist explanation, however, the Royal Commission also developed a more idealistic framework. Instead of perceiving the above factors as "help[ing] to overcome the colonial attitudes and pretensions the first European arrivals may originally have possessed", such "attitudes and pretensions" were abstracted from their historical and material context and turned into independent, rather than dependent, variables. They became the focal point of the Royal Commission's analysis, and it was merely stated in several areas of the *Final Report* that Europeans abstractly developed and applied philosophies during this historical period that respected aboriginal cultures, recognizing their "title" to lands and indigenous "sovereignty". The Royal Commission simply asserted that during this period European colonizers were less likely to covet native lands and regard aboriginal peoples as inferior heathens who needed to be inculcated with Christian beliefs.<sup>12</sup> As a result of these attitudes, the Royal Commission concluded, Europeans

---

<sup>11</sup> Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, cited in *Final Report*, 1, p.101.

<sup>12</sup>In its chapter on the "Contact and Cooperation" period, for example, the Royal Commission merely states that European territorial "ambitions would drive them to claim these lands as their own, to

were more inclined to develop equal and reciprocal relations with aboriginal peoples, leaving native cultures and "ways of life" intact.<sup>13</sup> With these assertions, there was no attempt to explain *why* Europeans held these attitudes at this time, abandoning them in the next historical period.

But while the Royal Commission did refer to these two different kinds of explanations throughout its *Final Report*, it will be shown below that it is the idealistic framework that dominates its understanding of the history of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations. The Royal Commission became intent on showing that the abstract principles of "respect" and "recognition" existed in early Canadian history, leading to "sharing" and "mutual responsibility" between Aboriginals and Non-aboriginals, and that these attitudes could be resuscitated at will to create the same relationship. This view was related to its uncritical adoption of aboriginal peoples' "cyclical" framework for understanding the past, and the unsubstantiated beliefs that were deployed in its support. In accepting this view, history was perceived as repeating itself, whereby ideas, values and practices become isolated from the modes of production out of which they emerged. With this "conception of history", it was maintained that

---

proclaim their exclusive sovereignty over the Aboriginal inhabitants, and to issue instructions either to drive the Aboriginal peoples farther inland or to subdue them entirely..." (*Final Report*, 1, p. 102). It also points out that "European conceptions of the inferiority of Aboriginal peoples" based on their conviction "that they were heathens", resulted in the assumption "that it was their religious duty to convert Aboriginal peoples to Christianity. This intolerant view led to sustained efforts at missionary proselytization by the various Christian denominations...that undermined Aboriginal cultures and social structures" (*Final Report*, 1, pp. 104-5). Such an explanation, however, does not really help readers understand the changes in the relationship with aboriginal peoples because European colonizers always held Christian beliefs and territorial ambitions.

because "there was a slow downturn" in relations during the displacement and assimilation period "where adherence to the principles of equality and respect was...negligible", there will inevitably be a "slow upswing as efforts are made to renew the original relationship and to restore the balance that it represented".<sup>14</sup>

With this "conception of history", therefore, the "guarded appreciation of the other's distinctive cultures and a recognition of certain underlying commonalities" that the Royal Commission claimed existed during the "Contact and Cooperation" period are expected to return, even if the historical and material factors that led to the "slow downturn" still exist. This led the Royal Commission to focus on the original intent and meaning of historical legal documents, because it was assumed that the values and attitudes embodied in them, as well as the practices that they promoted, can be restored today regardless of their incompatibility with modern requirements. A kind of inverted logic was put forward, where it was argued that the "equality" between newcomers and natives that was "symbolized in the ceremonies and speeches accompanying the negotiation of the early treaties and alliances"<sup>15</sup> could be restored simply by appealing to similar abstractions.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 101-2; 2, p.465.

<sup>14</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp.34-5.

<sup>15</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.678.

<sup>16</sup> This view pervades Part Three of Volume One of the Final Report: "Building the Foundation of A Renewed Relationship". *Final Report*, 1, pp.607-697.

The Royal Commission, in fact, did not perceive any incompatibility between the circumstances of the past and the requirements of the present because, as was explained in Chapter Three, it rejected notions of historical progress. It did not adequately recognize the fundamental differences in productivity, scale, and complexity that existed between prehistoric aboriginal societies and European nations developing out of feudalism, or the progressive changes that occurred in the capitalist system throughout Canada's history. As a result, there was no clear and consistent analysis of how aboriginal societies were dramatically transformed when they were integrated into the fur trade, or why a relationship of "peaceful co-existence and non-interference" emerged and then waned at different times across the country.

In addition to its tendency to separate the attitudes and values of European colonizers from their historical and material context in many parts of its Final Report, the Royal Commission's understanding of the variables influencing cooperative relations was also hindered by its inability to recognize how the three materialist factors it identifies - the fur trade, the small numbers of Europeans that were present in the "Contact and Cooperation" period and the need to make alliances with aboriginal groups - were all interrelated.<sup>17</sup> They were all part of a historically specific combination of economic

---

<sup>17</sup> This interrelation is understood to some extent in a study prepared for the Royal Commission that states that "the point cannot be overemphasized that in the wars with France and later the United States, Britain's future in North America hinged on the active support -- or the neutrality -- of Indian nations. These alliances had a value to each of the parties that related not just to war against an agreed enemy, but also to trade and commerce -- furs, fish, game, and manufactures". The study goes on to argue that the presents provided to aboriginal groups to obtain such support "included guns, powder, shot, tobacco,

and political circumstances particular to the mercantile period. Such circumstances arose out of the transition from feudalism to capitalism that occurred in Europe, where merchants associated with nations such as England, France and Spain expanded their enterprises to the New World to extract additional resources and increase profits for themselves and their royal patrons. This period was qualitatively different than the agricultural and industrial developments that occurred later because it involved transitional economic and political processes that linked unevenly developed modes of production together.

In what is now Canada, the result of these historical and material conditions was the fur trade. A small population, cold climate and a lack of infrastructure meant that more intensive forms of economic activity such as agriculture were unprofitable initially in what is now Canada, necessitating the use of aboriginal groups to extract the most plentiful and readily available resource - fur - up until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>18</sup> The small numbers of European settlers during the mercantilist period, and the increasingly volatile relations between European powers and aboriginal groups that the competition for furs caused, also resulted in the formation of alliances with aboriginal groups to maintain control over sections of North America to facilitate trade - i.e. the "cooperative" relations to which the Royal Commission referred.

---

cloth and provisions. They were intended to support combatants and their communities in times of war and to assist with the conduct of the fur trade in times of peace". Thalassa Research, "Nation to Nation: Indian Nation-Crown Relations in Canada", *For Seven Generations*.

In contrast to the idealism that dominated the Royal Commission's analysis, it will be shown throughout this chapter that "cooperation" ensued during this period because it was profitable to accommodate aboriginal cultures and practices in the pursuit of mercantile wealth, in contrast to the period of agricultural settlement and then the gradual industrialization that followed (resulting in the period of displacement and assimilation). In the early mercantile phase of Canadian development, aboriginal peoples became integral participants because their hunting and gathering practices could be easily incorporated into the emerging capitalist system.<sup>19</sup> Agricultural and industrial development, on the other hand, required much more productive, disciplined and organized forms of labour, necessitating a radical transformation of aboriginal productive processes and political structures. And although the pursuit of mercantile wealth did not originally break down aboriginal economies and political relationships, the introduction of Iron Age technology and the transformation from production for use to production for exchange that occurred as it incorporated aboriginal groups into the world market dramatically increased their productivity and undermined the "independence" that characterized Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations up until the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries.<sup>20</sup> It is this circumstance, not abstract attitudes/values or

---

<sup>18</sup> C. Heidenreich and A. Ray, *The Early Fur Trade: A Study in Cultural Interaction* (Toronto: McClelland&Stewart, 1976).

<sup>19</sup>Rennie Warburton and Stephen Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia", *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 5 (1985), p. 27.

<sup>20</sup> For a detailed account of how European mercantile imperatives interacted with aboriginal groups in what is now North America, increasing the efficiency of hunting and subsequently depleting various animal species, see Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, pp. 158-194.

culturally respectful legal agreements, which explains the early "cooperation" between  
Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals and the native dependency that emerged thereafter.

#### ROYAL COMMISSION'S ANALYSIS OF "CONTACT AND COOPERATION"

In its historical analysis of the contact and cooperation period, there are essentially  
two distinct areas that the Royal Commission believed important enough to merit  
examination. The first was the fur trade; the second concerned the legal agreements  
that were developed and implemented during this period: the pre-confederation  
treaties and the Royal Proclamation of 1763.<sup>21</sup> It was mainly because of the existence  
of these particular economic circumstances and legal agreements, the Royal  
Commission argued, that "cooperation" was facilitated during this period instead of  
"displacement and assimilation".

#### *The fur trade and cooperation during Canada's early history*

The Royal Commission's analysis of the fur trade was essentially materialist in  
character, and occurred largely in two areas of its Final Report - a section of its  
"Contact and Cooperation" chapter and a few pages in its overview of economic

---

<sup>21</sup> These are the areas specifically mentioned in the Royal Commission's chapter on the "Contact and  
Cooperation" period of Canadian history.

development as it pertains to aboriginal peoples.<sup>22</sup> In these areas of the Final Report, the Royal Commission noted that the interaction between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals during this historical period was subject to the economic requirements of the time. It maintained that the "relationship was characterized by considerable interdependence", where aboriginal peoples were drawn "into the production of staples for markets using technologies derived from European techniques or resulting from North American innovations".<sup>23</sup> There was also a recognition that the fur trade was dependent upon extensive development, where larger geographical areas were incorporated into the global economic system, necessitating movement into the interior of what is now Canada so that European fur traders could cover their costs.<sup>24</sup>

The Royal Commission noted that aboriginal peoples were eager to participate in the fur trade since it was "compatible with Aboriginal patterns of making a living".<sup>25</sup> This was because the fur trade "built on traditional lifestyles in important ways, rather than seeking to displace them" by incorporating aboriginal peoples' modes of production and their previous political alliances into European trade networks.<sup>26</sup> As the Royal Commission pointed out,

Aboriginal people had the skills required to play a major role in the economy of the time, and not only as harvesters. Many of the French and English buyers

---

<sup>22</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp.105-111; 2(2), pp. 782-3.

<sup>23</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 130-1.

<sup>24</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.108.

<sup>25</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 783.

<sup>26</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.783.



remarked on the negotiating prowess of Aboriginal people. There is considerable evidence that groups such as the Iroquois and west coast peoples were adept at playing off the English against the French, or one trading boat against another, to get better prices.<sup>27</sup>

This "negotiating prowess" existed, according to the Royal Commission, because aboriginal peoples had "extensive commercial networks" before contact.<sup>28</sup> The Royal Commission maintained that these networks existed both to exchange surplus foodstuffs and furs, as well as to acquire new technology. As is shown in Figure 6.2. of the *Final Report*, materials such as copper, obsidian, amber, silica, shells and meteoric iron have been found in archaeological sites far from their place of origin, which the Royal Commission assumed indicated the existence of "prehistoric trade" among different aboriginal groups.<sup>29</sup> It also maintained that the "oral histories" of various groups indicated the existence of "peace treaties and trade alliances that permitted nations to extend the range of goods to which they regularly had access and facilitated the diffusion of new technology".<sup>30</sup> And with respect to the north, it is

---

<sup>27</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 783.

<sup>28</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.782. This view is present in two reports prepared for the Royal Commission. One notes that "traditionally, Indian people were great traders. Even before first contact with European adventurers and settlers, Indian societies had developed intricate trading patterns which criss-crossed North and Meso America" (Del C. Anaquod and Vikas Khaladkar, "Case Study — The First Nations Economy in the City of Regina", *For Seven Generations*), while another maintains that "... a well established system of trade in furs/hides, hand-crafted items and other commodities also existed throughout North America before the arrival of the first Europeans. Following European contact, these same trading systems facilitated the development of the fur trade and the subsequent growth and settlement of Canada" (Richard R. Maracle and Associates, "Wildlife Sectoral Study", *For Seven Generations*).

<sup>29</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 418.

<sup>30</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 662.

noted that oral traditions and archaeological finds show that "travel, trade and diplomacy were common among the independent Aboriginal peoples and nations".<sup>31</sup>

The Royal Commission noted that this exchange of materials occurred "not only for profit or material gain as we would understand it from the perspective of a market economy", but to "gain prestige, build or maintain alliances, or cement agreements as well".<sup>32</sup> In the Royal Commission's view, acquiring material goods through trade was important economically, but also because "in some societies, particularly among the Pacific northwest coast peoples, the accumulation of wealth was accompanied by ceremonies for giving it away - the potlatch. Status and prestige were accorded to those who were the most generous".<sup>33</sup>

To facilitate "trade, peace, neutrality, alliance, the use of territories and resources, and protection" before contact, the Royal Commission maintained that a number of "well-established diplomatic processes" existed within the native population.<sup>34</sup> It is argued that aboriginal peoples, in fact, had "their own continental treaty order" made up of alliances such as the Wendat confederacy, which "carried on extensive trade with neighbouring nations such as the Algonquin, Montagnais and Ojibwa".<sup>35</sup> Although these groups had not developed writing, the Royal Commission stated that "elaborate

---

<sup>31</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 417.

<sup>32</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), 782.

<sup>33</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.782.

<sup>34</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 119.

systems were adopted to record and maintain...treaties", including "oral traditions, ceremonies, protocols, customs and laws...".<sup>36</sup> Such diplomatic processes and alliances, according to the Royal Commission, were carried into the "Contact and Cooperation" period to ensure that "peaceful and friendly relations prevailed". Aboriginal confederacies before contact, therefore, "fostered trade and communications networks that were later adapted for trading purposes with the Europeans", and that they "shaped treaty arrangements as well".<sup>37</sup> It argued that "guided by the teachings of the Old Ones, the people survived and flourished. Great nations coexisted. Extensive trade networks thrived. Alliances and confederacies formed for mutual interest, and complex international relationships emerged. Compatible attitudes toward the Creator and Mother Earth formed the basis of agreements among nations. Rules of conduct, whether in peace or in war, governed behaviour".<sup>38</sup>

Although the Royal Commission maintained that "commercial networks" existed before contact and trade was undertaken to some extent for profit, it also implied that prehistoric exchange was qualitatively different in that it was limited by aboriginal philosophies. It argued that, for aboriginal peoples, "the emphasis was on living in balance with nature rather than on accumulating economic surplus or wealth. This

---

<sup>35</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.119-20.

<sup>36</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.120.

<sup>37</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.121.

<sup>38</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 108.

generally meant meeting the food needs of the group and sustaining the ability of the land and sea to continue to provide for its human inhabitants well into the future"<sup>39</sup>.

This view, expressed in its discussion of the fur trade, was consistent with another argument that appears repeatedly throughout the *Final Report* - that aboriginal peoples believe that they were given North America ("Turtle Island") by the Creator to act as stewards of the environment, and therefore they acted with ecological sensitivity in all economic activities, including trade.<sup>40</sup>

But presumably because the Royal Commission assumed that Europeans had no such restrictive philosophies,<sup>41</sup> there were a number of negative consequences as aboriginal peoples were incorporated into the fur trade. This, the Royal Commission argued, along with

the use of new technologies, combined with the need to produce for a market rather than for subsistence, led to the depletion of furbearing animals and to conflict among Aboriginal groups as some pushed into new territories in search of resources. Dependence on an external market brought exposure to the seemingly inevitable boom and bust cycle associated with staple production, a pattern experienced first in the eastern fur trade but repeated across the continent with whales, forest products, fish, seals and minerals up to the present day.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 781.

<sup>40</sup> For examples of this argument see *Final Report*, 1, p. 62, 119, 219; 2(1), pp. 45-6; 120; 2(2), 448; 4, pp. 108-9.

<sup>41</sup> The Royal Commission provides a quotation stating that "greed" was a tendency existing in European states at the time of contact (*Final Report*, 1, p. 88), and notes that such a characteristic is one of the factors having "left their legacy in the social and economic conditions of Aboriginal communities and in the distrust and betrayal felt by Aboriginal people" (*Final Report*, 5, p. 3).

<sup>42</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 783. For the Blackfoot specifically, it is noted that "the westward advance of the fur trade and non-Aboriginal settlement upset this balance and created conflicts between those who were displaced and those upon whose territories they were forced to relocate" (*Final Report*, 1, p. 62).

The Royal Commission also maintained that contact with Europeans brought with the fur trade resulted in "exposure to contagious diseases, which devastated the populations of many Aboriginal societies and disrupted social and economic patterns".<sup>43</sup>

In addition to examining the fur trade in general, the Royal Commission discussed the activities of a few particular groups. The most detailed analysis occurs in the case of the participation of the Wendat (Huron) and Innu (Montagnais) in the early fur trading networks developed by the French. Another, briefer analysis, was made with respect to the Metis. This discussion takes up just a few pages in the Royal Commission's discussion of early economic development in Canada, and pertains to later fur trade developments involving the Hudson's Bay and Northwest Companies.

The Royal Commission's overview of the participation of these different groups tended to focus on the particular characteristics of the aboriginal cultures involved,

---

In its special report, *The High Arctic Relocations*, it is also noted that "Cree Indians supplied with guns by the fur traders drove the Eskimos from the Eastmain River north to about Great Whale River" ("Early impact of Europeans on the Whaling Economy", *The High Arctic Relocations*, Volume II, Part 3). A research study prepared for the Royal Commission also generally argues that aboriginal peoples "were drawn into the fur trade competition among the French, Dutch and British and, increasingly dependent on European goods and arms in particular, they began to engage in ever quickening rounds of intertribal war" (Thomas O. Hueglin, "Exploring Concepts of Treaty Federalism: A Comparative Perspective", *For Seven Generations*).

<sup>43</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.783. Although not mentioned in its discussion of the fur trade, the Royal Commission notes in its health chapter that Europeans also provided aboriginal peoples with alcohol in trade, the effects of which, "were somewhat similar to those of introducing smallpox and other

rather than the mercantile imperatives that led to these groups' integration into the various trading networks and their subsequent transformation. No clear distinction was made, for example, between the early fur trade dominated by the French, and the later, more extensive, institutionalized and complex character of trade organized by the Hudson's Bay Company (and to some extent the Northwest Company) - although it was noted that the Metis were engaged in a wide variety of activities in the latter, and that these activities declined when the Métis could not compete with the advances in transport such as railroads and steamboats.<sup>44</sup> In terms of the French trading networks, it was simply asserted that the French and the Innu and Wendat entered into trade for mutual economic and political benefits, leading to unique forms of commercial and

---

infectious diseases: Aboriginal people had no 'immunity' to alcohol, in the sense that social norms and personal experience can 'protect' against over-consumption". *Final Report*, 3, p. 157.

<sup>44</sup> The Royal Commission points out that "while some [Metis] worked as independent traders or trapped and hunted as primary producers, others worked as labourers, as freighters on the boat brigades, or in clerical and supervisory jobs at trading posts. For a time, their labour was much in demand as inland trading posts expanded in number and geographic scope, requiring staff for the new posts and transporters of furs and trade goods". After the Hudson's Bay Company's merger with the Northwest Company in 1821, it is also explained that the "new opportunities presented themselves in the form of buffalo hunting and the freighting of buffalo hides and furs to the United States in exchange for farm animals, seeds, implements or consumer goods. Expanding settlements also led to the development of a small merchant class and the emergence of skilled tradesmen engaged in the building of churches, housing and commercial establishments and the manufacture of carts" (*Final Report*, 2(2), p. 783). A report prepared for the Royal Commission also notes that "the present condition of the Metis people is a stark contrast to their tremendous commercial achievements of the past. Traditionally the Metis were a commercial nation whose entrepreneurs pursued ventures in national and international trade. The historical evidence of their entrepreneurship is seen in the fur trade with the Hudson's Bay Co., the organized buffalo hunt, the manufacture of pemmican and leather goods and the massive transportation of these goods to the Canadian and World markets" (Manitoba Metis Federation, "A Report on Metis Self-Government in Urban Manitoba", *For Seven Generations*.). Another study also points out the diversity of occupations taken up by the Metis. One of these occupations was the development of the Red River cart. The report notes that "at the peak of the freighting business as many as 7000 men were employed in the operation of the Red River Carts. Considerable employment was involved in the construction of the carts which in the Red River alone numbered as many as 2000. During this period of trade a major demand for leather made from Buffalo hides developed in the United States. The result was large scale harvest of the prairie buffalo, which in time led to their near extinction". (SaskNative

political associations.<sup>45</sup> The French realized these benefits by acquiring aboriginal herbal remedies, clothing, corn surpluses, and transport, but most importantly beaver pelts, from the Wendat and Innu. In exchange, these aboriginal groups received iron and copper tools (such as knives and kettles), glass beads, wool clothing and dried foodstuffs.<sup>46</sup>

The Wendat and the Innu were affected differently by this trade, according to the Royal Commission, because of their "...different modes of subsistence and social organization and unique and well established patterns of political and trade relations before European contact...".<sup>47</sup> The Innu, for example, occupied a prime location in the early fur trade, and used their geographic position to block the northern movement of the French up the Saguenay River to obtain furs of superior quality, thus necessitating the French to form alliances and solidifying the Innu's position as middlemen. The Innu lived in small, nomadic groups, the Royal Commission explained, since short growing seasons prevented them from developing agriculture. As a result, they were unable to accumulate trade goods, giving them less incentive to engage in trade.<sup>48</sup> The Wendat, on the other hand, were more settled and densely

---

Economic Development Corporation, "Metis economic development in Regina", *For Seven Generations*).

<sup>45</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 111.

<sup>46</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp.107-8.

<sup>47</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.111.

<sup>48</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp.107-8.

populated because of their development of food production.<sup>49</sup> This, along with their deeper location in the interior, the Royal Commission argued, led them to become a more attractive trade partner relative to the Innu as the fur trade matured. When the Wendat became the hub of the intertribal trading network in the Great Lakes region, the Royal Commission explained that the Innu were bypassed and largely reverted to their old subsistence patterns.<sup>50</sup> The Jesuits tried to teach the Innu farming and to convert them to Christianity, according to the Royal Commission, but "the extensive seasonal movements of the Innu and their frequent changes in group affiliation made it difficult for missionaries to accomplish this task".<sup>51</sup>

As with its discussion of the Innu and Wendat, the Royal Commission also argued that the particular characteristics of the Metis led to their unique participation in the fur trade. The Metis, unlike other aboriginal peoples, actually came into existence with the fur trade as a result of unions between aboriginal groups and European fur traders.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> The Royal Commission uses the word agriculture, when the correct term is horticulture.

<sup>50</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.109.

<sup>51</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.109.

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, the following studies prepared for the Royal Commission for a discussion of this point: SaskNative Economic Development Corporation (L. Heinemann), "Metis Economic Development in Regina", *For Seven Generations*; James Morrison, "The Robinson Treaties of 1850: A Case Study", *For Seven Generations*; "The Robinson treaties of 1850" and Louise Mandell and E. Ann Gilmour, "Metis land rights in Canada". This view is also put forward for the Metis in northern Ontario, where it is maintained that "Prior to the 1850s, Metis in Ontario were seen as distinct local groups or families, or as individuals involved with the fur trade. Metis communities and families were located in or near trade centres, including Moose Factory, Thunder Bay, Fort Frances, Kenora, and Penetanguishene. Metis in Ontario did not appear to identify themselves as a distinct 'nation', but rather as politically and culturally distinct communities from each other" (David Cameron and Jill Wherrett, "New Relationship, New Challenges: Aboriginal Peoples and the Province of Ontario", *For Seven Generations*). This conception of the Metis is criticized in another study prepared for the Royal Commission, which maintains that "Some writers and, more important, many Metis people in eastern



Their closer association to Europeans, at the same time as retaining aspects of their aboriginal heritage, enabled them to engage in a wider variety of activities than other groups, and often it was Metis people that were able to assume the more lucrative positions as middlemen. As the Royal Commission explained,

at first, the children of mixed unions were brought up in the traditions of their mothers or (less often) their fathers. Gradually, however, distinct Métis cultures emerged, combining European and First Nations or Inuit heritages in unique ways. Economics played a major role in this process. The special qualities and skills of the Métis population made them indispensable members of Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal economic partnerships, and that association contributed to the shaping of their cultures. Using their knowledge of European and Aboriginal languages, their family connections and their wilderness skills, they helped to extend non-Aboriginal contacts deep into the North American interior.<sup>53</sup>

It is also apparent from the Royal Commission's identification of Metis and other aboriginal middlemen<sup>54</sup> that it recognized the increasing division of labour and stratification that the fur trade created within the native population. The Royal

---

Canada oppose this traditional western frontier and fur trade-oriented explanation of the origins of the Metis, however, and focus on the presence of mixed-blood persons and groups from the earliest periods of European exploration and colonization". (Bradford W. Morse and John Giokas, "Do the Métis fall within section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867 and, if so, what are the ramifications in 1993?", *For Seven Generations*). The source used that criticizes this view is Duke Redbird, *We are Metis*, which maintains that "people of mixed heritage have existed from at least the mid-sixteen hundreds or nine months from the time the first white man set foot in North America [in the 1500s]". This view, however, sees "Metis" as purely a racial category apart from a people that developed through resistance to encroachment.

<sup>53</sup> A report prepared for the Royal Commission notes that "as the population of Metis increased, Metis gradually began to replace European workers from Great Britain and the Courier de Bois from central Canada as the major work force in the fur trade. They became the preferred work force for several reasons which included the following: the Metis had important family connections with the Indian tribes which facilitated trade relationships; they had an intimate knowledge of the country and knew how to live off the land; they were indigenous to the area of the trade and provided a more stable work force; and they provided a less costly work force" (SaskNative Economic Development Corporation (L. Heinemann), *Metis Economic Development in Regina*", *For Seven Generations*).

Commission even argues that some aboriginal groups "profited from serving as commercial intermediaries between the Europeans and other Aboriginal nations located further in the interior".<sup>55</sup> In the case of the Wendat, increasing stratification was seen as a positive development when the Royal Commission explained that the fur trade "strengthened Wendat social organization, enhanced the power of hereditary chiefs, and generally enriched their culture".<sup>56</sup>

The above analysis, while not recognizing the qualitative difference of the mercantile imperatives that drew aboriginal peoples into the global economic system and transformed their societies into production for exchange, is relatively consistent with the idea of combination outlined in the previous chapter. In these areas of the Final Report, the interaction between European trading networks and the particular economic and political characteristics of various aboriginal groups are used to explain

---

<sup>54</sup> The Royal Commission mentions the emergence of middlemen in several other aboriginal groups, including the Mi'kmaq, Wuastukwiuk, Innu, Iroquois, Cree and Ojibwa (*Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 782-3).

<sup>55</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.101.

<sup>56</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.109. This positive view of aboriginal peoples taking on the role of middlemen and merchants is also found in a study prepared for the Royal Commission. This study notes that profit accumulation is consistent with aboriginal culture and values because "Aboriginal people were active in the fur trade, assumed a major role in it...and were good traders. One of the names of the Micmac was "Taranteens", which meant trader and which reflected their role as excellent middlemen between the hunters of the North and the agriculturalists of the south. Cree businessmen in the late 1800s in northern Saskatchewan were excellent business people, so good in fact that many of the surrounding business people wanted to restrain their ability to trade. In fact, throughout the whole of contact, Aboriginal people have engaged in trade with those who arrived here and, prior to that, with each other. For example, Oolichan grease was traded far into the interior of the country along trails which became known as "grease trails." In the present day, one has only to examine the huge powwow circuit that has grown up over the last few years or the rapid growth in the sale of cigarettes on Indian reserves to see the great increase in the number of people who are engaging in trade and making a profit, that most fundamental of capitalist activities". David Newhouse, "Modern Aboriginal Economies: Capitalism with an Aboriginal Face", *Sharing the Harvest* (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services, 1993), p.93.

the cooperative character of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations, and even the development of the Metis population itself as a distinct cultural group. The French provided the Wendat and Innu with arms and military support in their conflicts with the Iroquois, in exchange for a preferential trading relationship and aid in their attempts to thwart British expansionism.<sup>57</sup> This mutually beneficial relationship, according to the Royal Commission, led to the development of "treaties...of a type similar to those the European nations were accustomed to making with each other" because "neither support nor neutrality could be demanded at this stage in the relationship" and "it could be achieved only by persuasion and diplomacy".<sup>58</sup>

*The Royal Commission's analysis of pre-confederation legal documents*

Although the above summary indicates that the Royal Commission recognized that the legal documents developed during this period were connected to specific historical and material circumstances such as the small size of European settlements and the relative weakness of colonial governments, these factors were not stressed throughout the rest of the Final Report. Despite its understanding that these "peace and friendship" agreements were mechanisms to facilitate trade, in contrast to the later attempts to free

---

<sup>57</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.122.

<sup>58</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.102. The Royal Commission also notes that "in the early days of colonization the French were usually compelled to seek Aboriginal nations as trading partners and military allies, in that way recognizing the autonomy and independence of the Aboriginal nations with which they sought association" (*Final Report*, 1, p. 111).

up lands for agricultural and then industrial development,<sup>59</sup> most of the Royal Commission's analysis of the pre-confederation treaties and the Royal Proclamation of 1763 tended to abstract these documents from their historical and material foundations. There was no consideration, for example, of the mercantile interests that led the Royal Proclamation to dictate that aboriginal peoples' hunting grounds should not be "molested or disturbed". Instead, this stipulation is merely seen in terms of the British Crown's abstract recognition of aboriginal "title" and "sovereignty". Such a characterization of this document occurs in spite of the fact that a research study prepared for the Royal Commission notes that the Royal Proclamation of 1763 "prescribed the process" that would "provide for an orderly process of land acquisition" so as "to ensure that the significant economic contribution to the fur trade was not disrupted".<sup>60</sup> This study goes on to argue that

the Royal Proclamation itself set up what could be seen as the first and largest Indian reserve in British-Canadian history: the hunting grounds of North America. The purpose of this reserve, judging from the text and background of the Proclamation, was to protect Indian nations from encroachment by settlers and thus preserve the economic and social foundations of indigenous societies. This was not purely an acknowledgement that Indian nations had rights and interests in their lands that could not be appropriated unilaterally. It also reflected the fact that Indian nations needed to maintain control over the means of production to fulfil the economic imperatives of the fur trade...But as we have seen, increasing settlement and the declining importance of the fur trade in southern British North America contributed to a situation where local governments sought increasingly to restrict or eliminate the ability of Indian

---

<sup>59</sup> See, for example, *Final Report*, 1, p.155; 2(1), p. 61.

<sup>60</sup> Thalassa Research, "Nation to Nation: Indian Nation-Crown Relations in Canada", *For Seven Generations*.

nations to use and manage lands and resources. The reserve system as we know it today is a product of this policy.<sup>61</sup>

The ahistorical and nonmaterialist tendencies in the Royal Commission's analysis that led it to ignore arguments like the above are even more pronounced in many of its references to the pre-confederation treaties. In its chapter on "Treaties", for example, the Royal Commission ceased to conceptualize these legal agreements as arising out of particular economic and political circumstances. Instead, it maintained that pre-confederation legal documents should continue to define relations between aboriginal peoples and the Canadian state since they enabled the French and British Crown to maintain a "peaceful coexistence and non-interference with the Aboriginal nations then in sole occupation of the land".<sup>62</sup> Because it maintained that "the French and British Crowns recognized the Aboriginal nations as self-governing entities with their own systems of law and governance and agreed to respect them as such" during this period of Canadian history, the Royal Commission concluded that these documents constitute a "doctrine of Aboriginal rights" that should be applied to aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations today.<sup>63</sup> It also argued that current legal agreements concerning

---

<sup>61</sup> Thalassa Research, "Nation to Nation: Indian Nation-Crown Relations in Canada", *For Seven Generations*. A similar view is also expressed in another report prepared for the Royal Commission, which maintains that "[before confederation] the Crown intervened between Aboriginal nations and the settler communities...in a way which made it possible for imperial power to bear upon local encroachments of Aboriginal interests. As historians have pointed out, this Crown role with its primary emphasis on making and maintaining treaties of mutual coexistence and military alliance, lasted only as long as -- and only where -- the fur trade retained its economic ascendancy over settler agricultural interests". Douglas M. Brown and Alan Kari, "Aboriginal Peoples and Canadian Federalism - an Overview", *For Seven Generations*. The "historians" used for this assertion are J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*.

<sup>62</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p. 2.

<sup>63</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.190.

land claims and self-government are indicative that there has been "a return to at least some of the basic principles that governed the relationship at the time of early contact",<sup>64</sup> and that developing separate institutions for aboriginal and non-aboriginal people in the modern context "harks back to the nation-to-nation relationship envisaged in treaties of peace and friendship".<sup>65</sup> According to the Royal Commission, these developments can be seen as a movement toward justice or, as is believed by aboriginal peoples, "a second chance to establish the balanced relationship never realized fully in historical encounters".<sup>66</sup>

In fact, the aboriginal perspective that the treaties "continue to be the mechanism preferred" to establish a more equal relationship today was one of the key reasons given by the Royal Commission that they should define aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations in the modern context. This deference to aboriginal beliefs and opinions, however, resulted in a confused interpretation of these legal documents. In some parts of the *Final Report*, for example, the Royal Commission maintained that aboriginal and European conceptions of the treaties are different (Europeans regard treaties simply as a legal contract<sup>67</sup> and aboriginal peoples see them as sacred covenants<sup>68</sup>), yet

---

<sup>64</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 235.

<sup>65</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p. 670.

<sup>66</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p.670.

<sup>67</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 119-122, 130; 2(1), p. 18, 29-30, 75. At some points it does refer to Europeans as regarding these compacts as "sacred". For example, Borden is quoted as saying that " For the past two hundred years, it is our boast that the British government has scrupulously observed its contracts and treaties with the Indians, and the Indian has learned to know that he can look forward at all times with confidence to the sacred fulfilment of any treaty he makes with the British Crown". The words "for as long as the sun shines and the rivers flow", also indicates a promise that the treaties would be

it still asserted that it is the aboriginal view that should be accepted. Then, after making this distinction, the Royal Commission completely ignored it and directs "federal, provincial and territorial governments" to provide programs of public education showing that the "historical treaties were meant by *all parties* to be sacred and enduring and to be spiritual as well as legal undertakings" (emphasis added).<sup>69</sup> To support the view that both regarded the treaties as sacred, the Royal Commission argued that "each party brought to the treaty ceremony its most sacred and enduring symbols. The Crown formalized the treaties using its most formal instrument: a written document under seal. Clergy were often asked to attend treaty councils to provide advice and spiritual guidance to the parties. Representatives of the Crown pledged the word of the sovereign".<sup>70</sup>

But, besides being in contradiction with the Royal Commission's earlier claims that aboriginal and European conceptions were different, there are two problems with these assertions about the treaties being "sacred and enduring". First of all, they discourage an understanding of how legal interpretations change over time. Although a "written document under seal" might have been thought as "sacred" by some in the past,<sup>71</sup> this

---

"enduring". The Royal Commission also maintains in another area of the Report that the treaties arose out of a "fiduciary relationship", and as such, involved "conduct, not contract" (*Final Report*, 2(2), p. 546.

<sup>68</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p. 39, 53.

<sup>69</sup> This is "Recommendation 2.2.1 (b)" of the Royal Commission. *Final Report*, 2(1), p. 22.

<sup>70</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p. 39.

<sup>71</sup> Such a view, in fact, was probably related to the idea of the "Divine Right of Kings", which would be accepted by few today.

does not mean that it is perceived as such today. Consequently, it will be difficult for many Canadians to accept that the treaties have a religious character. Secondly, the Royal Commission tended to confuse what aboriginal peoples believe to be true with what exists in reality. The Royal Commission used the fact that certain aboriginal peoples believe that the treaties are sacred to actually argue that this is the case. It contended that "the continuing relationship to which the Crown and the treaty nations brought their most binding formalities" was "sacred", simply because a number of aboriginal leaders have made this argument.

Perhaps because of the tenuous character of such claims, in another area of the *Final Report* the Royal Commission stated that the importance of treaties is not that they are sacred, but that they are perceived as being enduring. It argued that

the treaties are unique in part because their central feature makes them irrevocable. The central feature of almost all the treaties is to provide for the orderly and peaceful sharing of a land and the establishment of relations of peace and even kinship. Once this has been acted upon, it cannot be reversed. Parties that have made such promises cannot go back to the beginning and annul the agreement, because the treaty has made them interdependent in a way that precludes starting over again as strangers.<sup>72</sup>

This assumption of the "irrevocable" character of the treaties, however, was contradicted by the Royal Commission's statement that "before the enactment of section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, the courts took the view that Aboriginal treaties could be amended or overridden by federal statute, without the agreement of



the Aboriginal parties. This view was consistent with certain British constitutional traditions, under which even such fundamental documents as Magna Carta could be repealed by a simple act of Parliament. However, it did not correspond to Aboriginal conceptions of the treaties, which were viewed as sacred pacts, not open to unilateral repeal".<sup>73</sup> It is, therefore, not that the treaties are irrevocable or must be enduring, but that either a) the *Constitution Act of 1982* stipulates that they are currently in force or b) aboriginal peoples believe this because the treaties are "viewed as sacred pacts".

What all the references to the treaties being "sacred and enduring" do, in fact, is mystify the historical and materialist character of legal documents.<sup>74</sup> Legal documents do not have some kind of transcendental character; they are the result of various economic, political and social forces. As was mentioned earlier, the Royal Proclamation's dictate that aboriginal peoples should not be "molested or disturbed" on their hunting grounds, for example, was not due to some kind of abstract principle based on British benevolence or a spiritual blueprint, but because settlement would be contrary to the mercantile interests that were dominant at the time.<sup>75</sup> In addition, the

---

<sup>72</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p.19.

<sup>73</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p. 198.

<sup>74</sup> The Royal Commission in one area of the Report recognizes this. It maintains that "in the realm of international law, treaties are less readily made, but they too are sometimes changed or broken. Nation-states that break off a treaty relationship may continue to have enduring links, but they do not usually find themselves in a state of continuing interdependence as a result of sharing a territory. Except in the rarest of cases, they do not make treaties that obliterate their separate identities and legal personalities or prejudice their exclusive dominion over their territories". *Final Report*, 2(1), p.19.

<sup>75</sup> This point was made by Chief Justice Allan MacEachern, and is cited in the research study by Paul Joffe, Mary Ellen Turpel and Richard Spaulding, "Extinguishment of the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples: Problems and Alternatives", in *For Seven Generations*. According to MacEachern, "...[The Royal

fact that the original treaties did not involve land cessions, while later ones did, was due to the different economic and political circumstances out of which each arose. The fur trade did not require strict controls over plots of land because of animal movements, whereas agricultural settlement and later industrial developments did.<sup>76</sup> Also, the few European settlers that were present when the fur trade was dominant meant that the existing state apparatuses were weak, making it difficult to enforce any dispossession of aboriginal lands, even if economic priorities had encouraged it.<sup>77</sup>

---

Proclamation's] principal purposes were to establish new governments, to settle present and anticipated difficulties on the frontier, and to encourage British mercantilism by limiting the spread of settlement too distant from coastal trade... ". This view is criticized by Joffe and Turpel because MacEachern did not provide any opinions from legislators at this time to support this claim. Stanley Ryerson, however, cites the Lords Commissioners as instructing the government of the time to "Let the savages enjoy their deserts in quiet" since "were they driven from their forests the peltry trade would decrease". Ryerson, *The Founding of Canada*, p. 238.

<sup>76</sup> As a result, boundaries at this time were much more fluid. This is shown by a treaty of 1794, which allowed free passage of aboriginals from the United States to Canada to engage in trading activities. For a discussion of this treaty, see Russel Lawrence Barsh and James Youngblood Henderson (Apamuwek Institute), "International Context of Crown-Aboriginal Treaties in Canada", *For Seven Generations*. The economic and political circumstances that existed at this time, however, have changed dramatically, since all sorts of policing arrangements now exist within borders. As a result, aboriginal reserves stretching across these borders create problems for modern states that have developed to have a monopoly over the legitimate use of coercion within a defined territory because they can exist as lawless zones, where cigarette smuggling and gun running can flourish.

<sup>77</sup> This is why one report prepared for the Royal Commission notes that "a gradual weakening of respect for treaties traces the historical progress of European mercantilism into world imperialism. As soon as European empires had the power to impose their will on other peoples, they constructed colonial and racist distinctions of "capacity" and "civilization" to excuse themselves from commitments they found no longer convenient" (Russel Lawrence Barsh and James Youngblood Henderson (Apamuwek Institute), "International Context of Crown-Aboriginal Treaties in Canada", *For Seven Generations*). Another report makes a similar claim, with respect to treaty making after confederation. It notes that "The timing and location of treaty-making in the former Rupert's Land and Northwest Territories, after their purchase by Canada from the Hudson's Bay Company in 1870, reflected the new nation's priorities for settlement and resource development. Between 1871 and 1877, Canada was mainly concerned with opening up prairie grasslands and parkland to agricultural settlement. East and north of Winnipeg, the major considerations were securing access to the timber, fish and mineral resources of the adjacent boreal forest (and in the case of Treaty 3, a transportation corridor to the fertile belt)" Peter J.Usher,

In addition to its different requirements from later agricultural and industrial developments, the fur trade itself changed as it progressed, necessitating revisions to the existing legal framework. The depletion of animal species that came with extensive development, where yields of fur bearers could not be increased to meet profitability requirements, for example, made it necessary to restrict aboriginal hunting, even though the Royal Proclamation dictated that aboriginal peoples should not be "molested or disturbed" on their territories.<sup>78</sup> Such developments, however, were obscured by the Royal Commission when it saw unlimited rights to hunt and trap as being "sacred and enduring".<sup>79</sup> The Royal Commission, in fact, noted that these regulations "ran head-on into the assumption by Aboriginal people that the treaties protected their rights to trap", criticizing penalties for aboriginal peoples' violation of hunting regulations with references to the Royal Proclamation of 1763.

---

"Contemporary Aboriginal Land, Resource and Environment Regimes — Origins, Problems, and Prospects", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>78</sup> In some areas, such regulation did not occur until very recently, as was the case for the Inuit of northern Quebec. For a discussion of this see Lorraine F. Brooke, "The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement: Experiences of the Nunavik Inuit with Wildlife Management", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>79</sup> There is also a confusing analysis of attempts to conserve resources through a trapline registration system in one of the studies prepared for the Royal Commission. In the report it is noted that "during the wartime period of high prices the resource had suffered from over-harvesting. Discussions about creating a registered trapline system in Yukon had begun in the early 1940s, but, ironically, registration was only initiated in 1951, after the demand for furs had plummeted...Analysis of the impact of trapline registration in a number of Canadian jurisdictions indicates that many of the programs created severe dislocation and economic and social disruption for aboriginal groups. Among the effects, trapline registration often ignored existing native systems of management. Most significant, the programs introduced a method through which an important part of the resource base for aboriginal economies could be lost to communities". However, how this occurred is not specified. For a discussion of this, see Martin Weinstein, *The Ross River Dena*, *For Seven Generations*.

Understanding the development and continued existence of the treaties as being the result of economic, political and social forces makes it necessary to explain why certain treaties were broken and ignored while others continue to be honoured. In the pre-confederation period, treaties were essentially non-aggression pacts, and as a result, when one signatory gained strength in relation to the other(s), they would immediately disregard the treaty and create a new political order.<sup>80</sup> Such actions were not only undertaken by European powers; aboriginal groups, as well, violated their treaty obligations when it suited their interests. In the case of the Treaty of Montreal, for example, the Iroquois made a treaty with the French that they would remain neutral in the hostilities between the French and the English. This promise was soon broken, however, when the Iroquois sensed the vulnerability of the French and sided with the British.<sup>81</sup> Aboriginal groups also readily broke promises with one another. According to Stanley Ryerson, for example, in 1645 the Hurons "apparently promised the Iroquois to supply them with furs. However, they proceeded the following year to carry huge shipments of furs to the French, while by-passing the Iroquois: a course that led promptly to a disastrous renewal of the war".<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> This is the view of a research report prepared for the Royal Commission. It notes that "rather than establishing lasting diplomatic relations, [pre-confederation treaties] more likely constituted short-lived alliances, truces and trade arrangements following the evolving dynamic of European rivalries and conquest". Thomas O. Hueglin, "Exploring Concepts of Treaty Federalism", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>81</sup> For a discussion of the Treaty of Montreal, see Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, pp. 63-5.

<sup>82</sup> Ryerson, *The Founding of Canada*, p. 93. This was also the case for the agreement between the Ojibwa and the Dakota on the southern shores of Lake Superior. As Eric Wolf explains, the Ojibwa's growing of maize and other crops enabled their population to increase, and "the arrangement with the

As British North America developed economically and politically, however, its legal superstructure became more resistant to change. "Treaties" took the form of legal contracts that had to be honoured since they were rooted in a much larger interrelated system of property rights, upon which the whole economic and political system was based. This explains why the treaties continue to be honoured even though their provisions of supplying miniscule annuities and primitive agricultural implements do not really make sense in the modern context. There is a "superstructural lag", where legal documents arising out of previous economic and social relations remain since they form an intricate part of the legal system of the Canadian confederation as a whole; phasing out the treaties, even if they are obsolete, becomes very difficult if it is resisted by aboriginal groups since there is a threat to the integrity of the entire legal framework if one element is not upheld by the state.<sup>83</sup> At the same time, aboriginal peoples' marginalization from productive activities has meant that treaties are one of the only ways in which they can demand improvements to their social circumstances. As a result, they cling tenaciously to these archaic legal documents, and vigorously resist any attempts by government to phase out their "special status" rooted in the treaties.

---

Dakota was abrogated and gave way to violent war between the former treaty partners". Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, p. 171.

<sup>83</sup> This is perhaps why classical liberals like Tom Flanagan and Mel Smith are so concerned that legal obligations be honoured, although they provide arguments that support a minimalist interpretation of these agreements so as to reduce the transfers aboriginal groups would receive.

The increasing "legalization of politics" that came about with the enactment of the Constitution Act of 1982 and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms has made this legal superstructure even more impervious to change,<sup>84</sup> and has bolstered the importance of pre-confederation treaties and the Royal Proclamation of 1763 in aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations. Consequently, while treaties with aboriginal groups were often perceived either as being "dead" documents or as remnants of efforts to dupe the native population into ceding their lands,<sup>85</sup> the Royal Commission now argued that these interpretations are "distortions of the meaning of the treaties". Instead, it "propose[d] a rethinking of the treaties as a means to secure justice for Aboriginal nations and a reconciliation of their rights with the rights of all Canadians" and argued that its "substantive recommendations on matters such as governance, lands and resources, and economic issues" be addressed through treaty processes.<sup>86</sup>

But although the Royal Commission's analysis of the treaties was largely concerned with showing how they must be honoured on legal, ethical and religious grounds, it also maintained that such a strategy is in the material interest of all Canadians because it would reduce aboriginal dependency. It maintained that "a new relationship built on honouring the treaties will lead to self-reliance, empowerment and the restoration of resources to the treaty nations. It will lead away from the crippling dependence on

---

<sup>84</sup> For an in-depth discussion of this process and its political consequences, see Michael Mandel, *The Charter of Rights and the Legalization of Politics in Canada* (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, 1994).

<sup>85</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), pp. 13-14.

government that has been engendered in treaty nations communities".<sup>87</sup> Overcoming aboriginal dependency, therefore, according to the Royal Commission, must begin with "the long overdue recognition that our past and present prosperity rests on a relationship of sharing extended by Aboriginal peoples", since a "commitment to renew this ancient partnership" will result in the "future prosperity and well-being of all".<sup>88</sup>

Implicit in this argument was the idea that the political autonomy and control over lands that the early treaties stipulated for aboriginal peoples stopped them from becoming dependent, and therefore recognizing aboriginal "nationhood", "sovereignty" and "title", as well as respecting aboriginal cultures and "ways of life", will end dependency today. This argument was made by John McDonald, Vice-Chief of the Prince Albert Tribal Council (and provided in the Royal Commission's Final Report), when he maintained that "The sources of the under-development, poverty, disease and dependence within our First Nations can be found in the disregard and violation of our treaties and of Canada's own constitution. Likewise, the seeds of the solutions to the fundamental problems and contradictions can be found in the

---

<sup>86</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p.17.

<sup>87</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p. 38.

<sup>88</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 688. As an example of this "ancient partnership", the Royal Commission relies on the oral histories of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy. According to the Confederacy, their ancestors recognized that they and the European newcomers "could not live together in the same way inside the circle". The result was the creation of a "two-row wampum belt", which symbolizes "two different paths, two different people". In the Confederacy's words: "the agreement was made that your road will have your vessel, your people, your politics, your government, your way of life, your religion,

honouring and faithful implementation of these sacred treaty rights and obligations".<sup>89</sup> Such an argument, however, downplayed or ignored the economic and political factors that enabled aboriginal peoples to remain much more autonomous and independent during the fur trade period. It abstracted the legal superstructure from its economic and political foundations. Once again, we see the inverted logic that the legal documents that arose out of particular historical circumstances actually were the cause of the material conditions that favoured cooperation.

As will be shown below, such an analysis occurred because this was the focus of much of the research and opinions that the Royal Commission used to develop its understanding of the "Contact and Cooperation" period. This material concentrated on the "spirit and intent" of the legal documents developed at this time. Largely omitted was the research cited earlier on the requirements of the fur trade in particular, and the pursuit of mercantile wealth more generally. As a result, it was not clearly articulated that mercantile imperatives differed qualitatively from economic developments that occurred later, and how this changed European colonizers' relations with aboriginal groups. The incorporation of romanticized viewpoints in aboriginal peoples' "oral histories" also prevented the Royal Commission from recognizing that prehistoric "trade" and the "treaties" between aboriginal tribes were associated with cultures that

---

your beliefs...The same goes for ours..." (The Haudenosaunee Confederacy, cited in *Final Report*, 1, p. 103).

<sup>89</sup> Vice-Chief John McDonald, Prince Albert Tribal Council and Denesuliné First Nations La Ronge, Saskatchewan, 28 May 1992, cited in *Final Report*, 2(1), p. 50.



were much smaller, less productive and simpler than the system introduced by Europeans, so when Aboriginals were incorporated into mercantile networks they were changed forever. Because of this developmental difference, it was not possible for aboriginal peoples to retain their traditional "ways of life" in the modern context without becoming welfare dependent.

#### THE ROOTS OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION'S IDEALISTIC ANALYSIS

Upon examining the Royal Commission's *Final Report*, it is apparent that the fur trade is not a topic to which it devotes much attention. In fact, only two small sections in the *Final Report* discuss the subject. The most detailed analysis occurs in the case of the Innu and the Wendat, even though these groups only participated in the early fur trade.<sup>90</sup> The much more extensive trade organized by the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company was mentioned in just a few pages in the economic development chapter.<sup>91</sup> Such a focus largely prevented the Royal Commission from developing an analysis that recognized the economic and political basis of the "Contact and Cooperation" period of Canadian history.

In contrast to its analysis of the fur trade, the Royal Commission's overview of the treaties developed during this period was much more extensive. In addition to a large

---

<sup>90</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 105-111.

section on the pre-confederation treaties and the Royal Proclamation in the Royal Commission's chapter on the "Contact and Cooperation" period,<sup>92</sup> there was also an extensive discussion of these legal documents throughout Volume Two of the *Final Report*. Most significantly, there was a whole chapter on "Treaties", of which the pre-confederation period is discussed in detail.<sup>93</sup> Also, there were sections on the pre-confederation treaties in the chapters on governance and lands and resources.<sup>94</sup>

The scanty analysis of the fur trade reflected a relative lack of interest in this area in both the Royal Commission's research program and its public hearings. In these forums, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the pre-confederation treaties were much more of a concern. With its research program, for example, no studies were commissioned specifically on the fur trade. Only a few of these studies, in fact, had substantial references to this economic activity.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 782-3.

<sup>92</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 111-130.

<sup>93</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), pp. 9-21; 36-48; 61.

<sup>94</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), pp. 110-115; 263; 299; 2(2), pp. 429; 464-71.

<sup>95</sup> The studies with substantial sections on the fur trade include: R.G. Williamson, "Significant Aspects of Acculturation History in the Canadian Arctic", *For Seven Generations*; Denys Delâge, "Cultural Exchanges within the Franco-Amerindian Alliance, 1600-1760" [TRANSLATION], Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 158, File 7254-3.1D; Praxis Research Associates, "A Case Study of the Inuit Economy: Pangnirtung, Northwest Territories", *For Seven Generations*; Martin Weinstein, *The Ross River Dena: A Yukon Aboriginal Economy*, *For Seven Generations*; John Loxley et al., "Aboriginal People in the Winnipeg Economy: Case Study", *For Seven Generations*; and Bill Wicken and John D. Reid, "An Overview of the 18th Century Treaties Signed Between the Mi'kmaq and Wuastukwiuk Peoples and the English Crown, 1725-1928", *For Seven Generations*. Other studies with smaller references to the fur trade include SaskNative Economic Development Corporation, "Metis Economic Development in Regina", *For Seven Generations*; Sinaaq Enterprises Inc, "Community Economic Case Study: Nain, Labrador", *For Seven Generations*; James Morrison, "The Robinson Treaties of 1850: A Case Study", *For Seven Generations*; and Virginia Petch, "The Relocation of the Sayisi Dene of Tadoule Lake", *For Seven Generations*.

As well as there being an absence of studies analyzing aboriginal participation in the fur trade, none of the traditional sources on the fur trade were used by the Royal Commission.<sup>96</sup> There was no mention of the works of H.A. Innis, the founding scholar on the fur trade, or any of the academic debates that emerged out of his work. The most significant omission was the ongoing debate between "political institutionalists" like E.E. Rich, Rotstein and Daniel Francis and Toby Morantz<sup>97</sup> and "economic institutionalists" such as Arthur Ray, Charles Bishop and Shepard Krech III.<sup>98</sup> Stranger still was the fact that Metis political economist Ron Bourgeault was

---

<sup>96</sup> The only sources referred to that examine the fur trade during this period are Jennifer S.H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980); Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties': Women in the Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 1980); J.E. Foster, "Indian and White Relations during the Fur Trade", in Richard Price (ed), *The Spirit of the Alberta Indian Treaties* (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1979); Tim E. Holtzkamm et al, "Rainy River Sturgeon: An Ojibway Resource in the Fur Trade Economy", *Canadian Geographer*, 32(3), 1988; James Gibson, *Otter Skins, Boston Ships and China Goods*; and Dorothy Harley Eber, *When the Whalers were up North*. Also mentioned is an article by John J. Burrows, "A genealogy of law", *Osgoode Hall Law Journal*, 30 (1992), 291, which discusses the impact of the fur trade and Christianity on Ojibwa identity and Waldram et al, *Aboriginal Health in Canada* that examines the introduction of alcohol by the fur trade.

<sup>97</sup> E.E. Rich, "Trade Habits and Economic Motivation among the Indians of North America", *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, XXVI, 1960, pp. 35-53; E.E. Rich, *Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1870*, 3 Volumes (Toronto: 1960); Abraham Rotstein, "Trade and Politics: An Institutional Approach", *Canadian Journal of Anthropology*, III, 1, 1972, pp. 1-28; and Daniel Francis and Toby Morantz, *Partners in Furs: A History of the Fur Trade in Eastern James Bay, 1600-1870* (Montreal: 1983).

<sup>98</sup> Charles A. Bishop *The Northern Ojibwa and the Fur Trade: A Historical and Ecological Study*. (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1974); Shepard Krech III (ed), *The Subarctic Fur Trade* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979); Arthur J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974). Although a work by Arthur J. Ray, *The Canadian Fur Trade in the Industrial Age* is used extensively in the trapping section of the Royal Commission's economic development chapter of Volume 2(2) of the *Final Report*, Ray's works on the fur trade in the "Contact and Cooperation" period are ignored. The same is true for Toby Morantz. Although Morantz, along with Daniel Francis, wrote extensively on the fur trade in the Contact and Cooperation period, their work *Partners in Fur* is not mentioned. Morantz's, "Provincial Game Laws at the Turn of the Twentieth Century", a paper presented at the annual Algonquin meetings, October 1994 is cited three times in connection with trapping in the Displacement and Assimilation period, however.

not mentioned, even though he has extensively studied the fur trade. Such an absence is difficult to fathom when one considers the Royal Commission's commitment towards using the works of aboriginal scholars.<sup>99</sup>

Possibly this lack of attention to the fur trade in its research program was because the Royal Commission assumed that far too much attention had been devoted to it in the past. It noted in its integrated research plan, for example, that "Native historical studies fall into two main categories: fur trade history and government relations or policy".<sup>100</sup> One of the academics that provided an overview for the Royal Commission, Kenneth Coates, commented that "the emergence of Native history as a sub-discipline has been simultaneously nourished and constrained by documentation available in the Hudson Bay Company and government archives".<sup>101</sup> Much of this

---

<sup>99</sup> Bourgeault's work only appears once in the research reports obtained by the Royal Commission. This was Kathy L. Brock, "Relations with Canadian Governments: Manitoba", *For Seven Generations*. The work of Bourgeault referenced is "The Indian, the Metis and the Fur Trade", *Studies in Political Economy* 12, 1983, pp. 45-80. In note 7, Brock notes that earlier descriptions of the political structures of aboriginal communities by anthropologists such as Diamond Jenness were plagued by "ethnocentric bias", but more "recent work by scholars like Samuel Corrigan, L.J. Barkwell, L.F. Barron and J.B. Waldrum, Bob Beal and Ron Macleod, R. Bourgeault, M. Giraud, Antoine Lussier, Sylvia Van Kirk, and Hugh Dempsey, among others, have improved understanding of these communities".

<sup>100</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, "Integrated Research Plan", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>101</sup> "Integrated Research Plan - Appendix C: An Overview of the State of Research in the Field of Aboriginal Affairs", *For Seven Generations*. This summary is drawn from Coates' short paper prepared for the Royal Commission to shape its research agenda, "Native History in Canada". Short papers have been archived at Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Files 7020-3, 7020-4, 7040-1, 7040-2, 7040-3, Boxes 127-8, but they have been designated as "confidential" and are not available to the public. However, in another file – "Unsolicited research – historical perspectives", Box 131, File, 7090-5, Volume B-C1 – a paper by Coates entitled "Creating a Common Past: The Search for Agency, Relevance and Authenticity in the Writing of Native History" is accessible. Attached to this 12 page paper is a letter to David Hawkes, one of the Commission's co-directors of research, on April 14, 1992 stating that the work "is not a polished piece, but expands on several of the points that I raised in my earlier submission to you".

literature was perceived by the Royal Commission as ignoring aboriginal "world views", and it was argued that "Aboriginal peoples are not represented within their own context or on their own terms, even in the new historiography that seeks to correct the ethnocentric biases of past historical accounts".<sup>102</sup>

Perhaps to counter the "ethnocentric biases" of these sources, a much more significant component of the Royal Commission's research program was devoted to studying the treaties. The Royal Commission, in fact, notes that it "undertook historical and legal research on the treaties on a scale unprecedented in our country's history".<sup>103</sup>

Devoting so much of its resources to studies of the treaties, according to the Royal Commission, was very important because Canada's

proud place among the family of nations was made possible by the treaties. Our defining national characteristics are tolerance, pluralism and democracy. Had it not been for the treaties, these defining myths might well not have taken hold here. Had it not been for the treaties, wars might well have replaced the treaty council. Or the territory might have been absorbed by the union to the south. Canada would have been a very different place if treaty making with the Indian nations had been replaced by the waging of war.<sup>104</sup>

An extensive examination of the history of the treaties is also necessary, in the Royal Commission's view, because the treaties were important to aboriginal peoples.<sup>105</sup> The

---

<sup>102</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, "Integrated Research Plan", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>103</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p.15. The Royal Commission lists 25 reports that were part of its research into treaties in *Final Report*, 2(1), pp. 94-5, note 4.

<sup>104</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p. 15.

<sup>105</sup> See, for example, the testimony of Nancy Louis, who argues that "we have an agreement as treaty Indians and we believe that these treaties cannot be broken or changed or negotiated because a sacred pipe was used when the treaties were signed and sealed" (Nancy Louis Samson Cree Nation Hobbema,

Royal Commission noted that "much was said at our public hearings about the sacred nature of the treaties and their embodiment of spiritual values".<sup>106</sup> It went on to note that aboriginal groups "want the treaties to be implemented in the context of the traditional relationship but in a way that the parties can agree effects a just and reasonable resolution of areas in dispute. They see the treaties as sacred compacts between peoples, not as relics of the past, and they want them renewed in that spirit".<sup>107</sup> The Royal Commission pointed out that "the consistent message emerging from the testimony of treaty nations is that the treaties are sacred and spiritual covenants that cannot be repudiated, any more than the cultures and identities of treaty nations can be repudiated. In entering into treaties, treaty nations maintain that they made an irreversible and spiritual alliance with the Crown that cannot be broken".<sup>108</sup> The Royal Commission also referred to "the continued commitment of Aboriginal nations to treaties signed by their ancestors many years ago and still held sacred by their members today" as a defining characteristic of aboriginal "national consciousness".<sup>109</sup> As a result, "denials of the validity and importance of the treaties have denigrated Aboriginal peoples' stature as nations and their substantial contribution to Canada". Although the Royal Commission correctly pointed out that "non-Aboriginal people valued treaties as long as they continued to be useful, which

---

Alberta, 10 June 1992, cited in *Final Report*, 2(1), p.13 and Chief Johnson Sewepegaham, Little Red River Cree Nation/The Tall Cree First Nation High Level, Alberta, 29 October 1992, cited in *Final Report*, 2(1), p.50.

<sup>106</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p. 18.

<sup>107</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p.52.

<sup>108</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p.53. See also, *Final Report*, 1, pp. 545-546 for a discussion of a similar point.

often meant until land changed hands, settlements grew, and resources were extracted and converted into money” and “First Nations expected that treaties would grow more valuable with time, as the parties came to know each other better, trusted one another, and made the most of their treaty relationships”,<sup>110</sup> this was very different from accepting the argument that “treaties are sacred and spiritual covenants that cannot be repudiated”.

The Royal Commission also was concerned that aboriginal conceptions of the treaties, based on native "oral histories", have been ignored, and it was intent on rectifying this circumstance. Aboriginal peoples think that these understandings of the treaties should be given equal weight in historical interpretation, and consequently the Royal Commission noted that it had taken it upon itself to increase the visibility of these viewpoints. According to its “Integrated Research Plan”, for example, there was a "need to gain an Aboriginal perspective on the treaties, based on oral history, and to compare this to the non-Aboriginal view, based largely on written texts" and therefore "research is required on the spirit and intent of the treaties, their implications for land and resources and for fiscal relations".<sup>111</sup> It then noted in the *Final Report* that

according to oral tradition, treaties were entirely consistent with the Aboriginal relationship to the land, because they were instruments to include newcomers in the circle of relations with whom the original stewards were required to share life. The sacredness and durability of the historical agreements is beyond

---

<sup>109</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.609.

<sup>110</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 178.

<sup>111</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Integrated Research Plan, For Seven Generations*.

dispute for Aboriginal participants, observers and later historians of the oral tradition. The sacred pipe was smoked, the wampum belt was woven, the medicine bundles were opened, expanding the compacts beyond the people actually present at the ceremony, to include as witnesses and participants the grandparents who had already gone to the spirit world and the children not yet born, whose well-being would depend on the decisions taken.<sup>112</sup>

As a result of this perception of the importance of the treaties, and the need to include aboriginal perspectives on them, there were four studies that were specifically commissioned on "Early Treaty Making in Canada",<sup>113</sup> as well as eleven projects that had significant sections on pre-confederation treaties and the land rights that were believed to have existed during the "Contact and Cooperation" period.<sup>114</sup>

In addition to commissioning research on the pre-confederation treaties, the Royal Commission also frequently referred to the wider body of research that is available on this area. Unlike the fur trade, where very few outside studies were referenced, much

---

<sup>112</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 633-634.

<sup>113</sup> William C. Wicken and John G. Reid, "An Overview of the Eighteenth Century Treaties Signed between Mi'kmaq and Wuastukwiuk People and the English Crown, 1693-1928", Denys Delâge et al., "Cultural Exchanges within the Franco-Amerindian Alliance, 1600-1760" [TRANSLATION]; Pierre Verville, *Le statut juridique des autochtones au quebec et le pluralisme*; and Paul Williams and Curtis Nelson, "Kaswentha". Two studies are available on *For Seven Generations* and the Delâge and Verville studies can be obtained at Library and Archives Canada (RG 33, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 158, File 7254-3.1D).

<sup>114</sup> Delia Opekokew, "The Nature and Status of the Oral Promises in Relation to the Written Terms of the Treaties"; Thalassa Research, "Nation to Nation: Indian Nation-Crown Relations in Canada"; Russel Lawrence Barsh and James Youngblood Henderson (Apamuwek Institute), "International Context of Crown-Aboriginal Treaties in Canada"; Leroy Little Bear, James Youngblood Henderson and Tony Hall, "Relationship of Aboriginal People to the Land and the Aboriginal Perspective on Aboriginal Title"; J. Weinstein, "Metis Land Rights in Canada Research Project - Introduction" and "Metis Land Rights in Canada Research Project - Conclusion"; Louise Mandell and E. Ann Gilmour, *Metis Land Rights in Canada*; Joseph Eliot Magnet, "Metis Land Rights in Canada: Legal Issues"; and D.N. Sprague, "Administrative History of Metis Claims". Of these reports, only the study by Leroy Little Bear et al. is not available on *For Seven Generations*. It can be accessed at Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 162, File 7278-3.1.



research on the treaties during the Contact and Cooperation period was reviewed.<sup>115</sup>

The Royal Commission even published a special report - *Treaty Making in an Era of Co-Existence* - that examined a wide range of opinions on the character of the treaties.<sup>116</sup>

Similar attention was paid to the Royal Proclamation of 1763.<sup>117</sup> The Royal Commission thinks the Proclamation was such an important document with respect to aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations, in fact, that it maintained that a new Royal Proclamation and five pieces of companion legislation should be enacted in the

---

<sup>115</sup> In its chapter on "treaties", for example, the Royal Commission refers to the following body of research: Richard Price, *Legacy: Indian Treaty Relationships* (Edmonton: Plains Publishing Inc., 1991); Russel Lawrence Barsh and James Youngblood Henderson, "Aboriginal Rights, Treaty Rights and Human Rights", *Journal of Canadian Studies* 17/2 (1982), pp. 55-81; Sebastien Grammond, "Aboriginal Treaties in Canadian Law" 20 (57), 1994 *Queen's L.J.*; The Grand Council of Micmacs et al, *The Mi'kmaq Treaty Handbook* (Sydney, N.S.: Native Communications Society of Nova Scotia, 1987); Francis Jennings et al. (eds), *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy: An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and their League*; Patricia Kennedy, "Treaty Texts: When Can We Trust the Written Word?", *Social Sciences and Humanities Aboriginal Research Exchange* 3(1), Spring/Summer 1995; Peter J. Usher et al., "Reclaiming the land: aboriginal title, treaty rights and land claims in Canada", *Applied Geography* 12(2), 1992, pp.109-132; Remi Savard, "Un Projet d'Etat independent a la fin du XVIII siecle et le Traite de Jay", *Recherches Amerindiennes au Quebec* 24(4), 1994, pp. 57-69; There are also numerous scholarly works referred to that provide an overview of the pre-confederation treaties as well as an extensive footnote in the "Governance" chapter that details the Supreme Court decisions that "contain important discussions of Aboriginal rights and their relation to treaty rights". Footnote 139, *Final Report* 2(1), p. 392.

<sup>116</sup>This Report contains sections on "Early Treaty Negotiations", "The Royal Proclamation of 1763", "1763-1867", which pertain to pre-confederation treaties. There is also a section on "The Royal Proclamation Revisited" that argues that the Royal Proclamation did not mandate extinguishment of aboriginal title and, "above all, is a document designed to safeguard Aboriginal peoples in the possession of their ancestral lands". *Treaty Making in an Era of Co-Existence*, pp. 48-9. Nowhere is this dictate linked to the fur trade. And although the Royal Commission also produced a report on aboriginal economic development, the fur trade is only mentioned very briefly in two discussion papers. These include Clem Chartier's discussion paper, "Metis Lands and Resources", and David Newhouse's "Modern Aboriginal Economies: Capitalism with an Aboriginal Face", *Sharing the Harvest*.

<sup>117</sup>A search of "Royal Proclamation" shows that it was referred to 193 times in the Final Report. Some of these references may be to the new Royal Proclamation that the Royal Commission proposes. "Royal

modern context.<sup>118</sup> A copy of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 was also provided in its entirety in the appendix of Volume One, the part of the *Final Report* devoted to the history of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal relations.<sup>119</sup>

In addition to the Royal Commission's research program's greater interest in the pre-confederation treaties and the Royal Proclamation of 1763 in comparison to the fur trade, it was also apparent that a similar focus occurred in its public hearings. This can be seen in the six summaries of the hearings provided by the Royal Commission. The fur trade received almost no attention,<sup>120</sup> while honouring the dictates of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the pre-confederation treaties were mentioned as being major concerns. With respect to the Royal Proclamation, for example, it was pointed out that the "Intervenors consistently maintained...that First Nations are still governed by the principles of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 which committed the Crown not to harass Aboriginal people".<sup>121</sup> The treaties occupied an even more

---

Proclamation' and 1763", however, turned up 91 hits, which is still more than the 74 hits for the fur trade.

<sup>118</sup> For the Royal Commission's discussion of this, see *Final Report*, 5, pp. 4-9.

<sup>119</sup> *Final Report*, 1, Appendix D, pp. 720-725.

<sup>120</sup> The only reference to the fur trade is made in Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, "Framing the Issues", *Public Hearings: Discussion Paper No 1*, October 1992, *For Seven Generations*. In this paper, it is noted that "Gerald Thom recalled that only thirty years ago, the Métis of Lac La Biche, Alberta, were self-sufficient: We were involved in mixed farming, the fur trade was healthy, commercial fishing was healthy. Our people were self-sufficient, self-reliant.... Somewhere along the line in the 1960s they introduced the welfare system, the welfare system that devastated our people, that brought people down to their knees".

<sup>121</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Overview of the First Round*, October 1992, *For Seven Generations*. This document also cites Harold Turner, who maintains that "Indian self-government is not a new phenomenon. It existed before the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and continues to exist even after attempts have been made to take away self-government from us. Today the Canadian government's position that First Nations signed Treaties with the Crown as subjects of Her Majesty is disrespectful to

prominent position, shown by the fact that each of the six documents on the public hearings had a "treaty rights" section. As is noted in the discussion paper, "Framing the Issues",

the importance of treaty rights was strongly stated across Canada. For most First Nations peoples, treaties form the basis of the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada. They establish relations of peace and friendship and define reciprocal obligations between governments. They create or affirm military and trade alliances and agreements to share the land and resources. They cover such topics as hunting, fishing, gathering and trapping rights, schools and medicine, tools and equipment, and annual payments to the members of treaty nation signatories.<sup>122</sup>

This concern was especially noticeable in the second round of hearings, where it was pointed out that "questions related to treaties and treaty rights, land and land claims received more attention during the second round of hearings than any other issue".

According to the summary, in this round of public hearings "there were frequent references to the need to honour the original intent of treaties, including the pre-Confederation treaties and - in the case of New Brunswick Indians - the Doober Treaty of 1725".<sup>123</sup> This was also noted to be the case in the second discussion paper on the

---

our ancestors and the principles they defended on our behalf...". The Royal Proclamation is also mentioned in "Framing the Issues". It is noted that "the interpretation of section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867 ("Indians, and Lands reserved for the Indians") and the Canadian government's fiduciary or trust-like responsibility were major areas of concern. The frustration and anger in Jerry Wetzel's comments below were repeated many times as Commissioners crossed the country". Jerry Wetzel is quoted as saying that "the point is, Section 91(24) is simply an expression of federal duty, federal fiduciary duty, that flows from the Royal Proclamation and the treaties. Unfortunately, it has been misinterpreted by British colonists in Canada. Instead of being used to protect the reserve lands and the self-government rights of the Micmac and other Aboriginal nations, it's been used to try to oppress them and to destroy, to usurp their lands and destroy their self-government".

<sup>122</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, "Framing the Issues", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>123</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, "Overview of the Second Round", April 1993, *For Seven Generations*.

public hearings, "Focusing the Dialogue", where it was explained that "many Aboriginal people look on the pre- and post-Confederation treaties with the Crown and its successor, the government of Canada, as providing the best route for negotiating new relations of governance with the rest of Canada".<sup>124</sup>

But while respecting the "spirit and intent" of legal documents developed hundreds of years ago may be important to aboriginal peoples, this does not mean that this will address aboriginal dependency. A number of aboriginal spokespeople think that it will, but this is part of their political strategy of using the legal status of the treaties to extract more resources from the government. This strategy is justified by aboriginal peoples' "cyclical" conception of history, which does not consider how the economic and political requirements of the fur trade were very different than the agricultural and industrial developments that occurred thereafter. As will be shown below, it is the neglect of the historical and material circumstances connected to mercantilism that prevented the Royal Commission from adequately understanding the character of the

---

<sup>124</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, "Focusing the Dialogue", Public Hearings, Discussion Paper 2, April 1993, *For Seven Generations*. A view of an aboriginal leader is also quoted directly in the overview of the third round of the public hearings, "Exploring the Options". It is noted that "in Moncton, Frank Palmater of the New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council said what is needed is not a new relationship, but a return to the original agreement based on co-existence that his ancestors and non-Aboriginal people entered into in the pre-Confederation treaties. He blamed current problems in Aboriginal communities on neglect and denial of that original model of co-existence. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians should sign a national treaty of renewal that recognizes Aboriginal culture, language and treaty rights as well as the right of Aboriginal peoples to self-determination and to co-exist with other Canadians, he said". Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, "Exploring the Options: Overview of the Third Round", November 1993, *For Seven Generations*.

"Contact and Cooperation" period and the displacement and attempts at assimilation that occurred with agricultural development and then industrialization.

#### THE HISTORICAL AND MATERIALIST BASIS OF EARLY COOPERATION

The Royal Commission was correct in its assertion that the fur trade is the most studied area in examining the role played by aboriginal peoples in Canada's historical development.<sup>125</sup> Beginning with the "staples approach" of Harold Adams Innis, and then the debates concerning the "political" versus "economic" character of aboriginal involvement in the fur trade and the "feudal" nature of fur trade relations, this period has dominated political economy's study of aboriginal peoples in Canada. Such a focus can be explained by the extensive participation of aboriginal peoples in the fur trade, in contrast to the later economic and political developments that shaped the character of the Canadian federation.

The extensive aboriginal participation is largely due to Canada's particular historical development as a "young centre". This position, which also applied to New England, Boer South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, was "constituted on the basis of European immigration in new lands where there was no previously existing substratum". According to Samir Amin, these areas "were exceptional formations that

were constituted from the start in close connection with the genesis of European *central capitalism*".<sup>126</sup> Such a characterization recognizes both the pre-class character of aboriginal societies before contact and how they interacted with the mercantilist and then capitalist imperatives brought by Europeans.

But in comparison to the other "young centers" identified by Amin, Canada's development was relatively slow and it is characterized by a prolonged period of mercantilism. Unlike the United States, for example, the fur trade dominated the economy in Canada until the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, both because of a large supply of quality furs and the fact that short growing seasons made agricultural development difficult.<sup>127</sup> It was originally made an appendage of Europe like the United States when both were relatively unproductive - a lack of infrastructure and access to coal and iron deposits meant that they could not produce commodities efficiently; a small population also resulted in their internal markets initially being much smaller, necessitating the export of materials to Europe. The greater agricultural productivity of the United States, however, enabled it develop much more quickly than Canada. Capitalist agriculture took off,<sup>128</sup> while the fur trade remained the most profitable activity in Canada until

---

<sup>125</sup> Abele and Stasiulis, "Canada as a 'White Settler Colony'", pp. 246-50; Bruce G. Trigger, "The Historians' Indian", *Canadian Historical Review*, LXVII (1986), pp. 315-342.

<sup>126</sup> Amin, *Unequal Development*, p.57.

<sup>127</sup> For a discussion of the factors influencing the development of the fur trade in Canada see Conrad E. Heidenreich and Arthur J. Ray, *The Early Fur Trades: A Study in Cultural Interaction* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1976), pp. 10-11.

<sup>128</sup> C. Post, "The American Road to Capitalism", *New Left Review*, 133 (1982).

the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>129</sup> In these initial years, such trade largely involved the procurement and sale of beaver skins because of the surpluses produced in Europe resulted in an increasing market for luxury products such as beaver felt top hats.<sup>130</sup>

Unlike intensive agriculture,<sup>131</sup> the fur trade was also compatible with the hunting and gathering practices of aboriginal tribes and so they were easily integrated into this new economic activity as suppliers of furs and middlemen during this period.<sup>132</sup>

Aboriginal groups were anxious to participate in the trade, because it was a means to obtain Iron Age goods such as steel traps and guns. This enabled them to more easily satisfy their subsistence needs and to protect their hunting grounds and access to trade routes from other groups. They became crucial participants in this activity, and the result was a relationship of interdependency that lasted until wildlife resources declined and economic progress necessitated increased productivity in the form of industrialization and agricultural development. As Clare Clifton Brant pointed out in the case of the Mi'kmaq in a study prepared for the Royal Commission,

---

<sup>129</sup> Ryerson, *The Founding of Canada*, p. 149.

<sup>130</sup> Ray, Arthur J and Donald F. Freeman. *Give Us Good Measure* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), p.19; Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, pp. 159-60.

<sup>131</sup> Richard Pomfret also makes the interesting point that the fur trade was antagonistic to agriculture and settlement, although he doesn't connect this to the participation of aboriginal peoples in early Canadian economic development. This antagonism occurred because agriculture required the clearing of land, which destroyed the habitat of the fur-bearing animals, which often led fur traders to oppose European settlement and support aboriginal peoples' continued occupation of their lands. For a further discussion of the antipathy between the fur trade and settlement see Richard Pomfret, *The Economic Development of Canada* (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1993), 15-18.

<sup>132</sup> Easterbrook and Aitken, *Canadian Economic History*, pp.40-49; Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, pp.158-194.

European diseases and other forms of interference in traditional patterns took their toll. However, the Micmac (sic) could adapt fairly readily to the demands of the fur trade, since it did not represent a sharp break from Aboriginal hunting patterns and they were certainly important, necessary participants in the fur trade economy. They had, therefore, some leverage over the situation and no doubt they used their influence to advantage.<sup>133</sup>

But, while recognizing that the fur trade was compatible with aboriginal "ways of life", it is also important to understand that it had substantially different requirements than aboriginal peoples' pre-contact existence - a circumstance that was not made clear in the Royal Commission's analysis. As was explained earlier, the Stone Age technology of aboriginal groups before contact meant that their economies were much less productive than those of European societies, reflecting a low population density and kinship forms of social organization. The existence of small surpluses was part and parcel of production for use rather than exchange, and "trade" was local and not "international" in character. It involved transferring luxuries rather than necessities, and this occurred as gift-giving, or a system where trade is dominated by personal relationships, not the exchange of commodities according to market principles.<sup>134</sup>

The references that the Royal Commission made to "commercial" trade networks and trade "for profit" before contact, however, distorted the major difference between

---

<sup>133</sup> Clare Clifton Brant, "Suicide in Canadian Aboriginal Peoples", *The Path to Healing* (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1993), p. 58.

<sup>134</sup> For a discussion of the character of trade among peoples with Stone Age technology see V. Gordon Childe, *Social Evolution*, pp. 25-6; Leslie A. White, *The Evolution of Culture*, pp.242-244.



prehistoric and post-contact trade.<sup>135</sup> This distinction was made clear in one of the reports prepared for the Royal Commission. This report notes that

During the late pre-contact period, from 2,500 to 350 years ago, climatic changes led to expansion of the boreal forest and migration into southern Manitoba of people from the upper Great Lakes region, who brought with them the birch-bark canoe, the bow and arrow and a stable population relying for subsistence on forest resources. They traded for copper goods, shells, flint etc with people as far away as the Gulf of Mexico, British Columbia, Wyoming, Minnesota and North Dakota. The nature of that trade was, however, quite different from the mercantile relations established in the fur trade after European contact. It was based on political and communal considerations and extended out from production based on use. The later fur trade, on the other hand, was built on individual, market-exchange with very different implications for social relations and the resource base...<sup>136</sup>

Understanding aboriginal participation in the fur trade, therefore, requires a recognition that aboriginal groups were integrated into an international system of commodity exchange that irrevocably transformed aboriginal societies. The relatively autonomous subsistence oriented aboriginal economies became increasingly dependent upon external demand. This demand, along with the Iron Age technology brought by Europeans,<sup>137</sup> dramatically increased the productivity and complexity of aboriginal societies. A greater division of labour (largely through the development of

---

<sup>135</sup> This kind of distortion can be found in a report prepared for the Commission which states that "households are economic enterprises which organize and allocate wildlife resources, capital in the form of harvesting equipment, and the labour of the household and of the extended family. Food and other products are distributed among other households in the extended family, and well before contact with Europeans societies and the advent of the fur trade, extensive networks for exchange existed". Frederick H. Weihs Consulting, "A Review and Assessment of the Economic Utilization and Potential of Country Food in the Northern Economy", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>136</sup> John Loxley, "Aboriginal People in the Winnipeg Economy", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>137</sup> Eric Wolf, for example, notes that "European trade goods appear on the Niagara frontier as early as 1570 and that by 1670 sites of the Onondaga subgroup reveal almost no items of Native manufacture except pipes". Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, p. 4.

middlemen) and greater stratification resulted – a circumstance exacerbated by European states' conflicts over territory that led to a number of alliances of convenience with different aboriginal tribes.<sup>138</sup> Shifting alliances and tribal wars, along with epidemics brought about by contact with Europeans, caused massive displacements of aboriginal societies,<sup>139</sup> as well as the development of a substantial mixed-blood or Métis population.<sup>140</sup> It also led to their reorganization so that they could orient themselves to produce for exchange instead of simply for use. This reorientation, along with the depletion of wildlife populations brought by increased productivity and European demand, made it next to impossible for aboriginal peoples to return to their subsistence economies and pre-contact social relations when the fur trade declined.

This distinction between the fur trade and later developments was also made in one of the research studies undertaken for the Royal Commission. Summarizing arguments by Michael Asch and Peter Usher, this study noted that "with the exchange of primary

---

<sup>138</sup> Morton Fried even maintains that the concept of "tribe" came about with the arrival of Europeans. According to Fried, "although we are accustomed to think about the most ancient forms of human society in terms of tribes, firmly defined and bounded units of this sort actually grew out of the manipulation of relatively unstructured populations by more complexly organized societies. The invention of the state, a tight, class-structured political and economic organization, began a process whereby vaguely defined and grossly overlapping populations were provided with the minimal organization required for their manipulation, even though they had little or no internal organization of their own other than that based on conceptions of kinship". Morton Fried, *The Notion of Tribe*, p.i.

<sup>139</sup> The Woodlands Cree and Assiniboine first moved south and east, and then westwards to control the fur traffic to Hudson's Bay. For a further discussion of this development see John S. Nicks and Trudy Nicks, "Introduction", *Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology - Special Issue* Vol. III, No. 1, 1972, pp. xi- xii.

products and furs, aboriginal people participated in mercantile capitalism" since this "essentially provided an extension of the basic subsistence economy, where the organization and control of work still resided essentially within a kin group or household unit". As a result, this study pointed out that "participation in mercantile capitalism...did not necessitate a change in the 'social relations of production' - the social organization of the productive activity, and the framework of values and institutions which serve to perpetuate it".<sup>141</sup> According to this study, such mercantile imperatives were very different from those of the large-scale resource developments that dominated industrial capitalism in the north. These projects involved selling one's labour, which is then supervised or directed by firms or a bureaucracy.<sup>142</sup> Aboriginal participation is limited in this system, the study argued, because the native population is resistant to developments that disrupt their relationship to the land and their kinship forms of social organization.

But while the fur trade did not break up the kinship relations upon which aboriginal groups were based, increases in productivity and production for exchange did

---

<sup>140</sup> For a discussion of the development of the Métis, see David Boisvert and Keith Turnbull, "Who are the Métis?", *Studies in Political Economy* No. 18, Autumn 1985, pp. 107-145.

<sup>141</sup> David DesBrisay, "The Impact of Major Resource Development Projects in Aboriginal Communities", *For Seven Generations*. This point is based on an article by Michael Asch, "Dene Self-determination and the Study of Hunter-Gatherers in the Modern World", in Eleanor Leacock and Richard Lee (eds), *Politics and History in Band Societies* (New-York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 347-371.

<sup>142</sup> David DesBrisay, "The Impact of Major Resource Development Projects in Aboriginal Communities", *For Seven Generations*. This part of DesBrisay's argument is drawn from a study by Peter Usher, "Assessing the Impact of Industry in the Beaufort Sea Region", *A Report to the Beaufort Sea Alliance*, Ottawa, 1982.

necessitate a quantitative change. Referred to as "strengthen[ing] pre-existing forms of social organization",<sup>143</sup> increasing specialization, differentiation and stratification ensued. This consisted of the development of a number of chiefs who "controlled extensive trading networks and derived considerable wealth as middlemen in the fur trade". Such stratification was often encouraged by the fur trading companies because middlemen were needed to transport the furs. And although "the favours and special treatment accorded chiefs by the fur traders led to increased jealousy among other Indians...the wealth which the leaders accumulated helped them to ward off challenges to their leadership".<sup>144</sup>

These post-contact influences brought about by integrating the native population into mercantile relationships dramatically transformed the five aboriginal groups/regions analyzed by the Royal Commission - the Mi'kmaq, the Blackfoot, the Iroquois, groups from the Northwest Coast, and the Inuit. The prehistoric ranked social structure of the Iroquois, for example, would have increased in productivity, size and complexity after its incorporation into mercantile capitalism. Bruce Trigger, for example, notes that a number of archaeologists think it is likely that "very large [Iroquoian] communities developed as 'gateways' to control trade routes used in connection with the fur trade", while others argue that these communities were created as defensive measures against

---

<sup>143</sup>Warburton and Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia", p. 32.

<sup>144</sup>Warburton and Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia", pp. 33-4.

attacks from southern groups.<sup>145</sup> The increasing conflicts presumably were precipitated because of their acquisition of more advanced weaponry (i.e. firearms) from Europeans, as well as the iron tools (traps, axes, knives, chisels, kettles, needles, etc.) that increased the productivity and complexity of all aboriginal groups after contact.<sup>146</sup> As will be shown below, increasing tensions between the Iroquois and the Wendat (Huron) were directly linked to the expansion of trade, and the fact that the Iroquois were being supplied with arms by the Dutch. It is even likely that the introduction of European trade and technology resulted in the formation of the confederacy itself,<sup>147</sup> since a dramatic increase in competition for furs and the resulting

---

<sup>145</sup> Trigger, "Maintaining economic equality in opposition to complexity", p.127.

<sup>146</sup> For a discussion of the technology brought by Europeans, see Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, pp. 35-37; Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, pp. 4, 166; Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, pp. 111, 114, 166.

<sup>147</sup> Although one of the main sources used by the Commission, Lewis Henry Morgan's ethnography, maintains that the Iroquois Confederacy was formed "about A.D. 1400-1450" (Morgan, *Ancient Society*, p.128), this view was developed on the basis of unsubstantiated Iroquoian oral histories that had been influenced by Iron Age cultures for 300 years. In his work to which the Royal Commission refers, in fact, Morgan argues that "the epoch of [the Confederacy's] establishment cannot now be decisively ascertained...it is evident from their traditional history...that they had long occupied the country before their necessities or increase of numbers made the League a feasible or desirable consummation. In relation to the period of its origin, there are some circumstances connected with their first intercourse with Europeans tending to show that it had subsisted about a century or a century and a half at the era of Dutch discovery [between 1459 and 1509]; on the other hand, their principal traditions indicate a period far more remote". Morgan, *League of the Ho-de-no sau-nee or Iroquois*, Volume One, p. 7. Eric Wolf argued in the 1980s that "the Iroquois Confederacy had probably come into being in the course of the fifteenth century, as a means for reducing conflict and warfare among the clusters" but that "the growing fur trade gave the various clusters an overriding convergent interest". Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, p. 165. More recent scholarship tends to push back the development of the confederacy to between 1000 and 1450 A.D., but these claims are largely based on an acceptance of Iroquois mythology that involves the story of Hiawatha and Diganwidah creating the "Great Law of Peace". According to Iroquois beliefs, the Iroquois Constitution - otherwise known as "The Great Law of Peace" - was adopted in 1451. Although the Iroquois had no numbers, the date 1451 was first claimed to be the "founding date" by Paul A.W. Wallace (author of *White Roots of Peace*), who, drawing upon Iroquoian oral histories, focussed on this year because an eclipse supposedly occurred at the time "The Great Law of Peace" was being ratified (and one occurred in 1451). This "founding date" has been pushed back even further by Barbara Mann and Jerry Fields of Toledo University in Ohio.

warfare would have made greater cooperation necessary for economic success and survival.<sup>148</sup> This speculation, however, is only a hypothesis since archaeological evidence remains silent on the date of origin of the confederacy.<sup>149</sup>

The aboriginal groups inhabiting the Northwest Coast also were heavily influenced by European societies by the time their cultures were documented by anthropologists, explorers and missionaries. The first contact came in July 1774, when the Spaniard Juan Pérez encountered the Haida off Langara Island. It was not until 1792, however, that the maritime fur trade began to take off. One of the consequences of the trade during this time was that aboriginal groups acquired significant amounts of iron. As Robin Fisher points out,

like the explorers, the early fur traders found that the coast Indians were most partial to iron. Members of the Spanish expedition led by Perez had noted that the Indians particularly wanted large pieces with a cutting edge, and Dixon's staple medium of exchange was 'toes,' or iron chisels. Early in 1789 the crew

---

Relying once again on eclipse tables, they maintain that 1451 cannot be the "founding date" because this particular eclipse's shadow fell over Pennsylvania, not over Iroquois territory. In 1142, however, there was an eclipse that would have been visible to the Iroquois, according to Mann and Shields, and this date is supported by family lineages and by counting the number of people who have allegedly held the office of the Tadadaho (speaker) of the Confederacy. Using the works of a contemporary "Iroquois oral historian" Paula Underwood and the anthropologist William N. Fenton, Mann and Shields estimate the founding of the Confederacy/League to 1090, a date that they argue "compares roughly" to the 1142 date indicated by the eclipse. Barbara Mann and Jerry Fields, cited in Bruce E. Johansen, "Dating the Iroquois Confederacy", *Akwesasne Notes New Series*, Fall 1995 1(3-4), pp.62-3. For other works that attempt to push back the origins of the Iroquois Confederacy, see Jack Weatherford, *Indian Givers: How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), p. 135; Bruce E. Johansen, *Forgotten Founders* (Ipswich: Gambit, 1987), pp. 12, 61.

<sup>148</sup> See, for example, Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, p.164. Bruce Trigger also notes that there is archaeological evidence of dramatic increases in long distance trade between 1525 and 1600 A.D. Trigger, "Maintaining economic equality", p. 129.

<sup>149</sup> Trigger, "Maintaining economic equality in opposition to complexity", p. 129.

of the Columbia, trading in the Straits of Juan De Fuca, were mortified to see seventy pelts escape them 'for want of Chizels to purchase them'.<sup>150</sup>

Because of the increase in productivity that the large influx of iron tools would provide, one would expect a corresponding change in the complexity of the Northwest Coast cultures. This, in fact, appears to be the case.<sup>151</sup> A flourishing of artistry occurred because the possibilities for carving were dramatically increased with the iron tools brought by Europeans. Although prehistoric technology - jadeite, shell, horn, beaver incisors, and bone<sup>152</sup> - could have been used for working smaller pieces of wood, the amount of effort required to use these implements for carving the large tree trunks needed for totem poles would obviously have inhibited this activity before contact. As Drucker explains, "the giant red cedar and other trees were felled by laboriously pecking away with adzes and chisels around the trunk"<sup>153</sup> - a process that would have taken a long time before the introduction of iron tools. The increased productivity brought about by Iron Age technology would also have increased the possibilities for full-time specialists, something that has only come about relatively late in human history.<sup>154</sup>

---

<sup>150</sup> Robin Fisher, "Indian Control of the Maritime Fur Trade and the Northwest Coast", in R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith (eds), *Canadian History: Pre-Confederation* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1990), p.82

<sup>151</sup> For a general discussion of this, see Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, pp.53, 112, 220.

<sup>152</sup> Drucker, *Cultures of the North Pacific Coast*, p.23.

<sup>153</sup> Drucker, *Cultures of the North Pacific Coast*, p.23.

<sup>154</sup> Childe notes that although "in ethnography we find specialist makers of pottery or betel-pouches among societies in the Pacific that are essentially Neolithic", these are generally "part-time specialists". "Full-time specialists", on the other hand, "neither grow nor catch their own food, but get it in return for the products of their crafts. As far as archaeological evidence can go, this applies to prehistoric bronze-smiths. They are the first full-time specialists attested in human history". Childe, *Social Evolution*, p. 25.

The combination of the Northwest Coast peoples' hunting and gathering mode of production with early capitalist forms, such as the integration of these tribes into European trading networks, also had important consequences for their social relations. This can be seen most clearly in the greater elaboration of their ceremonial life, especially the potlach.<sup>155</sup> Trade in sea otters with Europeans increased individual and village specialization, and "greatly augmented...rank differences, competitiveness and warfare".<sup>156</sup> As Godelier explains more generally, "new economic relations...provide the material resources necessary for an intensification of ritual life beyond the limits which the old aboriginal way of life had permitted. The ceremonies are now more numerous and the number of participants is greater. Before the arrival of Europeans it was very rarely that hunting and gathering groups had food resources sufficient for 200 or more people for two or three weeks at their disposal".<sup>157</sup>

The same factors likely would have led to the development of the cultural practices of the Mi'kmaq that were referred to as "traditional" by the Royal Commission. The

---

<sup>155</sup> Wessman, *Anthropology and Marxism*, p.200.

<sup>156</sup> Leacock, "Marxism and Anthropology", p.251. Lee, "Primitive communism...", p. 232. Some commentators have suggested that the tribes of the Northwest Coast practiced slavery (see, for example, Drucker, *Cultures of the North Pacific Coast*, pp. 14-15; and Leland Donald, "Was Nuu-chah-nulth-aht (Nootka) Society Based on Slave Labor", in Elisabeth Tooker and Morton H. Fried (eds), *The Development of Political Organization in Native North America* (Washington, DC: American Ethnological Society, 1983). This is convincingly refuted by White and Fried, on the basis that while the "slaves" had a different status, they essentially engaged in the same productive activity as other members of the tribe. White, *The Evolution of Culture*, pp. 200-3; Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, pp. 216-223.

<sup>157</sup> Godelier, "Modes of production, Kinship and Demographic Structures", p.8.



Royal Commission, for example, referred to "planting grounds" that were maintained by tribal groupings in the summer. As was mentioned in Chapter Three, however, there is an ongoing archaeological debate as to whether these groups were horticultural before contact,<sup>158</sup> and most scholars claim that they were hunters and gatherers.<sup>159</sup> Furthermore, the Royal Commission outlined an extensive system of ranking among the Mi'kmaq, which it claims existed before contact, but it provided no evidence for this except the oral histories of aboriginal peoples. It was not considered that this circumstance could have been brought about by the increasing productivity made possible by the pursuit of mercantile wealth. Increased stratification and warfare, in fact, is shown to have occurred after the arrival of the Europeans, when the Mi'kmaq used Iron Age technology to take over the Beothuk's territories in Newfoundland.<sup>160</sup>

---

<sup>158</sup> A report prepared for the Royal Commission actually alludes to this debate. For a discussion see William C. Wicken and John G. Reid, "An Overview of the Eighteenth Century Treaties Signed Between the Mi'kmaq and Wuastukwiuk Peoples and the English Crown, 1693-1928", note 56, *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>159</sup> This is, in fact, the view of two research reports produced for the Royal Commission. In a report by Adrian Tanner et al, "Aboriginal Peoples and Governance in Newfoundland and Labrador", it is maintained that the Mi'kmaq were nomadic hunters. A Report by John Crossley, "Prince Edward Island", *For Seven Generations*, states that "shellfish, game, and other products of nature provided food, clothing, and shelter" for the Mi'kmaq. For other similar assertions see Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, p.6 and a source used by the Royal Commission - Conrad et al., *History of the Canadian Peoples*, p.20 - which maintains that the Mi'kmaq "did not establish permanent coastal settlements but lived according to a traditional migratory-subsistence cycle". Dickason maintains that the Mi'kmaq were "an agricultural people reverting to hunting and gathering" because "archaeology has confirmed a connection [of the Mi'kmaq] with the Adena and Hopewellian mound builders of the Ohio Valley" and therefore "Mi'kmaq social organization was more complex than that of their northern hunting and gathering neighbours". Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, p.73. There is some evidence that the Mi'kmaq had developed horticulture at some point in the past, but this had disappeared by time Europeans came. For a discussion of the same point see Ryerson, *The Founding of Canada*, p.30.

<sup>160</sup> This assertion is now often avoided by historians, presumably because of the romantic view that aboriginal peoples are peaceful by nature. Miller, for example, notes that a decline of the Beothuk "may" have been the result of "the increased use of the southern part of Newfoundland by the Micmac

Mercantile influence is even more apparent in the case of "The Blackfoot Confederacy" - since contact with Europeans completely changed its economy and social structure.<sup>161</sup> As was pointed out in Chapter Three, "The Blackfoot Confederacy", actually consists of three distinct cultural traditions that migrated to the plains from other areas,<sup>162</sup> displacing the Siouan groups inhabiting the region.<sup>163</sup> The economy of the Blackfoot was dramatically transformed with contact because the

---

after 1713, although the evidence for this is inconclusive". Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, p.90. Tanner et al., in their report produced for the Commission maintain that "it was once popularly believed that the French had brought the Mi'kmaq to Newfoundland to harass the Beothuks, but there is no evidence that this is so. However, there is evidence that relations between the two aboriginal groups were not friendly". The two sources used to make this claim are Ralph T. Pastore, *The Newfoundland Micmacs*, St John's Newfoundland Historical Society, Pamphlet No. 5. 1978 and Ralph T. Pastore, *Shanawdithit's People: The Archaeology of the Beothuks* (St. John's: Atlantic Archaeology Ltd., 1992). Tanner et al. also argue that "until recently, Mi'kmaq were incorrectly blamed in Newfoundland school texts for killing off the Beothuks". Tanner et al., "Aboriginal Peoples and Governance in Newfoundland and Labrador", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>161</sup> For a comprehensive overview of this see Oscar Lewis, *The Effects of White Contact upon Blackfoot Culture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966).

<sup>162</sup> Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology*, pp.4-5; Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, p.73; James Rousseau and George W. Brown, "The Indians of Northeastern North America", in R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith (eds) *Readings in Canadian History*, p. 6. The Blackfoot includes three closely related Algonkian-speaking peoples - the Pikuni, or Piegan, the Kainah, or Blood, and the Siksika, or Blackfoot proper (often referred to as the Northern Blackfoot). They were among the first Algonkians in the westward movement from timberland to open grassland ("Blackfoot" *Encyclopædia Britannica* <<http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=15741>> [Accessed June 18, 2002]. Also included in the Blackfoot Confederacy are the Gros Ventre (or Atsina) and the Sarcee. The Gros Ventre were originally part of an Algonkian speaking people known as the Arapaho, who engaged in horticulture in the eastern woodlands ("Arapaho" *Encyclopædia Britannica* <<http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=9309>> [Accessed June 18, 2002]). The Sarcee, unlike the Blackfoot and Gros Ventre, were originally part of the Athabascan language family and moved southward to the plains at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. "Sarcee" *Encyclopædia Britannica* <<http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=67440>> [Accessed June 18, 2002].

<sup>163</sup> The one report prepared for the Royal Commission that documents the pre-contact history of the Confederacy does not mention these pre-contact cultural origins, although it does argue that "the Blackfoot tribes moved from their previous occupation and residence on the Saskatchewan Plains, near the Eagle Hills, located about 400 miles east of the Rockies, during the early 18th century after they had acquired both horses and guns. Consequently they pushed other tribes, such as the Kutenais and Flatheads, southwestward and eventually arrived at the foothills of the Rockies which became their

introduction of horses and firearms increased, and perhaps even made possible, hunting buffalo on the plains.<sup>164</sup> The buffalo hunt also developed in response to the demands of the Hudson's Bay Company, which required large amounts of food to be supplied in order to expand trade across the country.<sup>165</sup> In exchange for food, the Hudson's Bay Company provided the buffalo hunters with trade goods, which increased their productivity and made larger populations possible.<sup>166</sup> At the same time, however, these groups needed to maintain the relatively fluid forms of social organization required by nomadism. As Godelier explains, after less than a hundred years of contact,

a new mode of production involving a nomadic way of life became the norm for these tribes [of the plains], without the original social relations undergoing total collapse or a radical disappearance, though there were changes in these relations caused by the addition of new functions or the suppression of old ones. These additions and suppressions corresponded to the constraints which arose as a result of the new conditions of production and social life. Those groups which were originally sedentary farmers organised in chiefdoms, were obliged to adopt a much more fluid and egalitarian form of social organisation, imposed by the need to split up regularly into nomadic bands where individual initiative played a large role. On the other hand, those groups which were

---

historic homeland". Andrew Bear Robe, "The historical, legal and current basis for Siksika Governance". *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>164</sup> As is argued by the Encyclopaedia Britannica, "some anthropologists have argued that Indians could not have lived on the Plains before the introduction of the horse. Others, pointing to the fact that Francisco Vázquez de Coronado's expedition in 1541 encountered fully nomadic buffalo-hunting tribes on the Southern Plains who lacked horses and depended on dogs for transport, claim that the acquisition of the horse produced only minor changes. One consequence of the horse was the creation of great differences in wealth. Horse stealing became a major motive for warfare. The man who had horses to give away or to offer as bride-price was at a distinct advantage in social prestige". "Plains Indian" *Encyclopædia Britannica*

<<http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=127688>> [Accessed June 18, 2002].

<sup>165</sup> Ryerson, *The Founding of Canada*, p.246.

<sup>166</sup> The Royal Commission, for example, notes that Andrew Bear Robe's report maintains that the aboriginal population on the plains reached 200,000 in 1800, and the confederacy itself is estimated at 30,000. *Final Report*, 1, p..95.

originally nomadic bands of foot hunter-gatherers were obliged to adopt a more hierarchical form of organisation in order to impose the communal discipline necessary for the success in *their* great collective summer hunts.<sup>167</sup>

It was these circumstances that made the formation of "the Blackfoot Confederacy" possible, resulting in the contradictory social formation of a hunting and gathering economy with a stratified social structure.

The group least affected by combination with mercantile capitalism were the Inuit.

This was because the harsh environment of the area made it the least desirable area in Canada for profit-seeking merchants. Fur-bearing animals were relatively scarce, and travel was next to impossible after freeze-up. Most of the contact with the Inuit before the 20<sup>th</sup> Century occurred with the arrival of European whalers. These whalers did not incorporate the Inuit into their hunting activities as extensively as occurred in southern Canada because the European boats and harpoons being used were much more technologically advanced and efficient than Inuit umiaks and kayaks. Some Inuit did work for the whalers as boatcrews, harpooners or "ship's natives",<sup>168</sup> but these positions would have been relatively few in number in comparison with the participation of more southern groups in the fur trade. And since the Inuit had little surplus, they could not be used extensively to supply whaling ships.<sup>169</sup> It was not until 1830 that the Hudson's Bay Company moved north, and permanent trading posts in the

---

<sup>167</sup> Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology*, p.5.

<sup>168</sup> Keith Crowe, *A History of the Original Peoples of Northern Canada*, p.106.

<sup>169</sup> Keith Crowe notes that clothes, eggs, meat and tools were traded for items such as tobacco and iron tools. Crowe, *A History of the Original Peoples of Northern Canada*, p. 100.

Hudson Strait were only established in the 1920s.<sup>170</sup> As a result, the Inuit remained nomadic and largely isolated from the modern world until after World War II.

Such changes also have been thoroughly documented for one of the groups the Royal Commission focussed on in its brief examination of the fur trade - the Innu. This occurs in Eleanor Leacock's *The Montagnais "Hunting Territory" and the Fur Trade*, where it is explained that the development of the Innu "hunting territory" actually was in response to the imperatives brought by the fur trade. According to Leacock,

it is the production for *use* rather than for *exchange* in primitive economies that focuses the attention on the products of the land rather than the land itself. Formerly the Montagnais hunted cooperatively and shared their game, which was immediately consumed by the group. They could not preserve, store, or transport food to any significant extent. Occasionally there was surplus meat to be dried and kept, but it merely filled in temporarily when hunting was poor and could not be depended upon for any length of time. Owing to the uncertainty of the hunt, several families were necessarily dependent upon each other, thus providing 'a kind of subsistence insurance or greater security than individual families could achieve'. With production for trade, however, the individual's most important ties, economically speaking, were transferred from *within* the band to *without*, and his objective relation to other band members changed from the co-operative to the competitive. With storable, transportable, and individually acquired supplies - principally flour and lard - as staple foods, the individual family becomes self-sufficient, and larger group living is not only superfluous in the struggle for existence but a positive hindrance to the personal acquisition of furs. The more furs one collects, the more material comforts one can obtain. In contrast to the aboriginal situation, material needs become theoretically limitless. The family group begins to resent intrusions that threaten to limit its take of furs and develops a sense of proprietorship over a certain area, to which it returns year after year for the sake of greater efficiency.<sup>171</sup>

---

<sup>170</sup> Crowe, *A History of the Original Peoples of Northern Canada*, p.100.

<sup>171</sup> Eleanor Leacock, *The Montagnais "Hunting Territory" and the Fur Trade*, p.7.

This is why, in Leacock's view, the "first regions to be exploited [have] the most highly developed hunting territories,<sup>172</sup> resulting in "more stable bands with greater formal organization".<sup>173</sup> The process was also hastened by the "coureurs de bois and Europeans who married with the Montagnais" since they further entrenched the use of European goods and "owing to their understanding of money and its relation to individual effort, they must have aided the introduction of the more efficient individual trapping methods".<sup>174</sup>

In her analysis, Leacock stresses the uneven and combined character of this evolutionary process. The combination of two modes of production means that the process is gradual and ongoing, rather than occurring all at once. As a result, there are transitional forms containing both advanced and primitive features, where the sharing of meat and ownership of furs exist side by side. She points out that there are three stages of this transition to private ownership:

the first period is that prior to complete dependence on fur-trading and exists only in the memory of the Indians...The second...[is where] adjustment to the demands of fur-trapping has lagged behind the establishment of fur-trading as more important economically than hunting for game. The third is...[where native trappers] differ from white trappers only in the carry-over of some material traits, including at times a slightly, but hardly significantly, greater dependence on natural products and, more markedly, in the retention of

---

<sup>172</sup> Leacock, *The Montagnais "Hunting Territory" and the Fur Trade*, p.14.

<sup>173</sup> Leacock, *The Montagnais "Hunting Territory" and the Fur Trade*, p.20.

<sup>174</sup> Leacock, *The Montagnais "Hunting Territory" and the Fur Trade*, p.40.

attitudes and personal relationships more closely correlated with their past than their present way of life.<sup>175</sup>

She notes, therefore, that uneven and combined forms exist when "the individual hunter was emerging as an independent unit, yet, on the other hand, there are constant references to shifting alliances and mutual assistance between friends and relatives".<sup>176</sup>

Leacock's analysis also exposes the flawed logic, constantly found in the Royal Commission's Report, of assumptions about "the aboriginality of conservation", where it is maintained that aboriginal peoples had developed hunting territories before contact in order to "manage" or "conserve" wildlife resources. As a refutation to what she maintains is merely a "questionable inference", Leacock offers the following quote by the missionary Paul Le Jeune: "When the Savages find a lodge of them [beavers], they kill all, great and small, male and female. There is danger that they will finally exterminate the species in this Region, as has happened among the Hurons".<sup>177</sup> She also points out that "conservation implies a drive toward 'settling down' that is markedly absent in this as in other simple cultures. The present-day life of the eastern Montagnais bands indicates that wandering in multifamily groups is so basic a pattern that they are adjusting with difficulty to the limited movement and

---

<sup>175</sup> Leacock, *The Montagnais "Hunting Territory" and the Fur Trade*, p.24.

<sup>176</sup> Leacock, *The Montagnais "Hunting Territory" and the Fur Trade*, p.38.

<sup>177</sup> This quotation comes from the *Jesuit Relations*, 8, p. 57. It is omitted by the Royal Commission, which extensively uses this source.

smaller numbers which are demanded by the fur trade and which are necessary to a system of husbanding game in family territories".<sup>178</sup>

And Leacock notes that this transition to family territories is not limited to the Innu; it is a general feature in the relationship between Aboriginals and Europeans during this period. In particular, she points out that Diamond Jenness documented family territorial rights among the Parry Island Ojibway [sic]<sup>179</sup> that occurred after contact, while Julian Steward did so for the Carrier Indians and Jochelson for the Yukaghir.<sup>180</sup>

More generally, she explains that

there have been studies of the fur trade and pressure from white settlers as intensifying Iroquois political organization and patterns of warfare; of the surplus produced by the fur trade as causing the extreme exaggeration and distortion of Northwest Coast potlatching; of the importance of trading in the formation of the 'typical' Plains culture of the nineteenth and late eighteenth centuries. 'Acculturation' is now recognized as encompassing more than the final breakdown of Indian societies, which has come about all too often with the tremendous expansion and industrialization of America in the last century. It is becoming increasingly evident that Indian tribal life as recorded in the nineteenth and even early twentieth centuries, came about as a result of the Indians taking an active part in the world-wide growth of trade and commerce;

---

<sup>178</sup> Leacock, *The Montagnais "Hunting Territory" and the Fur Trade*, p. 3. Leacock's assertion is also supported by the case of the Plains Indians, who used what is called a "buffalo pound". Fur trader Alexander Henry documented this technique as follows: "the buffalo being caught, the men assemble at the inclosure, armed with bows and arrows; every arrow has a particular mark of the owner, and they fly until the whole herd is killed" (Alexander Henry, cited in Ryerson, *The Founding of Canada*, p. 29).

<sup>179</sup> This argument is also made by Charles Bishop in his analysis of the northern Ojibwa. For a further discussion see C.A. Bishop, *The Northern Ojibwa and the Fur Trade* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1974); and Charles A. Bishop, "The Emergence of Hunting Territories Among the Northern Ojibwa", *Ethnology* 9 (1970), pp.1-15.

<sup>180</sup> Leacock, *The Montagnais "Hunting Territory" and the Fur Trade*, pp.41-2.



in other words, we are here dealing with a 'successful' phase of acculturation.<sup>181</sup>

Elisabeth Tooker makes a similar point when discussing the development of aboriginal confederacies. Unlike the Royal Commission, which maintains that these confederacies were "well-established" at the time of contact, Tooker explains that

although confederations of Indian tribes were common in post-contact times, they do not seem to have been a feature of pre-Columbian North American cultures. Most of the Indian confederacies were formed to combat the superior strength of European intrusions through greater numbers. A similar reaction may have strengthened the Iroquoian nation. The Indians along the Atlantic coast who were trading with the Europeans in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century may have formed a kind of alliance with them and caused the more interior tribes, the Iroquoians, to confederate to gain superiority and thus take part in this trade. Further, as alliances serve to make communication easy and to facilitate trade between their members, the various Indian confederacies directed the trade that became important. These considerations support the suggestion that the Iroquoian confederacies were founded (or at least strengthened) in the latter part of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>182</sup>

The various "confederacies" that the Royal Commission asserted existed before contact, therefore, are likely to have received their institutionalized character as a result of pressures from the fur trade. It is even possible that these confederacies did not even come into existence until mercantile imperatives necessitated that aboriginal societies become more productive and complex.

The "strengthening" of aboriginal kinship groupings that occurred during the fur trade, however, did not continue with Canada's agricultural development and the

---

<sup>181</sup>Leacock, *The Montagnais "Hunting Territory" and the Fur Trade*, p.43.

industrialization that occurred later. This was because these developments, unlike the pursuit of mercantile wealth, did not consist primarily of separate markets linking unevenly developed modes of production. Instead, "the old network of local markets and the 'carrying' trade between them were giving way to an integrated market...which would replace 'the infinite succession of arbitrage operations between separate, distinct, and discrete markets that had previously constituted foreign trade'".<sup>183</sup> In such a system, trade was "competitive" rather than "complementary", necessitating cost-effective production. As a result, much more control was being asserted over the productive process, necessitating pre-capitalist modes of production be transformed into capitalist ones.

In Canada, industrialization was emerging out of the "growing rural-handicraft economy".<sup>184</sup> This began with the increasing productivity of agriculture, and "a limited, partial change-over from the 'natural economy' of the self-sufficient pioneer farm to production for the market: commodity production".<sup>185</sup> With the beginnings of commercial agriculture came the development of a home market, the differentiation of the town from the countryside, and the growth of "a number of fields of industrial enterprise - in lumber, ship-building and iron-working".<sup>186</sup> So, while the fur trade was

---

<sup>182</sup> Elisabeth Tooker, *An Ethnography of the Huron Indians, 1615-1649* (Washington: Bureau of American Ethnology, 1964), pp. 3-4, note 1.

<sup>183</sup> Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism*, p. 100.

<sup>184</sup> Ryerson, *The Founding of Canada*, p. 149.

<sup>185</sup> Ryerson, *The Founding of Canada*, p.150.

<sup>186</sup> Ryerson, *The Founding of Canada*, p.151.

the dominant activity in Canada's early development, "settlement, agriculture and the beginnings of local manufacture were now providing a firmer economic base for the colonial community" as history progressed.<sup>187</sup>

Warburton and Scott also discuss how agricultural development and industrialization in Canada emerged in response to "the problems and contradictions faced by mercantilism".<sup>188</sup> According to Warburton and Scott, "low profits due to the expensive costs of transportation and to competition from American and Russian traders" made it necessary for the Hudson's Bay Company to "increase profits through diversification" and introduce the capitalist mode of production.<sup>189</sup> They maintain that "agricultural goods were produced to lower the cost of provisioning its labour force, transportation routes were constructed in order to lower costs, and export markets were development [sic] for a number of resources. All of these ventures required wage-labour".<sup>190</sup> This made it necessary to transform aboriginal cultures, since native control over land and production "presented a barrier to the development of...industrial capitalis[m]...based on the full commodification of labour and resources and accompanied by a European-derived culture, social organization and political system". They maintain that in the fur trade "the strength of external commercial influence was not sufficient to transform pre-capitalist modes of

---

<sup>187</sup> Ryerson, *The Founding of Canada*, p.269.

<sup>188</sup> Warburton and Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia", p. 28.

<sup>189</sup> Warburton and Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia", pp. 28, 35-6.

production, because of the resistance offered by domestic economic activity and the 'internal solidarity' of the pre-capitalist mode of production...But the transition to industrial capitalism, particularly the employment of wage labour, overcame these barriers". The result, in the view of Warburton and Scott, was a "disastrous decline in the well-being of Native peoples" in British Columbia.<sup>191</sup>

Interestingly, Warburton and Scott do not elaborate upon one of the most significant factors in the decline of the fur trade - the depletion of wildlife. One of the essential contradictions in the fur trade was that this economic activity required expansion to ensure profitability, yet the yields of fur production could not be increased. Such a problem meant that the fur trade would eventually be superceded by industrialization and commercial agriculture in the trajectory of Canadian capitalist development, since only these activities, through intensive rather than extensive growth, had the capacity to substantially increase profits over the long term.

Although the emergence of industrialism out of mercantile relations undoubtedly had a negative impact on aboriginal peoples across Canada, as well as in British Columbia, the important question that needs to be answered is *why* this was the case. Why were aboriginal peoples able to participate in the mercantile period of Canada's history during the fur trade, but suffered a "disastrous decline" in their social circumstances as

---

<sup>190</sup>Warburton and Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia", p. 41.

industrialization proceeded? The answer to this question can be found in the different requirements of agriculture and industrial capitalism, and the consequence that this had for relatively undeveloped aboriginal cultures with their less productive modes of production and kinship social relations.

#### BUT WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR ME LATELY?

As has been shown in the previous sections, it is apparent that the "cooperation" that occurred in Canada's early history was due the fact that aboriginal peoples were necessary to the fur trade, either as fur producers or middlemen. When the fur trade declined, however, and Canada pursued agricultural, and then industrial, development, more efficient production methods were adopted. Since this required coordinated forms of labour and the development of a nation-state based on private property, it conflicted with the subsistence-based kinship groupings that had sustained the native population before contact.

This circumstance, which is crucial to understanding the origins of aboriginal dependency, was largely ignored by the Royal Commission because it was not consistent with its political strategy of parallelism. This strategy was justified by the Royal Commission's rejection of notions of historical progress and cultural evolution.

---

<sup>191</sup>Warburton and Scott, pp. 27-9.

The Royal Commission maintained that recognizing the different levels of development between Europeans and Aborigines at the time of contact is a "false assumption" that must be purged from the history books.<sup>192</sup> As a result, overcoming aboriginal dependency was not envisioned in terms of enabling the native population to participate in more productive and complex economic and political processes; instead, getting non-Aborigines to "respect" archaic cultural characteristics and to "recognize" aboriginal tribes as "nations" with "inherent sovereignty" was promoted as the course of action. The legal documents developed during the "Contact and Cooperation" period were pointed to as mechanisms to restore a more equal and balanced relationship between Aborigines and Non-aborigines; often ignored was the consideration that the character of the pre-confederation treaties and the Royal Proclamation of 1763 was related to the fact that the native population was needed to provide furs for profitable exchange and military support in colonial wars - economic and political circumstances that disappeared 200 years ago.

Integrating conceptions of unequal exchange into political economists' analysis of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations has also resulted in difficulties. Warburton and Scott, for example, after providing a very lucid account of the different impacts of mercantile relations and capitalism on the aboriginal population, maintain that "Marx identified exploitation as occurring when the producers of commodities do not realize

---

<sup>192</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.248.

the full value of their labour power. The value of the trade goods exchanged was less than profits realized from the sale of the furs in Asia, Europe and the Eastern United States",<sup>193</sup> implying that aboriginal peoples were exploited during the fur trade. They also argue that

profits realized from the labour of native people in British Columbia and around the world were part of a process of capital accumulation in the advanced centres of early capitalist wealth and power...Although the forty-year-long fur trade on the North West Pacific Coast was a short-lived, tail-end element in the three--centuries-long phase of mercantilism, during that phase as a whole enough capital was accumulated on a world-wide scale to finance the initiation of competitive industrial capitalism. Later, during British Columbia's industrialization, much of the necessary capital was borrowed from British and other western European sources who had accumulated some of their wealth through mercantile activities...although the precise channels cannot be traced at this point, the labour of the indigenous population helped indirectly to finance the Province's own industrial revolution.<sup>194</sup>

There are two problems with these assertions. The first is that, in the grand scheme of things, the fur trade was relatively insignificant in the development of industrial capitalism. This was because it provided luxury goods or "*commercial commodities* geared to consumption", rather than the "*industrial raw materials*" needed for the expansion of production.<sup>195</sup> In other words, although the fur trade "shaped" the emergence of capitalism in Canada's early history, it cannot be considered to be a "driving" force in its development over the long-term.

---

<sup>193</sup> Warburton and Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia", p. 39.

<sup>194</sup> Warburton and Scott, "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia", p.41.

<sup>195</sup> Wallace Clement, *Class, Power and Property: Essays on Canadian Society* (Agincourt: Methuen Publications, 1983), p.175.

Such a conclusion is resisted in some recent studies of the fur trade because there is an increasing tendency to perceive aboriginal cultures as playing a significant role in early Canadian economic development. Anthropologists like Bruce Trigger, for example, argue that "the view that native people have played more than an insignificant role in shaping the national history of Canada must be entertained if scholars are to overcome their own heritage of racism and ethnic bias".<sup>196</sup> The implication is that if native people are *not* seen as playing a significant role "in shaping the national history of Canada", this will impact negatively on aboriginal peoples. The influence of a group in the development of Canada is equated with notions of their "inferiority" or "superiority", not the particular material circumstances or "accidents of history" that determine the character of wider economic and political processes.

Secondly, as Wallace Clement, following Watkins, correctly points out, aboriginal peoples' participation in the fur trade was either as quasi-merchants or commodity producers, not wage labourers.<sup>197</sup> In this capacity they sold the product of their labour

---

<sup>196</sup> Trigger, "The Historians' Indian: Native Americans in Canadian Historical Writing from Charlevoix to the Present", *Canadian Historical Review*, 1986 LXVII(3), p. 336.

<sup>197</sup> Clement, *Class, Power and Property*, pp. 175, 192. The statement from Watkins that Clement concurs with is the following: "The prosecution of the fur trade depended, at least initially in each region into which the fur trade expanded, on the Indian as fur-gatherer. As such the Indian was a commodity producer, not a wage-earner, and the fur trade was literally a trade, or a commercial activity...he did not have to make two critical and traumatic adjustments that result from imposed industrialization. Firstly, he did not have to become a wage-earner, and secondly, which is really the opposite side of the coin, he did not have to yield up his ownership of the land...Now mineral production (including petroleum) is an industry not a trade, and it needs both rights to the use of land and people who will work for a wage". Mel Watkins, "Underdevelopment and Development", in Mel



(or someone else's, in the case of the middlemen), not their labour power.<sup>198</sup> In contrast to work in the mining and forestry sector, where independent commodity production was "rapidly transformed [into wage labour] as the products of the mines and forests came integrated into industrial production",<sup>199</sup> aboriginal peoples never were alienated from their labour in the fur trade. The fur trade offered no precedent for this qualitative difference in production. In fact, as will be shown in the next two chapters, aboriginal peoples' continued attachment to the subsistence patterns and kinship forms of social organization that had meshed with the fur trade, now provided an obstacle to their participation in farming and industrialization.

These particularities of the fur trade have made it difficult to develop a historical and materialist analysis of this period in Canada's history. There has been a shift away from political economy, and as a result, instead of examining how the different requirements for production in post-fur trade developments affected aboriginal dependency, there tends to be a focus on the racist attitudes of non-aboriginal peoples towards the native population.<sup>200</sup> This formulation has been adopted by many

---

Watkins (ed), *Dene Nation: The Colony Within* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), pp. 87-88.

<sup>198</sup> Clement, *Class, Power and Property*, p. 192.

<sup>199</sup> Clement, *Class, Power and Property*, pp. 175-6.

<sup>200</sup> Carol M. Judd argues, for example, that race or ethnic origin influenced employment position in the Hudson's Bay Company because servants were usually aboriginal or French, while officers and administrators were almost always British or Scottish. She also notes that aboriginal peoples were hired only on a casual basis in comparison to other employees who were on contract, and when the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company amalgamated, a surplus of labour was created and these hierarchies or class divisions became entrenched. Judd does not offer any evidence for her "racism hypothesis" and only notes that it is "more likely" that the "company was unwilling to admit them to

theoretically nebulous works devoted to an examination of "colonialism", "subjugation" and "cultural oppression".<sup>201</sup>

But such characterizations suffer from the same flaws that plagued the Royal Commission's analysis. The existence of aboriginal dependency is attributed to various European attitudes, rather than with the historical and material circumstances that led these ideas to become accepted by society. As the Royal Commission itself points out, racist attitudes towards aboriginal peoples throughout history were most prominent when the fur trade declined and aboriginal peoples were no longer a necessary part of the Canadian economy. It was erroneously thought that aboriginal peoples' inability to contribute to modern economic and political developments was due to the fact that they were (racially) "inferior". There is no acknowledgement that it was the unproductive, small and simple economies of aboriginal groups, not their racial characteristics, that was the obstacle to their participation in agricultural development and industrialization.

---

more prestigious positions and remunerative posts". It is not considered that aboriginal workers might have lacked the skills or attitudes required to take up these positions and posts. See Carol M. Judd, "Native labour and social stratification in the Hudson's Bay Company's Northern Department, 1770-1870", *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 1980 17(4), pp. 305-8 for her arguments concerning these points.

<sup>201</sup> See, for examples, Brian Gallagher, "A Re-examination of Race, Class and Society in Red River", *Native Studies Review* 4, Nos. 1&2 (1988), pp. 25-65; John L. Tobias, "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879-1885", *Canadian Historical Review* LXIV, 4, 1983, pp. 519-548.; and Gail Kellough, "From Colonialism to Economic Imperialism: The Experience of the Canadian Indian", in J. Harp and J.R. Hufley, (eds) *Structured Inequality in Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1980), pp. 343-373.

It was the concern with the legacy of racism that mainly influenced the historical accounts of entities like the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Confusing culture with race, for example, resulted in the Royal Commission encouraging readers not to be "incredulous" when "Aboriginal people talk about returning to their traditions" since "being Aboriginal" is not about "buckskin, igloos and buffalo" but "is a matter of mind" where "the stories that teach Aboriginal people how to live with each other and with creation - how to be fully human - are loaded with symbols that transcend time and the particular circumstances in which they originated".<sup>202</sup> But the "traditions" to which "Aboriginal people talk about returning to" came out of historically specific circumstances that no longer exist. They are associated with the mercantile period, where aboriginal "traditions" were useful to the fur trade. As Canada developed, mercantile relations were superseded by agricultural development and then industrial capitalism. To retain practices and ideas that were associated with the former in the context of the latter is to maintain aboriginal dependency today. Overcoming dependency, on the other hand, requires discarding those traditions that are an obstacle to aboriginal participation in a larger, more productive and complex economy and society.

In the Royal Commission's analysis, the period of "contact and cooperation" was followed by a discussion of the next historical period - "displacement and

---

<sup>202</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 663.

assimilation". This was the period in which the fur trade declined and the imperatives of more productive economic processes became dominant. Agriculture became important at this time but even the most advanced aboriginal tribes had only practiced horticulture. As a result, it proved difficult for aboriginal peoples to make the transition from the fur trade to agriculture. Resource development such as lumbering and mining also posed difficulties because aboriginal peoples had not developed the skills or cultural attributes to participate in the industrial workforce. And since it was more profitable to obtain skilled workers from Europe, which had already assumed the costs of agricultural development and proletarianization, it was easier to warehouse aboriginal peoples on reserves than to devote the resources needed for their progressive development. These circumstances, which led to aboriginal displacement and attempts at their assimilation, will be examined in the following two chapters.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Displacement and the Limits of Agricultural and Industrial Assimilation**

After hundreds of years of "contact and cooperation", the Royal Commission maintained that relations between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals were gradually transformed into a period of "Displacement and Assimilation".<sup>1</sup> The Royal Commission asserted that unlike the earlier era of cooperative relations, increasingly prominent notions of European superiority led to a number of government policies and legal documents that attempted to assimilate the native population into the developing Canadian economy and society.<sup>2</sup> During this period, according to the Royal Commission, "a more unequal and coercive system was superimposed on the joint economy" and "the original sharing of lands, goods and knowledge among indigenous peoples and newcomers gradually faded from Canada's collective memory and was downplayed or completely overlooked in the history books. Aboriginal contributions to the fur trade and the larger economy were largely forgotten".<sup>3</sup>

Aboriginal peoples, therefore, were "displaced physically" in that they were gradually moved off their lands to make way for European settlement.<sup>4</sup> Instead of remaining "unmolested and disturbed" on their hunting territories, as the Royal Proclamation had

---

<sup>1</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 137-199.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, *Final Report*, 1, pp. 4; 139; 188-9; 263-4; 273; 382; 608; 2(2), p. 554.

<sup>3</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.686.

<sup>4</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.139.

dictated during the fur trade, they were "herded into small reserves to make way for development".<sup>5</sup> They were also "displaced socially and culturally" through "intensive missionary activity and the establishment of schools". This displacement, the Royal Commission argued, had long lasting negative effects because it "undermined [aboriginal peoples'] ability to pass on traditional values to their children, imposed male-oriented Victorian values, and attacked traditional activities such as significant dances and other ceremonies". The imposition of colonial laws was also disruptive because aboriginal groups were "forced...to abandon or at least disguise traditional governing structures and processes in favour of colonial-style municipal institutions".<sup>6</sup> Unlike the period of "contact and cooperation", where aboriginal cultures were respected and their "sovereignty" was recognized, the goal now was "remaking Aboriginal people in the image of the newcomers".<sup>7</sup>

Because the period of displacement and assimilation emerged as "contact and cooperation" declined at different times across the country, the former also began earlier in the East than in the West and the North. Aboriginal peoples were being displaced and attempts made to assimilate them as early as 1780 in the Maritimes, partly because of the large influx of Loyalists after the American Revolution, while

---

<sup>5</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.140. For a discussion of the imposition of Victorian values on the native population in studies prepared for the Royal Commission, see John Giokas, "The Indian Act", *For Seven Generations*; Russell Lawrence Barsh and James Youngblood Henderson, "International Context of Crown-Aboriginal Treaties in Canada", *For Seven Generations*; and J.S. Milloy, "Suffer the Little Children", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>7</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.140.

this process did not become dominant in the North until the 1950s.<sup>8</sup> The Royal Commission, however, claimed that this period ended pretty much at the same time regardless of the location – when the Trudeau government's White Paper was proposed in 1969. Because the White Paper was opposed by aboriginal organizations throughout Canada at the time it was put forward, the Royal Commission maintained the widespread reaction that resulted prompted a new era of "Negotiation and Renewal". This era, according to the Royal Commission, continues to this day.<sup>9</sup> The Royal Commission, in fact, was an integral aspect of this era since its formation was part of the Canadian state's political strategy to address the continuing grievances of aboriginal organizations.

Examining the circumstances that led to the emergence and decline of the "displacement and assimilation" period is important, according to the Royal Commission, so that the mistakes of the past will not be repeated.<sup>10</sup> As was the case with its analysis of the contact and cooperation period, the Royal Commission maintained that understanding the causes of "displacement and assimilation" is a crucial step in building a more balanced and equal relationship in the future.<sup>11</sup> Such

---

<sup>8</sup> Only one study prepared for the Royal Commission directly refers to a period of "displacement and assimilation", and notes that 1867-1930 is the time during which this period occurred. Thalassa Research, "Nation to Nation: Indian Nation-Crown Relations in Canada", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>9</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 201-202.

<sup>10</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 3, 141.

<sup>11</sup> The Royal Commission maintains that "the forces that created economic marginalization" were that "certain conditions essential for economic development were ignored over time" and that these "need to be re-established". Such conditions include "the economic provisions in the historical treaties; the

balance and equality was absent until 1969, the Royal Commission argued, because the legal documents and policies that were developed during this time obstructed the development of such a relationship. Developing more respectful policies and legal agreements that recognize the "inherent sovereignty" of aboriginal groups, in the Royal Commission's opinion, were necessary precursors for the development of this balanced relationship.<sup>12</sup>

In attempting to pinpoint why these policies and legal documents emerged during this era, the Royal Commission again offered two different types of explanations. The first was historical and materialist, and extended from its arguments about the importance of the fur trade, the small numbers of European settlers and the need for aboriginal military allies in maintaining cooperative relations. The Royal Commission noted in a number of sections of the *Final Report* that changes in the country's economic base,<sup>13</sup>

---

freedom for Aboriginal people to manage their own economies; and a fair share of the land and resource base that sustained Aboriginal economies in the past". *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 776.

<sup>12</sup> For discussions of aboriginal peoples' "inherent sovereignty", see *Final Report*, 1, p. 45, 608-9. Such terminology is used in the following studies prepared for the Royal Commission: The Mawiw Council of Chiefs (cited in Robert A. Milen, "Canadian Representation and Aboriginal Peoples", *For Seven Generations*), B. Ryder (cited in Paul Joffe and Mary Ellen Turpel, "Extinguishment of the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples", *For Seven Generations*), The Report of the British Columbia Task Force (cited in "Extinguishment of the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples", *For Seven Generations*); J.J. Borrows, "A Genealogy of Law: Inherent Sovereignty and First Nations Government", (1992), *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* (cited in "Extinguishment of the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples"); Richard Spaulding, "Doctrines of Dispossession", *For Seven Generations*; Andrew Bear Robe, "The Historical, Legal and Current Basis for Siksika Nation Governance", *For Seven Generations*; John Giokas, "The Indian Act", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>13</sup> The Royal Commission notes that the fur trade declined in the Canadian economy as agriculture and industrial development became more profitable (*Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 467-484) and that this "change in the colonial economic base" led to a change in policies and treaty interpretation (*Final Report*, 1, p. 138). The Royal Commission maintains that "from a western perspective" this meant that "Aboriginal



as well as political factors such as the decreasing numbers of aboriginal peoples in relation to Europeans and the stabilization of the military situation,<sup>14</sup> all were connected to "displacement and assimilation". In other words, the Royal Commission maintained that changing economic and political requirements led to particular policies and pieces of legislation being developed that attempted to gain control over aboriginal lands and assimilate the native population into the wider Canadian society. As the Royal Commission explained,

Crown respect for the existence of Aboriginal title...was most consistent during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when settlers and colonial officials still needed or valued Aboriginal people as friends and military allies. This respect was eroded by the decline of the fur trade and the concomitant decline of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal economic interdependence. Increased demands on Aboriginal territory occasioned by population growth and westward expansion, followed by a period of paternalistic administration marked by involuntary relocations and resettlement, only exacerbated the

---

peoples were seen to stand in the way, for they inhabited and claimed title to vast stretches of land" (*Final Report*, 1, p.188). As a result, "formerly autonomous Aboriginal nations came to be viewed, by prosperous and expanding Crown colonies, as little more than an unproductive drain on the public purse" (*Final Report*, 1, p. 138).

<sup>14</sup> The Royal Commission notes that diminishing aboriginal numbers were due to both disease and warfare, while immigration from Europe and the infusion of loyalists from the United States after the American Revolution increased European numbers. Loyalists had a particularly dramatic affect on the Maritimes, perhaps partially explaining why the period of displacement began in 1780 in this area. Increasing European settlement meant that aboriginal peoples were in a minority, rather than a majority, position in what is now Canada, and the hostilities with other nations on Canadian soil were coming to an end. As a result, "responsibility for 'Indian policy' - formerly a quasi-diplomatic vocation - had been transferred from military to civil authorities. The preoccupation of policy makers turned to social rather than military concerns, and soon schemes were devised to begin the process of dismantling Aboriginal nations and integrating their populations into the burgeoning settler society around them" (*Final Report*, 1, p. 138). For a discussion of the impact of Loyalist immigration on the "displacement and assimilation" period, see David Milne, "The Case of New Brunswick-Aboriginal Relations", *For Seven Generations*; The New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples' Council, "Aboriginal Self-Governance within the Province of New Brunswick", *For Seven Generations*; Bill Wicken and John Reid, "An Overview of the Eighteenth Century Treaties...", *For Seven Generations*; James Morrison, "The Robinson Treaties of 1850", *For Seven Generations*; Thalassa Research, "Nation to Nation", *For Seven Generations*.

erosion of respect. The treaty-making process fell into disuse, and treaties that had been concluded were often vulnerable to manipulation and misinterpretation by government officials.<sup>15</sup>

The Royal Commission also asserted that Canada, like Australia, New Zealand and the United States, was targeted for agricultural development and settlement in the colonization process because "Aboriginal population density was low — or fell precipitously as a result of disease after contact — and geographic conditions were considered ideal for European agriculture and ways of life". These areas were "considered worthless without an increase in the size and 'civilization' of the workforce" and "served as safety valves for the rapidly growing population of European home countries. Europe could usefully shed its poorest citizens by offering them land and work in the colonies. Once installed there, they became low-wage producers and high-price consumers of imports from the home economy".<sup>16</sup>

Although such a description does indicate that the Royal Commission recognized the wider economic and political forces influencing the emergence of the "displacement and assimilation" period, this kind of analysis was minimal in the *Final Report*. In fact, the assertion above was the only time the Royal Commission linked the process of agricultural development and European settlement to global capitalist imperatives. Similar to its analysis of the contact and cooperation period, most of the Royal Commission's analysis of the beginnings of aboriginal marginalization took on an

---

<sup>15</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.467-8.

idealistic character, where the legal documents and government policies developed during this time were separated from their historical and material foundations. The main focus for the Royal Commission was the "false assumptions" that it claimed led to the Canadian government's dictatorial "displacement and assimilation" initiatives.<sup>17</sup>

There are two major problems with the Royal Commission's assertions about the "false assumptions" and power abuses that resulted in the displacement and assimilation era, however. The first is that many of the assumptions that the Royal Commission argued were "false", concern the gap in scale, productivity and complexity that actually existed between aboriginal groups and European societies at this time. As was explained in the last chapter, this gap was not as great an obstacle to progress in Canada's early history because mercantile relations relied upon extensive (i.e. quantitative) development, and aboriginal societies could remain relatively intact as they were integrated into international trading networks. This chapter and the one that follows, however, will show that when the mercantile period declined and Canada made the transition to a nation based on agriculture and then industry, this led to more intensive development. The more productive and complex economy and society that emerged required new attitudes and values, which were inconsistent with aboriginal peoples' hunting and gathering and horticultural modes of production. More specifically, three cultural characteristics associated with less developed productive

---

<sup>16</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.139.

processes - a task orientation instead of working by the clock, the predominance of kinship relations, and resistance to absorbing abstract forms of instruction – all acted to inhibit native participation in the economy and society of the “displacement and assimilation” period. Therefore, if aboriginal peoples were not accordingly transformed to be productive in relation to this kind of development, it was inevitable that they would become dependent in this context.

Canada's early development, in fact, was constantly plagued by labour shortages, which could have been eased with aboriginal workers. Many aboriginal peoples during this time, however, received relief or lived a marginal existence instead of being fully integrated into agricultural and industrial production. As the Royal Commission itself pointed out,

historically, many Aboriginal communities did not follow the mainstream pattern of transformation from an agricultural to industrial economy. Rather, they continued as subsistence communities involved in some trading long into the twentieth century. However, both the subsistence and the trading economy have been replaced to a large extent — and not by a market economy, as elsewhere in Canada, but by welfare.<sup>18</sup>

The Royal Commission, however, was unable to adequately explain this circumstance because it refused to recognize the developmental differences between hunting and gathering/horticultural tribes and European nations, and how the continuation of

---

<sup>17</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.236.

<sup>18</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp.971-2.

cultural features associated with the former modes of production made aboriginal peoples less competitive producers and provided obstacles to their transformation into agriculturists and industrial workers.

Secondly, the government abuses of power to which the Royal Commission referred largely concerned the form, not the content, of the policies and legislation that were developed. These policies generally were not the arbitrary concoction of racist megalomaniacs,<sup>19</sup> as the Royal Commission often implied,<sup>20</sup> but were attempts to grapple with the problems of integrating groups retaining hunting and gathering/horticultural features into a more highly developed economy and society. It will be shown below that racism was not the cause of these policies, although it often

---

<sup>19</sup> This is not to say that racist attitudes did not exist, only that they did not constitute the dominant force behind policies developed during the displacement and assimilation period. One research study prepared for the Royal Commission, for example, cites a racist military commander, General Amherst, who states that "the savages were the vilest race of beings that ever infested the earth and whose riddance from it must be esteemed a meritorious act for the good of mankind" (Thalassa Research, "Nation to Nation", *For Seven Generations*).

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, *Final Report*, 1, pp. 259-260; 382; 601; 5, p. 5. The view that policies during the displacement and assimilation period were the result of the racist attitudes of state officials is also present in a number of research studies. These include Thomas O. Hueglin, "Exploring Concepts in Treaty Federalism", *For Seven Generations*; Bradford W. Morse and John Giokas, "Do the Metis fall within section...", *For Seven Generations*; Douglas Sanders, "Developing a modern international law on the rights of aboriginal peoples", *For Seven Generations*; Russel Lawrence Barsh and James Youngblood Henderson, "International Context of Crown-Aboriginal Treaties in Canada", *For Seven Generations*; J.S. Milloy, "Suffer the Little Children", *For Seven Generations*; Denise G. Reaume and Patrick Macklem, "Education for Subordination", *For Seven Generations*; Roland D. Chrisjohn and Sherri L. Young, "The Circle Game", *For Seven Generations*; Kathy Absolon and Tony Winchester, "Cultural Identity for Urban Aboriginal Peoples", *For Seven Generations*; Madeleine Dion Stout, "Family Violence in Aboriginal Communities", *For Seven Generations*. The most overt statement in this regard comes from Absolon and Winchester's study, which maintains that "the Indian Act, the reserve system, and the residential school system, among many other institutions, are all examples of fundamentally racist mainstream policies and practices -- they all ensure that political disempowerment, cultural genocide, poverty and other forms of oppression will pervade in the lives of Aboriginal people".

led to an incorrect interpretation of the cultural obstacles to assimilation that were observed.

What was not stressed by the Royal Commission was the fact that because such an assimilation process was being undertaken by an emerging capitalist nation-state that was more concerned with creating the conditions for profit-maximization than with satisfying human needs, it was often coercive, inadequate and insensitive. That it was done badly, however, does not negate the fact that developmental processes had to be formulated if aboriginal dependency, marginalization and impoverishment were to be overcome. And since participation in the wider Canadian economy and society was advocated both by the Royal Commission and aboriginal people themselves,<sup>21</sup> the problems that were encountered historically in bringing this about need to be understood if they are to be addressed today.

Therefore, in contrast to the Royal Commission's largely idealistic analysis in the *Final Report*, it will be shown in this and the following chapter that there is a fundamental difference in the economic and political requirements of the agricultural, and then industrializing, economy that developed after the fur trade declined. Such a transitional period necessitated greater control over lands, resulting in treaties demanding cession of territories and relocations when aboriginal "ways of life"

---

<sup>21</sup>See, for example, *Final Report*, 1, p.6; 3, pp. 169-70; and 4, pp. 545-46.

impeded development. It also led to "paternalistic" legal documents and policies like the *Indian Act*, residential schools and relocations. But because these legal documents and policies were being developed as capitalism began to take hold, they were often terribly neglectful and abusive towards the native population, impeding aboriginal integration. These assimilative processes were disruptive and destructive because the requirement of creating the conditions for capital accumulation constituted the major imperative of the day.

#### THE ROYAL COMMISSION'S ANALYSIS OF DISPLACEMENT & ASSIMILATION

Although the Royal Commission points to both materialist and idealist explanations for the emergence of aboriginal dependency, its analysis of the displacement and assimilation era focused almost entirely on factors associated with the latter. It argued that this period was brought about "through a series of culturally based misunderstandings and the emergence of a radically different interpretation of the protective relationship among British and Canadian policy makers", where "ethnocentric notions based on the claimed cultural superiority of the settler society prodded imperial and colonial officials to reinterpret the original bargain between the

Crown and tribal nations".<sup>22</sup> Instead of the initial nation-to-nation relationship that was dictated by the Royal Proclamation, the Royal Commission noted that the protection offered aboriginal groups was gradually transformed into civilizing processes and then the goal of complete assimilation.<sup>23</sup> The result, in the Royal Commission's view, was "more than a century of official measures" that "caused the original partnership to become completely unbalanced".<sup>24</sup>

These "culturally based misunderstandings" and a "radically different interpretation of the protective relationship", the Royal Commission asserted, were largely due a number of "false assumptions" based on racist theories that eventually led the government to abuse its power.<sup>25</sup> In the Royal Commission's view, these initiatives reflected "a sense of cultural and moral superiority" and were developed so as "to justify [the colonial government's] failure to continue to accord Aboriginal nations the

---

<sup>22</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 263. A number of research studies prepared for the Royal Commission discuss these notions of European superiority. See, for example, Patricia A. Monture-Angus, "The Familiar Face of Colonial Oppression", *For Seven Generations*; Michael Jackson, "A New Covenant Chain", *For Seven Generations*; Paul Joffe and Mary Ellen Turpel, "Extinguishment of the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples", *For Seven Generations*; Richard Spaulding, "Doctrines of Dispossession", *For Seven Generations*; Russel Lawrence Barsh and James Youngblood Henderson, "International context of Crown-Aboriginal Treaties in Canada", *For Seven Generations*; and Kathy Absolon and Tony Winchester, "Cultural Identity For Urban Aboriginal Peoples", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>23</sup> For a discussion of this transformation from protection to assimilation see *Final Report*, 1, pp. 263-267. This process is also mentioned in a research study prepared for the Royal Commission, John Giokas, "The Indian Act", *For Seven Generations*. The terminology was coined by J.L. Tobias, "Protection, civilization, assimilation: an outline history of Canada's Indian policy", *Western Journal of Anthropology*, 1976 (6), pp. 13-30 - an article cited numerous times by the Royal Commission.

<sup>24</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.263. The most extensive discussion of the development of this unbalanced relationship in a research study prepared for the Royal Commission appears in Alan Pratt, "The Fiduciary Relationship and Aboriginal Governance", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>25</sup>For the Royal Commission's discussion of these "racist theories", see *Final Report*, 1, pp. 139, 188-9, 600-1.



respect that initially guided relations between them".<sup>26</sup> Europeans were able to disregard aboriginal groups' "actual status as nations...and their legitimate demands to participate as constitutional equals to the colonies that eventually federated to become Canada".<sup>27</sup> As a result, government initiatives concerning the native population "undermined the tripartite relationship between Aboriginal peoples, the colonies and the imperial Crown, and paved the way for the attempted destruction of Aboriginal societies".<sup>28</sup> This, according to the Royal Commission, led to aboriginal dependency because it caused the native population to lose control over its destiny and have low self-esteem, inhibiting aboriginal participation in the Canadian federation.<sup>29</sup>

The following are the four "false assumptions" that the Royal Commission thought were the most significant in leading to the initiatives of the "displacement and assimilation" era:

1. ...Aboriginal people [were] inherently inferior and incapable of governing themselves.
2. ...treaties and other agreements were, by and large, not covenants of trust and obligation but devices of statecraft, less expensive and more acceptable than armed conflict....

---

<sup>26</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.600.

<sup>27</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp.600-1.

<sup>28</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.600.

<sup>29</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 448, 600-1, 654, 682. The Royal Commission also provides a quotation from Mark Dockstator to this effect. According to Dockstator, "by restricting and thereby controlling the lifestyle of Aboriginal people, the administrative system acted to isolate Aboriginal society from both mainstream society and the larger physical environment. Consequently, the social ills resulting from the imbalance of Aboriginal society were 'turned inward'; the natural release mechanisms employed by Aboriginal society to vent 'negative forces' were foreclosed by the operation of the Western administrative system". Cited in *Final Report*, 1, p. 190.

3. ...wardship was appropriate for Aboriginal peoples, so that actions deemed to be for their benefit could be taken without their consent or their involvement in design or implementation.
4. ...concepts of development...could be defined by non-Aboriginal values alone. This assumption held whether progress was seen as Aboriginal people being civilized and assimilated or, in later times, as resource development and environmental exploitation.<sup>30</sup>

In its attempts to show how these assumptions led to abuses of government power, two different types of official measures were examined - the treaties signed during this period and the significant policy/legislative areas that were instituted with Confederation. The treaties included those developed in Ontario in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, as well as the "numbered treaties" - 11 treaties signed between 1871 and 1921 west of Ontario (but not in most of British Columbia).<sup>31</sup> The three significant policy/legislative areas identified during this period included the *Indian Act*, relocations, and residential schools.<sup>32</sup> These documents and policies, according to the Royal Commission, were directly responsible for aboriginal dependency since they "interrupted the transmission of culture in Aboriginal nations",<sup>33</sup> resulting in a "disruption in traditional ways of making a living and dispossession from a rich land and resource base" and blocking "the rebuilding of aboriginal economies".<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.248.

<sup>31</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 155-172.

<sup>32</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 247-253. "Veterans" is also an area that the Royal Commission examines, but this is not related very directly to policies of displacement and assimilation.

<sup>33</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p.585.

<sup>34</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.790.

One of the most significant measures the Royal Commission identified in the displacement, disruption and dispossession of the native population were the treaties signed after the "contact and cooperation" era. Instead of being the non-aggression pacts that were negotiated during a period of sparse settlement and military instability, these treaties, because of the "false assumption" that they were "devices of statecraft", now became focused on expropriating aboriginal lands.<sup>35</sup> Lands were purchased from aboriginal groups (often under false pretenses, the Royal Commission pointed out), removing them from their traditional territories onto reserves. Also, because of the assumption that "concepts of development...could be defined by non-Aboriginal values alone", it was expected that aboriginal peoples would become farmers and pools of labour in the industrializing economy instead of living off "the fruits of the chase".<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup>The treaties' role in displacement is discussed in the following research studies prepared for the Royal Commission: Paul Joffe and Mary Ellen Turpel, "Extinction and the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples", Volume 2, *For Seven Generations*; Rene M.J. Lamothe, "'It was only a treaty': Treaty 11 According to the Dene of the MacKenzie Valley", *For Seven Generations*; Thalassa Research, "Nation to Nation", *For Seven Generations*; Peter J. Usher, "Contemporary Land, Resource and Environment Regimes", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>36</sup> This phrase was used by John Locke, who maintained that certain groups pursued this mode of life to "avoid labour". Since this mode of production was too unproductive to support larger populations, Locke maintained that hunters and gatherers had no right to protest "if other more industrious nations, too confined at home, should come and occupy parts of their lands" (See, Richard Spaulding, "Doctrines of Dispossession", *For Seven Generations*, for a further discussion of Locke's views). This view was also adopted by a number of Canadian government officials who noted that "benefit will accrue to both the industrial occupants of the country covered by treaty and to the Indians by weaning a number from the chase and inclining them to industrial pursuits ..." (J.A. Macrae, Inspector of Schools for the Northwest, cited in J.S. Milloy, "Suffer the Little Children", *For Seven Generations*) and that "wild untamed savages living by the chase...must of necessity, turn to the soil for their subsistence" because of the scarcity of game (Martin Benson, superintendent of education, cited in J.S. Milloy, "Suffer the Little Children", *For Seven Generations*).

This new kind of treaty resulted in aboriginal dependency, the Royal Commission argued, because it reduced the size of aboriginal peoples' land base, providing them with more isolated and poorer quality lands that were unsuitable for agriculture or resource extraction.<sup>37</sup> Aboriginal peoples' hunting and fishing activities were also restricted by resource development and government regulations to protect wildlife.<sup>38</sup> As a result, they were prevented from pursuing their "traditional lifestyles" or becoming rentiers in the developing economy. The Royal Commission implied that if "aboriginal nations" were granted ownership over unspecified lands and resources throughout Canadian history, or were given the appropriate amounts in compensation, the native population would not have become dependent. The Royal Commission, for example, provided a quote from Ian Johnson stating that

to a significant degree the Mississauga and Chippewa [and the Ojibwa generally] financed the foundation of Upper Canada's prosperity at the expense of their self-sufficiency and economic independence. Government profits in the nineteenth century from the sale of Indian land amounted to the difference between the purchase price and the fair market value...If the Mississauga and Chippewa had received market value for their lands, the British treasury would have been obligated to finance the development of Upper Canada while the aboriginal population would have become the financial elite of the New World.<sup>39</sup>

The implication is that aboriginal peoples, by obtaining a fair price for their lands or charging rents for the resources originally in their possession, could have financed

---

<sup>37</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 156. See also *Final Report*, 1, p. 183 for discussion of this same point.

<sup>38</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 176; 184; 2(2), pp. 514, 831.

their development, retaining their traditional "ways of life" and remaining politically autonomous from the Canadian state.<sup>40</sup> Instead, however, "the economies and resource use patterns of First Nations were undermined", creating the conditions for dependency.<sup>41</sup>

As well as through the negotiation of treaties, the Royal Commission pointed out that aboriginal peoples were also displaced by a number of more informal initiatives.

Known as "relocations",<sup>42</sup> these initiatives were also described as "devices of statecraft" and "defined [development] by non-Aboriginal values alone". In addition, they often occurred without aboriginal consent or involvement because of the

---

<sup>39</sup> Ian Johnson, "British-Tribal Relations in the Colonial Period", cited in *Final Report*, 1, p.156. This quotation is also provided in the research study prepared for the Royal Commission by Thalassa Research, "Nation to Nation", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>40</sup> This view is present in a number of research studies prepared for the Royal Commission. See, for example, Michael Jackson, "A New Covenant Chain", *For Seven Generations*; Thalassa Research, "Nation to Nation", *For Seven Generations*. It is also still present in proposals for treaties today. One research study prepared for the Royal Commission, for example, notes that "the assumption of a right of self-government implies land to be governed and a right to the revenue that land can produce. In our view, every effort should be made to enable that linkage, either in the foundational treaty or the proposed Recognition Act, or in the constating charters of individual Aboriginal governments. Otherwise funding will be tied to transfers from other governments and the attendant susceptibility to suggestions of dependency -- suggestions that damage both communities involved" (Don McMahon and Fred Martin, "The Metis and 91(24): Is inclusion the issue?", *For Seven Generations*).

<sup>41</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 156. In another area of the *Final Report*, the Royal Commission notes that "the historical record shows that while Aboriginal communities contributed capital in the form of lands and resources to the accumulated wealth of Canada, they derived little benefit in return. Instead, Aboriginal communities have borne the brunt of the social, economic and environmental costs of development. Thus, not only did government policies and practices impede alternative economic pursuits, they generated and subsequently perpetuated dependence". *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 518-19. This is also the view of the research study prepared for the Royal Commission by Thalassa research, which maintains that "the dislocation of self-sufficient economies and vibrant social institutions has led to massive dependency". This dislocation, according to the study, has been caused by a dismantling of the original treaty relationship, whereby the Crown has "imposed its own definitions and moved the consideration of fiscal and economic matters outside the context -- and the obligations -- of the treaty relationship". Thalassa Research, "Nation to Nation", *For Seven Generations*.

assumption that wardship was required.<sup>43</sup> The relocations, according to the Royal Commission, were "a prime example of how erroneous assumptions by administrators concerning Aboriginal people can lead to abuses of authority and power".<sup>44</sup>

Because of these erroneous assumptions, the Royal Commission argued, aboriginal groups were removed from their lands for two general purposes - administrative reasons and to facilitate development.<sup>45</sup> "Development relocations", for example, were related to "agricultural expansion and land reclamation, urban development and hydroelectric projects".<sup>46</sup> Aboriginal peoples were to be removed from where development was slated to occur or they were transferred to an area thought to be more economically viable.<sup>47</sup> In contrast to these "development relocations", there

---

<sup>42</sup> For an overview of these initiatives see *Final Report*, 1, pp. 411-543.

<sup>43</sup> The Royal Commission obtained five studies on relocations: Carol Brice-Bennett, "Dispossessed: The Eviction of Inuit from Hebron, Labrador", Library and Archives Canada, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 178, File 7466-3.1, Volume 1 - 5.2.1.2.; Virginia Petch, "The Relocation of the Sayisi Dene of Tadoule Lake", *For Seven Generations*; Ken Coates, "Hardly a Grand Design", *For Seven Generations*; Emery and Associates, "You moved us here....: A Narrative Account of the Amalgamation and Relocation of the Gwa'Sala and "Nakwaxda'xw Peoples", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 178, File 7466-6.1, Volume 1, 5.2.1.5; and Alan Rudolph Marcus, "Inuit Relocation Policies in Canada and Other Circumpolar Countries", *For Seven Generations*. The Royal Commission also compiled a special report on the Inuit relocations to the High Arctic, which involved two rounds of hearings in April and June/July 1993. For an overview of the Royal Commission's findings of these relocations see Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *The High Arctic Relocation* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1994).

<sup>44</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 412.

<sup>45</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 414-5.

<sup>46</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.415.

<sup>47</sup> The "development relocations" referred to by the Royal Commission include the Ojibwa in Ontario and the Metis of Ste. Madeleine in Manitoba (both because of land needed for agriculture), the Songhees in British Columbia (land needed for urban growth), and the Cheslatta T'en in British Columbia and the Chemawawin Cree in Manitoba (both concerned land needed for hydro dam construction). (*Final Report*, 1, p. 416).

were others that took place "to make things easier for Government".<sup>48</sup> Referred to as "administrative relocations", they were aimed at moving aboriginal peoples from sparsely populated settlements to more centralized locations to reduce the costs of providing government services. Some also were intended to have the "additional benefit of exposing previously scattered, nomadic groups of people outside the mainstream economy to the discipline of wage labour and 'regular' employment".<sup>49</sup>

According to the Royal Commission, the relocations "must be seen as part of a broader process of dispossession and displacement, a process with lingering effects on the cultural, spiritual, social, economic and political aspects of people's lives".<sup>50</sup> They were justified by an "attitude of paternalism" where aboriginal peoples were perceived by government officials as being "unsophisticated, poor, outside modern society and generally incapable of making the right choices. Confronted with the enormous task of adapting to 'modern' society, [aboriginal peoples] faced numerous problems that government believed could be solved only with government assistance".<sup>51</sup> The Royal Commission implied that this perception was erroneous,<sup>52</sup> arguing that the relocations

---

<sup>48</sup> These relocations concerned the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, the Hebron Inuit in Labrador, the Sayisi Dene in Manitoba, the Yukon First Nations, the Gwa'Sala and 'Nakwaxda'xw in British Columbia, and the Mushuau Innu of Labrador (carried out for more convenient provision of services), as well as the Baffin Island Inuit and the Keewatin Inuit (in order to move them to more viable hunting grounds or to separate them from negative non-aboriginal influences). *Final Report*, 1, p. 416, 454.

<sup>49</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.454.

<sup>50</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.412.

<sup>51</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp.412-13.

<sup>52</sup> The Royal Commission refers to "erroneous assumptions made about Aboriginal ways of life" (*Final Report*, 1, p.-414-415), whereby "erroneous" often refers to assuming that hunting and gathering lifestyles were unviable in the modern context. In the case of the Sayisi Dene, for example, it notes that

caused aboriginal peoples to become dependent because they "separated Aboriginal people from their homelands and destroyed their ability to be economically self-reliant".<sup>53</sup> Such a separation caused a number of negative economic effects, according to the Royal Commission, because aboriginal peoples were often relocated to more restricted environments, their lands were damaged by development projects, and they suffered a loss of employment opportunities if they were moved away from more populated areas. As a result of these problems, the Royal Commission maintained that welfare became the most prominent resource in most of the relocations that it studied.<sup>54</sup>

Throughout its discussions of the relocations, one is left with the impression that aboriginal peoples were living in vibrant, healthy and self-sufficient communities before the government decided to uproot them from their homelands.<sup>55</sup> With the

---

government was responding "to a number of perceived problems" (*Final Report*, 1, p. 431), using the word perceived to raise doubts as to whether or not there really were problems. In the case of the Gwa'Sala it notes that the government "wanted the people to move out of their 'isolated' location", and provides ironic quotes around the word isolated suggesting that this was not the case. It also notes that in the case of Devon Island, "the traditional hunting economy was seen as doomed" (*Final Report*, 1, p. 457), criticizing the government of the time because it "assumes that the Inuit way of life is both quaint and doomed" (*Final Report*, 1, p. 458). The Royal Commission also uses the term "modern" in ironic quotes (*Final Report*, 1, p. 412) and maintains that government assistance was deployed when aboriginal peoples "appeared to be starving", implying that they were not (*Final Report*, 1, p.412).

<sup>53</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.413.

<sup>54</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.494.

<sup>55</sup> This is especially the case of the relocation of the Inuit of Hebron, which relies on the research study of Carol Brice-Bennett (Labrador Institute of Northern Studies), "Dispossessed: The Eviction of Inuit from Hebron, Labrador", Library and Archives Canada, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 178, File 7466-3.1, Volume 1 – 5.2.1.2. This "study", comprised only of several quotations strung together, provides a number of assertions from informants that testify to the squalid conditions that existed in Hebron before they were relocated. For example, there is a quotation from Dr. W.A. Paddon that asserts that one out of three Inuit in Hebron had tuberculosis because of the overcrowded and filthy



exception of the cases where the government transferred the native population so as to embark upon resource development, which would require the movement of aboriginal peoples even if they were self-reliant, characterizing the other relocations in such a way was a distortion of reality. First of all, in a number of cases the government was attempting to move aboriginal groups shortly after fur trading posts had closed, indicating that the economic base of these communities was deteriorating.<sup>56</sup> The government, therefore, was attempting to come to terms with a group of people whose economic livelihood was rapidly disappearing, yet who lived in isolated areas not connected to any emerging economic activity. Secondly, one of the services that the government was attempting to provide more efficiently was welfare.<sup>57</sup> This calls into question the claims of the Royal Commission that these areas were "self-reliant"

---

living conditions. In Paddon's words: "I don't have any doubt in my mind what would have happened if we couldn't have got them to a better site, better conditions for living, and for raising children, I was aware that we had problems with child mortality and death in Nain and Hopedale, but in Hebron it appeared to be out of hand".

<sup>56</sup> For the Chemawawin Cree it is noted that "reports from the early 1960s confirm that the local economy was viable and that welfare rates were low and employment levels were high" (*Final Report*, 1, p. 483) and that the community "formerly had a diverse and strong economic base, a marked contrast to the pervasive and long-term welfare dependency that resulted from relocation" (*Final Report*, 1, p. 497), even though we are also told that the fur trade post closed in 1941. It is also noted that "the first and most immediate reason behind the evacuation of the Duck Lake group (of the Sayisi Dene) was the 1956 closure of the Hudson's Bay post following the collapse of the fur market in the area" (*Final Report*, 1, p. 433). A collapse of fur prices and a dependence on government relief is also one of the major reasons cited for the High Arctic Relocations. See, for example, *Report of the High Arctic Relocation*, pp. 47-55. The Royal Commission makes this point again in the second volume, in its economic development chapter. *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 789.

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, the Royal Commission's discussion of the relocation of the Mi'kmaq. It is noted that "the depression of the 1930s accelerated the trend of Mi'kmaq losing "their rather tenuous foothold in the industrial economy."...Large numbers of Aboriginal people, already at the bottom of the social and economic heap, had to turn to the government for help. As the cost of supporting the Mi'kmaq began to rise, Indian affairs looked for ways to reduce expenditures. It found the answer in a report from the local Indian agent in 1941. The report stated that the annual cost of Indian administration had risen from \$16,533 in 1910-11 to \$168,878 in 1940-41...The agent recommended centralizing the Mi'kmaq on two reserves ...". *Final Report*, 1, p.415.

before the relocations. And although these communities might have become more dependent on welfare after they were moved, this could have been due to an increase in the costs of the services provided - costs that would have been even greater if modern education, health care and housing programs were administered in more isolated and dispersed outposts.

The Royal Commission, in fact, provided very little reliable evidence to support its claims. Instead, many of the studies that it relied upon depend upon interviews with relocatees decades after they were moved, who claimed that they were happy and self-reliant in the past.<sup>58</sup> Although it is possible that some of these memories were accurate, they could also have been due to romantic musings about the "good old days", exacerbated by the community's dislike of their current circumstances.<sup>59</sup> These

---

<sup>58</sup> In the case of the Cheslatta T'en and the Kemano Hydro Project, for example, the Royal Commission notes that "elders told [Commissioners] that before their relocation Cheslatta people were self-sufficient and had little need for or contact with the department of Indian affairs" (*Final Report*, 1, p. 475), and that "the economic self-sufficiency of the Cheslatta people was destroyed by relocation" (*Final Report*, 1, p.495), but there is no specific data provided about the economic circumstances in the area before the displacement occurred. It is also noted that in the case of the Hebron of Labrador, that "Hebron relocatees remember life in their community with fondness, as a time when it was less complicated, less painful" (*Final Report*, 1, p. 422) and "Inuit of the region considered their land rich in game and their life good" (*Final Report*, 1, p.425), even though "there was considerable discussion during the 1950s about the viability of northern Labrador communities" (*Final Report*, 1, p. 423) and non-Inuit observers at the time "had the opinion that the traditional Inuit harvesting economy was not viable and the culture of living off the land was 'irretrievably lost'" (Brice-Bennett, *Dispossessed*, cited in *Final Report*, 1, p. 526).

<sup>59</sup> The Royal Commission notes that many of these communities are angry at the government for failing to keep its promises and they all suffer from unemployment and social problems. See, for example, *Final Report*, 1, pp. 420-1; 430; 436-7. In the case of the Sayisi Dene, the Royal Commission offers the following comment: " We are changed forever because of the living hell we experienced in Churchill. We have been demanding an apology from Indian affairs or the government of Canada for 20 years. But they are still denying that they did something terribly wrong to us". Stephen Thorassie, cited in *Final Report*, 1, p. 430.

interviews, therefore, would need to be compared with a wide range of other evidence, especially information compiled around the time of the relocations, which was something that the Royal Commission seemed to have been reluctant to undertake.<sup>60</sup>

In addition to the treaties and policies that displaced aboriginal peoples from their traditional territories, the Royal Commission identified two other initiatives that acted to entrench aboriginal dependency - the *Indian Act* and the residential schools. With respect to the *Indian Act*,<sup>61</sup> the Royal Commission argued that this piece of legislation provided the framework for assimilating the native population - the policy orientation that has "left a heritage of dependency, powerlessness and distrust".<sup>62</sup> Instead of recognizing aboriginal peoples as "nations", the Royal Commission maintained that the *Indian Act* "substituted...the artificial legal entities known as bands",<sup>63</sup> and reflected the assumption of the appropriateness of wardship for aboriginal peoples.<sup>64</sup> It also indicated that the government believed that they were "inherently inferior and incapable of governing themselves" and "defined development in terms of non-

---

<sup>60</sup> In fact, the Royal Commission often dismisses views about the unviability of aboriginal communities at this time as a "devalu[ing]" of an "[aboriginal] lifestyle" (*Final Report*, 1, p. 424) and prejudicial (*Final Report*, 1, p.425).

<sup>61</sup> One study was commissioned on the Indian Act. This was John Giokas, "The Indian Act: Evolution, Overview and Options for Amendment and Transition", *For Seven Generations*. In this study, the Indian Act is characterized as a piece of legislation based on the "paradox of 'protective assimilation'". It is noted that this was a paradox because at the same time that the goal was assimilation, the isolation and political structures that afforded protection enabled aboriginal peoples to "resist the forces of settlement and cultural assimilation".

<sup>62</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p. 7.

<sup>63</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 261.

Aboriginal values alone" by attempting to impose European forms of political organization on native bands.<sup>65</sup>

Because of these assumptions, the *Indian Act* "was marked by singular disparities in legal rights, with Indian people subject to penalties and prohibitions that would have been ruled illegal and unconstitutional if they had been applied to anyone else in Canada".<sup>66</sup> It also resulted in "paternalistic and constraining provisions that prevent Indian peoples assuming control of their own fortunes".<sup>67</sup> According to the Royal Commission, the *Indian Act* contributed to aboriginal dependency because it disrupted traditional decision making practices and placed restrictions on property ownership and economic activity, impeding economic development in aboriginal communities.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 1016. This point is also made in a research study prepared for the Royal Commission. For a discussion, see Alan Pratt, "The Fiduciary Relationship and Aboriginal Governance", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>65</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 250, 259-60, 273, 277. The linkage between inferiority and the Indian Act is also expressed in a study prepared for the Royal Commission, Thomas O. Hueglin, "Exploring Concepts of Treaty Federalism", *For Seven Generations*, while its assumption of aboriginal peoples being incapable of governing themselves is noted in Kathy L. Brock, "Relations with Canadian governments: Manitoba", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>66</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.257.

<sup>67</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.259.

<sup>68</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 180; 2(2), pp. 785-6. A research study prepared for the Royal Commission notes that the policies like the Indian Act "ensured the complete liquidation of lands and resources that were traditionally the source of livelihood for Aboriginal people, thus ensuring their poverty and dependence on the mainstream welfare system". Leslie A. Brown, "Community and the Administration of Aboriginal Governments", *For Seven Generations*. See also Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, "Enhancing Integrity in Aboriginal Government", *For Seven Generations*, for another discussion of how the Indian Act's destruction of traditional political structures has contributed to aboriginal dependency. John Giokas also notes that "the Indian Act regime has created a self-fulfilling prophecy or vicious cycle: as the degree of ministerial control increased incrementally over the years, reserve communities gradually became more and more dependent on the Act and its structures for their functioning and their finances, thereby justifying the demeaning vision of Indians of the non-Indian bureaucrats and politicians who had imposed it on them in the first place. This has not only permitted non-Indian society to maintain an image of Indians as dependent wards, it has also facilitated what one modern chief refers to as getting

Furthermore, aboriginal peoples were designated as a federal responsibility in these initiatives, preventing them from accessing local services, loans, employment and "other types of community support".<sup>69</sup>

A complementary policy to the *Indian Act* was the development of the residential school system.<sup>70</sup> The Royal Commission argued that "of all the nineteenth-century policies formulated to respond to the Indian question, none was more obviously the creature of that era's paternalistic attitudes and its stern assimilative determination than residential school education".<sup>71</sup> Like the *Indian Act*, it was based on the "attitude that Indian people required protection because they were inferior — although with proper education and religious instruction, they could be turned into productive members of society".<sup>72</sup> And because it defined development by "non-Aboriginal values alone", the schools attempted to "remove Aboriginal children from their

---

Indians 'to accept the negative views that whites have of them.'", He also explains that "Paternalistic measures have, in turn, bred a dependency relationship that has often robbed Indian people of their original sense of personal and group self-reliance along with their relative political autonomy." John Giokas, "The Indian Act", *For Seven Generations*. Another report notes that the Indian Act has "operated to redefine Indian identity, detribalize and fragment Indian society, displace traditional systems of Indian governance, and foster a state of anarchy and dependency on reserves", Thalassa Research, "Nation to Nation", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>69</sup> Final Report, 2(2), p. 788. For discussions of this, see also Ken Rasmussen, "The Case of Saskatchewan-Aboriginal Relations", *For Seven Generations*; and John Giokas, "The Indian Act", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>70</sup> For an in depth discussion of the problems with the assimilative, abusive and neglectful character of the residential schools, see J. S. Milloy, "'Suffer the Little Children..' A History of the Residential School System, 1830-1992"; Denise G. Reaume and Patrick Macklem, "Education for Subordination: Redressing the Adverse Effects of Residential Schooling"; and Roland D. Chrisjohn and Sherri Young, "The Circle Game: Shadows and Substance in the Indian Residential School Experience in Canada", all in *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>71</sup> Final Report, 1, p. 251.

<sup>72</sup> Final Report, 2(2), p. 554.

families and cultures and expose them continuously to more 'civilizing' influences".<sup>73</sup> Therefore, because the residential school system "asserted the superiority of colonial culture and values", it was "used deliberately to break down the transmission of culture and language from one generation to the next".<sup>74</sup>

These attitudes, the Royal Commission maintained, were caused by "selfless Christian duty" and "self-interested statecraft".<sup>75</sup> This was indicated by the two main objectives of the system - Christianizing the native population and ensuring that they became integrated into the developing economy and society. Various religious denominations were entrusted with running the schools since it was thought that they could best convert aboriginal peoples to Christianity, and religious instruction became a major part of the curriculum.<sup>76</sup> There was also an attempt to impart aboriginal children with values that would make them "industrious", to better prepare them for their roles as farmers or labourers and to prevent them from becoming a dangerous element as settlement progressed.<sup>77</sup>

To achieve these objectives as quickly as possible, colonial officials focused on aboriginal children since they thought that the adults were not only "unimprovable",

---

<sup>73</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 251.

<sup>74</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 273; 3, p. 435.

<sup>75</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 335.

<sup>76</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 251; 268; 334; 354-5; 3, p. 435.

<sup>77</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 334-5, 339-40.

but an impediment to the civilizing process.<sup>78</sup> As a result, aboriginal children were removed from their communities to minimize the “influence of the wigwam”.<sup>79</sup> This resulted in two problems, according to the Royal Commission. First, it deprived aboriginal children of a loving and nurturing environment and broke apart aboriginal communities; secondly, it led to a slighting of aboriginal educational methods,<sup>80</sup> and a “devaluing and undermining Indian cultural identity” more generally.<sup>81</sup> These two factors were also related, the Royal Commission explained, since assimilation could

not be accomplished simply by bringing the children into the school. Rather it required a concerted attack on the ontology, on the basic cultural patterning of the children and on their world view. They had to be taught to see and understand the world as a European place within which only European values and beliefs had meaning; thus the wisdom of their cultures would seem to them only savage superstition. A wedge had to be driven not only physically between parent and child but also culturally and spiritually. Such children would then be separated forever from their communities, for even if they went home they would...bring 'the generation gap with them'. Only in such a profound fashion could the separation from savagery and the re-orientation as civilized be assured.<sup>82</sup>

The result has been, in the words of one aboriginal leader, “to disorient and demoralize three generations of our people”.<sup>83</sup> In a number of other areas in the *Final Report*, the Royal Commission also spoke of how the residential schools have caused the “sapping [of] children’s bodies and beings”, “identity problems”, “arrested development”, and

---

<sup>78</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 338.

<sup>79</sup> This wording is used in the Davin Report in 1879. *Final Report*, 1, pp. 334-5, 338.

<sup>80</sup> The Royal Commission maintains that this problem continues to this day. *Final Report*, 4, p. 126.

<sup>81</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.273.

<sup>82</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 341.

<sup>83</sup> Alex Christmas Eskasoni, Nova Scotia, 6 May 1992, cited in *Final Report*, 1, p.421.

"social maladjustment".<sup>84</sup> It was this cultural dislocation caused by the residential schools, therefore, that has made the native population dysfunctional, preventing them from participating in the wider economy and society.

But while the Royal Commission largely focused on the role of the residential schools in destroying aboriginal culture and identity, it also mentioned some other problems with this policy initiative. This was the poor quality of the schools and their abusive character. It noted, for example, that practices aimed at obliterating aboriginal traditions and beliefs "were compounded by the too frequent lack of basic care", including "the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, medical services and a healthful environment, and the failure to ensure that the children were safe from teachers and staff who abused them physically, sexually and emotionally". The Royal Commission also pointed out that the residential schools "failed dramatically" to educate the native population with "participation rates and grade achievement levels lagging far behind those for non-Aboriginal students...".<sup>85</sup> As well, it asserted that there was no "follow-up" for the residential school system, which along with the "race prejudice" that was encountered after graduation, meant that many aboriginal peoples had no option but to return to their communities.<sup>86</sup> The Royal Commission, in fact,

---

<sup>84</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp.377, 3, p.18.

<sup>85</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.187.

<sup>86</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 342-44.



described the schools as institutions of "systemic neglect" that greatly inhibited aboriginal peoples' transition to modern life.<sup>87</sup>

#### A PROBLEM OF ASSIMILATION, OR GOVERNMENT NEGLECT?

The problem of neglect was only mentioned briefly in comparison to the Royal Commission's assertions about the destruction of aboriginal identities and the obstructed "transmission of culture in Aboriginal nations",<sup>88</sup> indicating a major deficiency with the Royal Commission's analysis of how assimilationist policies and legislation created aboriginal dependency. This was that the Royal Commission often failed to make a distinction between poorly designed and executed government initiatives and the goal of assimilation itself. In the early stages of the "displacement and assimilation" period, the Royal Commission noted that aboriginal peoples themselves requested some of these official measures because they wanted to acquire a similar standard of living as their non-aboriginal neighbours.<sup>89</sup> They, too, defined development according to "non-Aboriginal values" and wanted to participate in farming or early industrial development,<sup>90</sup> become educated, and in some cases, they

---

<sup>87</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp.353-365; 365-376.

<sup>88</sup> The problem of neglect is only discussed in the residential school chapter. All other references refer to the problems of residential schools being assimilationist in character.

<sup>89</sup> This is also noted, for example, by John Giokas, "The Indian Act", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>90</sup> The Royal Commission notes, for example, that "Indian people often requested or consented to official assistance in acquiring tools to adapt to the growing presence of non-Indian settlements around them" (*Final Report*, 1, p. 264) and argues that "many of the numbered treaties...contain provisions for the supply of seed, cattle and agricultural implements, because the Cree, Dakota and Ojibwa nations had expressed an interest in expanding their economies to include farming. Other treaties provided for

did not initially oppose being relocated to areas that were more viable.<sup>91</sup> They also requested the government to act as a protector so that they could be safeguarded from famine and the unscrupulous behaviour of non-Aboriginal settlers.<sup>92</sup> The Royal Commission, despite its disdain for "paternalism", even expected such an attitude to prevail with its references to the "fiduciary relationship" between aboriginal peoples and the Canadian state.<sup>93</sup> It applauded the fact that "the Crown established itself as

---

the distribution of fishing nets, net twine, guns and ammunition so that First Nations could blend their subsistence activities with participation in the new economy... In principle, many western peoples welcomed the introduction of agriculture at a time of social and economic change" (*Final Report*, 2(2), p. 487).

<sup>91</sup> See, for example, *Report of the High Arctic Relocation*, pp. 58-9, especially note 146. It is also noted by the Royal Commission that the Sayisi Dene were given inducements to move with the promise of material to build new houses, but that the "promised houses...never materialized". *Final Report*, 1, p.432. In another section of its chapter on relocations, the Royal Commission notes that "coercion - in the form of withheld or eliminated funding for housing, schools and services, - coupled with promises of improved housing, health and education facilities, and economic opportunities, ensured Aboriginal 'consent'. The bands 'agreed' on the condition that adequate housing would be built so everyone could move at the same time", but that "promises of housing and other amenities were not fulfilled" (*Final Report*, 1, p. 445). In the case of the Gwa'Sala and 'Nakwaxda'xw it is noted that they recognized their poverty and "were beginning to feel that their remoteness was no longer the source of strength it had once been. In fact, some of them were reluctantly admitting that a move closer to education and health services, and to a community that had sewer, water and electricity, might be best for their children" (Emery and Grainger, "You moved us here", cited in *Final Report*, 1, pp. 444-5).

<sup>92</sup> *Report of the High Arctic Relocation*, pp. 74-5; *Final Report*, 1, p. 261; Thalassa Research, "Nation to Nation", *For Seven Generations*. The problems of not providing legislative protection can be seen in the case of the Metis. The Royal Commission notes that while "additional land in Manitoba was to be made available to benefit Métis children and their families through the provision of scrip", this system "was fraught with problems, including fraud and land speculation, with the result that, by 1886, only a small proportion of the lands remained in the hands of the original allottees. Those who moved further west postponed this fate for a time, but the inevitable westward progression of surveyors, railroads and settlers and a second failed attempt at issuing scrip produced a Métis population that was largely without a land base..." (*Final Report*, 2(2), p. 785). For research studies examining the scrip system and the dispossession of the Metis, see Paul Joffe and Mary Ellen Turpel, "Extinguishment of the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples", *For Seven Generations*; and Manitoba Metis Federation, "A Report on Metis Self-Government in Urban Manitoba", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>93</sup> For an in-depth discussion of the development of this fiduciary relationship in studies commissioned see Alan Pratt, "The Fiduciary Relationship and Aboriginal Governance", *For Seven Generations*; James S. Anaya, Richard Falk, and Donat Pharand, "Canada's Fiduciary Obligation to Aboriginal Peoples in the Context of Accession to Sovereignty by Quebec - Volume 1 - International Dimensions", *For Seven Generations*; Renée Dupuis and Kent McNeil, "Canada's Fiduciary Obligation to Aboriginal

[aboriginal peoples'] protector" with the Royal Proclamation of 1763, arguing that this was a role that should continue today.<sup>94</sup>

Therefore, it was not government intervention, "paternalism", or "wardship" in themselves that were really the problem. Opposition emerged only when official measures became coercive and were imposed on aboriginal peoples against their will.<sup>95</sup> As was the case with the residential schools, the Royal Commission itself pointed out that all assimilationist policies were flawed because they were discriminatory, neglectful, and incompetently administered and monitored. It was noted by the Royal Commission, for example, that aboriginal veterans were discriminated against,<sup>96</sup> and malfunctioning laws and institutions impeded aboriginal peoples' capacity to take up new occupations.<sup>97</sup> In addition to the low educational standards mentioned earlier, the Royal Commission also documented inadequate health care and poor housing.<sup>98</sup> In the case of relocations, it was argued that they often did not provide what was promised, that they were poorly planned and executed, and little monitoring occurred afterward.<sup>99</sup> In fact, the Royal Commission argued that the government was mainly concerned with reducing costs, not improving the well-

---

Peoples in the Context of Accession to Sovereignty by Quebec -Volume 2 - Domestic Dimensions",  
*For Seven Generations.*

<sup>94</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 259-263.

<sup>95</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.264-267.

<sup>96</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp.553-4, 603.

<sup>97</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp.294-5; 2(2), pp. 487-90, 786-790.

<sup>98</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 187.

<sup>99</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp.247; 252; 266, 343-5, 353, 356, 360; 374-375; 412, 419, 461; 3, p. 113, 434-5; 5, p.24.

being of the native population.<sup>100</sup> Although the Royal Commission doesn't put it this way, these problems were inextricably connected to the economic and political imperatives of the emerging capitalist system.

In one section of its report entitled "welfare dependence in historical perspective", the Royal Commission recognized that similar problems of neglect and coercion were present in the wider society more generally.<sup>101</sup> It pointed out that social programs were related to the assumptions that were present in the British Poor Law of 1834, which were not rejected until after the Second World War.<sup>102</sup> These assumptions included

the belief that poverty sprang from an inherent character defect. Relief systems were developed to combine punishment and assistance, according to a strict distinction between employable and unemployable poor. Poor people with disabilities were assisted on the basis that they were unemployable through no fault of their own. Those judged employable, on the other hand, were compelled to work as a punishment for laziness and a deterrent to idleness.<sup>103</sup>

Providing economic assistance to aboriginal peoples was based on similar assumptions, except the development of reserves had the additional purpose of seeking "to isolate Indians from the larger population" to "[minimize] racial friction".<sup>104</sup> As was the case for non-Aboriginal people, it was expected that "all Indians ultimately

---

<sup>100</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 181, 289, 344, 347, 354; 454.

<sup>101</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 972-977.

<sup>102</sup> An in-depth discussion of the Poor Law and the application of its assumptions to aboriginal peoples can be found in the study produced for the Royal Commission by Allan Moscovitch and Andrew Webster, "Social Assistance and Aboriginal Peoples", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>103</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 973.

had a way out of the 'poorhouse' as farmers or common labourers" even if the economic and social conditions to facilitate this were absent.<sup>105</sup> During this period, government officials argued that those aboriginal peoples that "refuse to work, and refuse to settle down on their reserves...must take the consequences...[and] remain miserably poor".<sup>106</sup>

It was this callous disregard for the economic and social circumstances of aboriginal peoples, and the poor more generally, that led to the displacement of aboriginal peoples and the failure of assimilationist policies. Because aboriginal peoples were emerging out of hunting and gathering and horticultural modes of production, they required intensive services and sensitive programs to facilitate their participation in the developing Canadian economy and society. They would have had difficulties competing on equal terms with immigrants who had lived in agricultural societies for several generations, but this would be ignored by the mentality that focussed on "punish[ing] laziness" and "deter[ring] idleness" rather than aiding human development.

The Royal Commission, however, is constrained in its presentation of the problems that aboriginal peoples faced because it insisted on maintaining that assumptions about differences in development were "false". As was shown in Chapter Three, aboriginal

---

<sup>104</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 973.

societies were smaller, less productive and simpler than European nations at the time of contact. Although some aboriginal groups were horticulturists, this was a much less intensive form of food production than field agriculture using draught animals and ploughs.<sup>107</sup> As a result, it is not surprising that wardship was deemed to be appropriate for the native population, since many unfamiliar skills, values and attitudes would have to be instilled if aboriginal peoples were to become participants in completely new economic activities and forms of social organization.

It was not these assumptions about "wardship" or "development" that were objectionable, but two others to which the Royal Commission referred - that aboriginal peoples were thought to be "inherently inferior" and that wardship meant that the government could implement its policies "without [aboriginal peoples'] consent or their involvement in design or implementation". Respect for aboriginal peoples' dignity was lacking during this period and much more attention needed to be given to their concerns and grievances. It was also disastrous that the "statecraft" that occurred was more concerned with reducing costs than improving the social conditions of the

---

<sup>105</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 973.

<sup>106</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 973.

<sup>107</sup> This major difference in development is obscured by the Royal Commission's assertion that Iroquoian groups were engaged in "agriculture" and its contention that they "taught agricultural techniques" to Europeans (no evidence is provided for this assertion and it is not explained what these "techniques" were). *Final Report*, 1, p.260 This same confusion between agriculture and horticulture is made in a number of research studies prepared for the Royal Commission. Most notably, C.M. Williams' study, "Agriculture: Sectoral Study.", notes that " There are so many reminders of the specific nomadic lifestyle of the aboriginal peoples of northern and western Canada, that one can be forgiven failing to remember that many, perhaps the majority of the North American pre-European population practised some form of hand-powered agriculture".

native population. This meant that aboriginal peoples received inferior services in comparison to other Canadian citizens, when a coordinated and intensive development strategy was required.

These problems were exacerbated by racist attitudes in Canadian society, which led to an incorrect interpretation of the difficulties aboriginal peoples were experiencing in making the transition to agriculture and then industrialization. Not understanding that these problems were cultural, not racial in nature, a number of government officials throughout Canadian history have maintained that because aboriginal peoples were an "inferior race" they would be incapable of integrating into Canadian society. The most notable example was that of Sir Francis Bond Head, the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada between 1836 and 1838. Bond Head's racism was evident in the fact that he did not think that Aboriginals could become civilized or make the transition to farming. As the Royal Commission pointed out, it was for this reason that "he proposed to provide a protected place where they could continue their traditional pursuits in a location far removed from non-Aboriginal influences".<sup>108</sup>

A number of current policies continue to be influenced by these racist assumptions. Such policies, however, are not informed by the assimilationist views disparaged by the Royal Commission, but by romantic beliefs that aboriginal peoples are inherently

---

<sup>108</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.156.

disposed to retain hunting and gathering/horticultural traditions in the modern context. These policies ignore that all peoples at one time in human history were hunters and gatherers, and that aboriginal peoples retained this mode of production because environmental conditions prevented them from making the transition to agriculture.<sup>109</sup> Instead, it is argued that aboriginal peoples, because of their special relationship to "The Creator", must continue to pursue their traditional "ways of life" so that they can fulfill their role as stewards of the environment.<sup>110</sup>

However, if we are to accept, as the Royal Commission often claimed, that aboriginal peoples should not have become dependent or impoverished as Canada developed, it would have been necessary for aboriginal groups to give up their "traditional

---

<sup>109</sup> As was explained earlier, these groups gradually increased their control over nature through technological development and a more complex division of labour, eventually settling down and becoming agriculturists. Aboriginal groups that were still hunters and gatherers at the time of contact also improved their productive capacity historically (and some even had become horticulturists), but the absence of certain environmental conditions prevented them from making the transition to agriculture. This transition was made possible, however, by the introduction of technological implements and forms of social organization from the Old World. This point is made by a research study prepared for the Royal Commission, which maintains that "the aboriginal peoples of North America were generally aware of the benefits of a crop food supply in addition to that from hunting and gathering. Farming, with the means at hand, was practised where possible. However, it does underline the reality that farming on the plains, without the benefits of animal power and appropriate implements was not possible. The Europeans introduced power implements and indirectly, the horse, which were the missing factors to make it conceptually possible for some of the prairie tribes to take up agriculture, which they did, if not with enthusiasm, at least with conviction". C.M. Williams, "Agriculture: Sectoral Study", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>110</sup> It is not clear what the Royal Commission believes gives aboriginal peoples this "special relationship", which does not exist for non-Aboriginals. The Royal Commission is somewhat cagey about linking identity to race, and states that "Aboriginal peoples are not racial groups; they are organic political and cultural entities". These "organic political and cultural entities", however, use "ancestry" as a defining characteristic, and often differentiate themselves from "white people" (See, for example, *Final Report*, 2(1), pp.165-69). The Royal Commission also notes in one section that "Identity is more than skin deep. It is in the blood, the heart and the mind, Aboriginal people told us; you carry it with you wherever you go". *Final Report*, 4, p. 612.



lifestyles" as they became more productive and part of larger and more complex societies. The government at the time, with the *Indian Act*, the relocations and the residential schools, was trying to accomplish this. Although it was a mistake to have coercively imposed these policies and to have been concerned with cost effectiveness rather than the needs of the aboriginal population, various kinds of programs to develop aboriginal communities economically, politically and ideologically were needed to prevent native dependency and marginalization at this time.

The Royal Commission maintained that "Indian parties were concerned primarily with retaining and protecting their lands, their ways of life, and the continuation of their traditional economies based on hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering,"<sup>111</sup> lamenting the fact that "as their homelands were engulfed by the ever expanding Canadian nation, all Aboriginal persons would be expected to abandon their cherished lifeways to become 'civilized' and thus to lose themselves and their culture among the mass of Canadians".<sup>112</sup> But by the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, wildlife populations were severely depleted, and so an economy of "hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering" would not have produced enough surplus for aboriginal peoples to have acquired the goods and services that they would need to achieve a standard of living similar to other Canadians. So, while aboriginal peoples economic and political structures and "ways of life" could persist during the fur trade, this was impossible if they were to become

---

<sup>111</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.159.

producers during Canada's agricultural and industrial development. Although the government can be criticized for attempting to develop aboriginal cultures in an insensitive or neglectful way, it does not negate the fact that government action was a response to circumstances where self-sufficiency had already been weakened from economic changes in the aftermath of the mercantile period, and a return to traditional "ways of life" was impossible as aboriginal peoples became reliant on modern technology and Canada pursued more intensive developments.

The Royal Commission's neglect of the dramatic economic and political changes that were required as mercantile relations declined and agricultural, and then industrial development, emerged, also hindered its analysis of the interventionist character of the government's assimilation policies. The Royal Commission argued that policies towards aboriginal peoples "invaded [their] lands, traditions, lives, families and homes, with a cradle-to-grave pervasiveness that other Canadians would have found utterly intolerable if applied to them",<sup>113</sup> even though aboriginal circumstances were profoundly different than those facing European immigrants. European societies were already making the transition out of feudalism when their population surpluses were dispersed to the New World. These immigrants that arrived in Canada already had been "displaced" (often coercively) from their "lands, traditions, lives, families and homes" and most were actively attempting to integrate themselves into Canadian life.

---

<sup>112</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.181.

Aboriginal peoples' economic practices and forms of social organization, on the other hand, were kept relatively intact as they were confined to reserves, and their isolated existence meant they retained traditions that provided obstacles to their participation in the developing Canadian economy and society. And to the extent to which these characteristics impeded profitability, the Canadian state attempted to orchestrate their "complete destruction".<sup>114</sup>

The Royal Commission maintained that there was a "continuous and deliberate subversion of Aboriginal nations - groups whose only offence was their wish to continue living in their own communities and evolving in accordance with their own traditions, laws and aspirations",<sup>115</sup> without recognizing that it was these "traditions" and "aspirations" that made it difficult for aboriginal peoples to become integrated into the larger, more productive and complex economy required by agriculture and then industrialization. This is because the Royal Commission provided little analysis of these forms of economic activity, and how they required a substantially different kind of participation from aboriginal peoples than the preceding mercantile period. As a result, it is largely prevented from developing a historical and materialist analysis of the origins of aboriginal dependency.

---

<sup>113</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.250.

<sup>114</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.600.

<sup>115</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.600.

## ABORIGINAL FARMING & PARTICIPATION IN EARLY INDUSTRIALIZATION

In its analysis of economic requirements during the "displacement and assimilation" era, the Royal Commission noted that European settlement and agricultural, and then industrial, development became increasingly incompatible with the nomadic practices of wildlife harvesting and the buffalo hunt, which were declining in economic importance.<sup>116</sup> As a result, aboriginal peoples became more dependent upon government relief to supplement their commercial and subsistence activities. The government started to recognize that their traditional "ways of life" were doomed, and maintained that aboriginal peoples needed to become farmers or labourers in the emerging economy if they were to become self-sufficient.<sup>117</sup> To aid this process, the treaties obligated the government to provide agricultural implements and schooling to those inhabiting the reserves. The *Indian Act* also provided a legal framework so that aboriginal peoples could be "protected" from European settlers, and assimilative

---

<sup>116</sup> This is noted in the case of the Robinson treaties in a study prepared for the Royal Commission. According to this study, "colonial politicians...characterized aboriginal people as uncivilized nomads whose lifestyle was an impediment not only to agricultural settlement but to the new activities of resource development", demanding that "that Indian people be removed from the path of settlement". James Morrison, "The Robinson Treaties of 1850", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>117</sup> Before this development, these tribes sustained themselves through the Buffalo hunt and by supplying the Hudson's Bay Company forts with provisions and furs in exchange for trade goods. With the depletion of buffalo herds due to over-hunting and the decline of the fur trade, many aboriginal groups were facing starvation and it became necessary for governments to intervene (*Final Report*, 1, pp. 167, 169). For a discussion of this transition, see Andrew Bear Robe, "The Historical, Legal and Current Basis for Siksika Governance", *For Seven Generations*; and Benita Cohen and John O'Neil, "Health Services Development in an Aboriginal Community", *For Seven Generations*.

policies could be developed to aid aboriginal peoples' eventual participation in the wider economy and society.

The Royal Commission noted, however, that government efforts to develop aboriginal farming were largely a failure.<sup>118</sup> This, however, was not due to any cultural obstacles to farming, according to the Royal Commission, since it asserted that many aboriginal groups were initially making a successful transition to agriculture.<sup>119</sup> It explained, in fact, that

several nations in eastern Canada — the Huron-Wendat, members of the Iroquois Confederacy, and some Ojibwa nations — were already raising crops at the time of contact, and many took easily to the introduction of European farming methods. Recent research has shown, for example, that many Iroquois and Chippewa (Ojibwa) farmers in southwestern Ontario were as productive as their non-Aboriginal neighbours in the nineteenth century. Other nations, such as the Saulteaux (Ojibwa) of northwestern Ontario and northeastern Manitoba, took up farming in the eighteenth century for the purpose of commercial sales to fur traders. In principle, many western peoples welcomed the introduction of agriculture at a time of social and economic change.<sup>120</sup>

With respect to aboriginal groups on the Prairies,<sup>121</sup> which constituted most of the Royal Commission's analysis, it is noted that the Peigan tribe in Alberta and the Dakota (Sioux) in Manitoba were also successful farmers in the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>122</sup>

---

<sup>118</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 786-7.

<sup>119</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.867.

<sup>120</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 487.

<sup>121</sup> The Royal Commission also notes that this was the case in Ontario, where a number of Ojibwa and Iroquois had become successful farmers in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. *Final Report*, (2(2), p. 487.

In the 1890s, however, aboriginal farming began to fail. This is explained, as in the Royal Commission's analysis of the displacement and assimilation era more generally, not by problems of integrating hunters and gatherers/horticulturists into more productive forms of economic activity, but by the existence of paternalistic policies and government duplicity.<sup>123</sup> It maintained that government policies at this time were fundamentally flawed because they destroyed aboriginal peoples' land base and undermined their political structures.<sup>124</sup> Reserves were often too small for farming,<sup>125</sup> and if they were the proper size, they were in isolated areas "making [aboriginal peoples'] economic circumstances even more tenuous", causing them to become "wholly dependent on the funding whims of the government".<sup>126</sup> This was exacerbated, in the Royal Commission's view, by attempts to "to replace traditional governing structures with new ones", because the internal divisions created disruptions that "interfered with the socio-economic development of communities for decades".<sup>127</sup>

---

<sup>122</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.786.

<sup>123</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 148-155, 167-171. This is the view of one of the studies prepared for the Royal Commission. It notes that " Early in this century, many First Nations of the Great Plains were adapting successfully to an agrarian existence. They had survived a shocking dislocation of liberty, diet, and affluence. But taking to agriculture with a will, they were able to reverse their fortunes. At the time, a wave of automation was being introduced into agricultural methods. In many instances, Indian Affairs agents forbade the use of mechanical threshers and other automated methods by Indian farmers. These men ruled the Bands with an iron fist. The ostensible reason for their actions, was that they desired to cultivate a 'work ethic' among the Indians they ruled. The consequence was that Indian farmers couldn't compete fairly with the dominant society farmers who surrounded them." . Del Anaquod, "Aboriginal Education, Training and Employment", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>124</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.786.

<sup>125</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp.488-9.

<sup>126</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.183.

<sup>127</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.786.

The Royal Commission also argued that many regulations designed to institute wardship over the native population had a negative impact on aboriginal farming. Most significantly, the Royal Commission pointed to laws that "contained provisions restricting mobility and the ownership of property and other measures that have impeded economic development".<sup>128</sup> The *Indian Act*, for example, introduced a permit and chit system where cash transactions became illegal, and Aboriginals were paid in vouchers that could be exchanged in stores. Furthermore, people wishing "to barter, directly or indirectly, with any Indian, or sell to him any goods or supplies, cattle or other animals..."<sup>129</sup> first needed to obtain permission from the government. The Royal Commission pointed out that this thwarted aboriginal initiative, the result of which was "to hinder Indian farmers and to make them appear less efficient or even to drive them from farming".<sup>130</sup> The Royal Commission explained that because aboriginal peoples did not hold lands in fee simple on reserves, they were not able to acquire things such as water licenses from provincial authorities or capital for "purchasing seeds, livestock, ploughs and tractors".<sup>131</sup> It also noted that the government did not provide enough assistance, or that this assistance was incompetently applied, since there was not enough "land, equipment or seed...to permit success".<sup>132</sup>

---

<sup>128</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.786.

<sup>129</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.183.

<sup>130</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.295.

<sup>131</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 490; 877.

<sup>132</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp.787, 868. Such a problem is also noted for groups outside the prairies. In the case of the Mi'kmaq, for example, the Royal Commission explains that "agricultural projects at the

The most significant government initiative that led to the failure of aboriginal agriculture on the prairies, in the view of the Royal Commission, was the policy of "peasant farming". According to the Royal Commission, this policy consisted of preventing aboriginal peoples from acquiring labour saving machinery, encouraging them to use hand tools on small plots of land instead. Based upon the misguided assumptions of "a philosophy of strict social darwinism", the Royal Commission argued that aboriginal peoples were prevented from acquiring machinery because it was believed that they would progress too quickly in relation to their level of development; government officials maintained that policies should encourage Aboriginals to advance through successive stages, and peasant agriculture had to be mastered before large scale farming could be attempted.<sup>133</sup> As a result, the Royal Commission asserted that it was impossible for native groups to succeed because they could not compete with the larger and more productive farms of non-aboriginal settlers. This then justified the alienation of lands from aboriginal peoples, enabling non-aboriginals to benefit from these acquisitions through the application of more advanced technology.<sup>134</sup>

---

expanded reserves collapsed when an Indian agent replaced cows with goats, which ate newly planted fruit trees, and when seed potatoes were ruined after they were sprinkled with kerosene to keep people from eating them" (*Final Report*, 1, p. 420). Mi'kmaq farming was also disrupted by a misguided policy of centralization, according to the Royal Commission, where the government attempted to move Aboriginals from 20 locations to two reserves so that services could be provided more cost-effectively (*Final Report*, 1, pp. 417-19).

<sup>133</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 294-5.

<sup>134</sup> *Final Report*, (2(2), pp. 488, 867-879.



It was, in fact, pressure from non-Aboriginals that led to the policy of peasant farming, according to the Royal Commission. The Royal Commission argued that restrictions on aboriginal farming were put in place largely because of "conflict with non-Indian farmers, who often persuaded the government to sell off productive Indian lands, place restrictions on the sale of produce, and limit Indian use of new technologies to increase productivity".<sup>135</sup> In the Royal Commission's opinion, the settlers had responded because agricultural programs for aboriginal peoples were seen by non-aboriginal farmers as creating unfair competition. The Royal Commission pointed out that "this may have been the way it looked to struggling pioneer farmers, but in fact Indian people were not eligible for the information and assistance that settlers themselves received from federal and provincial departments of agriculture".<sup>136</sup>

Similar to its analysis of aboriginal farming, the Royal Commission was also intent on showing that aboriginal cultural features did not hinder native participation in early industrial development. It maintained, in fact, that "Aboriginal people were successfully making the transition from a traditional to a 'modern' economy", but evidence showing this "tend[s] to be overlooked by those who conclude that Aboriginal people were unable to make the transition, that they were prevented from gathering positions in the wider economy because of racism, or that they were

---

<sup>135</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 787; 487-9.

unwilling to venture beyond the safe haven provided by reserves".<sup>137</sup> The Royal Commission argued that this participation was largely "on the margins and generally in manual occupations", but that "Aboriginal people coped with the changes occurring around them and again developed a measure of self-sufficiency, although at quite low levels of income". Such participation and self-sufficiency consisted of "people working their own farms or as hired hands on others, of seasonal participation in construction of housing and community infrastructure. Some were able to establish businesses in areas such as the crafts industry, and others sought their fortunes by moving to areas where jobs were available, including the United States".<sup>138</sup> These activities were documented most in the case of British Columbia, where it is asserted that "Aboriginal men...worked in commercial fishing, canning, road construction, logging, milling, mining, railroad construction, longshoring, and coastal shipping" and "Aboriginal women...worked as domestic servants, cannery workers and seasonal agricultural labourers" until 1930.<sup>139</sup>

It was only after 1930, the Royal Commission argued, that aboriginal peoples became increasingly dependent.<sup>140</sup> This, again, the Royal Commission did not attribute to the

---

<sup>136</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.490.

<sup>137</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.788.

<sup>138</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.787.

<sup>139</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.787.

<sup>140</sup> The Royal Commission, in fact, designates the period between 1930 and 1960 as the "period of dependence". *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 788-90. This time frame is not identified in any of the research studies prepared for the Royal Commission as being significant for dependency, except for one that designates "1930-69" as a period of "Denial and Fragmentation". Thalassa Research, "Nation to Nation", *For Seven Generations*.

problems of integrating hunters and gatherers/horticulturists into a more productive and complex economy and society. Instead, native dependency was rooted in the "dislocation and dispossession created by the settler economy", exacerbated by government policies and regulations "adopted in response to economic distress and economic opportunity". It also noted that this dependency was reduced to some extent during the Second World War because of labour shortages, but that "the end of the war and the return of the veterans again displaced Aboriginal people".<sup>141</sup>

Another important factor that exacerbated dependency during this period, in the Royal Commission's opinion, "was the view that Aboriginal people...were a federal responsibility".<sup>142</sup> Because municipalities and provincial governments did not assist the native population, aboriginal peoples "were seen as being outside local society" and "local services were often not available, banks were reluctant to do business with people on reserves without federal government guarantees on loans, and businesses saw the reserve community primarily as a market for their goods and services, without the reciprocal obligation to provide employment or other types of community support".<sup>143</sup> The Royal Commission also argued that aboriginal dependency was exacerbated by the relocation of aboriginal communities that undermined subsistence activities, and welfare programs that "were applied to situations for which they were

---

<sup>141</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 788.

<sup>142</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.788.

<sup>143</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.788.

not designed in cultural or socio-economic terms...".<sup>144</sup> It maintained that resource development projects played a role as well because they "routinely established operations in areas where Aboriginal people were trying to continue a traditional lifestyle" and "either ignored Aboriginal and treaty rights or chose to interpret them as narrowly as possible, until court decisions forced them to adopt a broader interpretation".<sup>145</sup>

In addition to this general overview, the Royal Commission also examined aboriginal participation in the development of three specific sectors of the Canadian economy - minerals/oil/gas, forestry and wildlife harvesting. With this analysis, the Royal Commission pointed to two major factors that increasingly contributed to aboriginal dependency as the 20<sup>th</sup> Century progressed. These included competition from non-Aboriginals and discriminatory government regulations.<sup>146</sup> The Royal Commission asserted that aboriginal participation in mineral extraction, for example, was inhibited by the fact that valuable lands were intentionally excluded from treaty negotiations and native people "were more likely than other small prospectors to suffer discrimination in registering their claims".<sup>147</sup> Strangely, there was no discussion of aboriginal participation in the labour force of the minerals, oil and gas industries in the

---

<sup>144</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.789.

<sup>145</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.789-90.

<sup>146</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 498; 513.

<sup>147</sup> Only one instance of such discrimination is mentioned. This is the case of an Ojibwa Chief by the name of Tonene whose "claim was jumped". *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 492.

Royal Commission's historical overview of this sector, even though mining was the focus of a number of its research studies.<sup>148</sup>

The Royal Commission's analysis of forestry in historical perspective briefly mentioned that "some Indian people worked in sawmills or on river drives", but no evidence or elaboration was provided for this assertion.<sup>149</sup> In the case of the Ojibwa of Treaty 3, it was also maintained that aboriginal "employment declined steadily as settlers took over cutting jobs" and they were "denied employment off-reserve",<sup>150</sup> even though no data was forthcoming in support of this claim. Most of its discussion of forestry, in fact, centred on how aboriginal peoples were excluded from obtaining licenses for cutting and selling timber, and therefore starting their own companies. In the case of northern Ontario, this analysis was vague and there was only reference to "provincial government...policies...that have denied Aboriginal people access to forest resource and a share of their social and economic benefits". On reserves in Ontario, this involved encouraging aboriginal groups to "surrender more valuable timber to the department for sale to non-Aboriginal companies at auction" and then having the money obtained held in trust for the band by the Department of Indian and

---

<sup>148</sup> See, for example, Hans Matthews, "Aboriginal Participation in the Minerals Industry", *For Seven Generations*; Jeffrey Davidson, Rethinking Aboriginal Participation in the Minerals Industry: An Exploration of Alternative Modes", *For Seven Generations*; Jon Pierce and Robert Hernal, "Aboriginal People and Mining in Nunavut, Nunavik and Northern Labrador", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 179, file 7474-4.1, volume 5.2.4.3.; Wanda Wuttunee, "Aboriginal People and the Minerals Industry: Yukon and Denendeh / On Our Own Terms", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>149</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 494.

<sup>150</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 494-5.

Northern Affairs. For Crown lands, the Royal Commission merely stated that timber rights were allocated to non-Aboriginals except in the most marginal areas.<sup>151</sup> In its discussion of British Columbia, the Royal Commission noted that "handlogging was major source of income" for many aboriginal groups at the turn of the century, but that this activity declined when the government stopped issuing licenses for it in 1907 (again, no data is provided). After this, according to the Royal Commission, "some Aboriginal men subsequently found work as wage labourers and some bought the equipment necessary to bid on smaller timber sales", but that "they found other obstacles, including general stereotypes about Aboriginal people". What the nature of these "stereotypes" were was not discussed; the only explanation offered was a district forester's rejection of a Haisla logger's application on the basis that he did not want "a good body of timber... alienated by any Indian reserve applications".<sup>152</sup>

A third sector that the Royal Commission examined historically was wildlife harvesting, which included fishing, guiding and trapping. Aboriginal participation in these activities, according the Royal Commission was again hindered by government regulations and non-aboriginal competition. In the case of fishing in Ontario and Manitoba, for example, it was noted that the "effect of regulation was to eliminate or

---

<sup>151</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.494-5.

<sup>152</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp.494-5. The Royal Commission merely provides a footnote directing readers to "see" John Charles Pritchard, *Economic Development and Disintegration of Traditional Culture Among the Haisla*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1977, p.147 (footnote 140).

severely reduce existing Aboriginal commercial fisheries".<sup>153</sup> Although the Royal Commission maintained that this was because "government regulations...favoured non-Aboriginal commercial operations", it did not show how this was carried out. It only noted the effect: "of the 97 leases issued on Lake Huron during the first regulatory season in 1859, 71 went to non-Aboriginal 'practical fishermen', 14 to the Hudson's Bay Company and only 12 to 'Indian Bands'. Over the following four years, the number of Aboriginal leases dwindled to almost none".<sup>154</sup> The Royal Commission also maintained that there was a "white preference" in the granting of fishing licenses in British Columbia, but it did not explain the nature of this restriction.<sup>155</sup>

As well as discussing aboriginal peoples' fishing activities in British Columbia, the Royal Commission examined the canning industry in the province, maintaining that the native population "played an important role".<sup>156</sup> This was because the perishable

---

<sup>153</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 498.

<sup>154</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp.499. The Royal Commission also notes that licenses also had a similar effect in the 1960s. According to the Royal Commission, "in some cases, federal or provincial regulations intended to apply broadly had a particularly damaging effect on Aboriginal people. A case in point was the 1969 fishery regulations in British Columbia. Since fishing is a way of life and not just an economic pursuit for First Nations fishers, they maintained a variety of licences. Rather than fishing only salmon, they held licences for species such as halibut, herring and rock cod as well. The 1969 Davis Plan (named for the federal fisheries minister of the day) sought to solve the problem of too many boats chasing too few fish by limiting access to the fishery. The plan limited salmon fishing licences to boats with the highest annual catch efficiency, thereby contributing to conservation of salmon stocks and providing a better income for the remaining boats. Many of the boats owned by Aboriginal people could not compete with single-purpose vessels, because they fished several species. The result was a substantial reduction in the number of Aboriginal commercial salmon fishers". *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 790.

<sup>155</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 499. The source used to make this claim is John Lutz, "The White Problem - State Racism and the decline of Aboriginal Employment in 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Columbia", paper presented to the 1994 Canadian Historical Association Meeting.

<sup>156</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 499.

character of salmon meant that the canneries had to be built either on or close to reserve lands, which were in close proximity to the fishing grounds. As a result, this industry was "marked by exploitation of Indian land, resources and labour". In one case, the Royal Commission noted that the British Columbia Packers Association negotiated a lease with an Indian reserve that guaranteed "employment for local Indian fishers and shoreworkers should a cannery ever be built there". The Royal Commission generally maintained that the building of canneries, however, eventually had the effect of marginalizing the native population since "canning companies were given licences that enabled them to control who supplied the canneries with salmon", which resulted in an "alienation of the salmon resource from Aboriginal ownership and control".<sup>157</sup>

Despite this "alienation of the salmon resource from Aboriginal ownership and control", the Royal Commission maintained that aboriginal peoples "dominated the labour market" in canning until the First World War because the industry relied upon "transient labour that could quickly respond to a 'run' lasting two to three weeks". This circumstance began to change after the war, however, because "the federal government lifted a pre-war policy of limited entry in fishing and canning in order to accommodate the needs of returning war veterans". As a result of this change, both aboriginal people and Japanese fishers were disadvantaged. Aboriginal peoples did

---

<sup>157</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 784.



not have overt discriminatory measures employed against them like the Japanese, who were specifically excluded from obtaining licenses, but they also saw their position in the industry decline in comparison with "whites". To support this claim, the Royal Commission offered a quotation from Dianne Newell, who argues that

Indians were not treated on equal terms with whites. Indian fishing licences were concentrated in the north. As numbers of licences issued to Japanese declined, only the number of licences issued to whites increased, while those to Indians remained roughly the same. In order to keep up the number of Indian cannery workers it became customary in the major district for cannery operators to use only those Indian fishers who had female relatives who could work at the cannery. Even then the Indian fishers reported they often received insufficient and sub-standard gear.<sup>158</sup>

On the basis of Newell's arguments, the Royal Commission concluded that this licensing policy has had a "lasting impact on the relative distribution of Aboriginal people within the commercial fishing industry". According to the Royal Commission it resulted in the decline in the absolute number of aboriginal peoples holding fishing licenses and led the proportion of aboriginal cannery workers to outnumber those employed in the actual fishery. As a result, "about 40 per cent of the shoreworkers in [the United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union] membership are Aboriginal, while about 10 per cent of those working in fishing vessels are union members".<sup>159</sup>

---

<sup>158</sup> Dianne Newell, ed., *The Development of the Pacific Salmon-Canning Industry: A Grown Man's Game* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), cited in *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 503.

<sup>159</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 502-503. The source used for these figures is Canadian Labour Congress, "Aboriginal Rights and the Labour Movement", brief submitted to RCAP (1993), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/09, Box 215, File 8200-50C".

Similar problems with government regulations and non-aboriginal competition also affected aboriginal participation in guiding and trapping, according to the Royal Commission. The Royal Commission noted that in some parts of the country during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, "Aboriginal people served as guides, packers and cooks for parties of hunters or fishermen in frontier regions" but "with increasing competition from non-Aboriginal people and increasing government regulation, Aboriginal people found themselves gradually excluded from this industry as well".<sup>160</sup> In the Yukon, this was because overkill was blamed on aboriginal peoples<sup>161</sup> and because allowing them to fill the positions of "chief guides" would, according to one government official in Whitehorse, "[take] away...the livelihood of guiding from the white men".<sup>162</sup>

In the case of trapping, the Royal Commission cited "competition from [Non-aboriginals]" as the major factor. With the building of the railways, an influx of non-aboriginal trappers ensued, especially after World War One, when fur prices increased dramatically. In addition to their numbers, these trappers were also more productive

---

<sup>160</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 507.

<sup>161</sup> Such a claim was based on the fact that aboriginal peoples had just "lately acquired high-powered magazine guns". This lack of familiarity with these weapons, according to a Yukon guidebook, was leading "the average Indian who gets into a band of big game [to shoot] as long as his cartridges hold out, whether he can use the meat or not." *Final Report*, 2(2), p.508.

<sup>162</sup> In 1923, an ordinance was passed stipulating that aboriginal peoples were prohibited from becoming chief guides, even though they could still be guides, assistant guides and helpers. Aboriginal peoples who became enfranchised were able to obtain these licenses, but their efforts were also "blocked...through bureaucratic delays or unreasonable terms". The Royal Commission maintains, for example, that one aboriginal person "was turned down in 1934 for a chief's licence because he had no horses, even though, as he reasoned, there was no point in purchasing horses on speculation". *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 508-9. The source used for the discussion of guiding in the Yukon is Robert McCandless, *Yukon Wildlife: A Social History* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1985).

than their aboriginal counterparts. To support this contention, the Royal Commission offered the account of a Hudson's Bay Company official, who maintains that

the professional trapper does not make an occasional short trapping journey as does the Indian, then forget about his trapline for a while, neither does he "farm" his territory as was done by Indians until just a few years ago. Instead he brings in a complete grub-stake from the "outside" in the fall...From the first snowfall until the ice breaks up he is tirelessly on the go, and in the course of a single season will accumulate three or four times as much fur as an entire Indian family has been in the habit of taking out of the same territory over a period of years.<sup>163</sup>

Aboriginal trapping activities were also affected by the introduction of government regulations "requiring everyone, Aboriginal people included, to apply for and register their traplines".<sup>164</sup> This resulted in "Aboriginal people [losing] out to non-Aboriginal trappers in all but the most remote areas". The Royal Commission maintained that this was due, in part, to the fact that governments "earned fees from the trapline registrations of non-Aboriginal people, but not from Indians" and because "Aboriginal people were...accused of not being efficient enough in trapping fur". Government officials at the time claimed that these regulations discriminated against aboriginal peoples, not because they were "Indian", but because "the standard of trapping practice on which the priorities were decided favoured the white trapper over the Indian trapper...".<sup>165</sup> Therefore, whenever wildlife resources were "perceived as

---

<sup>163</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 511.

<sup>164</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 512.

<sup>165</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 513.

abundant, Aboriginal people were regarded as not using them to maximum efficiency, and others were given priority access".<sup>166</sup>

Although the Royal Commission tended to focus on the various policies and regulations that restricted their participation in commercial resource extraction, as well as competition from Non-Aboriginals, it did briefly recognize some of the developmental problems that led to Aboriginal dependency. It noted that "other contributing factors" to Aboriginal dependency and economic deprivation were inadequate educational systems and a lack of access to capital. This prevented Aboriginal peoples from becoming involved in more skilled and specialized forms of labour, as well as owning the equipment needed to develop their own companies, especially in the natural resource industries. These factors, according to the Royal Commission, "generally excluded Aboriginal people from participation in the broader economy, whether as wage labourers or as entrepreneurs".<sup>167</sup>

Such materialist considerations, however, were not elaborated upon in other discussions of the displacement and assimilation era. In another area of the *Final Report*, for instance, the Royal Commission simply stated that "when Aboriginal people sought wage labour outside their own communities, many were refused employment", maintaining that "union practices did little to ameliorate the situation

---

<sup>166</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 515.

during this period". The example that the Royal Commission provided to elucidate this circumstance concerned an incident in 1958 whereby

two organizers from the lumber and sawmill workers union visited the New Post Reserve north of Cochrane, Ontario, where 34 Indian men were cutting under a subcontract to Kimberley-Clark, and explained that those who did not join the union would have to leave immediately. As a result of this threat, 28 of the 34 men paid \$29 each and \$4 for monthly dues, while the remaining six returned to their homes at James Bay. It turned out that there was no clause in the original timber licence for the New Post Reserve specifying that Indian people would have to be hired, nor had any previous arrangement been made for an exemption to the union agreement, although the subcontractor had agreed orally with the department of Indian affairs to hire Indian labour. On the basis of a discussion with the Indian foreman, the department tried to secure a refund of the money collected, arguing that the organizers had used intimidation. As regional supervisor Fred Matters explained, the "wood belongs to the Indians and is on their own reserve", and the primary purpose of the licence was to provide them with employment. He also pointed out that, because the men in question only worked seasonally, they would be compelled to rejoin the union every year for only a few weeks' work. Apparently none of the men had understood what they were signing; as far as they were concerned, they had simply been exploited by white men.<sup>168</sup>

Then, after providing this one "example" of how aboriginal peoples were "refused employment", the Royal Commission then went on to state that "related to such practices was the general attitude that northern resource-related jobs, such as those in hydroelectric development and mining, were for southern non-Aboriginal workers". To support this claim, the Royal Commission referred to a report submitted to the Manitoba government in 1963 arguing that

---

<sup>167</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.790.

<sup>168</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 518. This case is drawn from NAC RG 10, volume 7051, file 486/20-7-4-69 1, Fred Matters to Department, 21 July 1958.

Industrial concerns in this area should not be expected to employ native labour which is not as productive as white labour....It is difficult enough to persuade large investors to put money in resource development in the north without expecting them to assume the added cost of solving the welfare problems of the native population..<sup>169</sup>

These were the only two circumstances to which the Royal Commission referred to explain why aboriginal peoples were "refused employment" when seeking "wage labour outside their own communities".

Throughout its discussions of aboriginal participation in the developing Canadian economy, in fact, there was generally a reluctance to recognize, let alone discuss, the unproductive character of native labour mentioned in the quotation above. Instead, the Royal Commission generally denied that developmental differences between the aboriginal population and European societies contributed to native dependency and marginalization in its examination of aboriginal participation in early agricultural and industrial development. Identifying aboriginal groups as being unproductive in relation to European immigrants was generally perceived by the Royal Commission as being a colonialist prejudice.<sup>170</sup>

This was made possible, in part, because of its sparse analysis of early agricultural and industrial imperatives. In contrast to its extensive description of the legal, political

---

<sup>169</sup> Manitoba, Committee on Manitoba's Economic Future, Manitoba, 1962-1975, *A Report to the Government of Manitoba*, as quoted in Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*, p.74, cited in *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 518.

and administrative initiatives pursued during the "displacement and assimilation" period, the overview provided of agricultural and industrial development during this time was very brief. Unlike the treaties of displacement, which were discussed in the greater part of two chapters, and the *Indian Act*, residential schools and relocations that each have their own chapter, the Royal Commission's discussion of aboriginal farming was minimal. In its chapter on "displacement and assimilation", in fact, the references to farming concern the agricultural implements dispersed in the various treaties.<sup>171</sup> A discussion of the development of agriculture only appeared in Volume Two, where there was an "Agriculture" section in its chapter on Lands and Resources,<sup>172</sup> as well as two sections discussing the history of agriculture in the context of economic development and the causes of native dependency.<sup>173</sup> This is in spite of the Royal Commission's recognition that agricultural development was a significant aspect of economic development during the "displacement and assimilation" period, since "Indian agents made significant attempts to persuade Indian people to become farmers" across the country and there was a general goal "to have Indian and Métis peoples 'settle down' and make the transition to the settlers' way of life".<sup>174</sup>

---

<sup>170</sup> See, for example, *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 462-3; 884-9.

<sup>171</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 160, 164, 166, 169-171. .

<sup>172</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 487-90.

<sup>173</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 784-789; 867-879.

<sup>174</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.786.

In addition to devoting little space to the study of aboriginal peoples' historical participation in agriculture, very few groups were examined in any detail. Attempts to develop farming in aboriginal communities were discussed briefly in the context of a number of aboriginal groups, including the Innu, the Mik'maq, Ojibwa, Iroquois, and a few tribes in British Columbia.<sup>175</sup> Most of the Royal Commission's analysis was devoted to those aboriginal groups inhabiting the Prairies - the Blackfoot, Blood, Peigan, Gros Ventre, Assiniboine, Plains Cree, Saulteaux, Métis and Dakota.<sup>176</sup> While this was because the most significant efforts to encourage aboriginal agriculture occurred in this area during the period of western settlement and the development of the wheat staple, such a focus prevented the Royal Commission from engaging in any comparative analysis of aboriginal attempts at farming, impeding its understanding of the economic and political factors that influenced these activities.

The same sparse treatment is found with respect to aboriginal peoples' participation in early industrial development. As was discussed above, the Royal Commission did briefly discuss aboriginal participation in wildlife harvesting and mineral extraction across the country, as well as forestry in northern Ontario.<sup>177</sup> However, most of its

---

<sup>175</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 109, 417-20; 2(2):487, 489-90.

<sup>176</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 294-5; 2(2), pp. 786-7; 867-869.

<sup>177</sup> The Royal Commission refers to aboriginal participation in commercial fishing in Ontario and Manitoba (*Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 498-99), trapping in northern Ontario, Quebec, the Northwest Territories and Yukon (*Final Report*, 2(2), p. 496, 507-13), and guiding in the Yukon and the Maritimes (*Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 507-509) in its "Lands and Resources" chapter. The only research study that the Royal Commission uses in these discussions is Morrison, "The Robinson Treaties", *For Seven Generations* (the references concern the jailing of aboriginal trappers for hunting out of season and attempts of a government official to ban aboriginal hunting and fishing). As well, no research



analysis focused on aboriginal groups in British Columbia. This is not surprising since the literature on aboriginal peoples' role in early industrial development tends to examine aboriginal involvement in the first resource industries in the region, both as wage labourers and commodity producers,<sup>178</sup> and very few works have analyzed aboriginal participation in the industrial development of Canada as a whole.<sup>179</sup> Such a focus on British Columbia was presumably because this province, unlike the Prairies, "was never primarily based upon farming...BC leapt from a region sustaining a

---

studies are cited in the case of forestry (*Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 493-96) or mineral extraction (*Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 490-93).

<sup>178</sup>James K. Burrows. "'A Much Needed Class of Labour': the Economy and Income of the Southern Interior Plateau Indians, 1897-1910", *BC Studies*, 1986 71 (Autumn); Wallace Clement, *The Struggle to Organize: Resistance in Canada's Fishery* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986); Gladstone, "Native Indians and the Fishing Industry of British Columbia", in M.Nagler, (ed) *Perspectives on the North American Indian* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1972); Stuart Jamieson, "Native Indians and the Trade Union Movement", M. Nagler, (ed) *Perspectives on the North American Indian* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972). Michael Kew, "Making Indians", in R. Warburton and D. Coburn (eds) *Workers, Capital and the State in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1988); Rolf Knight, *Indians at Work* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1978, 1996); Lutz, John. "After the Fur Trade: the Aboriginal Labouring Class of British Columbia, 1849-90", *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 1992; John Lutz, "The White Problem - State Racism and the decline of Aboriginal Employment in 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Columbia", paper presented to the 1994 Canadian Historical Association Meeting; McDonald, "Images of the Nineteenth Century Economy of the Tsimshian", in Margaret Segun (ed), *The Tsimshian, Images of the Past: Views for the Present* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984); Alicja Muszynski, *Cheap Wage Labour: Race and Gender in the Fisheries of British Columbia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996); Dianne Newell, *Tangled Webs of History: Indians and the Law in Canada's Pacific Coast Fisheries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Dianne Newell, ed., *The Development of the Pacific Salmon-Canning Industry: A Grown Man's Game* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989); Richard Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital: The Economy of Vancouver Island, 1849-1858", MA thesis, University of Victoria, 1985; Stuart B. Philpott, *Trade Unionism and Acculturation: A Comparative Study of Urban Indians and Immigrant Italians*, MA thesis, University of BC, 1963; John Charles Pritchard, *Economic Development and Disintegration of Traditional Culture Among the Haisla*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1977.

<sup>179</sup>J. S. Frideres, "The Quest for Indian Development in Canada: Contrasts and Contradictions", in John H. Moore (ed), *The Political Economy of North American Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), pp. 161-183; Steven High, "Native Wage Labour and Independent Production during the 'Era of Irrelevance'", *Labour*, 1996 37 (Spring), pp. 243-64; M Nagler, "Minority Values and Economic Achievement: the Case of the North American Indian", in M. Nagler, (ed) *Perspectives on the North American Indian* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1972), pp. 131-141; M. Nagler, *Natives Without a*

monopoly trading company extracting furs to one based on the industrial extraction of primary resources for export".<sup>180</sup> The rapid development of these sectors, in conjunction with a scarcity of non-aboriginal settlers, required the integration of aboriginal peoples into the emerging capitalist economy, thereby providing the most significant example of native participation in the early stages of industrialization.

The relatively little attention that the Royal Commission devoted to aboriginal participation in early agricultural and industrial development can be explained by the idealistic character of its historical analysis. The Royal Commission maintained that aboriginal traditions could be revitalized in the modern context, even though it did not base this argument on a detailed analysis of how past practices would facilitate aboriginal participation today. Instead, the Royal Commission tended to focus on the various assimilationist legal and bureaucratic arrangements that attempted to transform aboriginal cultures and integrate them into Canadian society. This focus was consistent with the Royal Commission's strategy of recognizing aboriginal cultures and blaming non-aboriginals, but it resulted in an impoverished understanding of the historical roots of native dependency.

---

*Home* (Don Mills: Longman Canada, 1975); Terry Wotherspoon and Vic Satzewich. *First Nations: Race, Class, and Gender Relations* (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1993).

<sup>180</sup> Knight, *Indians at Work* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1996), p. 122.

## Chapter Seven

### The Failure of Aboriginal Farming and Native Proletarianization

This cursory treatment of agricultural and early industrial development in comparison to the Royal Commission's analysis of the treaties, the *Indian Act*, the relocations and the residential schools can be explained, to some extent, by the orientation of its research program. In the case of its analysis of the treaties signed during the displacement and assimilation period, for example, 16 studies were prepared.<sup>1</sup> As was mentioned earlier, five studies were also undertaken on the relocations and three on the residential schools. And while it was noted above that only one study was directly commissioned to study the *Indian Act*, several studies had significant sections devoted to the subject.

In contrast to the many studies commissioned on the various legal agreements and policies developed during the displacement and assimilation period, few studies examined aboriginal participation in early agricultural and industrial developments. Just two studies were undertaken on agriculture, only one of which examined its historical context.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the Royal Commission generally relied on a number of

---

<sup>1</sup> See "Treaties", Project Areas 2-4 - "Treaty Case Studies", "Perspectives and Interpretations of the Treaties" and "Treaties and Aboriginal Lands" - *For Seven Generations*, for a list of these studies.

<sup>2</sup> The first is by C.M. Williams, "Sectoral Study: Agriculture", *For Seven Generations*. The second is by Richard Scott Fulham, "A Historical Review of Metis Agriculture and its Current Status in Canada", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 155, File 7238-2.1F. There are also significant sections on agriculture in Andrew Bear Robe, "The Historical, Legal and

outside sources to make its conclusions,<sup>3</sup> the most significant of these being the works of Sarah Carter and Peter Douglas Elias.<sup>4</sup> And with respect to the research studies commissioned on aboriginal peoples' participation in early industrial development, none are specifically focussed on this subject. There are, however, sections pertaining to this in the case studies of particular aboriginal communities,<sup>5</sup> aboriginal participation in resource industries,<sup>6</sup> the aboriginal labour force,<sup>7</sup> the northern economy,<sup>8</sup> and land claims agreements in the north.<sup>9</sup> And in addition to there being no studies commissioned on aboriginal participation in early industrial activity, only five outside sources are referred to in the Royal Commission's analysis of aboriginal participation in resource industries of British Columbia.<sup>10</sup>

---

Current Basis for Siksika Governance", *For Seven Generations*; L. Heinneman, Metis Economic Development in Regina, *For Seven Generations*; Thalassa Research, "Nation to Nation", *For Seven Generations*; and J.S. Milloy, "Suffer the Little Children", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>3</sup> Edward S. Rogers and Flora Tobobondung, "Parry Island Farmers", Canadian Ethnology Service Paper no. 31, *Contributions to Canadian Ethnology*, 1975, ed. David Brez Carlisle, (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1975); Helen Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*; Neil Ferris, "Continuity within Change", M.A. Thesis, York University, 1989. Hugh A. Dempsey, "The Peigan Indians", *Glenbow 5/5* (September-October 1972); and Leo G. Waisberg and Tim E. Holtzkamm, "A Tendency to Discourage them from Cultivating", *Ethnohistory* 40/2 (1993).

<sup>4</sup> Sarah Carter, "Two Acres and a Cow", in J.R. Miller (ed), *Sweet Promises* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); *Lost Harvests* (Kingston: Queen's University Press, 1990); Peter Douglas Elias, *The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988).

<sup>5</sup> These are listed under in the "RCAP Research Reports" area of *For Seven Generations*. More specifically, they can be found in "Economy - Project Area 1 - Aboriginal Economies: Theory and Practice", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>6</sup> See "Economy - Project Area 2 - Aboriginal Employment and Economic Development in Natural Resource Industries", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>7</sup> See "Economy - Project Area 3 - Employment of the Aboriginal Labour Force", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>8</sup> See "The Northern Economy" section of "North", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>9</sup> See the "Land, Resource and Environment Regimes" section of "North", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>10</sup> Parzival Copes et al., "West Coast Fishing Sectoral Study", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 155, File 7238-3.1C; John Lutz, "The White Problem - State Racism and the decline of Aboriginal Employment in 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Columbia", paper presented to the 1994 Canadian Historical Association Meeting; Dianne Newell, *Tangled Webs of History*:

Besides the few studies commissioned and the narrow range of sources used in its analysis of aboriginal participation in agriculture and early industrial development, the Royal Commission's use and interpretation of evidence is also problematic. This is because the Royal Commission tended to select information that confirmed its opposition to conceptions of historical progress. Confusing culture and race, the Royal Commission assumed that any recognition of aboriginal difficulties in making the transition to agriculture and industrial development was an indication that the native population was being designated as "inferior". As will be shown in the following sections, this led the Royal Commission to accept a number of dubious inferences, obscuring its understanding of the continuation of aboriginal dependency and marginalization in Canada today.

---

*Indians and the Law in Canada's Pacific Coast Fisheries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Dianne Newell (ed), *The Development of the Pacific Salmon-Canning Industry: A Grown Man's Game* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989); John Charles Pritchard, "Economic Development and Disintegration of Traditional Culture Among the Haisla", Ph.D. dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1977; all others pertaining to British Columbia examine the political conflicts caused by increasing non-aboriginal settlement and the provincial government's failure to recognize "aboriginal and treaty rights". These include Robert E. Cail, *Land, Man and the Law* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1974); Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1977); Louise Mandell and Leslie Pinder, "B.C. Issues", *For Seven Generations*; Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990); and Dennis Madill, *British Columbia Indian Treaties in Historical Perspective* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs, 1981).

## AN HISTORICAL AND MATERIALIST ANALYSIS OF THE FAILURE OF ABORIGINAL FARMING<sup>11</sup>

As was mentioned above, the Royal Commission's views on the impediments to aboriginal farming were largely taken from the studies of Sarah Carter and Peter Douglas Elias, which were both cited extensively in the Royal Commission's Report.

---

<sup>11</sup> This historical and materialist analysis is limited to the aboriginal groups singled out by the Royal Commission in its discussions of aboriginal farming. The case of the Metis in Manitoba, therefore, has not been analyzed. The Manitoba Metis' declining participation in agriculture during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century has been the subject of much debate. According to Alexander Ross, George F.G. Stanley, Marcel Giraud, W.L. Morton and W.Leland Clark, for example, the Métis' connection to hunting and gathering made the buffalo hunt a more attractive pursuit than the disciplines required for the constant tending of crops. The historian Gerhard J. Ens has criticized this interpretation, however, arguing that the Metis orientation to the buffalo hunt actually involved a switch from subsistence agriculture because it was more profitable. He points out that "hindsight alone confirms that the switch from peasant agriculture to the fur trade and domestic buffalo-robe industry would, over the long term, prove an unsuccessful strategy for adaptation to the new order in the West [which involved the depletion of buffalo herds and the emergence of commercial agriculture]". Gerhard J. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp. 111, 173. Another challenge to the cultural explanation for the Metis' difficulties in continuing farming has come from the historian Douglas Sprague. Sprague maintains that the Metis were "persistent settlers" who wanted to farm, but their efforts were denied by a deliberate government conspiracy to dispossess and disperse the Metis. Sprague's work, however, has been criticized for the fact that it was commissioned by the Manitoba Metis Federation's to buttress legal arguments for land claims. The historian Brad Milne maintains that Sprague's "dispossession thesis has convinced very few contemporary scholars" because of a "failure to provide hard evidence in support of his conclusions". Brad Milne, "The Historiography of Métis Land Dispersal, 1870-1890", *Manitoba History* 30, Autumn 1995. For works that have adopted the cultural explanation for the decline in Metis farming in Manitoba, see George F.G. Stanley, *The Birth of Western Canada: A History of the Riel Rebellions* (Toronto: 1963); Alexander Ross, *The Red River Settlement* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1856); Marcel Giraud, *The Métis in the Canadian West*, 2 vols. Trans. George Woodcock (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1986); W.L. Morton, "Agriculture in the Red River Colony", in A.B. McKillop (ed), *Contexts of Canada's Past: Selected Essays of W.L. Morton* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, 1980); and W. Leland Clark, "The Place of the Metis within the Agricultural Economy of the Red River During the 1840's and 1850's", *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 1983 3(1), pp. 69-84.

Carter's work concerns aboriginal farming in Saskatchewan,<sup>12</sup> especially the areas included in Treaty Four and Treaty Six. Carter was the source cited when the Royal Commission maintained that agricultural policies were "forcing [Aboriginals] to use hand implements instead of machinery"<sup>13</sup> and that the restrictions on the sale of aboriginal agricultural products were partially motivated by "the desire to reduce competition between Indian and non-Indian farmers" since "non-Indian farmers were complaining to local Indian agents about the competition they were facing from Indian farmers, claiming it was unfair because of the government assistance to reserves".<sup>14</sup> A long quote is also provided from Carter's book *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy*, where it is maintained that the failure of aboriginal farming was not due to a lack of interest from aboriginal peoples or the fact that "the sustained labour required of them was alien to their culture and that the transformation of hunters into farmers was a process that historically took place over centuries". Instead, she maintained that it was due to the apathy of Canadian officials and the circumstance that "government policies made it virtually impossible for reserve agriculture to succeed because the farmers were prevented from using the technology required for agricultural activity in the West. The promotion of reserve land surrender

---

<sup>12</sup> Sarah Carter, "Two Acres and a Cow", in J.R. Miller (ed), *Sweet Promises* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); *Lost Harvests* (Kingston: Queen's University Press, 1990).

<sup>13</sup>Final Report, 1, p.298. To support this point, the Royal Commission cites Carter, "Two Acres and a Cow", p. 368.

<sup>14</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.294. This assertion is made on the basis of Carter, "Two Acres and a Cow", p. 360.

after the turn of the century further precluded the hope that agriculture could form the basis of a stable economy on the reserves".<sup>15</sup>

Similar explanations were provided by Peter Douglas Elias in the case of the Dakota of Northwestern Manitoba. In the Royal Commission's *Final Report*, a text box, partly based on Elias' book *The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest: Lessons for Survival*, was highlighted in the Royal Commission's discussion of the failure of agricultural initiatives.<sup>16</sup> The text box stated that while Dakota communities had "adapted easily to commercial-based agriculture by the mid-1880s", this was thwarted by the government's attempt to "create a form of 'peasantry' farming", the goal of which was "to 'civilize' the Indians and to prevent their direct competition with settler farmers". Instead of continuing to control their own affairs, it is noted that "when the Dakota appealed to Indian affairs for more and better seed, implements and farming instruction, the department insisted that control over agriculture planning and practices be vested in Indian agent(s) and/or farm instructors". This meant that "the Dakota lost all political autonomy, and their social fabric was severely damaged", preventing them from "farm[ing] on a communal basis" and being able to "shift labour easily from farming to hunting and fishing, without disrupting either endeavour". It was then argued that "Dakota communities attempted to compensate for the changes by purchasing more efficient technology through private means" but that the government

---

<sup>15</sup> Carter, *Lost Harvests*, p. ix, cited in *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 868.

<sup>16</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 488-89.



"was strongly opposed to Indian people using labour-saving devices". The main obstacle to aboriginal success was claimed to be the "Department's introduction of the permit and 'chit' system in the 1890s", which required the Dakota "to obtain a permit to sell grain and other produce, or to buy stock and implements" and to be paid "in chits that could be exchanged in stores". It was pointed out that this policy was "condemned by both Indian and non-Indian farmers" because it prevented the Dakota from being "allowed the full benefit of the fruit of their own labour", disadvantaging them in their competition with non-aboriginal settlers.

In making these claims, Carter and Elias' interpretation of archival sources came to a very different conclusion from that reached previously by scholars studying the area. Carter, for example, noted that historians such as John Hawkes and G.F.G. Stanley<sup>17</sup> maintained that "Indians failed to adapt to agriculture because they lacked initiative and diligence, and reverted to 'primitive' behaviour patterns ruled by superstition",<sup>18</sup> and that other historians studying reserve agriculture have mostly agreed with this interpretation.<sup>19</sup> She pointed out that more recent studies by L.M. Hanks and J.R. Hanks, H. Samek and H.B. Hawthorn have also stressed the cultural obstacles and

---

<sup>17</sup> John Hawkes, *The Story of Saskatchewan and Its Peoples*. 3 vols. (Regina: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1924; G.F.G. Stanley, *The Birth of Western Canada: A History of the Riel Rebellions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975).

<sup>18</sup> Carter, *Lost Harvests*, p.3.

<sup>19</sup> Carter, *Lost Harvests*, p.5.

differences between non-industrial and modern cultural values in explaining the failure of aboriginal farming.<sup>20</sup>

According to Carter, "the prevailing view that the Indians of western Canada failed to adapt to agriculture because of their cultural traditions is in need of revision", and that this already had been undertaken by a number of scholars.<sup>21</sup> In the case of the Prairies, Carter noted that previous studies by herself, John L. Tobias and Noel Dyck all indicated that it was not cultural obstacles, but "restrictive government regulations" and a "coercive system of administration", that led Aborigines to be unsuccessful in comparison to non-aboriginal settlers. As Carter explained, "those who stress that the fundamental problem was that Indians were culturally or temperamentally resistant to becoming farmers have ignored or downplayed economic, legal, social and climatic factors. Reserve agriculturists were subject to the same adversities and misfortunes as their white neighbours were, but they were also subject to government policies that tended to aggravate rather than ameliorate a situation that was dismal for all farmers".<sup>22</sup>

Elias went even further than Carter, claiming that the Dakota readily took up farming and their culture was actually suited to this economic activity. He maintained that

---

<sup>20</sup> Carter, *Lost Harvests*, pp.5-8.

<sup>21</sup> Carter, *Lost Harvests*, p.8.

<sup>22</sup> Carter, *Lost Harvests*, p.13.

while the Dakota lacked material assets, they had other potential for economic growth. Of primary importance, they were able and willing to incorporate all manner of new ideas, techniques and technology into what remained essentially a Dakota culture. They were multilingual, many were literate in two languages, and they valued education... They were eager to learn new ways of doing things, either by taking instruction or by experimenting... Their cultural flexibility allowed them to operate simultaneously in several distinct economic fields - domestic production for subsistence, production of surpluses for market sale, and sale of wage labour.<sup>23</sup>

Carter's work, as well as the study by Elias, have proved to be remarkably influential in revising current opinions on why aboriginal farming failed. Besides the Royal Commission's acceptance of their work,<sup>24</sup> their assumptions largely have been adopted in Helen Buckley's *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare: Why Indian Policy Failed in the Prairie Provinces*. Extensively using the works of Carter and Elias, Buckley argued that "officials in a position to observe the operations [of aboriginal farmers] judged that setbacks were due not to want of character or training, as many believe to this day, but to the economic and climatic conditions that made it a high-risk enterprise for Indians and settlers alike".<sup>25</sup> The early efforts of aboriginal farmers on the Prairies were, in fact, "promising", according to Buckley, but "ultimately failed", unlike the efforts of non-aboriginal settlers, because of small lot sizes, the

---

<sup>23</sup> Elias, *The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest*, p.73.

<sup>24</sup> A number of research studies prepared for the Royal Commission also unquestioningly accept the research of Carter. See, for example, Del Anaquod and Vikas Khaladkar, "Case study: The First Nations Economy in the City of Regina", *For Seven Generations*; Del Anaquod, "Aboriginal Education, Training and Employment", *For Seven Generations*; C.M. Williams, Sectoral Study: Agriculture, *For Seven Generations*; Thalassa Research, "Nation-to -Nation: Indian Crown Relations in Canada", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>25</sup> Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*, pp. 51-2. To support this point, Buckley cites Carter, *Lost Harvests*, pp. 76, 101, 175 and Elias, *The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest*, p. 73.

government's policy of "peasant agriculture", and "the continuing scarcity of equipment and working capital...".<sup>26</sup>

In reviewing the sources that the Royal Commission used to make its assertions about the failure of aboriginal farming, however, two glaring inconsistencies can be discerned from an overview of these arguments. The first, and most obvious, is the question of why the government would have funded farming at all on reserves if its real agenda was to pave the way for the non-aboriginal takeover of aboriginal lands, as is implied. The second concerns the fact that farming instructors and all sorts of subsidies were provided to aboriginal farmers. If aboriginal farmers were initially so "successful" and experiencing little difficulty in making the transition to agriculture, why was it necessary for the government to provide Aboriginals with this additional assistance?

Carter, Buckley and Elias, in fact, all documented government expenditures on farm implements, livestock and seed, and farming instructors.<sup>27</sup> Carter, for example, referred to an estimation made in the 1880s that "the cost of maintaining [aboriginal] farms in the Territories had reached ninety thousand dollars, with no results to warrant this expenditure". She also pointed out that "the resident supervisory staff on the Treaty Four reserves was greatly increased after 1885", where up to nine people were

---

<sup>26</sup> Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*, p. 52.

<sup>27</sup> In the case of Buckley, see, for example, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*, pp. 64-6.

employed. The overall costs for these employees was not mentioned, but Carter does document that farm instructors earned up to \$600/year before 1896, at which time this was reduced to \$300-\$480 "to keep expenses at an absolute minimum".<sup>28</sup> And although Elias makes the claim that "[the Dakota] were largely permitted to succeed or fail by their own abilities" and downplays the amount of government assistance provided,<sup>29</sup> a number of instances of subsidization and the funding of farm instructors were mentioned.<sup>30</sup>

While some of this assistance could be explained by the legal obligations dictated by the treaties, this would not apply to either the expenditures for farm instructors or all the subsidies provided to the Dakota (since they had immigrated from the United States and were not considered treaty Indians).<sup>31</sup> To understand the reasons for these expenditures, one must view government actions in the context of the economic and political imperatives of the day. At this point in history, Canadian officials were trying to create the conditions for increased profitability through agricultural and industrial development. This led them to have two major concerns: 1) increasing productivity of the land to spur intensive economic growth; and 2) decreasing the

---

<sup>28</sup> Carter, *Lost Harvests*, pp. 105, 162, 267.

<sup>29</sup> Elias, *The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest*, pp. 18, 82-3.

<sup>30</sup> Elias, *The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest*, pp. 57-59, 78.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, the comments by A.E. Forget, in Elias, *The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest*, p. 108.

subsidization of the aboriginal population.<sup>32</sup> With aboriginal farming initiatives, it was hoped that by providing aboriginal peoples with farmland, implements, livestock, seed and instruction, they would produce enough food for subsistence and no longer require relief payments. Furthermore, the government assumed that as aboriginal peoples' understanding of farming increased, they would be able to produce a surplus to sell, thus acquiring the capital necessary to fund future expenditures (ending a reliance on government transfers and spurring intensive growth).

Decisions with respect to aboriginal agriculture would have been largely shaped by these two goals. Lands would be allocated most readily to those who increased agricultural productivity with the least amount of subsidization. This is why lands for settlers would have received greater priority than maintaining a "land base" for Aboriginals, since greater productivity could be achieved and less subsidization was required. Non-aboriginal farmers often arrived with some savings or could acquire private financing, and they had already developed the skills, knowledge and values for more intensive agricultural production. The government also would have been reluctant to purchase machinery for aboriginal people if it was not convinced that the expenditure would result in a corresponding increase in productivity and aboriginal "self-reliance". It was somewhat misleading, therefore, for Carter, Elias and Buckley to imply that government officials tried to "prevent" Aboriginals from acquiring

---

<sup>32</sup> See A.E. Forget, cited in Elias, *The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest*, 108; Buckley, *From Wooden...*, p. 35.

machinery.<sup>33</sup> What they appeared to be actually opposed to was government funds being spent on machinery if they believed that these subsidies were unlikely to be offset with productivity gains. This was why, as Buckley pointed out, the government tended to focus its efforts on the aboriginal people that "had the capacity to be farmers and to act like white men". According to Buckley, "those who got loans were usually sons of chiefs, young men who had done well at school or who had shown other evidence of acculturation".<sup>34</sup> And even then, Buckley noted, officials were reluctant to spend government resources on labour-saving devices when many members of the reserves were receiving relief and, according to the philosophy of the poor law, considered "idle".

Furthermore, the government became increasingly reluctant to outlay resources for aboriginal agriculture as the Canadian economy developed and farming became more capital intensive. Immigration into the region meant that agriculture could progress with far less investment from the government, since settlers could often purchase what they needed without government subsidization.

As Elias pointed out, many settlers in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century were "experienced farmers who came fully equipped to establish their operations and go

---

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, Elias, *The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest*, p. 90.

<sup>34</sup> Although Buckley uses the phrase "act like white men", this is a racial interpretation of cultural attributes such as speaking English, being educated, and accumulating savings. Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*, pp. 54-55.

into immediate production", and "the pressure to increase farm size drove the price of lands up until they could be purchased only by well-established and extensively capitalized operators".<sup>35</sup> And as the wealth of the settlers increased, they asserted more control over the government. They began to argue that it was their earnings that enabled the land to be purchased from the Indians, and therefore it was the government's "right and duty" to look after the settlers' interests regardless of the impact on the native population.<sup>36</sup>

These economic and political factors made the government more and more hesitant to devote resources to aboriginal agriculture. This reluctance was intensified further when native groups did not immediately become self-sufficient after receiving inadequate assistance. As Carter, Elias and Buckley correctly pointed out, many government officials and settlers mistakenly thought that aboriginal peoples did not have the capacity to become farmers, regardless of resources that were devoted to native agriculture. A vicious circle developed where insufficient aid resulted in failed harvests, which, in turn, reinforced erroneous racist assumptions that Aboriginals could not become farmers.

But even though these failures were often interpreted in racist terms, it does not make sense for Carter, Elias and Buckley to downplay, and sometimes deny, the cultural

---

<sup>35</sup> Elias, *The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest*, p. 109.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, *Bulletin*, January 17, 1881, cited in Carter, *Lost Harvests*, p. 189.



obstacles to farming that existed within the native population. Although some aboriginal groups were more successful than others depending on their level of development and the economic and political circumstances to which they had to adapt,<sup>37</sup> it is obvious that all native tribes would be disadvantaged in relation to European settlers who had lived in much larger, productive and complex agricultural societies for generations.

More specifically, there were three aspects of life in Europe that made it easier for immigrants to take up agriculture. The first was the more intensive subsistence strategies associated with field agriculture that made larger communities and year-round settlement possible.<sup>38</sup> This required the development of certain cultural and

---

<sup>37</sup> Some groups like the Dakota had been horticulturists at one time, which perhaps explains why Alexander Morris saw the Dakota as "display[ing] a greater aptitude for farming operations than any other of our Indians". Morris, cited in Elias, *The Dakota of the Canadian...*, p. 61. A historical experience with horticulture also might explain why, as the Royal Commission recognizes, some of the most successful efforts occurred amongst those aboriginal groups, like the Iroquois and Chippewa (Ojibwa) in southwestern Ontario. *Final Report 2(1)*, p. 487.

<sup>38</sup> For a discussion of the increases in productivity brought about by more intensive forms of food cultivation see Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel*, pp. 88-89, 109-113; White, *The Evolution of Culture*, pp. 289-90; Boyd and Richerson, *The Origin and Evolution of Cultures*, p. 339; McC. Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society*, p.38. As Diamond explains, "by selecting and growing those few species of plants and animals that we can eat, so that they constitute 90 percent rather than 0.1 percent of the biomass on an acre of land, we obtain far more edible calories per acre. As a result, one acre can feed many more herders and farmers – typically, 10 to 100 times more – than hunter-gatherers. That strength of brute numbers was the first of many military advantages that food-producing tribes gained over hunter-gatherer tribes". Boyd and Richerson argue that the development of agriculture then became compulsory for many groups during the Holocene epoch since "local communities that discover or acquire more intensive subsistence strategies will increase in number and exert competitive pressure on small populations with less intensive strategies". According to Boyd and Richerson, "an agricultural frontier will tend to expand at the expense of hunter-gatherers as rising population densities on the farming side of the frontier motivate pioneers to invest in acquiring land from less-efficient users...subsistence improvement generates a *competitive ratchet* as successively more land-efficient subsistence systems lead to population growth and labor intensification. Locally, hunter-gatherers may win some battles...but in the long run the more intensive strategies will win whatever environments are

social patterns that disciplined people to the type of strategic behaviour oriented to looking after animals and raising crops year after year on the same plot of land in a Canadian farming community. Such a settled and regimented "way of life" did not develop overnight; it gradually evolved in the context of technological and political advancements in European feudalism, where agricultural surpluses were appropriated by landowners, and towns developed in relation to long distance trade and the increasing productivity of the countryside.<sup>39</sup> The skills and attitudes created in this historical process would be especially important for participation in capitalist agriculture, since goods had to be produced competitively in relation to other farmers.

The exploitative character of the feudal mode of production also indicates another "advantage" that was enjoyed by European settlers - the fact that they were being increasingly introduced to relations extending beyond kinship,<sup>40</sup> enabling them to be

---

suitable for their deployment". Boyd and Richerson, *The Origin and Evolution of Cultures*, p. 339. Leslie White also points out that "the hunter or plant gatherer may be able to obtain more food by working longer, but to do this he must go farther afield and therefore spend more and more of his time going to and from his camp, which time and labor are unproductive of food. Moreover, if hunters and gatherers exploit the resources of a locality faster than they are renewed by natural increase, additional time spent in food getting will actually and eventually *reduce* the food supply of the area, decreasing number of calories per man-hour". White, *The Evolution of Culture*, pp. 289-90.

<sup>39</sup> Although Eric Wolf notes that "different areas were integrated into states in markedly different ways and at different times", he also points out that all agricultural development consisted of a "functional division of labor, between cultivators and rulers which we have defined as the hallmark of civilization". Wolf, *Peasants*, pp. 4, 11.

<sup>40</sup> The anthropologist Robert Redfield notes that this was a gradual process that took place between the urban and industrial revolutions. According to Redfield, this meant that "the economic character of the peasant village...combines the primitive brotherhood of the precivilized folk community with the economic nexus characteristic of civilized society. So far as the peasant community faces inward, the relationships that compose it are still personal and familial, but now they are modified by a spirit of pecuniary advantage". He goes on to point out that "this pecuniary spirit contributes to the formation of an added dimension of the peasant's social life: in the peaceful and stable relationships with outsiders.

more quickly integrated into a territory governed by a state.<sup>41</sup> Although peasants were much more socially isolated than wage labourers and commodity producers embedded within the capitalist mode of production, and their relations were still largely determined by customs and tradition, economic and political processes were much more organized than was the case in primitive modes of production.<sup>42</sup> An increased division of labour meant that peasants were required to interact with people not related to themselves, such as blacksmiths, clergy and state officials, forcing them to engage in increasingly cooperative labour processes and complex forms of social organization.<sup>43</sup>

---

The peasant village maintains its local solidarity, its folklike inwardfacingness, but now qualifies the sharp exclusiveness of the primitive settlement with institutionalized forms for admitting strangers. In the idealized typical folk society all members of one's own community are kinsmen; all others are enemies. In some real primitive societies, under original conditions of isolation, this condition is approximated...But in the peasant village there is institutionalized provision for the stranger". Redfield, *The Primitive World and Its Transformations*, p. 33.

<sup>41</sup> For discussions of the development of the peasantry, see Wolf, *Peasants*, pp. 4, 11, 38-40 and Redfield, *The Primitive World and Its Transformations*, pp. 33-36, 40-1, 53. Eric Wolf, for example, points out that "it is the crystallation of executive power which serves to distinguish the primitive from the civilized, rather than whether or not such power controls are located in one kind of place or another. Not the city, but the state is the decisive criterion of civilization and it is the appearance of the state which marks the threshold of transition between food cultivators in general and peasants. Thus it is only when cultivator is integrated into a society with a state – that is, when the cultivator becomes subject to the demands and sanctions of power-holders outside his social stratum – that we can appropriately speak of peasantry". Wolf, *Peasants*, p. 11. Perry Anderson has also argued that, in the case of Western Europe, an "Absolutist State" emerged during the 16<sup>th</sup> Century (before most Europeans immigrated to what is now Canada). According to Anderson, these states 'represented a decisive rupture with the pyramidal, parcellized sovereignty of the medieval social formations, with their estates and liege-systems" and they "introduced standing armies, a permanent bureaucracy, national taxation, a codified law, and the beginnings of a unified market". Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolute State*, pp. 15-17.

<sup>42</sup> One example of this is the peasantry's exposure to writing. As Robert Redfield explains, "the precivilized hunter or villager is preliterate; the peasant is illiterate. The existence of the art of writing has become an element in his mode of life, although he himself perhaps cannot read or write. He must take account of those who can, and things written are meaningful objects in his life". Redfield, *The Primitive World and Its Transformations*, p. 36.

<sup>43</sup>This general development of the peasantry in Medieval Europe has been documented by Eric Wolf. Wolf outlines a general historical process in the development of the peasantry whereby the "growing

Finally, the production of a surplus made it easier for immigrants from Europe to understand another principle necessary for success in capitalist agriculture - saving. As Easterbrook and Aitken explain in the context of the settlement of the St. Lawrence lowlands between 1815-49, three types of immigrants became farmers - those without resources who had to first hire themselves out as labourers to save enough to purchase land, those who possessed a little capital who had to rely on outside income until they could produce a saleable crop, and farmers who possessed considerable capital, enabling them to "either purchase an improved farm at once or else buy a location and pay for having it cleared, so that a cash crop would be obtained within a relatively short time". According to Easterbrook and Aitken, therefore, the amount of capital possessed "determined the rate at which immigrants became farmers".<sup>44</sup>

All these requirements would have disadvantaged the native population in comparison to European immigrants since such economic and political developments had not

---

demands of the tax collector for money required that the [peasants] begin to sell their products for cash, reinforcing a tendency towards specialization in certain products which had high market values". He argues that this resulted in an intracommunity division of labour in Medieval Europe and so "the community contained not only peasants, but also full-time or part-time specialists – a miller, a smith, a herdsman, sometimes a priest" that "were often part-time cultivators, and not distinguished from the remainder of the population by different degrees of ritual pollution or cleanliness". Wolf also points to the peasantry's "periodic encounters in the market place". According to Wolf, "outside the market, each of these communities lives its own life, maintaining its own body of custom; each regards the others as strangers, as members of out-groups in sharp contrast to their own in-group. But the periodic market helps bring these separate units together, with each to some extent dependent upon the specialist activities of the other". Wolf, *Peasants*, pp. 38-40.

<sup>44</sup> Easterbrook and Aitken, *Canadian Economic History*, pp. 274-9.

existed before contact. Although horticulture existed in the case of the Iroquois, this was a much more primitive economic form than European agriculture. No animals had been domesticated, and so the Iroquois were still largely dependent upon the hunting of wild game to survive. Agriculture was far less intensive, since animal power had not been harnessed to pull ploughs, resulting in the planting of seeds and the vacating of settlements to pursue hunting and gathering activities<sup>45</sup> There was also a lack of fertilizers, so, as the Royal Commission itself points out, Iroquoian villages had to be moved every 10 to twenty years when the soil was depleted.<sup>46</sup> As a result, too little of a surplus was produced for classes to form, and small groups of extended families comprised Iroquois villages. They remained kinship oriented in their outlook,<sup>47</sup> instead of being gradually “subject to the demands and sanctions of power-holders outside [their] social stratum” as had occurred in Europe. This especially would have been a problem for capitalist farming, since interrelating with others on an impersonal basis becomes increasingly important when producing for the market. It also results in increasing social complexity, necessitating greater interaction with governmental authorities and institutions. This would be difficult for aboriginal

---

<sup>45</sup> See Wicken and Reid, "An Overview of the Eighteenth Century Treaties Signed Between the Mi'kmaq and Wuastukwiuk Peoples and the English Crown, 1693-1928" and William Fenton, "Northern Iroquoian Cultural Patterns", *Handbook of North American Indians*, Volume 15, p.298 for a discussion of this point.

<sup>46</sup> Final Report, 1, p. 52. The Royal Commission acquired this information from Lewis Henry Morgan's, *League of the Iroquois* (Secaucus, N.J.: The Citadel Press, 1962), book II, chapter VI, pp.313-320.

<sup>47</sup> Morgan, *League of the Ho-de-no sau-nee or Iroquois*, Volume One, pp. 86-7.

peoples brought up in isolated aboriginal communities, who would feel comfortable only when relating to their kin.<sup>48</sup>

Aboriginal circumstances were also different from those of European immigrants because, unlike the latter, they were not uprooted from their traditional social relations. Although aboriginal peoples were removed from their traditional territories and relocated to reserves, aboriginal kinship groupings were kept relatively intact. The provision of welfare on isolated reserves meant that the social structures of these groups could be artificially retained. Even though aboriginal peoples were impoverished and lived in terrible conditions through the period of displacement and assimilation, the provision of basic necessities meant that they were not compelled to enter more developed economic and social relations. This was different from the circumstances in Europe, where those deprived of their livelihood by capitalist developments faced starvation.<sup>49</sup>

All these cultural explanations for the failure of aboriginal farming, however, were largely rejected by Carter, Elias and Buckley. This was because it was assumed that aboriginal *demands* for government assistance to begin farming was somehow synonymous with their *capacity*, at that time, to become successful farmers in the

---

<sup>48</sup> The Royal Commission, for example, cites a government report in 1895 that refers to the need to give aboriginal peoples "courage to compete with the rest of the world". *Final Report*, 1, p. 339, note 33.

<sup>49</sup> In fact, European immigration to North America was caused by the lack of resources provided to support the growing numbers of dispossessed and unemployed people.

capitalist context. There also appeared to be a concern, similar to that was mentioned with respect to political economy vis-à-vis aboriginal peoples in Canada, that pointing to these cultural obstacles would constitute *blaming* aboriginal peoples for their current dependency and marginalization. The result was a mirror-image of this idealistic viewpoint – placing the “blame” on “Whites” or “Europeans” rather than focusing on economic and political requirements that were emerging at the time.

Contrary to the assertions of Carter, Elias and Buckley, however, there is plenty of evidence that there were difficulties in attempting to encourage aboriginal peoples to adopt a settled existence and become more productive in agriculture.<sup>50</sup> There are many documented instances of hunting excursions and traditional gatherings resulting in poor yields or the neglect of harvesting altogether. This, in fact, was one of the major reasons for restrictions on dancing and other festivities and ceremonies. Duncan Campbell Scott, the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs through the 1920s, for example, remarked that, in the case of dancing,

these practices tend to disorganize the efforts which the department is putting forth to make [Aboriginals] self-supporting...you should suppress any dances which cause waste of time, interfere with occupations of Indians, unsettle them for serious work, injure their health or encourage them in sloth and idleness.

---

<sup>50</sup> For discussions of these problems see Leland W. Clark, "The Place of the Metis within the Agricultural Economy of the Red River During the 1840's and 1850's", *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 3(1983), pp. 71-3; Olive Patricia Dickason, *Canada's First Nations* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992), p. 377; I.M. Spry, "The Transition from a Nomadic to a Settled Economy in Western Canada, 1856-96", *Selections of the Royal Society of Canada*, 6 (June 1968), pp. 195-197; Arthur J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), pp. 217-229.

You should dissuade and if possible prevent them from leaving their reserves for the purpose of attending fairs, exhibitions, etc. when their absence will result in their own farming and other interests being neglected.<sup>51</sup>

Although Scott's authoritarian response was to order that these dances be "suppressed", his dictate did indicate how such cultural traditions were making aboriginal farmers less productive than their European counterparts who had already adapted their ceremonies to more intensive agricultural production over several generations.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to cultural features that inhibited productivity, the fact that aboriginal peoples had no historical experience of saving meant that it was difficult for aboriginal farmers to purchase livestock and farm implements. These problems were briefly acknowledged by Buckley when she stated that "...certain aspects of [a hunting and gathering] culture worked against adjustment [to agricultural settlement]" because the "values and practices by which they had always lived and which defined their identity and ordered their society...could not easily be put by to fit the white man's plan, still less so when the people did not understand the plan". Some of the cultural factors that "worked against adjustment" to which Buckley refers include a "deeply ingrained practice of sharing", "a weak sense of the future", and a lack of farming knowledge.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> Scott, cited in Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*, p.44.

<sup>52</sup> Farming celebrations in agricultural societies, for example, generally have celebrations after harvest time.

<sup>53</sup> Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*, pp. 26, 39-40.



The difficulties that hunting and gathering/horticultural cultures faced in making the transition to farming also explains the coercive and paternalistic regulations imposed upon the aboriginal population. Because Carter, Elias, and to some extent Buckley, are inclined to deny that there were cultural obstacles to aboriginal farming, the government restrictions applied to Natives appeared arbitrary, prejudicial and even vindictive.<sup>54</sup> It was assumed that since farming failed for Aboriginals and not for settlers, and because Aboriginals were subjected to restrictions while the settlers were not, it *must* have been the restrictions that caused the failure. But this view does not adequately consider the government's rationale for putting these restrictions in place, and what the consequences would have been if they had *not* been imposed.<sup>55</sup>

According to government sources at the time, these restrictions were necessary to protect aboriginal peoples from unscrupulous non-Aboriginal settlers, and to speed up the civilizing process so that Aboriginals could be more easily assimilated into the emerging capitalist economy and society.<sup>56</sup> The government imposed two kinds of restrictions. The first was oriented towards increasing the agricultural productivity of the native population, while the second attempted to encourage aboriginal peoples to

---

<sup>54</sup> Elias implies that it was simply a way for the government to abstractly "control" aboriginal peoples. *The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest*, pp. 68-9. He does not see the need to search for a material explanation for this control.

<sup>55</sup> A good example of this was the restrictions on the sale of land. As was mentioned earlier, those groups that did not have such restrictions, such as the Metis, lost their land base.

<sup>56</sup> These sources are often referred to by Carter, Elias and Buckley, but it is maintained that the prejudicial attitudes and duplicity of government officials make the truthfulness of their statements questionable. See Carter, *Lost Harvests*, pp. 18-25 for an example of her interpretation of such sources.

save and accumulate wealth (so that government subsidies could be decreased). The former was manifested most clearly in the use of the pass system and restrictions on aboriginal ceremonies, which attempted to stop "idleness" and prevent aboriginal peoples from abandoning their crops for extended periods of time; the latter can be observed in the development of the permit and chit systems that stopped expenditures on unnecessary items such as alcohol. As well, regulations for restricting the sale of reserve lands were imposed to prevent aboriginal lands from being lost to speculators, so that the native population would not become completely indigent and more dependent upon relief.

Therefore, although understandably criticized because they were coercive, inadequately funded, and poorly thought out, policies asserting wardship over the native population were not implemented to cause aboriginal farming to fail; they were rooted in the problems of attempting to instill the principles necessary for the emerging capitalist system within hunting and gathering/horticultural societies. It should be stressed, however, that this analysis of why these restrictions were imposed is not intended to absolve the government of responsibility, or to lay blame at the feet of Aboriginals. It is merely to explain the historical and materialist basis for these restrictions, and how they were rooted in the changing requirements of the Canadian economy. At this period in Canada's economic development, there was no welfare state, or ideas that all human beings should be given the necessary assistance to enable

them to become contributors to society; when it became apparent that it was more cost effective to warehouse aboriginal peoples than to provide the resources necessary for their development, they were largely forgotten and terribly neglected. Helen Buckley was quite right to point out that the government did not supply aboriginal peoples with the resources that they needed since the actions of officials were "shaped more by a wish to cut costs than by any real concern for the people or for what it might take to get them established in an occupation that only a few of them had practised".<sup>57</sup>

At the same time, however, denying the cultural obstacles that prevented native groups from assimilating into modern society without the proper government assistance does not improve our understanding of the roots of aboriginal dependency or aid effective policy development to address it. The analysis of Carter, Elias and Buckley, in fact, refused to accept that a gap in productivity, scale and complexity existed between aboriginal hunter-gatherers/horticulturists and European settlers. As a result, these authors maintained that it was the destruction of aboriginal cultures that caused aboriginal dependency, not the retention of hunting and gathering/horticultural features in the context of an emerging capitalist economy. Buckley, for example, maintained that "any approach based on character and cultural transformation is entirely discredited", since aboriginal culture and traditional social structures were

---

<sup>57</sup> Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*, pp. 35-6.

"just as necessary to them in the new life as it had been in the old".<sup>58</sup> This statement ignored that certain cultural features and social structures were inhibiting aboriginal peoples' success in agricultural developments, problems that also arose in attempts to proletarianize the aboriginal population.

#### AN HISTORICAL AND MATERIALIST ANALYSIS OF THE OBSTACLES TO ABORIGINAL PROLETARIANIZATION

As was mentioned earlier, similar to its analysis of the failure of aboriginal farming, the Royal Commission was intent on showing that the aboriginal participation in early industrial development was not impeded by cultural factors linked to the hunting and gathering/horticultural traditions of the native population. In fact, it was noted that the Royal Commission maintained that aboriginal peoples did participate extensively in a wide range of industrial activities, but that this was thwarted by the dispossession of aboriginal lands and paternalistic government policies.

In attempting to understand aboriginal involvement in early industrial activity, it was necessary to examine the qualitative and quantitative differences in aboriginal peoples' participation rates from their non-Aboriginal counterparts. As was shown above in the discussion of the Royal Commission's historical analysis of mining, forestry and

---

<sup>58</sup> Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*, p. 45.

wildlife harvesting, these specific factors were not analyzed by the Royal Commission, which seems to assume that *any* participation by aboriginal peoples, no matter how marginal, was an indication that they "were successfully making the transition from a traditional to a 'modern' economy". Such a circumstance, of course, could be due to a few exceptional cases, and might be contrary to the experiences of the majority of aboriginal peoples. Also, aboriginal participation could be concentrated in those occupations that had characteristics resembling the native population's "traditional economy", while their transition to a more "'modern' [i.e. industrial] economy" was being made less "successfully".

To get a better grasp of aboriginal participation in early industrial development, the case that the Royal Commission focused on most, British Columbia, will be examined in more detail. Determining the participation rates of aboriginal peoples in British Columbia's early history, however, is difficult because records are fragmented and incomplete. Although there is a major work by Rolf Knight that has attempted to document this participation from 1858 to 1930, his assertions about the significance of native labour tend to be anecdotal, often resulting in unsupported generalizations or questionable inferences. He writes whole chapters describing the extensive character of aboriginal participation with hardly any documentation. Comparisons between aboriginal and non-aboriginal workers are few and far between, sole examples are

used to make far-reaching claims<sup>59</sup> and words such as "some", "many", and "most" describe native participation in lieu of any kind of quantitative analysis. Another far less vague and speculative overview of aboriginal participation in British Columbia's economy has been recently undertaken by John Lutz.<sup>60</sup> According to Lutz, aboriginal peoples were central to the development of industrial capitalism in British Columbia's early history. In his view, their involvement was essential to capitalist development until about 1884, when increasing settlement meant that aboriginal peoples had become a minority in the province.<sup>61</sup> In contrast to Lutz, Knight, like the Royal Commission, identifies 1930 as the point when aboriginal participation precipitously declined.<sup>62</sup> This occurred, in Knight's opinion, when the depression brought an end to the local and small-scale ventures Natives had developed during the 1800s.<sup>63</sup>

As well as having a high rate of participation in British Columbia's early economic development, Knight and Lutz maintain that aboriginal peoples worked in a wide

---

<sup>59</sup> To support his argument that "reserve enterprises and local Indian businesses were not uncommon 80 to 100 years ago", for instance, Knight gives the example of "one village in the 1870s [that] had its own sawmill, trading schooner, tannery and cobbler shop, spinning and weaving shop, glass works and brick kiln, blacksmith and hardware shop, trading post, and other enterprises". Knight, *Indians at Work* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1996), p. 13.

<sup>60</sup> John Lutz, "After the Fur Trade: the Aboriginal Labouring Class of British Columbia, 1849-90".

<sup>61</sup> Lutz, "After the Fur Trade", pp. 92-3.

<sup>62</sup> Most analysts of aboriginal participation in British Columbia's economy maintain that the 1920s and 1930s were the period during which aboriginal participation in the fishing and canning industries declined. For a discussion of this point see High, "Native Wage Labour...", pp. 252, 261-2.

<sup>63</sup> Knight, *Indians at Work* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1996), p. 4; see also High, "Native Wage Labour", p. 254 for a discussion of this point.

range of occupations, including coal mining, sawmilling, fishing, and canning.<sup>64</sup> Other forms of labour documented include aboriginal peoples' service to settlers and Hudson's Bay Company posts, and their employment as guides, freighters and porters,<sup>65</sup> loggers, longshoremen and railway maintenance workers. Knight also devotes chapters to aboriginal farming/ranching and the production of ethnographic pieces for museums and private collections in the nineteenth century.<sup>66</sup> This is in contrast to Lutz who concludes that by 1891 the native participation was largely confined to fishing, canning and agriculture.<sup>67</sup>

After World War II, aboriginal participation became limited to even fewer occupations, and it is estimated that more than two-thirds of the aboriginal workforce was in only two industries - fishing and logging/sawmilling, while farming, trapping, longshoring, railway maintenance and construction made up the remainder of their employment. At this point, Aboriginals were also dependent on welfare and other subsidies from the Indian Affairs branch and other government agencies. It is maintained that by far the most significant industry of all, however, was the processing and catching of fish, and in the 1950s it was estimated that "perhaps as many as

---

<sup>64</sup> Lutz, "After the Fur Trade", p. 92. McDonald and Burrows also maintain this for particular groups and regions.

<sup>65</sup> McDonald, "Images of the Nineteenth Century Economy of the Tsimshian", pp. 44-5.

<sup>66</sup> Knight, *Indians at Work*, (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1996), pp. 135-166-178.

<sup>67</sup> Lutz, "After the Fur Trade", p. 92.

10,000 [Aboriginals] derive their livelihood from fishing and allied occupations, and they have become a vital and necessary part of the labour force in that industry".<sup>68</sup>

As well as working in fewer industries than Non-Aboriginals, aboriginal employment in the post-war era in British Columbia also differed in that it tended to be concentrated in primary, rather than secondary or tertiary, sectors of production and that Natives were being increasingly displaced from these industries. In the forest industry during the 1950s, for example, few aboriginal peoples were employed except in logging and seasonal "rough" sawmilling, and none had jobs in the pulp and paper industry, even though some of the mills were close to large native communities.<sup>69</sup> Aboriginals also tended to be employed in work that was mostly periodic and seasonal,<sup>70</sup> and they were becoming a marginal part of the labour force confined to reserves, dependent upon government relief, and employed only in unskilled jobs avoided by Non-Aboriginals.<sup>71</sup> It was these circumstances that led Mark Nagler to comment in the 1970s about the "interest and concern...[that Aboriginals] are not moving into the American economic system in the same way or on equal terms as other citizens...". He observed that this increasing displacement and marginalization had created a "culture of poverty" within the aboriginal population, where they were

---

<sup>68</sup> Gladstone, "Native Indians...", pp. 158-9; see also Jamieson, "Native Indians...", pp. 144, 146.

<sup>69</sup> Jamieson, "Native Indians and the Trade Union Movement", pp. 144-45, 151.

<sup>70</sup> Nagler, "Minority Values and Economic Achievement: the Case of the North American Indian", p. 135.

<sup>71</sup> Gladstone, "Native Indians and the Fishing Industry of British Columbia", p. 157.



"not integrated with the major institutions of society", leading them to have feelings of powerlessness and to be hostile towards non-aboriginal authorities.<sup>72</sup>

The high rates of economic deprivation and dependency within the aboriginal population, especially in the twentieth century, have been attributed both to increasing competition from non-aboriginal labour and developments within the capitalist economy itself. Competition from Non-Aboriginals has been shown to have an effect in that aboriginal peoples' position in the labour force was most prominent in periods when there was a shortage of labour - i.e. before 1884 and during the first and second world wars.<sup>73</sup> During World War II, for example, the Japanese were interned, removing them from the fishing industry. This, along with the transfer of a number of confiscated Japanese fishing boats to aboriginal fisherman, enabled them to increase their prominence in the fishing industry during this period.<sup>74</sup>

In addition to increasing competition from Non-Aboriginals, developments within the capitalist economy itself also had a negative impact on native participation in British Columbia's labour force. As has been explained in earlier chapters, the competitive market pressures in capitalism make it necessary to constantly revolutionize the forces

---

<sup>72</sup> Nagler, "Minority Values and Economic Achievement", pp. 137-8, 141. Nagler's point about the "poverty cycle" was also made by H.B. Hawthorn et al, *Indians of British Columbia* (Vancouver, 1955), pp. 242-3.

<sup>73</sup> Lutz, "After the Fur Trade"; Gladstone, "Native Indians and the Fishing Industry of British Columbia", pp. 167, 169.

<sup>74</sup> Gladstone, "Native Indians...", p.173.

of production and increase labour productivity. In British Columbia, this was shown by larger, more capital intensive and mechanized plants, as well as the movement of processing facilities to urban areas.<sup>75</sup> Early on, resource industries tended to be "both labour extensive and able to utilize labour without much formal training".<sup>76</sup> With mechanization, centralization and increasing capital intensity, however, came the requirement for higher skill levels and a preference for stable, year round work, rather than employment using casual migrants.<sup>77</sup>

Although increasing labour market competitiveness and industrial development undoubtedly is related to decreasing aboriginal participation in British Columbia's workforce, acknowledging these factors does not explain *why* aboriginal peoples were impacted disproportionately in relationship to other groups. In other words, what was it about aboriginal circumstances that specifically led to native dependency and marginalization in the later stages of capitalism? Why were aboriginal peoples unable to compete with non-aboriginal workers and what made them less able to adapt to capitalist demands for increasing productivity? In works examining the history of

---

<sup>75</sup> Jamieson, "Native Indians and the Trade Union Movement", p. 143.

<sup>76</sup> Knight, *Indians at Work* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1996), p. 124; for a similar point see McDonald, "Images...", p. 49.

<sup>77</sup> Nagler, "Minority Values and Economic Achievement", p. 132; Jamieson, "Native Indians...", p. 143.

aboriginal labour in British Columbia, essentially three explanations are offered - racist attitudes of employers, restrictive government policies, and cultural factors.<sup>78</sup>

Explanations relying on the first two factors - racist attitudes and faulty government policies - are the most common in the literature today.<sup>79</sup> These two explanations by themselves, however, are inadequate because they do not explain why other groups, who were also victims of racism and discriminatory government actions, did not become similarly dependent and marginalized. Asiatic and black workers in British Columbia, for example, were also regarded as being racially inferior and often prevented from living in certain areas or participating in political activities. As was mentioned earlier, the Japanese were heavily discriminated against in the fishing industry. Later, they were also segregated from Canadian society in internment camps and had their property confiscated, but after World War II they assimilated into mainstream Canadian society even though it is claimed that the Japanese were located below Aboriginals in the racial hierarchy.<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup>For arguments about restrictive government policies, see Michael Kew, "Making Indians"; See also Lutz, *The White Problem*, Paper presented to the 1994 Canadian Historical Association meeting, p. 5, cited in High, "Native Wage Labour ...", p. 258. Gladstone adopts all three explanations when he maintains that aboriginal dependency and marginalization occurred "because of racial discrimination, lack of training, and inability to break family and community ties, they find it difficult to enter other occupations". Gladstone, "Native Indians...", pp. 160-1. For examples of these explanations see Nagler, "Minority Values and Economic Achievement", pp. 132-3.

<sup>79</sup> See, for example, *Final Report*, 2, pp. 778, 933-39, 946; 3, 301; 4, 55; 5, 99.

<sup>80</sup> Newell, *Tangled Webs of History*, p. 120.

Focusing on racist attitudes and flawed government policies also does not examine the extent to which both are often a response to cultural factors. Nagler, for example, points to the fact that native people lack values such as "punctuality, saving, future orientation, and the work ethic", and that "these factors combined with prejudice have been instrumental in effecting their low socio-economic position". But the prejudice to which Nagler refers is inseparable from the cultural values that he claims act to "maintain a vast separation between Indians and the rest of North American society".<sup>81</sup> The relationship between prejudicial attitudes and the cultural characteristics of aboriginal peoples can be seen in an employer survey cited by Nagler on the "negative characteristics of Indian workers". Although some comments clearly indicated the existence of racist attitudes towards Aboriginals, many others referred to cultural problems such as unreliability, communication difficulties, and a lack of initiative to go beyond a defined job.<sup>82</sup>

A similar relationship to cultural factors can be seen in the restrictions that the government imposed. As with its efforts to increase agricultural productivity in aboriginal communities, the government also restricted a number of native activities to more easily integrate Aboriginals into the industrial workforce. Missionaries, for example, were encouraged to settle in aboriginal communities so as to civilize the

---

<sup>81</sup> Nagler, "Minority Values and Economic Achievement", p. 134.

<sup>82</sup> Nagler, "Minority Values and Economic Achievement", p. 139.

native population and make them more productive.<sup>83</sup> It is for this reason that the missions were most prominent between 1890 and the First World War.<sup>84</sup> Improving "industriousness" (i.e. productivity) was also one of the reasons why the potlatch was banned. As Lutz explains, the potlatch "was inconsistent with the 'stable' habits of industry that both missionaries and government agents saw as essential to the development of a Christian capitalist society". He points out that "since the seasonal cycle kept them mobile and away from schools and churches, missionaries and the Indian agents argued that it kept aboriginal people poor and mitigated against the accumulation of individual dwellings, land holdings, and private property".<sup>85</sup> It was no accident, according to Lutz, that restrictions on the potlatch were imposed in 1884. He argues that at this time the potlatch was interfering with capitalist development since the economy was increasingly demanding year-round employment.<sup>86</sup>

It is an examination of the cultural features of the remnants of hunting and gathering/horticultural societies, and how they conflict with capitalist processes aimed at increasing the productivity of labour, in fact, that offers the primary explanation for the increasing dependency and impoverishment of the native population throughout the twentieth century. Essentially, there are two capitalist developments that led to native marginalization from commodity production and wage labour. The first

---

<sup>83</sup> Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1977), pp. 68-9.

<sup>84</sup> Knight, *Indians at Work* (Vancouver, New Star Books, 1996), p. 90.

<sup>85</sup> Lutz, "After the Fur Trade...", p. 91.

<sup>86</sup> Lutz, "After the Fur Trade...", pp. 91-2.

concerns the increasing capital intensity of the economy, while the second relates to the necessity to construct a stable, educated and disciplined labour force to improve productivity.

Increasing capital intensity displaced native commodity producers because they were unable to afford the more technologically advanced machinery needed to compete with other enterprises.<sup>87</sup> This has been attributed in part to the cultural features, rooted in subsistence practices, which discourage native cultures from saving economic surpluses in the form of money or luxury goods. One factor that is referred to in the literature is that hunter gatherers tend to work until they receive enough money to live on for a while, and then quit until the money is spent.<sup>88</sup> Another is the cultural feature of kinship reciprocity that permeates aboriginal societies so that any money accumulated often would be distributed in "giveaways". Lutz, for example, documents the huge increases in the number of blankets that were distributed in potlatches over a 100-year period.<sup>89</sup> He also quotes an Indian Agent for the Fraser Valley who remarks that "the Indians generally have views peculiar to the country as to the value of money" because one band had applied for assistance when they had just

---

<sup>87</sup>For an example of this with respect to the fishing industry, see Nagler, "Minority Values...", p. 149; and Jamieson, "Native Indians...", p. 154. James McDonald also notes that a similar process occurred in the freighting industry, when heavily capitalized forms of transport put labour-intensive aboriginal operations out of business. McDonald, "Images of the Nineteenth Century Economy of the Tsimshian", p. 45.

<sup>88</sup> George Grant, cited in Lutz, "After the Fur Trade", p. 89.

<sup>89</sup> He notes that 320 were given away between 1829 and 1848 and 33,000 in 1930-49. Lutz, "After the Fur Trade", p. 90.

held a potlatch where \$700 "of their earnings as labourers, fishermen and hunters" had been used to distribute gifts to their friends.<sup>90</sup>

The obstacles to saving economic surpluses within subsistence cultures were only part of the problem, however. This can be illustrated by the case of the fishing industry in British Columbia. Although fishing was influenced by the same capitalist imperatives that resulted in greater capital intensity and technical improvements,<sup>91</sup> it has been noted previously that this was one of the industries in which aboriginal peoples were the *most* successful. This has been attributed to the fact that it was more consistent with the traditional knowledge, customs and techniques of aboriginal peoples, enabling them to adjust more easily to an industry that was also experiencing rapid technological change.<sup>92</sup>

What still needs to be clarified, however, are the specific characteristics of the fishing sector that enabled it to accommodate these traditions. Although it is true that aboriginal peoples engaged in fishing before contact, this activity was very different from that which was required by capitalism. Knight explains that early commercial fishing largely involved gillnetting on river estuaries, rather than the indigenous methods "involving weirs and fish traps, dip nets and drag nets, and spearing". He

---

<sup>90</sup> Lenihan, cited in Lutz, "After the Fur Trade", p. 88.

<sup>91</sup> Gladstone, "Native Indians and the Fishing Industry of British Columbia", p. 174.

<sup>92</sup> Knight, *Indians at Work* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1996), p. 10; and Jamieson, "Native Indians...", p. 146; Gladstone, "Native Indians...", p. 157.

also points out that "the gear, the methods, the knowledge and the context of commercial fishing were novel" and fishing vessels had changed dramatically, from dugout canoes to planked cannery boats with gas engines.<sup>93</sup>

Aboriginal participation in commercial fishing, in fact, was not so much due to its continuity with pre-contact knowledge or technology, but in its ability to mesh with the wider patterns of certain hunting and gathering cultural features. Fishing was similar to the economic activities engaged in during the mercantile period, where productivity could be increased through extensive development. Economic activities relating to industrialization, on the other hand, required more intensive developments and a transformation of cultural patterns to ensure increasing productivity. More specifically, these changes in production required the interaction with others on a basis other than kinship, the more disciplined practice of working "by the clock", and the development of formalized and decontextualized forms of instruction needed for acquiring skills such as literacy and mathematics. All these factors tended to disadvantage aboriginal people who retained attitudes and values associated with their hunting and gathering traditions.

The dispersal and migratory nature of fish, for example, meant that aboriginal fishermen could continue to live in their villages no matter how mechanized the

---

<sup>93</sup> Knight, *Indians at Work* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1996), p. 9.



industry. This meant that fishing avoided one of the main "cultural barriers to industrialization among [aboriginal peoples]" identified by Jamieson - "emotional ties to village and kinship groups", as well as "customary or traditional participation in tribal ceremonies and social activities..."<sup>94</sup> – enabling aboriginal peoples to be more successful at fishing than other economic activities. Fishing was very different from these other activities, which required aboriginal peoples to leave their traditional territories and integrate into a more complex nation-state and interact with strangers. This requirement was not as prominent in early stages of capitalist development that tended to be paternalistic, where employers provided the necessities of survival to their employees and organized their daily lives.<sup>95</sup> Various ethnic groups - Europeans, Chinese, Japanese, and Natives - were also segregated into different accommodations, making cross-cultural interaction less of a necessity.<sup>96</sup> As capitalism progressed and larger urban centres formed, however, employers would come to be concerned with their workers only during their time on the shop floor; workers were now responsible for obtaining what they needed for sustenance themselves. A more formal education and familiarity with the English language would also be becoming necessary qualifications at this point, so that large numbers of people could relate to one another,

---

<sup>94</sup> Jamieson, "Native Indians...", p. 145. The reluctance to leave their traditional territories and kinship relations is also noted in Nagler, "Minority Values...", p. 138 and by the aboriginal leader George Manuel, cited in *Final Report* (2(1), p. 487.

<sup>95</sup> See Knight, *Indians at Work* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1996), p. 10 for a discussion of this with respect to the canning industry.

<sup>96</sup> Muszynski, *Cheap Wage Labour*, p.7.

coordinate their activities, and live under one law.<sup>97</sup> This was very different from the 1800s, when it is reported that Chinook - a mixture of aboriginal languages, French and English - was the lingua franca of isolated outposts, and laws and regulations were just beginning to be established and enforced.<sup>98</sup>

As will be discussed further in Chapter Nine, the kinship orientation of aboriginal culture continues to inhibit aboriginal participation in wage labour.<sup>99</sup> Cooperative work with others outside of their kinship group is difficult for people who place a strong emphasis on the value of tribal loyalties. Aboriginal people feel uncomfortable when they must leave their communities to look for work or to get an education, even though there are few opportunities on reserves and late capitalism requires that workers become increasingly mobile.<sup>100</sup> As Daniel Ashini, the Vice-President of the Innu Nation points out

---

<sup>97</sup> Gladstone notes, for example, that fishing regulations posed difficulties for aboriginal peoples. He points out that "they were confronted with a maze of conservation laws and regulations that were difficult to understand, let alone obey". Gladstone, "Native Indians and the Fishing Industry of British Columbia", p. 159.

<sup>98</sup> Lutz, "After the Fur Trade", p. 82. Robin Fisher points out that in the early history of what became British Columbia, the first Governor (Douglas) made it a policy not to "interfere in conflicts between Indians", including the massacre of the Koskimo Indians by another tribe. Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, pp. 56-7.

<sup>99</sup> Rolf Knight, for example, notes that "the pervasive and durable feature of native Indian workers was their identification, first and foremost, as members of particular 'tribal' communities". Knight, *Indians at Work* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1978), p. 73. The kinship-oriented character of aboriginal culture is also maintained to be a "cultural barrier to employment" by John Loxley. Loxley, "The Great Northern Plan", p.159. The Royal Commission also recognizes that in aboriginal hunting camps "the family was the all-purpose mediator, teaching its members how to understand and respond to the world at large and interpreting to the community the contribution each member had to offer". *Final Report*, 5, p. 16.

<sup>100</sup>See R. Quinn Duffy, *The Road to Nunavut: The Progress of the Eastern Arctic Inuit since the Second World War* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), p. 158 for a discussion of this problem.

wages are not the Innu way of life. Most jobs are incompatible with life on the land, with serious hunting. Jobs separate people. At first there were 22 Innu people employed on the exploration program around Voisey's Bay. But only three are still working. The other 19 quit because it drove them crazy to be separated so long from their families and communities. It would be the same if Innu started to be miners.<sup>101</sup>

As well as the transition of economic activity from outlying areas to urban centres, the development of capitalism required a regularization of work that was foreign to hunting and gathering societies. This was not too much of a problem during the beginning of industrialization, since early resource industries tended to be seasonal and aboriginal groups could incorporate employment with their hunting, gathering and ceremonial activities.<sup>102</sup> In the case of coal mining, in fact, production was regularly interrupted during the 1850s because of seasonal fishing, potlatches or illness, which led the Governor of British Columbia of the time to argue that miners must become independent of Aboriginals to prevent their work from being "subject to continual stoppage".<sup>103</sup> With the development of capitalism, however, a stable, year-round supply of labour was required, resulting in the increasing marginalization of those native groups that continued with their traditional practices.<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>101</sup>Daniel Ashini, cited in Janet Somerville, "The Innu, the Inuit and Inco: can their cultures co-exist?", *Catholic New Times*, 21(12) June 29, 1997 pp. 1,10.

<sup>102</sup> Knight, *Indians at Work* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1996), pp. 124-5; Lutz, "After the Fur Trade", p. 74.

<sup>103</sup> Lutz, "After the Fur Trade", p. 76.

<sup>104</sup> Lutz, "After the Fur Trade, p. 91.

In addition to the requirement for year-round, regular employment, later stages of capitalist development also imposed more regimented work routines.<sup>105</sup> Such routines are inconsistent with various tribal values, attitudes and practices linked to subsistence activities, which tend to be task and present oriented, resulting in difficulties "working by the clock".<sup>106</sup> As a result, it is common to hear claims about aboriginal peoples' "lacking industriousness" or being "notoriously undependable and exasperating".<sup>107</sup> This also explains aboriginal peoples' apparent "preference...for seasonal outdoor work rather than indoor jobs in factories, stores or offices".<sup>108</sup> As Lutz points out, "the fact that aboriginal people...chose when they would both enter and leave the labour force was a source of constant frustration to white employers" and "probably accounts for the schizophrenic comments of white employers who spoke about them as 'indispensable' while condemning their 'unreliability' and 'laziness'".<sup>109</sup>

All of these factors made labour and commodity production after the 1930s more alienating and difficult for natives still immersed in a subsistence and tribal culture,

---

<sup>105</sup> Lutz, "After the Fur Trade", p. 83; Nagler, "Minority Values and Educational Achievement", p. 138.

<sup>106</sup> These problems were not as prevalent in the early stages of B.C.'s industrialization because piecework, not working by the clock, was the dominant form of remuneration in many industries. In the case of early coal mining, see Lutz, "After the Fur Trade", p. 76 and canneries and logging, Knight, *Indians at Work* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1996), p. 341, note 8.

<sup>107</sup> Governor Douglas, cited in Lutz, "After the Fur Trade", p. 73; see also D.D. Calvin, *A Saga of the St. Lawrence* (Toronto, 1945), pp. 77-82, in Pentland, *Labour and Capital in Canada*, p. 34. Lutz also documents a case of a mill being shut down for several days because of a poker game. Lutz, "After the Fur Trade", p. 79.

<sup>108</sup> Jamieson, "Native Indians...", p. 145; see also Pentland, *Labour and Capital in Canada*, pp. 178-9 for a discussion of this point with respect to the particular requirements of early natural resource industries..

<sup>109</sup> Lutz, "After the Fur Trade", p. 91.

leading them to become more marginal during this period than in earlier and less productive stages of capitalism. It is not surprising, therefore, that aboriginal participation would be affected by the increasing population of settlers, whose cultural prerequisites and greater experience in commercial pursuits would lead them to compete more effectively than native producers.<sup>110</sup>

It is important to stress that this problem with adjusting to the disciplines of industrialization has nothing to do with race, but was a problem that all cultures have faced in the transition to capitalism. Regular work habits, which seem so self-evident today, took a lot of getting used to. In fact, for the vast majority of humanity's history, labour was directed towards the completion of a task. With wage labour, workers were expected to engage in continual production, regardless of the number of tasks completed, for the amount of time that they had sold their labour. This necessitated a dramatic change in the way people related to the labour process. As the historian Paul Phillips points out, this change, which occurred in the development of the capitalist labour market, "required a remaking of the behaviour and attitudes of the workers themselves, a remaking that constituted a cultural as well as an economic transformation - a replacement of the habits of irregularity, ill-discipline and sloth and a preoccupation with the immediate, with habits of punctuality, regularity and order

---

<sup>110</sup>Gladstone, "Native Indians...", p. 159; Lutz, "After the Fur Trade", p. 77.

and a longer-term view, all of which were necessary to the working of an emerging capitalist order with its new scientific technology".<sup>111</sup>

E.P. Thompson, the British labour historian, has described this transformation in England during the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The competitive, profit-driven character of capitalism demanded that previous work patterns be transformed. A greater division of labour meant that that the "task orientation" of the guilds or cottage industries had to be replaced with working by the clock. As Thompson explains, "attention to time in labour depends in large degree upon the need for the synchronization of labour. But in so far as manufacturing industry remained conducted upon a domestic or small workshop scale without intricate subdivision of processes, the degree of synchronization demanded was slight, and task-orientation was still prevalent".<sup>112</sup> But when labour was paid by the hour, and not by the task (i.e. piecework), workers' "submission to more exacting labour discipline"<sup>113</sup> was required. According to Thompson, "in mature capitalist society all time must be consumed, marketed, put to use; it is offensive for the labour force merely to 'pass the time'".<sup>114</sup> Thompson also points out that working by the clock brought about a separation of "work and life", unlike other labour processes where "social intercourse and labour are intermingled -

---

<sup>111</sup> Paul Phillips, "Introduction", in H. Clare Pentland, *Labour and Capital in Canada 1650-1850* (Toronto: Lorimer, 1981), pp.xv-xvi.

<sup>112</sup> E.P.Thompson, "Time Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism", *Past and Present*, 38 (1967), pp. 70-1.

<sup>113</sup> Thompson, "Time Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism", p. 78.

<sup>114</sup> Thompson, "Time Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism", pp. 90-1.

the working-day lengthens or contracts according to the task - and there is no great sense of conflict between labour and 'passing the time of day'.<sup>115</sup> It also developed alongside the requirement that workers show up for work continuously for a pre-determined number of hours and days per week, which was very different from work in pre-capitalist societies where the "pattern was one of alternate bouts of intense labour and idleness"<sup>116</sup> and "the irregular working rhythm is commonly associated with heavy week-end drinking" and absences because of fairs, wakes and other celebrations.<sup>117</sup>

These problems encountered by all people as they gradually became accustomed to the alienating disciplines of capitalist wage labour, however, have been much more pronounced and long lasting with the indigenous populations in the industrialized world. This is because, unlike other areas, where the transition was being made by the peasantry and craft workers, aboriginal cultures had not progressed into indentured or compensated labour when capitalism was thrust upon them. Working as exploited producers or producing goods for exchange, was completely unknown to them. As a result, they have great difficulties adapting to the fundamental principle of participation in a capitalist labour force - the sale of labour as a commodity, which results in workers being alienated from the products that they produce. This is a

---

<sup>115</sup> Thompson, "Time Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism", p. 60.

<sup>116</sup> Thompson, "Time Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism", p. 73.

<sup>117</sup> Thompson, "Time Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism", p. 76.

fundamental transition for people used to making "things" that, for the most part, were possessed and used by the maker.

Hunters and gatherers and horticultural societies are also characterized by the fact that they exert much less control over nature than was the case for peasants or craft workers. A lack of surplus means that once a requirement is met, the fruits of that labour are consumed or used, and the effort is repeated only when the need arises and natural circumstances permit. This is the reason behind anthropologists' conclusions that "hunter-gatherers focus on the present. People make decisions based on what they can find, kill, or gather now, not at some later time or as a result of long-term strategic planning".<sup>118</sup>

Carried into the disciplines of the modern workplace, this results in high rates of tardiness and absenteeism. Often referred to as "unreliability",<sup>119</sup> or by euphemisms such as "doing things when the time is right" or "Indian time",<sup>120</sup> this phenomenon is

---

<sup>118</sup> Brody, *The Other Side of Eden*, p.133.

<sup>119</sup> For references to this problem see Duffy, *The Road to Nunavut*, pp. 158, 161, 176; Nelson H.H. Graburn, *Eskimos without Igloos: Social and Economic Development in Sugluk* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), pp. 157, 206; James Burke, *Paper Tomahawks*, pp. 18, 66.

<sup>120</sup> The Royal Commission not once mentions the problem of tardiness or absenteeism in its Final Report, but cites the Mohawk psychiatrist Clare Brant as stating that "Doing things 'when the time is right' rather than by the clock" is a trait of native culture (*Final Report*, 1, p.653). Such a statement ignores that, in modes of production with coordinated labour, "doing things when the time is right" is working "by the clock". Despite the reluctance of the Royal Commission to recognize this problem, it is often alluded to in its hearings. Although a few testimonials at the Royal Commission's public hearings refute the existence of "Indian time" as a "myth" or a stereotype, (Everett Lambert, public hearings, Edmonton, 92-06-11; Anick Riverin, Montreal, 93-11-30, p. 664; Trisha Janvier, Lethbridge, Alberta, 93-05-25, p.13-14), many other participants recognize difficulties in "working by the clock" as a



explained by anthropologist Hugh Brody thusly: "the hunters want to go hunting; gatherers like to gather. Hunter-gatherers tend not to plan and manage surplus. They need food or money now, not in several weeks' time. In the modern world, the hunter-gatherer often appears to be restless as well as poor".<sup>121</sup>

Besides the irregularity and tribal character of a hunting and gathering/horticultural existence, the form of learning in aboriginal societies also impedes their transition to wage labour.<sup>122</sup> Unlike modern cultures, where formalized and decontextualized educational methods have evolved alongside the development of literacy, mathematics and increasing social complexity,<sup>123</sup> aboriginal people learn by watching others in the

---

common characteristic of events involving aboriginal peoples. See, for example, Elijah Harper, Public Hearings, Winnipeg, 92-04-23; Wilson Okeymaw, Public Hearings, Hobemma, 92-06-10; Georges Erasmus, Halifax, 92-11-04; Linberg Louttit, Timmins, Ontario, 92-11-05, p.214; Sarah Melvin, Sioux Lookout, 92-12-01, p.209; Rene Dussault, Val D'Or, Quebec, 92-12-01, p.476; Alma Ranson, Akwesasne, Ontario, 93-05-04, p.247; Stan Lawlor, North Bay, Ontario, 93-05-11, p.4; Walter Stonechild, Regina, saskatchewan, 93-05-11, p.363; Gerri Ense, Native Skills Centre, Toronto, 92-11-02, p.166. The most candid of the participants was Patsy Paul Martin of the Millbrook Learning Centre. Martin explains that tardiness is a major problem with educational programs. According to Martin, "we go by Indian time and it's very hard when you have a program on the reserve and everybody's got this attitude that we function on Indian time. It's unfortunate and we try to remedy that and try to make people responsible that we are accountable to whatever program that we are instilled in. Attendance itself creates a barrier because there are so many things that happen throughout the school year that, you know, we have to take part in. I, myself, as the director, have to be--like I feel I have--as a Native person I have to be involved in funerals. I have to be involved in important events such as this today and, you know, then I'm absent from duties as a director, so that creates a barrier to me" (Patsy Paul-Martin, Millbrook Native Learning Centre, 92-11-04, p.302). All testimonials are available on the CD-ROM, *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>121</sup> Brody, *The Other Side of Eden*, p.295.

<sup>122</sup> This difference is described by the Royal Commission as "teaching by modelling rather than shaping (direct instruction)". *Final Report*, 1, p.350, 653.

<sup>123</sup> The less abstract forms of communication associated with preliterate languages are, albeit only implicitly, recognized by the Royal Commission when it maintains that this communication "requires personal contact" and takes place "in a context that is shared by speaker and listener" so that "many of the spaces in the verbal content can be filled in by the context". It is even argued that aboriginal peoples "need to walk on the land in order to know it" and that this is "a different approach to

group.<sup>124</sup> It is considered offensive, in fact, for one aboriginal person to tell someone else what to do.<sup>125</sup>

In fact, many native children growing up in isolated communities live in a relatively unstructured environment where waking up and going to sleep at regular hours, having a quiet area to complete homework, or even seeing the presence of books or other reading materials at home is not part of their life experience.<sup>126</sup> As an editorial in a northern newspaper explains, "the practise of early rising to a schedule is a cultural characteristic of Europeans, believed necessary for making money and getting a job done. In the North, less than 100 years ago, waking when necessary was not a problem but it was not necessary to wake up at 7:00 every morning...The weather, seasons and animals ruled, so time management is a relatively new tradition for the North".<sup>127</sup> The retention of such traditional practices, according to another editorial, is why far more

---

knowledge than the one-dimensional, literate approach to knowing. Persons schooled in a literate culture are accustomed to having all the context they need to understand a communication embedded in the text before them. This is partly what is meant by 'clear writing', which is urged upon children as soon as they begin communicating practical or academic content. Persons taught to use all their senses to absorb every clue to interpreting a complex, dynamic reality - may well smile at the illusion that words alone, stripped of complementary sound and colour and texture, can convey meaning adequately" (*Final Report*, 1, pp.622-3).

<sup>124</sup> Margaret Mead, *Continuities in Cultural Evolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964); and J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

<sup>125</sup> C.C. Brant, a Mohawk psychologist, refers to this as the "ethic of non-interference" that is common in aboriginal culture. For a further discussion see Brant, "Native Ethics and rules of behaviour", *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 35(6), August 1990, pp. 534-47.

<sup>126</sup> The problems of "lack of supervision" and neglect were also identified by government authorities in the late 1960s and early 1970s. See *Final Report*, 1, p. 349, notes 99-102.

<sup>127</sup> "Time is a culture thing", editorial, *Northern News Services Online*, Monday, September 4, 2000, ([http://www.nnsl.com/frames/newspapers/2000-09/sep4\\_00edit.html](http://www.nnsl.com/frames/newspapers/2000-09/sep4_00edit.html)).

non-Inuit graduate from high school.<sup>128</sup> The Royal Commission quotes testimonials that state that the teaching of abstract principles and the disciplines required to develop literacy and mathematical skills is a form of "cognitive imperialism".<sup>129</sup> There does not seem to be much awareness that while "looking, listening and learning" worked in the context of the simple forms of organization found in kinship groups,<sup>130</sup> retaining this method today leads to a resistance to following instructions, causing problems for Aboriginals in modern work environments.<sup>131</sup>

The continuance of aboriginal peoples' traditional social structures and economic practices, in fact, is part of the reason why the Canadian state encouraged missionary

---

<sup>128</sup>In this editorial, it is maintained that "Non-Inuit have had the necessary cultural tools handed down to them over generations to succeed in school. Get up, go to class on time, do your homework, sit still, don't talk unless teacher says so. It's a regimen so rooted in non-Inuit culture it is almost instinctive. That's why the number of non-Inuit graduates far exceeds the Inuit graduates" ("Rethink scholarship rejection", Editorial, *Northern News Services Online*, Friday, October 22, 1999, [http://www.nnsl.com/frames/newspapers/1999-10/oct25\\_99edit.html](http://www.nnsl.com/frames/newspapers/1999-10/oct25_99edit.html)).

<sup>129</sup> According to Marie Battiste, "When another culture is imposed upon children, when another language is imposed upon them, when the values and cultural mores of one particular group of people are imposed upon another, that is a process of what I call 'cognitive imperialism'. And we have been subjected to this cognitive imperialism from the time formal schooling began among our people". *Focusing the Dialogue*, Discussion Paper 2, April 1993. This view was also cited in the *Final Report*, 3, p.464.

<sup>130</sup> J.R. Miller maintains that this is the educational method used in aboriginal societies, which he calls "The Three Ls" (Looking, Listening and Learning). For a discussion see "The Three Ls: The Traditional Education of the Indigenous Peoples", pp. 1-8 ([http://collections.ic.gc.ca/shingwauk/Section2/section2\\_1\\_8.html](http://collections.ic.gc.ca/shingwauk/Section2/section2_1_8.html)).

<sup>131</sup> It is only in one section of its Final Report that these problems are briefly recognized. While discussing the ideas of the Mohawk psychiatrist Clare Brant, it notes that a number of aboriginal cultural traits "served to suppress conflict in small societies where a high degree of cooperation was required for survival", but retaining these behaviours could "put a person at a disadvantage" in more competitive environments. It goes on to point out that "if a child was left to solve problems without interference or direction, and the problems were beyond the child's repertoire of solutions, the prospect of failure could be quite overwhelming, even when the genesis and the solution of the problem were beyond the child's control. In a rapidly changing environment, where old solutions often have to be adapted, the ethic of non-interference has the potential to leave young people in a very vulnerable situation, fearful about the prospect of failure and reluctant to try new behaviours". For the Royal Commission's discussion of this point, see *Final Report*, 1, p.653.

involvement in aboriginal communities. Christian imposition did not only occur because Europeans thought their beliefs were spiritually superior, but because missionizing was used to impart the values and attitudes needed to participate in more productive economic activities and social relations beyond those based on kinship. As well as being seen as "Godless", aboriginal beliefs and rituals were also described as "being a result of a free and easy mode of life" that could not "conform to the intense struggle for life" required by the economic and political developments brought by Europeans,<sup>132</sup> and it was hoped that the residential schools would be instrumental in "weaning a number [of aboriginal peoples] from the chase" and "inclining them to industrial pursuits".<sup>133</sup> As the Royal Commission itself pointed out, the schools "were part of a network of institutions that were to minister to industrial society's need for order, lawfulness, labour and security of property".<sup>134</sup> For this reason, the missionaries attempted to use the school system to separate native children from their communities. It was argued that the next generation of aboriginal peoples could be assimilated more quickly if they were removed from the influences of the values and practices of aboriginal communities.<sup>135</sup>

---

<sup>132</sup> Memorandum of the Convention of the Catholic Principals of Residential Schools, 28 and 29 August 1924, cited in *Final Report*, 1, p.340.

<sup>133</sup> Letter from Inspector J.A. Macrae to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 7 December 1900, cited in *Final Report*, 1, p.334.

<sup>134</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 334. See also *Final Report*, 1, p.340 for an additional discussion of the values the residential school system attempted to inculcate.

<sup>135</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp.268, 334-5, 337-339.

In its efforts to integrate aboriginal peoples into industrial production, as was the case for aboriginal farming, the government was not, as the Royal Commission argued, attempting to arbitrarily and irrationally destroy aboriginal cultures. This was a *necessary consequence* of achieving its actual goal - creating the conditions for capitalist development by integrating aboriginal peoples into the agricultural and industrial economy and the emerging Canadian nation state. Although it was correct to claim that policies to achieve this end were insensitive and authoritarian, this does not refute the fact that aboriginal cultures needed to be transformed if aboriginal peoples were to become participants in Canadian life. Industrial capitalism, unlike the pursuit of mercantile wealth, requires an increase in the productivity of labour and a radical transformation of pre-capitalist modes of production.

Although the Royal Commission argued that it was government intervention that caused aboriginal dependency and marginalization, it should have considered what would have happened if the government had *not* intervened. The Royal Commission assumed that some kind of "harmonious...middle ground" could have been achieved by allowing aboriginal peoples to maintain their hunting and gathering/horticultural traditions.<sup>136</sup> This view, however, implied that capitalism was quantitatively, rather than qualitatively, different from hunting and gathering/horticultural modes of production. It was not based on an understanding of the vastly different requirements

---

<sup>136</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 189-90, 600-3.

that separate them, and the fact that the latter emerged out of a long evolutionary process that began with former. As a result, the continuance of the practices and "world views" associated with hunting and gathering would not have facilitated aboriginal participation in the wider Canadian economy and society in the past, nor can it today.

#### ACKNOWLEDGING CULTURAL UNEVENNESS IN CANADIAN DEVELOPMENT

Throughout this chapter, it has been noted that there were two tendencies in the Royal Commission's examination of aboriginal participation in Canada's development during the period of "displacement and assimilation". The first was that aboriginal participation in both farming and early industrial development has been underestimated and that this needed to be revised.<sup>137</sup>

Secondly, it was maintained that when aboriginal peoples *did* become "irrelevant" to Canadian development - a time that some maintain came about by 1890<sup>138</sup> and others at the time of the depression<sup>139</sup> - this was not related to the hunting and gathering

---

<sup>137</sup> This contention is also present in the literature on aboriginal participation during this period. The title of Steven High's article, "Native Wage Labour and Independent Production during the 'Era of Irrelevance'", for example, places the words "Era of Irrelevance" in ironic quotes. This implies that aboriginal peoples were *not* irrelevant to Canada's development during this historical era.

<sup>138</sup> This is the view in Lutz' "After the Fur Trade".

<sup>139</sup> This is the view of both the Royal Commission and Rolf Knight.

cultural features of aboriginal groups. This conclusion seemed to have been made even though the problems of "unreliability", the retention of kinship ties, and difficulties in absorbing the formal and decontextualized educational methods needed for literacy and mathematical skills were all extensively documented by government authorities of the time and in the scholarly literature until the 1970s. After the 1970s, however, there has been an attempt to refute the validity of these claims.

But as has been discussed throughout this chapter, these attempts at revision suffer from a number of difficulties. Most significantly, there seems to be a readiness to dismiss observations about the cultural obstacles to aboriginal participation in farming and industry as being "stereotypes", even when it is recognized that the historical evidence is incomplete. It is as if the people examining aboriginal peoples' experience in farming and agricultural development want to avoid even considering the possibility that some hunting and gathering/horticultural features could create obstacles for native participation in a larger, more productive and complex economy and society.

As has been mentioned before, this tendency is largely due to confusing culture and race and the idea that recognizing different levels of cultural development between aboriginal groups and European nation-states is somehow "racist". And nowhere was this confusion more apparent than in the Royal Commission's analysis of the "displacement and assimilation" era. In this analysis, the Royal Commission

constantly conflated evolutionary theories with racism, and as a result perceived all assimilationist policies as being morally repugnant.

This can be seen most clearly in its condemnation of Duncan Campbell Scott, who claimed to want to "get rid of the Indian problem" by ensuring that all aboriginal peoples were "absorbed into the body politic".<sup>140</sup> The Royal Commission argued that these comments were "redolent of ethnocentric triumphalism" and an indication that Aboriginals were thought of as "'inferior' peoples" because they would be "accept[ed]...on equal terms only if they renounced their Aboriginal identity and demonstrated in terms acceptable to non-Aboriginal society that they were fit for the 'privileges' of enfranchisement and fuller participation in the more evolved, more 'civilized' society that had overtaken and grown up around them".<sup>141</sup>

What the Royal Commission did not recognize, however, was that racial theories maintaining that certain groups were "inferior" were generally accompanied by the assumption that they would be *unable* to participate in, or should be *prevented* from assimilating into, the "more evolved...society". Scott, however, was urging the government to implement programs that would *enable* aboriginal peoples to participate in, and thereby *become* assimilated into, the wider Canadian society. The quotation from Scott provided by the Royal Commission, therefore, was actually

---

<sup>140</sup> Scott, cited by *Final Report*, 1, pp.599-600.

<sup>141</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 599-600.



referring to cultural, not racial, characteristics. It was through the development of the *cultures* of aboriginal peoples, so that they *could* be assimilated into the wider social fabric, that Scott proposed to "get rid of the Indian problem". This, of course, would involve aboriginal peoples "renounc[ing] their Aboriginal identity", if aspects of this identity, because of its roots in hunting and gathering/horticulture, were obstructing their participation in the wider economy and society.

This kind of historical and materialist analysis, however, is strongly resisted because it is not compatible with the political climate in which aboriginal issues are currently studied. As will be shown in the next two chapters, current demands for land claims and self-government are based on the premise that aboriginal cultural features are compatible with participation in modern economic and political processes. But if capitalist nation-states are far more developed economically than hunting and gathering tribes, how will many of the initiatives promoted in land claims and self-government address aboriginal dependency? This contradiction can never be resolved if pressure exists to adopt an *a priori* acceptance of native traditions; it is easier to dismiss ideas of historical progress, and downplay the evidence in their support, than to critically evaluate the viability and social consequences of promoting hunting and gathering/horticultural features in the modern context.

As a result, instead of recognizing the continued existence of practices, values and attitudes that prevent many aboriginal peoples from participating in the mainstream, it is argued that a recognition of aboriginal rights is needed for aboriginal peoples to develop their economies and become "self-reliant". Aboriginal peoples, the argument goes, have needs, values and "ways of life" that are different from other Canadians. Therefore, economic development will only work if it takes into consideration these differences. The way to do this is to allow aboriginal groups to determine the shape and pace of their own economic and political development.

But in order to become truly "self-reliant", aboriginal peoples must produce as much as they consume. This will not be possible if they continue to live on isolated reserves that cannot produce commodities competitively with other areas in Canada. It also will not occur if aboriginal peoples retain practices, values and attitudes that keep them from engaging in more productive forms of labour upon which large and complex societies depend, whether they be socialist or capitalist.

Although it is hypothetically possible for subsistence practices to exist independently alongside capitalist ones if a lower standard of living is retained in the case of the former, constant interaction between the two economic forms makes this circumstance impossible in practice. This can be seen from the following excerpt from the Royal Commission's *Report on the High Arctic Relocation*. It is noted that

the war brought dramatic change to some Eastern Arctic settlements. Airfields were built at Fort Chimo, Coral Harbour and Frobisher Bay. This was done in haste, with thousands of men descending on the communities to construct the airfields and large numbers of ships to supply the bases. Only a few Inuit were employed in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs, such as kitchen help and unloading cargo vessels, although around the Fort Chimo base, some found work as carpenters and truck drivers as well as general helpers. Fort Chimo attracted Inuit from as far away as Great Whale River. Those who enjoyed, for a few short years, substantial incomes working at the bases came quickly into conflict with those who continued with a modest hunting and trapping existence. Jenness describes some Inuit as becoming parasitical, scrounging food and collecting from the dumps. The waste and extravagance around these facilities was enormous. Jenness reports that the discontent brought about by the contrast with the amenities of non-Inuit society was deepened when the end of the war brought an end to employment. He reports that some Inuit adopted a fatalistic attitude that discouraged enterprise, a feeling that there was no need to worry since, if conditions became difficult, the non-Inuit possessed an abundance of everything and would provide for them.<sup>142</sup>

When vast discrepancies exist in the productivity of different societies, therefore, the less developed tends to become parasitical upon the former if it remains separate. This is because scavenging in this circumstance provides a much more secure existence than depending upon the vicissitudes of nature.

Although cultural osmosis occurs whenever two groups interact, in cases where the developmental gap is very wide, as has occurred during Canada's history, most of the cultural features of the simpler society will be "lost" and replaced with ones that are more advanced. The process is not entirely one way, as is shown by the continued use

---

<sup>142</sup> Jenness, pp.72-75, cited in Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *The High Arctic Relocation*, p.45.

of kayaks, canoes and snowshoes, but these cultural forms only exist at the margins of Canadian life. Much more significant is the modern infrastructure and technology that have been incorporated into aboriginal "lifestyles" - circumstances that could only occur in the presence of agricultural and industrial development

Ignoring these historical and material circumstances was exactly the problem with the Royal Commission's analysis of the current phase of aboriginal and non-aboriginal relations - "Negotiation and Renewal". Once again, the Royal Commission focused on various initiatives that have attempted to give aboriginal peoples political autonomy, without addressing how this will lead to economic self-sufficiency. As a result, instead of addressing aboriginal marginalization and deprivation, the Royal Commission merely ended up advocating a form of renewed dependency.

## PART III

# THE CURRENT STATE OF ABORIGINAL DEPENDENCY AND THE POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

### Chapter Eight Negotiating a Renewed Dependency

After over a hundred of years of displacement and attempts at assimilation, the Royal Commission maintained that we are now entering a period of "Negotiation and Renewal".<sup>1</sup> Unlike the efforts in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries to displace aboriginal peoples both culturally and physically, thereby paving the way for economic development and the absorption of the native population into Canadian society, there was now, in the Royal Commission's opinion, an "admission of the manifest failure" of this "interventionist and assimilationist approach".<sup>2</sup> By recognizing the period of displacement and assimilation as a failure, the Royal Commission argued, "non-Aboriginal society is haltingly beginning to search for a change in the relationship".

---

<sup>1</sup> The Royal Commission devotes a chapter to this period of history in Volume One. For its discussion see *Final Report*, 1, pp. 201-244. It is maintained in one research study prepared for the Royal Commission that aboriginal peoples' view of the treaty relationship with the Canadian state is "perpetual renewal through negotiations among autonomous peoples". Thomas O. Hueglin, "Exploring Concepts in Treaty Federalism", *For Seven Generations*. Other references to aboriginal peoples' view on negotiating a "renewed relationship" with the Canadian state occur in Peter Russell and Roger Jones, "Aboriginal Peoples and Constitutional Reform", *For Seven Generations*; Patricia A. Monture-Angus, "The Familiar Face of Colonial Oppression", *For Seven Generations*; Wendy Moss, "Inuit Perspectives on Treaty Rights and Governance", *For Seven Generations*; Thalassa Research, "Nation to Nation", *For Seven Generations*. Particularly relevant in this regard is the idea of the "Covenant Chain" and "two row wampum", whereby a relationship is continually negotiated between the two parties to ensure that the two remain a respectful difference apart. For a discussion of these two ideas, see Michael Jackson, "A New Covenant Chain", *For Seven Generations* and Paul Williams and Curtis Nelson, "Kaswentha", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>2</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 39.

Such a search has involved "a period of dialogue, consultation and negotiation", where "a range of options, centring on the concept of full Aboriginal self-government and restoration of the original partnership of the contact and co-operation period, is considered".<sup>3</sup> It also has resulted in "some movement...toward greater understanding and recognition of Aboriginal aspirations". With this understanding and recognition, "it no longer seems so important that aboriginal societies follow the evolutionary path toward assimilation within non-Aboriginal society".<sup>4</sup>

This period also involved a change in how aboriginal peoples viewed their relationship with Non-Aboriginals. The Royal Commission argued that "from the perspective of Aboriginal groups, the primary objective is to gain more control over their own affairs by reducing unilateral interventions by non-Aboriginal society and regaining a relationship of mutual recognition and respect for differences". It also involved the realization that "they must take steps to re-establish their own societies and to heal wounds caused by the many years of dominance by non-Aboriginal peoples".<sup>5</sup> And as a result of the emerging dialogue between Aboriginals and Non-Aboriginals, the

---

<sup>3</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.39. For research studies discussing a return to this "partnership" at the time of contact see Alan Pratt, "The Fiduciary Relationship and Aboriginal Governance", *For Seven Generations*; and John Giokas, "The Indian Act", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>4</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 235. For discussion of the official repudiation of assimilation for aboriginal peoples, see Joseph H. Carens, "Citizenship and Aboriginal Self-Government", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>5</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 39. This view of aboriginal peoples is prevalent in the Royal Commission's discussion paper, *Framing the Issues, Discussion Paper No. 1* (October 1992), pp. 19, 23.

Royal Commission maintained that there is "a better understanding of the Aboriginal perspective and some movement toward a middle ground".<sup>6</sup>

The latest stage of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations began with the release of the Trudeau government's White Paper on aboriginal policy in 1969, the following excerpt of which was provided by the Royal Commission:

[A] separate road cannot lead to full participation, to equality in practice as well as theory...[T]he Government has outlined a number of measures and a policy which it is convinced will offer another road for Indians, a road that would lead gradually away from different status to full social, economic and political participation in Canadian life. This is the choice.

Indian people must be persuaded, must persuade themselves, that this path will lead them to a fuller and richer life.<sup>7</sup>

The White Paper's proposed path, the Royal Commission argued, consisted of "end[ing] the collective rights of Aboriginal people in favour of individual rights", and "included...plans to eliminate the protection for reserve lands, to terminate the legal status of Indian peoples, and to have services delivered to them by provincial governments".<sup>8</sup>

Although the Royal Commission pointed out that that the White Paper caused bitterness, suspicion and resentment towards the government, it also created the

---

<sup>6</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.201.

<sup>7</sup> *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy*, 1969, cited in *Final Report*, 1, p.203.

<sup>8</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.202.

impetus for aboriginal political development, which eventually forced the document to be withdrawn.<sup>9</sup> This new sense of identity eventually forced the federal government to withdraw the document. Even with the White Paper's demise, however, the Royal Commission maintained that its assimilationist philosophy continued to "animate federal policy for years to come".<sup>10</sup> As a result, the "period of negotiation and renewal has been and continues to be an uncertain time, full of change but also reversals and retrenchment".<sup>11</sup> The most significant areas of progress within Canada, in the Royal Commission's view, have occurred in constitutional negotiations and in the increasing number of court cases that have given wider scope to the definition of aboriginal and treaty rights. It also maintained that there have been impressive developments internationally, where a number of aboriginal organizations have been established to participate in forums like the United Nations. For the Royal Commission, all of these developments indicated that there has been "a return to at least some of the basic principles that governed the relationship at the time of early contact".<sup>12</sup> As the Royal Commission put it: "within a span of 25 years, Aboriginal peoples and their rights have emerged from the shadows, to the sidelines, to occupy

---

<sup>9</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.201-2.

<sup>10</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.203. This view is expressed in the research study Thalassa Research, "Nation-to-Nation", *For Seven Generations*, which denies that a period of "renewal" existed after the White Paper. It argues that while "Indian nations have won a number of important political and legal victories that served to 'legitimize' their standing in domestic law and Canadian society generally", governments have responded "with continued denial, avoidance and delay, proceeding in the meantime with their own agenda". The uneven progress during this period is also discussed in G. Bruce Doern, "The Politics of Slow Progress", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>11</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.234.

<sup>12</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.235.



centre stage...Aboriginal people have gathered strength, developed national and international political networks, and forced their way into the debate on the future of our country".<sup>13</sup>

But despite the increasing prominence of aboriginal organizations both nationally and internationally, and the growing recognition that aboriginal demands for land claims and self-government should be addressed, it is not clear how these developments will address aboriginal dependency. Although the Royal Commission maintained that a "partnership relationship" must be developed instead of one of wardship, and that "this partnership can be realized...only when Aboriginal peoples secure political and constitutional autonomy",<sup>14</sup> how will this "partnership" help the native population achieve the "self-reliance" that the Royal Commission maintained was necessary for this autonomy to be meaningful? In fact, the Royal Commission itself argued that the "period of dependency" that emerged after 1930 "continues, for the most part, today".<sup>15</sup>

The Royal Commission's recognition of continuing aboriginal dependency during the period of "negotiation and renewal" indicates that the institutional, legal and political developments that it was promoting have not been particularly effective in addressing

---

<sup>13</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.216.

<sup>14</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.689.

<sup>15</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 788.

this problem. This is because these processes do nothing to address the fundamental gap in size, productivity and complexity that exists between aboriginal "nations" and modern societies. As will be discussed in Chapter Nine, the Royal Commission's focus on constitutional, legal and organizational factors was incapable of addressing the problem of aboriginal dependency because these initiatives were intent on "rebuilding" unviable areas of the country and entrenching a number of cultural features that inhibit aboriginal participation in wider economic and social processes. Since increasing aboriginal participation in Canadian life is a goal that the Royal Commission itself espoused, proposing mechanisms that limit aboriginal peoples' ability to achieve this was a serious flaw of the Final Report.

#### THE ROYAL COMMISSION'S ANALYSIS OF THE POST-WHITE PAPER ERA

In examining the historical period of "Negotiation and Renewal", the Royal Commission described a number of political and legal developments that have occurred since the demise of the White Paper. These developments, the Royal Commission argued, were the starting point for addressing aboriginal dependency because they have resulted in a more balanced power relationship between Aboriginals and Non-Aboriginals. Although it asserted that the original recognition of aboriginal "sovereignty" and respect for cultural "difference" has not yet returned to the one that existed at the time of contact, the Royal Commission maintained that what has

emerged recently represents a significant improvement in self-sufficiency in comparison to the relationship that developed during the "Displacement and Assimilation" period.

The progress towards a more balanced relationship, in the Royal Commission's opinion, was connected to the recognition of aboriginal and treaty rights.<sup>16</sup> In contrast to the position of the White Paper, which maintained that these rights were too vague to define, the Royal Commission pointed out that a number of inquiries, commissions, political forums, court decisions and international bodies recently maintained that these rights should be recognized and accommodated in Canadian institutions. This, the Royal Commission argued, was the starting point for addressing aboriginal dependency and marginalization.

According to the Royal Commission, the recognition of aboriginal and treaty rights largely was to be achieved through two major initiatives - the negotiation of land claims and recognition of the "inherent right" of self-government. Land claims, it was argued, would address aboriginal dependency by restoring the "economic base" that

---

<sup>16</sup> This is also the view of a number of research studies. See, for example, Patricia A. Monture-Angus, "The Familiar Face of Colonial Oppression", *For Seven Generations*; Paul Joffe and Mary Ellen Turpel, "Extinguishment of the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples", *For Seven Generations*; Douglas M. Brown, "Aboriginal Peoples and Canadian Federalism", *For Seven Generations*; Michael Jackson, "A New Covenant Chain", *For Seven Generations*.

existed before contact.<sup>17</sup> To support this view, the Royal Commission cited Lloyd Barber, the first Indian Claims Commissioner, who stated that settling land claims

can help provide the means for Indians to regain their independence and play their rightful role as a participating partner in the Canadian future. The claims business is no less than the task of redefining and redetermining the place of Indian people within Canadian society. They themselves are adamant that this shall be done, not unilaterally as in the past, but with them as the major partner in the enterprise.<sup>18</sup>

The Royal Commission's argument for the need to recognize self-government agreements, on the other hand, was that they would restore aboriginal peoples' political autonomy so that they could run their own affairs according to their own traditions and values.<sup>19</sup> The Royal Commission maintained that "there are profound differences in culture, world view and communication styles between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people" and so space needs to be made within the Canadian federation

---

<sup>17</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p. 6; 5, p. 47, 66.

<sup>18</sup> Barber, cited in *Final Report*, 1, p.203. The relationship between land claims and restoring an economic base is discussed in a number of research studies. See, for example, Michael Jackson, "A New Covenant Chain", *For Seven Generations*; John Crossley, "Relationship between the Province and the Peoples of Prince Edward Island", *For Seven Generations*; Lac Seul First Nation, "Pizaaniziwin", *For Seven Generations*; Simon Brascoupe, "Kitigan Zibi Anishnabeg Economic Case Study", *For Seven Generations*; Del Anaquod, "Aboriginal Education, Training and Employment", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>19</sup> This argument is expressed in general terms in the following research studies: Patrick Macklem, "Normative Dimensions of the Right of Self-Government", *For Seven Generations*; and Andrew Bear Robe, "The Historical, Legal and Current Basis for Siksika Governance", *For Seven Generations*. In the former, it is noted that "Many of the debilitating social and economic conditions of Aboriginal people are direct results of historical refusals by Canadian authorities to allow Aboriginal people to make political decisions according to their own political practices concerning matters central to Aboriginal difference. A right of self-government can be viewed as possessing a remedial dimension, in that recognition of the right would permit Aboriginal people to exercise greater control over matters essential to their distinct individual and collective identities, thereby alleviating their disadvantaged economic and social position in Canadian society". It is also expressed in the case of the economies of specific aboriginal groups such as the development of "The Inuit Way", in Gwen D. Reimer, "Case Study of an Inuit Economy", *For Seven Generations*.

for the "self-expression and authentic participation by Aboriginal people..."<sup>20</sup> Self-government and land claims, in fact, would reinforce one another, in the Royal Commission's opinion, because "self-determination is an important element in achieving self-reliance" and a "greater degree of autonomy in the political realm is illusory without a strong economic base..."<sup>21</sup>

In outlining the increasing acceptance of land claims and self-government in the period of "Negotiation and Renewal", the Royal Commission focused on three processes that have increased the acceptance of land claims and self-government in Canadian society - constitutional negotiations, court cases and aboriginal participation in international forums. The Royal Commission maintained that these processes have resulted in "intercultural institutions and practices", which while being "inadequate and distorted", also have "provide[d] the starting point for a renewed dialogue".<sup>22</sup> It is these various negotiations, in the Royal Commission's view, that have led to a renewed respect for aboriginal differences and increased native autonomy within the Canadian federation.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.236. One of the initial proponents of this view was put forward by S. Arnstein in an article "A Ladder of Citizen Participation", who developed an "authentic hierarchy of the various forms of citizen participation" showing "the increasing autonomy citizens gained through different kinds of involvement". Arnstein was attempting to "encourage greater participation by citizens in the planning for their communities — rather than leaving it to professionals giving their advice to government officials", and her model formed the basis of Dene self-determination in the 1970s. For a further discussion of this, see Antoine Mountain and Susan Quirk, "Dene Nation: An Analysis", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>21</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.696.

<sup>22</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 693.

<sup>23</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.201.

One of the main sets of negotiations that led to "some movement toward a middle ground" revolved around the patriation of the Canadian constitution.<sup>24</sup> As the Royal Commission explained,

the vast majority of non-Aboriginal Canadians who have given any thought to the matter would probably acknowledge that Canada's Aboriginal peoples have not been accorded their proper place in the life and constitution of this country. Some might say that this is attributable to deep-seated racism; others might say, more charitably, that it is the result of the paternalistic, colonial attitude we have described, the goal of which was to indoctrinate the original inhabitants of Canada into the ways of non-Aboriginal society and make them over in the image of the newcomers. Whatever the explanation, it seems clear, as a judge of the British Columbia Supreme Court has acknowledged, that we 'cannot recount with much pride the treatment accorded to the native people of this country'.<sup>25</sup>

The increasing strength of aboriginal organizations, however, was able to change this situation somewhat, in the Royal Commission's view. As a result of pressure from numerous native organizations,<sup>26</sup> aboriginal peoples were included within the 1982 *Constitution Act*, where it was guaranteed that the Charter would not "...abrogate or derogate from any aboriginal, treaty or other rights or freedoms that pertain to the

---

<sup>24</sup> The importance that the Royal Commission attributes to constitutional reform can be seen in its research studies, where a whole section of "Governance" is devoted to "Aboriginal Rights and the Constitution". These studies include Patrick Macklem, "Normative Dimensions of the Right of Aboriginal Self-Government", *For Seven Generations*; Kent McNeil, "Aboriginal Governments and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms", *For Seven Generations*; Peter Russell and Roger Jones, "Aboriginal Peoples and Constitutional Reform", *For Seven Generations*; Peter W. Hogg and Mary Ellen Turpel, "Implementing Aboriginal Self-Government: Constitutional and Jurisdictional Issues", *For Seven Generations*; Patricia Monture-Angus, "The Familiar Face of Colonial Oppression", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>25</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.218.

<sup>26</sup> National aboriginal organizations lobbied the federal government and a number of native chiefs "travelled to England to oppose patriation, concerned that it might damage their special relationship with the Crown...and several launched lawsuits in the British courts" (*Final Report*, 1, p. 206). Aboriginal groups also banded together with women's organizations, which supported the inclusion of aboriginal and treaty rights in the Constitution.

aboriginal peoples of Canada including: (a) any rights or freedoms that have been recognized by the Royal Proclamation of October 7, 1763; and (b) any rights or freedoms that may be acquired by the aboriginal peoples of Canada by way of land claims settlement".<sup>27</sup> Section 35 also "recognized and affirmed" aboriginal peoples' "existing aboriginal and treaty rights",<sup>28</sup> while "Section 37 provided for a single conference...to identify and define those Aboriginal rights for the participation of Aboriginal peoples' leaders and territorial government delegates".<sup>29</sup> According to the Royal Commission, "the conference was televised live, and the hopes and dreams of Aboriginal peoples were brought to viewers across the country. Aboriginal cultures were given a place of respect through the use of Aboriginal traditions - opening prayers, drumming, the passing of the great pipe of peace. For the first time since Confederation, Aboriginal leaders sat at the table as equals with first ministers".<sup>30</sup> The Royal Commission maintained that "in a decade, Aboriginal leaders and organizations had become powerful players in the rough and tumble of constitutional politics and negotiations".<sup>31</sup>

Despite this symbolism and the inclusion of aboriginal leaders in three First Ministers' Conferences, the Royal Commission acknowledged that no agreement emerged as to

---

<sup>27</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 207. 25(b) was later amended to "any rights or freedoms that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired" in 1983. *Final Report*, 1, p. 208.

<sup>28</sup> This section was also amended to clarify that "'treaty rights' includes rights that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired". *Final Report*, 1, p.208.

<sup>29</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.207.

<sup>30</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 208.

<sup>31</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 212.

what "aboriginal and treaty rights" actually were.<sup>32</sup> This disagreement, as well as the failure to mention aboriginal and treaty rights in the Meech Lake Accord, led to growing discontent within the aboriginal population. The most significant expression of aboriginal grievances came with the stand-off at Oka where "Canada's reputation on the international stage, one of promoting human rights and the well-being of Aboriginal peoples, was badly tarnished".<sup>33</sup> Uprisings like Oka, asserted the Royal Commission, led the Spicer Commission to argue that

there is an anger, a rage, building in aboriginal communities that will not tolerate much longer the historic paternalism, the bureaucratic evasion and the widespread lack of respect for their concerns. Failure to deal promptly with the needs and aspirations of aboriginal peoples will breed strife that could polarize opinion and make solutions more difficult to achieve... We join with the great majority of Canadians to demand prompt, fair settlement of the territorial and treaty claims of First Nations people, to secure their linguistic, cultural and spiritual needs in harmony with the environment.<sup>34</sup>

Arguments such as these prompted governments in Canada to accept the demand of the inherent right of self-government in all future constitutional negotiations. The most significant result was the inclusion of this right in the Charlottetown Accord,<sup>35</sup> where "there was recognition of Aboriginal participants as political equals at the table"

---

<sup>32</sup> This was because there was a fundamental disagreement between the federal government and aboriginal organizations as to the nature of aboriginal self-government. For the federal government, this right "was to be delegated from federal and provincial governments", while native organizations maintained that it "flowed from inherent and unextinguished aboriginal sovereignty, and from treaty and Aboriginal rights". *Final Report*, 1, p.209.

<sup>33</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.214.

<sup>34</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.215.

<sup>35</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.216.



and "that Aboriginal governments constitute one of three orders of government based on the inherent right of self-government".<sup>36</sup> Although the Royal Commission notes that the Charlottetown Accord was defeated in a referendum, thereby preventing the "inherent right" of self-government from being entrenched as an aboriginal right in the constitution, it maintained that "the fact that the federal, provincial and territorial governments accepted that the right of Aboriginal self-government is inherent - and not delegated from other governments or created by the constitution - is a recognition that cannot be readily or easily withdrawn".<sup>37</sup> For the Royal Commission, this was an important indicator of the renewed relationship between Aboriginals and Non-Aboriginals.

As well as the progress that was made in constitutional negotiations, the Royal Commission also pointed to a number of court decisions from the 1960s on that have increased the acceptance of aboriginal and treaty rights.<sup>38</sup> These court decisions, according to the Royal Commission, constituted another significant improvement in aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations over those that occurred during the period of "displacement and assimilation", when the doctrine of Parliamentary supremacy and a

---

<sup>36</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 235.

<sup>37</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.216. This view is supported by a research study prepared for the Royal Commission by Peter Russell and Roger Jones, "Aboriginal Peoples and Constitutional Reform", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>38</sup> Research studies examining the effects of court decisions on Aboriginal and Treaty Rights include: Douglas M. Brown, "Aboriginal Peoples and Canadian Federalism", *For Seven Generations*; Richard R. Maracle, "Wildlife Sectoral Study", *For Seven Generations*; and Paul Williams and Curtis Nelson, "Kaswentha", *For Seven Generations*.

positivist philosophy of law prevailed, resulting in the focus on narrow legal questions rather than attempts to seek justice.<sup>39</sup> Such decisions have been made possible by the repeal of certain sections of the *Indian Act* that prohibited Aboriginals from suing the government,<sup>40</sup> as well as the mobilization of native organizations during the 1960s. As a result of these changes, a number of court cases were brought forward that broadened the scope of aboriginal and treaty rights. And although the Royal Commission "recogniz[ed] the shortcomings of relying on the courts to redefine the relationship" between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people, it maintained that "the decisions do for the most part provide some support for the recognition of Aboriginal and treaty rights. As such, they provide a stimulus to political negotiations".<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> This view is contradicted by one research study prepared for the Royal Commission, which criticizes recent court decisions because "Aboriginal rights is a term with a specific legal meaning and one that only expresses claims that have currently been accepted within Canadian law". Therefore, certain Aboriginal rights have been excluded because "Aboriginal and treaty rights in Canadian law do not embrace the much broader notion of Aboriginal and treaty rights that exist within...Aboriginal understanding" since "courts have consistently rejected attempts to introduce a different way of understanding bounded by Aboriginal cultural concepts". Patricia A. Monture-Angus, "The Familiar Face of Colonial Oppression", *For Seven Generations*. Criticism is also leveled at various court decisions in Peter W. Hutchins and Anjali Choksi, "Renouncing the Old Rules of the Game", *For Seven Generations* and John A. Olthuis and H.W. Peter Townsend, "Is Canada's Thumb on the Scales?", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>40</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.217. The Royal Commission also recognizes that these actions would have been inhibited by the fact that "most aboriginal people during the historical period [of displacement and assimilation] were poor, largely uneducated and unsophisticated in the ways of the non-Aboriginal society around them". Furthermore, the Royal Commission asserts that "aboriginal peoples - holding steadfastly to their original nation status - often refused to admit that non-Aboriginal courts had any jurisdiction over them. In other cases, Aboriginal peoples simply had no confidence that Canadian courts would be willing to recognize their rights or to enforce them against the federal or provincial governments". *Final Report*, 1, p.217.

<sup>41</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 201-2.

The most significant development since 1969 has been the increasing recognition of "aboriginal title" by the courts, the Royal Commission argued.<sup>42</sup> This had required a considerable transformation in the attitudes of judges to accommodate the unique "world view" of aboriginal peoples. The Royal Commission asserted that the courts have "difficulty reconciling Aboriginal concepts with Euro-Canadian legal concepts" because aboriginal peoples don't see themselves as owners, but as "stewards", where they have a "responsibility to the Creator to care for [their traditional territories] and every living thing on them".<sup>43</sup> As a result, "the courts have tried to be sensitive to the uniqueness of the legal concepts that have emerged as a result of the evolution of the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal society without undermining the existing legal framework of the Canadian federation".<sup>44</sup>

The Royal Commission implied that these court decisions provided the starting point for addressing aboriginal dependency because they have broadened aboriginal peoples'

---

<sup>42</sup> For studies that discuss the importance of the recognition of "aboriginal title" see Patricia A. Monture-Angus, "The Familiar Face of Colonial Oppression", *For Seven Generations*; Paul Joffe and Mary Ellen Turpel, "Extinguishment of the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples", *For Seven Generations*; Richard Spaulding, "Doctrines of Dispossession", *For Seven Generations*; Stephen Aronson and Ronald C. Maquire, "Federal Treaty Policy Study", *For Seven Generations*; Peter J. Usher, "Contemporary Aboriginal Land, Resource, and Environment Regimes", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>43</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 218-19. To support this point, the Royal Commission offers a quotation from the aboriginal leader George Manuel, who claims that he has noticed "common attachment to the land" amongst all aboriginal peoples and that "this is not the land that can be speculated, bought, sold, mortgaged, claimed by one state, surrendered or counter-claimed by another...mother earth...although there are as wide variations between different Indian cultures as between different European cultures, it seems to me that all of our structures and values have developed out of a spiritual relationship with the land on which we have lived" (*Final Report*, 1, p. 219).

<sup>44</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 218. The Royal Commission notes that there is one exception to this trend - B.C. Supreme Court Justice McEachern's rejection of the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en case in 1991 (*Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*).

interest in their traditional territories from "a mere 'personal' and 'usufructory' right" to one that was more akin to property ownership,<sup>45</sup> which gave them a firmer legal basis upon which to establish a "viable land base".<sup>46</sup> Such legal recognition also was deemed significant by the Royal Commission because it was related to a wider rejection of evolutionary assumptions by the courts, which was a necessary prerequisite for supporting land claims and self-government.<sup>47</sup> The Royal Commission pointed out that this rejection of evolutionary assumptions was most evident in the decision of *Simon*,<sup>48</sup> which refuted an earlier court judgement that a treaty was "legally meaningless" because it was negotiated "between a 'civilized nation' and 'uncivilized people or savages'". The Royal Commission applauded the Supreme Court decision in the *Simon* case because it "refer[red] to the disparaging way the earlier Nova Scotia county court decision had characterized Indian societies" and "took the occasion to speak directly to the legal community about the judicial attitude toward Aboriginal rights it was fostering...".<sup>49</sup> Rejection of the language

---

<sup>45</sup> As was mentioned in Chapter One, this broadening has been made possible by decisions such as *Simon* that argue for treaties to be interpreted in a manner that favours aboriginal viewpoints, including an acceptance of oral histories.

<sup>46</sup> This view is present in one research study prepared for the Royal Commission, which maintains that "extinguishment of aboriginal title, in its purpose and effects, severely impedes or prevents indigenous peoples from freely determining the course of their development. The right of indigenous peoples to development, according to their own values, perspectives and priorities, is a critical aspect of the right to self-determination". Paul Joffe and Mary Ellen Turpel, "Extinguishment of the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>47</sup> For discussions of the relationship between the extinguishment of aboriginal title and evolutionary theories see Michael Jackson, "A New Covenant Chain", *For Seven Generations*; and Richard Spaulding, "Doctrines of Dispossession", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>48</sup> [1985] 2 S.C.R. 387, Cited in Note 41, *Final Report*, 1, p. 241.

<sup>49</sup> The Supreme Court made the following comment: "It should be noted that the language used...reflects the biases and prejudices of another era in our history. Such language is no longer

pertaining to cultural evolution also formed one of the reasons for the Royal Commission's criticism of Chief Justice McEachern's decision, the one case that was contrary to the trend of broadening aboriginal and treaty rights. According to the Royal Commission, "an unfortunate aspect of this case was the language used by Chief Justice McEachern to describe Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en life and social organization before contact. The use of terminology reminiscent of the language deplored by the Supreme Court of Canada in the *Simon* case continues to arouse anger and indignation among Aboriginal people and fuels the distrust of the Canadian justice system often voiced by Aboriginal people across Canada".<sup>50</sup>

In addition to discussing developments occurring in Canada, the Royal Commission maintained that the period of "Negotiation and Renewal" has been brought about by international pressure for land claims and self-government.<sup>51</sup> The most significant development internationally, according to the Royal Commission, has been the participation of aboriginal organizations in the United Nations.<sup>52</sup> These organizations

---

acceptable in Canadian law and indeed is inconsistent with the growing sensitivity to native rights in Canada" ([1985] 2 S.C.R. 387 Dickson, C.J., p.399, cited in *Final Report*, 1, p. 224).

<sup>50</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 227.

<sup>51</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 229. For studies discussing the role of international organizations in pressing for a renewed relationship, see Douglas Sanders, "Developing a Modern International Law on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples", *For Seven Generations*; Douglas Sanders, "Indigenous Peoples and Canada's Role on the International Stage", *For Seven Generations*; and G. Bruce Doern, "The Politics of Slow Progress", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>52</sup> Although the United Nations supports the "decolonization of all territories that were geographically and culturally distinct from the states administering them and in a subordinate position politically, socially or economically", this dictate was not applied to North and South America since it was argued that countries like the United States and Canada "did not control and exploit Aboriginal peoples". A number of aboriginal organizations, however, claimed that they were victims of "internal colonialism"

have encouraged aboriginal peoples around the world to "battle against all the forces of assimilation and try to build [their] nations economically, culturally and politically",<sup>53</sup> as well as arguing for "abolishing...cultural genocide and ethnocide" and "establishing and strengthening the concepts of Indigenous and cultural rights based upon the principle of equality among Indigenous Peoples and the peoples of nations who may surround them".<sup>54</sup>

The international organization that the Royal Commission discussed in the most detail was the Inuit Circumpolar Conference.<sup>55</sup> The Royal Commission maintained that this organization was formed because

the Inuit of the world take tremendous pride in the fact that they have been able to survive culturally and spiritually and to prosper in the harsh Arctic climate. In this context, Inuit have always seen themselves as one people. Their

---

(*Final Report*, 1, p. 204), and as a result, they formed a number of international organizations to place pressure on the UN to support aboriginal and treaty rights.

<sup>53</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 205. In Canada, the first organization formed was the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP). The initial speech was made by George Manuel, the founder and first president of the organization.

<sup>54</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 204. As a result of the formation of the WCIP and a number of other international aboriginal organizations, the UN developed a Working Group on Indigenous Populations in 1982, which resulted in a 1993 draft declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Pressure from aboriginal organizations also led to changes in the International Labour Organization's Convention 107 (enacted in 1957), which referred to the "integration" of indigenous populations. In 1989 it was revised with Convention 169, which recognized 'the aspirations of these indigenous people to exercise control over their own institutions, ways of life and economic development and to maintain and develop their identities, languages and religions, within the framework of the States in which they live" (*Final Report*, 2(2), 567).

<sup>55</sup> For research studies examining the role of this organization see Wendy Moss, "Inuit Perspectives on Treaty Rights and Governance", *For Seven Generations*; Marc Malone and Carole Levesque, "Nunavik Government", *For Seven Generations*; Peter Jull, "A Thousand Years", *For Seven Generations*; Peter Jull, "Re-inventing Canada", *For Seven Generations*; Peter Jull, "Them Eskimo Mob", *For Seven Generations*.

legends and stories, both ancient and modern, speak of family and relatives in the far-off places. The establishment of a modern, permanent international organization to reflect their concerns and aspirations as well as protect their environment, culture and basic human rights, was a matter of doing what they had done many times in the past to ensure their survival. It meant adapting to new forces, circumstances and conditions now facing them, but doing so in a manner consistent with traditions and aspirations that go back thousands of years.<sup>56</sup>

As a result, the ICC developed a charter that, amongst other things, called for the "preservation and evolution of Inuit culture and societies".<sup>57</sup> It also gained access to the United Nations as a registered non-governmental organization in 1984, where it pressed for one of its major objectives - to "achieve greater political control over the daily lives of Inuit".<sup>58</sup> To achieve greater political control, the ICC holds assemblies every three years with 18 elected delegates. According to the Royal Commission, "the general assemblies are like no other gathering in the circumpolar world, since they are a unique mixture of politics, international diplomacy, family reunion, and cultural and entertainment exposition. In addition to the general assembly, an elders conference - a sort of arctic senate - is held, bringing the experience, wisdom and understanding of the elders to the issues".<sup>59</sup>

ICC pressure also was one of the factors that led to "one of the most comprehensive land agreements signed in Canada" – the Nunavut land claims agreement. The Royal

---

<sup>56</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.230.

<sup>57</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.232.

<sup>58</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 232.

<sup>59</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.234.

Commission maintained that that Nunavut land claim has created a new relationship between the Inuit in the Eastern Arctic and non-Aboriginal Canadians, not only because of the 134,390 square miles and 580 million dollars in compensation received for lands surrendered. In the Royal Commission's view, "perhaps more important than the land or the money is the provision in the agreement to negotiate and to establish the new territory of Nunavut, which will have its own government to serve a region where Inuit now make up more than 80 per cent of the population".<sup>60</sup>

But despite devoting its entire chapter on "Negotiation and Renewal" to discussing how constitutional negotiations, numerous court cases and the emergence of international aboriginal organizations have led to a greater acceptance of aboriginal and treaty rights, it was unclear how the Royal Commission envisioned these developments would resolve aboriginal dependency. The Royal Commission, after all, maintained that a "renewed relationship" between Aboriginals and Non-Aboriginals "is not possible under conditions of poverty and dependence, so strong and effective measures need to be taken to address the often appalling inequalities that separate Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians in such sectors as health, housing, income and overall living conditions".<sup>61</sup> It also maintained that any negotiated and renewed relationship "must take a form that enhances, rather than diminishes people's capacity to contribute to the whole. Transfers that perpetuate relations of dependency,

---

<sup>60</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.233.

<sup>61</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.688.



such as welfare payments, are not the long-term solution...Aboriginal peoples should be assisted to develop economic self-reliance through new relations of economic co-operation in resource development and other fields".<sup>62</sup>

Although not addressed in its chapter on "Negotiation and Renewal", the development of aboriginal "economic self-reliance through new relations of economic co-operation in resource development and other fields" was examined in two other areas of the *Final Report*. The first area was the second part of Volume Two,<sup>63</sup> where there were two chapters that discussed the economic circumstances of aboriginal peoples from the 1960s to the 1990s. These chapters, one on "lands and resources" and the other pertaining to "economic development",<sup>64</sup> provided an analysis of aboriginal dependency and proposed some mechanisms to address it. In addition to generally examining aboriginal dependency, the Royal Commission also analyzed the economic circumstances of three distinct segments of the native population in Volume Four - northern aboriginal peoples,<sup>65</sup> the Métis,<sup>66</sup> and urban natives.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.688.

<sup>63</sup>The other half of Volume Two discusses legal and political issues similar to those examined in the period of "Negotiation and Renewal". These areas discuss "Treaties" (*Final Report*, 2(1), pp. 9-104) and "Governance" (*Final Report*, 2(1), pp. 105-419).

<sup>64</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 421-774; 775-1014.

<sup>65</sup> *Final Report*, 4, pp. 387-518.

<sup>66</sup> *Final Report*, 4, pp. 199-386

<sup>67</sup> *Final Report*, 4, pp. 519-621.

In all of these areas, the Royal Commission essentially provided two strategies for overcoming aboriginal dependency and making the native population more "self-reliant". The first, and most extensive, focused on "building" economies in aboriginal communities through land claims/treaties with a combination of "traditional" and capitalist enterprises (mostly resource extraction and the development of aboriginal businesses to service the native population). The second involved increasing aboriginal peoples' direct participation in the Canadian economy by providing education and training to help more Natives enter into the labour force and to become entrepreneurs selling goods and services in Canadian and international markets. As the Royal Commission explained, "many Aboriginal individuals will want to or will have little choice but to make their way in the larger Canadian economy...but it should not be forgotten that Aboriginal nations want to develop their own economies on their own land and resource base, guided by policies, programs and institutions that they control".<sup>68</sup> This, according to the Royal Commission, would address aboriginal dependency by "enabling individuals to contribute to the development of their communities and nations and participate in the wider Canadian economy".<sup>69</sup>

The following sections will show that most of the initiatives proposed by the Royal Commission would not enable aboriginal peoples to become more "self-reliant". This is because they did not really address two of the main causes of aboriginal dependency

---

<sup>68</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.777.

<sup>69</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.777.

- the unviability of most aboriginal communities and the cultural impediments to aboriginal participation in a modern economy and society. Many of the Royal Commission's proposals, in fact, were aimed at subsidizing aboriginal communities and enterprises rather than making the native population more productive. Much of what the Royal Commission referred to as "economic development" is merely a way of providing welfare under another name, resulting in the entrenchment of aboriginal peoples' segregated dependency.

#### WISHING FOR THE EMERGENCE OF ABORIGINAL ECONOMIES

One of the most noticeable aspects of the Royal Commission's analysis of native economic circumstances is that it vacillated between maintaining that aboriginal peoples were generally dependent on the one hand, and then decrying that such an assertion was a "stereotype" on the other. The Royal Commission, for example, argued that "the media have helped to bring the deplorable state of Aboriginal economies to the attention of Canadians and have also, on occasion, prodded governments to action. In the process, they have unfortunately created a stereotype".<sup>70</sup> In this instance, the Royal Commission asserted that this was a "stereotype" because "contemporary Aboriginal economies are quite diverse" and "vary across a wide spectrum, from predominantly traditional economies to modern market economies.

---

<sup>70</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 778.

They have varying levels of natural and human resources".<sup>71</sup> Such "diversity" included "comprehensive claims regions - such as the Inuvialuit region of the western Arctic, Nunavut and James Bay - where economies of considerable size and resource endowments are being built", Métis settlements in northern Alberta where "provincial legislation has created some if not all of the conditions required for economic development to be successful", and aboriginal communities like the Six Nations reserve in Brantford, Ontario, "where a dynamic small business sector has been created and where indices of unemployment and income are comparable to those of the surrounding area".<sup>72</sup> These economies, in the Royal Commission's view, varied substantially from the "many communities - rural and urban, Métis, Inuit and First Nation - where a self-sustaining economic base is far from being achieved" and where "the media stereotype of high unemployment, low incomes and reliance on transfer payments is the reality".<sup>73</sup>

But there are two problems with the Royal Commission's references to the "diversity" of aboriginal economies, and the use of the word "stereotype" to challenge the idea that the native population is generally dependent. The first was that the Royal Commission provided no quantitative analysis showing the extent to which aboriginal peoples participated in "modern market" economies, or how this related to native

---

<sup>71</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 778, 799.

<sup>72</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.778.

<sup>73</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.778.

dependency. No concrete data was provided by the *Final Report* on the "varying levels of natural and human resources" found within various aboriginal communities, making its statements about their "diversity" questionable. There was little evidence provided, in fact, even to support the assertion that the Inuvialuit, James Bay and Nunavut land claims agreements were building "economies of considerable size and resource endowments" - cases that will be discussed further in the following section. And with respect to the "[successful] economic development" occurring in the Alberta Metis Settlements and the "dynamic small business sector" that has lowered unemployment and raised incomes on the Six Nations Reserve in Brantford, no elaboration was forthcoming in the *Final Report*.

With the case of the Six Nations Reserve, in fact, there was virtually no analysis of its economy.<sup>74</sup> What descriptions there were involved references to the existence of various service agencies, most of which were government funded. These included: "Touch the Sky" consulting,<sup>75</sup> as well as a non-profit housing corporation that provided "revolving loan funds",<sup>76</sup> the provision of health services by a "Community

---

<sup>74</sup> The Royal Commission obtained its information on this community from a research study by David Newhouse et al, "The Six Nations Economy: Its Development and Prospects". This report is available at Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 154, File 7230-11.1, Volume 2.1.1.10.

<sup>75</sup> It is noted that this organization offers "specialized consulting services staffed by trained professionals who understand the requirements and values of these communities and are well versed in the disciplines of commercial enterprise". *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 893.

<sup>76</sup> With respect to housing on the Six Nations Reserve, it is pointed out that "band members can gain possession of a house and use a defined portion of reserve land according to the custom of the band or by being allotted a portion of land by the band council and given a certificate of possession or occupation by the minister. Many reserves in British Columbia and central and eastern Canada have

Health Review",<sup>77</sup> the "Six Nations of Grand River Forestry Program Project",<sup>78</sup> a cultural centre,<sup>79</sup> and a radio station.<sup>80</sup> It was also mentioned that the reserve was differentiated from non-aboriginal communities in that it did not have to pay municipal taxes<sup>81</sup> and there was considerable consumption of goods and services off

---

opted to use these certificates, which amount to deeds. Among First Nations like the Dene, the Crees of Quebec, the Algonquin and the Six Nations, individual ownership is common, with positive results". *Final Report*, 3, p. 390.

<sup>77</sup>In reference to these services, testimony is provided stating that "when we talk about health planning [for transfer] in First Nations, the first thing the government does immediately is to slot your concerns into 15 budget line items. They are asking us to do the health plan based on only these 15 items, and by no means does that help us to build a comprehensive health system. All they are interested in is their budget items and "how does your planning fit into our planning?"...We can do all the planning in the world, but Medical Services Branch has no money for enrichment of services. So no matter what kind of health plan we come up with, if we don't put it within the 15 budget line items, then it's up to us to come up with our own resources, or to handle those as best we can". Gloria Thomas, Six Nations Community Health Review, Brantford, cited in *Final Report*, 3, pp. 117-18. For a further discussion of this agency, see RCAP Transcripts, Brantford, Ontario, May 13, 1993, *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>78</sup>This was a regulatory framework that established "a multi-disciplinary natural resources department to develop a sustainable natural resource base according to Aboriginal needs and values and to protect it for all time" *Final Report*, 3, p. 200. This project is outlined in testimony by Robert Moore, a Program Manager for the Project. For a discussion of this see RCAP Transcripts, Brantford, Ontario, May 13, 1993, *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>79</sup>This is the Woodland Cultural Centre, which, among other things, participates in a program of the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board, which helps "qualified institutions to purchase artifacts by granting or lending up to two-thirds of the cost". *Final Report*, 3, p.593.

<sup>80</sup>The existence of this radio station is mentioned in the following testimony from the Royal Commission's hearings: "When the government drew that invisible line across the country and said that these communities north of this line need communication societies to preserve their languages, to preserve their songs, they gave them money for satellite networks, radio, printers for the newspapers and in the south we didn't get that. So when we started our radio station at Six Nations, we used that against the CRTC and told them that it was a form of genocide because they didn't give us the opportunity in the south to access those kinds of money so we could preserve our languages as well". Elaine Bomberry, Association for Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts, cited in *Final Report*, 3, p. 631. For a further discussion of this see RCAP Transcripts, Toronto, June 2, 1993, *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>81</sup>The Royal Commission notes that "the Township of Onondaga, which borders the large Six Nations reserve in southern Ontario, passed a resolution protesting any First Nation purchases of land outside reserve boundaries. While recognizing the right of all Canadians to buy and own land, the resolution opposes the right of Aboriginal people to purchase private property and have it become part of a reserve. The stated reason is the potential loss of municipal tax assessment and the effect of such loss on school funding and the provision of municipal services". *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 626.

the reserve.<sup>82</sup> There were no references to the community's unemployment rate or income levels, or how they compared to other aboriginal economies or the Canadian population more generally. It was not clear, therefore, how this community differed from others, and if it actually challenged the "stereotype" of "high unemployment, low incomes and reliance on transfer payments".

When one examines the research report that was used by the Royal Commission to inform its understanding of the Six Nations economy, in fact, it appears that its optimistic pronouncements were unwarranted. Although this report noted "the impressive economic performance of the Six Nations community" and that its economy was "very dynamic, has grown considerably in the past decade and now shows surprising diversity of occupations and firms",<sup>83</sup> these conclusions were not borne out by the evidence supplied throughout the document. Despite pointing to the reserve's close proximity to large markets in Canada and the United States and how "this has provided the community with a tremendous opportunity to sell their goods and services in the outlying areas", the report's findings indicated that the community's role with respect to the surrounding economy was as a consumer, not a

---

<sup>82</sup>The study by David Newhouse et al., is cited as arguing that "Six Nations was contributing about \$115 million yearly to the regional economy surrounding the community". David Newhouse et al., "The Six Nations Economy", cited in *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 847.

<sup>83</sup> David Newhouse et al, "The Six Nations Economy: Its Development and Prospects", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 154, File 7230-11.1, Volume 2.1.1.10., pp. I-II, 14.

producer.<sup>84</sup> This was why the community was not visible to communities close by, and with the exception of the cigarette trade, “considered...to be outside of and separate from the local regional economy”.<sup>85</sup> It also explained why the labour force “participation rate in Six Nations is much lower than that in Ontario and Canada”.<sup>86</sup>

The body of the report also did not show a “dynamic” economy with a “diversity of occupations and firms”. It was indicated, in fact, that the economy had a weak manufacturing sector and was dominated by government services and construction,<sup>87</sup> an economy which presumably required large infusions of external transfers to sustain.<sup>88</sup> The only “firms” engaged in production for external markets appeared to be those involved in the burgeoning cigarette trade. Although the report downplayed this activity in its initial summary, it went on to document the trade’s rapid emergence and how it was perceived by two economic development officers as “a vehicle for economic development”.<sup>89</sup> The increasing importance of the cigarette trade was due to the tax exempt status of aboriginal peoples living on reserves – a status that many community members felt could pave the way for improved social conditions.<sup>90</sup> It was

---

<sup>84</sup> David Newhouse et al, “The Six Nations Economy”, pp. 12, 59.

<sup>85</sup> David Newhouse et al, “The Six Nations Economy”, p. II.

<sup>86</sup> David Newhouse et al, “The Six Nations Economy”, p. 15.

<sup>87</sup> David Newhouse et al., “The Six Nations Economy”, pp. 13, 27.

<sup>88</sup> Newhouse et al. mention a number of government funded programs/institutions developed to supply the community with “capital” - Touch the Sky, Six Nations Development Corporation, the Lender Loan programs of major banks, and the Six Nations Circle Fund. Newhouse et al., “The Six Nations Economy”, p. 59.

<sup>89</sup> David Newhouse et al, “The Six Nations Economy”, pp. 31-34, 55.

<sup>90</sup> David Newhouse et al, “The Six Nations Economy”, pp. 40-41. This tax exempt status enables the Six Nations community to sell cigarettes at much lower prices than is possible in the rest of Canada.



noted that other members of the community, however, were critical of the cigarette trade because of a “general lack of community benefits, beyond the obvious creation of jobs and individual wealth”.<sup>91</sup>

Claims about the “dynamic” character of the Six Nations reserve also appeared questionable in the context of the poor social conditions documented in the community and the fact that it had a much lower quality of life index than was the case for Canada as a whole.<sup>92</sup> The report noted, for example, that the age structure on the reserve was one of “a typical less developed economy, characterized by high current and cumulative fertility rates, and high mortality rates among seniors”. It also pointed to a high incidence of single-parent households, large families and lower disposable incomes.<sup>93</sup> And while it was maintained that educational levels were higher than in most aboriginal communities, they were still below the Canadian average. More specifically, “65 percent of the respondents from Six Nations reported they did not have a high school diploma, compared to 43 percent in Ontario”. In addition, the educational gap with the rest of Canada tended to increase the higher the educational level examined.<sup>94</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup>Newhouse et al., “The Six Nations Economy”, p. 48.

<sup>92</sup>Newhouse et al., “The Six Nations Economy”, pp. 15, 46.

<sup>93</sup>Newhouse et al., “The Six Nations Economy”, pp. 20-21.

<sup>94</sup>Newhouse et al., “The Six Nations Economy”, p. 24.

Similar to its analysis of the Six Nations Reserve, the Royal Commission's claims about the Alberta Metis Settlements cannot be substantiated.<sup>95</sup> In the *Final Report*, the Royal Commission maintained that provincial legislation was supposed to have "created some if not all of the conditions required for economic development to be successful".<sup>96</sup> These conditions included the fact that "a substantial land area was transferred to the Alberta Metis settlements General Council in fee simple in 1990" and that the Metis in this area now have "fairly extensive power[s] to organize their economies at the community level and at the level of the regional general council". However, the Royal Commission noted that, like reserves, "strict protective mechanisms prevent the loss of settlement lands to outsiders". This, according to the Royal Commission, enabled these Metis settlements to "protect the land base" but inhibited them from "obtaining loans for economic development purposes, because the land and its assets cannot be pledged as collateral". It was also pointed out that while

---

<sup>95</sup>Twelve settlements were initially provided to the Metis on public land by the Alberta legislature in 1938, and 8 still exist. The Royal Commission maintains that "although some of the assumptions underlying their creation were condescending and racist, and although the initial arrangements were undemocratic, the Alberta Metis Settlements constituted the first (and still the only) assured collective Métis land base in Canada. After years of evolution toward greater autonomy, the settlements were substantially reorganized and entrenched in the Alberta constitution in 1990". *Final Report*, 4, p. 228. The Royal Commission's analysis of the formation and development of these settlement is based on two outside studies: T.C. Pocklington, *The Government and Politics of the Alberta Metis Settlements* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1991); and Catherine E. Bell, *Alberta's Metis Settlements Legislation* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1994).

<sup>96</sup>The Royal Commission claims to have acquired information on the Albert Metis Settlements' economies from a research study prepared by the Metis Settlements General Council, entitled "Aboriginal Economies Report", research study prepared for RCAP (1994), but this study is not listed in the research reports at the back of the *Final Report*. There is, however, another research study prepared by the Metis Settlements General Council entitled "Aboriginal Governance Project: Metis Settlements General Council", *For Seven Generations* and a brief prepared by the Council entitled "Metis Settlements General Council Aboriginal Economies Report", submitted February 1994, Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 153, File 7230-7.1, Volume 2.1.1.6.

the land base was more substantial than what existed on reserves, "subsurface rights remain with the province of Alberta", although negotiations regarding this are ongoing.<sup>97</sup> In addition, the Royal Commission asserted that the settlements lacked capital to start businesses or expand their farming operations,<sup>98</sup> a circumstance that was exacerbated by the Metis Settlements' legal protection against loss of land.<sup>99</sup>

The Royal Commission, however, offered no specifics about how these circumstances would enable "economic development to be successful". In fact, with many of the details listed above - restrictions on land ownership, a lack of capital, and an absence of subsurface rights – the picture was largely one of economic impediments rather than mechanisms to stimulate development.<sup>100</sup> The only support for the Settlements' economic "success" came from a statement by Ken Noskey, a member of the Metis Settlements General Council, who vaguely asserted that "the settlements have achieved significant things with this legislation and that it provides a stepping stone to greater autonomy and higher levels of economic and social development in our

---

<sup>97</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 810, 812.

<sup>98</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 906. For the problems the settlements are encountering with agriculture, see Richard Scott Fulham, "A Historical Review of Metis Agriculture and its Current Status in Canada", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 155, File 7238-2.1F, Volume Volume 2.9.1.

<sup>99</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 810.

<sup>100</sup> This is presumably why the Metis Nation is opposed to a similar settlement for themselves. The Royal Commission notes that "for the Métis Nation, the legal question of entitlement to its historical land base is of secondary importance since, even if legal extinguishment occurred, it was accomplished in such a fundamentally unjust and flawed manner that every principle of fairness demands the return of what was taken. In any case, they assert, a land base is a vital element of full nationhood. They regard the establishment of Alberta's Metis Settlements as a good but insufficient beginning to the restoration of their land base and demand that the process now be completed". *Final Report*, 4, p. 248.

communities".<sup>101</sup> Once again, therefore, the Royal Commission did not provide an example showing that the existing assumptions about native dependency were a "stereotype".

Most of the Royal Commission's discussion of the Alberta Metis Settlements, in fact, did not concern economic factors at all. Instead, the focus was on entrenching the settlements in the Constitution.<sup>102</sup> To this end, the Royal Commission provided two recommendations - Recommendation 4.5.4 and Recommendation 5.5.3. The former recommended that the draft legal text of the Charlottetown Accord with respect to the Metis Settlements of Alberta be entrenched, and the latter that "entrenchment of the Alberta Metis Settlements Act...form part of the constitutional agenda".<sup>103</sup>

A brief prepared for the Royal Commission by the Alberta Metis Settlements General Council also did not support its claims about the potential for "economic development to be successful". This report maintained that "the settlements vary considerably in the extent of their endowment of potential economic development opportunities" - a circumstance that was perceived to depend upon their natural resource wealth and

---

<sup>101</sup> Cited in *Final Report*, 4, p. 233. For a Ken Noskey's full testimony before the Royal Commission, see RCAP Transcripts, Elizabeth Metis Settlement, Alberta, June 16, 1993, *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>102</sup> See, for example, *Final Report*, 4, pp. 234; 382-3; 5, p. 127.

<sup>103</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 234; 5, p. 133.

proximity to centres of regional economic development.<sup>104</sup> The report, in fact, argued that the potential for economic growth was limited because the Metis only had surface rights to the land.<sup>105</sup> It also pointed out that many of the settlements were isolated from urban centres, requiring a number of businesses to be set up outside the settlement area to better access external markets.<sup>106</sup> These businesses, however, were not intended to give the settlements “greater autonomy and higher levels of economic and social development”. Instead, it was argued that the “federal government should provide sufficient financial support to the Settlement Investment Corporation,,so that there will be a sufficient capital pool to adequately finance the development of a settlement-based private sector”.<sup>107</sup> Most of the recommendations of this report were not oriented towards achieving greater “self-reliance”, but in obtaining additional government funds.<sup>108</sup>

In addition to its lack of evidence showing that the Six Nations Reserve and the Alberta Metis Settlements provided examples of how aboriginal communities varied in terms of their traditional/modern character and their "levels of natural and human resources", the Royal Commission's categorization of native "economic diversity" was

---

<sup>104</sup> Metis Settlements General Council, “Metis Settlements General Council Aboriginal Economies Report”, brief submitted February 1994, Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 153, File 7230-7.1, Volume 2.1.1.6, p. 53.

<sup>105</sup> Metis Settlements General Council, “Metis Settlements General Council...”, p. 40.

<sup>106</sup> Metis Settlements General Council, “Metis Settlements General Council...”, p. 67.

<sup>107</sup> Metis Settlements General Council, “Metis Settlements General Council...”, p. 4.

<sup>108</sup> Metis Settlements General Council, “Metis Settlements General Council...”, pp. 73-86.

also flawed. The Royal Commission maintained aboriginal economies were "diverse" because they were manifested in three distinct types - "First Nations reserve and rural Métis economies", "urban economies", and "northern economies".<sup>109</sup> These types, however, were not diverse in terms of their dependency.<sup>110</sup> The levels of dependency and impoverishment were actually similar in that they were much higher in all of the three types of economies that the Royal Commission identified than was the case for the non-aboriginal population.<sup>111</sup> This was, in fact, acknowledged by the Royal Commission, when it argued that "for Aboriginal individuals and families, whether they live in urban or rural areas, employment levels and income continue to lag far behind Canadian standards".<sup>112</sup> According to the Royal Commission, "the legacy of history is economies that are dependent rather than self-reliant and that offer labour force participation rates, incomes and levels of business development far below

---

<sup>109</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 806-823.

<sup>110</sup> The Royal Commission maintains that northern economies are "enormously diverse", but that they share "important fundamental structural features" in that "outside a few wage employment centres, the household-based mixed economy predominates: extended families share income in kind from gathering, hunting and fishing and cash income from occasional wage employment and social welfare transfers" (*Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 818-820). One of the research studies prepared for the Royal Commission does not accept that these economies are "diverse", and instead maintains that "the Northern Territories are and will always be exceptionally high cost regions for public administration. The problems of climate, distance, small and scattered population, limited economic development, and the need to maintain high quality public services interact to create such Northern disparity. A variety of other factors are hardly less temporary: reliance on fiscal transfers from the South, reliance on public sector employment and employment growth, lack of economic diversity, etc. Canadian governments must accept Northern disparity as a cost of Canadian unity and nationhood". Peter Jull, "Re-inventing Canada", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>111</sup> This is also concluded for aboriginal governments in a study prepared for the Royal Commission. The study, which examines four case studies that are argued to span a diversity of circumstances and therefore "hold generally for other Aboriginal governments", maintains that "Aboriginal governments are almost completely dependent upon revenue transfers". Torben Drewes and Harry Kitchen, "Current practices in financing aboriginal government", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>112</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 775.

Canadian averages", and that exceptions to this are "usually the result of advantageous location, particularly imaginative leadership, unusual resource endowments, or comprehensive claims agreements". It concluded that "in the absence of new approaches to economic development, this situation is not likely to improve, particularly given the large anticipated increase in the size of the Aboriginal working age population".<sup>113</sup> As the Royal Commission pointed out, relatively high birth rates within the aboriginal population meant that "even where some progress in employment is occurring on an absolute basis, these developments are being overwhelmed by demographic patterns, so that unemployment rates are rising, not falling".<sup>114</sup>

The "diversity" to which the Royal Commission referred, in fact, does not concern economic factors such as unemployment, poverty and a reliance on government transfers, but the structures of governance associated with the three types of economies it identified. Reserves and rural Métis communities, for example, both have "their own governments and a clearly delimited membership",<sup>115</sup> even though Métis communities had governments that were municipal in character and reserves were subject to the authority of the *Indian Act*.<sup>116</sup> Aboriginal peoples in the north, on the other hand, "have tended to prefer what has been called the 'public government'

---

<sup>113</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.800.

<sup>114</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.803.

<sup>115</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 807-08.

<sup>116</sup> The Metis exception to this pattern is again largely due to its political institutions and legal status. See, for example, *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 778, 810, 812.

model" of political institutions, where both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people can hold office. And unlike reserves/rural Métis communities and northern regions, urban native economies were considered separately by the Royal Commission because they had no forms of governance distinguishing them from the wider Canadian society.<sup>117</sup>

Using these distinct forms of governance to categorize aboriginal economies, however, obscured the main economic difference between them, impeding an evaluation of the Royal Commission's analysis of aboriginal dependency and deprivation. If one examines the type of economy in each, northern, reserve and rural Métis communities appeared far more similar to each other than to the urban economies in which nearly half of the native population in Canada lives. All of the former could be characterized as what the Royal Commission referred to as "mixed economies",<sup>118</sup> while the latter necessitated aboriginal participation in the wider Canadian economy, either as regular wage earners or entrepreneurs. The latter would become self-sufficient only by achieving a certain amount of economic and social

---

<sup>117</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 822.

<sup>118</sup> The term "mixed economy" generally refers to a capitalist economy that relies on both public and privately owned enterprises, but this term is referred to throughout the Final Report as a mixture of traditional harvesting, wage employment and social assistance. See, for example, Final Report, 2(2), pp. 818-820. This terminology is also used in a number of the Royal Commission's research studies, including: Michael Jackson, "A New Covenant Chain", *For Seven Generations*; Gurston Dacks, "Canadian Government and Aboriginal Peoples: The Northwest Territories", *For Seven Generations*; Gwen D. Reimer, "Case Study of an Inuit Economy", *For Seven Generations*; Sinaaq Enterprises, "Community Economic Case Study: Nain Labrador", *For Seven Generations*; Martin Weinstein, "The Ross River Dena", *For Seven Generations*; David DesBrisay, "The Impact of Major Resource Development Projects on Aboriginal Communities", *For Seven Generations*; and Frederick Weihs et al., "A Review and Assessment of the Economic Utilization of the Potential of Country Food in the Northern Economy", *For Seven Generations*.



integration with other Canadians, while the former were expected to develop economically by retaining geographic separation and political and cultural "autonomy".<sup>119</sup> This fundamental difference was recognized by the Royal Commission at one point in the *Final Report*, when it argued that "to understand the distinctive features of urban Aboriginal economies, it is useful to contrast them with the rural economies..." of native peoples. It noted that "First Nations reserves and, to some extent, rural Métis economies are 'enclave economies'", while "urban economies of non-reserve Aboriginal populations were more appropriately conceived of as 'interwoven economies'" where "it is often difficult to distinguish a distinct urban Aboriginal economic unit".<sup>120</sup>

#### FOCUSING ON ABORIGINAL "ENCLAVE ECONOMIES"

Although the Royal Commission pointed out that almost half of the aboriginal population resided in urban areas,<sup>121</sup> its main concern was with the "mixed economies" of the north and the "enclave economies" of reserves and rural Metis communities. In fact, the Royal Commission only devoted one chapter to urban areas,<sup>122</sup> while almost

---

<sup>119</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 590.

<sup>120</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 815. The Royal Commission draws this distinction between "enclave" and "interwoven" economies from a work by David Newhouse and Ken Paul, entitled "Indian Reserve Economies as Enclave Economies" (Peterborough: Department of Native Studies, Trent University, 1990).

<sup>121</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 814.

<sup>122</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 519-613. This is discussed later, this is also reflected in its research studies. Out of all the studies the Royal Commission obtained on native economic development, only four examine

all of Volume Two concerned "rebuilding" aboriginal "nations"<sup>123</sup> - 80 to 100 clusters of dispersed aboriginal communities that would provide aboriginal peoples with a "cultural homeland and viable economic base".<sup>124</sup> As the Royal Commission explained, "we suggest that the nation, rather than the local community, is the preferred unit of self-government. Each Aboriginal nation would govern its own people and require enough land to accommodate them...Aboriginal nations will need land, in some rough proportion to their numbers (which are on the increase, if current demographic trends persist), on which they are a majority and can maintain and promote their language, identity and culture and live their own way of life...".<sup>125</sup>

The Royal Commission's preoccupation with "national", "mixed", and "enclave economies was reflected in the studies it obtained that concerned the economic circumstances of the native population."<sup>126</sup> Research concerning the "economy"

---

aboriginal economic participation in urban communities. There are also no studies on the economy in its "Urban" Section of the research studies.

<sup>123</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.799.

<sup>124</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p. 6.

<sup>125</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p.6.

<sup>126</sup> For a categorized list of these studies see "Search by Theme and Project Area" - "Economy" and "North", on the CD-ROM produced by the Royal Commission, *For Seven Generations*. Some economic studies are not on the CD-ROM, however, and are only available from Library and Archives Canada. These appear in the Royal Commission's list of "Research Studies Prepared for the Commission", 5, Appendix D, pp. 306-24. The "Aboriginal Economies: Theory and Practice" subsection that are not available on the CD-ROM include Stephen Augustine, "Economic Profile of Big Cove", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 154, File 7230-15.1, volume 2.1.1.14; First Nations Consultants, "Aboriginal Economic Development in Canada: A Policy Paper", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 151, File 7220-2.1; Jean Knockwood, "A Case Study in Grassroots Economic Development from a First Nations Perspective", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 142, File 7156-14.1; David Newhouse et al., "Six Nations Economy", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 154, File 7230-11.1, Volume 2.1.1.10.; Roxanne Warrior,

generally was divided into three "project areas", two of which focused on "national"/"mixed"/"enclave" economies - studies of particular aboriginal communities/regions and native participation in natural resource industries. And while eight studies were devoted to a third project area examining "Employment of the Aboriginal Labour Force", only two studies offered a general analysis of aboriginal underrepresentation<sup>127</sup> since the other reports either just documented the extent of native unemployment across Canada<sup>128</sup> or were concerned with one barrier to

---

"Case Study of the Economy of the Peigan Nation", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 153, File 7230-6.1, Volume 2; and Westcoast Development Group, "Aboriginal Economic Development Institutions", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 151, File 7220-3.1. For the "Aboriginal Employment and Economic Development in Natural Resource Industries" project area (#2), five studies are not on the CD-ROM. These include Parzival Copes et al., "West Coast Fishing Sectoral Study", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 155, File 7238-3.1C; Richard Scott Fulham, "A Historical Review of Metis Agriculture", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 155, File 7238-2.1F, Volume 2.9.1; Begley Consulting, "Oil and Gas Sectoral Study", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 156, File 7238-7.1, volume 2.9.6; GTA Consultants, "Aboriginal Fisheries in the Maritimes", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 155, File 7238-3.1G; and William J. Hatton, "Metis Involvement in Northern Saskatchewan Mining", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 156, File 7238-4.1H, Volume 2.9.3. In the case of "The Northern Economy", the studies missing from the CD-ROM include Ignatius La Rusic, "Subsidies for Subsistence", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 152, File 7220-9.1; Jon Pierce and Robert Hornal, "Aboriginal People and Mining in Nunavut, Nunavik and Northern Labrador", October 1994, Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 179, file 7474-4.1, volume 5.2.4.3. A study is also missing from "Land Resource and Environment Regimes" pertaining to the north - Letha MacLachlan, "Northern Comprehensive Claims Agreements", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 181-182, File 7506-5.1. Although this report is at the archives it has a "closed" status and is being withheld from the public.

<sup>127</sup>Del C. Anaquod, "Aboriginal Training, Education & Employment", *For Seven Generations*; and Corinne Mount Pleasant Jetté, "The Dynamics of Exclusion - Discrimination and other Barriers Facing Aboriginal Peoples in the Labour Market", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>128</sup>Stewart Clatworthy, Jeremy Hull and Neil Loughran, "Patterns of Employment, Unemployment and Poverty", *For Seven Generations*; and Peter George, Peter Kuhn and Arthur Sweetman, "Patterns of Employment, Unemployment and Poverty", *For Seven Generations*.

employment - access to child care.<sup>129</sup> In its economic studies of aboriginal communities/regions, no research was specifically devoted to urban areas as a category, while northern economies were a major focus of research.<sup>130</sup>

National/"mixed"/"enclave economies were also the main concern of a special Roundtable that was held by the Royal Commission to specifically examine the problem of aboriginal dependency.<sup>131</sup>

As a result of this research focus, the Royal Commission stressed the need to develop aboriginal "nations" because of the "importance of collectivity" and the desire for "holistic solutions" in aboriginal cultures. Past government policies to address aboriginal dependency failed, according to the Royal Commission, because they "emphasize[d] individual advancement and integration into the broader Canadian economy more than rebuilding Aboriginal economies and all that entails".<sup>132</sup>

Therefore, the Royal Commission "favours integrated, holistic approaches to development", which involved funding "activities that, while not focusing directly on economic development, still have a significant effect on it. These activities include education, improving overall levels of health, developing positive cultural identities,

---

<sup>129</sup> Clare Wasteney, "Aboriginal Child Care in Ontario and Quebec", *For Seven Generations*; Elizabeth Lightford, "Child Care in the North", *For Seven Generations*; Conrad Saulis, "Regional Overview of Aboriginal Child Care in Atlantic Canada", *For Seven Generations*; and Judith Colbert, "Child Care Literature Search and Recommendations", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>130</sup> These studies can be found in the "North" section of the CD-ROM *For Seven Generations*' listing of "research reports".

<sup>131</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Sharing the Harvest - The Road to Self-Reliance* (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1993).

<sup>132</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 797-8.

and building and maintaining infrastructure and services for communities and families". It argued that to achieve this "some of the most important steps that need to be taken involve the collectivity - for example, regaining Aboriginal control over decisions that affect their economies, regaining greater ownership and control over the traditional land and resource base, building institutions to support economic development, and having non-Aboriginal society honour and respect the spirit and intent of the treaties, including their economic provisions".<sup>133</sup> In the Royal Commission's opinion, "the forces that created economic marginalization" within the native population were due to the fact that "certain conditions essential for economic development were ignored over time". These included "the economic provisions in the historical treaties; the freedom for Aboriginal people to manage their own economies; and a fair share of the land and resource base that sustained Aboriginal economies in the past".<sup>134</sup> According to the Royal Commission, "economic development will be curtailed" if these areas were not addressed.<sup>135</sup>

In order to build these economies, therefore, the Royal Commission mostly focused on two areas - increasing aboriginal ownership over, and access to, land and resources<sup>136</sup>

---

<sup>133</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.777.

<sup>134</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.776.

<sup>135</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.800.

<sup>136</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 994. This is shown by the Royal Commission devoting an entire chapter on "Lands and Resources" (*Final Report*, (2(2), pp. 421-774).

and giving aboriginal organizations more control over economic development<sup>137</sup> to increase employment and develop businesses opportunities.<sup>138</sup> To achieve the first goal, the Royal Commission advocated the reinterpretation of treaties so that their original "spirit" can be restored<sup>139</sup> and the recognition of aboriginal rights.<sup>140</sup> As the Royal Commission explained, "an obvious starting point on the road to self-reliance is the fulfillment of treaty promises and the conclusion of modern treaties...in areas where such agreements have not been made".<sup>141</sup> These treaties were necessary, according to the Royal Commission, because "the single most important factor in the medium term will be the restoration to Aboriginal peoples of fair shares in the lands and resources of this country". The Royal Commission acknowledges that increasing aboriginal lands and resources "is likely the most contentious aspect of a strategy to achieve economic self-reliance, yet the one whose absence would make the prospect of meaningful economic change for Aboriginal communities an empty expectation".<sup>142</sup>

This was because aboriginal

---

<sup>137</sup> Although discussions of this appear throughout the Royal Commission's Final Report, its most comprehensive analysis of this area appears in its "Governance" chapter - *Final Report*, (2(1), pp. 105-419.

<sup>138</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 778, 828, 994.

<sup>139</sup> For an extensive elaboration of the Royal Commission's arguments concerning the importance of treaties, see its chapter on this subject - *Final Report*, (2(1), pp. 9-104.

<sup>140</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 832, 994.

<sup>141</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.829.

<sup>142</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.827. See also *Final Report*, (2(2), pp. 557, 574-8) for additional arguments pertaining to this point. Also, Recommendations 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 2.4.4 all discuss the need to "provide the land and resource base that Aboriginal nations require for self-government and self-reliance". *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 619.

lands and resources were taken from them by the settler society and became the basis for the high standard of living enjoyed by other Canadians over the years. Only a small proportion of Canada's resource income has come back to Aboriginal people, most in the form of transfer payments such as social assistance. This has never been, and is not now, the choice of Aboriginal people. They want to free themselves from the destructive burden of welfare and dependency. But to do this they need to have back some of what was taken away. They need land and they need resources.<sup>143</sup>

The Royal Commission argued that "the loss of the lands and resources on which First Nations economies traditionally depended severely undermined the capacity to maintain economic self-sufficiency".<sup>144</sup> It also maintained that "unresolved land and resource issues" were the source of many of the social problems currently being experienced by the aboriginal population.<sup>145</sup>

"Meaningful economic change" and improved social conditions would be brought about, the Royal Commission argued, because increasing lands and resources would give the native population leverage to obtain royalties<sup>146</sup> and "guarantees of employment benefits" when corporations extracted resources from these lands.<sup>147</sup> To achieve this, land claims should focus on "securing a significant continuing source of revenue for Aboriginal claimants", rather than "as a way of spreading cash

---

<sup>143</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p.5.

<sup>144</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.970.

<sup>145</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.684.

<sup>146</sup> Two sectors that the Royal Commission discusses extensively with respect to royalties are the development of water resources (*Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 662-3) and oil and gas extraction (*Final Report*, 2(2), p. 643).

<sup>147</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 433, 632, 643, 827.

compensation over a longer period of time", as has occurred in the past.<sup>148</sup> This could be achieved through mechanisms such as governments "giv[ing] preference in awarding licenses to natural resource companies that pursue joint ventures, mak[ing] special training and employment commitments or commit[ting] to major contract work with an Aboriginal community or business".<sup>149</sup> The Royal Commission pointed out that "transportation, mining, and oil and gas in particular have received massive public subsidies in the last 40 years", but that this resulted in little full-time employment for aboriginal peoples.<sup>150</sup> Such a circumstance could be changed, in the Royal Commission's opinion, by requiring companies to employ aboriginal residents of the area.<sup>151</sup>

Besides increasing employment and the royalties derived from resource extraction, the Royal Commission also maintained that more lands and resources were necessary for aboriginal peoples pursuing traditional activities. As has been discussed earlier, because hunting and gathering cannot increase yields, a larger land base is required to sustain this activity.<sup>152</sup> The Royal Commission maintained that "traditional economies

---

<sup>148</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 538.

<sup>149</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 645.

<sup>150</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 821.

<sup>151</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 643.

<sup>152</sup> The Royal Commission also maintains that "Aboriginal peoples require greater physical space than non-Aboriginal people to maintain their cultures and to protect their quiet and symbolic places - places of autonomy where they can reassert authority over their economic, social and political futures. For the same reason, Aboriginal peoples also require a greater share in decision making about activities occurring on the parts of their traditional territories currently treated as ordinary Crown land" . *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 557.



must be supported, not only for their intrinsic value but also because there are very few alternatives in many northern communities". According to the Royal Commission, "[subsistence] activities remain a vital component in the mixed economies of northern communities, a preferred way of life for their participants, and an important wellspring of Aboriginal culture and identity".<sup>153</sup> It argued that

subsistence activities are economically productive as a source of income in kind, and they provide nutritious and highly valued food such as fish and wild meat, for which there is often no import replacement... Without this subsistence base, the informal sector of the mixed subsistence-based economy that typifies many communities becomes largely non-viable. Subsistence, in its broadest sense, is also a key means of reaffirming Aboriginal identity and of intergenerational transmission of skills and values... subsistence is part of a social and cultural system. Family ties form the basis of its social organization; kinship is in turn reinforced by hunting, fishing, harvesting and sharing.<sup>154</sup>

And instead of viewing subsistence practices as a hindrance to capitalist resource extraction, as has been the case in the past, the Royal Commission viewed them as an enhancement to a "mixed economy". As the Royal Commission explained,

---

<sup>153</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 778-9. This is also the view of a number of research studies. See, for example, Gwen D. Reimer, "Case Study of an Inuit Economy", *For Seven Generations*; Martin Weinstein, "The Ross River Dena", *For Seven Generations*; David DesBrisay, "The Impact of Major Resource Development Projects on Aboriginal Communities", *For Seven Generations*; Frederick Weihs et al., "A Review and Assessment of the Economic Utilization of the Potential of Country Food in the Northern Economy", *For Seven Generations*; Marc G. Stevenson, "Traditional Inuit Decision-Making Structures and the Administration of Nunavut", *For Seven Generations*. The opposite view, however, is provided in another study. This study maintains that "territorial Natives depend on a mixed economy comprising wage employment, harvesting of country food and transfer payments from government. While this economy suffices in a minimal sense, the low per capita income it generates contributes to the culture of poverty and to the poor housing and lack of fulfillment and hope that in turn have fed serious social problems among the Native people of the territories. These include high levels of conflict with the law, suicide, infant mortality and substance abuse". Gurston Dacks, "Canadian Government and Aboriginal Peoples: The Northwest Territories", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>154</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.463. For a similar argument see also *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 820.

"traditional' production does not preclude participation in the wage economy. On the contrary, hunting, fishing, gathering and trapping can be complementary to the northern wage economy, particularly as that economy moves through boom and bust cycles".<sup>155</sup> Such arguments about "traditional production" being "complementary", however, assumed that a high level of unemployment already existed in these areas.

While land and resources were perceived as necessary to make self-government meaningful,<sup>156</sup> it was also maintained that self-government would aid economic development and the rebuilding of aboriginal economies. This second major area that the Royal Commission focused on to rebuild aboriginal economies - increasing aboriginal control over economic development - was to be achieved "over the medium to long term" by "locating authority and resources to support economic development in the hands of appropriate Aboriginal institutions at the level of the Aboriginal nation and community".<sup>157</sup> The Royal Commission argued that increased control should also be facilitated "in the interim" by pressuring "federal, provincial and territorial governments to enter into economic development agreements with Aboriginal

---

<sup>155</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 822. This view is also put forward in the research study Frederick Weihs et al., "A Review and Assessment of the Economic Utilization...", *For Seven Generations*. For an overview on the different views in the literature about the relationship between traditional practices and a market economy see David DesBrisay, "The Impact of Major Resource Development Projects in Aboriginal Communities", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>156</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p.5.

<sup>157</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 778, 994. For additional discussions of this point see also *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 799, 827.

governments, or institutions representing them, to provide multi-year funding for Aboriginal-controlled economic development programs and projects".<sup>158</sup>

There were a number of reasons the Royal Commission offered to support this assertion. The first was that aboriginal peoples themselves believed this to be the case.<sup>159</sup> Numerous quotations were offered from aboriginal spokespeople who claimed that self-government is a necessary prerequisite to achieving self-sufficiency.<sup>160</sup> George Rich of the Innu Nation in Davis Inlet, for example, maintained that "to live on our land for periods of time throughout the year continues to be of central importance to maintaining our culture. We are a hunting people...In the country, we have the skills passed to us from our mothers and fathers. In the country, we are the teachers, passing on Innu skills to our children. It will be a major role of the Innu government to do whatever is necessary to ensure that our rights to use and occupy our lands are protected". Rich then went on to state, without any further elaboration, that the previous sentences "are examples of what Innu government means. I think it is obvious how recognition of Innu government and the Innu rights will lead to political and economic self-sufficiency. Recognition of our

---

<sup>158</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 994.

<sup>159</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 795-8.

<sup>160</sup> This argument is continually made in the Royal Commission's Public Consultation Reports. The Royal Commission's *Focusing the Dialogue, Discussion Paper No. 2* (April 1993), for example, maintains that "Self-government is the way forward and the main source of hope for Aboriginal people. It is the key to renewing the vigour of communities and societies, a prerequisite for ending the cycle of poverty and despair, and a means of enhancing both the self-respect of Aboriginal people and mutual respect between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people".

rights means recognition of our nationhood, and recognition of our nationhood brings all we need to be politically and economically self-sufficient".<sup>161</sup>

The Royal Commission also supported such assertions with the dubious reasoning that because the intervention of past non-Aboriginal governments resulted in the destruction of aboriginal economies, non-intervention would consequently enable them to be rebuilt. It argued that the economic benefits of self-government could be supported simply by "point[ing] to the historical record and trac[ing] the decline of Aboriginal economies from the time aboriginal people lost the power to control the shape, pace and direction of economic change. That record is replete with decisions made by non-Aboriginal governments or by the private sector that harmed the economic health of Aboriginal communities. These decisions systematically undermined the land and resource base of Aboriginal nations, virtually destroying their economies".<sup>162</sup> The actions of the aboriginal leadership, on the other hand, probably would be more effective, in the Royal Commission's view, since it was "more likely to have the commitment required to make development initiatives succeed and to mobilize the support of its communities".<sup>163</sup>

---

<sup>161</sup> George Rich, cited in *Final Report*, 2(2), p.464.

<sup>162</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.833.

<sup>163</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 833.

Another reason the Royal Commission provided was that increasing aboriginal control would mean less bureaucratic red tape and duplication of programs and services.<sup>164</sup> This would also, according to the Royal Commission, enable "aboriginal communities to stabilize the funding of economic development institutions" since they could "change public spending priorities to achieve a better balance between long-term economic development and short-term spending to remedy or alleviate social problems".<sup>165</sup> Decision making could be made more efficiently, since a distant bureaucracy would no longer be involved in the process.<sup>166</sup> Aboriginal administrators could spend their time helping entrepreneurs instead of filling out forms.<sup>167</sup> This view, however, seemed to be contradicted by the Royal Commission when it maintained that self-government required "the development of formalized rules and procedures so that things are done and are seen to be done in an accountable and fair manner"<sup>168</sup> and any economic development agreements signed should be "subject to audit on a biannual basis, with a report to Parliament through the responsible department".<sup>169</sup>

---

<sup>164</sup> This is also the view of one of the research studies, which notes that "it is widely held that the net impact of the activities of senior governments has been to inhibit economic development due to bureaucratic red tape, institutional rigidities and the diminution of incentives for development and job training that has arisen out of a reasonably generous welfare system which has created and perpetuated a form of economic welfare trap". Gary N. Tompkins et al., "La Loche Community Case Study, Final Report", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>165</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 834.

<sup>166</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.833.

<sup>167</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 836.

<sup>168</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.841.

<sup>169</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.837.

Finally, and most importantly, the Royal Commission maintained that aboriginal control was needed to achieve self-sufficiency because the "diversity" of aboriginal economies meant that no one solution would fit all communities.<sup>170</sup> As the Royal Commission explained, "in the economic realm, as in governance, it is necessary to make room so that Aboriginal people can develop their own solutions" and take responsibility for their actions.<sup>171</sup> It would also mean that "decisions about economic development would be culturally and situationally appropriate".<sup>172</sup> The Royal Commission argued that "Aboriginal people would like their economies to be structured in accordance with Aboriginal values, principles and customs, contributing to the development and affirmation of aboriginal culture and identity. This includes having the freedom to develop economies in accordance with Aboriginal visions of the goals and processes of development".<sup>173</sup> For aboriginal peoples, the Royal Commission asserted, "economic development is about much more than individuals striving to maximize incomes and prestige, as many economists and sociologists are inclined to describe it. It is about maintaining and developing culture and identity;

---

<sup>170</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 799.

<sup>171</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 777.

<sup>172</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 833, 837. This view is also present in the research study David Milne, "The Case of New Brunswick-Aboriginal Relations", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>173</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.780. This view often entails a "critique of...modernist assumptions" of "the modernization model", through the use of the "subsistence/adaptation" model. This model "rejects the modernist assumption of a traditional economy being replaced by a modern industrial one" and "advances a view of a dynamic subsistence-based economic and social system that has adapted to and incorporated modern influences". It claims that "development should allow Aboriginal people to adapt to change in a way that reflects Aboriginal values. Furthermore, it should be built on the foundation of a strong land-based economy to which these values are inherently tied". David DesBrisay, "The Impact of Major Resource development projects...". *For Seven Generations*. For another study challenging the assumptions behind the modernization model, see Peter Jull, "Re-inventing Canada: The North and National Policy", *For Seven Generations*.

supporting self-governing institutions; and sustaining traditional ways of making a living. It is about giving people choice in their lives and maintaining appropriate forms of relationship with their own and with other societies".<sup>174</sup> It noted that "given the diversity of Aboriginal economies, their paths to interdependence and self-reliance may differ. Self-reliance can be practised by following the migrating caribou herd across Labrador, by pursuing a mix of part-time wage jobs and harvesting resources from land and sea, or by conventional wage or entrepreneurial activity".<sup>175</sup>

Besides enabling aboriginal groups to determine the balance between subsistence and market oriented activities in their communities, the Royal Commission claimed that self-government would also allow aboriginal communities to decide what kind of modern economy they would like to develop. The Royal Commission pointed out that "aboriginal people are fully aware that, in addition to supporting traditional economies, new forms of economic activity are required for the future, including resource-based industries, manufacturing and services, if self-sufficiency and self-

---

<sup>174</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.780. One research study notes, for example, that "In order for the forms of self government to work...they must be discharged by institutions that achieve 'a match between the formal institutions of governance on the one hand and the culture of the society on the other'". These institutions, therefore, must respect the diversity of aboriginal traditions and cannot be imposed by outsiders, reinforcing "the logic and legitimacy of the drive for aboriginal self-government in Canada". David Milne, "The Case of New Brunswick-Aboriginal Relations", *For Seven Generations*. This is also the view of another research study, which maintains that "the north is the most culturally diverse region in Canada" and therefore "something is needed other than a uniform process for all northerners". It also argues that since "northerners face a number of severe social and economic problems...individuals in communities and regions in the north are the best resource to be used in tackling these problems". Mark O. Dickerson and Robert Shotton, "Northern self-government and subsidiarity", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>175</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.826.

government are to become a reality".<sup>176</sup> However, it maintained that aboriginal peoples want to develop resources, manufacturing and services "according to their own culturally grounded visions of development".<sup>177</sup> The Royal Commission implied that aboriginal peoples, for example, may choose not to maximize production, develop enterprises based on economies of scale<sup>178</sup> or "[favour] efficiency in resource use above other considerations",<sup>179</sup> as was the case for past resource management regimes. Instead, aboriginal peoples might want to focus on "human capital investment rather than individual capital accumulation".<sup>180</sup> The Royal Commission maintained, in fact, that besides increasing the amount of "market opportunity" and "access to financial capital"<sup>181</sup> in aboriginal communities, one of the most important factors in achieving self-sufficiency was the fit between an aboriginal community's culture and the type of economic development that was pursued.<sup>182</sup> This was because, according to the Royal Commission, "as the fit between the culture of the community and the structure and powers of the governing institutions becomes better, the more legitimate the

---

<sup>176</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p.8.

<sup>177</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 833. This objective criteria, however, is resisted in a number of research studies prepared for the Royal Commission. For example, a case study on Pangnirtung notes that "when projects like the Misuviq Centre or the Day-Care Centre were unable to continue without government subsidy, they were judged to be failures and were closed down. The government had no means of auditing such ventures in terms other than those defined by an industrial economy and lacked devices to measure benefits to the domestic and informal economies, or to the society and culture of Inuit communities. Federal contribution and loan programs tend also to be rigorous about demonstrated business abilities and profit projections". Gwen D. Reimer, "Case Study of an Inuit Economy", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>178</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.632.

<sup>179</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 525-6.

<sup>180</sup> See David R. Newhouse, "Modern Aboriginal Economies: Capitalism with an Aboriginal Face", *Sharing the Harvest*, p.91. The Royal Commission bases this argument on Newhouse's article.

<sup>181</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p.8.

<sup>182</sup> See Joseph P. Kalt, "Sovereignty and Economic Development on American Indian Reservations: Lessons from the United States", *Sharing the Harvest*, pp. 46-8 for an elaboration of this argument.



institutions become and the more able they are to regulate and organize the development process".<sup>183</sup>

At the same time, however, the Royal Commission stressed that "economic development of Aboriginal communities cannot occur in isolation from the rest of the Canadian economy". According to the Royal Commission, "Aboriginal people are saying that they want to develop economies that are largely self-reliant and sustaining, not in the sense of being independent from trade networks or other economic systems but in the sense of being in a position to give and receive fair value in economic exchanges. Economies should provide not just the basis for survival but also an opportunity to prosper and to help build a sense of accomplishment and self-worth for the individual and collective".<sup>184</sup> It noted that this would require them to "create and manage enterprises that can harvest resources and manufacture the goods and services that generate income and wealth", which, in turn, "will depend critically on the development of business acumen and organization".<sup>185</sup> To develop the necessary skills, the Royal Commission maintained that "Aboriginal people must participate in federal, provincial and local economic planning mechanisms (such as economic development commissions, economic planning boards, local economic task forces), and that "genuine partnerships with the non-Aboriginal private sector...[should] be

---

<sup>183</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 824-5.

<sup>184</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 779.

<sup>185</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 828.

encouraged".<sup>186</sup> It also pointed to the need for aboriginal people to complete their education, since "a foundation in traditional knowledge and proficiency in the professional and technical skills of contemporary society will build self-reliance". Finally, it suggested "partnerships between Aboriginal and other governments, employers and educational institutions, together with the innovative approach to employment brokering and on-the-job training..." to increase the number of aboriginal peoples in the workforce.<sup>187</sup>

But despite these claims about the need for aboriginal communities to be connected to the Canadian economy, most of the initiatives proposed by the Royal Commission had nothing to do with supplying goods and services outside aboriginal communities. In fact, "organiz[ing] the development process" appeared to be one of the major opportunities for expanding employment in aboriginal communities. Either through what has been called "co-management", where "governments and Aboriginal people share responsibility for resource development",<sup>188</sup> or with the development of separate aboriginal institutions of governance, numerous jobs were to be created for aboriginal

---

<sup>186</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 800. As an initiative to be emulated, the Royal Commission points to the Canadian Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy (CAEDS). This strategy "provides equity contributions to aboriginal businesses, capitalizes and supports the activities of regional Aboriginal capital corporations, and sustains community economic development organizations on reserves and Inuit communities. In addition, the Pathways program sponsors national, regional, and local area management boards, composed of representatives from Aboriginal communities that make decisions about the allocation of training dollars for Aboriginal people" (*Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 836).

<sup>187</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 828.

<sup>188</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p. 7.

peoples on various boards.<sup>189</sup> This was why with each demand of the Royal Commission that governments "should actively promote Aboriginal involvement in [resource] management and planning", there was a stipulation that public funds should be supplied to facilitate their participation.<sup>190</sup> The Royal Commission, in fact, even referred to financial support for such initiatives as "nation building".<sup>191</sup> A program designed for aboriginal economic development was deemed to be a success because it, among other things, "sponsors national, regional, and local area management boards, composed of representatives from Aboriginal communities that make decisions about the allocation of training dollars for Aboriginal people".<sup>192</sup> This program was also promoted because it had increased the employment of aboriginal peoples "through the establishment of boards that control or advise on decisions and the advent of Aboriginal institutions in fields such as education, the disbursement of loans, and community development".<sup>193</sup> The Royal Commission lauded the "increasing influence of aboriginal people over the development process and related government policy" with reference to the creation of a number of committees and boards, because it maintains that these organizations have led to "significant growth in the institutional

---

<sup>189</sup> This phenomenon has been noted by classical liberals like Melvin Smith, who argued that "over the past 20 years, the people of the North have become what observers call 'board junkies'. In an economy with few job opportunities for the minimally educated, board appointments are a way to earn good per diems, frequent travel opportunities, and direct political influence". Smith, *Our Home or Native Land?*, p.36.

<sup>190</sup> See, for example, *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 641, 675, 680, 950.

<sup>191</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 642..

<sup>192</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.836.

<sup>193</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 836.

capacity of Aboriginal communities to further the process of socio-economic development".<sup>194</sup>

Self-government further increased employment in aboriginal communities by transferring the delivery of public services to native organizations. One of the main demands of self-government was that aboriginal people in the communities, not outside professionals, should staff administrative positions. Although this demand was usually justified with references to the need for aboriginal peoples to gain "control over their affairs" and have "culturally relevant" programs and services, it was through such initiatives that native labour force participation was increased. This was why the federal government's encouragement of "bands to assume responsibility for providing programs and services" resulted in the fact that "local jobs have been created in band and social service administration".<sup>195</sup> It also explains why the Royal Commission argued that "in the northern parts of the provinces and in the rest of the territorial north, as control over institutions is devolved and self-governing institutions are developed, more wage employment opportunities will be created". The Royal Commission maintained that "provided these jobs are created with aboriginal

---

<sup>194</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.798.

<sup>195</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 813. It is also pointed out that in the north, the public sector is "a more stable source of employment". According to the Royal Commission, nearly half the labour force in the territorial North is employed directly by federal, territorial and local governments. Most of these public service jobs are held by non-Aboriginal people, many of whom were drawn to the North by employment opportunities. The proportion of Aboriginal public service employment increases in local and regional government offices and is least noticeable in senior and technical positions in the capital cities and regional centres". *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 821.

employment in mind, self-government could assist in the diversification and development of northern regional economies for many years to come".<sup>196</sup> It went on to point out that most of the jobs available in the north were in the public sector and so "public service wages represent a very large proportion of the cash entering the community", making it so that "even small reductions in government spending are noticeable".<sup>197</sup> Increasing aboriginal employment in isolated areas, therefore, was not to be achieved by making native communities more productive; it was most likely to occur by increasing aboriginal representation in the public sector.

Although it could be argued that this would reduce aboriginal dependency by lowering the requirements for social assistance payments, this view ignores that additional bureaucratic jobs are often created with the development of self-government institutions. This was the case with the creation of Nunavut, a case that will be discussed below, when two territorial governments were needed instead of one (one for what is now the Northwest Territories, and the other for Nunavut). Furthermore, many of the people who will fill the newly created positions obtain them because of their family connections, not because they have the necessary skills.<sup>198</sup> As a result, other positions, staffed by qualified Non-Aboriginals, are needed to ensure that basic

---

<sup>196</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.823.

<sup>197</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 821. For a similar point see also RCAP, 2(2), p. 801.

<sup>198</sup> This problem is referred to by the Royal Commission with the euphemism the "inappropriate mix of politics and business". For a discussion of this, see *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 843. It is also discussed by anthropologist Edward Van Dyke, who taught "cultural awareness" courses for the Northwest Territories government in the 1990s. Edward W. Van Dyke, "Families in Other Cultures" (Calgary: Bear Spike Productions, 1988), p. 2.

services are provided. All this requires additional government transfers, without the increase in productive capacity that is needed to offset them.<sup>199</sup>

The main mechanism that the Royal Commission proposed to achieve the goals of obtaining more lands and resources, exerting more control over their development, and forming successful businesses, was through the settlement of land claims.<sup>200</sup>

According to the Royal Commission, "recent comprehensive claims settlements provide for a wide range of Aboriginal benefits from resource development outside their community lands, as well as guaranteed roles for Aboriginal governments in planning and managing Crown land activities".<sup>201</sup> It argued that these claims were "providing access, in varying degrees, to new human, financial and natural resources for economic development".<sup>202</sup>

But was there evidence that the provisions of land claims settlements enabled the native population that negotiated them to become more self-reliant? After all, most of the land claims settlements that have been negotiated were in areas far away from where most Canadians live. And even if some aboriginal economies were lucky enough to have ownership/access to lands with valuable resources, this was no

---

<sup>199</sup> A good example of this occurred in the formation of the Nunavut territory. Although it was assumed that most jobs in Nunavut would need a university education, 50 percent of the workforce is staffed by Inuit even though half the population has not even completed high school.

<sup>200</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p.7.

<sup>201</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.645.

<sup>202</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 776.

guarantee that the costs of maintaining these communities could be covered by resource extraction.<sup>203</sup> To determine if land claims settlements had their desired effect, it would be necessary to examine how a few have been implemented and if they have reduced aboriginal dependency. In order to do this, the three land claims where the Royal Commission asserted that "economies of considerable size and resource endowments are being built" - the Inuvialuit region, Nunavut and James Bay/Northern Quebec/Northeastern Quebec - will be analyzed in more detail in the next chapter. An analysis of these land claims will also be used to better understand the differences between aboriginal peoples living in native communities and those that have moved to the cities.

---

<sup>203</sup>The Royal Commission points out, for example, that "at present, mineral revenues from reserve lands are a significant source of wealth for some Indian people, although revenues have fallen drastically since the boom years of the late 1970s and early 1980s, when they amounted to as much as \$200 million annually. Almost all the revenues derive from oil and natural gas on certain reserves in Alberta". *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 490.

## **Chapter Nine**

### **The False Promise of Parallel Aboriginal Economies**

In its examination of land claims, the Royal Commission repeatedly referred to four settlements as being the most successful at rebuilding aboriginal economies - the Inuvialuit claim in the Western Arctic, the Nunavut settlement, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and the Northeastern Quebec Agreement. As was mentioned earlier, these areas were specifically referred to by the Royal Commission as being exceptions to the generally impoverished and dependent character of aboriginal economies.<sup>1</sup> Besides this assertion, the Royal Commission also used these agreements as evidence that "comprehensive claims negotiations over the last two decades...have demonstrated that the results of this process can have a major impact on the resources available to Aboriginal communities for economic development and other purposes", including "an expanded land and resource base" over which aboriginal peoples can exert control and "cash transfers and support for education and training".<sup>2</sup> The Inuvialuit, Nunavut and northern Quebec claims were even given as examples of "proof that more territory and jurisdictional authority will have a dramatic effect on Aboriginal nations' ability to achieve economic, cultural and political self-sufficiency".<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 778.

<sup>2</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 830. See also, *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 422 for a similar point.

<sup>3</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 558.



A more qualified version of this argument was also offered a little later in the Royal Commission's economic development chapter:

two relatively new developments in northern Canada are having an important positive economic effect: the advent of land claims settlements and the realization of a degree of political self-determination. Negotiation of comprehensive land claims settlements has led to the introduction of stable infusions of capital to certain regions of the North and the creation of Aboriginally controlled organizations to manage these funds. Although the overall amounts are not great enough to transform local economies, they have put the means for sustained, diversified economic development in Aboriginal hands.<sup>4</sup>

But what effect have these "stable infusions of capital" and "Aboriginally controlled organizations" had on native dependency in the north? How were they "proof" of "Aboriginal nations' ability to achieve economic, cultural and political self-sufficiency"? And what has been the "major impact" that these land claims settlements have had on economic development in these areas?

In order to understand the effects of these agreements, this section will provide a preliminary analysis of the James Bay/Northern Quebec and Northeastern Quebec, Inuvialuit and Nunavut claims. These four agreements have been chosen because the Royal Commission asserted that they have been the *most* successful initiatives so far in addressing aboriginal dependency. If there were evidence that these agreements

---

<sup>4</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.822.

have not been particularly effective in this endeavour, then the whole strategy of settling land claims and negotiating self-government agreements to increase native self-reliance would be thrown into question. The Inuvialuit and Nunavut claims also had the advantage of having in-depth statistics compiled on individual communities that were very accessible, and so government spending in these areas could be more easily tracked than in claims in the rest of Canada.<sup>5</sup> This was because community development was a high priority for both territorial governments, since the native population made up a large proportion of these areas.

#### *The James Bay and Northern Quebec and Northeastern Quebec Agreements*

The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (1975) and the Northeastern Quebec Agreement (1978) were the first land claim agreements, or "modern treaties", signed in Canada. The Agreements were out of court settlements responding to litigation brought forward by the Inuit of Nunavik (14 communities in northern Quebec represented by the Northern Quebec Inuit Association {reorganized to become the Makivik Corporation in 1978}),<sup>6</sup> the James Bay Crees (comprising eight communities

---

<sup>5</sup> Two websites, one for the Northwest Territories ([www.stats.gov.nt.ca](http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca)) and the other for Nunavut ([www.stats.gov.nu.ca](http://www.stats.gov.nu.ca)), offer detailed statistics for the communities of each region.

<sup>6</sup> A study prepared for the Royal Commission notes that the total Inuit population in these communities during 1990 was 7222, which includes Kuujjuaraapik (478); Umiujaq (313); Inukjuak (1,025); Povungnituk (1,034); Akulivik (364); Ivujivik (159); Salluit (789); Kangirsujuaq (418); Quaqtak (229); Aupaluk (130); Tasiujaq (130); Kuujuaq (1,192); Kangirsualujuaq (535); Chisasibi Inuit (57). Marc Malone and Carole Levesque, "Nunavik Government", *For Seven Generations*.

represented by the Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec),<sup>7</sup> and the Naskapi (one community represented by the Naskapi Band of Quebec {Kobac Naskapi-Aeyouch}),<sup>8</sup> in opposition to hydroelectric development in the region. In exchange for extinguishing their title to their traditional lands, the Royal Commission noted that the Crees and the Inuit have been granted title to certain lands and preferential rights on others, a monetary settlement in lieu of royalties,<sup>9</sup> a subsidy program for hunters and trappers, and regimes for environmental protection and wildlife management. The land claims agreements also led to Parliament's passing of the Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act in 1984, "conferring a form of delegated self-government on the Cree and Naskapi peoples of Quebec", as well as the Quebec government's *Act Concerning Northern Villages and the Kativik Regional Government*, which established two levels

---

<sup>7</sup> There is no research study prepared for the Royal Commission that lists all the Cree communities that are signatories to the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. Piecing together a number of different reports, it appears that these communities are as follows: Chisasibi; Wemindji; Eastmain; Waskaganish; Nemaska; Waswanipi; Mistissini; and Oujébourgoumau. Whapmagoostui is also mentioned, but it is not clear if this is a region or a community. No population figures are mentioned for any of these communities. One research study, however, notes that the eight Cree and one Naskapi community have a total population of over 11,000. John Giokas, "The Indian Act", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>8</sup> In 1978 a Northeastern Quebec Agreement was also entered into between the same non-Aboriginal parties and the Naskapi Band of Quebec, amending the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. The Naskapi originally considered themselves to be a third party, but chose to negotiate in 1978 to avoid being left out of the 1975 Agreement. For a further discussion of this see Paul Joffe and Mary Ellen Turpel, "Extinguishment of the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples: Problems and Alternatives", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>9</sup> It is not clear from the *Final Report* what the amount of this compensation was. At one point it is noted that \$90 million was given to the Inuit (*Final Report*, 4, p. 432), but there is no mention of the compensation provided to the Cree or Naskapi. One research study provided to the Royal Commission, however, maintains that James Bay Cree were paid \$125 million over 50 years (David DesBrisay, "The impact of major resource development projects...", *For Seven Generations*), while another maintains that "the JBNQA provided for a cash settlement of \$75 million (as part of the total monetary compensation of \$225 million) given in place of royalties from the development of the region's natural resources" (John Olthuis and H.W. Roger Townsend, "Is Canada's thumb on the scales?", *For Seven Generations*). Melvin Smith states that the Cree and Inuit were awarded \$225 million in financial compensation, and the Naskapi \$9 million. Melvin Smith, *Our Home or Native Land?*, p.14.

of government in the area of northern Quebec inhabited by the Inuit. The Royal Commission noted, however, that the powers granted in these agreements were only those of municipalities, and not the wider arrangement sought that "would restore [aboriginal peoples] to the self-governing status they enjoyed before the Gradual Enfranchisement Act of 1869".<sup>10</sup>

But what has been the effect of these provisions in creating "sustained, diversified economic development" and ensuring "economic, cultural and political self-sufficiency" in the region? According to the Royal Commission, these agreements reduced dependency for both the Crees and Inuit that signed the agreement (the Naskapi are not mentioned).<sup>11</sup> With respect to the Inuit signatories, the Royal Commission maintained that "there can be no question that Quebec Inuit are more self-sufficient than their neighbours". This was because the neighbouring Labrador Inuit "have no formally recognized lands of their own, no guaranteed rights to resources outside their communities and no share in the governance of their traditional

---

<sup>10</sup> Final Report, 1, p. 317. This comment was made with respect to the Cree-Naskapi Act, but the Royal Commission also maintains that "The Kativik Regional Government (KRG) is recognized as a municipal corporation by the Act Concerning Northern Villages and the Kativik Regional Government, which also provides the legal framework for the fiscal arrangements between Kativik and the Quebec government". (*Final Report*, 2(1), p. 414).. This view is supported by a research study that maintains that "regional and local governments run by the Cree and the Inuit with jurisdiction over Category 1 lands, have been created largely as municipal governments" (John Olthuis and H.W. Roger Townsend, "Is Canada's Thumb on the Scales", *For Seven Generations*), but is contradicted in another that argues that the new law replaces the Indian Act, and therefore "gives [the Cree and Inuit] more control over their lands and governance powers not ordinarily available to municipalities and thus constitutes a first legislative step toward greater self-government". Marc Malone and Carole Levesque, "Nunavik Government", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>11</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 558-59.

land-use areas". The Royal Commission maintained that the same is true for the Cree signatories of the James Bay Agreement, in contrast to the Cree in northeastern Ontario (one of the groups that signed Treaty 9). The Royal Commission argued that the former were more self-reliant because they had "more economic tools at their disposal to improve the lot of their communities", including "more land, more rights to resources and more capital". The Cree of Treaty 9 in Ontario, in contrast, only had limited rights to hunt, fish and trap on Crown lands outside their reserves.<sup>12</sup> They also lacked the income security program for hunters and trappers that the Cree in Quebec negotiated under their land claims agreement.

As a result of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, the Royal Commission asserted that the "Crees and Inuit in Quebec now have more economic tools at their disposal to improve their lot, and have used some of the proceeds of a land claims settlement to acquire and develop businesses". This was because, in the Royal Commission's view, "when Aboriginal people control resources and the businesses that exploit them, a larger part of the income generated is likely to remain in the region instead of being transferred to urban centres. The result is that more money is spent locally, and in turn more jobs and greater business activity are generated".<sup>13</sup> It was

---

<sup>12</sup> The Royal Commission points out, for example, that "inhabitants of Peawanuck (Winisk) on the western James Bay coast, which is located within a provincial park, require a work permit from an Ontario ministry of natural resources office several hundred kilometres away if they want to cut down trees to build a trapper's cabin on their traditional lands". *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 559.

<sup>13</sup> This program is lauded in a research study prepared for the Royal Commission by Frederick Weihs et al.. In this study, Weihs et al. maintain that "the effectiveness of a support program designed

this interpretation of the northern Quebec land claims settlements that led the Royal Commission to conclude that the solution for aboriginal dependency was "providing Aboriginal nations with enough territory to facilitate economic, cultural and political self-sufficiency...".<sup>14</sup> It argued that land claims would facilitate "economic opportunities for Aboriginal people [that] have not yet been widely recognized", including

develop[ing] world markets for entirely new and unique products in cultural tourism, the arts, specialty foods, clothing, pharmaceuticals, sports and recreation, as well as in the construction and service industries. Many new jobs can be created as a result of an increase in two-way trade with neighbouring communities and wider outside markets. Given a growing land base and more investment funds from further claims settlements, coupled with self-government, a better-educated work force and healthy communities, there is a potential for a major turnaround in the economic fortunes of Aboriginal people.

But the Royal Commission just detailed the various additional rights and programs that aboriginal peoples in northern Quebec received; it did not show the *effects* that these land claims provisions have had on reducing aboriginal dependency in the region. Have unemployment and social assistance rates been reduced as a result of these provisions? Was the standard of living higher and the incidence of social dysfunction lower? What was the nature of the "sustained, diversified economic

---

specifically for harvesting households has been demonstrated by the experience of the Cree in James Bay with the Income Security Program for Hunters, Trappers and Fishermen. This program has provided the basis for a healthy domestic economy, which ensures an adequate supply of country food for the Cree communities and maintenance of a healthier overall economic and social life for the communities". Frederick Weihs et al., "A Review and Assessment of the Economic Utilization and Potential of Country Food in the Northern Economy", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>14</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 559.

development" that supposedly has been created? And, most importantly, how have these agreements affected government transfers to the region?

Unfortunately, this kind of information was not forthcoming in the Royal Commission's Final Report. The Royal Commission, in fact, focused largely on three areas - the land rights that have been granted,<sup>15</sup> the environmental and wildlife management regimes created,<sup>16</sup> and the nature of the hunting and trapping subsidy programs.<sup>17</sup>

Although these initiatives might have improved aboriginal peoples' standard of living (this was not something the Royal Commission substantiated, however), it is hard to see how they would contribute to "sustained, diversified economic development" or "economic...self-sufficiency", as the Royal Commission asserted.<sup>18</sup> The only two

---

<sup>15</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 720-1. The Royal Commission devotes most of the discussion of this agreement to land ownership and resource rights. It notes that the Crees and the Inuit were "allocated an area of 'primary interest' (basically their traditional land use areas or traditional territories) and an area of 'common interest' (overlapping land use area)". According to the Royal Commission, "primary interest" lands amounted to 35,000 square kilometres for the James Bay Cree and 56,000 square kilometres for the Inuit. These areas were further divided into Category I (lands for the exclusive use and benefit of the Aboriginal signatories; Quebec retains mineral rights, but aboriginal peoples in the region were granted exclusive use of forestry resources), Category II (lands that are accessible by others for development and the province of Quebec retains title over these lands, although the Crees and Inuit share in the management for hunting, fishing, trapping, tourism, and forestry), and Category III lands (unique provincial public lands, where both aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples can hunt and fish but aboriginal peoples have the exclusive right to hunt certain species. Aboriginal peoples in the region also participate in the management in these lands, and environmental assessments are required for certain projects). *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 720-22.

<sup>16</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 735-6; 4, pp. 451-2.

<sup>17</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 986-988; 4, 479-80.

<sup>18</sup> The Royal Commission, for example, notes that the Cree hunters and trappers support program is a success because it "involves the Cree people directly in program design, recognizes and supports

areas of the economy that these initiatives would stimulate, in fact, are wildlife harvesting and the public sector, which are not productive. Most wildlife harvesting, for example, just provides food for aboriginal communities; it does not produce the surplus that is needed to sustain a diversified and self-sufficient economy today. And even the Royal Commission's arguments about increasing self-sufficiency through the provision of "country food" (so as to reduce welfare payments) are questionable when one considers the costs of pursuing "traditional lifestyles" in the modern context. To hunt, fish and trap today, aboriginal peoples rely on modern technology such as rifles, snowmobiles, powerboats, pick-up trucks, and even airplanes. As a result of these costs, "hunter support" programs are now needed to subsidize this traditional "way of life".<sup>19</sup>

---

economic activity that provides meaningful work, and contributes to a diversified economy that is in harmony with the land, the seasons and the people who live and work in these communities". It also argues that both the Cree and Inuit hunting and trapping subsidization programs "appear to be operating to the benefit of the claims agreements beneficiaries" because they "provide a better solution to the shortage of cash than social assistance, which can erode individual self-esteem. Hunter and trapper income support programs provide a strong income multiplier through the production of food, are a spur to economic development of communities by placing money directly in the hands of those in the community who are in need and are in turn most likely to spend it in the community, and are likely to be cheaper than alternative programs when all are taken into account". *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 987.

<sup>19</sup> For the Cree program in 1992-1993, "the guaranteed income was \$3,240 for the head of the 'beneficiary unit' (family, defined in broad terms) and an additional \$3,240 for the 'consort' (partner). There is also a per diem portion that can be collected to a maximum of 240 days, at \$38.27 per day. Any wage earnings over the guaranteed annual income reduce the guaranteed income by 40 per cent of the wages earned. For example, a harvester earning \$5,000 in the wage economy would receive a reduction in guaranteed annual income of \$2,000 (40 per cent of \$5,000). Payments are made in advance to allow harvesters to prepare and purchase the equipment needed to harvest. Program costs in 1992 were \$14.8 million, according to the Cree Hunters and Trappers Income Security Board. There were 1,214 beneficiary units, representing 3,018 individuals, in 1992. The benefit per unit in 1991-1992 was \$11,719.194". *Final Report*, 4, p. 479,



It is apparent from the information provided by the Royal Commission, in fact, that most of the employment being created will be in the public sector. This is due to the large bureaucracy that has emerged with the implementation of these land claims agreements.<sup>20</sup> The land administration, wildlife management/environmental regimes, and the self-government agreements all required that numerous boards and councils be formed.<sup>21</sup> The Royal Commission, however, did not discuss increased aboriginal employment with respect to these bodies, even though a study prepared for it cited McCutcheon (1991) as reporting that "the creation and growth of an Aboriginal bureaucracy after the James Bay Agreement has reached the point where it now

---

<sup>20</sup> This is noted as a problem by the Royal Commission, when it points out that there has been "excessive bureaucratization [in northern land claims agreements], as Aboriginal organizations followed patterns established by non-Aboriginal governments and established a large presence in northern economies". *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 822. One study was prepared for the Royal Commission discussing this - Letha MacLachlan's "Northern Comprehensive Aboriginal Claims Agreements", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 181-182, File 7506-5.1. However, this file currently has a "closed" status and is being withheld from the public.

<sup>21</sup> The following bodies have been created with the implementation of the land claims and self-government agreements: Land Administration and Economic Development: James Bay Regional Council, James Bay Development Corporation, Cree Regional Authority, Grand Council of the Crees, Cree landholding corporations, Kativik Regional Government, Makivik Corporation, Inuit Village Corporations; Environmental/Wildlife Management Bodies: James Bay Advisory Committee on the Environment (JBACE), Evaluating Committee (COMEV), Environmental and Social Impact Review Committee (COMEX), Environmental and Social Impact Review Panel, North and South Divisions (COFEX), Kativik Environmental Advisory Committee (KEAC), Federal Screening Committee (FSC), Kativik Environmental Quality Commission (KEQC), Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Coordinating Committee (HFTCC), Anguvigaq Wildlife Management (disbanded in 1988, due to lack of funding), Hunters and Trappers Income Security Board(s); Self-Government Bodies: Cree Housing Authority, Cree Construction Company, Cree Trappers Association, Cree Arts and Crafts Association, Cree School Board, Cree Health Board, Cree Regional Board of Health and Social Services, Cree-Naskapi Commission, Health and Social Services Consultative Committee (Naskapi), Kativik School Board, Kativik Regional Development Council, [Kativik] Regional Health and Social Services Council. This list of bodies was drawn by studying the references provided in the Final Report and reviewing a number of research studies prepared for the Royal Commission, including Paul F. Wilkinson and Maria Vincelli, "The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement: An Evaluation and Implementation of Its Environment Regimes", *For Seven Generations*; and Marc Malone and Carole Levesque, "Nunavik Government", *For Seven Generations*. For a discussion of the demise of the Anguvigaq Wildlife Management association see Lorraine F. Brooke, "Experiences of the Inuit of Nunavik with Wildlife Management and the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement", *For Seven Generations*.

provides most of the region's permanent employment opportunities".<sup>22</sup> These "employment opportunities" were to be extended further in the case of the Inuit of northern Quebec, which, at the time the Royal Commission's *Final Report* was released, were negotiating the development of a public government in Nunavik, complete with a legislative assembly, bureaucracy and judiciary.<sup>23</sup> Since the entire population of Nunavik consisted of just 8,000 people, the proportion of public sector jobs to the citizenry will be unusually large by Canadian standards.

Besides these bureaucratic developments and the promotion of hunting, fishing and trapping, the only mention of "economic diversification" concerned aboriginal peoples' preferential access to outfitting licenses and traditional materials for arts and crafts (for example, soapstone).<sup>24</sup> Forestry and mining were referred to only in the context that aboriginal peoples have not been able to acquire the legal mechanisms to block development in these sectors.<sup>25</sup> There was only one area of the *Final Report* that referred to "economic development ventures". This reference occurred with respect to the Inuit in northern Quebec, where it was maintained that

---

<sup>22</sup> David DesBrisay, "The Impact of Major Resource Development Projects on Aboriginal Communities", *For Seven Generations*. The report cited by DesBrisay is Sean McCutcheon, *Electric Rivers: The Story of the James Bay Project* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1991). This report is also referenced by the Royal Commission, but only in terms of the decline in traditional food sources for the aboriginal groups in the James Bay Region. *Final Report*, 3, p. 191, note 195.

<sup>23</sup> For a discussion of these developments, see Marc Malone and Carole Levesque, "Nunavik Government", *For Seven Generations*; and Wendy Moss, "Inuit Perspectives on Treaty Rights and Governance", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 722. This is also outlined in a research study, which notes that the Cree have been granted preferential rights " 1) to hunt, fish and trap; 2) to commercial fisheries; 3) to determine if and under what conditions non-native people may hunt and fish; 4) to establish and

investment revenue from the [James Bay and Northern Quebec] agreement's original pool of compensation capital has funded considerable applied research into economic development prospects and the creation of strategically positioned, Inuit-owned companies. For example, most recently Nunavik Arctic Foods (NAF) was incorporated as a subsidiary of Makivik Corporation. NAF harvests, processes and sells northern meat products, creating jobs in at least four communities and providing cash income to harvesters.

No data was presented, however, to evaluate the number of jobs that have been created or the cash income provided.<sup>26</sup>

The Royal Commission's focus on hunting, trapping and fishing, as well as legal rights, administrative structures, and subsidies, reflected the research studies that were commissioned on these agreements. A number of studies, for example, extensively

---

operate outfitting operations; and 5) to soapstone and other traditional materials for arts & crafts" (John Olthuis and W.H. Roger Townsend, "Is Canada's thumb on the scales?", *For Seven Generations*).

Another study - Paul Joffe and Mary Ellen Turpel, "Extinguishment of the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples", *For Seven Generations* - also discusses some of these economic provisions.

<sup>25</sup> Alan Penn notes that a provincial government body "acquired the mineral rights under most of the Cree communities (the transfers of Category I lands did not, in any case, involve subsurface rights)" and that "Québec successfully excluded the Cree from direct economic participation in the forest products industry, and exempted forestry operations from impact assessment. Alan Penn, "The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement: Natural Resources, Public Lands, and the Implementation of a Native Land

Claim Settlement", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>26</sup> No research studies prepared for the Royal Commission mention Nunavik Arctic Foods, although one study does refer to the fact that "Makivik Corporation has supported small scale entrepreneurs in establishing commercial country food ventures focused on the northern market. There is a country food store in Kuujjuaq, and small commercial fisheries have been established for char in the George River area, and for salmon in the Koksoak River and the Whale River". It is also noted that "a small-scale, commercial fish processing plant was established in Waswanipi [a Cree community that is a signatory of the JBNQA]". This plant, however, must be subsidized since "the commercial fish harvest last year was close to 75,000 pounds", but "the plant needs to sell between 100,000 and 150,000 pounds of fish to break even". This is because "the fish is marketed through Montreal, but high transportation costs, inadequate storage facilities, and lack of other basic infrastructure make it difficult to reach the market. The plant is currently trying to develop a market among restaurants and non-native residents in the region". It is noted that the plant is Cree owned and all the employees are Cree. Data on the number of employees or their income, however, is not provided. Frederick Weihs et al., "A Review and Assessment of the Economic Utilisation and Potential of Country Food...", *For Seven Generations*.

examined the land rights that were granted, especially with respect to wildlife harvesting.<sup>27</sup> There were detailed discussions of "primary interest" (traditional land use areas) and "secondary interest" lands (overlapping land use areas), and the fact that the former were divided into three different categories (some which have subsections) in terms of their legal character and preferential access to resources that they allowed. Two studies were also specifically commissioned on the wildlife management and environmental regimes in the Agreements. These studies detailed the effectiveness of numerous administrative structures and political bodies created or strengthened by the land claims settlements.<sup>28</sup> There were many research studies detailing the activities of the various self-government bodies. Several studies also examined the hunters and trappers subsidy programs in the region.<sup>29</sup>

Although there was very little discussion of the economic circumstances in the research studies prepared for the Royal Commission on the region, the brief analysis

---

<sup>27</sup> One research study by Alan Penn - "The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement: Natural Resources, Public Lands, and the Implementation of a Native Land Claim Settlement", *For Seven Generations* - was specifically devoted to this subject. For studies that also examine this area see Kent McNeil, "Aboriginal Governments and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms", *For Seven Generations*; John Olthuis and W.H. Roger Townsend, "Is Canada's Thumb on the Scales?", *For Seven Generations*; and John Giokas, "The Indian Act", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>28</sup> Lorraine F. Brooke, "The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement: Experiences of the Nunavik Inuit with Wildlife Management", *For Seven Generations*; and Paul F. Wilkinson and Maria Vincelli "The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement: An Evaluation of the Implementation of its Environmental Regimes", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Christopher Fletcher and John O'Neil, "The Inuulisivik Maternity Centre", *For Seven Generations*; Marc Malone and Carole Levesque, "Nunavik Government", *For Seven Generations*; Alan Penn, "The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement", *For Seven Generations*; John Giokas, "The Indian Act", *For Seven Generations*; Vicky Barham and Robin Boadway, "Financing Aboriginal Self-Government", *For Seven Generations*; and Peter J. Usher, "Contemporary Aboriginal Land, Resource, and Environment Regimes: Origins, Problems, and Prospects", *For Seven Generations*.

that occurred did not support the Royal Commission's assertions about the "success" of the James Bay land claims agreements. In general it was maintained that "...there has been a failure to provide a secure land and resource base of any significant size, or to achieve integrated or holistic resource management" and that "the beneficiaries of [the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement] have not been able to play an effective role in the planning and development of their settlement regions."<sup>30</sup> It was also revealed that the Agreements have not reduced government transfers since "by far the largest share of the provincial payments made for and on behalf of Aboriginal peoples are to the three above-mentioned groups: the 11,277 Cree, the 6,960 Inuit and 488 Naskapi)", even though these groups only constituted 28 per cent of Quebec's aboriginal population.<sup>31</sup>

These circumstances were also noted in discussions pertaining specifically to the Cree and the Inuit in the region. In the case of the Cree, one study noted that their economies "have grown considerably more complex", but this "complexity" has resulted in a "very striking fiscal dependency on the Federal and Provincial governments", where "Cree society finds itself in an increasingly marginal, enclaved position in northwestern Québec, increasingly dependent, and increasingly disturbed

---

<sup>30</sup> Usher, "Contemporary Aboriginal Land...", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>31</sup> Goss Gilroy Inc., "Federal, territorial and provincial expenditures...", *For Seven Generations*.

by socially and culturally limited prospects for the future".<sup>32</sup> This study went on to state that the peripheral involvement of Cree communities in the major sectors of the Quebec economy

may, from a government perspective, not be problematic in the short term. In the longer term, however, the situation may be very different. The larger communities, such as Chisasibi and Mistissini [sic], face a difficult future. Limited prospects for economic diversification beyond the public sector, and limited prospects for further expansion of subsistence harvesting, raise the intractable issue of the future employment of the growing fraction of the population that cannot readily be absorbed either into the (externally supported) public sector or into subsistence food production. Is it in the longer range interest of Québec to allow native communities on the geographical periphery to become increasingly marginal in this manner?<sup>33</sup>

This lack of progress in decreasing the Crees' dependency, according to another study, was because the James Bay Agreement was largely oriented towards preserving the existing hunting economy, and so it "was not designed around the needs of an expanding and diversifying Aboriginal society and did not address the problems of equity and participation in the subsequent development of natural resources in the

---

<sup>32</sup> Alan Penn, "The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement", *For Seven Generations*. This is also noted in a study by Peter Usher, which maintains that "Implementation experience suggests that the Cree communities are regarded by [the Quebec government] as non-participating enclaves in regional economic and social development. In this respect, there is not much change from the situation that characterizes the historic treaty areas". Usher, "Contemporary Aboriginal Land...", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>33</sup> Penn, "The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement", *For Seven Generations*.

James Bay territory".<sup>34</sup> This resulted in there being little permanent employment being created for the Cree in the first phase of the hydroelectric development.<sup>35</sup>

A number of research studies reported that the same situation existed for the Inuit of Nunavik. In a section entitled "The Economic Setting" in its study on Nunavik government for the Royal Commission, for example, Marc Malone and Carol Levesque paint a bleak picture of the economy of the region. They maintained that "despite an expanding income base, related to the one-time boom in public sector jobs following implementation of the JBNQA in 1975, there is no savings base to speak of in Northern Quebec" and "Inuit spend 92 per cent of their income on goods and services alone".<sup>36</sup> It was also noted that "the Nunavik job market remains highly unbalanced, with rates of activity far below southern standards; this in turn leads to reliance on transfers".<sup>37</sup> Another study noted that these transfers tended to be high on a per capita basis because of the isolation of the region, which was said to constitute "an island off the coast of Quebec" with "no road network linking the communities or providing access to southern Quebec; maritime services are irregular and risky, and accordingly air services, while expensive, supply the only reliable bridge to the

---

<sup>34</sup> John A. Olthuis and H.W. Roger Townshend, "Is Canada's thumb on the Scales?", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>35</sup> One research study notes, for example, that "according to an advisor to the Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec, the first phase of the James Bay development has resulted in only five permanent jobs for the Cree...". David DesBrisay, "The impact of major development projects...", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>36</sup> Marc Malone and Carole Levesque, "Nunavik Government", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>37</sup> Malone and Levesque, "Nunavik Government", *For Seven Generations*.

outside world". This led to a very high cost of living in comparison to southern Quebec communities. It was concluded that "the region's climate, its distance from urban centres, and its small, highly-dispersed population -- only three communities have more than 1,000 residents -- together lead to very high costs in the provision of public services".<sup>38</sup> The "own-source revenues" used to fund these public services, noted the same study, are not derived "from taxes on significant local tax bases", but from outside transfers. Therefore, Nunavik is almost completely dependent upon the federal and Quebec governments.<sup>39</sup>

The Royal Commission's assertions about "success" of the James Bay agreements in bringing about "sustained, diversified economic development" and "economic...self-sufficiency" also have not been supported by outside sources. Daniel Salée, for example, maintained that "official statistics show that the standards of living and economic conditions of Cree and Inuit communities are poorer now than before the construction of the La Grande project was undertaken...the economic spin-offs have been limited and Cree communities have to contend with an unemployment rate in excess of 25 per cent at a time when 1,600 young Crees of working age are expected to flood the local labour market in a few years...".<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Torben Drewes and Harry Kitchen, "Current practice in financing aboriginal government", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>39</sup> Drewes and Kitchen, "Current practice in financing aboriginal government", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>40</sup> Daniel Salée, "The politics of recognition in Quebec", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 18/2 (April 1995), p. 287. Salée bases this claim on two sources: Bruno Bisson, "La convention de la Baie James n'aurait pas



Despite the Royal Commission's enthusiasm for the "success" of the James Bay land claims agreements in reducing dependency, therefore, no support for these claims existed in the *Final Report*, the Royal Commission's research studies or outside sources. These agreements, however, only concerned two attempts to build an "economic base" in aboriginal communities. In order to explore further the validity of the Royal Commission's claims, it is necessary to examine the other agreements that were identified as being significant in improving aboriginal self-reliance. These two agreements were the Inuvialuit Final Agreement in the western Arctic, and the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement in the eastern Arctic.

### *The Inuvialuit Final Agreement*

The Royal Commission characterized the Inuvialuit region in the western Arctic as a "relatively rich mixed economy" because of the "fur and petroleum" industries located in the area.<sup>41</sup> In its overview of the Inuvialuit land claim, which was finalized in 1984,<sup>42</sup> the Royal Commission argued that the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement* "is enabling

---

amélioré les conditions économiques de Cris", *La Presse*, December 4, 1991, p.A4; and Bruno Brisson, "L'économie des Cris est en voie d'asphyxie", *La Presse*, January 7, 1991, p. A1.

<sup>41</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.818.

<sup>42</sup> The Royal Commission largely uses three sources in its examination of the Inuvialuit claim: Lindsay Staples, "The Inuvialuit Final Agreement", *For Seven Generations*; Letha MacLachlan, "Northern Comprehensive Claims Agreements", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 181-182, File 7506-5.1. (designated "closed"); and Janet M. Keeping, *The Inuvialuit Final Agreement* (Calgary: Faculty of Law, University of Calgary, 1989). It also commissioned a study by the Inuvialuit Regional Council, entitled "Political Developments in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region" (Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 142, File 7156-16.1, Volume 1.5.1.15) and invited Roger T. Gruben, the Chairman of the Inuvialuit Regional

[the Inuvialuit] to build their communities and economy". It maintained that while "Aboriginal title to lands and resources has been extinguished", the "Inuvialuit have secured a sizeable land base that they - not the department of Indian affairs - control" and have "obtained a share in the management of resources on Crown lands throughout the entire region covered by the agreement".<sup>43</sup> As a result, according to the Royal Commission, "Inuvialuit have already experienced the effects on well-being of adequate lands, resources and political powers". This effectiveness, in the Royal Commission's view, was indicated by the fact that the Inuvialuit are "building their own communities and expanding their economic interests beyond the region and settlement area - using funds from the settlement to invest, for example, in enterprises in Edmonton, Vancouver and other urban centres".<sup>44</sup> Other comments included the assertion that the "Inuvialuit...have been using the money from their land claims settlement to buy property in urban areas as an investment"<sup>45</sup> and that they were able to benefit from economic development because they had "a land base, guaranteed access to resources, and powers of governance...".<sup>46</sup>

More specifically, the Royal Commission noted that the Inuvialuit Final Agreement "recognized Inuvialuit title to 91,000 square kilometres of land in the western Arctic

---

Corporation at the time, to produce a paper on the Inuvialuit land claim for its National Round Table on Aboriginal Economic Development and Resources. This paper is reproduced as "The Land and the Resource Base", *Sharing the Harvest*, pp. 51-60.

<sup>43</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.680.

<sup>44</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.681.

<sup>45</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 627.

<sup>46</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 684.

and provided compensation of \$152 million for the surrender of other land and \$17.5 million for economic development and social programs". Of the 91,000 kilometres of Inuvialuit title, it was also pointed out that "Inuvialuit hold full surface and subsurface rights to approximately 12,800 square kilometres...and the surface rights to sand and gravel over another 78,200 square kilometres...".<sup>47</sup> The lands giving Inuvialuit surface and subsurface rights were mostly distributed near the six communities in the region - Aklavik, Holman, Inuvik, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, and Tuktoyaktuk<sup>48</sup> - in chunks of approximately 1,700 square kilometres, but also "a single block of approximately 2,000 square kilometres of fee simple absolute title in Cape Bathurst was conveyed". In addition, "Inuvialuit have achieved a share in the management of resources on Crown lands throughout the entire settlement region".<sup>49</sup>

Ownership of these lands enabled the Inuvialuit to extract resources themselves or to charge rents when the resources were developed by non-Inuvialuit corporations or governments. As well, if developers required a right of way through Inuvialuit lands "they are required to deal directly with the Inuvialuit administration commission and negotiate participation agreements, including rents for surface use, compensation and

---

<sup>47</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.723.

<sup>48</sup> The Royal Commission does not identify all six communities in its report, referring only to five in a footnote (*Final Report*, 2(2), p. 771)

<sup>49</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 558. For a description of the different blocks of lands over which the Inuvialuit were given title, see Peter J. Usher, "Contemporary Aboriginal Land, Resource, and Environment Regimes: Origins, Problems, and Prospects", *For Seven Generations*.

other benefits".<sup>50</sup> Existing holders of resource rights on Inuvialuit lands "are entitled to exercise such rights without alteration or interruption until such licenses or permits terminate", but on the conditions that "Canada remits to Inuvialuit any rents, fees or other payments from such third-party resource rights". The Inuvialuit land administration also was entitled to receive concessions from governments or private interests for the removal of sand and gravel from Inuvialuit lands.<sup>51</sup>

The Royal Commission also pointed out that Inuvialuit had obtained a certain amount of self-government, despite "a clause extinguishing the Aboriginal land rights of Inuvialuit in the territory".<sup>52</sup> This was because Inuvialuit negotiated a provision that "guarantees that Inuvialuit will not be treated less favourably than any other Aboriginal group with respect to governmental powers and authority". Such a provision was to be achieved through a public model of governance, where political power was devolved from territorial authorities.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> See Hans Matthews, "Aboriginal Participation in the Minerals Industry", *For Seven Generations*, for a discussion of this stipulation in the *Inuvialuit Final Agreement*.

<sup>51</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 724.

<sup>52</sup> For a discussion of the Inuvialuit's extinguishment of title to their traditional territories, see Michael Jackson, "A New Covenant Chain", *For Seven Generations*; and Paul Joffe and Mary Ellen Turpel, "Extinguishment of the rights of aboriginal peoples: problems and alternatives", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>53</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p.434. Reports prepared for the Royal Commission discussing Inuvialuit self-government arrangements include Wendy Moss, "Inuit perspectives on treaty rights and governance", *For Seven Generations*; and Inuvialuit Regional Council, "Political Developments in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 142, File 7156-16.1, Volume 1.5.1.15.

To facilitate self-government, two umbrella organizations were created to implement the Inuvialuit Final Agreement - the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and the Inuvialuit Game Council. The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation was charged with overseeing economic development,<sup>54</sup> while the Inuvialuit Game Council "represents the collective Inuvialuit interests in wildlife" through a "joint wildlife management regime".<sup>55</sup> Besides the Inuvialuit Game Council, extensive additional "co-management" arrangements also have been developed. Many "new institutions to manage renewable resources and the environment" have emerged, including hunters and trappers committees in the six Inuvialuit communities, a Fisheries Joint Management Committee, two Wildlife Management Advisory Councils, an Environmental Impact Screening Committee, an Environmental Impact Review Board, a Joint Secretariat, and the Denendeh Conservation Board. These regimes were intended to balance development and conservation, represent the interests of Inuvialuit harvesters, compensate harvesters for any losses sustained from development, and "promote self-management and self-regulation among harvesters, backed by government regulations".<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Inuvialuit lands, for example, are "collectively owned and managed through the Inuvialuit Land Corporation, a division of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation". *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 723.

<sup>55</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.737, 4, p. 433. The different roles of these bodies are discussed by Staples who maintains that the "Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC)...is the recipient of both the title to settlement lands and the cash compensation and through its economic subsidiaries has a strong development interest". Lindsay Staples, "The Inuvialuit Final Agreement: Implementing its Land, Resource and Environmental Regimes", *For Seven Generations*. For an examination of the wildlife management regime, see Frederick Weihs et al., "A Review and Assessment of the Economic Utilisation...", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>56</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp.736-743.

The Royal Commission reported that these "economic institutions have generally functioned well, with the Inuvialuit Development Corporation playing a key part in the regional economy through investment of land claim compensation funds and developing various subsidiaries to market Inuvialuit products".<sup>57</sup> The Royal Commission, in fact, maintained that the Inuvialuit Final Agreement has been a more effective tool in creating economic development than the James Bay Agreement. While the "evidence is still limited" about the future benefits of the agreement, the Royal Commission pointed out that one recent study leads it to be "cautiously optimistic" about its impact on economic development. This is a doctoral dissertation, which on the basis of a comparison of census data between 1981 and 1991, argued that "over time, the Inuvialuit maintained a rapid increase in development while the James Bay communities maintained a modest increase".<sup>58</sup>

But to what were the "longer-term benefits" and the "rapid increase in development" that the agreement provided? How have the above "economic institutions...generally functioned well", acted as a "tool of economic development", and "play[ed] a key part

---

<sup>57</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p.434. One report prepared for the Royal Commission, for example, notes that "the Inuvialuit Development Corporation [possesses] the substantial economic resources that enable[s] them to pursue a broad range of contracting opportunities with the Government of the N.W.T." and has "creat[ed] additional Native economic development agencies and strengthen[ed] existing ones" (Gurston Dacks, "Canadian government and aboriginal peoples: the Northwest Territories", *For Seven Generations*). Another report notes that Hunters and Trappers Association from the Inuvialuit region was examining "increasing the commercial sales of country food" to "provide employment and income in a sustainable and manageable manner" (Frederick Weihs et al., "A review and assessment of the economic utilisation...", *For Seven Generations*).

<sup>58</sup> James Saku, *The socio-economic impact of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Department of Geography, University of Saskatchewan, 1995.

in the regional economy"? Like the pronouncements made by the Royal Commission, many other commentators have promoted the Inuvialuit land claim on the basis that this initiative would "build" an economy in the region and enable the Inuvialuit to "become equal and meaningful participants in the Northern and Canadian society".<sup>59</sup> Few concrete details were provided, however, as to the impact that this agreement had on making the Inuvialuit more self-reliant and improving their social circumstances.

Although three reports were prepared for the Royal Commission on the Inuvialuit land claim, only one of these examined its relationship to economic development in the region. The two others were concerned with "Political Developments in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region" or implementing the Agreement's "land, resource and environmental regimes".<sup>60</sup> While the latter claimed to investigate if the Inuvialuit Final Agreement had "supported or enhanced...the meaningful participation of the Inuvialuit in northern and national social and economic life",<sup>61</sup> there was really no information provided enabling readers to determine if this was the case. It argued that the agreement was "the defining event and reference for most Inuvialuit in the

---

<sup>59</sup> Michael Robinson and Lloyd Binder, "The Inuvialuit Final Agreement and Resource-Use Conflicts: Co Management in the Western Arctic and Final Decisions in Ottawa", in Monique Ross and J. Owen Saunders (eds), *Growing Demands on a Shrinking Heritage* (Calgary: Canadian Institute of Resources Law, 1992).

<sup>60</sup> Lindsay Staples, "The Inuvialuit Final Agreement: Implementing its Land, Resource and Environmental Regimes", *For Seven Generations*; and Inuvialuit Regional Council, "Political Developments in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 142, File 7156-16.1, Volume 1.5.1.15. There is also a substantial section on the "Western Arctic Experience" with respect to co-management in a report by Peter Usher, "Contemporary aboriginal land, resource and environment regimes...", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>61</sup> Lindsay Staples, "The Inuvialuit Final Agreement: Implementing its Land, Resource and Environmental Regimes", *For Seven Generations*.

Western Arctic today, whether they are hunting, trapping or fishing, managing wildlife, or pursuing a range of local, regional, national and international economic development opportunities", but these "economic development opportunities" were not specified. The only reference to Inuvialuit "participation...in northern and national...economic life", in fact, concerned a section of the agreement that obligated developers to "negotiate 'participation agreements' that would include rents for surface use, wildlife compensation, restoration and mitigation, and special arrangements for employment and training programs and other participation benefits". The few "economic opportunities" mentioned specifically were those associated with the establishment of a national park on Banks Island and the increased Inuvialuit participation in wildlife management brought about by the Agreement. The other references to "economic" factors merely concern compensation to Inuvialuit for loss of wildlife and damage to the environment and Inuvialuit participation in subsistence harvesting.<sup>62</sup>

One report prepared for the Royal Commission, however, did provide some further elaboration on how the initiatives of the three subsidiaries of the Inuvialuit Regional

---

<sup>62</sup> Based on Staples' report, the Royal Commission notes that "Inuvialuit hunters have been able to control hunting and harvesting activities in a way that was not possible before the agreement" but "success in implementation depends somewhat precariously on government goodwill and co-operation, which have not always been forthcoming" (*Final Report*, 4, p. 434). This view is challenged to some extent in a report prepared by Peter Usher, which maintains that "there are diverging interpretations of the [Inuvialuit] agreement between the parties, but there is a political will, in most cases, to implement the agreement. The agreement requires considerable collaboration between the parties to be successful". Peter Usher, "Contemporary aboriginal land, resource and environment regimes...", *For Seven Generations*.



Corporation - the Inuvialuit Investment Corporation (IIC), the Inuvialuit Petroleum Corporation (IPC), and the Inuvialuit Development Corporation (IDC) - have aided economic development.<sup>63</sup> This report, written by Roger T. Gruben, the Chairman of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation at the time, pointed out that these institutions are intended to "build a stable economic base" for the region by "provid[ing] new and enhanced employment, training and small business opportunities for Inuvialuit". He explained that the IIC is supposed to "conservatively...manage the majority of the claims capital" - an amount not specified, but presumably the \$152 million that the Inuvialuit obtained in exchanged for relinquishing title to their lands. Gruben asserted that most of the capital has been "placed in secure investments" overseen by "professional managers such as Wood Gundy and Nesbitt Thompson". He maintained that, under the guidance of these professional managers, the IIC has "established a diverse and secure portfolio in the domestic market. We currently hold investments in very stable and conservative short- and long-term securities such as treasury bills and bonds".<sup>64</sup>

The second major initiative to "build an economic base" involved the Inuvialuit Petroleum Corporation's purchase of an oil company<sup>65</sup> so that it could "participate in [oil and gas] projects and take the greatest advantage of the opportunities associated

---

<sup>63</sup> Roger T. Gruben, "The Land and the Resource Base", in *Sharing the Harvest*, pp. 51-60.

<sup>64</sup> Gruben, "The Land and the Resource Base", pp. 51-4.

<sup>65</sup> This company is evidently "one of the 50 largest oil and gas companies in Canada". Gruben, "The Land and Resource Base", p. 55.

with the development of [Inuvialuit] resources". According to Gruben, the company produced 3,300 barrels of oil and gas per day by "actively drilling and operating a diversity of oil and gas properties in western Canada". It was also implied that the company would be involved in extracting the estimated 100 million barrels of oil and 300 billion cubic feet of gas on Inuvialuit lands. To facilitate this process, the Inuvialuit oil company signed an agreement with Esso on Tutktoyaktuk lands and Shell on Inuvik lands, in 1986 and 1992 respectively. According to Gruben, "both provided Inuvialuit with substantial royalties and the prospect of further benefits", although no specific figures are provided.<sup>66</sup>

The last major initiative concerned the Inuvialuit Development Corporation. Gruben explained that this corporation was "active in transportation, real estate, manufacturing, wholesale food supply, surveying, retailing, construction and environmental services". It also owned 50% of Norterra, which, as well as being involved in transportation, owned a pipeline valve manufacturing company and "the largest mobile home manufacturing company in Canada", enabling the company to generate over \$50 million in revenues. The IDC also obtained "\$20 million worth of contracts and on site construction for Department of National Defence", and was involved in real estate developments in the Inuvialuit region and in other areas of Canada. Most of these developments appeared to be in British Columbia. The largest

---

<sup>66</sup> Gruben, "The Land and the Resource Base", pp. 54-6.

investment of the Corporation was in "800 acres of undeveloped land in Nanaimo" where "it is hoped that once this project is fully developed Inuvialuit will receive substantial profits in the millions of dollars". Therefore, although Gruben talked about these initiatives "provid[ing] new and enhanced employment, training and small business opportunities for Inuvialuit", the major focus of these three corporations seemed to be on obtaining royalties and investment income from developments occurring outside the area.<sup>67</sup>

The Royal Commission's argument with respect to the Inuvialuit's "economic institutions...generally functioning well in the early 1990s", in fact, was not supported by the evidence. Instead, "economic development" for the area during Roger Gruben's tenure as Chairman of the IRC became a way for powerful individuals to distribute funds to themselves and their cronies (i.e. an "inappropriate mix of business and politics" resulted). This was to come to a head in the early 1990s, when Gruben and the Vice-President of Finance, Preston Maddin, used their authority to award more than \$1.6 million in bonuses to 25 employees between 1993 and 1995. Of this, Gruben received about \$322,000 and Maddin \$346,000. Although the bonuses were supposedly awarded for a "job well done", the IRC reported an \$18.5-million loss in

---

<sup>67</sup> Gruben, "The Land and the Resource Base", pp. 53-5.  
530

1995. Gruben and a number of board members were also charged with tax evasion in 1997.<sup>68</sup>

These circumstances were predicted by Pedro van Meurs, a consultant working for the Inuvialuit since 1976. In 1993, Van Meurs evaluated the "successes and failures" of the Inuvialuit land claim since its enactment in 1984. Van Meurs' evaluation was especially critical of the Inuvialuit's adoption of a "traditional aboriginal form of organization whereby business and politics are mixed and whereby all economic and political matters are controlled by a single chief". According to van Meurs, this

creates the problems of defining the role of the 'leaders'. It is impossible to be a good political leader and a good business leader at the same time. These qualities do not go together in the modern society. The 'leaders' therefore end up being either commercial leaders who loose [sic] touch with the electorate or political leaders who will squander the land claims capital, or both.<sup>69</sup>

Van Meurs also noted that this had created false expectations about what it was that the land claim could accomplish. Van Meurs explained that

The IRC was not meant to be a structure that would replace the role of government. IRC was only meant to play a modest role in social development...IRC does not have the capital, the resources or the mandate to carry out a major governmental role. Yet, as a result of the mixture of political

---

<sup>68</sup>Glenn Taylor, "Former IRC chair under investigation. Roger Gruben: facing tax fraud allegations", *Northern News Services*, August 15, 1997.

<sup>69</sup> Pedro van Meurs, "'Ten Years IFA' - Successes and Failures, A Report Card", December 1993, p.3. Unpublished paper in the possession of the author.

and business interests in IRC, some beneficiaries are now expecting the IRC to fulfill a major social and governmental role in many areas.<sup>70</sup>

Therefore, despite all the rhetoric about the land claim enabling the Inuvialuit to "become equal and meaningful participants in the Northern and Canadian society", it was really only equipped to play a "modest role in social development".

These fundamental problems with the Inuvialuit land claim, however, were not picked up at all by the Royal Commission. This is not surprising when one considers the fact that it used sources like Gruben and the Inuvialuit Regional Council to develop its analysis of the claim.<sup>71</sup> It also reflected a lack of analysis that exists about the economic viability of land claims more generally. With respect to the media coverage of the Inuvialuit claim in the early 1990s, for example, Gruben was portrayed as a "savvy", "tough-talking", "impressive" and successful entrepreneur who had been

---

<sup>70</sup>Van Meurs, "'Ten Years IFA'", p. 3.

<sup>71</sup> It is also interesting to note that a file at Library and Archives Canada housing one of the research studies prepared for the Royal Commission on the Inuvialuit land claim contained correspondence between Jim Bourque, Co-Director of Policy and Planning, Robert Kuptana, Chairman of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, David C. Hawkes, Co-Director of Research for the Royal Commission, Frank Cassidy, Senior Research Associate of the Royal Commission, and Gloria Allen, Unit Manager of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. This correspondence showed that the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation refused to revise their report because they maintained that the comments of a peer reviewer were "biased", "inappropriate" and "frequently offensive" and, as a result, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation had suffered "callous treatment" from the Royal Commission. Because of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation's reaction, David Hawkes, the Co-Director of Research of the Royal Commission agreed that the critical comments of the reviewer in question be removed from the record so that the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation would cooperate in revising the study. The name of the reviewer and the particular charges of bias were also blacked out in the file. Inuvialuit Regional Council, "Political Developments in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 142, File 7156-16.1, Volume 1.5.1.15.

instrumental in developing the Inuvialuit economy,<sup>72</sup> and there was no coverage of his mismanagement of the IRC once it became public (in 1995). The most enthusiastic appraisal of Gruben's "business acumen" appeared in the *Financial Post Magazine* in 1993, where it was maintained that

Gruben is a new kind of native leader, as comfortable in a plush corner office as he is in the Arctic. For much of the past decade he has been wheeling and dealing his way through the boardrooms of the country in a quest for jobs and development for his people. Bankrolled by settlement cash, he's in the midst of an ambitious shopping spree that's seen him snap up companies and investments the way some people shop for groceries. In the process, he's become a symbol of the new future for native Canadians, which is just now taking shape in the wake of several massive land - claim settlements.

Thanks to settlement dollars -- over \$1 billion to date -- people like Roger Gruben have what it takes to trade a bleak poverty - stricken past for a slice of prosperity. It's a replay of the old cowboys - and - Indians movie, only this time the Indians may come out on top.<sup>73</sup>

Inuvialuit "shareholders", however, were not particularly impressed with Gruben's "wheeling and dealing" and "natural savvy" since the only benefit that most received from the settlement of the claim was one \$500 cheque in ten years.

This discontent led to a shake up of Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, ending its irresponsible phase. In January 1996, Nellie Cournoyea, the former Premier of the Northwest Territories, was elected Chairman and set to work putting in administrative

---

<sup>72</sup>"First Nations ripe with opportunities", *Windspeaker*, 11(7) June 21, 1993 p.3; "Inuvialuit corporation lands largest bank loan for Aboriginal group", *Windspeaker*, 11(17) November 8-21, 1993 p. 11; "Investment firm launched", *Windspeaker*, 11(15) October 11-24, 1993,p. 12.

<sup>73</sup>"This land is my land: when Roger Gruben talks, Bay Street listens", *Financial Post Magazine*, March, 1993 pp. 16-22.

controls and making more responsible investments. As a result, the Corporation began to turn a profit immediately after Cournoyea took the helm. But despite the Inuvialuit Development Corporation's profits of \$11.2 million in 1996 and \$12.5 million in 1997, just \$2.15 million was distributed to 2,886 beneficiaries during this period. This meant that each beneficiary received only \$297.38 in 1997 and \$426.71 in 1998.<sup>74</sup>

Although Inuvialuit beneficiaries would undoubtedly have been pleased to receive these cheques, \$426.71 is not very much money when it has to be spread over a year. This is especially true for the north, since living expenses are much higher than in southern Canada. And \$426.71 was a large amount compared to what other land claims beneficiaries received. Their neighbours to the south, the Gwich'in, did not have the benefit of oil and gas deposits in their territory, and so they have only received one \$400 payment in nine years.<sup>75</sup>

Although the Inuvialuit have the benefit of inhabiting lands with oil and gas potential, most of the people in the area, with the exception of the community of Inuvik, continue to live on incomes far below the national average.<sup>76</sup> One report prepared for

---

<sup>74</sup>"Inuvialuit profit up: Beneficiaries get \$1.3 million", *Northern News Services*, May 4, 1998.

<sup>75</sup> Lynn Lau, "Gwich'in get \$400 payout: Result of a windfall from Sahtu royalties", *Northern News Services*, May 6, 2001.

<sup>76</sup> In 1997, average incomes for the area were as follows: Inuvik, \$33,343; Tuktoyaktuk, \$21,484; Aklavik, \$18,534; Holman, \$19,514; Paulatuk, \$22,336; and Sachs Harbour, \$24,050. This contrasts to the Canadian average of \$27,466. These figures are also probably inflated because they include both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal members of the community, and the latter tend to have higher incomes. This would explain why the incomes in Inuvik would be so high, since 40% of the population of Inuvik

the Royal Commission noted that this is because of the low level of education in the area (48% of Inuvialuit had less than a grade 9 education compared to four percent of Non-aboriginals) and the lack of jobs in the small communities. It concluded that this "mixed economy" in the region contributed to a "culture of poverty and to the poor housing and lack of fulfillment and hope that in turn have fed serious social problems among the Native people...", which included "high levels of conflict with the law, suicide, infant mortality and substance abuse".<sup>77</sup>

This was because, apart from the one natural resource that provides few jobs to unskilled natives, the region cannot produce anything competitively. Except for Inuvik, each of the communities is inhabited by less than 1,000 people (Inuvik had a population of 3,451 in 2000). Only Inuvik, as well, has permanent road access,<sup>78</sup> while Holman, Paulatuk and Sachs Harbour must be supplied solely by air in the winter. As a result, these communities are plagued by high costs, distance from markets and an inability to take advantage of economies of scale. This is why, as

---

is Non-Aboriginal, compared to it being less than 10% in the other communities. All of these statistics are provided by the "Community Profiles" reports of the NWT's Bureau of Statistics ([www.stats.gov.nt.ca](http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca)). The lower incomes in the region, with the exception of Inuvik, was also pointed out in a source used by the Royal Commission - James Saku, "The socio-economic impact of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement", Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Department of Geography, University of Saskatchewan, 1995, p. 231. Saku focuses on the increases in income in the region between 1981 and 1991, but such increases were also apparent for Canada as a whole.

<sup>77</sup>Gurston Dacks, "Canadian government and aboriginal peoples: the Northwest Territories", *For Seven Generations*. Another report notes that there are vast discrepancies in income and employment levels within the Inuvialuit region between the small and larger communities, with the former being much more deprived. Mark O. Dickerson and Robert Shotton, "Northern self-government and subsidiarity", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>78</sup> In the winter, Tuktoyaktuk and Aklavik are joined to Inuvik by ice roads.



Roger Gruben pointed out, a great deal of the "capital" of the Inuvialuit land claim needed to be invested outside the region to "ensure that [Inuvialuit] investments are profitable, protected and secure".<sup>79</sup>

But investing the land claims money outside the Inuvialuit region doesn't do anything to generate employment for the area; it only allows a few hundred dollars to be distributed every year as "royalties". The employment in the Inuvialuit region, therefore, must be generated by using federal transfers to fund additional services. In the "private" service sector, this has occurred largely through the development of boards on the numerous "corporations", "trusts", "land administrations", and co-management boards and committees at both the regional and community levels.<sup>80</sup> Besides these entities, there is also substantial employment created by the public sector in the region, which is large in comparison to the territorial average, and especially in relationship to Canada as a whole.<sup>81</sup> This is in contrast to employment generated from "goods production", which is far lower than the Canadian average.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> Gruben, "The Land and the Resource Base", pp. 56, 60.

<sup>80</sup> See [www.irc.inuvialuit.com](http://www.irc.inuvialuit.com) for an overview of all these bodies.

<sup>81</sup> While in 1996 "Government" provided employment for 39.5% of the NWT population and 23.1% of Canadians, it supplied 45.5% of the employment for Inuvik, 45.9% for Tuktoyaktuk, 50% for Aklavik, 40% for Holman, 47.1% for Paulatuk, and 42.9% for Sachs Harbour.

<sup>82</sup> In 1996, "Goods production" accounted for 8.9% of employment in Inuvik, 9.8% for Tuktoyaktuk, 12.5% for Aklavik, 5.7% for Holman, and 11.8% for Paulatuk. There is a mysteriously high number for Sachs Harbour (28.6%), but this is still less than the amount of employment in goods production for Canada as a whole (32.9%).

Despite the low level of "goods production" in this region, the oil and gas industry does provide *some* economic activity. This is in contrast to the last land claim promoted as a "success" by the Royal Commission - Nunavut. Nunavut can be distinguished from the other two land claims economies being "built" because there is no resource extraction occurring there at present, and so the entire "economy" basically involves distributing federal transfers to the territory.

### *The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*

As well as the James Bay Agreements and Inuvialuit settlement, the Royal Commission thoroughly examined the Nunavut land claim.<sup>83</sup> Although this land claim had not been fully implemented at the time the Royal Commission submitted its *Final Report* in 1996, the Royal Commission made optimistic pronouncements about the

---

<sup>83</sup>In its examination of Nunavut, the Royal Commission gave out a number of research contracts for studies of the area. The most significant, in terms of the Agreement's economic implications, is Letha J. MacLachlan's study, "Northern Comprehensive Aboriginal Claims Agreements", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 181-182, File 7506-5.1, which was intended to analyze the Nunavut land claim in the context of other northern land claims. However, this report cannot be analyzed since it has a "closed" status and is being withheld from the public. The other studies commissioned tend to focus on the relationship between the land claim and political developments in the region. These include the following: Gurston Dacks, "Nunavut: Aboriginal Self-Determination Through Public Government"; Peter Jull, "Them Eskimo Mob: International Implications of Nunavut"; Kevin Knight, "Institutional and Human resource development Implications of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement"; Jon Pierce and Robert Horal, "Aboriginal People and Mining in Nunavut"; Praxis Research Associates, "A Case Study of the Inuit Economy: Pangnirtung, Northwest Territories"; Marc G. Stevenson, "Traditional Inuit Decision-Making Structures and the Administration of Nunavut"; and R.G. Williamson "Significant aspects of acculturation history in the Canadian Arctic". All of these reports are available in *For Seven Generations*, except the Pierce and Horal study, which can be obtained at Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 179, file 7474-4.1, volume 5.2.4.3.

Agreement.<sup>84</sup> It maintained that "through their agreement, Inuit of the eastern Arctic will have both extensive community lands and access to resources. Through the new government of Nunavut, they will also have significant authority over all Crown lands and resources".<sup>85</sup> The Royal Commission argued that the creation of Nunavut was a "major development with important economic effects" since it would "create a new public government, with a fresh mandate and some new functions". As has been mentioned before, the most significant "economic effect", according to the Royal Commission, was that it would "create an estimated 2,300 jobs in the region", which, because of a "best efforts" clause to increase Inuit employment, would eventually be staffed mostly by Inuit. As the Royal Commission pointed out, "this clause, and the general need for employment in Inuit communities, creates an enormous challenge to develop appropriate training and development mechanisms. About half the Inuit in Nunavut are under the age of 20 and 50 per cent of adults do not have a high school diploma or skills relevant to public sector employment".<sup>86</sup>

In terms of the Nunavut land claim, the Royal Commission stated that the "agreement recognized Inuit title to 350,000 square kilometres of land and provides compensation of \$580 million and \$13 million training trust fund; it also includes provisions for joint

---

<sup>84</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 724-726.

<sup>85</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 558.

<sup>86</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 823. The training of Inuit for Nunavut is discussed in a number of research studies. See, for example, ATII Training Inc., "Northern Education and Training systems for Inuit", *For Seven Generations*; Leslie A. Brown, "Community and the Administration of Aboriginal Governments", *For Seven Generations*; and Gwen D. Reimer, "Case Study of an Inuit Economy", *For Seven Generations*.

management and resource revenue sharing".<sup>87</sup> It was noted that "'Inuit owned lands' are intended to provide Inuit with rights that promote economic self-sufficiency consistent with Inuit social and cultural needs and aspirations. Lands will therefore be selected near communities, include significant sites, and incorporate land use activities and patterns. Inuit-owned lands will take one of two forms: fee simple including surface and subsurface rights, and fee simple excluding surface and subsurface rights".<sup>88</sup> The land claim would also result in the formation of a number of "designated Inuit organizations" (DIOs)<sup>89</sup> that "will have the right of first refusal throughout Nunavut to the following ventures: new lodges (sports or naturalist); wildlife propagation, cultivation or husbandry enterprises; and marketing wildlife (including parts and products)". The Royal Commission also explained that "third parties can enter Inuit lands for mineral exploration and/or development only with the consent of the DIO. Such consent may involve compensation".<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 436.

<sup>88</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 724.

<sup>89</sup> A study prepared for the Royal Commission notes that "with the signing of the Nunavut Final Agreement, on the division of the NWT, the Nunavut Trust has been set up as the principle investment body of \$577 million the Inuit will receive over the next several years. Interest made through Nunavut Trust investments is turned over to Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. which, in turn, develops a budget based on its own administrative operations and those of the three regional Inuit Associations (Kitikmeot, Keewatin, and Baffin). These three Inuit Associations use part of the proceeds to invest and accumulate wealth through their own regionally based development corporations". Michael J. Prince and Gary Juniper, "Public Power and the Public Purse", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>90</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 726. For a discussion of this aspect of the agreement with respect to mining companies, see Jon Pierce and Robert Hornal, "Aboriginal people and mining in Nunavut, Nunavik and Labrador", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 179, file 7474-4.1, volume 5.2.4.3.; and Price Waterhouse, "Aboriginal Participation in the Minerals Industry", *For Seven Generations*. The latter notes that "the undertaking of major development projects (e.g., in excess of \$35 million in Nunavut) may be subject to socio-economic negotiations. These "participation" agreements ensure Aboriginal communities benefit from mining projects. Holders of mineral rights isolated within Aboriginal-owned lands wishing to explore, develop and produce

Besides the economic benefits of Nunavut, the Royal Commission also extensively discussed its new "Wildlife and Environmental Management Regime".<sup>91</sup> The main organization in this regime was the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, which was responsible for research, environmental monitoring and the allocation of wildlife resources in the territory. Similar to the Inuvialuit agreement, a number of hunters and trappers organizations and regional wildlife organizations would oversee aboriginal harvesting.<sup>92</sup> In addition, a number of new regulatory bodies were to be created, including the Nunavut Planning Commission, the Nunavut Impact Review Board and the Nunavut Water Board".<sup>93</sup> As the Royal Commission explained, these new agencies would enhance self-government because "the composition of the boards and the planning commission has the potential to place a great deal of control in Inuit hands. With one-third representation from Inuit organizations and one-third from the Inuit-dominated territorial government, Inuit will have two-thirds representation on these crucial agencies". Another body, the Nunavut Implementation Commission, was also established to represent Inuit in the implementation of the land claim.<sup>94</sup>

---

minerals, may be expected to negotiate conditions related to participation, wildlife compensation and communication. This participation will often meet the needs of the local Aboriginal community".

<sup>91</sup> This is also examined in Gurston Dacks, "Nunavut: Aboriginal Self-determination through public government", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>92</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 746-748.

<sup>93</sup> The Royal Commission notes that the Nunavut Water Board "is perhaps the most important management model to date. Inuit rights to water use, management and administration are now recognized and have been integrated into the joint management regimes. The board also contemplates a cohesive and co-ordinated approach to water management and administration in the settlement area by way of the interface between the board and land use planning and environmental assessment provisions". *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 664. See also *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 668 for an assertion of the Water Board's importance.

<sup>94</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p.436.

Because of all these new bureaucratic structures being created, the Royal Commission noted that the main task of the new government would be staff training and administrative development. It was pointed out once again that "given the current levels of education and training in the resident population, a major and sustained effort will be required" since "Aboriginal people in the North have lower levels of formal education than other Aboriginal people in Canada and than the general population" and "the situation is even worse in the far north", which included Nunavut. But besides the need to master "such areas as accounting, financial management, organizational development, planning and business development", the Royal Commission argued that "it will be important for the new bureaucracies to emphasize skills and the capacity to acquire skills in their hiring practices, rather than relying entirely upon formal credentials to select employees". Inuit employees should be hired "on the basis of their potential to achieve skills" and on-the-job training provided to "permit learning while work is performed".<sup>95</sup>

As well as giving leeway in the "formal credentials" of Inuit employees, the Royal Commission also stressed that government institutions must be "shaped by the culture of territorial residents". Citing R.G. Williamson, the Royal Commission pointed out that for Inuit people, "the quality of intelligence derives not from the rational ordering

---

<sup>95</sup> *Final Report*, 4, pp. 436-438.

and understanding of the universe but from a deeper understanding of one's place in the world and one's connection to the natural environment and to kin".<sup>96</sup> A quotation was also offered from Gurston Dacks, who discussed the "distinctive Aboriginal approach to social problem solving". According to Dacks, "among Aboriginal peoples, the value attributed to the community and its unity and the faith in laws of nature provided by the creator have defined the task of traditional Native politics as working together to understand how the laws of nature apply to a particular question. It is assumed that an answer to a question already exists and can be found if all participants in the decision to be taken work collectively to discern that correct answer".<sup>97</sup> After offering these two insights,<sup>98</sup> the Royal Commission maintained that the key question was to determine how "these new political entities evolve in a direction responsive to the needs of their constituents and at the same time operate within the context of the Canadian federation. Regimes of financing, styles of negotiation, the requirements for strategic planning, and the imperatives of probity, accountability, accountability and fiscal responsibility - all must be present in a form that fits well with general Canadian practice".<sup>99</sup> Such a statement indicated that the

---

<sup>96</sup>Williamson, Significant Aspects of acculturation history in the Canadian Arctic: Analysis of the Force of Inuit and southern White Interaction until Mid-Century", *For Seven Generations*, cited in *Final Report*, 4, p. 438-9.

<sup>97</sup> Dacks, "The adaptation of public governing institutions in the territorial north", *For Seven Generations*, cited in *Final Report*, 4, p. 439.

<sup>98</sup> The need for these institutions to be consistent with Inuit culture is also stressed in a number of other studies prepared for the Royal Commission. See, for example, Dacks, "Nunavut: Aboriginal Self-determination through public government", *For Seven Generations*; Stevenson, "Traditional Inuit Decision-Making Structures and the Administration of Nunavut", *For Seven Generations*; and Reimer, "Case Study of an Inuit Economy", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>99</sup> *Final Report*, 4, pp. 439-40.

Royal Commission's assertions about "preserving aboriginal culture" were merely a political strategy to symbolically recognize the native population; these traditions, in the end, would only be accepted if they were consistent with wider economic and political processes.

The Nunavut Agreement, therefore, was perceived to be an economy that would be "built" through government transfers and the estimated 2,300 jobs created with a new territorial bureaucracy.<sup>100</sup> It was maintained that of all aboriginal "nations", "only Inuit are well advanced in the process of political reform".<sup>101</sup> Unlike the Inuvialuit or James Bay Agreements, however, Nunavut lands did not have much oil and gas or hydroelectric potential. Also, minerals tended to be scattered in small deposits, making their extraction largely unprofitable, so far fewer royalties could be distributed. In fact, Peter Rose, the finance director for Nunavut's land claims organization, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, recently argued that since royalties from mining have only been about \$1 million a year, it was not feasible even for beneficiaries to receive a \$500 cash payment.<sup>102</sup> Instead, Nunavut mostly provided payments to specific groups such as hunters and trappers and in the form of "employment" - both in the organizations created by the land claim, and in the large territorial bureaucracy that came with the division of the territory. Such employment

---

<sup>100</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 822-3; 829-30; 4, pp. 491-2.

<sup>101</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p.2.

<sup>102</sup> Patricia D'Souza, "NTI can't afford cash payouts for beneficiaries - \$7.5 million to give each Inuk \$500", *Nunatsiaq News*, March 7, 2002.



also has been dispersed throughout the 26 communities in the territory through the process of decentralization.<sup>103</sup> All these initiatives, however, do not make the territory more productive and "self-reliant"; they just amount to distributing funds that have been supplied by outside sources.<sup>104</sup>

Because decentralization is a more expensive form of government due to the separate offices that must be created in small communities that cannot take advantage of economies of scale or cheap transportation, the formation of Nunavut is increasing, not decreasing dependency. Development in Nunavut, in fact, amounts to even more of a "challenge" than in the Inuvialuit and James Bay regions, because all of its 26 communities, even the capital Iqaluit, must be serviced by air during the winter. And like the Inuvialuit region, most of the communities are inhabited by less than a thousand people, making it impossible for the territory to produce anything competitively.<sup>105</sup>

---

<sup>103</sup> The Government of Nunavut maintains that "decentralization provides communities with much-needed infrastructure and economic development, as well as employment and training opportunities". Government of Nunavut, *Budget Address 2003*, March 11, 2003, p.7.

<sup>104</sup> This is noted by one study prepared for the Royal Commission, which notes that "the main-stay of the formal economy...throughout the Eastern Arctic...is government services and subsidies". Reimer, "Case study of an Inuit economy", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>105</sup> Of the 26 communities, 16 have less than 1,000 people, eight have between 1,000 and 2,000 inhabitants. The largest communities are Rankin Inlet (2,230 people) and Iqaluit (4,627 people). These statistics were compiled during 1999 by Nunavut's Bureau of Statistics ([www.gov.nu.ca](http://www.gov.nu.ca)).

<sup>106</sup> These quotations appear in all Nunavut Budget Addresses, under the heading of "Excerpts from the Bathurst Mandate".

<sup>107</sup> Government of Nunavut, "Main Estimates", 2001-2002, February 2001, p.xii; Government of Nunavut, *2002-2003 Budget Address*, April 30, 2002, Appendix A, p.3; and Government of Nunavut, "Main Estimates", 2003-2004, March 2003, p.ix.

<sup>108</sup> Government of Nunavut, *Budget Address 2003*, March 11, 2003, pp. 2-3.

Despite the fact that Nunavut budgets start off with optimistic pronouncements that the territory aspires to "...Healthy Communities, Simplicity and Unity, Self-Reliance and Continuing Learning..." and that by 2020 it expects Nunavut residents to "own and manage a strong mixed economy where residents have productive choices for economic participation", there are no signs that this is happening.<sup>106</sup> In fact, because of its attempts to create an economy through government transfers, the amount of funding earmarked for Nunavut has increased from \$615 million in 2001, to \$682 million in 2002, to \$725 million in 2003. These funds account for 92% of the territorial budget; the only revenues raised within the territory come from taxes, staff housing rents, and utility payments.<sup>107</sup> And despite these continuous increases in expenditures, the Nunavut government maintains that "if we are to provide Nunavummiut [Nunavut residents] with a level of services enjoyed by other Canadians, we must have increased funding from the federal government". It even maintains that it has "strongly made the case that the development of the Nunavut economy depends in large part through increased public investment [sic]".<sup>108</sup>

The continuing dependency of Nunavut is exacerbated by the severe social problems that plague the region. One research study prepared for the Royal Commission noted that "Inuit youth face numerous problems of social and cultural adaptation", including "one of the highest school drop-out rates in Canada, as well as other problems such as chronic substance abuse, sexual abuse, and suicide". It argued that "the severity of

these social problems, in a context of a limited potential for future economic growth, have led some social scientists to predict an increasing trend in Inuit socio-economic dependency...".<sup>109</sup> Another study noted that youth in Nunavut, no matter what their education, "face a future of little hope of wage income in settlements with normally 95% unemployment".<sup>110</sup> And because Nunavut's population was predicted to increase by 125% in the next ten years, "a significant number of new jobs over and above those currently available will have to be created each year to meet the increasing employment needs of the Inuit community".<sup>111</sup>

#### *"Enclave Economies" and Aboriginal Dependency*

Despite all the positive pronouncements made by the Royal Commission concerning the James Bay, Inuvialuit and Nunavut claims, there is no indication that these agreements are redressing aboriginal dependency. Increasing the number of government jobs or the development of hunters and trappers committees, for example, would only act to reduce dependency if they made these economies more productive.

---

<sup>109</sup> Jean-Philippe Chartrand, "Inuit statistics in Canada", *For Seven Generations*. This study cites "Irwin 1989; Tungavik Federation of Nunavut 1989" as the social scientists that predict this.

<sup>110</sup> Williamson, "Significant aspects of acculturation history in the Canadian arctic", *For Seven Generations*.

This study also asserts that "the suicide rate in the Arctic is epidemic in its proportions, involving mainly the young, from mid-teens to late twenties. Talented youngsters with promise (not just drug-damaged drop-outs), are not infrequently found among the dead by their own hand. Housing problems are acute and extensive. Child welfare problems are found in every settlement, particularly where parents have drinking problems and inter-spouse violence occurs".

<sup>111</sup> ATII, "Northern education and training systems for Inuit", *For Seven Generations*.

No information showing this, however, was provided by the Royal Commission. The only hint of an evaluation was the Royal Commission's assertion that a number of land claims have been frustrated by three factors - "implementation problems", "limited local investment opportunities, owing to the highly undiversified nature and small size of regional economies" and "excessive bureaucratization".<sup>112</sup>

It is apparent from an analysis of the economic circumstances of these areas, therefore, that they are not living up to these expectations. Although James Bay, Inuvialuit and Nunavut beneficiaries received an increased "land base", millions of dollars in "capital" and various subsidies and preferential treatment to improve employment and business opportunities, aboriginal people living in these areas continued to remain impoverished and dependent upon government transfers for sustenance.<sup>113</sup> In addition, the development of a number of "corporations" does not indicate that

---

<sup>112</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 822.

<sup>113</sup> As was mentioned before, these problems are even recognized by the Royal Commission when it points out that "northern Aboriginal people confront severe economic hardships: very high costs for travel, transportation and consumer goods, set against scant and constrained wage opportunities, a harsh climate and distant markets", *Final Report*, 2(2), p.820. In the case of Nunavut, it also recognized that the territory "will be created in the shadow of fiscal restraint and the desire of governments to cut public spending. While the governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories have 'committed themselves unequivocally to the creation of Nunavut', fulfillment of this commitment is likely to require some additional expenditure, as well as artful planing, imagination and ingenuity". *Final Report*, 4, p. 440.

<sup>114</sup> One report notes that the creation of native development corporations during the 1980s and 1990s "symbolize[d] a bridge between the dual economies of the North", and that "the share of territorial expenditures going to [the economic development policy] field grew over this period, and represents a significant part of the [territorial government's] budget". Prince and Juniper, "Public power and the public purse", *For Seven Generations*.

economic development is occurring. These generally are just institutions that have been created to distribute federal funds by servicing the population.<sup>114</sup>

The problems of geographical isolation and "access to markets" that exists in the James Bay, Nunavut and Inuvialuit regions was recognized by the Royal Commission as being an obstacle to economic development in aboriginal communities more generally,<sup>115</sup> but this area was glossed over in comparison to what was perceived to be a much larger problem - "access to capital". It was for this reason that the Royal Commission spent 25 pages analyzing the different kinds of organizations that could be created to lend money to aboriginal businesses.<sup>116</sup> This, however, ignored the reason why these entities were necessary - investing in these communities was high

---

<sup>115</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 890; 902-905. A few studies prepared for the Royal Commission recognize this as a problem in aboriginal communities. These include Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, "Presentation to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", brief submitted to RCAP, Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 215, File 8200-50C; Metis Settlements General Council, "Aboriginal Economies Report", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 153, File 7230-7.1, volume 2.1.1.6; and "La Loche Community Case Study", *For Seven Generations*. The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business recommends the development of an "Aboriginal Trade Commission" so that aboriginal peoples can develop better access to markets.

<sup>116</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 906-930. Several research studies prepared for the Royal Commission mention this problem. These include Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, "Presentation to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 215, File 8200-50C; Sinaaq Enterprises Inc., "Community Economic Case Study: Nain, Labrador", *For Seven Generations*; William Lyall, "Retaining Wealth and Control in Remote Aboriginal Communities", *Sharing the Harvest*; Michael L. Rice, "Native Economic Development in Kahnawake: Banking and Collateral", *Sharing the Harvest*; Economic Development for Canadian Aboriginal Women (EDCAW), "Access to Financial Institutions", brief submitted to RCAP (1994), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 216, File 8200-50E; and John Loxley et al., "Aboriginal Peoples in the Winnipeg Economy", *For Seven Generations*.

risk.<sup>117</sup> Without government-backed loans, no investment could be found, since these businesses were unlikely to generate the profits necessary to make the necessary interest payments on the loans.

Because of their isolation, in fact, the aboriginal economies envisioned by the Royal Commission would largely have to be those of a "rentier state" - where economies are sustained by extracting royalties from resource development.<sup>118</sup> But few aboriginal communities have access to the resources the Royal Commission envisioned as being necessary to provide an economic base to capitalize their development. This was recognized by the Royal Commission when it maintained that "in parts of western and northern Canada covered by the numbered treaties, the federal government tried to ensure that the reserves selected contained no valuable minerals. In 1874, for

---

<sup>117</sup>This is why banks would not lend money to aboriginal communities even if they owned lands in fee simple. This problem is disguised by the Royal Commission's assertions about the Crown's ownership of reserve lands "stand[ing] in the way of obtaining loans for economic development purposes, because the land and its assets cannot be pledged as collateral" (*Final Report*, 2(2), p. 810). The Royal Commission maintains that because of the Indian Act, "creditors and bankers are reluctant to enter because they cannot exercise their rights in case of default; provincial governments are reluctant to enter because it is an area of exclusive federal jurisdiction; individual entrepreneurs are reluctant to enter because they perceive that reserves are inhospitable to their interests; and band councils have experienced considerable uncertainty and restriction in terms of their capacity to regulate the business environment" (*Final Report*, 2(2), p. 812). But if these areas cannot produce commodities competitively, these problems would remain regardless of these legal restrictions.

<sup>118</sup> This, in fact, was the view of Pierre Elliot Trudeau, who maintained in the 1990s that "to reduce [native] dependence on government assistance [the aboriginal] land base should be greatly increased so that natives can enjoy higher rents from resources like timber sales or mineral rights". Axworthy & Trudeau 1992, 28, cited in Peter Jull, "A thousand years: Indigenous peoples and northern Europeans", *For Seven Generations*.

example, the federal cabinet directed the officials in charge of locating reserves under Treaty 3 to ensure that they did not include 'any land known...to be mineral lands' or any lands for which patents had been sought by either the Ontario or the dominion government".<sup>119</sup> As it pointed out, even the richest bands in Canada located in Alberta "are the accidental beneficiaries of the discovery of oil at Leduc in the late 1940s".<sup>120</sup>

But even when aboriginal communities are fortunate enough to be sitting on a reserve that has resources that can be profitably extracted, they have not become self-reliant. This is because resource extraction is not labour intensive; it employs relatively few people, and those who are hired must have skills that are not possessed by most aboriginal people. "Economic development" on these reserves, largely consists of collecting resource royalties, which, as we have seen with the Nunavut and Inuvialuit claims, do not amount to enough to make significant improvements in these communities since they must be distributed amongst thousands of people. As Tom Flanagan points out with respect to the oil rich Morley and Hobbema reserves in Alberta,<sup>121</sup>

---

<sup>119</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 490.

<sup>120</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 491.

<sup>121</sup> The Hobbema bands' economic circumstances are discussed extensively in a report prepared for the Royal Commission, which notes that "the influx of wealth--reaching as much as \$3,000 per month per individual at the peak of the oil boom--into a subsistence hunting and gathering community created traumatic social upheaval, including suicide, alcoholism, and the drug abuse" and that "the story of Hobbema is proof that money by itself cannot repair the damage that has been done to native culture for more than a century. When the flow of money is too great and too sudden, it becomes yet another threat to traditional cultural values. The shift from poverty to wealth was as wrenching as the shift onto reserves in the nineteenth century". It is also argued that "declining rates of production of oil on 'Indian lands' provides ample testimony to the need to utilize resource rents to generate more diversified, self-

these reserves have earned huge royalties, and some residents have become well off; but large majorities on the reserves are still dependent on welfare and suffer from all the attendant social pathologies. Cash flow is not the same as prosperity. Royalties bought new houses and pick-up trucks for residents, but few ever became self-supporting wage-earners.<sup>122</sup>

Putting in place rentier economies, therefore, doesn't really lead to "self-sufficient" communities. It merely subsidizes consumption, rather than making the population more productive.

Similar problems exist for the two other areas that were promoted by the Royal Commission for "building" aboriginal communities through land claims - providing more services to aboriginal communities<sup>123</sup> and maintaining "traditional economies".<sup>124</sup> The only way for the provision of services to increase self-sufficiency would be if these services were exchanged for goods and services produced elsewhere. But the services that were promoted for the "development" of aboriginal communities were merely those provided to its own population, maintaining its dependency on

---

sufficient aboriginal economies". Hugh M. Grant, "Resource Rents from Aboriginal Lands in Canada", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>122</sup> Flanagan, *First Nations? Second Thoughts*, p.184.

<sup>123</sup> See Corinne Jetté, "Creating a Climate with Confidence: Providing Services Within Aboriginal Communities", *Sharing the Harvest*, pp.120-136; and William Lyall, "Retaining Wealth and Control in Remote Aboriginal Communities", *Sharing the Harvest*, pp. 137-148, which have influenced the arguments of the Royal Commission with respect to providing services within aboriginal communities.

<sup>124</sup> For its discussion of maintaining these economies, the Royal Commission relies heavily on a study prepared by Peter Usher - "Contemporary Aboriginal Land, Resource and Environment Regimes — Origins, Problems, and Prospects", *For Seven Generations*. See, also, David R. Newhouse, "Modern Aboriginal Economies: Capitalism with an Aboriginal Face", *Sharing the Harvest*, pp.90-100; and Simon Brascoupe, "Strengthening Traditional Economies and Perspectives", *Sharing the Harvest*, pp. 101-119, for two other reports that the Royal Commission uses to develop its arguments about the importance of the traditional sector for aboriginal economic development.



outside sources. Although the "leakage" of funds "to non-Aboriginal businesses in neighbouring towns"<sup>125</sup> could be reduced by building stores, garages and hairdressing salons in aboriginal communities, these funds largely originated from production outside the community in the first place.

A similar misconception led to the Royal Commission's continuous promotion of the "traditional sector". As the Royal Commission explained, "the final requirement for successful land-based production is regular access to cash. As practised today, hunting, fishing and gathering require equipment: snow machines, boats with motors, rifles, ammunition, gasoline. The use of such equipment turns an investment of money into high-quality food, the materials necessary for handicraft production and art, and a healthy way of life. But these products rarely generate sufficient cash to finance further land-based production".<sup>126</sup> This was why this sector had to be justified

---

<sup>125</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 813. This problem is discussed in a number of research studies prepared for the Royal Commission. See, for example, Simon Brascoupe, "Kitigan Zibi...", *For Seven Generations*; Andre LeDressay et al., "Drawing Home", *For Seven Generations*; David Newhouse et al., "The Six Nations Economy: Its Development and Prospects", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 154, File 7230-11.1, Volume 2.1.1.10; David DesBrisay, "The Gaming Industry in Aboriginal Communities", *For Seven Generations*; David DesBrisay, "The Impact of Major Resource Development Projects in Aboriginal Communities", *For Seven Generations*; and Thalassa Research, "Nation to Nation", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>126</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 820. The need to obtain cash to pursue traditional activities is discussed in a number of studies for the Royal Commission, including Sinaaq Enterprises, "Community Economic Case Study: Nain, Labrador", *For Seven Generations*; Reimer, "Case Study of an Inuit Economy", *For Seven Generations*; and Weihs et al., "A Review and Assessment of the Economic Utilization and Potential of Country Food", *For Seven Generations*.

largely on the basis of "spirituality" and preserving aboriginal traditions, not its economic contribution.<sup>127</sup>

With the exception of increased royalties and employment from capitalist resource extraction, therefore, very few aspects of land claims agreements have the capacity to reduce aboriginal dependency. And even these areas are not likely to have much effect since the position of the resource sector is declining in relationship to the Canadian economy as a whole. As was noted earlier, even the Royal Commission pointed out that

most reserves and rural Métis communities are located in regions that are struggling economically and losing jobs in the natural resources and manufacturing sectors. The depletion of resources, tougher international competition, and the continuing adoption of capital-intensive technology all contribute to this trend. The consequences become immediately obvious if unemployment rates in rural and northern areas are compared with those in urban and more southern areas. Exceptionally high population growth rates in First Nations and Metis communities present a major challenge for employment and economic development in these regions.<sup>128</sup>

This was also why "wage employment and profit making" in the north were "found in a relatively restricted range of economic sectors, including mining, oil and gas

---

<sup>127</sup> Such a justification is offered in numerous research studies prepared for the Royal Commission. See, for example, Stevenson, "Inuit decision making...", *For Seven Generations*; Gurston Dacks, "Canadian Government and Aboriginal Peoples: The Northwest Territories", *For Seven Generations*; Maracle, "Wildlife Sectoral Study", *For Seven Generations*; DesBrisay, "The Impact of Major Resource Development Projects on Aboriginal Communities", *For Seven Generations*; and Thalassa Research, "Nation to Nation", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>128</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 813. These population growth rates, and their implications for aboriginal employment, are discussed in Stewart Clatworthy et al., "Patterns of Employment, Unemployment and Poverty", *For Seven Generations*.

exploration, a small amount of oil and gas production, hydroelectric development, transportation of people and goods, tourism, military bases, the small business service sector and the public sector".<sup>129</sup>

The self-sufficiency of most Canadians, in fact, has little to do with their access to lands and resources, which the Royal Commission believed was so significant to the development of the native population. Most Canadians sustain themselves through working for wages, and much of this employment exists in the service sector. This is why most Canadians live in urban centres close to the United States' border. In these areas, the population is large enough to support the development of a manufacturing sector and provide the necessary demand for services. The proximity to the United States also means that international markets can be more easily accessed.<sup>130</sup>

In contrast to the most of the Canadian population, however, half of the aboriginal population lives outside urban environments. As the Royal Commission pointed out, "just 6.2 per cent of the Canadian population lives [in northern Canada]", while

---

<sup>129</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 820-1.

<sup>130</sup> The Royal Commission notes that "as a result of rapid urbanization in the post-war period, more than 90 per cent of all Canadians are now concentrated in the most southerly 10 per cent of the country - basically Atlantic Canada, the St. Lawrence River- Great Lakes waterway, the railway belt of the prairie provinces, and the southernmost parts of British Columbia (*Final Report*, 2(2), p. 451). The Royal Commission also provides, in Table 5.6, a overview of "Projected Annual Growth Rate of Occupational Groups, 1993-2000", which shows that a very high percentage of most of these jobs will be located in urban areas. *Final Report*, 2(2), p.808. The only occupations that are not part of this trend are farming, hunting and trapping and forestry and logging.

"Aboriginal people form the majority or a large plurality of residents...".<sup>131</sup> In fact, the Royal Commission argued that aboriginal peoples tended to constitute the majority of the population only in areas where few Non-Aboriginals lived. As a result, aboriginal communities tended to be small and isolated.<sup>132</sup> But despite the fact that the Royal Commission recognized that "many Canadians have been moving from rural to urban areas in order to find employment, better living conditions, or education opportunities not available in their home communities", the Royal Commission criticized "government assimilation policies and other actions designed to move them away from their reserves and settlements".<sup>133</sup>

The isolated character of aboriginal communities explains why "place of residence plays a role in economic prospects [for aboriginal peoples], because jobs tend to be created at a higher rate in urban than in rural areas".<sup>134</sup> The Royal Commission recognized that this would create problems in the future because the aboriginal population was increasing, resulting in "a mismatch between the geographic location

---

<sup>131</sup>This is shown in Table 5.10, *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 818. On a map the Royal Commission shows that "among the 139 communities in the far north (Yukon, Northwest Territories, northern Quebec and Labrador), 96 communities, or 69 per cent, have an Aboriginal majority population. Of communities in the mid-north, 216 of 624 communities (34 per cent) have an Aboriginal majority. However, in the mid-north zones of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, more than half the communities have a majority Aboriginal population" (*Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 449-50)

<sup>132</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 449-450, 807, 809.

<sup>133</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 451.

<sup>134</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 803.

of that labour force and the anticipated location of job growth in the Canadian economy".<sup>135</sup>

Encouraging aboriginal peoples to remain in isolated areas, therefore, is to maintain their dependency. This is why government policies during the 1960s focussed on developing programs that facilitated aboriginal peoples' movement away from these regions to urban areas.<sup>136</sup> One of the most extensive of these reports, the Hawthorn Report, was discussed by the Royal Commission when it stated that

the Hawthorn Report did not hold out much promise for people living on reserves, on the grounds that reserves lacked a sufficient resource base to support the growing population. The report rejected assimilation as an appropriate goal of government policy, but the strategies it supported placed a heavy emphasis on migration to urban areas, advocating a series of programs and activities to help Indian people enter the mainstream labour market. Work in traditional sectors such as fishing, forestry, hunting, trapping and farming was de-emphasized in favour of wage employment in commerce and industry.<sup>137</sup>

The Royal Commission, however, did not provide an explanation for why it thinks that the Hawthorn Report's analysis was incorrect. Instead, it is apparent from many of the details provided by the Royal Commission that the "rebuilding" envisioned for aboriginal economies would not mean making them self-sufficient, but providing them with subsidies from land claims and other initiatives. A number of such measures were

---

<sup>135</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 806. This mismatch is pointed out in a study prepared for the Royal Commission by Kerr et al., "Canada's Aboriginal Population, 1981-1991", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>136</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp.792-3, 795.

<sup>137</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 792.

proposed by the Royal Commission under the banner of "economic development", including exemptions from taxation, government-backed loans, and favourable regulations.<sup>138</sup> At times, it was even admitted that continued subsidization would be necessary to sustain these communities. For example, the Royal Commission acknowledged that "since the establishment of a non-Aboriginal presence in the North, all forms of economic activity have required public subsidy. Infrastructure development, building and maintenance of transportation and communications facilities, identification of mineral reserves and their development, organization and maintenance of tourism - all have been funded from the public purse. It seems clear that further activity of this nature and maintenance of the traditional mixed economy will continue to need subsidy".<sup>139</sup> It went on to argue that it was necessary to "break away from the notion that the only solution to social assistance dependency is a job in the labour market. This may be a solution for some, but for others living in areas where little or no employment is available, it is not likely a solution for the foreseeable future. In some communities it has been, and continues to be, possible to generate employment in the production of goods and services for sale primarily outside the

---

<sup>138</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 428; 449-50; 626; 809-10; 835. This circumstances is noted in two studies/briefs prepared for the Royal Commission: The Federation of Canadian Municipalities in co-operation with the Canadian Association of Municipal Administration, "Municipalities and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada", submission to the RCAP (1993), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 215, File 8200-50C; and Lester Lafond, "Historical Use of Land and Resources", *Sharing the Harvest*.

<sup>139</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 821.

community. In others it has not been possible".<sup>140</sup> Just how many communities where this would be "possible", however, was not specified.

The difficulties "generat[ing] employment in the production of goods and services for sale primarily outside the community", in fact, is why the Royal Commission discussed in a number of places how to make better use of social assistance payments in these areas.<sup>141</sup> The Royal Commission noted that "historically, many Aboriginal communities did not follow the mainstream pattern of transformation from an agricultural to industrial economy. Rather, they continued as subsistence communities involved in some trading long into the twentieth century. However, both the subsistence and the trading economy have been replaced to a large extent - and not by a market economy, as elsewhere in Canada, but by welfare".<sup>142</sup> But the focus of the Royal Commission was not in aiding aboriginal people to "follow the mainstream pattern", but in "whether income support funds are being used optimally, given the long-term objective of improving conditions in Aboriginal communities".<sup>143</sup> The Royal Commission recommended "a significant measure of Aboriginal control over social assistance to allow innovative use of welfare funds".<sup>144</sup> It argued that "disincentives inherent in the welfare system" should be reduced by diverting social

---

<sup>140</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 981.

<sup>141</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 970-993.

<sup>142</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 972.

<sup>143</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 972.

<sup>144</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 972, 978.

assistance to training programs,<sup>145</sup> providing subsidies to businesses, funding additional social services, and supporting traditional activities.<sup>146</sup>

The Royal Commission's actual argument, then, was not that building up reserves, rural Metis communities and northern regions would lead to native self-sufficiency, but that this was what aboriginal peoples "want".<sup>147</sup> As the Royal Commission explained, "First Nations people both on- and off-reserve place a high value on the reserves as a refuge from non-Aboriginal society, a place where the bonds of community are strong and where Aboriginal culture and identity can be learned and reinforced".<sup>148</sup> Earlier in the second volume, the Royal Commission made this argument for all aboriginal peoples when it asserted that "the maintenance and renewal of the connection between land, livelihood and community remain priorities for

---

<sup>145</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 978.

<sup>146</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 979, 981, 986-88. This also results in Recommendations 2.5.47-2.5.52, which concern the more effective use of social assistance. For research studies that propose such measures, see also Moscovitch and Webster, "Social Assistance and Aboriginal People: A Discussion Paper", *For Seven Generations*; First Nations Consultants, "Aboriginal Economic Development in Canada", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 151, File 7220-2.1; Ignatius E. La Rusic, "Subsidies for Subsistence: The place of income security programs in supporting hunting, fishing and trapping as a way of life in subarctic communities", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 152, File 7220-9.1; Weihs et al., "A Review of the Economic Utilization and Potential of Country Food...", *For Seven Generations*; Linda Lange, "Fractured Vision", *For Seven Generations*; and Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, "Aboriginal Peoples, Comprehensive Land Claims, and Sustainable Development in the Territorial North", brief submitted to RCAP (1993), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 215, File 8200-50C.

<sup>147</sup> This is shown by the a section in the Final Report entitled "Significance of Lands and Resources to Aboriginal Peoples" (*Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 448-464), where numerous testimonials from the Royal Commission's public hearings are presented to support the desire of aboriginal peoples to remain in their "homelands". See, also, transcripts of the National Round Table on Urban Issues, Edmonton, Alberta, June 21-23, 1992, *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>148</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 812.



Aboriginal peoples everywhere in Canada - whether in the far north, the coastal villages, the isolated boreal forest communities, the prairie reserves and settlements, or in and around the major cities".<sup>149</sup> It then pointed out that "Aboriginal communities continue to survive and even grow, and Aboriginal people regard these places as the heartland of their culture. For most, living off the reserve or settlement and in the towns and cities is like being in a diaspora".<sup>150</sup> Therefore, even if aboriginal peoples were living in the cities, they still wished to retain their "traditional homelands" regardless of their viability because this was where they felt they really belonged.

In these discussions, the Royal Commission seemed to assume that these communities would always continue to exist. But as was explained above, there is an alternative - developing programs and services to ease aboriginal peoples' transition into the wider Canadian economy and society. Although this has not been well orchestrated in the past, such failures do not mean that this is impossible. In fact, as was discussed in previous chapters, these failures largely can be attributed to a government that devoted hardly any social resources to assisting the aboriginal population to bridge the developmental gap. Today, the situation is potentially very different since the government devotes large amounts of funding to aboriginal issues.

---

<sup>149</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 449.

<sup>150</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 451.

The benefits of integration, in fact, can be seen in the information that the Royal Commission itself provided about the Métis and urban Aboriginals. The Royal Commission pointed out that these sections of the aboriginal population were the least dependent and impoverished and had the best educational achievement since they were the most likely to live in urban environments and be more immersed in the general population.<sup>151</sup> As the Royal Commission explained, "almost half of the Aboriginal identity population lives in urban areas... Aboriginal people have moved to cities to pursue jobs, education or training opportunities, to have better access to health or social services, to join a family member or spouse, or to escape an abusive relationship". It also pointed out that "the urban environment does offer somewhat better employment and business opportunities...Aboriginal people in urban areas, on average, have higher labour force participation and employment rates than those living in non-urban areas...As well, those who have found work earn more income on average and are more likely to have a steady, full-time job".<sup>152</sup> This was in spite of the fact that urban Aboriginals have fewer subsidies offered to them and "have used agencies and programs designed for the general population" instead of receiving services specially designed for Aboriginals.<sup>153</sup>

---

<sup>151</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 805, 816.

<sup>152</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 814. For a discussion of this, see Clatworthy, "The Migration and Mobility Patterns of Canada's Aboriginal Population", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>153</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 816. This is noted by two reports prepared for the Royal Commission: Loxley et al, "Aboriginal People in the Winnipeg Economy: Case Study", *For Seven Generations*; and First Nations Management, "Aboriginal Economic Development in Canada", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 151, File 7220-2.1.

But even aboriginal peoples living within or close to urban centres have suffered from higher rates of unemployment and impoverishment, and have lower educational levels, than the non-aboriginal population. Many, in fact, live in urban ghettos on the margins of Canadian life. These circumstances cannot be explained by their isolation from markets and educational opportunities, but because they lack the disciplines, attitudes and values to participate in a more complex economy and society. The Royal Commission assumed that cultural and political autonomy and aboriginal self-reliance are mutually reinforcing, but the reality is the opposite; because certain aboriginal cultural features have inhibited aboriginal participation in more complex economic and social processes, "losing" these aspects of aboriginal identity is necessary for the economic and social well being of the native population.

#### PROMOTING GHETTOS FOR THE URBAN ABORIGINAL POPULATION

Although the Royal Commission did argue that assisting aboriginal peoples to participate in urban economies was important for addressing aboriginal dependency, not much space was devoted to this subject.<sup>154</sup> Discussions were largely limited to brief references in its general chapter on economic development and a few papers in

---

<sup>154</sup> A number of criticisms have been made of the Royal Commission that it did not study urban issues very much more generally. See, for example, Alan Cairns, *Citizens Plus*.

*Sharing the Harvest*.<sup>155</sup> These areas were dwarfed by all the attention paid to initiatives associated with "building" aboriginal economies through land claims and self-government, including the promotion of the traditional sector and the provision of services to aboriginal communities. Even the chapter on economic development was largely concerned with discussing land claims and self-government, despite the fact that these subjects were thoroughly examined in the three previous chapters of Volume Two - Treaties, Governance, and Lands and Resources.

In addition to devoting little space to urban Natives in its general discussion of economic development, almost no attention was given to economic development in its chapter on urban Natives. Instead the chapter focused on enhancing aboriginal peoples' cultural identities in the urban context,<sup>156</sup> financing and providing services to

---

<sup>155</sup> Peter George and Peter Kuhn, "Expanding Employment in the Canadian Economy", *Sharing the Harvest*, pp. 149-164; and Renée Dupuis, "Aboriginal Peoples and Employment Equity", *Sharing the Harvest*, pp. 165-174. The Royal Commission notes that "through four rounds of public hearings, Commissioners received 322 submissions on topics of concern to urban Aboriginal people. Briefs, research papers and policy papers were received from nearly 30 organizations with a significant interest in urban issues. In June 1992 we held a national round table on urban issues. We also commissioned studies on self-government, institutional and economic development, cultural identity, housing and Aboriginal youth in the urban context". *Final Report*, 4, p. 520. However, with the exception of Kathleen E. Absolon and Anthony R. Winchester, "Cultural Identity For Urban Aboriginal Peoples, Learning Circles Synthesis Report", *For Seven Generations*, these studies are not cited extensively by the Royal Commission.

<sup>156</sup> *Final Report*, 4, pp. 521-537. This results in recommendation 4.7.1. The Royal Commission cites numerous testimonials from its hearings regarding this as well as John W. Berry, "Aboriginal Cultural Identity", *For Seven Generations*; Kathleen E. Absolon and Anthony R. Winchester, "Cultural Identity For Urban Aboriginal Peoples, Learning Circles Synthesis Report", *For Seven Generations*; and Debi Spence, "Rebuilding the Spirit of the Urban Aboriginal Under Class", brief submitted to RCAP (1993), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 220, 8200-50S.

the urban native population,<sup>157</sup> developing institutions for urban self-government,<sup>158</sup> and the socio-economic conditions of urban Aboriginals.<sup>159</sup> There was also a section on the specific experiences of urban aboriginal women.<sup>160</sup> Throughout the chapter, the essential argument that was made was that "to cope with the urban milieu, support for enhancing and maintaining [aboriginal] culture and identity is essential" since "whenever that support is absent, the urban experience is profoundly unhappy for Aboriginal people".<sup>161</sup>

In terms of increasing aboriginal participation in the urban economy, the Royal Commission briefly discussed two areas in its overview of aboriginal economic development - creating more aboriginal businesses and facilitating native peoples' entrance into the Canadian workforce. In its few references to aboriginal businesses in urban areas, the Royal Commission acknowledged that "the proportion in business ownership and self-employment is generally higher off-reserve and in southern and

---

<sup>157</sup> *Final Report*, 4, pp. 538-552; 553-569. The Royal Commission's special report on aboriginal justice, *Bridging the Cultural Divide*, also provides an extensive discussion of funding such services.

<sup>158</sup> *Final Report*, 4, pp. 580-601. See, also, Native Council of Canada, "The First Peoples Urban Circle, brief submitted to RCAP (1993), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 219, File 8200-50N; Linda Clarkson, "A Case Study of the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg...", *For Seven Generations*; and Native Association of Friendship Centres, "Final Report to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", Intervener Participation Program Report (1993), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 219, File 8200-50N.

<sup>159</sup> *Final Report*, 4, pp. 601-612. For reports discussing conditions, see Clatworthy, "The Migration and Mobility Patterns...", *For Seven Generations*; and O'Neil, "Aboriginal Health Policy for the Next Century", *The Path to Healing*.

<sup>160</sup> *Final Report*, 4, pp. 570-9.

<sup>161</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 520.

more urban areas",<sup>162</sup> but it still was less than for Canadians as a whole. And instead of attempting to aid aboriginal entrepreneurs in providing goods and services to the wider Canadian population in these areas, the Royal Commission suggested creating an aboriginal enclave within the urban environment. One proposal to achieve this was "creating urban 'incubators' bringing together a number of Aboriginal businesses and service agencies in a single facility where they have access to a central source of financing and managerial expertise and can share scarce skills, capital and overhead costs. An incubator makes it easier for fledgling Aboriginal businesses to learn from and support each other, to develop mutually reinforcing economic linkages, and to economize on costs".<sup>163</sup> The Royal Commission also suggested "strengthening urban Aboriginal economies" by "building supportive links with the community", in an attempt to encourage aboriginal peoples to buy goods and services from one another.<sup>164</sup>

This approach to business development was promoted because it was assumed by the Royal Commission that aboriginal traditions were consistent with entrepreneurship. The Royal Commission, for example, compared the "qualities...essential to the

---

<sup>162</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 881. This is discussed by Clatworthy, "Migration and Mobility...", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>163</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 817. "Incubators" are discussed by Loxley et al., "Aboriginal People in the Winnipeg Economy", *For Seven Generations* and SaskNative Economic Development Corporation, "Metis Economic Development in Regina", *For Seven Generations*, but they are also briefly mentioned in Tompkins, "La Loche Community Case Study", *For Seven Generations*; and Simon Brascoupe, "Kitigan Zibi...", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>164</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 817.

operation of a modern commercial enterprise" with those needed in "a traditional hunting party".<sup>165</sup> It provided a quotation from Ron Jamieson, a Mohawk who is now a vice-president of the Bank of Montreal, who attempted to "challenge [the] assumption" that "Aboriginal people lack the skills and temperament to be effective entrepreneurs". According to Jamieson, "the personal skills and resources [Aboriginals] bring to their business are the same as those which allowed our ancestors to survive in a traditional Aboriginal economy". The four "personal skills and resources" that Jamieson identified included "risk taking, discipline, clarity of vision and meeting the needs of the community or customer".<sup>166</sup>

But three of the four qualities that Jamieson pointed to - "risk taking", "discipline", and "clarity of vision" - would only result in a profitable business if the fourth, "meeting the needs of the community or customer", were present. This only could be achieved through market research - a "personal skill and resource" that did not exist in hunting and gathering societies. Besides, even if the vague references to "risk taking, discipline, [and] clarity of vision" were accurate depictions of the qualities of hunters and gatherers before contact, there is no reason to assume their operation would be transferable to the capitalist context.<sup>167</sup> After all, hunting and gathering skills were

---

<sup>165</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 885.

<sup>166</sup> Jamieson, cited in *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 885.

<sup>167</sup> According to Jamieson, "risk taking" in traditional economies consisted of unspecified "life-threatening" situations, while "personal discipline" involved an attention to detail and the ability to make quick decisions under pressure" so as to ensure "survival and the success of the hunt". In

passed down from one generation to another. In a rapidly changing global business environment, such methods would not result in successful entrepreneurship. This was why "genuine entrepreneurs with the skills to turn a small beginning into a major enterprise are few in number".<sup>168</sup>

But despite the vastly different skills, values and attitudes that were required under capitalism in comparison to hunting and gathering, the Royal Commission used the fact that aboriginal peoples "set a high value on passing on knowledge from one generation to the next" to support its claim that aboriginal cultural values would make the native population successful capitalists. It maintained that only the existence of a "colonial mentality" led to the assumption that aboriginal peoples "[lack] an interest in future investment". To support this view, the Royal Commission pointed to the questionable claim that aboriginal peoples "practised harvesting techniques that were conscious of the danger of resource depletion and mindful of the interests of future generations".<sup>169</sup> On the basis of this dubious assertion, the Royal Commission supported the proposal that "traditional wisdom as interpreted by the elders will be used to guide planning and decision-making" in developing businesses.<sup>170</sup>

---

addition, "vision and self-confidence" were present in traditional economies because of the need to "have a clear sense of ...results [in order to] feed, clothe and care for their families". *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 885.

<sup>168</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 890.

<sup>169</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 889.

<sup>170</sup> David Newhouse, in *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 889.



As well as promoting the creation of more aboriginal businesses in urban areas, the Royal Commission also argued that native participation in the Canadian workforce must be increased. To explain the lower levels of aboriginal participation in the Canadian workforce, the Royal Commission offered four reasons - the presence of racism, "mismatched skills and job requirements", a "lack of job information", and a "lack of child care".<sup>171</sup>

The first reason, the existence of racism, was seen as the most significant factor, and this explanation was referred to throughout the Royal Commission's Report.<sup>172</sup>

According to the Royal Commission, "finding employment is often problematic for Aboriginal people" in urban centres because "Aboriginal applicants often face discrimination and racism".<sup>173</sup> These claims about "the presence of racism"<sup>174</sup> were largely based upon the views of aboriginal peoples themselves, both in surveys and "personal accounts that detail the experiences Aboriginal people have had, and continue to have, with racist attitudes and behaviour".<sup>175</sup> As the Royal Commission explained, "racism is felt strongly by Aboriginal people living in urban areas.

---

<sup>171</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 933. The largest barrier identified by the Royal Commission was "the lack of jobs", but this appears to refer to the situation in isolated communities because "enhanced mobility" is seen as a factor to address it. *Final Report*, (2(2), pp. 933-34.. This problem is also mentioned specifically with respect to aboriginal communities (*Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 957-8). These reasons are mentioned by Loxley et al., "Aboriginal People in the Winnipeg Economy", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>172</sup> The Royal Commission also comments on "racism rooted in long-standing and deeply ingrained stereotypes", *Final Report*, (2(2), p. 937.

<sup>173</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p. 8.

<sup>174</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 777.

<sup>175</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 937.

Delegates to the urban issues round table described racism as pervasive in their dealings with government, business, financial institutions, employers, and the broader community. Indeed, they identified racism as the principal barrier to improving economic opportunities for aboriginal people in urban areas".<sup>176</sup> "Being aboriginal" was also identified as a problem for finding employment by a large number of aboriginal people, and the Royal Commission pointed out that this "likely relates to racial discrimination".<sup>177</sup>

Besides the views and personal accounts of aboriginal people, the Royal Commission also based its conclusions about racism on statistics acquired from aboriginal communities. In analyzing the differences in earnings and rates of unemployment between Aboriginals and Non-Aboriginals, the Royal Commission pointed out that a gap of 50 percent cannot be explained by education/training, age or location. This unexplained gap, according to the Royal Commission "is often taken to be a measure of discrimination, although other differences not measured and not included in the analysis could also be at work".<sup>178</sup>

---

<sup>176</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 817.

<sup>177</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 933.

<sup>178</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 937-8. For reports prepared for the Royal Commission discussing this see George et al., "Patterns of Employment, Unemployment and Poverty", *For Seven Generations*; Aboriginal Advisory Council, Manitoba Civil Service Commission, "Presentation to Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, December 8, 1992", (1992), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 218, File 8200-50M; and Jette, "The Dynamics of Exclusion", *For Seven Generations*.

But both the accounts of aboriginal peoples about their experiences, and the unexplained gap in earnings and rates of employment, cannot be definitive in the Royal Commission's assertion that racism was the major problem facing urban Aboriginals in addressing their dependency. This was because, as has been explained before, the underrepresentation of aboriginal peoples in the workforce was often due to cultural factors. In fact, the presence of "racism", although it undoubtedly exists, often is a catch-all term that is used to explain any difficulty aboriginal peoples are experiencing integrating into modern society. The Royal Commission, for example, offered the following statement from hearings in Roseau River:

The central finding of our report is that Aboriginal people face barriers and obstacles in the workplace...Our findings show that racism and discrimination exist in the Manitoba civil service, and that racism is the basis of the barriers and problems faced by Aboriginal people. Racism is experienced through discrimination, bias, exclusion, stereotyping, lack of support and recognition, negative attitudes, alienation in the workplace, and lack of role models in management positions. Racism is exclusion.<sup>179</sup>

But as the reference to "alienation in the workplace" showed, "exclusion" could be due to cultural factors as well as racist attitudes.<sup>180</sup>

The Royal Commission, however, ignored these methodological difficulties, assuming that racism was the major problem to be overcome if Aboriginals were to become participants in the Canadian workforce. To address the existence of such attitudes in

---

<sup>179</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 938.

<sup>180</sup> This can also be seen in numerous testimonials cited by the Royal Commission in its section on "Racism" in its "Urban Perspectives" chapter. See, *Final Report*, 4, pp. 526-528.

the non-aboriginal population, the Royal Commission recommended improved employment equity initiatives<sup>181</sup> and government compliance with equality provisions of the Charter of Rights.<sup>182</sup> It also proposed the "establishment of cross-cultural and anti-racist education programs, mentoring relationships, support groups, the use of secondments and acting appointments as part of a bridging strategy, inclusion of Aboriginal people in the shaping of employment equity programs, giving Aboriginal people credit for experience that helps them overcome seniority problems for promotion purposes, and involving unions in the design and implementation of programs".<sup>183</sup>

As well as the existence of racism, the Royal Commission also argued that a limited access to childcare and job information, as well as "mismatched skills and job requirements", played a role in inhibiting aboriginal entrance into the Canadian workforce. Limited access to childcare, however, was not a problem faced exclusively by aboriginal peoples. In fact, with the retention of kinship relations and extended families, one would expect this to have been less of a problem for Aboriginals than a number of other groups.

---

<sup>181</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 933-9; 946-7. This results in recommendations 2.5.38 and 2.5.39.

<sup>182</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), pp. 7-8. See also Renée Dupuis, "Aboriginal Peoples and Employment Equity", *Sharing the Harvest*, p. 165.

<sup>183</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 946.

It was also not clear why aboriginal peoples would have had a comparative "lack of job information".<sup>184</sup> There have numerous agencies in urban centres that have been created exclusively for the aboriginal population,<sup>185</sup> and the Royal Commission did not explain why these would be less effective than other employment agencies (which can also be accessed by the aboriginal population). The Royal Commission only commented that these programs have suffered from "the lack of commitment by governments to long-term funding".<sup>186</sup> It maintained that more funding was needed for such programs because "Aboriginal people in urban areas need culturally appropriate employment services that can meet their diverse needs arising from sex-age, parental status, migration, temporary job dislocation, recent imprisonment, or severe handicaps related to employability (for example, physical or mental disabilities, drug addiction and low levels of education)".<sup>187</sup>

---

<sup>184</sup>This is identified as a problem in Clatworthy et al., "Patterns of Employment, Unemployment and Poverty", *For Seven Generations*, and Loxley et al., "Aboriginal People in the Winnipeg Economy", *For Seven Generations*. Loxley et al. maintain that "Aboriginal people often do not have access to information about available job opportunities and are not plugged into networks where such information is readily available".

<sup>185</sup> The Royal Commission, for example, specifically discusses the "Pathways to Success" program that was developed in the late 1980s. *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 939-42. One of the objectives of the Pathways program was to "facilitate broader Aboriginal participation in the unique Aboriginal labour market and the broader Canadian labour market" but there has been "little strategic policy thinking to date...about...what the elements of the 'unique Aboriginal labour market' are and how they relate to the Canadian labour market characteristics" (*Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 941-2). Besides the Pathways program, the Royal Commission also discusses the Aboriginal Training and Employment Services (ATES) in Winnipeg, and notes that "several urban centres have at least one Aboriginal agency providing employment services, usually with financial support from the department of human resources development. These agencies help to connect the Aboriginal labour force in urban areas with potential employers, including employers not covered by employment equity legislation" (*Final Report*, 2(2), p. 949).

<sup>186</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 949.

<sup>187</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 950. This results in Recommendation 2.5.40.

From this quotation, it was also apparent that the Royal Commission's comments about the "mismatch of skills" in the aboriginal population were misleading. No discussion of these "mismatched" skills was provided; it was used merely as a euphemism for the "low levels of education" within the aboriginal population referred to above.<sup>188</sup> According to the Royal Commission, Aboriginals lacked basic education for many skilled occupations and therefore "a renewed focus on education and training is of vital importance" for native people because they "drop out of school at alarming rates and abandon all prospects for a meaningful future". Education was necessary, in the Royal Commission's view, so there can be more politicians, entrepreneurs, "institutional builders", and "policy makers", as well as "the scientists, technicians and educators" needed to implement self-government.<sup>189</sup> In addition, the Royal Commission maintained that "every effort must be made to ensure that those who migrate do so with levels of education and training that will serve them well in an urban environment".<sup>190</sup> And although the Royal Commission pointed out that the numbers graduating from high school and attending post-secondary institutions have improved, aboriginal peoples' "rates of attendance, and especially of graduation, still lagged behind those of the population as a whole".<sup>191</sup>

---

<sup>188</sup> This is supported by the fact that later on in the chapter, the Royal Commission refers to "Shortages in specialized knowledge and skills" (*Final Report*, 2(2), p. 962).

<sup>189</sup> *Final Report*, 2(1), p. 7.

<sup>190</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 779.

<sup>191</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 794. The Royal Commission also points out that "the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people tends to diminish as the level of education improves, showing that investments in education improve labour market outcomes and reduce inequalities" (*Final Report*, 2(2), p. 959). It also explains that "those who complete high school are much more likely to participate in the

The low educational levels of the aboriginal population, in fact, were obviously part of the reason as to why employment equity policies were not working.<sup>192</sup> Employment equity policies are supposed to increase representation of groups that have been historically discriminated against, but those who are hired are supposed to have the same qualifications and skills as the unsuccessful candidates. In addition, low educational levels can also lead employers to have low expectations of aboriginal performance and hence to discriminate against native employees. The Royal Commission gave the example of an aboriginal person who complained about their calculations being checked despite having a bachelor and master's degree. This person was evidently singled out for this treatment because their employer assumed that they "grew up on a reserve where nobody learned to add properly".<sup>193</sup>

These circumstances would likely account, at least in part, for the Royal Commission's observation that "the level of aboriginal representation in provincial government work forces is usually far below what it should be, and, at the municipal level, one is hard pressed to find any aboriginal employees in such departments as police, fire fighting and public works". It also could explain why "two or three departments that have substantial involvement with Aboriginal people tend to account for the bulk of hirings,

---

labour force than those who do not" and "obtaining a university degree does lead to better results" (*Final Report*, 2(2), p. 960).

<sup>192</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 933.

<sup>193</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 937. This example is discussed by Jette, in the report "The Dynamics of Exclusion", *For Seven Generations*.

while others lag far behind".<sup>194</sup> The government departments "that have substantial involvement with Aboriginal people" were those most likely to apply "culturally sensitive" standards in their hiring policies by downplaying educational and seniority requirements. The Royal Commission, however, glossed over these educational obstacles to aboriginal employment by blaming the lack of aboriginal representation on "a lack of commitment...by the employing departments".<sup>195</sup>

And low educational levels were only part of the problem. This was shown by the fact that the failure of employment equity policies was also due to the fact that the rate of turnover for aboriginal employees was the highest in comparison to other targeted groups, particularly in the case of the public service's initiatives to increase aboriginal representation.<sup>196</sup> So, even if more aboriginal people were hired, this likely would be offset by the higher rate of job losses for native employees.

The reasons for the difficulties in retaining aboriginal employees were not discussed extensively by the Royal Commission. It did maintain, however, that a major problem for increasing aboriginal representation was "work environments with cultures that alienate Aboriginal employees"<sup>197</sup> and "the barrier of cultural clash".<sup>198</sup> It noted that

---

<sup>194</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 936.

<sup>195</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 946.

<sup>196</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 936.

<sup>197</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 937.

<sup>198</sup> See, also, *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 962. These problems are discussed by Jette, *The Dynamics of Exclusion, For Seven Generations*.



"in the workplace, differences between Aboriginal cultures and corporate cultures are manifested in interpersonal relations, decision-making processes, concepts of leadership and the organization of work".<sup>199</sup> It then went on to cite a report prepared for the federal Public Service Commission:

current and former Aboriginal employees frequently comment on the difficulties faced in adapting to the Public Service. For many, entry involves a culture shock which comes in a variety of guises. The language of the bureaucracy and formalities of government create uneasiness for many Aboriginal peoples. They feel conflicts between their traditional ways and accepted government practices...The bureaucratic levels and systems within government are also foreign.

The Public service is perceived to allow minimal room for autonomy or creativity. The environment is perceived to be fiercely competitive, filled with roadblocks to advancement, and with people looking out only for themselves. The individualistic way in which work is done is perceived to be alien and pressure packed.<sup>200</sup>

In order to deal with this obstacle to aboriginal participation in the labour force, the Royal Commission encouraged "employers to commit to a strategy that would create a hospitable environment for the attraction and retention of Aboriginal employees".<sup>201</sup>

But what was the "hospitable environment" that was required "for the attraction and retention of Aboriginal employees"? Bureaucracies, after all are supposed to follow the "formalities of government" to ensure standardized levels of service and

---

<sup>199</sup> Final Report, 2(2), p. 938. This problem is discussed by the Aboriginal Advisory Council, Manitoba Civil Service Commission, "Presentation to Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, December 8, 1992", (1992), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 218, File 8200-50M.

<sup>200</sup> Cited in *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 938.

<sup>201</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 947.

accountability. Was the Royal Commission recommending that these standards be sacrificed so that aboriginal peoples could be made to feel less uneasy?

What was not recognized in the Royal Commission's analysis of "culture clash" was that many of the features of aboriginal cultures are incompatible with their participation in modern working environments.<sup>202</sup> These features will have to be overcome if aboriginal peoples are to become attractive job candidates in the Canadian economy. This is probably one reason why people who identify themselves as Aboriginal exclusively are less likely to be employed than those native people who report they have both aboriginal and non-aboriginal origins.<sup>203</sup>

Although the Royal Commission always promoted the retention of aboriginal cultural features by saying this was a way to "respect" and "recognize" the aboriginal population, it never examined what this accommodation would mean for a capitalist enterprise. Take, for example, the case of B&D plastics, which developed a joint venture with the Carry-the-Kettle First Nation. B&D plastics were convinced to accommodate aboriginal employees "attending feasts, pow-wows and funerals" as part

---

<sup>202</sup> This is apparent, in fact, in interviews with Inuvialuit in a study prepared for the Royal Commission where a number of people reported "feeling oppressed by the nine-to-five work ethic" of employers. This study notes that the economic institutions in the region "regardless of who owns or runs them, are based on non-Aboriginal standards of operation, which are often in direct conflict with the expression of ...Aboriginal cultural identity". Absolon and Winchester, "Cultural Identity for Urban Aboriginal Peoples", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>203</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 962.

of their agreement with the band.<sup>204</sup> But what was not considered was how such exemptions would affect the performance of aboriginal workers in comparison to non-aboriginal employees. If the Royal Commission expected all employers to allow aboriginal peoples extra time off to "hunt, fish or visit distant communities",<sup>205</sup> this would reinforce the impression that aboriginal workers were "unreliable". As a result, employers would be reluctant to hire aboriginal peoples because of their perceived negative consequences for profitability; they would only do so when offered incentives to offset the less productive character of aboriginal labour.

It was, in fact, such problems with native labour that led a government report 30 years ago to argue that industries in the north did not want to hire Aborigines. According to this report, these employees were undesirable because they were "not as productive as white labour".<sup>206</sup> In order to correct this problem, the solution is not to maintain the lower level of aboriginal productivity by giving aboriginal peoples privileges that non-aboriginal workers do not have (this will just cause non-aboriginal workers who are not given time off for cultural reasons to be resentful towards aboriginal employees); it is providing the transitional programs and services that will enable aboriginal peoples to develop the skills, values and attitudes that are required in capitalist societies.

---

<sup>204</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 896. This example was drawn from interviews between Dr. Lorne Ellingson of Toronto Consultants International Ltd. on behalf of the Royal Commission and managers of community-owned enterprises.

<sup>205</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 898.

<sup>206</sup> Manitoba, Committee on Manitoba's Economic Future, Manitoba, 1962-1975 - A Report to the Government of Manitoba, cited in *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 518.

In addition to lacking discipline in comparison to non-Aboriginal labour, aboriginal cultural features that retain close kinship relations also continue to pose obstacles for aboriginal proletarianization. This was why the Royal Commission stressed "the need for jobs that provide a decent income, that do not necessarily require moving from Aboriginal communities..."<sup>207</sup> and "training that [does] not require long absences from the community but that could be taken over several years in blocks of several weeks at a time".<sup>208</sup> As an aboriginal spokesperson puts it: "the bigger Winnipeg gets, the greater the sense of isolation for Natives, the less they practise togetherness. It is very difficult to 'feel' Native culture in urban areas. In the rural areas, Natives are in closer touch with one another".<sup>209</sup> Although these cultural characteristics helped aboriginal peoples sustain themselves as tribes of hunters and gatherers/horticulturalists before contact, they currently prevent aboriginal peoples from participating in a labour market that increasingly requires people to move to urban centres and work in impersonal environments.

The last significant problem that aboriginal peoples who retain hunting and gathering cultural features face is difficulties in developing the literacy and mathematical skills

---

<sup>207</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 779. This is also why the Royal Commission is so keen to encourage aboriginal employment in resource extraction. It maintains that "since these activities occur in proximity to many Aboriginal communities, they would offer a wide variety of skilled jobs and provide an alternative to leaving the communities to earn a living" (*Final Report*, 2(2), p. 827).

<sup>208</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 898.

<sup>209</sup> RCAP transcripts, cited in *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 815.

necessary to participate in the Canadian workforce today. The Royal Commission noted the "occupational shifts...over the past 15 years have led to an acceleration in the growth of highly skilled jobs - i.e., managerial, administrative, and professional and technical occupations"<sup>210</sup> and that "nearly half...of new jobs created between 1990 and 2000 will require more than 16 years of education and training",<sup>211</sup> but it did not recognize the aboriginal cultural features that were preventing the native population from moving into these kinds of jobs. The difficulties that hunting and gathering/horticultural traditions pose for modern educational achievement explains why "current trends suggest major shortages of Aboriginal people educated in fields such as economics, community planning and development, business management, forestry, biology, resources conservation, wildlife management, geology and agriculture" and the "serious gaps in other fields where a math or science base is required, such as engineering and the health sciences".<sup>212</sup> It also partially explains why it is so difficult to retain aboriginal students at the university level and why "the percentage of Aboriginal students who have left university with no degree is larger than the percentage who graduated".<sup>213</sup>

---

<sup>210</sup> Economic Council of Canada, cited in *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 963.

<sup>211</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 963. The skills gaps between current job requirements and aboriginal credentials are recognized in a number of reports prepared for the Royal Commission. See, for example, Del C. Anaquod, "Aboriginal Education, Training and Employment", *For Seven Generations*; and Loxley et al., "Aboriginal People in the Winnipeg Economy", *For Seven Generations*; and ATII, "Northern Education and Training Systems for Inuit", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>212</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 963.

<sup>213</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 965.

But instead of developing proposals for addressing these problems, and thereby making it easier for aboriginal peoples to enter into the Canadian workforce, the Royal Commission's focus was on promoting the same cultural features that were causing aboriginal dependency. This was because "enhancing aboriginal identities" was its major concern, and this involved the continuance of the traditions associated with hunting and gathering/horticultural modes of production. The Royal Commission maintained that "economic development should be compatible with and strengthen Aboriginal culture and identity rather than undermine it"<sup>214</sup> without considering that certain aspects of "Aboriginal culture and identity" were not "compatible" with "economic development".

The aspects of "Aboriginal culture and identity" that the Royal Commission maintained were important to "strengthen" included "spirituality, language, a land base or ancestral territory, elders, traditional values, family and ceremonial life".<sup>215</sup> "Spirituality", was deemed to be the most important feature because, as Evelyn Webster, the Vice-President of the Indigenous Women's Collective put it: "the Creator has given all peoples their own cultural identity, which we hold as sacred and which

---

<sup>214</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 797.

<sup>215</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 524. The Royal Commission's concern with these aspects arises from the fact that they were regarded as being important by aboriginal peoples, most significantly in the following two reports prepared for the Royal Commission: Absolon and Winchester, "Cultural Identity For Urban Aboriginal Peoples, Learning Circles Synthesis Report", *For Seven Generations*; and Lauri Gilchrist and R. Anthony Winchester, "Urban Survivors, Aboriginal Street Youth, kaøptøtipis eø-pimohteyahk: Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Montreal", *For Seven Generations*.

will be preserved for all time".<sup>216</sup> Aboriginal languages, ties to an ancestral territory and elders were also deemed to be very important because they would allow aboriginal people to "learn important lessons" and pass them on from one generation to another. Particular values were also identified as being significant; these allegedly included "responsibility, reciprocity, sharing, respect, kindness, honesty and strength".<sup>217</sup> Finally, it was pointed out that "Aboriginal cultures place great emphasis on family life and obligations within the family" and aboriginal "cultural identity is intimately tied to celebrating the ceremonial life of their culture", such as pipe ceremonies and burning sweetgrass.<sup>218</sup>

But although these aspects of cultural identity might be believed to be important for a variety of reasons, it has not been shown how they will help aboriginal peoples "to achieve an adequate standard of living and participate in the general life of the dominant society", which many aboriginal peoples are also supposed to "want".<sup>219</sup> In fact, aboriginal peoples who retain some of these cultural characteristics are more dependent than those who do not, as is shown in the case of those who speak an aboriginal language and retain a close connection to their "ancestral territory".<sup>220</sup> Involving elders in the educational process and promoting native spirituality will also

---

<sup>216</sup> Evelyn Webster, cited in *Final Report*, 4, p. 524.

<sup>217</sup> *Final Report*, 4, pp. 524-5.

<sup>218</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 526.

<sup>219</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 522.

<sup>220</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 960.

do nothing to improve aboriginal peoples' understanding of science.<sup>221</sup> And, as has been noted earlier, encouraging natives to "place great emphasis on...obligations within the family" could interfere with their participation in the workforce and as entrepreneurs.

Instead of recognizing that retaining some of these cultural features will exacerbate aboriginal dependency, the Royal Commission argued the opposite. This was because it uncritically accepts the idea that honouring and protecting aboriginal traditions will "[contribute] to the development of self-esteem" and "provide choices for people rather than dictating directions".<sup>222</sup> The Royal Commission maintained that

no single economic outcome is right or appropriate. Canada is blessed with natural and human resources that provide flexibility for people to pursue varied lifestyles, as they have for generations. We will continue to see economic outcomes and income mixes that are as strikingly different as the lives of Inuit carvers in Cape Dorset and Aboriginal professionals in Montreal or Vancouver. What should be common to everyone is the opportunity to acquire the needed education and skills to make a reasonable living no matter which way of life they choose.<sup>223</sup>

But arguing that aboriginal peoples should have a "choice" being either a carver in an isolated community or a professional in an urban centre ignored the vastly different

---

<sup>221</sup> Those aboriginal students who use Creation myths to explain their origins, for example, are unlikely to become successful evolutionary biologists or archaeologists.

<sup>222</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 779.

<sup>223</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 827.



skills that are required for participation in each activity. Being "a professional" usually requires years of formal education and the meeting of objective standards.

Such arguments, in fact, were based upon a denial of the gap between hunting and gathering and capitalist economies. Although people who have been immersed in urban environments have often chosen to "go Native" and lived the subsistence lifestyle, it is not possible for a trapper, without any formal education or experience in the city, to become an urban professional. The Royal Commission maintained that "mastering the skills of a modern economy or organizing communities to follow a mix of traditional and cash pursuits will provide the keys to self-reliance",<sup>224</sup> even though the encouragement of cultural features associated with hunting and gathering often limits educational achievement and participation in regular employment. As was pointed out above, urban Aboriginals and those native people who do *not* self-identify as Aboriginal, have *higher* workforce participation rates, incomes and educational levels than those living on reserves and in northern areas of country.<sup>225</sup>

The anthropologist Diamond Jenness sensed this forty years ago, in the case of the Inuit, when he remarked that "as the population continues to grow, relief expenditures too may grow; but they can never cure the sickness of the soul that is consuming the Eskimo people. That sickness will yield to one remedy only, honest, rewarding

---

<sup>224</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 827.

<sup>225</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 801, 803, 814; 3, p. 20; 4, pp. 608-11.

work...In that direction, and in that direction alone, lies the Eskimo's redemption".<sup>226</sup>

This, however, will eventually require aboriginal peoples to leave unviable reserves and develop those cultural characteristics that enable them to become productive members of the wider society.

---

<sup>226</sup> Diamond Jenness, *Eskimo Administration II: Canada* (Montreal: Arctic Institute of North America, 1964).

## **Chapter Ten**

### **Laying the Foundations for Overcoming Aboriginal Dependency**

As well as discussing the initiatives that were being pursued in the current period of "negotiation and renewal", the Royal Commission made a number of preliminary recommendations concerning future Aboriginal-Non-Aboriginal relations. According to the Royal Commission, this would involve both "a sincere acknowledgement by non-Aboriginal people of the injustices of the past", as well as "a profound and unambiguous commitment to establishing a new relationship in the future".<sup>1</sup> Such a new relationship, argued the Royal Commission, should embrace a number of themes: the reconstitution of "aboriginal nations" and the establishment of processes for them to assume additional powers, increased access to lands and resources, improved education and skills, and economic development to address "the poverty and dependency of lives defined by unemployment and welfare...".<sup>2</sup>

Essentially, these proposals were an extension of the demands for land claims and self-government being pursued by aboriginal organizations. To accelerate the development of these initiatives, the Royal Commission proposed a new Royal Proclamation and Companion Legislation that would recognize aboriginal peoples as

---

<sup>1</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p.4.

<sup>2</sup> *Final Report*, 5, pp.2-3.

nations,<sup>3</sup> as well as a Canada-wide Framework Agreement to develop overarching principles for a more equal relationship between aboriginal peoples and the Canadian state.<sup>4</sup> It also advocated increased funding to aboriginal organizations and their partnerships with Canadian governments "to address social and economic problems".<sup>5</sup> The Royal Commission maintained that these new initiatives would signal that "a profound, symbolic turning point in Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal relations will have been reached. The old relationship of paternalism and prejudice will have been rejected and, in its place, a foundation laid for a new partnership founded on

---

<sup>3</sup> *Final Report*, 5, pp. 4-10. The formation of these legal structures are proposed in Recommendation 5.1.1 (b). The Royal Commission proposes that they should recognize aboriginal peoples as nations, lay the foundation for the treaty process, and provide the framework for redistributing lands and resources. A new Royal Proclamation does not seem to have been proposed in any of the research studies prepared for the Royal Commission. One, however, states that the reassignment of power in "a new era of self-government" will indicate that "the fundamental policies of the Royal Proclamation will continue to be alive and well". Alan Pratt, "The Fiduciary Relationship and Aboriginal Governance", *For Seven Generations*. Another states that "it would be beneficial to focus on new and equitable approaches" that "recognize and affirm the aboriginal rights of Aboriginal peoples consistent with...constitutional instruments applicable in Canada since the time of the Royal Proclamation of 1763". Paul Joffe and Mary Ellen Turpel, "Extinguishment of the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>4</sup> *Final Report*, 5, pp. 10-11. The formation of the Framework Agreement is proposed in Recommendation 5.1.1(c). The possibility of developing such an agreement is mentioned in a few research studies. For example, the Union of New Brunswick Indians has asked for a task force to be formed involving federal, provincial and aboriginal governments "to examine all the outstanding issues around aboriginal rights, treaties, and native social and economic concerns" and "educate governments, guide future negotiations on substantive issues, and lay the foundation for a 'framework agreement' that would support future bilateral and trilateral arrangements". David Milne, "The Case of New Brunswick Aboriginal Relations", *For Seven Generations*. Another study argues that these governments should make a "practical commitment to negotiating and implementing Aboriginal self-government...in legally-binding declarations, recognizing the inherent right of self-government. Four potential forms are joint Aboriginal-Crown declarations; a new Canada-wide Treaty; framework federal legislation; and resolutions in legislatures to entrench new treaties under Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982". Douglas M. Brown and Jonathan Rose, "Exercising Aboriginal Self-Government", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>5</sup> *Final Report*, 5, pp. 11-17; 34-6. The Royal Commission recommends an increase in federal expenditures on aboriginal affairs in the amount of \$2 billion/year. It maintains that this increased funding should be devoted to native healing, improving economic opportunity and living conditions, developing human resources and creating aboriginal institutions and adapting mainstream institutions.

responsibility and mutual respect".<sup>6</sup> It would also be a "completion of the work of making Aboriginal people full partners in Confederation", ensuring that aboriginal cultures and governments "will never again be the objects of public policies of assimilation and extinguishment".<sup>7</sup>

The success of these initiatives in addressing aboriginal dependency, in the Royal Commission's view, would largely depend upon changing the attitudes of Non-Aboriginals. As was discussed in the last two chapters, the Royal Commission argued that the period of "negotiation and renewal" has faced a number of setbacks because of the persistence of assimilationist assumptions within the larger Canadian society. According to the Royal Commission, past policies have failed because of disrespect for aboriginal cultures, the inability of Non-Aboriginals to recognize the special "world view" of native peoples and their existence as "nations" in the Canadian federation, as well as the inadequate sharing of lands and resources with them.<sup>8</sup> In the Royal Commission's view, the continuation of aboriginal dependency could be explained by the fact that "non-Aboriginal people have simply refused to recognize Aboriginal nationhood, and that at the core of Canada's fundamental contradiction is a

---

<sup>6</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p.21.

<sup>7</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 694, 679. Proposals for extending land claims and self-government initiatives generally are also explored in detail in two special reports prepared by the Royal Commission - *Treaty Making in the Spirit of Co-existence* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1995); and *Partners in Confederation: Aboriginal Peoples, Self-Government and the Constitution* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1993). Extending self-government over the justice system is also explored in detail in the Royal Commission's special report *Bridging the Cultural Divide: A Report on Aboriginal Peoples and Criminal Justice in Canada* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.236.

racism and ethnocentrism that rejects the viability and value of Aboriginal cultures. Laws and structures founded on assumptions of cultural superiority continue to form the basis of the relationship between our peoples".<sup>9</sup> It argued that "the time has come to move out of an age of disrespect and intolerance, and into a new era or reconciliation with Aboriginal nations".<sup>10</sup> For the Royal Commission, Non-Aboriginals "must accommodate openly and generously the cultures and values that Aboriginal people are determined to retain" if they are to stop the "continuation of the oppressive practices of the colonial past". It also maintained, however, that "standing in the way of this accommodation are stereotypes and erroneous assumptions held by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people about each other's cultures".<sup>11</sup>

Overcoming dependency, therefore, means rejecting what the Royal Commission perceived to be the false and racist assumptions of the "displacement and assimilation" era.<sup>12</sup> These assumptions have arisen, according to the Royal Commission, because of "ethnocentric" assumptions about societal evolution, which paved the way for the intrusion, control and coercion during this period by justifying concepts like discovery and *terra nullius*.<sup>13</sup> As the Royal Commission put it: "our relations with Aboriginal peoples have been corrupted not by the inadequacy of indigenous cultures but by their subjection to an alien European value system bent on destroying their way of life.

---

<sup>9</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.608.

<sup>10</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.607.

<sup>11</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 614-15.

<sup>12</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.608.

Aboriginal political systems are predicated on key values such as co-existence, sharing, balance, equity and harmony. These values provide a sound foundation for reconstructing a relationship respectful of the rights and responsibilities of both partners".<sup>14</sup>

The Royal Commission maintained, in fact, that there was already a precedent for such a relationship in the period of "contact and cooperation" that occurred during the fur trade.<sup>15</sup> Returning to this relationship was necessary because at this time aboriginal groups were historically recognized as sovereign and self-governing.<sup>16</sup> And Canadian institutions should reflect this not only on the basis that such a relationship existed in the past, but also because aboriginal cultures continued to be "vibrant and distinctive" today.<sup>17</sup> As the Royal Commission explained,

when Aboriginal people talk about returning to their traditions, the response of non-Aboriginal people is often incredulous, because they associate First Nations, Inuit and Metis cultures with buckskin, igloos and buffalo. It is not well known that being Aboriginal is a matter of mind, that the stories that teach Aboriginal people how to live with each other and with creation - how to be fully human - are loaded with symbols that transcend time and the particular circumstances in which they originated.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.600.

<sup>14</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.610.

<sup>15</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp.608-9.

<sup>16</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp.609-10.

<sup>17</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp.612-13.

<sup>18</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.663.

Restoring aboriginal cultural practices and values, therefore, was not meant to turn back the clock, the Royal Commission argued. Instead, it recommended that we "[chart] a course for the future based on insights from the past".<sup>19</sup> The Royal Commission maintained that recognizing and respecting aboriginal cultures actually would enable the native population to participate more effectively in Canadian society. Native "insights from the past", in fact, could be beneficial to all Canadians, and so they should be made available to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginals.

The mechanism proposed to achieve this was "intercultural dialogue" and a "blend of historical sensitivity and creative initiative... ". Such blending and dialogue would recognize "the wrongs of the past and the rights flowing from our previous relationships and interactions", while at the same time not becoming "prisoners of the past, locked forever in the same historical postures, with the same attitudes grievances, suspicions and prejudices".<sup>20</sup> It also would ensure that both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginals could communicate in "their own accustomed voices and ways, even if this requires some patience and perserverence on all sides".<sup>21</sup>

But despite the Royal Commission's intention to bring forth a more equal and balanced relationship between Aboriginals and Non-Aboriginals with these initiatives, this will not be their effect. When one actually examines the cultural features that the

---

<sup>19</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.662-8.



Royal Commission believed should be "respected" and "recognized", they mostly turn out to be either unscientific beliefs or forms of observation practiced by cultures with pre-literate languages and kinship forms of organization – i.e. characteristics associated with the hunting and gathering/horticultural era of human existence. And since these are associated with smaller, less productive and simpler modes of production than what is required in a post-tribal world where large surpluses are produced and distributed, preserving or restoring these features cannot be the answer to aboriginal dependency today or in the future.

Although questions about how aboriginal problems should be solved are difficult to answer and beyond the scope of this dissertation, one thing is certain – there needs to be an understanding of the cause of aboriginal dependency before any solutions can be developed. As has been documented in this dissertation, one factor that has contributed to aboriginal dependency is the gap in scale, productivity and complexity between hunting and gathering/horticultural modes of production and those of European colonizers. Recognizing this gap calls into question parallelist assumptions that encourage aboriginal peoples to remain attached to cultural features associated with obsolete modes of production. Such a preoccupation with parallelism, in fact, has inhibited aboriginal peoples from achieving what the Royal Commission claimed

---

<sup>20</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.677.

<sup>21</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.693.

it was attempting to accomplish with its recommendations - the full participation of aboriginal peoples in Canadian life.

Increasing funding for programs and services that impede aboriginal integration and participation, in fact, was a major part of the Royal Commission's agenda for the future. This was because the Royal Commission denied the gap in progressive development between aboriginal traditions and modern requirements. With a combination of special pleading, romanticized accounts of aboriginal cultural features, and abstracting certain values and practices from their historical and material context, the Royal Commission was able to disguise the developmental roots of aboriginal dependency.

#### THE ROYAL COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS FOR A RENEWED RELATIONSHIP

In mapping out the future interaction between Aboriginals and Non-Aboriginals, the Royal Commission proposed four principles upon which to return the relationship to "a path of justice, co-existence and equality" - mutual recognition, mutual respect, sharing and mutual responsibility.<sup>22</sup> These four principles were depicted as existing in

---

<sup>22</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.694. These four principles are mentioned in one study prepared for the Commission, which notes that "early in their work, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples articulated four principles that would govern their work. These four principles are recognition, respect, reciprocity, and responsibility. These principles are seen as essential to achieving the new relationship between Aboriginal Peoples and Canadians that has eluded us at least since the time of Confederation. These standards are here embraced as the minimum essential elements required for meaningful legal

a circle "because a circle has no beginning and no end; the process is continuous. As we move through the cycle represented by the four principles, a better understanding is gradually achieved. As the cycle is repeated, the meanings associated with each principle change subtly to reflect this deeper level of understanding".<sup>23</sup>

Mutual recognition would involve understanding that "Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants and caretakers of this land and have distinctive rights and responsibilities that flow from that status" and that "they hold the status of self-governing nations by virtue of their prior standing as fully independent sovereign entities".<sup>24</sup> Mutual respect would flow from this recognition, consisting of "the quality of courtesy, consideration and esteem extended to people whose languages, cultures and ways differ from our own but who are valued fellow-members of the larger communities to which we all belong".<sup>25</sup> Both sharing and mutual responsibility were related to the principles of recognition and respect because the latter would ensure that aboriginal groups received their fair share of lands and resources to develop the

---

relationships amongst the distinct peoples which make up Canada. Establishing meaningful legal relationships which both Aboriginal Peoples and Canadians can respect is just one step in creating a new partnership". This study, however, goes on to state that it is not completely happy with the notion of partnership, since consent for partnership has not been given by aboriginal peoples and partnership assumes an equal relationship. The term "renewal", according to this study, is a better word to describe what kind of relationship is required between Aboriginals and Non-Aboriginals. Patricia A. Monture-Angus, "The Familiar Face of Colonial Oppression", *For Seven Generations*. Another study does not include all the same principles but maintains that "the Canadian federation and the Aboriginal Peoples need to establish a new relationship based on federal principles of equality, pluralism, autonomy and respect. The federal and provincial governments and the Aboriginal Peoples should agree on means to symbolically establish and practically implement a new relationship". Douglas M. Brown, "Aboriginal Peoples and Canadian Federalism", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>23</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 677-78.

"renewed economic base" enabling them "to be in a position to engage once again in genuine relations of reciprocity and sharing".<sup>26</sup> With this economic base they could overcome their existing position as wards and become true, mutually responsible, partners in the Canadian federation. Dependency would be overcome, therefore, "when Aboriginal peoples secure political and constitutional autonomy, as constituent members of a distinct order of government, and an economic and resource base sufficient to free them from the debilitating effects of long-term 'welfare'".<sup>27</sup>

But what were the aspects of aboriginal cultures that the Royal Commission was asking Canadians to "recognize" and "respect", and how would this replace the current relationship of dependency with one of sharing and mutual responsibility? Besides the assumptions about self-government giving aboriginal peoples the control to build an "economic base" extensively discussed in the last two chapters, the main reason offered by the Royal Commission was that recognition and respect would increase aboriginal self-esteem, giving the native population the confidence to become participants in Canadian life. As the Royal Commission explained,

people can be active and responsible members of their communities only if they have a sense of their own worth and the conviction that what they say and do in both the public and the private sphere can make a significant contribution. However, this sense of self-respect is based in part on society's

---

<sup>24</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp.678-79.

<sup>25</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.681-82.

<sup>26</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 687-88.

<sup>27</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 689-90.

recognition of the value of an individual's activities and goals. A multinational society that treats the culture of a member nation with derision or contempt may well undermine the self-respect of people belonging to that culture. Such treatment jeopardizes their ability to participate as active members of their communities and to function effectively as autonomous individuals in work and private life. The disastrous effects on Aboriginal societies of successive policies of cultural assimilation bear poignant witness to this message.<sup>28</sup>

To illustrate this circumstance, the Royal Commission gave two examples of situations "where a public attitude of cultural disrespect prevails" and "cultural difference is...seen simply as a deficiency or disability". These examples consisted of an aboriginal student who spoke a native language entering into a French or English school and an aboriginal worker who went hunting to provide food for his family at the same time he was scheduled to work a shift. The Royal Commission noted that the former "may be treated as 'backward' or deficient in language skills" while the latter "is considered 'unreliable' or delinquent". According to the Royal Commission, "such attitudes erode a person's sense of self-worth and discourage a commitment to education or employment; in the long run, they may even encourage dependency and self-abuse. If these results are seen as confirming the original assessment, the vicious circle is complete".<sup>29</sup>

Recognizing and respecting aboriginal "cultural difference", according to the Royal Commission, would enable aboriginal peoples to become "bicultural". This would help to overcome native dependency, in the Royal Commission's view, by giving

---

<sup>28</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 681, 683.

aboriginal peoples the capacity to find a balance "between the expectations, values and demands of two worlds", and preventing "tension, alienation and identity confusion". As a result, the Royal Commission explained, the native population would be able to "enjoy an identity firmly rooted in the cultural world of their own people, while also possessing the skills and knowledge required to succeed in non-Aboriginal society".<sup>30</sup> It argued that educational programs, for example, must "affirm Aboriginal people as members of historical nations with distinctive cultures, while equipping them to reach out and participate in a global society".<sup>31</sup>

The question that emerges out of these assertions, however, is to what extent is the "identity...rooted in the cultural world" of aboriginal peoples and their being "members of historical nations with distinctive cultures" consistent with "the skills and knowledge required to succeed in non-Aboriginal society" and their ability to "reach out and participate in a global society"? The two cases provided by the Royal Commission that were outlined above, in fact - the aboriginal student unable to speak English or French and the aboriginal worker who went hunting instead of working his shift - seemed to promote practices that were detrimental to success in non-Aboriginal society, even though they would probably reaffirm aboriginal identity (if this identity was inextricably connected to the subsistence practices and languages associated with previously existing hunting and gathering/horticultural modes of production). This

---

<sup>29</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.682.

was because very few people speak aboriginal languages in comparison to English and French, and highly disciplined and coordinated labour requires that workers show up for shifts at specified times. Therefore, "unreliable" workers and unilingual aboriginal language speakers would be considered "inferior" students and employees in comparison to others who have mastered the requirements needed to be successful in educational and work environments today.

In response to this conclusion, the Royal Commission would probably argue that this puts the onus on aboriginal peoples to adapt to "non-aboriginal ways" rather than the reverse. Aboriginal peoples were "here first", this argument goes, and therefore why should the standards of "white society" or European conquerors prevail? As has been shown repeatedly in previous chapters, however, the Royal Commission assumed that aboriginal peoples *should* participate in the wider Canadian society. The Royal Commission, for example, maintained that its recommendations with respect to aboriginal education were designed "to foster bicultural competence to allow Aboriginal youth to function effectively in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal environments", and to achieve this end "changes in curriculum and pedagogy are proposed to make education relevant to the tasks of consolidating an adult Aboriginal identity and bridging the divide between school and the workplace".<sup>32</sup> If this were the case, it makes sense to inquire if the "changes in curriculum and pedagogy" the Royal

---

<sup>30</sup> *Final Report*, 4, pp. 522, 530-1.

Commission recommended to "[consolidate] an adult Aboriginal identity" actually had these perceived desired effects: "allow[ing] Aboriginal youth to function effectively in...non-Aboriginal environments" and "bridging the divide between school and the workplace".

The Royal Commission definitely argued that the changes in curriculum and pedagogy that it proposed would have these effects. This was because the Royal Commission assumed that "distinctively Aboriginal ways of apprehending reality and governing collective and individual behaviour are relevant to the demands of survival in a post-industrial society", and consequently "this heritage must be made more accessible to all Canadians".<sup>33</sup> According to the Royal Commission, it was ethnocentrism and racism that led Non-Aboriginals to disregard the achievements and contributions of aboriginal cultures. It claimed that a new relationship based on respect for, and recognition of, aboriginal differences would finally make it possible to appreciate what these cultures have to offer. This was related to the Royal Commission's promotion of cultural diversity more generally, and its argument that "respect among cultures creates a positive, supportive climate for harmonious relations, as opposed to the acrimonious and strife-ridden relations of a culture of disdain. Respect for the unique position of Canada's First Peoples - and more generally for the diversity of

---

<sup>31</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p. 664.

<sup>32</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p. 13.

<sup>33</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.616.



peoples and cultures making up this country - *should* be a fundamental characteristic of Canada's civic ethos".<sup>34</sup> It maintained that

in every sector of public life there is an urgent need to liberate Aboriginal initiative by making room for Aboriginal institutions. They should be part of education, health and social services, housing, communications and economic development, as well as the administration of government. As self-government is established, Aboriginal institutions will become instruments for meeting needs through self-determined means. They will be a primary place for innovation based on traditional knowledge and contemporary experience and judgement.<sup>35</sup>

The contributions of aboriginal cultures that the Royal Commission maintained should be "recognized" and "respected", therefore, largely concerned claims about aboriginal knowledge - often referred to as "traditional knowledge". This included what the Royal Commission referred to as "Native science", but also concerned references to the "spiritual world view" of aboriginal peoples. The Royal Commission maintained

---

<sup>34</sup>*Final Report*, 1, pp. 684-5. The Royal Commission also relates cultural diversity to ecological diversity. It maintains that "ecological diversity is valuable for the same reason that cultural diversity is: it allows for greater flexibility, adaptability and creativity in the system as a whole". *Final Report*, 1, p.691. This relationship is also stressed in a report prepared for the Royal Commission, when it argues that "the colonizing nature of the Western discourse of resource management poses a serious threat to the very fabric of aboriginal cultural diversity. If this cultural diversity offers a special wisdom appropriate to the task of preserving biological diversity as many people now believe, the importance of the distinctive and the local in aboriginal cultures must be given a new prominence in negotiating strategies of co-existence in relation to land". Andrew Chapeskie, "Land, Landscape, Culturescape", *For Seven Generations*. The "many people" that "believe" this include Julian Burger et al., *The Gaia Atlas of First People* (New York: Doubleday), pp. 18-19, 180; David Barton Bray and Dominique Irvine, "Resource and Sanctuary", *Cultural Survival* 12 (Spring 1993), pp. 12-13; and Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988), pp. 180-93.

<sup>35</sup> *Final Report*, 5, 16.

that both these aspects of "traditional knowledge" - spiritual and scientific - should become part of modern curricula.<sup>36</sup> It noted, for example, that

educational institutions must become more receptive to what Aboriginal students say they want from the education system: schools that recognize and acknowledge Aboriginal culture and curricula that validate the contributions of Aboriginal people. Modest curriculum improvements have been made over the past 15 years, but they have been far too slow in coming and have not been introduced systematically in all parts of the country. Changes often gloss over or avoid the fundamental changes needed to create curricula rooted in Aboriginal understandings of the world in subjects such as history, art, health, mathematics and the sciences. Aboriginal content is usually in the form of add-on units to 'enrich' existing content; it does not tackle the core assumptions, values and logic of existing curricula. Language and culture classes can be added to a school's program without altering the basic content of classes in English, French, science, math or social studies.<sup>37</sup>

But as will be shown in the next sections, both the native "knowledge" and "pedagogy" referred to by the Royal Commission would not be beneficial to either aboriginal or non-aboriginal peoples today. This is because these traditions were developed for life in smaller, less productive and simpler societies. As a result, they are actually inhibiting participation in modern educational systems and productive activities. What the Royal Commission proposals actually did was to ignore the problems that aboriginal peoples were experiencing in becoming full participants in Canadian life under the auspices that do so would destroy "aboriginal identity" and "erode [their] self-worth".

---

<sup>36</sup> It notes that "Researchers are documenting bodies of knowledge in virtually every aspect of human life, including knowledge about physical, mental and spiritual health, science and technology, navigation, and all forms of production from the land and waters". *Final Report*, 4, pp. 454-8.

<sup>37</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 166.

## TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE: "TEACHINGS OF THE FOUR WINDS"

In its discussions of "traditional knowledge", the Royal Commission offered two kinds of reasons for why it should be "respected" and "recognized". The first was related to issues of self-government, and largely concerns institutions specifically for aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal peoples, the Royal Commission argued, were "different" from Non-Aboriginals, and therefore, incorporating traditional knowledge was important for affirming native identity and maintaining cultural diversity. Traditional knowledge initiatives were part of the process of "re-traditionalization" and the "general ferment of ideas now contributing to the renewal of Aboriginal cultures". Therefore, traditional knowledge "is valid and valuable in its own right" since it "will help Aboriginal cultures retain their integrity in the face of severe pressures to yield to Euro-Canadian culture and will help individuals develop strong, proud identities as Aboriginal people".<sup>38</sup> According to the Royal Commission, "commitment to full self-determination and self-government requires the federal and provincial governments to allow for — indeed to encourage — institutional development in Aboriginal nations and communities that differs from mainstream practice", and decisions about what kinds of information would be included were part of this process.<sup>39</sup> It asserted that "even if the insights and practices of Aboriginal cultures were to add nothing to the

---

<sup>38</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p.352. The Royal Commission also argues that "work with traditional Aboriginal knowledge goes far beyond research and documentation; it improves the self-esteem and cultural understanding of the people engaged in the process".

<sup>39</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p.353.

health of Aboriginal people", for example, respect for the principles of self-determination dictated that they should be allowed to "find out for themselves". In the Royal Commission's opinion, "it would seem reasonable to support many or most of the ideas we heard simply on the grounds that Aboriginal people are likely to know best what will work in their own communities".<sup>40</sup>

Secondly, and somewhat paradoxically, it was argued that it was important for traditional knowledge to be incorporated into all institutions, not just those programs and services that were provided to aboriginal people, because it would be beneficial to all Canadians. This argument contradicted the previous assumption about cultural "difference", asserting that both Aboriginals and Non-aboriginals as human beings have commonalities that they share, and traditional knowledge could help everyone, regardless of their culture, to better understand the world. This argument maintained that "ethnocentrism" led Europeans to be prejudiced against traditional knowledge and to disregard it as a primitive relic. This assumption, according to the Royal Commission, was erroneous and ignored the "growing legitimacy for [aboriginal peoples'] ideas". Traditional knowledge about the environment, for example, "is being acknowledged and given recognition by scientists worldwide",<sup>41</sup> while aboriginal

---

<sup>40</sup> *Final Report*, 3, pp. 209-210, 215.

<sup>41</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 139.

peoples' "vision of health and healing" contained "concepts and understandings [that] are affirmed by the leading edge of scientific research on the determinants of health".<sup>42</sup>

Although the Royal Commission continually stated that it was important to incorporate aboriginal peoples' "traditional knowledge" into not only aboriginal institutions, but all aspects of Canadian life, what was rarely elaborated upon was the methodology upon which this "knowledge" depended and how it differed from and/or contributed to science. The most common word the Royal Commission used to distinguish the two, was that traditional knowledge is "holistic" and "relational",<sup>43</sup> while scientific methods were "reductionist" and "linear". As it explained, "in Aboriginal societies, those who have this knowledge can 'see' in ways generally not possible in western societies, grounded as they are in a linear view that seeks understanding in terms of continuums, opposites and specific categories".

Linear/reductionist methods were identified as those that "think of isolated causes and effects, of what happened and in what order", while a relational/holistic "approach to knowledge sees the relationship among things as well as the unity and integrity of things".<sup>44</sup> The following quotation from Milton M.R. Freeman was offered as an elaboration:

---

<sup>42</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p. 215.

<sup>43</sup> Also referred to as a "belief in interconnectedness", "all elements of life and living are interdependent and, by extension, well-being flows from balance and harmony among the elements of personal and collective life..." (*Final Report*, 3, pp.205-208). This distinction is noted in the report prepared for the Royal Commission by Andrew Chapeskie, "Land, Landscape and Culturescape", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>44</sup> *Final Report*, 4, pp. 114-15.

[T]he methods of [western] science are essentially reductionist, that is to say, they seek to understand organisms or nature by studying the smallest or simplest manageable part or sub-system in essential isolation.... Traditional knowledge seeks to comprehend such complexity by operating from a different epistemological basis. It eschews reductionism, placing little emphasis on studying small parts of the ecological system in isolation....

[T]he non-western forager lives in a world not of linear causal events but of constantly reforming, multi-dimensional, interacting cycles, where nothing is simply a cause or an effect, but all factors are influences impacting other elements of the system-as-a-whole.

Linear approaches to analysis cannot be applied to cyclical systems and, as everyone now realizes, ecosystems are in fact complex cycles of re-circulating energy, matter and relationships.<sup>45</sup>

In contrast to the above, however, the Royal Commission referred to traditional knowledge as a "science" in other areas of the *Final Report*. The Royal Commission maintained, in fact, that "'Native science' can offer valuable insights and teachings in areas such as astronomy, medicine, pharmacology, biology, mathematics, and environmental studies, to name but a few".<sup>46</sup> It maintained that traditional knowledge, in fact, provided "explanations of environmental phenomena [that] are based on cumulative, collective experience, tested over centuries by people who required a sophisticated and practical knowledge of the land on which they depended for every aspect of life".<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Milton M.R. Freeman, "The Nature and Utility of Traditional Ecological Knowledge", *Northern Perspectives* 20/1 (Summer 1992), pp. 9-10, cited in *Final Report*, 4, p. 115.

<sup>46</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 128. The Royal Commission also notes that "traditional knowledge consists of a world view, organizing principles of life, laws of behaviour, and a knowledge of the sciences, from archaeology to zoology, framed and presented in a unique way through the power of the spoken word". *Final Report*, 4, p. 117.

<sup>47</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 456.

The Royal Commission's tendency to make these contradictory claims with respect to traditional knowledge's character were due to its misrepresentation of both science and traditional knowledge. Although scientific methodology does rely on notions of "cause and effect", this does not mean that it denies that ecosystems are the result of several causes interacting in a complex fashion (presumably what Freeman meant when he stated that ecosystems were "complex cycles of re-circulating energy, matter and relationships"). The assumption that the scientific method does insist upon, however, is that all of these interrelationships are material. In this respect, scientific research and "traditional knowledge" are completely different and incompatible.

Traditional knowledge, in fact, assumes that "spirituality" is a major component of "knowledge".<sup>48</sup> "Spirituality" was constantly inserted by the Royal Commission as being one of the factors necessary for "whole health", an assertion that often involved the conflation of "spiritual" with "emotional".<sup>49</sup> The Royal Commission even argued that "one area where convergence [of scientific and traditional medicine] is still weak

---

<sup>48</sup> For research studies that discuss the "spiritual" character of traditional knowledge, see Richard R. Maracle, "Wildlife Sectoral Study", *For Seven Generations*; Yvonne M. Hebert, "The State of Aboriginal Literacy and Language Education", *For Seven Generations*; ATII, "Northern Education and Training Systems for Inuit", *For Seven Generations*; Andrew Chapeskie, "Land, Landscape and Culturescape", *For Seven Generations*; and Absolon and Winchester, "Cultural Identity for Urban Aboriginal Peoples...", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>49</sup> The Royal Commission begins by stating that four determinants "are especially significant for public policy and the reform of Aboriginal health and wellness systems: economic factors, social factors, emotional factors and environmental factors", and then in the elaboration, the third factor has been changed in the heading to "emotional and spiritual factors". *Final Report*, 3, pp. 217, 219. In this elaboration, the Royal Commission only discusses the links between emotions and disease and the fact that "the mind and body are in direct communication through neurobiological links involving the hormone and immune systems".

is in relation to the role of spirituality and the connection between people and the natural world", but "non-Aboriginal definitions of health are beginning to recognize this dimension".<sup>50</sup> This assertion was made possible by the testimonials of a number of non-Aboriginal health practitioners making the questionable claim that "the spiritual" was one area where modern medicine was lacking.<sup>51</sup>

Furthermore, in discussions of "traditional ecological knowledge", it was noted that "a general characteristic...is the understanding that all parts of the environment — animal, vegetable and mineral — have a life force" and that "animals have souls and that certain places are considered sacred by virtue of having spirits".<sup>52</sup> Because

---

<sup>50</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p.222.

<sup>51</sup> Peggy Ericson, the Dean of the Faculty of Nursing at the University of New Brunswick, for example, maintains that "the interplay of the physical, emotional, social and spiritual for achieving well-being has long been inherent in the Aboriginal health paradigm and is now appearing as a stated value in health care teaching in Canada". Cited in *Final Report*, 3, p. 221. Dr. David Skinner of the Yukon Medical Association goes even further when he argues: "it is our belief that because our white man's medicine is very technical-oriented, very symptom-oriented, very drugs- and surgery-oriented, that it lacks something that Native medicine has, which we desperately need but don't practise: spirituality...In many of these things we are talking about — family violence, alcohol abuse, trauma, suicide — I believe that the Native public health nurses, Native nurses, Native doctors would have that in their approach as well — a spiritual component. Then we get on into that area of the question of traditional Native medicine and things that [only] Native people will do; it is not the white man who will ever do them, it is the Native traditional medicine [man/woman]". Cited in *Final Report*, 3, pp. 349-50.

<sup>52</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 456. The aboriginal conception of the existence of a "life force" is discussed in a research study examining aboriginal policing. In this report, it is maintained that "an important source of difference between many Aboriginal Peoples and non-Aboriginals today is the degree to which relationships may be personalized with the environment, both human and non-human. This often involves cultural distinctions, often of a religious or spiritual nature, that may be drawn, say, between what is considered to be animate or inanimate - stones and wind may have life force in an Aboriginal cosmos - or what life forms are capable of human-like behaviours - certain animals, for example, may have the power of articulate speech, thought, vision and moral influence on human beings in Aboriginal societies. In the context of policing, these distinctions and classifications played a significant role in regulating relations between humans and animals which in turn had important implications for the regulation of conduct among humans themselves...such distinctions may be a source of disagreement or perhaps incompatible assumptions, beliefs or poetic imagery...between Aboriginal Peoples and non-



aboriginal peoples held these beliefs, the Royal Commission talked about the native population's need to engage in religious ceremonies.<sup>53</sup> This also led the Royal Commission to argue that rational thought and logic might be "highly efficient for some tasks" but "by narrowing the field of perception to gain focus, searching for cause/effect sequences in a time-limited frame, and dismissing the influence of non-material forces, the logical mind may screen out much of the knowledge considered essential by many Aboriginal people for living well".<sup>54</sup> It even went on to state that

the fundamental feature of Aboriginal world view was, and continues to be, that all of life is a manifestation of spiritual reality. We come from spirit; we live and move surrounded by spirit; and when we leave this life we return to a spirit world. All perceptions are conditioned by spiritual forces, and all actions have repercussions in a spiritual reality. Actions initiated in a spiritual realm affect physical reality; conversely, human actions set off consequences in a spiritual realm. These consequences in turn become manifest in the physical realm. All these interactions must be taken into account as surely as considerations of what to eat or how to keep warm in winter.<sup>55</sup>

Some of these "spiritual forces" related to a form of numerology that saw spiritual significance in the number four.<sup>56</sup> Others concerned "vision quests" where aboriginal people claimed to have communicated with animals.<sup>57</sup> Prayers, prophecies and

---

Aboriginal Canadians that require mutual appreciation of the distinctions being drawn". Robert C. Depew, "Aboriginal Policing", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>53</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.640.

<sup>54</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp.640-41. One research study, however, notes that curriculum materials developed in one aboriginal educational program has a goal that students should be able to "think, reason, synthesize, evaluate and solve problems using appropriate skills and criteria with logic, imagination, curiosity, creativity, scepticism and the exercise of moral judgment". Yvonne M. Hebert, "The State of Aboriginal Literacy and Language Education", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>55</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.628.

<sup>56</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 641. See also *Final Report*, 1:646, 655, 676 for examples of the use of the number four to social phenomena.

<sup>57</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p.642.

aboriginal peoples' "special relationship" to "the Creator" were also constantly referred to as being important aspects of the aboriginal "world view" that others should appreciate.<sup>58</sup>

The Royal Commission, in fact, recognized the unscientific character of these aspects of "traditional knowledge" when it acknowledged that "the validity or truth value of the spiritual aspects of traditional knowledge cannot be assessed scientifically". It goes on to state, however, that this was irrelevant since the "social existence and transmission [of traditional knowledge's spiritual aspects] can be measured, as can effects on the environment (in, for example, the conservation of resources)".<sup>59</sup> The pertinent question, however, was if these "spiritual aspects" could help us to understand environmental processes more fully, not if they were being "transmitted" or if they resulted in environmentally sustainable practices (the latter was also a contention that was not self-evident).<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 617-18, 620, 632-33. See also Gilchrist and Winchester, "Urban Survivors; Aboriginal Street Youth...", *For Seven Generations*; Neil Winther, "A comprehensive overview of sports and recreation issues relevant to aboriginal peoples in Canada", *For Seven Generations*; and Brad McKenzie, "Aboriginal Foster Family Care in Canada", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>59</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 456.

<sup>60</sup> The anthropologist Maurice Godelier attempts to make a distinction between the mythological thinking of hunters and gatherers/horticulturalists – a large aspect of "traditional knowledge" – and scientific "world views". Godelier notes that "within the framework of our industrial society...analogies drawn from the domain of *perception* no longer constitute the *essential stuff* for man's *dominant* representation of Nature and history. Conversely – and this is the direct result of practical relations with the world characterized by the low level of development in productive forces and non-empirical knowledge – in primitive societies...it is those analogies drawn from the field of perception, from sentient knowledge, which constitute the basic material with which the mind of 'primitives'...construct their 'palace of ideas', where the reciprocal image of man and the world is reflected to infinity and where the illusions which primitive man holds about himself and the world originate and are maintained. Nourished by a wealth of knowledge derived from a thousand-year

Although the Royal Commission provided many gushing accolades about how "significant" and "important" traditional knowledge was, there was little substantiation concerning its contribution to modern research and understanding. It was not really shown how "Native science" had extended our grasp of "astronomy, medicine, pharmacology, biology, mathematics, and environmental studies" - the areas singled out by the Royal Commission.<sup>61</sup> The only references in the Royal Commission's *Final Report* linked to "astronomy" were connected to the claim that "modern science is beginning to recognize and validate the Aboriginal conception of the universe. This ancient philosophy of the nature of the cosmos is consistent with many of the fundamental principles set forth in modern science, particularly quantum physics and its offshoot, chaos theory".<sup>62</sup> To support this view, the Royal Commission offered the following excerpt from an article by Leroy Little Bear, which maintained that

It turns out that those concepts in quantum physics are very similar to concepts that North American Indians have always had — Native Science, for lack of a better name....[sic]

---

familiarity and commerce with Nature, the mind of 'primitives', in order to represent *the invisible but necessary relationships* between things, relationships *not observable on the level* of perception, could only avail themselves of the resources of analogy, an analogy which derived a great deal of its images and processes from the very content of sentient knowledge". He goes on to argue that "progress, as far as knowledge of Nature and history is concerned, has consisted in erasing from the surface of things, the network of intentions which man had initially ascribed to them in his own image; in destroying fragment by fragment, by level by level, the imaginary representations of 'intentional' causes and replacing these with the representation of unintentional and inevitable relationships". Maurice Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 216-218.

<sup>61</sup> See *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 962-63, 996, 3, p. 514, 549-550 (Tables 5.2 and 5.3) for a discussion of the lack of aboriginal representation in these subjects. This problem is also examined in Del Anaquod, "Aboriginal education, training and employment", *For Seven Generations*; and Brenda Tsioniaon LaFrance, "Culturally Negotiated Education in First Nations Communities", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>62</sup> *Final Report*, 4, pp. 127-8.

[The] notion of constant motion, which the quantum physicists sometimes talk about in terms of chaos theory, we've always talked about in terms of the trickster. In other words, the whole notion of chaos is not new to us at all. We've always known the trickster....

The notion of observer-created reality is also incorporated into Native thinking. The notion of relationships, relational networks, is very important, too. This discovery of time and space being the same is old hat in Blackfoot. We've always thought about it that way. If I were talking about somebody I see in the distance over there or somebody I saw several days ago, I'd talk about them in the same way. Time and space have always been the same thing in Blackfoot, in Cree and in many other Native languages.<sup>63</sup>

In an earlier volume of the *Final Report*, the Royal Commission also used the same article to support a similar claim that aboriginal peoples could offer insights to modern conceptions of the universe. These insights were possible, according to Little Bear, because aboriginal languages were very "action- or verb-oriented". As a result, aboriginal peoples have "always thought in terms of energy, energy fields and constant motion".<sup>64</sup>

Aboriginal contributions to mathematics, physics and astronomy were also mentioned in connection with the Akwesasne Science and Mathematics Pilot Project. In a shaded text box, the Royal Commission noted the project's

study of 'Energy' includes units on the Haudenosaunee teachings of the four winds, Thunder, Lightning, Sun and overall conservation, while also examining the 'western' science. The cosmos is incorporated by providing experiential teaching in the Aboriginal and Haudenosaunee concept of oneness with the universe. The moon, stars and other galaxies are intertwined with

---

<sup>63</sup> Leroy Little Bear, "What's Einstein Got to Do With it", in *Continuing Poundmaker and Riel's Quest* (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 1994), p.21, cited in *Final Report*, 4, p. 128.

<sup>64</sup> Little Bear, cited in *Final Report*, 1, p. 621; *Final Report*, 4, p. 123.

Aboriginal cosmos mythology to demonstrate the intricate thought of our ancestors relative to cosmology.<sup>65</sup>

But even if one were to accept that cultures that had no writing and only a rudimentary counting system were able to develop an advanced understanding of mathematics, physics and astronomy that emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century only after hundreds of years of scientific experimentation,<sup>66</sup> these excerpts did not show us what aboriginal cultures have added to our understanding of these scientific fields. All the quotations from Little Bear did was to make the dubious claim, on the basis of the unsubstantiated and vague arguments of one Native Studies professor who has no background in physics,<sup>67</sup> that aboriginal peoples had understandings that were similar to current scientific

---

<sup>65</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p. 458-459. This excerpt is taken from a report prepared for the Royal Commission by Brenda Tsioniaon LaFrance, "Culturally Negotiated Education in First nation Communities, Empowering Ourselves for Future Generations", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>66</sup> This appears to be the view of a research study prepared for the Royal Commission, which maintains that aboriginal students "had researched the teachings of physics, chemistry and biology, and they knew that ancient Indigenous scholars had studied these areas too. They had a sense of carrying on these traditions, and they respected professors who were able to teach these subjects in unique ways. They [the professors] demonstrate that the way Indians think is legitimate way in its own right. It is just as legitimate as the so-called 'scientific' way". This study then goes on to state that "students need to see Aboriginal faculty teaching physics, chemistry, mathematics, philosophy, engineering, medicine, psychology and metaphysics -- all subjects that were highly developed by Aboriginal peoples before contact with Europeans, and all subjects that are now considered difficult by mainstream society". The Saskatchewan Federated Indian College, "Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Indigenous Student Perceptions", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>67</sup> The physicists Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont have examined similar claims within the humanities and social sciences more generally. They provide a detailed analysis of how the works of a number of prominent intellectuals such as Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Bruno Latour, Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, and Paul Virilio all "have repeatedly abused scientific concepts and terminology: either using scientific ideas totally out of context, without giving the slightest justification...or throwing around scientific jargon in front of their non-scientist readers without any regard for its relevance or even its meaning". More specifically, Sokal and Bricmont document how the sociologist Bruno Latour provides a "semiotic analysis of the theory of relativity", which "illustrates perfectly the problems encountered by a sociologist who aims to analyze the content of a scientific theory he does not understand very well". Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont, *Fashionable Nonsense: Postmodern Intellectuals' Abuse of Science* (New York: Picador USA, 1998), pp. x-xi, 124-133.

theories. The case of the Akwasasne Science and Math Project was also not very helpful since no elaboration was provided on what the "teachings of the four winds" consisted of, or how Haudenosaunee "cosmos mythology" improved our understanding of astronomy.<sup>68</sup>

Similarly dubious claims were made with respect to the "valuable insights" that the Royal Commission claimed aboriginal cultures have provided with respect to the field of biology. Although it was noted that "there is increasing interest in integrating traditional knowledge with the knowledge of biologists, botanists, climatologists and others in deliberations about environmental regulation" and "growing legitimacy for these ideas", it was also pointed out that "just what is involved in integrating the two forms of knowledge is still a matter of some uncertainty, although various attempts have been made".<sup>69</sup> There was no explanation of what these "attempts" were, however, except that "the views and knowledge" of certain aboriginal groups have been "considered". All we were provided with in substantiation was Milton Freeman's vague assertion that "the credibility of native hunters as accurate interpreters of nature has become more widely accepted".<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> This example is drawn from a research study prepared for the Royal Commission by Brenda Tsioniaon LaFrance, entitled "Culturally Negotiated Education in First Nation Communities, Empowering Ourselves for Future Generations," paper presented at the National Round Table on Education, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Ottawa, July 1993, *For Seven Generations*. No information is provided in this report either to shed light on how this program enhances our knowledge of the world.

<sup>69</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 456-457.

<sup>70</sup> Milton Freeman, quoted in *Northern Perspectives* 22(Spring 1994), p. 18, cited in *Final Report*, 4, p. 457. This is also the view of "Wildlife Sectoral Study", *For Seven Generations*, where traditional

The one specific reference that was provided concerned classification systems of plants and animals. According to the Royal Commission, these insights supposedly pertained to the fact that aboriginal people have "verb-based languages"<sup>71</sup> and "need to gain knowledge of the land by direct experience", enabling "individuals to see relationships connecting phenomena rather than discrete objects". As a result of these circumstances, the Royal Commission maintained that "the skills to observe and the expertise to describe reality in ecological terms constitute part of the knowledge that elders possess to an exceptional degree", but that these skilled observations and expert descriptions have "begun to find a place in the classification systems of western science only recently".<sup>72</sup>

---

knowledge is extensively discussed. This study maintains that "Aboriginal people have often argued that their traditional knowledge can make an important contribution to the management of wildlife and other natural resources. Knowledge, which is based on detailed observation of wildlife habitat, populations and behaviour which has been handed down over many lifetimes. Often discounted by professional wildlife managers, this knowledge is now being given greater recognition (e.g. World Conservation Strategy) for the role it can play in wildlife management and conservation". The role of traditional knowledge in environmental management is also discussed in the context of the Inuvialuit region in Lindsay Staples, "The Inuvialuit Final Agreement", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>71</sup> This alleged distinctiveness of aboriginal languages is not discussed in any of the studies prepared for the Royal Commission. The only reference to verbs, in fact, concerns the Dene languages specifically, where it is claimed that they "are powerful and complex". This is supported by a statement from "a Dene language specialist from Fort Simpson", Andy Norwegian, who argues that "if you consider the experiences of people who have studied the Dene languages, you will find that they all have had great difficulty to learn it". He claims that the non-aboriginal linguist Phil Howard asserted that he "may never know the full meaning behind the words the way a Dene elder does" since "the verb system is the most complex of Slavey word classes and constitutes probably seventy-five percent of the language". He argues that the word "to go" in these languages has 60 forms. These forms, however, are not specified. It is also not clear from this discussion how the Dene languages are different from modern languages such as English and French. Rene M.J. Lamothe, "It was only a treaty", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>72</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 640.

To support this assertion, the Royal Commission referred readers to its chapter on "Elders" in Volume Four, where it is again stated that "traditional ecological knowledge is being acknowledged and given recognition by scientists worldwide".<sup>73</sup> The evidence of this "acknowledgement" and "recognition" was a 1990 study prepared by Douglas Nakashima for the Canadian Environmental Assessment Research Council, which discussed the "Inuit system of classifying animals according to their relationships within the ecosystem as a whole". The study maintained that "although ecological classification is a relatively recent development in the Western scientific tradition, it has long been a fundamental organizing principle for the traditional Inuit taxonomy". It also argued that this system "reveals a strong ecological logic and reflects a dichotomy of land and sea which is a central theme in traditional Inuit mythology and world-view", resulting in the categorization of plants and animals into the following six subdivisions:

- 1) 'those that rise to the surface' (for example, seals, whales and walrus);
- 2) 'those that walk' (for example, polar bears, caribou and foxes);
- 3) 'large birds' (for example, loons, swans, hawks and ptarmigans);
- 4) 'the songbirds, shorebirds and other small birds';
- 5) 'large motile fish (for example, Arctic char, brook char, lake char and whitefish); and

---

<sup>73</sup> There is no mention of aboriginal "classification systems" in the research studies prepared for the Royal Commission except in "Aboriginal History: Workshop Report", *For Seven Generations*, which was written by Ted Chamberlin and Hugh Brody. It maintains that an "Aboriginal Atlas Project" should "include the typical sections on physiography, climate, and biota, but from aboriginal perspectives, using aboriginal systems of classification and aboriginal concepts of significance and relationship. In other words, it should be in part an atlas of ethno-science and traditional knowledge, portraying aboriginal systems and theories of knowledge about the aboriginal world. This would be another area of innovation, for which there is little precedent". What these "systems of classification" are, however, is not specified.



- 6) 'a diverse group of bottom-dwelling marine organisms', which includes 'fish, clams, sea urchins and seaweeds [sic]'.<sup>74</sup>

Dividing organisms in this way, the report argued, was beneficial because it "directly reflects the Inuit world view", and this "will advance our understanding of arctic ecosystems and improve our ability to protect them, as well as helping sustain a culture with deep roots in the northern ecosystem".<sup>74</sup>

But how will such a system "advance our understanding of arctic ecosystems and improve our ability to protect them"? The only evidence offered for the latter was the concern of elders that current economic processes were leading to the "destruction of...Mother Earth" - a sentiment that could exist regardless of the classification system used. It was also not apparent how such a system would "advance our understanding of arctic ecosystems". All this "system" indicated was how the Inuit perceived the arctic ecosystem.

What is to be gained from a biologist's standpoint, in fact, by classifying animals according to whether or not they "rise to the surface" or if they are "those that walk"? "Walking" is a characteristic of a large number of animals, and if scientists classified them according to this attribute we would have a nebulous category of thousands of organisms with diverse characteristics. Even more problematic is the last category -

---

<sup>74</sup> Douglas J. Nakashima, *Application of Native Knowledge in EIA: Inuit, Eiders and Hudson Bay Oil* (Montreal: Canadian Environmental Assessment Research Council, 1990), p. 5, cited in *Final Report*, 4, pp. 139-40.

"bottom-dwelling marine organisms, that includes fish, clams, sea urchins and seaweeds [sic]". "Seaweeds" and "fish" are extremely far apart from each other in the evolution of life, yet they were placed in the same category. How would a biologist's "understanding of arctic ecosystems" be advanced by using this kind of system? These categorizations, in fact, obviously would be only useful in the context of Inuit subsistence. Animals that "rise to the surface" would be perceived differently than "those that walk", since the hunting methods for each would differ considerably.<sup>75</sup>

It was also amazing that the Royal Commission accepted Nakashima's claim that classification has occurred only recently in the "Western scientific tradition".

Classification has been occurring in the "west" for thousands of years. Aristotle, for example, developed a system of categorizing plants and animals thousands of years

---

<sup>75</sup> Keith Windschuttle makes a similar point when he discusses Marshall Sahlins' use of the taxonomy of the Chewa people of Malawi who do not classify domestic ducks in the same category as birds or even wild ducks as evidence of "the existence of an entirely different system of rationality" from western cultures. Windschuttle notes that the classification system of the Chewa people is more of an indication that "human beings who share the same rationality are quite capable of adopting a variety of methods for classifying the same things and a variety of ways of looking at things depending on how they intend to use them. Different uses generate different classifications. There is nothing surprising about a Malawi tribe that puts domestic ducks and wild ducks into different categories. We make exactly the same distinction in Western culture ourselves, else we would have little use for the words 'domestic' and wild'. Under Western legal systems, the gross taxonomy of domestic and wild animals has been unchanged since Roman law. Indeed, when we classify animals and plants for our own consumption we use groupings not dissimilar to those of the Chewa. The big difference between our culture and theirs is that we *also* have a method of classification derived from the science of biology. In this case we classify creatures not from our own interest but from the relations we find in nature. In fact, biology is the most obvious example of a science that adopts classifications that derive objectively from nature, despite the claims of postmodernists that such a thing is impossible. Our scientific taxonomies of species are in no way human-inspired or arbitrary but, rather, correspond precisely to the patterns of reproduction we find in nature. If animals or plants do not reproduce with each other they do not constitute a species. This is a taxonomy that exists in nature and did so eons before the emergence of Western science; indeed, it would still have existed even if human beings had never evolved to discover it". Windschuttle, *The Killing of History*, pp. 279-283.

ago. This was supplanted in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century by Linnaeus's system of classification when scientific developments revealed the limitations of previous systems.<sup>76</sup>

Similar problematic claims were made with respect to aboriginal "traditional ecological/environmental knowledge" - the "Native science" that the Royal Commission maintained was so important for studying the environment. According to the Royal Commission, it was a "science" that included "a deep understanding of the characteristics of the animal populations upon which people depended for food and other necessities, insight into climatic, game and other cycles, and strong geographical knowledge were all requirements for successful hunting, fishing and gathering - and remain so today".<sup>77</sup> The Royal Commission argued that this "knowledge" largely consisted of "management data [that] included not only immediate observations of

---

<sup>76</sup> Aside from such technological developments as the microscope, Aristotle's system became obsolete because it could not cope with the huge number of plants and animals that were being discovered by European naturalists. The need for a more scientific classification system was met by Carl Linnaeus in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Linnaeus' system was a breakthrough because it used binomial nomenclature - the descriptive term for each species using one word to designate the genus and another for a differential characteristic (e.g. Homo Sapiens - from the genus Homo + Sapiens denoting the differential characteristic "sapiens" or "wise"). Such a system was necessary because it enabled large numbers of species to be organized coherently. This system also ranks organisms from the general to the specific (the most general category being kingdom to the most specific being species) and has evolved to classify organisms according to their most fundamental or "natural" characteristics (i.e. vertebrate versus invertebrate animals; flowering versus non-flowering plants) as opposed to superficial or "key" ones (i.e. colour, shape or form of locomotion). Scientific systems also attempt to classify organisms based on the number of characteristics that they share, as opposed to relying on one criterion (mostly use by humans). As a result, Linnaeus' scheme is essential for aiding our understanding of evolution, genetics, ecology, behaviour and comparative physiology. It is especially significant with respect to helping us to understand the evolutionary process because it identifies the fundamental divisions of life and its progression from the simple to the complex.

<sup>77</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.1000, note 52.

variation and theories of cause and effect, but also the accumulated knowledge of countless generations of harvesters".<sup>78</sup>

Examples of the existence of this "management data" were drawn from a report prepared for the Royal Commission by Andrew Chapeskie and included the practices of two trappers - one that provided food to certain animals so that he could catch them more easily and maintain the ecological balance between furbearers, and another that opened up beaver lodges "to see where the various 'bedrooms' and other rooms were located and to visit with the beaver in them"<sup>79</sup> - as well as testimony from an aboriginal person who asserted that elders, at certain times, decided that the land "is going to rest", and no killing of deer was allowed for a certain period of time.<sup>80</sup> As a

---

<sup>78</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 460.

<sup>79</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), pp. 460-1. These examples are drawn from a research study prepared for the Royal Commission. In this study, it is maintained that this activity is "part of a broader spectrum of 'census-taking' activities designed to maximize the efficacy of her trapping work". In his study, Chapeskie cites two examples of the use of such aboriginal "management data". The first involves a trapper that provides food to certain animals so that he can catch them more easily, increasing the numbers that he harvests. The trapper also does this, according to Chapeskie, so as "to maintain balanced levels of other furbearers that they prey upon, but which at the same time are important to his livelihood". Chapeskie maintains that the collapse in the fur market has meant that predator species have risen, and so "if [the trapper] did not feed them they would not only disturb this optimal species balance with prey species such as muskrats, but they would also turn to cannibalism". The second involves another trapper who opens up beaver lodges "to see where the various 'bedrooms' and other rooms were located and to visit with the beaver in them". Chapeskie claims that this activity was "part of a broader spectrum of 'census-taking' activities designed to maximize the efficacy of her trapping work". Andrew Chapeskie, "Land, Landscape, Culturescape", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>80</sup> John Prince, Stoney Creek, British Columbia, 18 June 1992, cited in *Final Report*, 2(2), p.461. In this testimony, Prince states that "when the people came and started hunting at hunting time, maybe we picked on one area too much. The elders used to get together and say, "That land is going to rest. There is to be no more hunting. There will be no deer hunting for two, three, four years." But the system as it is now, the white man goes and gives a hunting permit, a hunting licence to everyone to shoot everything they see in sight and we have so much respect amongst our people we don't even go to other tribes' territory to hunt moose or deer or bear. We stay out of there unless we are invited by that tribe".

result of these examples, the Royal Commission maintained that "Aboriginal peoples still manage wildlife resources through 'a complex set of customary arrangements'".<sup>81</sup>

What was not clear, however, was what the "deep understanding" and "complex...customary arrangements" were, and how they would improve current environmental management regimes. What the Royal Commission seemed to be describing were practices that were consistent with the methods that scientific wildlife managers were currently using to ensure sustainable harvesting levels - determining the carrying capacity of the environment and then analyzing whether or not various kinds of economic activities were exceeding these limits. If this was so - i.e. that aboriginal methods were consistent with current scientific practices - why was it so necessary for aboriginal harvesters to develop their own systems? And if they wanted to contribute to the same system, was the Royal Commission asserting that aboriginal peoples have more accurate methods of determining base-line data than fish and wildlife biologists?

The Royal Commission's arguments became even more perplexing when it argued in other areas of the *Final Report* that aboriginal traditional environmental knowledge was not consistent with scientific research. Despite the use of words such as "science", "management data", "sustained yield" and "census taking" with respect to

---

<sup>81</sup> Chapeskie, cited in *Final Report*, 2(2), p.524.

aboriginal practices, the Royal Commission maintained that they should not be considered "'scientific' management", but as "cultural constraints on behaviour with respect to communal property" used to "[regulate] access to and use of resources". According to the Royal Commission, "the way Aboriginal harvesters define scarcity and abundance may differ substantially from the way resource managers define matters such as surplus and sustainable yield" and they might not share the same understanding of concepts such as "wildlife management", "census" and "population".<sup>82</sup> It argued, in fact, that many aboriginal peoples do not even feel comfortable using the term "management" to describe their practices. Because of the "inherent difficulty of relating the underlying concepts", the Royal Commission noted that "references to traditional knowledge tend to be general statements of principle", which "has led to misunderstandings and sometimes outright rejection of its value by western scientific practitioners and administrators".<sup>83</sup> It cited testimony from aboriginal people stating that they felt frustrated because a "lack of detailed technical information at [their] fingertips" meant that they have difficulty proving what they know and believe.<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>82</sup> These difficulties in incorporating "traditional knowledge" with scientific research are noted by Usher, "Contemporary Aboriginal Land, Resource and Environment Regimes", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>83</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 461.

<sup>84</sup> This testimony is as follows: "We also have a considerable amount of information within our communities. There is a lot of wisdom there; there is a lot of experience there; there is a lot of knowledge. It is going to take time, it is going to take people and it is going to take resources to access that. We have research we have to undertake. We have to be able to collect that information, store it and retrieve it....When we sit down with the Ministry of Forests or Energy, Mines and Resources or any particular area, we find that we have to rely on their information. The things we know and believe, we often have a difficult time proving because we simply don't have the detailed technical information at

It is important to stress that this analysis of traditional knowledge only pertains to the arguments and evidence presented by the Royal Commission. There are also many other examples, world-wide, as well as in Canada, where it is claimed that there has been successful collaboration of the ecological knowledge systems of aboriginal peoples and scientists (mainly wildlife biologists and botanists). While a review of this large body of research is beyond the scope of this dissertation, and I make no claims here that this literature suffers from the same exaggerations and unsubstantiated claims that appear in the *Final Report*, a critical examination of this literature should be a part of any new alternative research agenda to that set by the Royal Commission.

My own experience documenting aboriginal "traditional ecological/environmental knowledge", for example, has not found it to be "detailed", "complex" or "sophisticated", as is often claimed. While sitting on a committee tasked with implementing the Government of the Northwest Territories' "Traditional Knowledge Policy" in 1996 - a policy that was lauded by the Royal Commission as being the "most advanced" at "integrat[ing] traditional ecological knowledge" into the "entire public service and regulatory process"<sup>85</sup> - the traditional knowledge that was discussed was either native spiritual beliefs, or anecdotes too vague to contribute to scientific research, or basic observations about animals, plants and geography that

---

our fingertips". Bruce Mack, Cariboo Tribal Council, Kamloops, British Columbia, 14 June 1993, cited in *Final Report*, 2(2), 462.

<sup>85</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p.457. For a further discussion of the importance of this policy see also *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 651.

comes with spending time "out on the land". This latter information obviously would be useful for "such matters as the likely location of game", good fishing holes, areas where the ice is thin, and so on, as the Royal Commission acknowledged,<sup>86</sup> but this does not mean that all or most of it could necessarily contribute significantly to scientific studies. The "customary arrangements" or "customary restraints" referred to above also would not be useful for ensuring the sustainability of wildlife resources since these practices were developed in the context of the very small economies of hunters and gatherers/horticulturalists. Therefore, practices that supposedly resulted in maintaining an ecological balance historically would not necessarily do so today.

Despite these problems, aboriginal "traditional knowledge holders" were anxious that their spiritual beliefs, anecdotal opinions, and traditional practices be considered "equally valid" to scientific research and management techniques. Although this may have been due in part to their desire for "recognition" and "respect", it was also because aboriginal peoples often have been opposed to their harvesting being regulated according to scientific principles. This was due to the fact that these studies could be used to reduce the numbers of animals that they were allowed to harvest. Such government actions to ensure sustainability were seen as a violation of "aboriginal and treaty rights", since, despite their claims about being "environmental

---

<sup>86</sup> *Final Report*, 2(2), p.820.



stewards", aboriginal peoples frequently wanted to hunt and fish without restriction regardless of the environmental consequences.<sup>87</sup>

It was the argument that aboriginal peoples were "stewards" of the environment, however, which formed the basis of most of the Royal Commission's claims about aboriginal traditional ecological knowledge. Throughout the Royal Commission's *Final Report*, there were constant references to the idea that aboriginal peoples should be involved in environmental protection because they have philosophies and values that have enabled them to take on the role of custodians of the environment. As has been mentioned earlier, this argument was largely based on the fact that aboriginal peoples lived in North America for thousands of years without wreaking the

---

<sup>87</sup> The Royal Commission, in fact, cites a number of instances where aboriginal peoples are opposed to restrictions on hunting. It cites one Innu elder as saying the following: [W]e're saddened by the government regulations, what we have to put up with. In the early days we didn't have to put up with any of this. There was no such thing as rules and regulations, government regulations, in the bush because of hunting and living the way we used to live." Elizabeth Penashue, Sheshatshiu, June 17, 1992, cited in *Final Report*, 4, p. 141. In another area of the *Final Report*, it notes that "the Sayisi Dene assert that the provincial conservation officer in the region did not understand, or care about, their needs. What the government saw as over-hunting was in fact a traditional Dene practice to ensure the people had sufficient food for the long winter". In support of this, it offers a quote from Eva Anderson, who asserts that "the white people have no right to come and tell us that we are killing too many caribou". Cited in *Final Report*, 1, pp. 434-5. It is also pointed out that "for more than a century, this conflict has pitted the rights of all members of society to harvest fish and wildlife for sport or commerce (under state regulation) against the rights of Aboriginal people (often enshrined in treaty) to take fish and wildlife for their own purposes — even according to their own rules". *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 504. There is also a quote from Lyla Andrew that she thinks that "country living needs to be given a high priority. The impediments to country life, such as...wildlife regulations, have to be eliminated..." [translation. Lyla Andrew, Sheshatshiu, Newfoundland and Labrador, 18 June 1992, cited in *Final Report*, 4, p. 409. The Royal Commission recognizes that what "Aboriginal people really are experiencing is the logic of state management of lands and resources, particularly as it applies to fish and wildlife. Aboriginal peoples that signed treaties in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries may have believed that their rights with respect to harvesting — their customary laws and practices — were to be protected. What they did not know, nor could they have anticipated, was that the treaty commissioners

environmental destruction that occurred after Europeans crossed the Atlantic, resulting in the inference that aboriginal peoples must have had insights about nature that Europeans lacked. The Royal Commission argued, for example, that

in traditional Aboriginal cosmologies, all life forms are seen as aspects of a single reality in which none is superior...thus, loss of land and damage to lands, waterways and so on are experienced as assaults on one's own body and on the personal and collective spirit...In contrast, the non-Aboriginal world view portrays nature as something apart from human beings — indeed, as something created (or fortuitously available) for human use...To be sure, all peoples 'use' the resources of the earth in order to live, but their patterns of use are conditioned by cultural values they may scarcely perceive. In public testimony, many Aboriginal speakers commented on differences in values between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, expressing the hope that one day, all people will acknowledge and learn from the respectful, Aboriginal approach to Mother Earth and the sacred circle of life.<sup>88</sup>

This argument, however, was simplistic because it failed to consider how modes of production are connected to the ideas that are developed. Traditional "Aboriginal cosmologies" were related to the fact that native tribes exerted little control over nature, and these ideas would have changed as native economies and societies developed. It was these economic and political developments, brought by Iron Age technology and the profit-motive, not European "cosmologies", in fact, that have led to the destruction of the environment. And since aboriginal groups wanted to increase their participation in this destructive system,<sup>89</sup> such references to the "Aboriginal

---

had brought with them a whole complex of societal attitudes toward fish and wildlife and how those resources were to be managed". *Final Report*, 2(2), p. 497.

<sup>88</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p.187.

<sup>89</sup> As the Royal Commission points out, "aboriginal speakers made it clear to us (as they have told previous inquiries) that they are not naively opposed to development or modernity, as is sometimes alleged. They do not want to give up telephones, snowmobiles, or video games. They accept that industrial development is a necessary part of the economic fabric of every country. Indeed, many

approach to Mother Earth and the sacred circle of life" were antithetical to the current economic and political realities in which aboriginal peoples were embedded.

Despite the problematic assumptions behind these assertions, however, they also informed many of the arguments that the Royal Commission made about another kind of traditional knowledge - aboriginal "insights" into the field of medicine. This area, in fact, was the most extensively discussed in the Royal Commission's *Final Report*. There were numerous references to the importance of "traditional medicine" or "traditional healing", which mostly appeared in its chapter on "Health and Healing" in Volume Three of the *Final Report*.<sup>90</sup> In this chapter, the Royal Commission maintained that one of the major mechanisms to combat ill health in aboriginal communities, and to some extent in the wider society,<sup>91</sup> was through the use of traditional medicine and traditional healers.<sup>92</sup> As was mentioned earlier, this was not

---

pointed to their need and desire for greater participation in Canada's industrial economy. But few Aboriginal people would choose to participate at the expense of the land and life forms that anchor them in their past and link them to the future". *Final Report*, 3, p.188. This is also the view of David Newhouse's article "Modern Aboriginal Economies: Capitalism with an Aboriginal Face", *Sharing the Harvest*.

<sup>90</sup>It also identifies "traditional healers" as a "wide range of people whose skills, wisdom and understanding can play a part in restoring personal well-being and social balance, from specialists in the use of healing herbs, to traditional midwives, to elders whose life experience makes them effective as counsellors, to ceremonialists who treat physical, social, emotional and mental disorders by spiritual means" Note 1, *Final Report*, 3, p. 361.

<sup>91</sup> As the Royal Commission puts it: "traditional medicine and healing practices are a source of ideas that may ultimately benefit not just Aboriginal peoples, but all peoples". *Final Report*, 3, p. 353. It also argues that the combination of aboriginal and "bio-medical" knowledge offers "real hope for enhanced health among Aboriginal people and, indeed, enhanced health for the human race". *Final Report*, 3, p. 202.

<sup>92</sup> It maintains that "in the face of continuing threats to well-being, effective action is possible — and already under way — by drawing on community strengths, traditional knowledge and creative use of

only because aboriginal peoples themselves believe that traditional medicine was effective in alleviating the health problems of the native population; the Royal Commission also assumed that the "concepts and understandings" in traditional healing "are affirmed by the leading edge of scientific research on the determinants of health".<sup>93</sup> It noted that "for Aboriginal people, the conviction that they have a contribution to make [to enhanced health] is deeply held and a source of strength", arguing that a section of the *Final Report* entitled "Aboriginal perspectives on Health and Healing" showed "the solid ground on which this belief stands".<sup>94</sup>

An analysis of the *Final Report*, in fact, does not show this was the case. Most of its support for the importance of aboriginal health and healing consisted of quotations from aboriginal peoples themselves,<sup>95</sup> and even descriptions of what traditional healing entailed were hard to find. In the Royal Commission's chapter on "Health and Healing", for example, there were only five cases of "traditional healing" put forward - diabetes prevention programs, midwifery, traditional herbs, spiritual ceremonies, and using the principles of the "medicine wheel".

---

professional services". *Final Report*, 3, p.110 See also *Final Report*, 3, pp. 290-93, 348-61 for the Royal Commission's promotion of traditional healing.

<sup>93</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p.215.

<sup>94</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p.202.

<sup>95</sup> The Royal Commission, for example, refers readers to three research studies to support its claim that "support for traditional Aboriginal healing and medicine was expressed ...from many sources". These include Benita Cohen, "Health Services Development in an Aboriginal Community", *For Seven Generations*; Christopher Fletcher, "The Innuulisivik Maternity Care Centre", *For Seven Generations*; "Dianne Kinnon, "Health is the Whole Person", *For Seven Generations*; and Joseph M. Kaufert, "Health Status, Service Use and Program Models Among the Aboriginal Population of Canadian Cities", *For Seven Generations*.

These five cases, however, in no way could be considered to be on the "leading edge of scientific research". The diabetes prevention and midwifery programs, in fact, did not concern "knowledge" at all. The former involved communicating diabetes prevention in a manner that took into consideration aboriginal cultures,<sup>96</sup> and the latter concerned making childbirth more family-oriented and less of a medical procedure.<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup> One concerns an Ojibwa program, where the only detail provided of its "success" is the use of "the Ojibwa story of Nanabush and the Pale Stranger as a metaphor to explain the effects and management of diabetes". *Final Report*, 3, p.351. The research study from which this example is drawn is also not much help. It states that "Hagey (1984) developed and documented an educational program for urban-based Aboriginal people with diabetes. In this program there were attempts to interpret and mediate between alternative explanatory frameworks of medical and nutritional science and Ojibway illness beliefs. The project involved a collaborative health education program developed by nurse educators and Ojibway Elders. The diabetes education material used the traditional Ojibway account of 'Nanabush and the Pale Stranger' to illustrate the nature of an individual's encounters with diabetes. Hagey suggested that this program was effective in changing the attitudes and behavior of diabetics through this process of exploring metaphors and attending to their cultural meaning.". Joseph M. Kaufert, "Health Status, Service Use and Program Models...", *For Seven Generations*. How this program was "effective", and the criteria used to measure its benefits, is not specified. Three other prevention programs mentioned include the Diabetic Outreach Program in the High Prairie region of northern Alberta, the "Walking in Balance Program" of the Anishnabe Spiritual Centre on Manitoulin Island, and an initiative at the Kateri Memorial Hospital Centre at Kahnawake, Quebec. *Final Report*, 3, p.148. The Commission, however, does not specify how these programs are effective but refers readers to the following sources: Alethea Kewayosh (ed), *Sociocultural Approaches in Diabetes Care for Native Peoples* (Ottawa: Assembly of First Nations, 1993); Dr. Louis T. Montour of the Kateri Memorial Hospital Centre, RCAP transcripts, Kahnawake, 5 May 1993, *For Seven Generations*; Ann C. Macaulay, Nancy Hanusaik and Deborah D. Delisle, "Diabetic Education Program in the Mohawk Community of Kahnawake, Quebec", *Canadian Family Physician* 34 (July 1988), pp. 1591-1593; Ann C. Macaulay et al, "Prevalence of Diabetic and Atherosclerotic Complications Among Mohawk Indians of Kahnawake", *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 139 (1988), pp. 221-223. *Final Report*, 3, p.328. Despite of the lack of evidence provided, they are used as support for the Royal Commission's claim that "control over the design of diabetes prevention...led to culture-based materials that increased their effectiveness". *Final Report*, 3, pp.148, 209, 228.

<sup>97</sup> Although the Royal Commission maintains that midwifery programs were instituted to recognize "indigenous birthing knowledge" (*Final Report*, 3, pp.134-5) and have subsequently led to "excellent health outcomes" (*Final Report*, 3, p.228), the Royal Commission provides no evidence that this is because native midwives understand pregnancy and childbirth as much or more than "bio-medical" practitioners or non-aboriginal midwives. Instead, it is due to the fact that, in the "bio-medical" system, "a woman must leave her family behind and live in a hostel for a two-week waiting period, then enter a hospital for delivery. She may find that no one speaks her language or understands her background. She may give birth attended by strangers. What was traditionally a joyous, even sacred event can be

The third case - the use of the medicines of "traditional healers" or native "pharmacology" - on the surface appeared to offer the most promise for providing benefits to the health care system. The Royal Commission, for example, provided an assertion of Chrestien LeClercq, quoted by the historian Olive Dickason, that "Amerindians are all by nature physicians, apothecaries and doctors, by virtue of the knowledge and experience they have of certain herbs, which they use successfully to cure ills that seem to us incurable".<sup>98</sup> This was followed by the comment from Dickason herself that "the process by which the Amerindians acquired their herbal lore is not clearly understood, but there is no doubt about the results" since "more than 500 drugs used in the medical pharmacopoeia today were originally used by Amerindians".<sup>99</sup> But the Royal Commission offered no evidence that this "herbal lore" was on the "leading edge of scientific research". The "methodology" was generations of trial and error, which enabled aboriginal peoples to discover certain remedies that have had beneficial health effects. Trial and error is an aspect of the development of science, but the use made of it in traditional societies isn't confined to modern scientific methods. The Royal Commission noted the practice in aboriginal cultures of "traditional healing" ceremonies, including burning sweetgrass, smoking

---

frightening and alienating. Her family and community are denied the life-affirming experience of sharing in the miracle of new life. The father, siblings, grandparents and other relatives are excluded from the birth and from the all-important first days or weeks of the infant's life when the bonds of love and responsibility are forged". *Final Report*, 3, pp. 134-5. For a further discussion of similar claims supporting midwifery, see two studies prepared for the Royal Commission: Christopher Fletcher and John O'Neil, "The Inuulisivik Maternity Centre", *For Seven Generations*; and Lesley Paulette, "Midwifery in the North", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>98</sup> This quotation is from the Jesuit *New Relation of Gaspesia*.

<sup>99</sup> Dickason, *Canada's First Nations*, cited in *Final Report*, 3, p. 112.

tobacco, sweating (the "sweat lodge"), fasting and prayers. But these rituals could hardly have been considered "scientific", let alone the "leading edge of scientific research".

The Royal Commission made similar claims about the "medicine wheel" - a "centred and quartered circle" that is used as "a teaching device...adopted in recent years by teachers in many First Nations". According to the Royal Commission, this device "represents the circle that encompasses all life and all that is known or knowable, linked together in a whole with no beginning and no end. Human beings have their existence in this circle of life, along with other beings and the unseen forces that give breath and vitality to the inhabitants of the natural world". In the Royal Commission's view, medicine wheels were important for healing because they "help people examine experience by breaking down complex situations into constituent parts, while reminding them not to forget the whole".<sup>100</sup>

But the "constituent parts" that emerge from the "breaking down [of] complex situations" were arbitrarily constructed, the only basis for which was a spiritual belief

---

<sup>100</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 646-7. For research studies discussing the importance of the "medicine wheel", see New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council, "Aboriginal Self-Governance Within the Province of New Brunswick", *For Seven Generations*; Conrad Saulis, "Regional Overview of Aboriginal Child Care in Atlantic Canada", *For Seven Generations*; Kathy L. Vermette, "Issues of Pedagogy in Aboriginal Education", *For Seven Generations*; Joseph M. Kaufert, "Health Service, Service Use, and Program Models Among the Aboriginal Population of Canadian Cities", *For Seven Generations*; Brad McKenzie, "Aboriginal Foster Family Care in Canada", *For Seven Generations*; and Madeleine Dion Stout, "Family Violence in Aboriginal Communities", *For Seven Generations*.

about the significance of the number four. The Royal Commission, for example, noted that the "cycle of life" was broken down into child, youth, adult and elder, yet no rationale, except for the importance of "four directions" was given for categorizing human beings in this way.<sup>101</sup> The same was true for other medicine wheels that break down health - spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional - and the "cultural worlds" of aboriginal people (aboriginal, between worlds, assimilated, bi-cultural).<sup>102</sup> Even more perplexing was Figure 15.2 - "Anishnabe Teachings". These "teachings" connect four virtues (sharing, honesty, strength and kindness) with "animals", "tree", "rock" and "sweetgrass" because an aboriginal elder believed that "when the Creator made two people at the beginning of time the Creator gave them Indian law to follow. He gave them four directions. He gave them sweetgrass, the tree, the animal and the rock. The sweetgrass represents kindness; the tree represents honesty; the animal, sharing; and the rock is strength".<sup>103</sup>

Despite the Royal Commission's enthusiastic support of the benefits of "traditional healing", therefore, there was really not much support for its claims. This view, in fact, was expressed in one of the studies prepared for the Royal Commission, which asserted that "there is little scientific evidence for or against the efficacy of current treatment programs based on traditional Aboriginal healing practices". The study

---

<sup>101</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 647; *Final Report*, 3, p. 446 (Figure 5.2 "The Life Cycle").

<sup>102</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p. 447 (Figure 5.3) and *Final Report*, 3, p. 476 (Figure 5.4).

<sup>103</sup> Elder George Courchene, Sagkeeng First Nation, Fort Alexander, Manitoba, 30 October 1992, cited in *Final Report*, 1, pp. 654-5 (Figure 15.2 "Anishnabe Teachings").



went on to state, however, that "exploration of the mechanisms and efficacy of these programs is urgently needed and could make significant contributions to the evolution of healing practices in Canadian society as a whole".<sup>104</sup> But it is important to stress that "could" was the significant word here.

Consequently, in all the areas to which the Royal Commission referred as traditional knowledge making important contributions - astronomy, biology, medicine and environmental studies - there was little that has enhanced scientific research. Without the references to spiritualism, practices and values, all that remained of traditional knowledge was "junk science". John E. Dodes, the president of the New York Chapter of the National Council Against Health Fraud, maintains that "junk science results when conclusions are drawn using low-quality data such as testimonials, anecdotes, and case reports rather than from randomized, controlled clinical experiments". Although Dodes is largely concerned with exploring the negative effects of junk science on health care in the United States, he maintains that new regulations in American courts have made this form of "evidence" increasingly common. Dodes notes that junk science is generally used "in support of a political or legislative agenda". This agenda is driven by interested parties who, like the "faith

---

<sup>104</sup>Laurence Kirmayer et al., "Emerging trends in research on mental health", *For Seven Generations*.

healing" lobby, stand to gain financially from suppressing reliable scientific evidence.<sup>105</sup>

It is just such an agenda that was causing the Royal Commission to make such exaggerated claims about the importance of traditional knowledge. This agenda also was clearly present when I worked on the Traditional Knowledge Committee of the Government of the Northwest Territories in 1996. While working on this committee, it became apparent that most scientists didn't think that traditional knowledge was needed for their research, but they stated publicly that it was important for political expediency. Often they could not receive funding for studies unless they incorporated a traditional knowledge component, and promoting traditional knowledge was seen as being a relatively harmless way to appease aboriginal groups. Aboriginal elders would think that they were contributing to the research (as well as being paid)<sup>106</sup> and therefore be more likely to allow scientific studies to proceed without opposition. It also would supposedly increase cultural pride within the native population, since this, after all, is what "recognition" and "respect" is all about.

---

<sup>105</sup> John E. Dodes, "Junk Science and the Law", *Skeptical Inquirer*, July/August 2001, p.31.

<sup>106</sup> This is also a concern of the Royal Commission. In Recommendation 4.3.1, for example, it maintains that all levels of government should "acknowledge the essential role of Elders and the traditional knowledge that they have to contribute..." and that "this acknowledgement should be expressed in practice by...compensating Elders in a manner that conforms to cultural practices and recognizes their expertise and contribution". *Final Report*, 4, pp. 118-19.

This lack of rigour was why, as the Royal Commission itself acknowledged, "scientific scepticism" was one of the "barriers to the integration of traditional knowledge" into modern research. It maintained that "scientists are sceptical about the credibility or reliability of aboriginal information gathered through interviews, preferring 'hard' data such as biophysical data. Some may dismiss Aboriginal knowledge as subjective, anecdotal and unscientific".<sup>107</sup> The Royal Commission also noted that "the gatekeepers of western intellectual traditions have repeatedly dismissed traditional knowledge as inconsequential and unfounded".<sup>108</sup> Rather than delving into these criticisms, however, the Royal Commission just dismissed them as prejudicial attitudes that were slowly being overcome. It maintained that these "gatekeepers" have "failed to recognize" that "[western] knowledge building is also defined by culture and that Aboriginal intellectual traditions operate from a different but equally valid way of construing the world".<sup>109</sup>

Despite the absence of support for either the spiritual or "scientific" aspects of traditional knowledge enhancing our understanding of the world, the Royal Commission made a number of recommendations for incorporating aboriginal "world views" into education, health and environmental management. It even proposed the formation of an "Aboriginal Peoples International University" (APIU)<sup>110</sup> because

---

<sup>107</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p.457.

<sup>108</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p. 526.

<sup>109</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p. 526.

<sup>110</sup> See Recommendations 3.5.32 and 3.5.33, *Final Report*, 3, pp. 533-34.

throughout the world, the importance of indigenous knowledge to humankind has been recognized by leading scholars in the sciences and humanities. The new university would be a place where non-Aboriginal people could study with the acknowledged experts of the aboriginal world: the elders. Internationally, elders are already sought for their understanding of local environments and for their expertise in botany and ecological relationships. Environmental scholars and policy makes, medical researchers, healers and other scholars could meet with elders in gatherings that are respectful of their unique knowledge.<sup>111</sup>

This proposal maintained that it was not just the "knowledge" of elders that was important. It was also the fact that they have pedagogical techniques that were important for the educational process. As will be shown in the next section, however, these claims were just as dubious as those that were articulated about the significance of "traditional knowledge".

#### ABORIGINAL PEDAGOGY - ENCULTURATION NOT EDUCATION

The Royal Commission contended that it was not only the kind of knowledge that is taught in the school system that was contributing to aboriginal dependency, but methods that were used to disseminate this knowledge. In the mainstream educational system, the Royal Commission argued the methods used were culturally inappropriate for aboriginal students, causing them to drop out of school and be disadvantaged in the labour market. It was therefore necessary that more aboriginal teachers be hired and the educational programs for these teachers include "pedagogy based upon learning

modes derived from the Native cultural and linguistic heritage".<sup>112</sup> As was mentioned earlier, the Royal Commission maintained that pedagogy must be transformed to "make education relevant to the tasks of consolidating an adult Aboriginal identity and bridging the divide between school and the workplace". This, according to the Royal Commission, would "remove the impediments to learning" and "foster bicultural competence to allow Aboriginal youth to function effectively in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal environments".<sup>113</sup> The Royal Commission also maintained that there was often conflict "between the Aboriginal culture and the culture of the school", and that this "tend[ed] to inhibit personal investment in learning, skills development and advancement to higher levels of education and responsibility". Enabling aboriginal communities to "assume control over education", however, would give them "the opportunity to reinforce traditional cultural norms of achievement and excellence in roles that have been dominated for generations by non-Aboriginal people".<sup>114</sup> The result, in the Royal Commission's view, was increased educational attainment and ability to participate in modern life.

---

<sup>111</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p.531.

<sup>112</sup> See Recommendation 3.5.14, *Final Report*, 3, p. 495. There are a number of research studies that make this argument. See, for example, Cecil King, "The State of Aboriginal Education in Southern Canada", *For Seven Generations*; Kathy L. Vermette, "Issues of Pedagogy in Aboriginal Education", *For Seven Generations*; Claire K. Goldsmith, "Training the Teachers of Aboriginal Children", *For Seven Generations*; and Yvonne M. Hebert, "The State of Aboriginal Literacy and Language Education", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>113</sup> *Final Report*, 5, p. 13.

<sup>114</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p. 553.

But what were these "learning modes" and how were they different from those used in the Canadian educational system? And how would they enable aboriginal peoples to "[bridge] the divide between school and the workplace" and "function effectively in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal environments"? A review of the *Final Report* shows that there were a number of elements that make "aboriginal pedagogy" different from modern educational methods - these included the use of aboriginal languages and storytelling, involving elders, and "teaching by example" rather than using abstract instruction.

Both aboriginal languages and storytelling were believed to be important for transmitting knowledge because they reflected a "world view" associated with hunting and gathering that existed before the development of writing.<sup>115</sup> It was maintained that "the very nature of Aboriginal languages and the characteristic modes of transmitting knowledge in an oral culture make a direct transfer of meaning problematic...".<sup>116</sup> With respect to a language such as Mi'kmaq, for example, the Royal Commission argued that it "[operated] from the basis of verbs", unlike a "noun-based" language like English, which made native languages "complicated [because they showed] relationships [to] all the other elements around them."<sup>117</sup> As was mentioned earlier, it was also asserted that "constant motion is inherent in the Native

---

<sup>115</sup>This, according to the Royal Commission was essential for aboriginal children in the past for "taking in the multiple cues needed to survive as hunters and gatherers". *Final Report*, 3, p. 448.

<sup>116</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 620.

<sup>117</sup> Marie Battiste, cited in *Final Report*, 1, pp. 620-1.

thought process, and consequently many Native languages... are very action- or verb-oriented".<sup>118</sup> In addition, there was the claim that aboriginal languages perceived certain inanimate objects with which aboriginal peoples "have an intimate relationship" as being animate.<sup>119</sup> To support this contention, the Royal Commission offered a quote from Irving Hallowell who reports that "since stones are grammatically animate, I once asked an old man: Are *all* the stones we see about us here alive? He reflected a long while and then replied, 'No! But *some* are'".<sup>120</sup>

The Royal Commission concluded that these assertions about aboriginal languages were important indications of the special "world view" of aboriginal peoples that must be kept alive to preserve native identity. It maintained that the "Aboriginal reality" reflected by these languages "is intensely dynamic and fluid, requiring each person to pay attention to how he or she approaches each new situation, in order to adopt the appropriate attitude, to create the desired relationship".<sup>121</sup> Retaining these languages was also important for telling traditional stories, which were "often simple on the surface" but "multi-layered and [used to] address complex moral and ethical issues". The oral character of these stories meant that they are "intended to be conveyed only at particular times or locations and in specific contexts". They also instilled "basic

---

<sup>118</sup> Little Bear, cited in *Final Report*, 1, p. 621.

<sup>119</sup> Battiste, cited in *Final Report*, 1, p. 621.

<sup>120</sup> Hallowell, cited in *Final Report*, 1, p. 621.

<sup>121</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 621.

cultural knowledge" that helps aboriginal peoples "to participate fully in the traditions of their society", preventing them from suffering "identity confusion".<sup>122</sup>

As well as promoting the use of aboriginal languages and storytelling so as to truly reflect "aboriginal reality" and thus affirm native identity, the Royal Commission also maintained that these languages and forms of "transmitting knowledge" will be beneficial to all peoples, regardless of their culture. These characteristics were related to the fact that aboriginal peoples did not have writing before contact, and thus their educational techniques constituted an integral part of pedagogy that has not been contaminated by writing. The Royal Commission maintains that literacy results in a "one dimensional...approach to knowing" because

persons schooled in a literate culture are accustomed to having all the context they need to understand a communication embedded in the text before them. This is partly what is meant by 'clear writing', which is urged upon children as soon as they begin communicating practical or academic content. Persons taught to use all their senses - to absorb every clue to interpreting a complex, dynamic reality - may well smile at the illusion that words alone, stripped of complementary sound and colour and texture, can convey meaning adequately.<sup>123</sup>

The importance of "orality" in pedagogy was also put forward in an example the Royal Commission provided involving the aboriginal leader Matthew Coon Come. When Coon Come asked his father to "teach him about the land of his ancestors", he was told to tear up a topographical map that he had brought because this was

---

<sup>122</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p. 526.



"committing the white man's mistake" of "making plans for the land without ever setting foot on it, without ever getting a feel for it".<sup>124</sup>

Similar arguments were also made with respect to "storytelling". The Royal Commission maintained that "in oral traditions, stories are a particularly important medium for transmitting knowledge. They contain layers of meaning that listeners decode according to their readiness to receive certain teachings".<sup>125</sup> This largely involved aboriginal mythology, which was referred to as stories "that convey truths too deep to be contained in a literal account of singular experience" since they recount an "experience so significant that the story of it has been preserved in narrative and drama and song, from generation to generation, passing through so many storytellers that the contours of detail have been worn smooth, leaving it to the listener to fill in the context, to give the story life and meaning, to turn it into a teaching for today".<sup>126</sup> The Royal Commission maintained that these stories "might well serve non-Aboriginal people too, as an introduction to Aboriginal world view" by offering the character of the "trickster" to "Canadian youth who have never had a playful, unpredictable, good/bad teacher who always has to learn the folly of his ways in the school of hard knocks".<sup>127</sup>

---

<sup>123</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 622-23.

<sup>124</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 622.

<sup>125</sup> *Final Report*, 3, pp. 491-492.

<sup>126</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 626.

Although the Royal Commission did not provide any specifics that would enable readers to determine if and how "orality" helped aboriginal peoples (and human beings more generally) to better "absorb every clue to interpreting a complex, dynamic reality" and "convey meaning [more] adequately" than written accounts, such arguments were a distraction from focusing on one of the main educational problems that currently existed with respect to the aboriginal population. This was that literacy was introduced only relatively recently in aboriginal societies, while being integral to many Old World cultures for thousands of years. A lack of a literary tradition meant that aboriginal languages have much smaller vocabularies than English and French,<sup>128</sup> for instance, which has impeded developments in philosophy and science in native communities.

Such problems were recognized to a certain extent by the Royal Commission when it pointed out that "contact with other cultures may bring about changes that are so

---

<sup>127</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. 626-28.

<sup>128</sup> The Royal Commission cites earlier government reports as stating that "Aboriginal languages could not carry the burden of civilization; they could not 'impart ideas which, being entirely outside the experience and environment of the pupils and their parents, have no equivalent expression in their native language'. Those ideas were the core concepts of European culture — its ontology, theology and values. Without the English language, the department announced in its annual report of 1895, the Aboriginal person is 'permanently disabled' and beyond the pale of assimilation for, 'So long as he keeps his native tongue, so long will he remain a community apart' (*Final Report*, 1, p. 341). The government reports making these comments were Annual Report 1899 and Annual Report 1895. The Royal Commission also notes that "Inuktitut has had to be extended to include concepts for which there was no existing vocabulary" (*Final Report*, 3, p. 498) and that "in some cases, language research is needed. Aboriginal languages usually require 'lexical elaboration' to add words to the language for concepts encountered later in the child's education". *Final Report*, 3, p. 467. This view is contested by Marie Battiste, who maintains that "there are more ways to express things in Mi'kmaq than there are in English and the language is built around relationships..." (Battiste, Eskasoni, May 7, 1992, cited in

drastic the language is unable to adapt quickly enough to express new, everyday realities". It argued that "socio-cultural upheaval has overwhelmed the ability of many languages to absorb and communicate new concepts and realities" and therefore it was "not surprising that Aboriginal speakers draw upon majority language resources to express these new ideas".<sup>129</sup> Even though written forms have been developed for aboriginal languages, the Royal Commission noted that "their use is generally infrequent". It explained that "written work is rare, and reading and writing (and transmission of these skills) are often restricted to the classroom".<sup>130</sup> A study prepared for the Royal Commission, in fact, noted that

despite an increase in Aboriginal formal schooling in the Aboriginal language for the younger generations and the growing number of language experts (such as Aboriginal language teachers, interpreters, techno-linguists and the like), the rate of actual spontaneous use of native literacy skills in everyday life is quite low. Everyone somehow seems to favour reading and writing in the majority language.<sup>131</sup>

This lack of a history of writing has made it difficult for aboriginal children to master "clear writing" and "logic" - important skills that must be learned to become educated in a highly literate world. And while it could be argued that writing does "strip" words of their "complementary sound, colour and texture", we have all sorts of

---

*Final Report*, 3, p. 464). No elaboration is provided from Battiste, however, as to what such "things" are.

<sup>129</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p. 611.

<sup>130</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p. 610.

<sup>131</sup> Lynn Drapeau, "Issues in Language and Education for Aboriginal Populations in Quebec", *For Seven Generations*.

activities such as music, painting, dance and drama in educational systems today that help to develop the more "intuitive" capacities of children.

The absence of "clear writing" and "logic" in aboriginal cultures was illustrated by the three "trickster stories" that the Royal Commission provided in highlighted boxes to enlighten us as to how "storytelling" is essential for enhancing "self-knowledge".<sup>132</sup>

These stories included "Butterflies", which the Royal Commission documented itself, "Wesakychak and the Little Birds" in Sharon Boucher's *Stories my Granny Told Me*, and "Coyote Brings fire to the People", taken from *Giving Birth to Thunder, Sleeping with His Daughter Coyote Builds North America* by Barry Holstun Lopez.

"Butterflies" was an Anishnawbe creation myth that concerns a character by the name of Nanabush that turns pebbles into butterflies so children raised by animals can learn to walk. "Coyote Brings Fire to the People" was a story about how a coyote, with the help of a number of other animals, steals fire from the "fire-keepers" and then gives it to humans. The strangest of the stories, however, is "Wesakychak and the Little Birds". It has been reproduced in its entirety:

One day Wesakychak was walking through the woods when he came upon a nest of little birds. He saw they were defenceless and threw shit on them. Then he continued down the path and came upon a big stream. Two times he made a big run to jump over the stream and chickened out before he jumped. The third time he ran fast and jumped and then in the middle of the stream the parents of the little birds flew out and scared Wesakychak and he fell splat into

---

<sup>132</sup> For reports that discuss various "trickster stories", see Tammy Anderson Blumhagen, "Memories and Moments", *For Seven Generations*; and Peter Jull, "Re-inventing Canada", *For Seven Generations*.

the water! The moral of the story is: don't throw shit on little birds for one day they will grow up and could scare you.<sup>133</sup>

It would be an interesting exercise to determine the "truths too deep to be contained in a literal account of singular experience" that the Royal Commission maintained are conveyed in this story.

To disseminate this "aboriginal reality" more effectively, the Royal Commission maintained that it was important to involve elders in the process.<sup>134</sup> This was because "in many Aboriginal cultures, old age was seen as conferring characteristics not present in earlier years, including insight, wisdom and authority...Elders were the ones who had already walked a great distance on [life's] path and were qualified to advise based on their knowledge of life, traditional and experience".<sup>135</sup> It was also assumed that "as individuals especially knowledgeable and experienced in the culture, [elders] were seen as those most closely in touch with the philosophical teachings of

---

<sup>133</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 625.

<sup>134</sup> See, for example, Recommendation 3.5.8: "All schools serving Aboriginal children [should] adopt policies that welcome the involvement of Aboriginal parents, elders and families in the life of the school, for example, by establishing advisory or parents committees, introducing teaching by elders in the classroom, and involving parents in school activities". *Final Report*, 3, p. 472. The involvement of elders in education is promoted in a number of research studies prepared for the Royal Commission. See, for example, The Teslin Tlingit Council, "Aboriginal Governments Case Study", *For Seven Generations*; Laureen Nayally, "Wrigley Dene Band Research Report", *For Seven Generations*; Cecil King, "The State of Aboriginal Education in Southern Canada", *For Seven Generations*; Claire K. Goldsmith, "Training the Teachers of Aboriginal Children", *For Seven Generations*; John Dorion and Kuan R. Yang, "Metis Post-Secondary Education", *For Seven Generations*; LaFrance, "Culturally Negotiated Education in First Nations Communities", *For Seven Generations*; Ruth Norton and Mark Fettes, "Taking Back the Talk", *For Seven Generations*; and Yvonne M. Hebert, "The State of Aboriginal Literacy and Language Education", *For Seven Generations*.

<sup>135</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 109.

life lived in harmony with the Creator and creation".<sup>136</sup> As the Royal Commission put it: "elders have special gifts. They are considered exceptionally wise in the ways of their culture and the teachings of the Great Spirit".<sup>137</sup> They also "see the world through the eyes of the ancestors and interpret the contemporary world through the lessons passed down through generations", providing "a living bridge between the past and the present" and "a vision for the future...grounded in tradition and informed by the experience of living on the land, safeguarding and disseminating knowledge gained over centuries".<sup>138</sup>

In order to impart this "knowledge that extends back through countless generations" elders and other aboriginal teachers use the traditional pedagogical method of "teaching by example". Unlike modern educational systems that use formal and decontextualized methods, the Royal Commission maintained that aboriginal pedagogy relied on "one-to-one instruction" and "modelling correct behaviours",<sup>139</sup> noting that aboriginal peoples have traditionally "learned through observation and experience on the land in the company of those who are knowledgeable".<sup>140</sup> This kind of education, therefore, did not occur in the classroom; it must take place through

---

<sup>136</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 108.

<sup>137</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 110.

<sup>138</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 3; See also *Final Report*, 3, p.491.

<sup>139</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p. 526.

<sup>140</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 456.

"outdoor educational programs" so that students could watch teachers applying their knowledge.<sup>141</sup> As the Royal Commission explained,

much of the traditional knowledge whose loss was lamented by elders and youth in our hearings was normally transmitted during the practice of land-based activities, often involving ritual. With the loss of land and these land-based activities, the knowledge itself is at risk of being lost, because there are no verbal formulas to take the place of the experience that supports aural (heard) teachings. The reinstatement of sweat lodges, naming ceremonies and talking circles in contemporary Aboriginal communities demonstrates how a context for certain teachings can be re-created in an urbanized community, a prison yard or a college campus. Other teachings are intertwined so intimately with particular activities and environments that they can be transmitted effectively only in the original setting.<sup>142</sup>

Essentially two kinds of "knowledge" were imparted in this manner. The first concerned "survival skills" or "outdoor skills" - building boats, tanning hides, canoeing, hunting, fishing, "set[ting] up camp" and "skills related to the ocean".<sup>143</sup> Secondly, there were those activities that teach students about ethics or values, often through spiritual ceremonies. As the Royal Commission explained,

in the classroom and out on the land, the teacher conveys to students the acceptable rules of behaviour and the values to be honoured through subtle verbal and non-verbal communication. Education is holistic and addresses not only the intellectual but the spiritual, emotional and physical aspects of the individual. The teacher is a role model whose own behaviour and attitudes are absorbed by students. At the same time, the teachers encourage each individual

---

<sup>141</sup> This is because it is maintained that "for these youth to become mature adults" they will need "opportunities to experience cultural practices in ceremonies and life on the land". *Final Report*, 3, p. 49.

<sup>142</sup> *Final Report*, 1, p. 622. See also *Final Report*, 4, 159, for a further discussion about the need of aboriginal youth to be involved with elders "on the land".

<sup>143</sup> *Final Report*, 3, pp. 479-482

to use the special gifts they have been given and to do so in a way that benefits everyone, not just themselves.<sup>144</sup>

These types of instruction, according to the Royal Commission, were being impeded by modern educational methods because "elders...are not able to teach what they would like to share with the children" and "school timetables conflict with the proper time to transmit traditional knowledge and skills...".<sup>145</sup> There were also problems with Canadian educational institutions that did not "recognize the qualifications of elders to teach in areas where they have unique cultural knowledge" and the requirements for "paper qualifications has prevented many elders from becoming instructors in formal education systems".<sup>146</sup> But while these forms of outdoor instruction might have been entertaining and provided native students with the skills needed for hunting and trapping or surviving in the wilderness, it was difficult to see how they would help to improve the educational levels in aboriginal communities needed for today's work environments. Because the Royal Commission denied that there was a progressive difference between hunting and gathering/horticultural modes of production and life in the modern world, the Royal Commission was actually recommending teaching methods that would prevent aboriginal peoples from participating in Canadian life today. In fact, all the aspects of "aboriginal pedagogy" mentioned above - aboriginal languages and oral traditions/"storytelling", the involvement of elders and "teaching by example" - were reflective of the lack of

---

<sup>144</sup> *Final Report*, 3, pp. 491-2.

<sup>145</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p. 527.

<sup>146</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p. 527.



control over nature that previously existed in hunting and gathering/horticultural societies. Because hunting and gathering/horticultural societies were pre-literate before contact, they had not developed formal and decontextualized instructional methods, relying merely on "teaching by example".<sup>147</sup> And because the world changed very slowly during this period of human history, those that lived the longest were likely to have the most "wisdom". This was why elders were seen as being so important in the dissemination of knowledge at this time (although, as was shown above, this was often given a spiritual interpretation). Today, however, older people do not necessarily know the most. Quite often, in fact, they lack the appropriate knowledge because they have not kept up with the scientific advancements necessary for understanding what is happening in the world.

The promotion of these "culturally sensitive" standards could be seen in the Royal Commission's discussion of the fields of health and education. The Royal Commission argued that aboriginal peoples should develop their own standards in these areas because they have different "needs and priorities". According to the Royal Commission, mainstream institutions have failed to "recognize and affirm Aboriginal knowledge, skills and experience" in satisfying the native population's different health and educational requirements, and this has created obstacles to the employment and

---

<sup>147</sup> As a quotation provided by the Royal Commission itself points out, "traditionally, education was not schooling. Learning for survival happened during all the waking hours, each and every day, and all life long. Learning occurred through life experience — not in abstraction or set apart from on-going

advancement of aboriginal professionals. It maintained that "formal credentials and work experience with non-Aboriginal organizations — even if they are not directly applicable to the needs of Aboriginal people — are often valued more than Aboriginal knowledge and experience working in Aboriginal communities".<sup>148</sup>

In the case of health care, for example, the Royal Commission maintained that native "traditional healers" should not be regulated by the same standards as non-aboriginal health care practitioners. It noted that there was a "furious reaction" from traditionalists when they were questioned by "bio-medically trained people" as to how their practices should be documented and evaluated. According to the Royal Commission, these "traditional healers" asserted that "it would be utterly inappropriate to measure traditional, holistic healing and its results using reductionist bio-medical methods. They proposed standards of evaluation that would be generated, monitored and controlled within Aboriginal communities". As a result, the Royal Commission advocated that in the short-term there should be "respectful independence" between "traditional healing" and "bio-medicine", where the former self-regulates its practices and the latter "encourage[d] respect for and develop[ed] codes of co-operation with Aboriginal healers, midwives and elder-advisers". For the long-term, the Royal Commission envisioned a system where traditional healers would "develop their existing means of self-regulation and discuss the need to develop and publish codes of activities". *Dene Kede Education: A Dene Perspective, Dene Kede Curriculum Guide* (Yellowknife:

conduct to govern their relations with Aboriginal clients, health authorities and governments, and with mainstream health practitioners and institutions". It recommended that "traditional and bio-medical practitioners continue to engage in dialogue with two objectives in mind: to enhance mutual respect and to discuss areas of possible collaboration", which would require "health professionals and their associations to initiate contact, demonstrate their respect for traditional practitioners, and show their willingness to take steps to sensitize their members...to the value of traditional healing practices".<sup>149</sup>

Similar arguments were put forward with respect to education for aboriginal peoples. The Royal Commission, in fact, recommended two kinds of "culturally sensitive" standards for the native population with respect to educational initiatives. The first concerned the qualifications of aboriginal teachers. To increase the number of aboriginal teachers and elders in educational institutions, the Royal Commission recommended that less emphasis should be placed on formal credentials.<sup>150</sup> It referred to the failure of educational institutions to recognize the "qualifications of elders" as an "insult". Furthermore, the Royal Commission maintained that separate programs for educating aboriginal teachers should be developed because of the

---

Northwest Territories Education Development Branch, 1993), p. xxvi, cited in *Final Report*, 4, p. 126.

<sup>148</sup> *Final Report*, 3, pp. 283-4.

<sup>149</sup> *Final Report*, 3, pp. 360-61.

<sup>150</sup> For example, it is concerned that elders cannot teach aboriginal students because they "have no papers which would recognize that [they] have abilities". Rhoda Karetak, 19 november 1992, cited in *Final Report*, 3, p.527; See also Simeo Rich, 17 june 1992, cited in *Final Report*, 3, p.527.

different "cultural needs" of native students. These programs could then increase the number of aboriginal teachers they graduate by including "Native Studies", "aboriginal languages"<sup>151</sup> and aboriginal pedagogy as "teachable subjects". According to the Royal Commission,

many Aboriginal community members and education leaders have expressed frustration that Aboriginal teachers are not fully grounded in the teaching traditions of their nations. They argue that there should be stronger components in teacher education programs to address the language, history, pedagogy and traditions of Aboriginal peoples. It is important to ground teacher education programs in the cultural traditions of the communities in which teachers will eventually be working.<sup>152</sup>

Northern teacher educational programs were referred to as a positive example in this regard because they have "a solid component of course work directly related to the cultural aspirations of the region". It noted that in addition to instruction in aboriginal languages, "northern essential learnings, Aboriginal pedagogy, and field trips such as trapping school or cultural camp are part of the curriculum".<sup>153</sup>

---

<sup>151</sup>The Royal Commission notes that "the certification of language teachers has been a problem because many of the candidates who are richly qualified in their cultural and linguistic backgrounds do not have the academic qualifications required in Canadian teaching systems". *Final Report*, 3, p. 497.

<sup>152</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p. 492.

<sup>153</sup> The Royal Commission also supports a proposal of "the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (mcu) in 1988", which "identified the need to develop a strategy which would increase the number of Native students attending and graduating from Ontario's colleges and universities." It notes that this strategy included "funding will be made available under the Special Projects Fund and the Supplementary Grant Fund to Native teacher education programs which...include as a central component, instruction in a Native-specific curriculum and pedagogy based upon learning modes derived from the Native cultural and linguistic heritage" and "ensure that Native-specific curricular components and pedagogy are available as elective credit courses to all teacher education students". "Native Education and Training Strategy, May 1991", cited in *Final Report*, 3, Appendix 5A, pp. 582-3.

As well as having "culturally sensitive" standards for the training of aboriginal teachers, the Royal Commission also recommended that aboriginal students be evaluated differently. This was because aboriginal people have "the right...to articulate and apply their own standards of excellence in education". Aboriginal students should not be evaluated by Canada-wide standardized tests that "take non-Aboriginal populations as their norm", since their "goals of education...are defined by non-Aboriginal authorities". Although the Royal Commission conceded that "some Aboriginal parents and communities may share these goals", it asserted that others have "their own goals for the education of their children". As a result, the Royal Commission maintained that "Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal authorities must negotiate agreements that show mutual recognition of each other's curriculum decisions and standards. As self-governance in education is implemented, agreements should demonstrate respect and recognition of Aboriginal competence in the area".<sup>154</sup>

The Royal Commission insisted that giving aboriginal peoples the authority to develop and monitor their own programs and services "is not a question of watering down

---

<sup>154</sup> It agrees with a study that argues that an aboriginal "regional or provincial organization" is needed to "develop culturally appropriate intelligence tests" and "an evaluation branch for providing audits and evaluation of First Nation-operated system". This kind of aboriginally controlled structure is needed for evaluating aboriginal educational institutions, this report maintains, because otherwise "accreditation will become problematic. If a First Nation operated system declares itself independent from provincial curricula and standards, the provincial institutions and post-secondary programs may challenge or not recognize the credentials of the products of First Nation-operated systems". Therefore, a Native Ministry of Education "could develop its own standards and inspect systems to ensure set standards are being met" (Ron Common and Lorraine Frost, *Teaching Wigwams: A Modern Vision of Native Education* (Muncey, Ontario: Anishanaabe Kendaaswin Publishing, 1994), pp. 35-6, cited in *Final Report*, 3, p. 564-65). The Royal Commission also argues that "we would see a multi-nation organization negotiating a policy framework with the province governing tuition agreements, access to provincial services and transfer between Aboriginal and provincial academic programs. It would

standards", and it argued that aboriginal peoples only want to "represent their values" in self-government initiatives.<sup>155</sup> But from a review of the Royal Commission's discussions of increased aboriginal control over education and health care, it was hard to accept that this was the case. The Royal Commission, in fact, rarely discussed what these standards would consist of. Instead, it tended to avoid the issue by making vague statements that these standards will have to be determined by aboriginal communities themselves. In the case of "traditional healing", for example, the Royal Commission asked the following questions: "How is it decided who can perform certain ceremonies, practise certain rituals, sing certain songs, or organize and conduct healing circles? Who determines the qualifications of those calling themselves medicine people, traditional healers or Elders?". It then went on merely to state that

the issue of self-regulation among traditional healers is something Elders themselves should address within the larger Aboriginal community. There are Elders' societies and organizations, both formal and informal, at the local, regional and national levels. For example, the Nak'azdli Elders' Society is active in British Columbia; internationally, the Three Fires Society is a large North American spiritual organization based on the teachings of the Midewewin Grand Medicine Society. These and other groups might wish to discuss criteria or procedures for recognition of traditional Elders. Ultimately, it is Aboriginal people who will determine who their Elders are. For Aboriginal people and their Elders, community recognition is the most reliable determining factor.<sup>156</sup>

---

develop curriculum, monitor academic standards in the Aboriginal education system, advise provincial ministers of education, colleges and universities, and provide training". *Final Report*, 3, p. 565.

<sup>155</sup> *Final Report*, 3, p. 461.

But "community recognition" was just what the community happens to believe. Nowhere in the Royal Commission's *Final Report* was it ever specified how "community recognition" would establish standards consistent with the levels achieved in today's developed societies.

After examining the Royal Commission's discussions of health care and education, it was apparent that there were no "culturally sensitive" standards in existence.

"Culturally sensitive", in fact, seemed to be a euphemism for an absence of standards. This was generally reflective of the concern of self-government initiatives with increasing the amount of funding being provided to native organizations rather than improving the quality of services being delivered.<sup>157</sup> As the Royal Commission itself recognized in several areas of its *Final Report*, most aboriginal peoples lacked the qualifications needed to obtain employment as professionals. Therefore, in order to increase the numbers of aboriginal "jobs" in these fields, either the educational levels of aboriginal peoples must be raised or the standards lowered. And since the latter was easier to achieve than the former, there has been increasing pressure to follow this

---

<sup>156</sup> *Final Report*, 4, p. 135.

<sup>157</sup> The Royal Commission maintains that "there have been few resources in the school systems to support the involvement of elders. The fact that they are not given compensation comparable to that of other teachers and professionals sends a clear message that their knowledge and expertise are not valued. The programs where they teach are underfunded, with few resources to support their efforts in curriculum development and for supplies and teaching materials". *Final Report*, 3, p. 526. In the case of "traditional healing", the Royal Commission maintains that it "will require financial assistance from Aboriginal, federal, provincial and territorial governments so that traditional healers can form national

course of action rather than to devote the resources needed to bring aboriginal education up to Canadian standards.

---

(or several regional) associations to encourage the exchange of information and build toward more formalized self-regulation ". *Final Report*, 3, p. 361.



## Conclusion

At the beginning of this dissertation it was noted that the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was established to pursue two major goals – to increase the body of knowledge pertaining to the historical roots of aboriginal dependency and provide aboriginal peoples with a “voice” so that they could be symbolically recognized as integral members of the Canadian federation. It was asserted that these two goals would work in harmony with one another because, as Marlene Brant Castellano, the former co-director of research for the Royal Commission pointed out, the “history portraying the vitality inherent in Aboriginal cultures, the wisdom of Aboriginal teachings, the capacity for self-government that was exercised from time immemorial, and the tragic story of displacement and the loss has been neglected and suppressed”. According to Castellano, this neglect and suppression was based on the incorrect assumption that “Aboriginal people are stuck in their savage ways and need only to join the mainstream and modernize to catch up in the march of civilized society”,<sup>1</sup> resulting in the flawed policies of assimilation and dispossession. The Royal Commission’s research was needed, therefore, to “unmask” the “false assumptions that have informed policy decisions in the past” so that new “language and

---

<sup>1</sup> Marlene Brant Castellano, “Renewing the Relationship: A Perspective on the Impact of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples”, in Patricia Sherlock (ed), *Blind Spots: An Examination of the Federal Government’s Response to the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (Ottawa: Aboriginal Rights Coalition, 2001), p. 4.

benchmarks for productive dialogue” between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples could be established.<sup>2</sup>

As was shown throughout this dissertation, however, this dual mandate of the Royal Commission proved to be contradictory. This was because the inclusion of those aboriginal perspectives designed to aid the “recognition” and “respect” of aboriginal cultures often turned out to be contrary to the methods employed by social scientists to understand aboriginal and non-aboriginal relations. One result was the dismissal of an entire research tradition analyzing aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations within the framework of cultural evolution and historical progress. Such a rejection was not due to a critical evaluation of this literature, but because it was deemed as being politically unacceptable and inconsistent with “aboriginal voices”.

The Royal Commission’s rejection of any research engaging with conceptions of cultural evolution and historical progress was part of a wider political agenda of supporting aboriginal leaders’ aspirations of parallelism. This political strategy led the Royal Commission to argue that aboriginal dependency could not be addressed by focusing on integrating aboriginal peoples into the Canadian mainstream, but by encouraging aboriginal cultural distinctiveness and the political autonomy of “First Nations” on their traditional territories. Because aboriginal peoples were “born into

---

<sup>2</sup> Castellano, “Renewing the Relationship”, p. 19.

[distinct] cultures”, the Royal Commission maintained that they would “continue to secure their personal identity through the group into which they are born”.<sup>3</sup> The retention of aboriginal traditions, according to the Royal Commission, should be promoted by the Canadian state because it would recognize aboriginal peoples’ “birthright” and the valuable insights aboriginal perspectives could offer all Canadians. Questioning such a position on the grounds that it would retain archaic cultural traditions in the modern context, on the other hand, was unacceptable to the Royal Commission because it would directly challenge its claims about the economic and social benefits offered by parallelism.

The Royal Commission’s promotion of aboriginal cultures as a mechanism to address aboriginal dependency was justified by its adoption of the relativistic assumptions of a postmodern “identity politics” framework. As was explained in previous chapters, the Royal Commission assumed that cultural diversity was a good in itself because all cultures have reproduced viable societies over a significant period of time. It was also maintained that a group’s conception of itself was largely determined by how it was viewed by the dominant society, and marginalization could result if a culture was portrayed in a manner that questioned its current social contribution. Embracing these assumptions meant that the Royal Commission felt that researchers had an obligation to promote aboriginal cultures otherwise they would contribute to native “self-blame”

---

<sup>3</sup> *Final Report*, 1, pp. xxiii-xxiv.

and the feelings of inadequacy that it maintained were perpetuating aboriginal dependency.<sup>4</sup>

A number of political economists have adopted these assumptions of the “identity politics” approach and lean to the romanticization of Native culture as a way of righting past wrongs. But romanticization does not help the romanticized because it gives them an unrealistic assessment of their own abilities and place in the world. The Royal Commission’s *Final Report*, in fact, led to heightened expectations about the extent to which small, unproductive and kinship-based groupings could become equal participants in a larger and more complex nation-state. The Royal Commission’s rejection of conceptions of cultural evolution and historical progress, in fact, led it to prescribe “the poison as the antidote”, which will further entrench aboriginal dependency, marginalization and social dysfunction. Symbolically “recognizing” aboriginal cultures cannot change the gap in development between aboriginal traditions and modern requirements; it just justifies aboriginal peoples’ unequal position in the Canadian federation. This will not lead to a “reconciliation” between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples, but a perpetuation of feelings of resentment and bitterness.

---

<sup>4</sup> This is the contention of Marlene Brant Castellano who claims that “without a political-historical analysis of the genesis of present distress, Aboriginal people are caught in self-blame. In an ironic twist, they may blame their parents, thereby mirroring the colonial and racist judgements of their savagery and inferiority. Without an analysis that goes to the root of distressing conditions, non-Aboriginal governments and agencies offer programs and services which deal with the symptoms of malaise. Symptomatic treatment in some cases makes the problems worse by reinforcing perceptions of incapacity”. Marlene Brant Castellano, “Renewing the Relationship”, p. 5.

The dependency, dysfunction and social conflict propagated by the condescending political strategy of artificially “recognizing” aboriginal cultures will be exacerbated by two other tendencies inspired by the Royal Commission’s promotion of the “identity politics” approach. The first is the focus on differences between Europeans/Whites/Westerners and aboriginal peoples as the most significant variable in Canadian history, rather than the class relationships within and between these groups. This is increasingly leading to the development of racist attitudes because romanticizing the native population encourages people to view history in terms of the innate greed of the “white man”, rather than the wider economic and political imperatives of colonization. As Keith Windschuttle explains, current romantic conceptions of aboriginal peoples just presents “a mirror image of the racist ideologies that accompanied and justified Western imperialism in the colonial era: once it was the West that imagined it brought civilization to the heathen; today it is tribal cultures that are revered as humane, and imperial cultures that are condemned as brutish”.<sup>5</sup> This does nothing to foster a common understanding between aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples; all it does is propagate arrogance and feelings of racial superiority.

Such a problem is related to another postmodern assumption embedded within the “identity politics” framework – the idea that different “identities” (based on ethnicity,

---

<sup>5</sup> Windschuttle, *The Killing of History*, p. 308.

gender, sexual orientation, etc.) contribute to the development of different kinds of “knowledge”. This view is constantly asserted in the *Final Report* with respect to the native population, since it is assumed that people identifying as “Aboriginal” have different “world views”, “indigenous thought” processes, and even their own form of “science”. “Identity politics” then uses this assumption to support aboriginal parallelist aspirations, because it is argued that different institutions are required to nourish this diversity of “knowledge”.

But this conflation of identity with “knowledge” is both intellectually untenable and socially destructive. As Robin Fox has pointed out, postmodern references to “Eurocentric white male science” are actually referring to a “bias in the choice of subjects or the conduct of experiments or observations, or even more in the use of metaphors to popularize science”. He goes on to argue that, while this might be true, it is

*the very ideals of science itself are the only real antidote to its misuse. To insist on putting ‘feminist science’ in place of ‘male chauvinist science’ makes no more sense than putting ‘Aryan science’ in place of ‘Jewish science,’ if what we are interested in is the truth of the scientific propositions themselves. Here the only solution is to put ‘good science’ – that is, science conducted according to objective, rational empirical procedures aimed at eliminating as much observer bias as possible – in place of ‘bad science’.*<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Robin Fox, “State of the Art/Science in Anthropology”, in Paul R. Gross et al., *The Flight from Science and Reason* (New York: New York Academy and Sciences, 1996), pp. 327-345.

The Royal Commission's references to "Native science", in fact, merely were an attempt to justify what Fox refers to as "bad science". To argue in favour of a methodologically distinct form of "Indigenous thought", therefore, is to discourage aboriginal peoples from participating in processes that actually are improving human understanding. Such a symbolic "recognition" of aboriginal cultures only acts to disguise the low educational levels within the native population. This will do nothing to address aboriginal dependency; it will only entrench it in the name of "cultural sensitivity".

Although proposing mechanisms to address the problems that are associated with aboriginal marginalization and dependency are fraught with difficulties and beyond the scope of this dissertation, one thing is clear – the causes of problems must be understood *before* any real solutions can be proposed and evaluated. These causes have been obscured because the Royal Commission's political strategy of promoting parallelism has led it to disregard the research tradition that is most able to clarify the circumstances that have led to native marginalization – theories of cultural evolution and historical progress. A rejection of this tradition, in fact, has made it possible for the Royal Commission to promote archaic economic, political and ideological forms that will continue to isolate the native population from the wider Canadian economy and society.

What is needed is not a politically inspired forum that uses condescension to “recognize” and “respect” obsolete aboriginal traditions, but research that openly and honestly investigates the causes of aboriginal dependency and social dysfunction. Such a research agenda must evaluate explanations on their logic and evidence, not the extent to which they are consistent with the political motivations of aboriginal organizations. Given the political climate in which aboriginal issues are currently studied and the taboos that are restricting discussion of theories of cultural evolution and historical progress, this will not be easy and might not even be possible. Such difficulties, however, do not change the fact that such a research program is necessary if aboriginal dependency is to be addressed.

#### GATHERING STRENGTH TO MANAGE ABORIGINAL DISCONTENT

As was pointed out above, one of the main problems with the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was that it offered symbolic “recognition” and “respect” in lieu of any comprehensive attempt to understand aboriginal dependency. This is related to the fact that, as the political scientist Rand Dyck points out, royal commissions generally are used by governments as part of a “symbolic response” to difficult problems, which “at least in the short run [offer a substitute] for any substantive government action”. According to Dyck, “it is commonly held...that a royal commission is appointed to take the heat off the government in connection with some



problematic situation in the hope that by the time the commission's report is published, the problem will have evaporated".<sup>7</sup> It is for this reason, in fact, that Anthony Hall maintains that the Royal Commission was part of "an elaborate political bribe" of the Conservative government of the day - first to obtain support for the Meech Lake Accord and then as a response to the "profound unease stirred up by the events of Canada's Indian summer", most notably the violent stand-off at Oka.<sup>8</sup> Hall implies that the Royal Commission's mandate of engaging in "national reconciliation" was part of a front to prevent an open and honest inquiry into government actions concerning aboriginal resistance.<sup>9</sup>

The notion that the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was meant to avoid "any substantive government action" is supported by the nature of the official response to the Royal Commission's *Final Report*. The government's official response, released in January 1998, was entitled *Gathering Strength: Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan*. It was followed in February 1998 with another report – *An Agenda for Action with First Nations*. Both documents were criticized by a number of

---

<sup>7</sup> Rand Dyck, *Canadian Politics: Critical Approaches*, Fourth Edition (Scarborough: Thomson-Nelson, 2004), pp. 485-6.

<sup>8</sup> Anthony Hall, "RCAP's Big 'Blind Spots'", pp. 66-68.

<sup>9</sup> Hall's main focus in this article was the fact that the Royal Commission had chosen not to use its powers to subpoena witnesses or documents, a decision that Hall argues could have been part of a "secret political deal made to limit the inquiry into topics that would not force the governments of the day to explain the covert side of their recent actions vis a vis Aboriginal protests [sic]". Hall, "RCAP's Big 'Blind Spots'", p. 74.

aboriginal organizations and academics for paying lip service to addressing aboriginal problems. As Carol McBride points out,

Aboriginal peoples looked forward to the Royal Commission's final report with much anticipation, hoping that it would mark the beginning of real and substantive change in the oppressive relationship between government and the First Nations. However, the federal government of Jean Chrétien is clearly not prepared to take up the challenge. *Gathering Strength* and the *Agenda for Action*, both of which were announced with much fanfare by the federal government, are evasive and shallow responses to the Royal Commission, more focused on avoiding the fundamental issues than on addressing them.<sup>10</sup>

The two most significant outcomes of the official response to the Royal Commission were its *Statement of Reconciliation* and a \$350 million "healing fund" intended to support initiatives designed to aid aboriginal peoples deal with the long-term intergenerational effects of abuse suffered in the residential school system.<sup>11</sup>

Neglected or ignored were the Royal Commission's recommendations concerning increased funding for aboriginal communities and providing native groups with greater access to lands and resources.<sup>12</sup> In two policy areas – the federal government's proposed *First Nations Governance Act* and its response to the Supreme Court of Canada's *Marshall* decision affirming aboriginal peoples' fishing rights – it has been argued that the federal government has pursued a course of action that is contrary to the Royal Commission's recommendations. It is maintained that the federal

---

<sup>10</sup> Carol McBride, "Canada's Response to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", in *Blind Spots*, p. 31.

<sup>11</sup> Bradford W. Morse and Tanya M. Kozak, "Gathering Strength: The Government of Canada's Response to the Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", in *Blind Spots*, p. 46

<sup>12</sup> McBride, "Canada's Response to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", pp. 29-30.

government has chosen to “essentially ignore the key themes and recommendations of the Royal Commission, and to actively pursue policies which undermine the very rights the commission emphasized were at the heart of the report...”<sup>13</sup>

Concerns also have been raised about the *Statement of Reconciliation*, which expressed “profound regret for past actions of the federal government which have contributed to these difficult pages in the history of our relationship together”.<sup>14</sup>

Although this statement was applauded for being “the first official acknowledgement by the government of Canada on behalf of non-Aboriginal Canadians that great injustices have been perpetrated against Aboriginal peoples over many generations”, it was also criticized on the grounds that “it falls well short of being a full apology for fear that it would be tantamount to an admission of liability that would weaken federal positions in future court actions launched by residential school survivors”.<sup>15</sup> As a result, the *Statement of Reconciliation* was met with skepticism from a number of aboriginal organizations, especially the Native Women’s Association of Canada, which refused to accept it.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Ed Bianchi, “Epilogue”, in *Blind Spots*, pp. 133-6.

<sup>14</sup> Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, “Notes for an Address by the Honourable Jane Stewart, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development on the Occasion of the Unveiling of Gathering Strength: Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan” (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1998), p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Morse and Kozak, “Gathering Strength”, p. 46.

<sup>16</sup> Morse and Kozak, “Gathering Strength”, p. 36; Lorraine Y. Land, “Gathering Dust or Gathering Strength: What Should Canada Do With the Report of the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples”, in *Blind Spots*, p. 59.

A more positive response has accompanied the federal government's commitment to aboriginal healing initiatives. The \$350 million led to the formation of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, a non-profit corporation that would disburse the funds. Three aboriginal commissioners of the Royal Commission – Georges Erasmus, Viola Robinson and Paul Chartrand - also were appointed to sit on the 17-member board of directors of the Foundation. In 1998, the Foundation “initiated a consultation process with Aboriginal people and communities to determine what type of programs and activities should be funded to alleviate the effects of physical and sexual abuse suffered by Aboriginal students at residential schools”. These consultations resulted in the Foundation adopting four themes: “healing, restoring balance, developing and enhancing Aboriginal capacities, and honour and history”.<sup>17</sup>

Another outcome of the Royal Commission's *Final Report* has been its influence on Canadian and international institutions. It has been noted that the Supreme Court used the Royal Commission's commentary on oral histories to justify the legal reasons for one of its decisions and that there has been “a convergence between the analysis and conclusions of the commission and the pronouncements of influential public institutions”,<sup>18</sup> including an increased “momentum for treaty negotiations and self-

---

<sup>17</sup> Morse and Kozak, “Gathering Strength”, pp. 43-44.

<sup>18</sup> Castellano, “Renewing the Relationship”, pp. 12-13.

government agreements”.<sup>19</sup> The findings of the United Nations also have been shaped by the arguments of the Royal Commission. The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, for example, concluded that there is a “direct connection between economic marginalization and the ongoing dispossession of Canadian Aboriginal people from their lands, as recognized by the RCAP”. In addition, the United Nations Human Rights Committee has expressed agreement with the Royal Commission’s analysis, asserting that it was “particularly concerned that Canada had not yet implemented the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples”.<sup>20</sup>

One specific sector of policy development where the Royal Commission has had a particular impact is in the area of education. This is indicated by the influence of the publication of a number of updated research reports on education that were initially prepared for the Royal Commission.<sup>21</sup> With the publication of these updated reports, increasing legitimacy is being granted to the Royal Commission’s assertions that aboriginal peoples, because of their ethnicity, require a different kind of education placing “Aboriginal culture, knowledge, and values at the core of learning systems and

---

<sup>19</sup> Marlene Brant Castellano et al., “Conclusion: Fulfilling the Promise”, in Lynne Davis et al., *Aboriginal Education: Fulfilling the Promise* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), p. 254.

<sup>20</sup> Land, “Gathering Dust or Gathering Strength”, p. 61.

<sup>21</sup> Lynne Davis et al., *Aboriginal Education: Fulfilling the Promise* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000). This publication has influenced the educational policies of a number of governments and agencies, including The Council of Ministers of Education, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, the Saskatchewan School Boards Association and the Aboriginal Education Branch of the B.C. Ministry of Education.

designs”.<sup>22</sup> Devices such as the use of the “medicine wheel”, the preservation of aboriginal languages (because they “encode unique ways of interpreting the world”), and “traditional ecological knowledge” are three examples provided of the need for separate indigenous educational systems.<sup>23</sup> The opposition to cultural evolution found in the Royal Commission’s *Final Report* is also much in evidence in this publication.

The introduction to these updated reports, for example, notes that

until very recently, the concepts of education embedded in the languages and cultures of Aboriginal Peoples have been little known or appreciated by professional educators. Oral cultures, perceived through the lens of social Darwinism, were considered to be ‘pre-literate,’ not yet having reached the level of development that gives rise to writing. Languages rich in metaphor were considered to be ‘concrete’ and not suited to the expression of complex or abstract ideas. Education extended by colonial society was designed to lift Aboriginal peoples from their savage state and introduce them to the benefits of civilization. The error of these ethnocentric views and the invasions of Aboriginal societies that they supported have been successfully challenged only in the present generation.<sup>24</sup>

But these areas of the Royal Commission’s influence once again concern bureaucratic and/or legal processes and symbolic forms of “recognition”. Supporters of aboriginal rights have even noted that “the courts...will not bring reconciliation to the relationship between Aboriginal people and Canada” because legal processes are “time-consuming, prohibitively expensive, and confrontational”. Consequently, “five years after the commission’s report and four years after the landmark *Delgamuukw*

---

<sup>22</sup> Marie Battiste, “Foreword”, in *Aboriginal Education*, p. ix.

<sup>23</sup> Castellano et al., “Introduction”, in *Aboriginal Education*, p. xiii; Castellano et al., “Part 2 Aboriginal Languages and Communications: Voicing the Promise”, in *Aboriginal Education*, p. 26; and Castellano et al., “Conclusion: Fulfilling the Promise”, in *Aboriginal Education*, p. 255.

<sup>24</sup> Marlene Brant Castellano et al., “Introduction”, p. xi.

decision on Aboriginal title, government policy on Aboriginal land rights has not changed in any significant way”.<sup>25</sup> The same applies to how these initiatives are directly impacting the lives of aboriginal peoples. It is recognized that “despite a period of rich political experimentation, poverty among indigenous peoples is far greater than in the general population and does not appear to be diminishing”.<sup>26</sup>

The continuing lack of progress in the lives of aboriginal peoples despite increasing amounts of funding each year indicates that the cause of aboriginal problems is much deeper than just a lack of funding. It also cannot be explained by a lack of access to lands and resources or government control over the lives of the native population because there is no correlation between the successful negotiation of land claims and self-government agreements and indicators of well being within aboriginal communities. In fact, the opposite appears to be the case – those aboriginal peoples who have declined to live a “parallel” existence and have moved to the cities have more positive life chances than those who live on reserves and retain their traditions.<sup>27</sup>

This dissertation has raised serious questions about the Royal Commission’s assumption that promoting aboriginal cultural traditions will enable aboriginal peoples to become full participants in Canadian society. It has pointed out that a vast

---

<sup>25</sup> Land, “Gathering Dust or Gathering Strength”, pp. 60-61.

<sup>26</sup> Frances Abele, “Small nations and democracy’s prospects”, *Inroads*, 10, p. 149. For a discussion of the same point see Alan Cairns and Tom Flanagan, “An exchange”, *Inroads*, 10, p. 105.

<sup>27</sup> Alan Cairns, *Citizens Plus*, pp. 123-125, 128, 162-56, 185.

difference in size, productivity and complexity separates aboriginal groups from the modern nation state in which they are embedded, and this gap in cultural evolution will impede aboriginal participation in the wider economy and society. But to what extent has such a developmental difference been explored in the scholarly literature analyzing aboriginal issues? Has there been any critical analysis of the postmodern assumptions that permeate the Royal Commission's approach that could inform a more historical and materialist conception of aboriginal dependency?

#### OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES: CITIZENS PLUS OR THE WHITE PAPER?

Over the last 40 years of developing aboriginal policy, two major initiatives stand out in contrast to the Royal Commission's recommendations. The first was a proposal known as "Citizens Plus", put forward by the Hawthorn Report, released in 1966. While this report assumed that "in addition to the normal rights and duties of citizenship, Indians possess certain additional rights as charter members of the Canadian community" and therefore an aboriginal person should not be forced to "acquire those values of the majority society he does not hold or wish to acquire",<sup>28</sup> it also recognized the inevitability of the "Europeanization" of aboriginal peoples and that the future of the majority lay in their migration to the cities and integration into the

---

<sup>28</sup> H. B. Hawthorn, *A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies* (Ottawa: Indian Affairs, 1966-67), I, p. 6.



industrial workforce.<sup>29</sup> The second initiative was the Trudeau government's 1969 White Paper on Indian Policy, which was discussed earlier in this dissertation.

Interestingly, it is these two proposals that continue to animate the criticisms leveled at the Royal Commission's *Final Report*. Support for a return to the principles of the White Paper first appeared in a book by Melvin Smith, who maintained that "a Liberal government recognized in 1969 the failure of discriminatory policies leading to dependence and paternalism, and set out a new direction to revolutionize Canada's native policies. Tragically it retreated from principle in the face of short-sighted opposition".<sup>30</sup> In his book, Smith proposed many of the same measures detailed in the White Paper, including eliminating "the laws, regulations and procedures that separate natives from their fellow Canadians...".<sup>31</sup> More specifically, Smith argued for limiting the legal obligations of governments to Aboriginals,<sup>32</sup> phasing out programs specifically for aboriginal peoples and replacing them with ones applicable to all Canadians, providing funding directly to aboriginal peoples instead of native leaders,<sup>33</sup> privatizing reserves and improving their accountability, and requiring aboriginal peoples to pay taxes.<sup>34</sup> It was necessary for aboriginal peoples to be "equal under the

---

<sup>29</sup>Sally Weaver, "The Hawthorn Report", in Dyck and Waldram (eds) *Anthropology, Public Policy and Native Peoples in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), p. 77-9; see also, Cairns, *Citizens Plus*, pp. 161-165.

<sup>30</sup> Melvin Smith, *Our Home or Native Land?* (Victoria: Crown Western, 1995), p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> Smith, *Our Home or Native Land*, pp. 261-2.

<sup>32</sup> Smith, *Our Home or Native Land*, pp. 264-8.

<sup>33</sup> Smith, *Our Home or Native Land*, p. 269.

<sup>34</sup> Smith, *Our Home or Native Land*, pp. 271, 277.

law" in comparison to Non-Aboriginals, Smith argued, because special government programs segregating aboriginal peoples have created their dependency. According to Smith, "natives are different because governments, and by extension the non-native population of Canada, sees them to be different".<sup>35</sup>

A similar, but less strident, promotion of the principles of the White Paper also has been made recently by Tom Flanagan. Although, like the White Paper, encouraging integration is the focus of Flanagan's work, he maintains that there are too many legal and political obstacles to bring this about immediately.<sup>36</sup> He maintains that segregated aboriginal areas "will remain a fixture of the Canadian polity for decades and perhaps centuries to come" and so it is "vital that they be governed as well as possible".<sup>37</sup> To support this, he makes three recommendations: improving accountability requirements on reserves, dispersing the powers of the aboriginal leadership and "introduc[ing] a regime of individual property rights", starting with homeownership in native communities.<sup>38</sup> Similar to Smith, Flanagan also promotes transferring funding directly to aboriginal peoples. An undeveloped proposal is that the federal government should use its \$6.3 billion budget to disperse \$10,000 to every aboriginal person each year. They could then be taxed and the money obtained would be used to provide services to native communities. As Flanagan explains, "aboriginal self-governments will never

---

<sup>35</sup> Smith, *Our Home or Native Land*, p. 262.

<sup>36</sup> Tom Flanagan, *First Nations? Second Thoughts* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), p. 196.

<sup>37</sup> Flanagan, *First Nations?*, pp. 196-7.

<sup>38</sup> Flanagan, *First Nations?*, pp. 197-198.

be held accountable by their own people as long as the money they spend comes from outside". But "if they had to make the same choices that other Canadians routinely make, they would, I predict, take the axe to many of the governmental programs proliferating luxuriantly in their communities". For Flanagan, "the challenge for self-government is to 'civilize' aboriginal communities in the sense of creating the conditions for civil society to emerge. Above all, that means getting government out of the way - especially the kind of 'self-government' that exercises total control over community affairs".<sup>39</sup>

Although the books of Flanagan and Smith recognize the problems with current parallelist initiatives like those promoted by the Royal Commission, they have created other difficulties because of the assumption that government intervention, not its historical neglect of the native population and the coercive character of previous assimilative policies, is the source of aboriginal dependency and dysfunction. For these two commentators, aboriginal peoples are no different than any other ethnic group in Canada, and if they owned private property and were treated just like other minorities by the Canadian government, they would have the incentive to leave the reserves and integrate into the wider social fabric. This view fails to recognize that all government subsidies - from the original treaties to modern land claims - are the result, not the cause, of the "aboriginal problem". What they call for "individual

---

<sup>39</sup> Flanagan, *First Nations?*, pp. 197-198.

initiative" does, in fact, is to justify cutting off funding to aboriginal programs, which would have disastrous consequences for those members of the native population who are marginalized from productive processes.

In a television interview a few years ago, Tom Flanagan referred to Canadian aboriginal policy as a "failure of socialism". Aboriginal communities were described as "socialist ghettos, where everyone works for the government",<sup>40</sup> presumably because of the large subsidies that enable these places to exist. Related to this view is the classical liberal idea that the "communistic" character of aboriginal cultures must be destroyed so that natives can become capitalistic profit maximizers, thereby entering into the global economy.

Flanagan's statement about native "socialism", in fact, indicates how his classical liberal ideology makes him incapable of understanding the roots of aboriginal problems, which, in fact, are the product of uneven development within capitalism. More specifically, aboriginal politics has more in common with rentier capitalism than socialism. As was shown earlier, aboriginal peoples are encouraged to become "businessmen", where they will live off royalties from resource development. This is in complete opposition to any conception of socialism, where all people are supposed to own the world's resources and participate equally in their production. The

---

<sup>40</sup> These comments were made on the program "Studio One", TV Ontario, May 22, 2001.

capitalistic nature of aboriginal politics can also be seen in any attempt by the government to evenly distribute the subsidies being diverted to native communities. All proposals to equalize wealth by helping the poorest first are strongly resisted by the native leadership, some of which uses its power to siphon off money for friends and relatives.<sup>41</sup> This is what happens when tribal culture combines with a profit driven economic system; "socialism" in aboriginal communities is nowhere to be found.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Such a circumstance, in fact, has resulted in massive corruption in aboriginal communities across the country, only a fraction of which is made public because of the tendency to support aboriginal leaders and let aboriginal peoples "control their own affairs". See, for example, Brian Laghi, "Natives face strict code in tougher Indian Act", *The Globe and Mail*, A1, A7; Sue Bailey, "Chiefs struggle with calls for accountability", *The Toronto Star*, March 6, 2000, A6; Nahlah Ayed, "Self-government a mess, native coalition testifies", *The Toronto Star*, March 3, 1999, A5; and "Allegations of Corruption on Reserves Cast Shadow on Aboriginal Meeting", *CP Newswire*, September 3, 1997.

<sup>42</sup> The rentier mentality of the native leadership can also be seen in its opposition to left-wing organizations, especially unions. The insistence of the native leadership that it is ancestry, not economic circumstances, that determines their relations to others has made it difficult for aboriginal people to participate in these organizations. A change in native leadership often results in mass firings of existing personnel, which are then replaced by cronies of the incoming chief and council. Unions pose a threat to these tribal dictatorships, and so leaders discourage Natives from joining them on the basis that "unions aren't Native", or are an "instrument of White control". It is also difficult to maintain solidarity within a union when its membership consists of large numbers of aboriginal employees because of the lack of working class consciousness in native culture. This has led a number of unions to try to accommodate aboriginal "distinctiveness", as is shown by two following union briefs prepared for the Royal Commission: Canadian Labour Congress, "Aboriginal Rights and the Labour Movement" (1993), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 215, file 8200-50C11; and United Steelworkers of America, "Aboriginal Studies Project" (1993), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 222, file 8200-50U7. This view is expressed by Ethel Gardner, and aboriginal union organizer in B.C. For a more detailed description of Gardner's views and the problems she had in organizing a union with mostly aboriginal employees, see Janet Mary Nicol, 'Unions Aren't Native': The Muckamuck Restaurant Labour Dispute, Vancouver, B.C. (1978-1983), *Labour*, pp.235-51. See, for example, the response of chief Ron Derrickson to the formation of a union on his reserve in John Stackhouse, "Norma Rae of the Okanagan", *The Globe and Mail*, November 8, 2001, pp.A14-15.

In contrast to the views of Flanagan and Smith is the criticism of the Royal Commission offered by Alan Cairns. Cairns, one of the senior staff members who undertook research for the Hawthorn Report 40 years ago, maintains that its proposals continue to offer a promising framework for aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations. The most significant idea was Hawthorn's conceptualization of "citizens plus", which "stressed the virtues of a common citizenship as well as the reinforcement of difference".<sup>43</sup> According to Cairns, "neither a return to the goal of obliterating difference of the 1969 federal government White Paper, nor the two-row wampum vision of separate societies on separate paths heading to separate destinations, which casts a blind eye on our interconnectedness, has much useful advice to offer".<sup>44</sup> Instead it is necessary to recognize "Aboriginality" (the "plus" that should supposedly come with original occupancy, "indigenous difference", and the fact that the "majority society had built a flourishing wealthy society on the dispossession of Aboriginal, especially Indian, peoples") and the togetherness and interpenetration of aboriginal and non-aboriginal cultures ("citizens") that has resulted from intermarriage, shared educational processes and urban living.<sup>45</sup>

Although Cairns is critical of the Royal Commission's promotion of the parallel vision embodied in the idea of the "two-row wampum" because of its social divisiveness and

---

<sup>43</sup> Cairns, *Citizens Plus*, p. 8.

<sup>44</sup> Cairns, *Citizens Plus*, p. 9.

<sup>45</sup> Alan Cairns and Tom Flanagan, "An exchange", pp. 112-114. Cairns, *Citizens Plus*, pp. 9-10.

distortion of realities such as the size of aboriginal communities and the large numbers of the native people now living in cities, he also rejects the classical liberal vision of Flanagan and Smith. He argues that “assimilation, which assumes, among other things, the monopolization of our civic identities by a common, uniform citizenship, is unresponsive to the clear and strong Aboriginal desire to a positive institutional and symbolic response to...’indigenous difference””. Cairns points out that “the choice of ignoring or overriding the Aboriginal desire for recognition is not available to us” since “without some ‘plus’ component, citizenship will appear inadequate to many, perhaps most, members of First Nations”.<sup>46</sup> Cairns is also critical of classical liberal proposals to reduce state intervention in aboriginal policy. As Cairns points out, Flanagan’s promotion of privatization “implicitly discourages state involvement in situations of incipient crisis”. In Cairns’ opinion, “a hands-off state policy for Indian peoples as either politically feasible in the contemporary climate, or morally and practically justifiable”.<sup>47</sup>

Although Cairns’ arguments for continued state intervention offer more potential for addressing aboriginal dependency than the classical liberal vision of privatization and individual rights, and his concerns about the exaggeration of “otherness” are certainly timely, his analysis is hampered by an uncritical adoption of the assumptions of the “identity politics” framework. This is clear when Cairns offers a quotation from Noel

---

<sup>46</sup> Alan Cairns and Tom Flanagan, “An exchange”, p. 116.

<sup>47</sup> Alan Cairns and Tom Flanagan, “An exchange”, pp. 111-113.

Dyck that aboriginal peoples constantly have to listen to the message “that they are unacceptable as they are”, after which he comes to the following conclusion:

when they emerge from the sidelines of history, people who have been demeaned, humiliated and stigmatized inevitably construct arguments and reinterpret the past in ways that enhance their dignity. Although the orthodoxies they construct have an instrumental dimension, the psychic gratification they produce is immensely valuable to their believers. Accordingly, destruction of the orthodoxy – in the unlikely event that its believers would agree to renounce it – would not wipe the slate clean. The alienation and resentment which fuelled it would remain, possibly in an exaggerated form, for the comforting respectability and emotional support provided by the vanished orthodoxy would not be quickly replaced.<sup>48</sup>

But there is no evidence that a reinterpretation of the past contributes to the “dignity” of aboriginal peoples or that the current romanticization of aboriginal cultures offers the native population “psychic gratification”. Instead, this conception of aboriginal cultures is being fueled by non-aboriginal condescension that actually results in the undignified stereotyping of aboriginal cultures that constrains their development as human beings. With the high level of social dysfunction in aboriginal communities, it is also hard to accept that much “psychic gratification” is taking place. The “comforting respectability and emotional support” provided by the current “respect” and “recognition” of aboriginal cultures actually mystifies the current deprivation and marginalization of the native population.

---

<sup>48</sup> Alan Cairns and Tom Flanagan, “An exchange”, p. 109.



Although Cairns uncritically accepts the need for “a positive recognition of difference”,<sup>49</sup> he does not attempt to determine what constitutes “indigenous difference” and the social implications of recognizing it. As has been pointed out throughout this dissertation, “indigenous difference” is actually the traditions associated with the remnants of aboriginal peoples’ hunting and gathering/horticultural mode of production. “Recognizing” such a “difference” will not help to address aboriginal dependency since it will retain those characteristics that are inhibiting native participation in larger, more productive and complex economy and society.

Cairns’ uncritical acceptance of the need to preserve “indigenous difference” also prevents him from understanding one of the main reasons behind its promotion.

Although “difference” is generally promoted because of the “pride” and “self-esteem” that it will provide aboriginal peoples, this ignores the funding that is provided in its name. The “different” educational and health needs of aboriginal cultures, for example, justifies funding to aboriginal organizations to set up their own systems. The result is a system of perverse incentives, whereby inferior (i.e. “different”) services are demanded because of the additional government transfers that they require.

The problem that the arguments of Flanagan, Smith and Cairns all share is that it is not recognized that the difficulties aboriginal peoples are facing are a product of an

---

<sup>49</sup> Alan Cairns and Tom Flanagan, “An exchange”, pp. 113, 116.

advanced capitalist system. The unevenness in cultural development between aboriginal peoples and European colonizers made it difficult for the native population to become workers in industrializing economies, yet the surplus value that was extracted from the working classes of the world enabled them to be maintained as dependent entities for over a hundred years. This gap could have been overcome and their dependency ended with intensive social programs, but aboriginal peoples' vulnerable position meant that they received inferior health care, education and housing in comparison to other citizens. These circumstances are continuing today with current aboriginal policies, where low standards are justified under the guise of "cultural sensitivity".

To some extent the dislocation that aboriginal peoples are feeling is inevitable since it is not easy to make the transition from hunting and gathering to a modern existence in a few hundred years. Although the resources that can be devoted to finding solutions to aboriginal dependency appear to be extensive,<sup>50</sup> problems remain with attempting to address aboriginal deprivation in the capitalist context. In the current "postmodern" phase of capitalist development, the tendency has been to deny evolutionary frameworks and justify aboriginal deprivation under the guise of "diversity". The

---

<sup>50</sup> Estimates for the funding dispersed specifically for the aboriginal population range from \$7 billion to \$15 billion annually for less than a million people. Special programs and services for the aboriginal population abound, and almost every federal and provincial government, in addition to having "aboriginal" departments, have numerous divisions that assist aboriginal peoples in improving health, housing, and education, as well as facilitating their economic development.

result is the belief that aboriginal peoples don't have to change; as the rest of the world is increasingly looking outward to other cultures and forming larger political and economic units, aboriginal peoples are encouraged to use ideas and practices developed in small subsistence and tribal units to improve their circumstances in the modern context.

#### A PLEA FOR A GENUINELY COMPASSIONATE RESEARCH AGENDA

Although there are significant differences between the arguments of Flanagan and Cairns, there is one point upon which they would agree – open and honest debate is needed before effective aboriginal policies can be developed.<sup>51</sup> Both Cairns and Flanagan point out that there is very little systematic information on the economic and political performance of different aboriginal communities - a circumstance that is somewhat ironic when one of the main justifications for the existence of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was that it could provide just such a wide ranging analysis. There is even less information concerning aboriginal peoples living in urban environments since much less research has been devoted to this area.<sup>52</sup> To address this lack of data, Cairns proposes the formation of monitoring agencies that would compare the circumstances of urban aboriginals with those pursuing self-government in native communities. He points out that

---

<sup>51</sup> Alan Cairns and Tom Flanagan, "An exchange", p. 108.

<sup>52</sup> Alan Cairns and Tom Flanagan, "An exchange", pp. 106, 114-115, 118.

...we can profitably learn from the fact that we are in the early stages of major policy experiments in areas where our ignorance is vast. To reduce that ignorance is to reduce the cost it imposes on Aboriginal peoples. Some will deny that these are experiments and thus there is nothing to learn, but such claims are not believable. Others will possibly argue that if self-government is an inherent right, the manner of its exercise should be immune from public scrutiny. Such a claim will only survive if evidence of malperformance is rare and sporadic – which is implausible given the number of small nations potentially involved, and the immense problems and temptations they will encounter.<sup>53</sup>

Developing these monitoring agencies, however, is bound to be difficult because, as Cairns himself points out, “Aboriginal policy is extremely politicized and subject to taboos which constrain both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants”.<sup>54</sup>

Noel Dyck, an associate professor of anthropology at Simon Fraser University, has extensively documented these taboos and constraints. He admits in his article "Telling it like it is: Some Dilemmas of Fourth World Ethnography and Advocacy", that most anthropologists do not speak of the serious problems existing in aboriginal communities. He points out that "appalling and, arguably, worsening social conditions", as well as the "misuse of band funds and other resources", are common problems that go unmentioned in anthropological accounts of native life. These circumstances have evidently prompted Dyck and his colleagues to engage in a great

---

<sup>53</sup> Alan Cairns, “Aboriginal Peoples in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Plea for Realism”, Presented at the International Council of Canadian Studies Conference, Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 18-20 May, 2000, pp. 24-26, cited in Cairns and Flanagan, “An exchange”, p. 115.

<sup>54</sup> Cairns and Flanagan, “An exchange”, p. 108.

deal of soul searching because "in not exploring or writing about matters we know to be important...anthropologists give short shrift to awkward but pressing social and political problems at the reserve or settlement level. This is a situation that most intellectuals would, in principle, be unwilling to tolerate in any other context. Why, then, is it accepted in this one?".<sup>55</sup>

In an attempt to answer this question, Dyck candidly provides two possible explanations. The first is "simple self-interest", where anthropologists are hesitant to "tell it like it is" since the truth would jeopardize prospects for "research permission, lucrative contracts, or employment opportunities". Dyck largely rejects this explanation, claiming that it ignores the range of employment situations in which anthropologists find themselves. Instead, he argues that it is "moral and ethical constraints" that are at the roots of the discipline's failings, since anthropologists are reluctant to compromise the political agenda of those that they study. There is an underlying expectation, according to Dyck, that "anthropologists should identify personally with the people they study and that they ought to protect their 'subjects' interests". And because anthropologists are "cognizant of the vulnerability of the political gains registered by Native peoples in Canada during the past two decades", they avoid discussing matters that would reduce public support for the demands that aboriginal groups are making.

---

<sup>55</sup> Noel Dyck, "Telling it like it is", in Noel Dyck and James Waldram (eds) *Anthropology, Public Policy and Native Peoples in Canada*, pp. 194-5.

This invites scrutiny of Dyck's paradoxical conception of "moral and ethical constraints"; "research" that disseminates propaganda instead of reporting scientific data can hardly fall within these constraints. Since these studies constitute a large part of the information that the public opinion and authorities' decisions are based on, it seems that it should be revealed up front that the material is without integrity. Dyck's assertion that anthropologists come from a "range of employment situations" also should be challenged. Although it is true that anthropologists can work for aboriginal organizations, government departments, industry or academic institutions, an overall common interest unifies these professionals. Because they either are beneficiaries of legal processes or are constrained by imputations of racism and the need to pacify aboriginal organizations, all anthropologists would be reluctant to publicize findings that were critical of parallelist initiatives. The result, as Dyck points out, is "the risk of producing diminished, analytically atrophied, and thus misleading ethnography and advocacy which in the end will be of little use to Native communities, the Canadian public, or the discipline".<sup>56</sup>

In proposing a research agenda that attempts to understand the historical and materialist basis for aboriginal dependency, the close relationship between researchers and aboriginal organizations and the difficulties of "telling it like it is" will first have

---

<sup>56</sup>Dyck, "Telling it like it is", pp. 196-7.

to be addressed. Many researchers see their role first and foremost as providing information that supports the parallelist aspirations of aboriginal organizations. Questions should be raised about the objectivity of researchers and if their ties to aboriginal organizations will prevent them from providing accurate information about the economic, political and intellectual circumstances of the native population.

It is this politicized character of research on aboriginal peoples, in fact, that has led to the current aversion to theories of cultural evolution and historical progress. Because this tradition challenges parallelist political aspirations, has been completely rejected in the literature. But it is this tradition that provides valuable insights into the historical development of aboriginal dependency. Without a critical engagement with this body of research, aboriginal policy will continue to propose “solutions” that entrench native marginalization and social dysfunction.

As well as properly investigating the relevance of theories of cultural evolution and conceptions of historical progress, the analysis of aboriginal circumstances should be divided into two major areas – urban aboriginals and native communities, as Alan Cairns has suggested. This is because these two areas have very different political economies and policy implications. Such an understanding was obscured by the Royal Commission’s classification of the north as a third type of “aboriginal economy”, since northern communities are very similar to other isolated native communities.

This division will facilitate comparisons between the two distinct types of aboriginal circumstances identified by Cairns and Flanagan, enabling a better understanding of the challenges facing parallelism and integration.

One of the major areas of investigation that is required is the extent to which aboriginal “economic development” actually has addressed native dependency. One of the major problems of the Royal Commission’s analysis is that it does not make a distinction between the distribution of government transfers and productive economic activity. In order for aboriginal dependency to be decreasing, it is the latter, not the former, that is required. Making this determination would have to be a major component of any research investigating the nature and extent of aboriginal marginalization and the possibilities for native “self-reliance”.

Whether or not such a research agenda can be developed is extremely unlikely in the current political climate in which aboriginal circumstances are currently studied. However, this is the research agenda that is required if aboriginal problems are to be understood and addressed. At this time, such an agenda is resisted because it is believed to be “disrespectful” to aboriginal aspirations. But as Paul Gross and Norman Levitt pointed out in their criticism of postmodernism, “unthinking sentimentality is the great enemy of genuine compassion”.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Paul R. Gross and Norman Levitt, *Higher Superstition*, pp. 254-55.



## Bibliography

- Abele, Frances. "Understanding What Happened Here: The Political Economy of Indigenous Peoples", in Wallace Clement (ed) *Understanding Canada: Building on the new Canadian Political Economy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Importance of Consent: Indigenous Peoples' Politics in Canada", in James Bickerton and Alain-G. Gagnon (eds), *Canadian Politics, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1999).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Small nations and democracy's prospects", *Inroads*, 10
- Abele, F. and Stasiulis, "Canada as a 'White Settler Colony': What About Natives and Immigrants", in Clement and Williams (eds), *The New Canadian Political Economy* (Kingston: McGill Queen's University Press, 1989).
- Adams, Howard. *Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View*. Rev. ed (Saskatoon: Firth House Publishers, 1989).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A Tortured People: the Politics of Colonization* (Penticton: Theytus Books, 1999).
- Amin, Samir. *The Law of Value and Historical Materialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Class and Nation, Historically and in the Current Crisis* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Unequal Development* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976).
- Anderson, P. *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism* (London: Verso, 1974).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: Verso, 1979).
- Applebaum, Herbert. *Work in Non-market and Transitional Societies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984).
- "Arapaho" *Encyclopædia Britannica*  
<<http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=9309>> [Accessed June 18, 2002].
- Asch, Michael. "The Ecological-Evolutionary Model and the Concept of Mode of Production", in David H. Turner and Gavin A. Smith (eds), *Challenging Anthropology: A Critical Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited), pp.81-89.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Native Peoples", in Daniel Drache and Wallace Clement (eds), *The New Practical Guide to Canadian Political Economy* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1985), pp.152-161.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Economics of Dene Self-Determination", in Turner and Smith (eds), *Challenging Anthropology: A Critical Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited)
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Dene Self-determination and the Study of Hunter-Gatherers in the Modern World", in Eleanor Leacock and Richard Lee (eds), *Politics and History in Band Societies* (New-York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 347-371.

- Aston, T.H. and C.H.E. Philpin (eds). *The Brenner Debate: Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
- Avineri, Shlomo. *Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1969).
- Axtell, James. *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).
- Banaji, Jairus. "Modes of Production in a Materialist Conception of History", *Capital and Class*, Autumn 1977, pp.1-44.
- Barron, Laurie F. "The CCF and the Development of Métis Colonies in Southern Saskatchewan during the Premiership of T.C. Douglas, 1944-1961", *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 1990 10(2)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Walking in Indian Moccasins: The Native Policies of Tommy Douglas and the CCF* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).
- Battiste, Marie. "Foreword", in Lynne Davis et al. (eds), *Aboriginal Education: Fulfilling The Promise* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000).
- Bedford, David. "Marxism and the Aboriginal Question: The Tragedy of Progress", *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 1994, 14(1), pp. 101-117.
- Bedford, David and Dan Irving, *The Tragedy of Progress* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2001).
- Belabwi, Hazem, and Giacomo Luciani (eds). *The Rentier State* (London: Croom Helm, 1987).
- Benoit v. The Queen* [2003] F.C.J. No 923 (C.A.).
- Berger, Thomas R. *A Long and Terrible Shadow: White Values, Native Rights in the Americas, 1492-1992* (Toronto/Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1991).
- Bernier, Bernard. "The National Question: The Making of the Canadian Nation State", in Turner and Smith (eds), *Challenging Anthropology: A Critical Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited)
- Bernier, Gerald and Daniel Salée. "Social Relations and Exercise of State Power in Lower Canada (1791-1840): Elements for Analysis", *Studies in Political Economy*, 1987 22 (Spring), pp. 101-143.
- Bianchi, Ed. "Epilogue", in *Blind Spots: An Examination of the Federal Government's Response to the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (Ottawa: Aboriginal Rights Coalition, 2001).
- Bigart, R.J. "Indian Culture and Industrialization", *American Anthropologist*, 1972, 75(5), pp. 1180-1187.
- Bishop, Charles A. *The Northern Ojibwa and the Fur Trade: A Historical and Ecological Study* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1974).

- \_\_\_\_\_ "The First Century: Adaptive Changes Among the Western James Bay Cree Between the Early 17<sup>th</sup> and Early 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries", in Shepard Krech III (ed.) *The Subarctic Fur Trade* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980).
- \_\_\_\_\_ "Coast-Interior Exchange: The Origins of Stratification in Northwestern North America", *Arctic Anthropology* 24, pp. 72-83.
- \_\_\_\_\_ "The Emergence of Hunting Territories Among the Northern Ojibwa", *Ethnology* 9 (1970), pp.1-15.
- Blackburn, R. *The Making of New World Slavery* (London; Verso, 1997).
- Blackfoot" *Encyclopædia Britannica*  
<http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=15741>>[Accessed June 18, 2002].
- Bloch, Maurice. *Marxism and Anthropology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).
- Boas, *The Central Eskimo* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964).
- Boisvert, David and Keith Turnbull, "Who are the Métis?", *Studies in Political Economy*, Autumn 1985 18, pp. 107-145.
- Boldt, Menno. *Surviving as Indians: The Challenge of Self-Government* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).
- Bourgeault, Ron. "The South African Connection", *Canadian Dimension*, 1988, 21(8), pp. 6-10.
- \_\_\_\_\_ "The Struggle for Class and Nation: the Origin of the Métis in Canada and the National Question", R. Bourgeault et al. (eds), *1492-1992: Five Centuries of Imperialism and Resistance* (Winnipeg/Halifax: Society for Socialist Studies/Fernwood, 1992), pp. 153-186.
- \_\_\_\_\_ "The Indian, the Métis and the Fur Trade: Class, Sexism and Racism in the Transition from 'Communism' to Capitalism", *Studies in Political Economy*, 1983, 12(Fall), pp. 45-80.
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Class, Race and Gender: Political Economy and the Canadian Fur Trade*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Regina, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_ "Race and Class Under Mercantilism: Indigenous People in Nineteenth-century Canada", in B.S. Bolaria and P.S. Li, (eds), *Racial Oppression in Canada* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1988), pp.41-70.
- Boyd, R. and Richersen, P.J. *The Origin and Evolution of Cultures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- Bradford, Neil. "Innovation by Commission: Policy Paradigms and the Canadian Political System", in James Bickerton and Alain-G. Gagnon (eds), *Canadian Politics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Toronto: Broadview Press, 1999).
- Brant, C.C. "Native Ethics and rules of behaviour", *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 35(6), August 1990, pp. 534-47.
- Braverman, Harry. *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974).

- Breitman, George (ed). *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1978).
- Brenner, R.. Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe", *Past and Present*, 1976 79, pp. 60-69.
- \_\_\_\_\_ "The Origins of Capitalist Development: a Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism", *New Left Review*, 1977, 104 (July-Aug), pp. 25-92.
- \_\_\_\_\_ "The Agrarian Roots of European Capitalism", *Past and Present*, 1982 91, pp. 16-113.
- Brizinski, Peggy. *Knots in a String: An Introduction to Native Studies in Canada, Second Edition* (Saskatchewan: University Extension Press, University of Saskatchewan, 1993).
- Brody, Hugh. *The Other Side of Eden* (New York: North Point Press, 2001).
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Living Arctic: Hunters of the Canadian North* (Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1987).
- \_\_\_\_\_ *The People's Land: Inuit, Whites and the Eastern Arctic* (Vancouver; Douglas and McIntyre, 1991).
- Brown, James A. "Spiro Art and its Mortuary Contexts" in Elizabeth P. Benson (ed) *Death and the Afterlife in Pre-Columbian America* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections, 1975).
- Brownlie, Robin and Mary-Ellen Kelm. "Desperately Seeking Absolution: Native Agency as Colonialist Alibi", *Canadian Historical Review*, 1994 75(4).
- Buckley, Helen. *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare: Why Indian Policy Failed in the Prairie Provinces* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992).
- Burch Jr., Ernest S. "The Eskaleuts - A Regional Overview" and "The Caribou Inuit", in *Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997).
- Burke, James. *Paper Tomahawks: From Red Tape to Red Power* (Winnipeg: Queenston House Publishing, Inc., 1976).
- Burrows, James K. "'A Much Needed Class of Labour': the Economy and Income of the Southern Interior Plateau Indians, 1897-1910", *BC Studies*, 1986 71 (Autumn).
- Cail, Robert E., *Land, Man, and the Law: The Disposal of Crown Lands in British Columbia, 1871-1913* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1974).
- Cairns, Alan C. *Citizens Plus: Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian State* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000).
- Cairns Alan, and Tom Flanagan, "An exchange", *Inroads*, 10.
- Caldwell, Joseph R.. "Eastern North America", in Robert J. Braidwood and Gordon R. Willey (eds) *Courses Toward Urban Life* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1962).
- Callinicos, Alex. *Against Postmodernism* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1990).

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Theories and Narratives* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Trotskyism* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1990).
- Cardinal, Harold. *The Unjust Society* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1969).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Rebirth of Canada's Indians* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1977).
- Carpenter, Edmund. *Eskimo Realities* (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1973).
- Carr, E.H.. *What is History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965).
- Carroll, Joseph. *Evolution and Literary Theory* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995).
- Carter, Sarah. *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Two Acres and a Cow: 'Peasant Farming for the Indians of the Northwest, 1889-97", in J.R. Miller (ed), *Sweet Promises: A Reader in Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Agriculture and Agitation on the Oak River Dakota Reserve, 1875-1895", *Manitoba History* 6, 1983, pp. 2-9.
- Cassidy, Frank. "The Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", *Policy Options*, March 1997 18(2), pp. 3-6.
- Cassidy, Frank and Norman Dale. *After Native Claims? The Implications of Comprehensive Claims Settlements for Natural Resources in British Columbia* (Halifax and Lantzville, B.C.: Institute for Research on Public Policy and Oolichan Books, 1988).
- Castellano, Marlene Brant, et al. (eds), *Aboriginal Education: Fulfilling the Promise* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Renewing the Relationship: A Perspective on the Impact of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", in Patricia Sherlock (ed), *Blind Spots: An Examination of the Federal Government's Response to the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (Ottawa: Aboriginal Rights Coalition, 2001)
- Castellano, Marlene Brant et al., "Conclusion: Fulfilling the Promise", in Lynne Davis et al., *Aboriginal Education: Fulfilling the Promise* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000).
- Castile, George Pierre. "Federal Indian Policy and the Sustained Enclave: An Anthropological Perspective", *Human Organization* 1974, 33(3), pp. 219-28.
- Cavalli-Sforza, Luigi Luca, and Francesco Cavalli-Sforza. *The Great Human Diasporas: The History of Diversity and Evolution* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1995).
- Chagnon, Napoleon A. "The Academic Left and Threats to Scientific Anthropology", *Human Behaviour and Evolution Society Newsletter* IV(1), May 1995.
- Childe, Gordon V. *Man Makes Himself* (London: Mentor Books, 1951).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Social Evolution* (London: Watts & Co., 1951).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *What Happened in History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1954).

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Prehistory and Marxism", *Antiquity* 1979, 53(208):93-5.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Archaeology and Anthropology", *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 2, 1946, pp. 243-51.
- Churchill, Ward (ed.). *Marxism and Native Americans* (Boston: South End Press, 1983).
- Cipolla, Carlo M. *Before the Industrial Revolution: European Society and Economy 1000-1700* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993)
- Clark, W. Leland. "The Place of the Metis within the Agricultural Economy of the Red River During the 1840's and 1850's", *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 1983 3(1), pp. 69-84.
- Clement, Wallace. *Class, Power and Property: Essays on Canadian Society* (Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1983).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Challenge of Class Analysis* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1988)
- \_\_\_\_\_. (ed). *Understanding Canada: Building on the New Canadian Political Economy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Struggle to Organize: Resistance in Canada's Fishery* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986).
- Clement, Wallace and Glen Williams (eds). *The New Canadian Political Economy* (Kingston: McGill Queen's University Press, 1989).
- Clifton, James A. (ed). *The Invented Indian: Cultural Fictions and Government Policies* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996).
- Coates, K.S. and William R. Morrison (eds). *Interpreting Canada's North: Selected Readings* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1989).
- Coates, K. and J. Powell. *The Modern North: People, Politics and the Rejection of Colonialism* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1989).
- Cohen, G.A. *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).
- Cohen, J. "The Achievements of Economic History: The Marxist School", *Journal of Economic History*, March 1978 38(1), pp. 29-57.
- Connor, Walker. *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).
- Comeau, Pauline and Aldo Santin. *The First Canadians: A Profile of Canada's Native People Today* (Toronto: Lorimar & Co., 1995).
- Conrad, Margaret et al. *History of the Canadian Peoples: Beginnings to 1867*, volume 1 (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1993).
- Corbett, E.A. *Blackfoot Trails* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1934).
- Cox, B.A. "Prospects for the Northern Canadian Native Economy", in B.A. Cox (ed), *Native People, Native Lands: Canadian Indians, Inuit and Métis* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1987), pp. 256-265.

- Cox, Bruce Alden. "Natives and the Development of Mercantile Capitalism", in John H. Moore (ed), *The Political Economy of North American Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), pp. 60-86
- Cox, Oliver Cromwell. *Caste, Class and Race* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1949).
- Crowe, Keith J. *A History of the Original Peoples of Northern Canada* (Edmonton: Arctic Institute of North America, 1974).
- Cruikshank, Julie. "Oral Traditional and Oral History: Reviewing Some Issues", *The Canadian Historical Review*, 1994 LXXV(3), pp. 403-18.
- Culhane, Dara, "Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Social and Cultural Credibility", *Perception*, March 1993 17(1), pp. 31-2.
- D'Andrade, Roy. "Moral Models in Anthropology", *Current Anthropology*, 36(3), June 1995, pp. 399-408.
- Dacks, Gurston. *A Choice of Futures: Politics in the Canadian North* (Toronto: Methuen, 1981).
- \_\_\_\_\_(ed)., *Devolution and Constitutional Development in the Canadian North* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1990).
- Dahl, Jens et al (eds). *Nunavut: Inuit regain control of their lands and their lives* (Copenhagen: International Work group for Indigenous Affairs, 2000).
- Daniels, Doug. "The Coming Crisis in the Aboriginal Rights Movement: From Colonialism to Neocolonialism to Renaissance", *Native Studies Review*, 1986, 2(2), pp. 97-115.
- Dempsey, Hugh A. "The Blackfoot Indians", in R. Bruce Morrison and C. Roderick Wilson (eds) *Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997).
- \_\_\_\_\_"The Peigan Indians", *Glenbow* 5(5), September-October 1972.
- Deutscher, Isaac (ed). *The Age of Permanent Revolution: A Trotsky Anthology* (New York: Laurel, 1964).
- Diamond, A.S. *The Evolution of Law and Order* (London: Watts and Co., 1951).
- Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: W.W. North, 1999).
- Dickason, Olive Patricia. *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1992).
- \_\_\_\_\_(ed). *The Native Imprint: The Contribution of First Peoples to Canada's Character* (Athabasca: Athabasca University Educational Enterprises, 1995).
- Dickerson, Mark O. *Whose North?: Political Change, Political Development and Self Government in the Northwest Territories* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press and Arctic Institute of North America, 1992)
- Dickerson, Mark O. and Thomas Flanagan, *An Introduction to Government and Politics: A Conceptual Approach*, Sixth Edition (Toronto: Nelson-Thomson, 2002)

- Dobbin, Murray. *One and a Half Men* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1981).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Prairie Colonialism: The CCF in Northern Saskatchewan, 1944-1964", *Studies in Political Economy*, No. 16 Spring 1985 pp. 7-40.
- Dockstator, Mark. *Towards an Understanding of Aboriginal Self-Government: A Proposed Theoretical Model and Illustrative Factual Analysis*, doctor of jurisprudence thesis, York University, June 1993.
- Donald, Leland. "Was Nuu-chah-nulth-aht (Nootka) Society Based on Slave Labor", in Elisabeth Tooker and Morton H. Fried (eds), *The Development of Political Organization in Native North America* (Washington, DC: American Ethnological Society, 1983)
- Drache, Daniel. "The Formation and Fragmentation of the Canadian Working Class: 1820-1920", *Studies in Political Economy*, Fall 1984, 15.
- Drost, Helmar et al. *Market Solutions for Native Poverty: Social Policy for the Third Solitude* (Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute, 1995).
- Drucker, Philip. *Indians of the Northwest Coast*, Anthropological Handbook Number Ten (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., for the American Museum of Natural History, 1955).
- Duffy, R. Quinn. *The Road to Nunavut: The Progress of the Eastern Arctic Inuit since the Second World War* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).
- Dunning, Robert William. *Social and Economic Change Among Northern Ojibwa* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959).
- Dyck, Noel and J.B. Waldram (eds). *Anthropology, Public Policy and Native Peoples in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993).
- Dyck, Noel. *What is the Indian 'Problem': Tutelage and Resistance in Canadian Indian Administration* (St. John's: The Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1991).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Telling it like it is': Some Dilemmas of Fourth World Ethnography and Advocacy", in Dyck and Waldram (eds), *Anthropology, Public Policy and Native Peoples in Canada*, pp. 192-212.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Cultures and Claims: Anthropology and Native Studies in Canada", *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 22 (1990).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "An Opportunity Lost: The Initiative of the Reserve Agricultural Programme in the Prairie West", in Barron and Waldram (eds) *1885 and After* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1986).
- Dyck, Rand. *Canadian Politics: Critical Approaches*, Fourth Edition (Scarborough: Thomson-Nelson, 2004)
- Easterbrook, W.T. and Hugh G.J. Aitken. *Canadian Economic History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988).
- Eccles, W.J. "A Belated Review of Harold Adams Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada", *Canadian Historical Review*, 1979, 60(4), pp. 419-41.



- Ehrensaft, P. and W. Armstrong. "The Formation of Dominion Capitalism: Economic Truncation and Class Structure", in A. Moscovitch and G. Drover (eds), *Inequality: Essays on the Political Economy of Social Welfare* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981).
- Elias, Peter Douglas. *The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest: Lessons for Survival* (Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press, 1988).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Metropolis and Hinterland in Northern Manitoba* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, 1975).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Wage Labour, Aboriginal Rights and the Cree of the Churchill River Basin, Saskatchewan", *Native Studies Review*, 1990 6(2).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Northern Aboriginal Communities: Economics and Development* (North York, Ont: Captus University Publications, 1995).
- \_\_\_\_\_. (ed). *Development of Aboriginal People's Communities* (North York, Ont.: Captus Press, 1991).
- Engels, Friedrich. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State in the Light of the Researches of Lewis H. Morgan*. Introduction and notes by Eleanor Burke Leacock (New York: International Publishers, 1972).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Speech at the graveside of Karl Marx", in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), volume 3, p.162.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Part Played By Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man", in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works, Volume 3*, pp. 66-77.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Letter to J. Bloch", *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works, Volume 3* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977).
- Ens, Gerhard J. *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).
- Erasmus, Georges. "Twenty Years of Disappointed Hopes", in Boyce Richardson (ed) *Drumbeat: Anger and Renewal in Indian Country* (Toronto: The Assembly of First Nations and Summerhill Press, 1989).
- Erasmus, Georges and Joe Sanders. "Canadian History: An Aboriginal Perspective", in Diane Engelstad and John Bird (eds), *Nation to Nation: Aboriginal Sovereignty and the Future of Canada* (Concord: Anasi, 1992).
- Ewers, John C. *The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture*, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 159 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1955).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Blackfeet: Raiders on the Northwestern Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Intertribal Warfare as the Precursor of Indian-White Warfare on the Northern Great Plains", *Western Historical Quarterly*, 1975, pp. 397-410.
- Fanon, Franz. *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1968).
- Farb, Peter. *Man's Rise to Civilization*, (New York: Avon Books, 1969).
- Fenton, William N. (ed). *Parker on the Iroquois* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1968).
- Fenton, William N. "Structure, Continuity, and Change in the process of Iroquois

- Treaty Making", in Francis Jennings et al. (eds), *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985).
- \_\_\_\_\_"Foreword", in Morgan, *League of the Iroquois* (Secaucus, N.J.: The Citadel Press, 1962).
- \_\_\_\_\_"Northern Iroquoian Cultural Patterns", in Bruce G. Trigger (ed) *Handbook of North American Indians*, Volume 15 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1978).
- Ferris, Neil. *Continuity within Change*, M.A. Thesis, York University, 1989
- Fieldhouse, D.K. *The Colonial Empires: A Comparative Survey from the Eighteenth Century* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965).
- Fisher, R. "Joseph Trutch and Indian Land Policy", *BC Studies*, 1971-2, 12.
- \_\_\_\_\_*Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1977).
- \_\_\_\_\_"Indian Control of the Maritime Fur Trade and the Northwest Coast", in R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith (eds), *Canadian History: Pre-Confederation* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1990)
- Fisher, Robin and Kenneth Coates (eds) *Out of the Background: Readings in Canadian Native History* (Toronto: 1988).
- Flanagan, Tom. *First Nations? Second Thoughts* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000).
- \_\_\_\_\_*Riel and the Rebellion: 1885 Reconsidered* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1983).
- \_\_\_\_\_*Metis Lands in Manitoba* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1991).
- \_\_\_\_\_*Louis 'David' Riel: 'Prophet of the New World'*, Revised Edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).
- \_\_\_\_\_"Native sovereignty: Does anyone really want an Aboriginal Archipelago?", in Mark Charlton and Paul Barker (eds), *Cross Currents: Contemporary Political Issues*, Fourth Edition (Toronto: Thomson-Nelson, 2002), pp. 82-85.
- Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn. ""The Cultural Materialist and Dialectical Materialist Traditions in Anthropology: A Critical Review", in Fluehr-Lobban (ed), *International Perspectives on Marxist Anthropology*, (Minneapolis: MEP Publications, 1989)
- Forcese, D. *The Canadian Class Structure* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1975).
- Foster, Michael K. "Another Look at the Function of Wampum in Iroquois-White Councils", in *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985).
- \_\_\_\_\_"On Who Spoke First at Iroquois-White Councils", in Michael K. Foster et al. (eds) *Extending the Rafters: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Iroquois Studies* (New York: SUNY Press, 1984).
- Fowke, Vernon G. *Canadian Agricultural Policy: the Historical Pattern* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978).
- Fowler, Melvin L. "Agriculture and Village Settlement in the North American East",

- in Stuart Struever (ed), *Prehistoric Agriculture* (Garden City: Natural History Press, 1971).
- Fox, Robin. *The Challenge of Anthropology* (New York: Transaction Publishers, 1994).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "State of the Art/Science in Anthropology", in Paul R. Gross et al., *The Flight from Science and Reason* (New York: New York Academy and Sciences, 1996), pp. 327-345.
- Francis, Daniel and Toby Morantz. *Partners in Furs: A History of the Fur Trade in Eastern James Bay 1600-1870* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983).
- Frank, André Gunder. *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Lumpen-Bourgeoisie Lumpen-Development: Dependence, Class, and Politics in Latin America* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973).
- Freeman, Milton M.R. "The Nature and Utility of Traditional Ecological Knowledge", *Northern Perspectives* 20/1 (Summer 1992).
- French, Rebecca Redwood. "Law and anthropology", in Dennis Patterson (ed), *A Companion to Philosophy of Law and Legal Theory* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1996)
- Frideres, James S. "Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: The Route to Self Government", *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 1996 16(2), pp. 247-66.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Quest for Indian Development in Canada: Contrasts and Contradictions", in John H. Moore (ed), *The Political Economy of North American Indians* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Native People in Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1983),
- Fried, Morton. *The Evolution of Political Society: An Essay in Political Anthropology* (New York: Random House, 1967).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Explorations in Anthropology: Readings in Culture, Man and Nature* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1973).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Notion of Tribe* (Menlo Park: Cummings Publishing Co., 1975).
- Fudge, J. and H. Glasbeek. "The Politics of Rights: A Politics with Little Class", *Social and Legal Studies*, 1992 1, pp. 45-70
- Fumoleau, Rene. *As Long as the Land Shall Last* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, Ltd., 1983).
- Gallagher, Brian. "A Re-examination of Race, Class and Society in Red River", *Native Studies Review*, 1988 4(1&2), pp. 25-65.
- Gamble, Clive. *Timewalkers; The Prehistory of Global Colonization* (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1995).
- Ganong, William F. *New Relation of Gaspesia with the Customs and Religion of the Gaspesian Indians* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1910; reprinted in New York: Greenwood Press, 1968).
- Giraud, Marcel. *The Métis in the Canadian West*, 2 vols. Trans. George Woodcock.

- (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1986).
- Gladstone, Percy. "Native Indians and the Fishing Industry of British Columbia", in Mark Nagler (ed), *Perspectives on the North American Indians* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972).
- Godelier, Maurice. *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Modes of production, Kinship and Demographic Structures", in M. Bloch (ed) *Marxist Analyses and Social Anthropology* (London: Malaby Press, 1975).
- Goodman, David, and Michael Redclift. *From Peasant to Proletarian, Capitalist Development and Agrarian Transitions* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982).
- Gough, Kathleen. "New Proposals for Anthropologists", *Current Anthropology* 9 (1968).
- Government of Nunavut, "Main Estimates", 2003-2004, March 2003  
 \_\_\_\_\_ *Budget Address 2003*, March 11, 2003.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ *2002-2003 Budget Address*, April 30, 2002  
 \_\_\_\_\_ "Main Estimates", 2001-2002, February 2001.
- Graburn, Nelson H.H. *Eskimos without Igloos: Social and Economic Development in Sugluk* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969)
- Green, Joyce. "Decolonization and Recolonization in Canada", in Wallace Clement and Leah F. Vosko (eds), *Changing Canada: The Political Economy of Transformation* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Towards a Détente with History: Confronting Canada's Colonial Legacy", *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 12 (Fall 1995), pp. 85-105
- Green, L.C. and Olive P. Dickason, *The Law of Nations and the New World* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1989).
- Greer, Allan. "Wage Labour and the Transition to Capitalism: A Critique of Pentland", *Labour/Le Travail*, Spring 1985 15.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ *Peasant, Lord and Merchant* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).
- Grinde, Jr., Donald A. *The Iroquois and the founding of the American Nation* (San Francisco: The Indian Historian Press, 1977).
- Grinde Jr., Donald A. and Bruce E. Johansen. *Exemplar of Liberty: Native America and the Evolution of Democracy* (Los Angeles: University of California, American Indian Studies Center, 1991).
- Grinnell, George Bird. *Blackfoot Lodge Tales* (published originally in 1892; reprinted, Williamstown, Massachusetts: Corner House Publishers, 1972), pp. 143-44.
- Gross, Paul R. and Norman Levitt. *Higher Superstition: The Academic Left and Its Quarrels with Science* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).
- Guilleman, J. "The Politics of National Integration: A Comparison of United States and Canadian Indian Administrations", *Social Problems*, 1978, 25(3), pp. 317-332.

- Haddad, Tony and Michael Spivey. "All or Nothing: Modernization, Dependency and Wage Labour and Reserve in Canada", *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 1992 12(2), pp. 206.
- Hakken, David, and Hanna Lessinger, (eds.). *Perspectives in U.S. Marxist Anthropology* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987).
- Hall, Tony. "Royal Omission: Aboriginal People and the Inherent Right to Municipal Government", *Canadian Forum*, Jan-Feb 1997 75(856), pp. 5-7.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "RCAP's Big 'Blind Spots'", in Patricia Sherlock (ed), *Blind Spots: An Examination of the Federal Government's Response to the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (Ottawa: Aboriginal Rights Coalition, 2001).
- Hanks, Lucien M. Jr, and Jane Richardson Hanks. *Tribe under Trust: A Study of the Blackfoot Reserve in Alberta* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950).
- Harding, Thomas G. et al. *Evolution and Culture* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1960).
- Harris, Marvin. *Cultural Materialism: The Struggle for a Science of Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980).
- Harvey, David. *The Limits to Capital* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).
- Hawthorn, H.B. (ed). *A Survey of Contemporary Indians of Canada* (Ottawa, Indian Affairs Branch, 1967).
- Hawkes, John. *The Story of Saskatchewan and Its Peoples*. 3 vols. (Regina: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1924).
- Hedley, M.J. "The Peasant Within: Agrarian Life in New Zealand and Canada", *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 1988, 15(1), pp. 67-83.
- Heidenreich, Conrad and Arthur J. Ray. *The Early Fur Trade: A Study in Cultural Interaction* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976).
- Heron, Craig. *The Canadian Labour Movement: A Short History* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1989).
- Hicks, Jack. "On the Application of Theories of 'Internal Colonialism' to Inuit Societies", Unpublished Paper presented for the Annual Conference of the Canadian Political Science Association, Winnipeg, June 5, 2004.
- High, Steven. "Native Wage Labour and Independent Production during the 'Era of Irrelevance'", *Labour*, 1996 37 (Spring), pp. 243-64.
- Hilton, R. (ed). *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism* (London: NLB, 1976).
- Hindness, B., and P. Hurst. *Pre-capitalist Modes of Production* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1996).
- Hobsbawm, Eric J. *On History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997).
- Hodson, David Martin. *Native values in a non-native world: conflict, confusion and compromise*, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1989.
- Hoebel, E.A. *The Law of Primitive Man* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958)

- Holder, Preston. *The Hoe and the Horse on the Plains* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970).
- Horn, K-T. "Beyond Oka: Dimensions of Mohawk Sovereignty", *Studies in Political Economy*, 1991 35:29-42.
- Howlett, Michael et al. *The Political Economy of Canada: An Introduction* (Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- Hull, Jeremy. *Natives in a Class Society* (Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, 1982).  
 \_\_\_\_\_ *Aboriginal Peoples and Social Classes in Manitoba* (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives: 2001).
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, "Notes for an Address by the Honourable Jane Stewart, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development on the Occasion of the Unveiling of Gathering Strength: Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan" (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1998).
- Innis, H.A. *The Fur Trade in Canada*. Rev. Ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).  
 \_\_\_\_\_ *Essays in Canadian Economic History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ *Empire and Communications* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972).
- Jackson, Robert J. and Doreen Jackson. *An Introduction to Political Science: Comparative and World Politics*, Fourth Edition (Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2003).
- Jaenen, Cornelius J. "French Sovereignty and Native Nationhood During the French Regime", *Native Studies Review* 2(1), 1986.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, Or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).
- Jamieson, Stuart. "Native Indians and the Trade Union Movement", in Mark Nagler (ed) *Perspectives on North American Indians*.
- Jenness, Diamond. *Indians of Canada* (Ottawa: Acland, 1932).  
 \_\_\_\_\_ *Eskimo Administration II: Canada* (Montreal: Arctic Institute of North America, 1964).
- Johansen, Bruce E. *Forgotten Founders: How the American Indian Helped Shape Democracy* (Boston: The Harvard Common Press, 1982).  
 \_\_\_\_\_ "Dating the Iroquois Confederacy", *Akwesasne Notes New Series*, Fall 1995 1(34), pp.62-3.
- Johnson, Leo A. "Independent Commodity Production: Mode of Production or Capitalist Class Formation", *Studies in Political Economy*, 1981 6 (Autumn), pp. 93-112.
- Jorgenson, Joseph B. and Richard Borshay Lee (eds). *The New Native Resistance: Indigenous People's Struggles and the Responsibility of Scholars* (New York: MSS Modular Publications, Module No. 6, 1974).
- Judd, Carol M. "Native labour and social stratification in the Hudson's Bay Company's Northern Department, 1770-1870", *Canadian Review of Sociology and*

- Anthropology*, 1980 17(4):
- Judd, Carol M., and Arthur J. Ray, (eds.). *Old Trails and New Directions: Papers of the Third North American Fur Trade Conference* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).
- Kariya, P. (ed) *Native Socio-Economic Development in Canada: Adaptation, Accessibility and Opportunity* (Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, 1989).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Native Socio-Economic Development in Canada: Change, Promise and Adaptation* (Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, 1989).
- Kealey, Gregory S. *Workers and Canadian History* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995).
- Kellough, G. "From Colonialism to Economic Imperialism: The Experience of the Canadian Indian", in J.Harp and J.R. Hofley (eds) *Structured Inequality in Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1980), pp. 343-377.
- Kew, M. "Making Indians", in R. Warburton and D. Coburn (eds) *Workers, Capital and the State in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1988).
- Knight, Rolf. *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Indian Labor in British Columbia 1885-1930* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1978, 1996).
- Krader, L. *The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx* (Assen: Van Gorcum and Co, 1972).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx: A Commentary", in Stanley Diamond (ed), *Toward a Marxist Anthropology* (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1979), pp. 153-171.
- Krech III, Shepard (ed). *The Subarctic Fur Trade* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Review of Ray and Freeman, 1978", *American Anthropologist*, 1980, 82(3), pp. 640-42.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (ed) *Indians, Animals and the Fur Trade: A Critique of Keepers of the Game* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Ecological Indian* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1999).
- Kuper, Adam. *Culture: The Anthropologists' Account* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).
- Kuznar, Lawrence. *Reclaiming a Scientific Anthropology* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1997).
- Lamb, W. Kaye (ed). *The Journals and Letters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Hakluyt Society, 1970).
- Lancaster, Phil. "Politics of Renewal: A Comment on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", *Canadian Dimension*, Jan-Feb 1997 31(1), pp. 17-18.
- Land, Lorraine Y. "Gathering Dust or Gathering Strength: What Should Canada Do With the Report of the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", in Patricia Sherlock (ed), *Blind Spots: An Examination of the Federal Government's Response to the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (Ottawa: Aboriginal Rights Coalition, 2001).

- Laxer, Gordon (ed). *Perspectives on Canadian Economic Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).
- Lawson, Murray. *Fur: A Study of English Mercantilism, 1700-1770*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1943).
- Leacock, Eleanor. "Marxism and Anthropology", in B. Ollman and E. Vernoff (eds.) *The Left Academy* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Montagnais "Hunting Territory" and the Fur Trade* (American Anthropological Association, 1954).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Seventeenth-Century Montagnais Social Relations and Values", in June Helm (ed), *Handbook of North American Indians*, Volume 6 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1981).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Education, Socialization, and the 'Culture of Poverty'", in Annette T. Rubinstein (ed), *Schools Against Children* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970)
- Leacock, Eleanor and Christine Ward Gailey, "Primitive Communism and Its Transformations", in Christine Ward Gailey (ed), *Dialectical Anthropology: Essays in Honour of Stanley Diamond* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1992)
- Leacock, Eleanor and Richard Lee (eds). *Politics and History in Band Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).
- Leacock, Eleanor and Nancy Oestreich Lurie (eds). *North American Indians in Historical Perspective* (New York: Random House, 1971).
- Lee, Richard Borshay and Richard Daly (eds). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- Lee, Richard Borshay and Irven DeVore (eds), *Man the Hunter* (Chicago: Aldine, 1968).
- Lee, Richard B. "Primitive communism and the origin of social inequality", in Steadman Upham (ed), *The Evolution of Political Systems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
- Leeds, Anthony. "The Concept of the 'Culture of Poverty'", in Eleanor Leacock (ed) *The Culture of Poverty* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971).
- Leland, Donald. *Aboriginal Slavery on the Northwest Coast of North America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
- Lenin, Vladimir I. "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", in *Lenin: Selected Works*, 1, pp. 707-815 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Right of Nations to Self Determination*. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1979).
- Lenin on the National and Colonial Questions: Three Articles* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1970).
- Leupp, Francis E. *The Indian and His Problem* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910).



- Lewis, Oscar. *The Effects of White Contact upon Blackfoot Culture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966).
- Lipset, S.M. *Agrarian Socialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Lithman, Yngve Georg. *The Practice of Underdevelopment and the Theory of Development – The Canadian Indian Case*. (Stockholm: Department of Anthropology, University of Stockholm, 1982).
- Little Bear, Leroy. "What's Einstein Got to Do With it", in Richard Gosse et al. (eds), *Continuing Poundmaker and Riel's Quest* (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 1994), p.21
- Llewellyn, Karl N. and E. Adamson Hoebel. *The Cheyenne Way: Conflict and Case Law in Primitive Jurisprudence* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941).
- Locke, John. *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), Volume 2.
- Löwy, Michael. *The Politics of Uneven and Combined Development* (London: Verso, 1981).
- Loxley, J. "The 'Great Northern' Plan", *Studies in Political Economy*, 1981, 6(Autumn), pp. 151-182.
- Lutz, John. "After the Fur Trade: the Aboriginal Labouring Class of British Columbia, 1849-90", *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The White Problem: State Racism and the Decline of Aboriginal Employment in 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Columbia", Paper presented to the 1994 Canadian Historical Association meeting.
- Luxemborg, Rosa. *The National Question: Selected Writings*. Ed Horace B. Davis (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976).
- MacDonald, Laura. "Merchants Against Industry: An Idea and its Origins", *Canadian Historical Review*, 1975 56, pp. 263-281.
- MacDonald, Theodore. *Making a New People: Education in Revolutionary Cuba* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1985).
- Mackie, C. "Some Reflections on Indian Economic Development" in J. Ponting (ed) *Arduous Journey: Canadian Indians and Decolonization* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), pp. 211-227.
- Mackie, Richard. *Colonial Land, Indian Labour and Company Capital: The Economy of Vancouver Island, 1849-1858*, MA thesis, University of Victoria, 1985.
- Mackintosh, W.A. "Economic Factors in Canadian History", in Gordon Laxer (ed) *Perspectives on Canadian Economic Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).
- Macnair, Peter. "From Kwakiutl to Kwakw̓a̓ka'wakw", in *Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience*.
- MacPherson, Reverend D. *Souvenir of the Micmac Tercentenary Celebration* (St. Anne de Restigouche: Freres Mineurs Capucins, 1910).
- Madill, Dennis. *British Columbia Indian Treaties in Historical Perspective* (Ottawa:

- Indian and Northern Affairs, 1981)
- Mandel, Ernest. *From Class Struggle to Communism: An Introduction to Marxism* (London: Ink Links Ltd., 1977).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Trotsky: A Study in the Dynamic of his Thought* (London: Low and Brydone Printers Ltd., 1979).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Long Waves of Capitalist Development: A Marxist Interpretation* (London: Verso, 1995).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1969).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Marxist Economy Theory* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1968).
- Mandel, Michael. *The Charter of Rights and the Legalization of Politics* (Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, 1994).
- Manuel, George and Michael Posluns. *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* (Don Mills: Collier Macmillan Canada, Ltd., 1974).
- Marshall, T.H. *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1976).
- Martin, Calvin (ed). *The American Indian and the Problem of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).
- Martin, Calvin. *Keepers of the Game* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).
- Marx, Karl. *The thoughts of Karl Marx based on Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, presented by Leon Trotsky (London: Cassell, 1942).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Capital: An Abridged Edition*, edited and with an introduction by David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy* (London: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1993).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Pre-capitalist Economic Formations*. With an introduction by Eric Hobsbawm.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Wage Labour and Capital*, with an introduction by Frederick Engels (New York: International Publishers, 1933).
- Marx, Karl, and Frederick Engels. *On Colonialism: Articles from the New York Tribune and Other Writings* (New York: International Publishers, 1972).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The German Ideology", in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works*, Volume 1 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969-70).
- McBride, Carol. "Canada's Response to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", in Patricia Sherlock (ed), *Blind Spots: An Examination of the Federal Government's Response to the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (Ottawa: Aboriginal Rights Coalition, 2001).
- McC. Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1966).
- McCallum, John. *Unequal Beginnings: Agriculture and Economic Development in Quebec and Ontario in 1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).
- McDonald, James A. "Images of the Nineteenth-Century Economy of the Tsimshian",

- In Margaret Seguin (ed) *The Tsimshian: Images of the Past, Views for the Present* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1984).
- McFarlane, *Brotherhood to Nationhood: George Manuel and the Making of the Modern Indian Movement* (Toronto: Between The Lines, 1993).
- McGee, Jr., Harold Franklin. "No Longer Neglected: A Decade of Writing Concerning the Native Peoples of the Maritimes", *Acadiensis*, Autumn 1980, 10, pp. 135-42.
- McGee, Robert. "Contact Between Native North Americans and the Medieval Norse: A Review of the Evidence", *American Antiquity* 49(1), January 1984, pp.4-26.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ *Ancient Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1989).  
 \_\_\_\_\_ *Canadian Arctic Prehistory* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1990).
- McKay, Ian. "Historians, Anthropology, and the Concept of Culture", *Labour*, 1981-2 8(9), Autumn/Spring.
- McLeod, Dennis. *From Exploitation to Marginalization: The Aboriginals of Northern Saskatchewan in Relation to the National and International Political Economy*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Regina, 1991.
- McNally, David. "Staple Theory as Commodity Fetishism: Marx, Innis and Canadian Political Economy", *Studies in Political Economy*, Autumn 1981, 6, pp. 35-64.
- Mead, Margaret. *Continuities in Cultural Evolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964).
- Medicine, Beatrice. "'Warrior Women': Sex Role Alternatives for Plains Indian Women", in Patricia Albers and Beatrice Medicine (eds), *The Hidden Half: Studies of Plains Indian Women* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1983), pp. 267-280.
- Meek, Ronald L. *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).
- Meillassoux, Claude. "Historical Modalities of the Exploitation and Overexploitation of Labour", *Critique of Anthropology*, 1979, 13-14, pp. 7-17.
- Melotti, Umberto. *Marx and the Third World* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1977).
- Meriam, Lewis (ed). *The Problem of Indian Administration* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1928).
- Miles, R. *Capitalism and Unfree Labour* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1987).
- Mill, John Stuart. "Civilization" in Mill, *Dissertations and Discussions* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1859).  
 \_\_\_\_\_ *Principles of Political Economy* (London: Routledge and Sons, 1891).
- Miller, J.R. *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (ed) *Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: 1991).  
 \_\_\_\_\_ "Owen Glendower, Hotspur, and Canadian Indian Policy", *Ethnohistory* 1990, 37(4).  
 \_\_\_\_\_ *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto:

- University of Toronto Press, 1997).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "From Riel to the Métis", *Canadian Historical Review* 1(1), 1988.
- Milloy, John S. "Another Report in Another Year", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Winter 1996 31(4).
- Milne, Brad. "The Historiography of Métis Land Dispersal, 1870-1890", *Manitoba History* 30, Autumn 1995.
- Mitchell, Marybelle. *From Talking Chiefs to a Native Corporate Elite: The Birth of Class and Nationalism among Canadian Inuit* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996).
- Mithun, Marianne. "The Proto-Iroquoians: Cultural Reconstruction from Lexical Materials", in Michael K. Foster et al. (eds), *Extending the Rafters* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984).
- Moore, John H. "A New Orthodoxy for Navaho Studies", *Reviews in Anthropology*, 1984 11(4), pp. 282-87.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Myth of the Lazy Indian: Native American Contributions to the U.S. Economy", 1989, *Nature, Society and Thought* 2(2), pp. 195-219.
- \_\_\_\_\_. (ed). *The Political Economy of North American Indians* (Norman: University Of Oklahoma Press, 1993).
- Moody, K. *Workers in a Lean World* (London: Verso, 1997).
- Morgan, Lewis Henry. "Factory System for the Indians", *The Nation* 1876, 23, pp. 58-59.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Indian Question", *The Nation*, 1878, 27, pp. 332-33.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *League of the Iroquois* (Secaucus, N.J.: The Citadel Press, 1962).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ancient Society: or, Researches in the lines of human progress from savagery, through barbarism to civilization*, Edited with an introduction and annotations by Eleanor Burke Leacock (Gloucester, Mass.: P.Smith, 1974).
- Morse, Bradford W. and Tanya M. Kozak, "Gathering Strength: The Government of Canada's Response to the Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", in *Blind Spots: An Examination of the Federal Government's Response to the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (Ottawa: Aboriginal Rights Coalition, 2001).
- Morton, Desmond. *Working People: An Illustrated History of the Canadian Labour Movement* (McGill Queen's University Press, 1998).
- Morton, W.L. "Agriculture in the Red River Colony", in A.B. McKillop (ed), *Contexts of Canada's Past: Selected Essays of W.L. Morton* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, 1980).
- Moscovitch, Allan, and Andrew Webster. "Aboriginal Social Assistance Expenditures", in Susan D. Phillips, (ed) *How Ottawa Spends, 1995-96: Mid Life Crises* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1995).
- Mountain Horse, Mike, with Hugh Dempsey. *My People the Bloods* (Calgary and Standoff: Glenbow-Alberta Institute and Blood Tribal Council, 1979).
- Muga, David. "Native Americans and the Nationalities Question: Premises for a

- Marxist Approach to Ethnicity and Self Determination" *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, 1988, 16(1):31-51.
- Murphy, Michael. "Review", *Canadian Review of Sociology* 25(4), Fall 2000, p. 517.
- Muszynski, Alicja. *Cheap Wage Labour: Race and Gender in the Fisheries of British Columbia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996).
- Nabokov, Peter (ed). *Native American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophecy to the Present, 1492-1992* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1991).
- Nagler, M. "Minority Values and Economic Achievement: the Case of the North American Indian", in M. Nagler, (ed) *Perspectives on the North American Indian* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1972), pp. 131-141.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Indians in the City* (Ottawa: Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology, 1973).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Natives Without a Home* (Don Mills: Longman Canada, 1975).
- Nakashima, Douglas J. *Application of Native Knowledge in EIA: Inuit, Eiders and Hudson Bay Oil* (Montreal: Canadian Environmental Assessment Research Council, 1990)
- Naylor, T. *The History of Canadian Business, 1867-1914*, Vols. I and II (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1975).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Canada in the European Age, 1453-1919* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1987).
- Newell, Dianne (ed). *The Development of the Pacific Salmon-Canning Industry: A Grown Man's Game* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Tangled Webs of History: Indians and the Law in Canada's Pacific Coast Fisheries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).
- Nicol, Janet Mary. "'Unions Aren't Native': The Muckamuck Restaurant Labour Dispute, Vancouver, B.C. (1978-1983)", *Labour*, 40, Fall 1997, pp.235-51.
- Nicks, John S. and Trudy Nicks, "Introduction", *Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology - Special Issue* Vol. III, No. 1, 1972
- Noon, John A. *Law and Government of the Grand River Iroquois* (New York: Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology, Number 12, 1949).
- Novack, George. *Understanding History: Marxist Essays* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Democracy and Revolution* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1971).
- O'Laughlin, Bridget. "Marxist Approaches in Anthropology", *Annual Reviews in Anthropology*, 1975, 4, pp. 341-70.
- Oakes, Jill and Rick Riewe. *Culture, Economy and Ecology: Case Studies from the Circumpolar Region* (Millbrook, Ont: Cider Press, 1997).
- Page, B. and R. Walker. "From Settlement to Fordism: The Agro-Industrial Revolution in the American Midwest", *Economic Geography*, 1991 67.

- Page, Robert. *Northern Development: The Canadian Dilemma* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1986).
- Paine, Robert (ed). *Advocacy and Anthropology: First Encounters* (Newfoundland: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1985).
- Palmer, B. *Working Class Experience: The Rise and Reconstitution of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1992).
- Panitch, L (ed). *The Canadian State: Political Economy and Political Power* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Dependency and Class in Canadian Political Economy", *Studies in Political Economy*, 1981, 6 (Autumn), pp. 7-33.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Dependency and Class in Canadian Political Economy", in Gordon Laxer (ed), *Perspectives on Canadian Economic Development: Class, Staples, Gender and Elites* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1991).
- Park, R. *Race and Culture* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1950).
- Pastore, Ralph T. "Native History in the Atlantic Region During the Colonial Period", *Acadiensis*, 1990, 20, pp. 201-2.
- Pauktuutit, *The Inuit Way: A Guide to Inuit Culture* (Ottawa: Pauktuutit and National Library, 1990).
- Pentland, H. Clare. *Labour and Capital in Canada 1650-1860* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1981). Edited and with an introduction by Paul Phillips.
- Phillips, Paul. *Inside Capitalism: An Introduction to Political Economy* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2003)
- Philpott, Stuart B. *Trade Unionism and Acculturation: A Comparative Study of Urban Indians and Immigrant Italians*, MA thesis, University of BC, 1963.
- Phizacklea, A. and R. Miles. *Labour and Racism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980).
- Pipes, Richard. *Property and Freedom: The Story of How through the Centuries Private Ownership Has Promoted Liberty and the Rule of Law* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999).
- "Plains Indian", *Encyclopædia Britannica*  
<<http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=127688>> [Accessed June 18, 2002].
- Polanyi, K. *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1944).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Aristotle Discovers the Economy", in K. Polanyi, C.M. Arensberg, and H.W. Pearson (eds) *Trade and Market in Early Empires* (Illinois: 1957).
- Pomfret, Richard. *The Economic Development of Canada* (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1993)
- Porter, H.C. *The Inconstant Savage: England and the North American Indian 1500 1600* (London: Duckworth, 1979).
- Porter, Tom (Sakorarewate). "Men Who Are of the Good Mind", in Jose Barreiro (ed), *Indian Roots of American Democracy* (Cornell University, NY: Akwe:kon Press, 1992).

- Pospisil, Leopold. *The Anthropology of Law: A Comparative Theory* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1971).
- Post, Charles. "The American Road to Capitalism", *New Left Review*, 1982 133(May June), pp. 30-51.
- Pratt, Richard Henry. *Battlefield and the Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904*, with an introduction by Robert M. Utley (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964).
- Price, John. *Indians of Canada: Cultural Dynamics* (Ontario: Prentice-Hall, 1979).
- Pring, Beryl. *Education: Capitalist and Socialist* (London: Methuen and Co., 1937).
- Pritchard, Evan Thomas. *Introductory Guide to Micmac Words and Phrases*, annotations by Stephen Augustine, observations by Albert Ward (Rexton, N.B.: Resonance Communications, 1991);
- Pritchard, John Charles. *Economic Development and Disintegration of Traditional Culture Among the Haisla*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1977.
- Purich, Donald. *The Inuit and their Land: The Story of Nunavut* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1992).
- Quigley, N.C. and N.J. McBride, "The Structure of an Arctic Microeconomy: The Traditional Sector in Community Economic Development", *Arctic*, September 1987 40(3).
- Radforth, I and A. Greer (eds). *Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).
- Rasmussen, Knud. "Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos", in *Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-24 VII(1)* (1929, reprinted by AMS Press Inc., 1976).
- Ray, Arthur J. *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began: An Illustrated History of Canada's Native People* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1996).
- Ray, Arthur J. *Indians in the Fur Trade* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Periodic Shortages, Native Welfare and the Hudson's Bay Company 1670-1930", in K. Coates and W. Morrison (eds) *Interpreting Canada's North* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1989).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Canadian Fur Trade in the Industrial Age* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).
- Ray, Arthur J and Donald F. Freeman. *Give Us Good Measure* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978).
- Rea, J.E. "The Historian as 'Hired Gun'", *The Beaver* 73(2), June 1992.
- Rea, K. *The Political Economy of the Canadian North: An Interpretation of the Course of Development in the Northern Territories of Canada to the Early 1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968).
- Redfield, Robert. *The Primitive World and Its Transformations* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1969).
- Rey, P.P. "The Lineage Mode of Production", *Critique of Anthropology*, 1975, 3, pp. 27-79.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Class Contradiction in Lineage Societies", *Critique of Anthropology*, 1979, 7, pp. 41-61.
- Rich, E.E. "Trade Habits and Economic Motivation among the Indians of North America", *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 1960, 26(1):36-53.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Fur Trade and the Northwest to 1857* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1967).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The History of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1870*, 3 Volumes (London: Hudson's Bay Company Record Society, 1958-9).
- Richardson, Boyce (ed). *Drumbeat: Anger and Renewal in Indian Country* (Toronto: The Assembly of First Nations and Summerhill Press, 1989).
- Robertson, Gordon. *Northern Provinces: A Mistaken Goal* (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1985).
- Robinson, Michael and Lloyd Binder, "The Inuvialuit Final Agreement and Resource Use Conflicts: Co Management in the Western Arctic and Final Decisions in Ottawa", in Monique Ross and J. Owen Saunders (eds), *Growing Demands on a Shrinking Heritage* (Calgary: Canadian Institute of Resources Law, 1992).
- Rogers, E.S., and Flora Tobondung. *Parry Island Farmers: A Period of Change in the Way of Life of the Algonkians of Southern Ontario*. Mercury Series, Canadian Ethnological Services, Paper No. 31 (Ottawa, Ontario: National Museum of Man).
- Romaniuk, A. "Modernization and Fertility: the Case of the James Bay Indians", *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 1974, 11, pp. 344-59.
- Roseberry, William. "Political Economy", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 1988, 17, pp. 161-85.
- Rosenberg, J. *The Empire of Civil Society* (London: Verso, 1994).
- Ross, Alexander. *The Red River Settlement* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1856).
- Rotman, Leonard Ian. "Parallel Paths: Fiduciary Doctrine and the Crown-Native Relationship in Canada", *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 1997 17(2), pp. 389-92.
- Rotstein, Abraham. "Trade and Politics: An Institutional Approach", *The Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology: Special Issue*, November 1992 3.
- Rousseau, James and George W. Brown, "The Indians of Northeastern North America", in R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith (eds) *Readings in Canadian History*.
- Russell, Bertrand. *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945).
- Russell, Peter. "Research Program of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, Autumn 1995 2, pp. 277-83.
- Ryerson, Stanley. *The Founding of Canada* (Toronto: Progress Books, 1960).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Unequal Union: Confederation and the Roots of Conflict in the Canadas, 1815-1873* (Toronto: Progress Books, 1968).



- Sagan, Carl. *The Dragons of Eden: Speculations on the Evolution of Human Intelligence* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1977).
- Sahlins, Marshall D. *Stone Age Economics*. (Chicago: Aldine Press, 1972).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Evolution: Specific and General", in Thomas G. Harding et al. (eds) *Evolution and Culture* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1960).
- Saku, James. *The socio-economic impact of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Department of Geography, University of Saskatchewan, 1995.
- Salée, D. "Identities in Conflict: the Aboriginal Question and the politics of recognition in Quebec", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1995 18(2):272-314.
- "Sarcee". *Encyclopædia Britannica* <<http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article?eu=67440>> [Accessed June 18, 2002].
- Searles, Edmund. "Fashioning selves and traditions: Case studies in personhood and experience in Nunavut", *American Review of Canadian Studies* 31 (1-2), Spring-Summer, 2001, pp. 21-36.
- Seguin, Margaret. "Lest There be No Salmon: Symbols in Traditional Tsimshian Potlatch", in Margaret Seguin (ed) *The Tsimshian, Images of the Past: Views for the Present* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984).
- Sellnow, Irmgard. "Theories of State-Formation: A Controversy between Marxist and Other Schools of Anthropological Thinking", in Fluehr-Lobban (ed), *International Perspectives on Marxist Anthropology* (Minneapolis: MEP Publications, 1989).
- Selsam, Howard and Harry Martel, *Reader in Marxist Philosophy* (New York: International Publishers, 1970).
- Service, Elman R. *Origins of the State and Civilization: The Process of Cultural Evolution* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1975).
- Shkilnyk, A. *A Poison Stronger than Love: The Destruction of an Ojibway Community* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).
- Simmons, Deborah Lee. *Against Capital: The Political Economy of Aboriginal Resistance in Canada* Unpublished PhD Thesis, York University 1995.
- Sioui, Georges E. *For an Amerindian Autohistory* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill Queen's University Press, 1992).
- Smallface Marule, Marie. "Traditional Indian Government: Of the People, by the People, for the People", in Leroy Little Bear et al. (eds), *Pathways to Self Determination*.
- Smith, G.A. "The Use of Class Analysis in Social Anthropology", in Turner and Smith (eds), *Challenging Anthropology: A Critical Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited).
- Smith, Melvin H. *Our Home or Native Land* (Victoria: Crown Western, 1995).
- Smith, Neil. *Uneven Development* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).
- Snipp, C. Matthew. "The Changing Political Economic Status of the American

- Indians: From Captive Nations to Internal Colonies", *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 1986, 45(2), pp. 145-57.
- Snow, Dean R. "Iroquois Prehistory", in Michael K. Foster et al. (eds), *Extending the Rafters* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984).
- Sokal, Alan. "Transgressing the Boundaries: An Afterward", *Dissent* 43(4), Fall 1996, pp. 93-99.
- Sokal, Alan and Jean Bricmont, *Fashionable Nonsense: Postmodern Intellectuals' Abuse of Science* (New York: Picador USA, 1998).
- Sollis, Peter. "The Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua: Development and Autonomy", *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 1989 21.
- Sowell, Thomas. *Race and Economics* (New York: David McKay, 1957).
- Speck, Dara Culhane. *An Error in Judgement* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987).
- Sprague, D.N. *Canada and the Métis, 1869-1885* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1988).
- Spriggs, Matthew (ed). *Marxist Perspectives in Archaeology* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
- Spry, I.M. "The Tragedy of the Loss of the Commons In Western Canada", in Getty Aand Lussier (eds), *As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows*(Vancouver: UBC Press, 1983).
- "The Transition from a Nomadic to a Settled Economy in Western Canada, 1856-96", *Selections of the Royal Society of Canada* June 1968, Volume 6, Series 4(2), pp. 187-201.
- Stanley, George F.G. "The First Indian 'Reserves' in Canada", *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 4(2), September 1950, pp. 178-185.
- *The Birth of Western Canada: A History of the Riel Rebellions* (Toronto: 1963).
- Stanley, Samuel L. *American Indian Economic Development* (Chicago: Aldine, 1978).
- Stavenhagen, Rodolfo. "Decolonizing Applied Social Sciences", *Human Organization* 30 (1971).
- Sweezy, P.M. *The Theory of Capitalist Development: Principles of Marxian Political Economy* (New York: Monthly Review Perss, 1968).
- Sweezy, P. M. Dobb et al. *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism* (London: 1978).
- Symmes, Oliver C. *Ecology and Cultural Continuity as Contributing Factors in the Social Organization of the Plains Indians* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962).
- Taba, Hilda and Deborah Elkins. *Teaching Strategies for the Culturally Disadvantaged* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1966).
- Tabb, W. *The Political Economy of the Black Ghetto* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1970).
- Tanner, A. *Bringing Home Animals: Religious Ideology and Mode of Production of*

- the Mistassini Cree Hunters* (St. John's: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1979).
- Taylor, Charles. *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992)
- Teeple, Gary (ed). *Capitalism and the National Question in Canada* (Toronto).
- Tennant, Paul. *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990).
- Terray, Emmanuel. *Marxism and Primitive Societies* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972).
- Thompson, E.P. "Time Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism", *Past and Present*, 1967 38, pp. 56-96.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Customs in Common* (London: the Merlin Press, 1991).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Penguin Books, 1968).
- Thomson, Duane. "The Response of Okanagan Indians to European Settlement", *B.C. Studies*, Spring 1994, 101.
- Thwaites, Rueben Gold (ed). *Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791: The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents* (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers Company, 1896-1901).
- Tilly, C. *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990-1990*.
- Titley, E. Brian. *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986).
- Tobias, John L. "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879-1885", *Canadian Historical Review*, 1983 LXIV(4), pp. 519-548.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Protection, civilization, assimilation: an outline history of Canada's Indian policy", *Western Journal of Anthropology*, 1976 (6), pp. 13-30
- Tooker, Elisabeth. "The United States Constitution and the Iroquois League", *Ethnohistory* 35(4), Fall 1988, pp.305-336.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Tooker, An Ethnography of the Huron Indians, 1615-1649* (Washington: Bureau of American Ethnology, 1964).
- Tooker, Elisabeth (ed). *The Development of Political Organization in Native North America* (Washington, D.C.: American Ethnological Society, 1983).
- Tough, Frank. *"As Their Natural Resources Fail": Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870-1930* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1996).
- Trigger, Bruce G. "Indian and White History: Two Worlds or One?", in Michael K. Foster et al. (eds), *Extending the Rafters: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Iroquoian Studies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Marxism in Archaeology: Real or Spurious?" *Reviews in Anthropology*, 1985, 12(2), pp. 114-23.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Historians' Indian: Native Americans in Canadian Historical Writing

- From Charlevoix to the Present", *Canadian Historical Review*, 1986 LXVII(3), pp. 315-342.
- \_\_\_\_\_ "A Present of Their Past? Anthropologists, Native People, and Their Heritage", *Culture*, 1988 8(1)
- \_\_\_\_\_ *The Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People in 1660* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976).
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985).
- \_\_\_\_\_ *The Huron Farmers of the North. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.* (Fort Worth: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1990).
- \_\_\_\_\_ *A History of Archaeological Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Sociocultural Evolution* (London: Blackwell Publishers, 1998).
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Understanding Early Civilizations: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
- \_\_\_\_\_ "Childe's relevance to the 1990s", in David R. Harris (ed), *The Archaeology of V. Gordon Childe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994)
- \_\_\_\_\_ "Maintaining economic equality in opposition to complexity", in Steadman Upham (ed), *The Evolution of Political Systems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
- Trotsky, Leon. *History of the Russian Revolution*, 3 Volumes, Translated from the Russian by Max Eastman (London: Sphere Books, 1967).
- \_\_\_\_\_ *The Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1969).
- \_\_\_\_\_ *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution, with introductory essays by Joseph Hansen and George Novack* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1973).
- \_\_\_\_\_ *The Revolution Betrayed* (New York: Merit Publishers, 1965).
- Tully, James. *Strange Multiplicity: Constitutionalism in an Age of Diversity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- \_\_\_\_\_ "Aboriginal Property and Western Theory: Recovering a Middle Ground", in Ellen Frankel Paul et al. (eds), *Property Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- \_\_\_\_\_ "Aboriginal Peoples: Negotiating Reconciliation", in Bickerton and Gagnon (eds), *Canadian Politics, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1999).
- Tungavik Federation of Nunavut and Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. *Agreement Between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada* (Ottawa: Tungavik Federation of Nunavut and Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1993).
- Upham, Steadman (ed). *The Evolution of Political Systems: Sociopolitics in Small Scale Sedentary Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

- Uphoff, Norman T. *The Political Economy of Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).
- Usher, P.J. "Evaluating Country Food in the Northern Native Economy", *Arctic*, 1976, 29(2), pp. 105-120.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Staple Production and Ideology in Northern Canada" in William H. Melody et al., *Culture, Communication, and Dependency* (New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1981).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Class System, Metropolitan dominance and Northern Development in Canada", *Antipode* 8:3 (1976).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The North: One Land, Two Ways of Life", in L.D. McCann (ed) *Heartland and Hinterland: A Geography of Canada* (Toronto: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1998).
- Usher, Peter et al., "Reclaiming the Land: Aboriginal Title, Treaty Rights and Land Claims in Canada", *Applied Geography* 12:2 (April 1992), pp. 109-32.
- Van Binsbergen, Wim, and Peter Geschiere, (eds) *Old Modes of Production and Capitalist Encroachment: Anthropological Explorations in Africa* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985).
- Van Dyke, Edward W. "Families in Other Cultures" (Calgary: Bear Spike Productions, 1988)
- Van Meurs, Pedro. "'Ten Years IFA' - Successes and Failures, A Report Card", December 1993, Unpublished paper in the possession of the author.
- Veltmeyer, H. *Canadian Class Structure* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1986).
- Vincent, Joan. "Anthropology and Marxism; Past and Present", *American Ethnologist*, 1985, 12(1), pp. 137-47.
- Voget, Fred. "Anthropological Theory and Iroquois Ethnography: 1850 to 1970", in *Extending the Rafters: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Iroquois Studies* (New York: SUNY Press, 1984).
- Von Gernet, Alexander. *Oral Narratives and Aboriginal Past: An Interdisciplinary Review of the Literature on Oral Traditions and Oral Histories*, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, April 1996.
- Waisberg, Leo G. and Tim E. Holzkamm, "A Tendency to Discourage Them From Cultivating: Ojibwa Agriculture and Indian Affairs Administration in Northwestern Ontario", *Ethnohistory*, 1993 4(2).
- Wald, Karen. *Children of Che: Childcare and Education in Cuba* (Palo Alto: Ramparts Press, 1978).
- Walker, Deward E (ed). *Emergent Native Americans: A Reader in Culture Contact* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972).
- Walker, James W. St. G. "The Indian in Canadian Historical Writing, 1971-1981", in Ian A.L. Getty and Antoinette S. Lussier, (eds) *As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983).
- Wallace, Anthony F.C., "Overview: The Career of William N. Fenton and the Development of Iroquoian Studies", in Michael K. Foster et al. (eds) *Extending*

- The Rafters: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Iroquoian Studies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984).
- Wallace, Paul A.W. *White Roots of Peace* (Sante Fe:Clear Light Publishers, 1994).
- Warburton, Rennie. "Status, Class and the Politics of Canadian Aboriginal Peoples", *Studies in Political Economy*, Fall 1997 54, pp. 119-141.
- Warburton, Rennie and Stephen Scott. "The Fur Trade and Early Capitalist Development in British Columbia", *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 1985 5(1).
- Washburn, Wilcomb E., and Bruce G. Trigger. "Native Peoples in Euro-American Historiography", in Bruce G. Trigger and Wilcomb E. Washburn (eds), *The Cambridge history of Native Peoples of the Americas* Vol. I, Part 1, North America (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- Watkins, Mel (ed). *Dene Nation: the colony within* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977).
- Watkins, Mel. "Out of commission: When Ottawa decided to ignore the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", *ThisMagazine*, July-August 1997 31(1), pp. 11-12.
- Weatherford, Jack. *Indian Givers: How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988).
- Weaver, Sally. *Making Canadian Indian Policy: The Hidden Agenda 1968-79* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Hawthorn Report", in Noel Dyck and James Waldram (eds), *Anthropology, Public Policy and Native Peoples in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995)
- Webber, M.J. and D.L. Rigby. *The Golden Age Illusion* (New York: Guilford, 1996).
- Wenzel, George W. *Animal Rights, Human Rights: Ecology, Economy and Ideology in the Canadian Arctic* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Inuit Subsistence and Hunter Support in Nunavut", in J. Dahl and J. Hicks (eds), *Nunavut: Inuit Regain Control of the their Land and Lives* (Copenhagen: International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2000), pp. 178-88.
- Wessman, James W. *Anthropology and Marxism* (Cambridge: Schenkman, 1981).
- Wherrett, Jill. "Research Agenda of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", *Canadian Public Administration*, Summer 1995 38(2), pp. 272-82.
- White, Leslie A. *The Science of Culture* (New York: Grove Press, 1949).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Evolution of Culture: The Development of Civilization to the Fall of Rome* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Concept of Culture* (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Company, 1973).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ethnological Essays* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987).
- Whitehead, Ruth Homes. *The Old Man Told Us: Excerpts from Micmac History 1500 1950* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing Limited, 1991).
- Whyte W., and L Williams. *Toward an Integrated Theory of Development*. (Ithaca: New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University,

- 1968).
- Wickham, C. "The Other Transition: From the Ancient World to Feudalism", *Past & Present* May 1984.
- Widdowson, Frances. "Inventing Nationhood: The Political Economy of Aboriginal Self-Determination in the Context of Quebec Sovereignty", Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, June 2004.
- Widdowson, Frances. "The Political Economy of Nunavut: Internal Colony or Rentier Territory?", Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, June 2005
- Widdowson, Frances and Albert Howard, "Corruption North of 60", *Policy Options*, January-February 1999.
- Wilbur, C. (ed.) *The Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment* (New York: Random House, 1977).
- Wilkinson, Charles F. *American Indians, Time and the Law: Native Societies in a Modern Constitutional Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).
- Williams, G. "The National Policy Tariffs: Industrial Development Through Import Substitution", in G. Laxer (ed), *Perspectives on Canadian Economic Development*.
- Willis, Paul. *Learning to Labour*. (Farnborough: Saxon House, 1977).
- Windschuttle, Keith. *The Killing of History: How Literary Critics and Social Theorists are Murdering Our Past* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 1996)
- Wolf, E. *Europe and the People Without a History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Peasants* (Englewood: Prentice Hall, 1966).
- Wolpe, Harold. *Reflections on the Pertinence of a Theory of the History of Exchange* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980).
- Wood, E.M. "From Opportunity to Imperative: The History of the Market", *Monthly Review*, 1994, 46(3).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Democracy Against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Origin of Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2002).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Pristine Culture of Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Peasant-Citizen and Slave* (London: Verso, 1988).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Suggestions and Debates: Capitalism, Merchants and Bourgeois Revolution: Reflections on the Brenner Debate and its Sequel", *International Review of Social History*, 1996 41:209-232.
- Woolfson, Charles. *The Labour Theory of Culture: A Re-examination of Engels's Theory of Human Origins* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982).
- Wotherspoon, Terry and Vic Satzewich. *First Nations: Race, Class, and Gender Relations* (Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1993).
- Wright, Erik Olin. *Class Counts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

- Wright, James V. "The Cultural Continuity of the Northern Iroquoian-Speaking Peoples", in *Extending the Rafters: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Iroquoian Studies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984).
- Wright, Roland. "The Public Right of Fishing, Government Fishing Policy, and Indian Fishing Rights in Upper Canada", *Ontario History* 86(4), December 1994.
- Wright, Ronald. *Stolen Continents: The New World Through Indian Eyes Since 1492* (Toronto: Viking Penguin, 1992).
- York, Geoffrey and Loreen Pindera. *People of the Pines: The Warriors and the Legacy of Oka* (Toronto: Little, Brown & Company Limited, 1991).
- Zaslow, Morris. *The Opening of the Canadian North, 1870-1914* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971).
- Zlotkin, N. and D.R. Colborne. "Internal Canadian Imperialism and the Native People", in Craig Heron (ed) *Imperialism, Nationalism and Canada* (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1977).

#### **Bulletins, Magazines and Newspapers**

- "Allegations of Corruption on Reserves Cast Shadow on Aboriginal Meeting", *CP Newswire*, September 3, 1997.
- Ayed, Nahlah. "Self-government a mess, native coalition testifies", *The Toronto Star*, March 3, 1999, A5.
- Bailey, Sue. "Chiefs struggle with calls for accountability", *The Toronto Star*, March 6, 2000, A6.
- Coyne, Andrew. "Two, three, many nations: behind the apology to aborigines, is Ottawa preparing a negotiations binge?", *Time*, January 19/98 151(2), pp. 43-4.
- Dodes, John E. "Junk Science and the Law", *Skeptical Inquirer*, July/August 2001.
- Dyson, Freeman. "The Darwinian Interlude", *Technologyreview.com*, March 2005, p. 1. [www.technologyreview.com/articles/05/03/issue/megaphone.asp](http://www.technologyreview.com/articles/05/03/issue/megaphone.asp).
- D'Souza, Patricia. "NTI can't afford cash payouts for beneficiaries - \$7.5 million to give each Inuk \$500", *Nunatsiaq News*, March 7, 2002.
- "First Nations ripe with opportunities", *Windspeaker*, 11(7) June 21, 1993, p. 3.
- "Gitksan, Gitanyow against treaty", *The Province*, July 30, 1998.
- Hobsbawm, Eric J. "The new threat to history", *New York Review of Books*, December 16, 1993, pp. 62-4.
- "Inaction fuels commissioner's resignation", *Windspeaker*, 11(2), p. 3.
- "Inuvialuit corporation lands largest bank loan for Aboriginal group", *Windspeaker*, 11(17) November 8-21, 1993 p. 11
- "Inuvialuit profit up: Beneficiaries get \$1.3 million", *Northern News Services*, May 4, 1998.
- "Investment firm launched", *Windspeaker*, 11(15) October 11-24, 1993, p. 12.



- Kulchyski, Peter. "Socialism and Native Americans", *Rabble*, December 11, 2003.
- Laghi, Brian. "Natives face strict code in tougher Indian Act", *The Globe and Mail*, A1, A7.
- Lau, Lynn. "Gwich'in get \$400 payout: Result of a windfall from Sahtu royalties", *Northern News Services*, May 6, 2001.
- Munroe, V. "Educated Natives Have Difficulty Finding Work", *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, June 3, 1988.
- Peeling, Albert C. (with the assistance of Val Napoleon). "Aboriginal Governance: An Annotated Bibliography", Prepared for the First Nations Governance Centre, University of Saskatchewan, <http://fngovernance.org/pdf/FNGCbibliography.pdf>.
- "Rethink scholarship rejection", Editorial, *Northern News Services Online*, Friday, October 22, 1999, [http://www.nnsl.com/frames/newspapers/1999-10/oct25\\_99edit.html](http://www.nnsl.com/frames/newspapers/1999-10/oct25_99edit.html).
- Somerville, Janet. "The Innu, the Inuit and Inco: can their cultures co-exist?", *Catholic New Times*, 21(12) June 29, 1997
- Stackhouse, John. "Norma Rae of the Okanagan", *The Globe and Mail*, November 8, 2001, pp.A14-15.
- Taylor, Glenn. "Former IRC chair under investigation. Roger Gruben: facing tax fraud allegations", *Northern News Services*, August 15, 1997.
- "This land is my land: when Roger Gruben talks, Bay Street listens", *Financial Post Magazine*, March, 1993 pp. 16-22.
- "The Three Ls: The Traditional Education of the Indigenous Peoples", pp. 1-8 ([http://collections.ic.gc.ca/shingwauk/Section2/section2\\_1\\_8.html](http://collections.ic.gc.ca/shingwauk/Section2/section2_1_8.html)).
- "Time is a culture thing", editorial, *Northern News Services Online*, Monday, September 4, 2000, ([http://www.nnsl.com/frames/newspapers/2000-09/sep4\\_00edit.html](http://www.nnsl.com/frames/newspapers/2000-09/sep4_00edit.html)).

### **Reports and Research Studies of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples**

- Absolon, Kathy and Tony Winchester. "Cultural Identity for Urban Aboriginal Peoples", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Anaquod, Del C., and Vikas Khaladkar. "Case Study - The First Nations Economy in the City of Regina", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Aboriginal Economic, Training, Education and Employment", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Anaya, James S., Richard Falk, and Donat Pharand. "Canada's Fiduciary Obligation to Aboriginal Peoples in the Context of Accession to Sovereignty by Quebec - Volume 1 - International Dimensions", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Aronson, Stephen and Ronald C. Maquire. "Federal Treaty Policy Study", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).

- ATII Training Inc.. "Northern Education and Training Systems for Inuit: A Strategic Analysis", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Aucoin, Peter. "Relations between the Province of Nova Scotia and Aboriginal Peoples in Nova Scotia", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Augustine, Stephen J. et al. "Economic Profile of Big Cove - Case Study Analysis", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Barham, Vicky and Robin Boadway. "Financing Aboriginal Self-Government", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Barsh, Russel Lawrence and James Youngblood Henderson. "International context of Crown-Aboriginal Treaties", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Bear Robe, Andrew. "The Historical, Current and Legal Basis for Siksika Governance", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Berry, John W. "Aboriginal Cultural Identity", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Blumhagen, Tammy Anderson. "Memories and Moments", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Brant, Clare Clifton. "Suicide in Canadian Aboriginal Peoples", *The Path to Healing* (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1993).
- Brascoupé, Simon. "Strengthening Traditional Economies", *Sharing the Harvest* ——— "Kitigan Zibi...", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Brock, Kathy L. "Relations with Canadian Governments: Manitoba", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Brooke, Lorraine. "An Inventory of Mapping Projects in Connection with Aboriginal Land and Resource Use in Canada", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- "The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement: Experiences of the Nunavik Inuit with Wildlife Management", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Brown, Douglas M. "Aboriginal Peoples and Canadian Federalism", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Brown, Douglas M. and Alan Kari. "Aboriginal Peoples and Canadian Federalism", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Brown, Douglas M. and Jonathan Rose, "Exercising Aboriginal Self-Government", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Brown, Leslie A. "Community and the Administration of Aboriginal Governments", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Cameron, David and Jill Wherrett, "New Relationship, New Challenges: Aboriginal Peoples and the Province of Ontario", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Carens, Joseph H. "Citizenship and Aboriginal Self-Government", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Chamberlin, Ted and Hugh Brody. "Aboriginal History: Workshop Report", *For*

- Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Chapeskie, Andrew. "Land, Landscape, Culturescape", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Chartier, Clem. "Metis Lands and Resources", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Chartrand, Jean-Philippe. "Inuit statistics in Canada", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Chrisjohn, Roland D. and Sherri L. Young, "The Circle Game", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Clancy, Peter. "Contours of the Modern State in the Territorial North", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Clarkson, Linda. "A Case Study of the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg...", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Clatworthy, Stewart, Jeremy Hull and Neil Loughran, "Patterns of Employment, Unemployment and Poverty", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Clatworthy, "The Migration and Mobility Patterns of Canada's Aboriginal Population", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Coates, Ken. "'Hardly a Grand Design': Aboriginal Resettlement in the Yukon Territory After World War II", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Cohen, Benita and John O'Neil, "Health Services Development in an Aboriginal Community", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Colbert, Judith. "Child Care Literature Search and Recommendations", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Crossley, John. "Relations between the Province and Aboriginal Peoples in Prince Edward Island", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Cruikshank, Julie. "Claiming Legitimacy: Oral Traditional and Oral History", in *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Dacks, Gurston, "The Adaptation of Public Governing Institutions in the Territorial North", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Nunavut: Aboriginal Self-Determination Through Public Government", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Canadian Government and Aboriginal Peoples: The Northwest Territories", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Davidson, Jeffrey. "Rethinking Aboriginal Participation in the Minerals Industry; 1994, An Exploration of Alternative Modes", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- De Aguayo, Anna. "Background Paper on Customary Adoption", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Depew, Robert C. "Aboriginal Policing", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis,

- 1997).
- DesBrisay, David. "The Gaming Industry in Aboriginal Communities", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Impact of Major Resource Development Projects in Aboriginal Communities", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Dickerson, Mark O. and Robert Shotton, "Northern Self-Government and Subsidiarity: Centralization versus Community Empowerment", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Doern, G. Bruce. "The Politics of Slow Progress: Federal Aboriginal Policy Processes", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Dorion, John and Kuan R. Yang, "Metis Post-Secondary Education", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Drapeau, Lynn. "Issues in Language and Education for Aboriginal Populations in Quebec", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Drewes, Torben and Harry Kitchen, "Current practices in financing aboriginal government", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Dunn, Martin F. "All My Relations: The Other Metis", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Dupuis, Renée and Kent McNeil, "Canada's Fiduciary Obligation to Aboriginal Peoples in the Context of Accession to Sovereignty by Quebec -Volume 2 - Domestic Dimensions", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Dupuis, Renée. "Aboriginal Peoples and Employment Equity", *Sharing the Harvest*, pp.165-174.
- Erasmus, Roy. "Comprehensive Claims Agreements as Tools for Local/Regional Development", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Fletcher, Christopher and John O'Neil, "The Inuulisivik Maternity Centre", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Four Directions Consulting Group. "Patterns of Employment, Unemployment and Poverty, Part One", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Frederick H. Weihs Consulting. "A Review and Assessment of the Economic Utilization and Potential of Country Food in the Northern Economy", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- George, Peter, Peter Kuhn and Arthur Sweetman, "Patterns of Employment, Unemployment and Poverty", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- George, Peter and Peter Kuhn, "Expanding Employment in the Canadian Economy", *Sharing the Harvest*, pp. 149-164
- Gibbins, Roger, et al. "Domestic Governments and Aboriginal Peoples: The Alberta Case", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Gilchrist, Lauri and R. Anthony Winchester, "Urban Survivors, Aboriginal Street Youth, kaøptøtipis eø-pimohteyahk: Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Montreal", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).

- Giokas, John. "The Indian Act", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Goldsmith, Claire K. "Training the Teachers of Aboriginal Children", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Goss Gilroy Inc., "Federal, territorial and provincial expenditures...", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Government of Canada, *Report of the Special Representative Respecting the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*.
- Grant, Hugh M. "Resource Rents from Aboriginal Lands in Canada", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Gruben, Roger T. "The Land and the Resource Base", in *Sharing the Harvest*, pp. 51-60.
- Hebert, Yvonne M. "The State of Aboriginal Literacy and Language Education", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Hogg, Peter W. and Mary Ellen Turpel, "Implementing Aboriginal Self-Government: Constitutional and Jurisdictional Issues", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Hueglin, Thomas O. "Exploring concepts of treaty federalism", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Hutchins, Peter W. and Anjali Choksi, "Renouncing the Old Rules of the Game", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Institut Culturel et Éducatif Montagnais, "Development and Entrepreneurship in the Montagnais Communities of Quebec", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Jackson, Michael. "A new covenant chain", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Jetté, Corinne Mount Pleasant, "The Dynamics of Exclusion - Discrimination and Other Barriers Facing Aboriginal Peoples in the Labour Market", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- \_\_\_\_\_ "Creating a Climate with Confidence: Providing Services Within Aboriginal Communities", *Sharing the Harvest*, pp.120-136
- Joffe, Paul and Mary Ellen Turpel, "Extinguishment of the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Jull, Peter. "Re-inventing Canada", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- \_\_\_\_\_ "Them Eskimo Mob", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- \_\_\_\_\_ "A thousand years: Indigenous peoples and northern Europeans", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- KBM Forestry Consultants. "Sectoral Study: The Forest Industry's Relationship with Aboriginal Peoples", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Kalt, Joseph P. "Sovereignty and Economic Development on American Indian Reservations: Lessons from the United States", *Sharing the Harvest*
- Kaufert, Joseph M. "Health Status, Service Use and Program Models Among the

- Aboriginal Population of Canadian Cities", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Kerr et al., "Canada's Aboriginal Population, 1981-1991", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- King, Cecil. "The State of Aboriginal Education in Southern Canada", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Kinnon, Dianne. "Health is the Whole Person", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Kirmayer, Laurence et al., "Emerging trends in research on mental health", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Knight, Kevin. "Institutional and Human Resource Development Implications of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Kuhn, Peter et al. "Patterns of Employment, Unemployment and Poverty - Part II", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Lac Seul First Nation Research Team. "Pizaaenziwin: The Economy of the Obishikokaang (Lac Seul) Anishinaabeg", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Lafond, Lester. "Historical Use of Land and Resources", *Sharing the Harvest*.
- LaFrance, Brenda Tsioniaon. "Culturally Negotiated Education in First Nations Communities", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Lamothe, Rene M.J. "'It was only a treaty': Treaty 11 According to the Dene of the MacKenzie Valley", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Lange, Linda. "Fractured Vision", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- LeDressay, André et al. "Drawing Home: A CED Study of the Kamloops Urban Aboriginal Community", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Lightford, Elizabeth. "Child Care in the North", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Loxley, John et al., "Aboriginal People in the Winnipeg Economy: Case Study", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Lyall, William. "Retaining Wealth and Control in Remote Aboriginal Communities", *Sharing the Harvest*.
- Macklem, Patrick. "Normative Dimensions of the Right of Self-Government", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Magnet, Joseph Eliot. "Metis Land Rights in Canada: Legal Issues", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Malone, Marc and Carole Levesque, "Nunavik Government", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Mandell, Louise and E. Ann Gilmour, "Metis land rights in Canada", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Mandell, Louise and Leslie Pinder, "B.C. Issues", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa:

- Libraxis, 1997).
- Manitoba Metis Federation, "A Report on Metis Self-Government in Urban Manitoba", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Maracle, Richard R. and Associates, "Wildlife Sectoral Study", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Marcus, Alan Rudolph. "Inuit Relocation Policies in Canada and Other Circumpolar Countries", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Matthews, Hans. "Aboriginal Participation in the Minerals Industry", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- McKenzie, Brad. "Aboriginal Foster Family Care in Canada", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- McMahon, Don and Fred Martin, "The Metis and 91(24): Is inclusion the issue?", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- McNeil, Kent. "Aboriginal Governments and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Milen, Robert A. "Canadian Representation and Aboriginal Peoples", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Milloy, J.S. "Suffer the Little Children", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Milne, David. "The Case of New Brunswick-Aboriginal Relations", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Mitchell, Darcy A. and Paul Tennant, "Government to Government: Aboriginal Peoples and British Columbia", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Monture-Angus, Patricia A. "The Familiar Face of Colonial Oppression", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Morrison, James. "The Robinson Treaties of 1850: A Case Study", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Morse, Bradford W. and John Giokas, "Do the Metis fall within Section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867?", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Moscovitch, Allan and Andrew Webster, "Social Assistance and Aboriginal Peoples", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Moss, Wendy. "Inuit Perspectives on Treaty Rights and Governance Issues", *Aboriginal Self Government: Legal and Constitutional Issues* (Ottawa: RCAP, 1995),
- Mountain, Antoine and Susan Quirk, "Dene Nation: An Analysis", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Nayally, Laureen. "Wrigley Dene Band Research Report", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- The New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples' Council, "Aboriginal Self-Governance Within the Province of New Brunswick", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).

- Newhouse, David. "Modern Aboriginal Economies: Capitalism with an Aboriginal Face", *Sharing the Harvest: The Road to Self-Reliance* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1993).
- Norton, Ruth and Mark Fettes, "Taking Back the Talk", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- O'Neil, John. "Aboriginal Health Policy for the Next Century", *The Path to Healing*.
- Oakes, Jill and Rick Riewe. "Informal Economy: Baffin Regional Profile", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Obonsawin-Irwin Consulting Inc. "Urban Aboriginal Economic Development (Including Strengths and Weaknesses)", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Olthuis, John A. and H.W. Peter Townsend, "Is Canada's Thumb on the Scales?", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Opekokew, Delia. "The Nature and Status of the Oral Promises in Relation to the Written Terms of the Treaties", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Page, Robert. "Uranium Exploration and Mining and Aboriginal Peoples in Northern Canada", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Paulette, Lesley. "Midwifery in the North", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Penn, Alan. "The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement: Natural Resources, Public Lands, and the Implementation of a Native Land Claim Settlement", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Petch, Virginia. "The Relocation of the Sayisi Dene of Tadoule Lake", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Pratt, Alan. "The Fiduciary Relationship and Aboriginal Governance", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Praxis Research Associates. "A Case Study of the Inuit Economy: Pangnirtung, Northwest Territories", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Price Waterhouse. "Aboriginal Participation in the Minerals Industry", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Prince, Michael and Gary Juniper, "Public Power and the Public Purse: governments, Budgets and Aboriginal Peoples in the Canadian North", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Rasmussen, Ken. "The Case of Saskatchewan-Aboriginal Relations", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Reaume, Denise G. and Patrick Macklem, "Education for Subordination", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Reimer, Gwen. "A Case Study of an Inuit Economy: Pangnirtung, Northwest Territories", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Rice, Michael L. "Native Economic Development in Kahnawake: Banking and



- Collateral", *Sharing the Harvest*
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1996), 5 Volumes.
- \_\_\_\_\_*People to People, Nation to Nation: Highlights from the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1996),
- \_\_\_\_\_"Ethical Guidelines for Research", Integrated Research Plan, Appendix B, *For Seven Generations*.
- \_\_\_\_\_"Intervenor Participation Program, Final Report", August 1994, in *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- \_\_\_\_\_*The Mandate, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Background Documents* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1991),
- \_\_\_\_\_*Framing the Issues, Discussion Paper No. 1* (Ottawa: RCAP, 1992).
- \_\_\_\_\_*Focusing the Dialogue, Discussion Paper No. 2* (Ottawa: RCAP, 1993).
- \_\_\_\_\_*Overview of the First Round* (Ottawa: RCAP, 1992).
- \_\_\_\_\_*Overview of the Second Round* (Ottawa: RCAP, 1993).
- \_\_\_\_\_*Exploring the Options: Overview of the Third Round* (Ottawa: RCAP, 1993).
- \_\_\_\_\_*Toward Reconciliation: Overview of the Fourth Round* (Ottawa: RCAP, 1994).
- \_\_\_\_\_*National Round Table on Aboriginal Economic Development and Resources. Sharing the Harvest: The Road to Self Reliance* (Ottawa: RCAP, 1993).
- \_\_\_\_\_*Aboriginal Peoples in Urban Centres: Report of the National Round Table on Aboriginal Urban Issues* (Ottawa: RCAP: Canadian Communication Group--Publishing, 1993).
- \_\_\_\_\_*The Path to Healing: Report of the National Round Table on Aboriginal Health and Social Issues* (Ottawa: RCAP, 1993).
- \_\_\_\_\_*Aboriginal Peoples and the Justice System: Report of the National Round Table on Aboriginal Justice Issues* (Ottawa: RCAP, 1993).
- \_\_\_\_\_*Partners in Confederation: Aboriginal Peoples, Self-Government, and the Constitution* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1993).
- \_\_\_\_\_*Treaty Making in the Spirit of Co-Existence: An Alternative to Extinguishment* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1995).
- \_\_\_\_\_*Public Policy and Aboriginal Peoples, 1965-1992*, 4 Volumes (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1993-1996).
- \_\_\_\_\_*The Arctic Relocation: Report of the 1953-55 Relocation and Summary and Supporting Information*, 3 Volumes (Ottawa: RCAP, 1994);
- \_\_\_\_\_*Choosing Life: Special Report on Suicide Among Aboriginal People* (Ottawa: RCAP, 1995).
- \_\_\_\_\_*Bridging the Cultural Divide: A Report on Aboriginal People and Criminal Justice in Canada* (Ottawa: RCAP, 1996)
- \_\_\_\_\_*The Right to Self-Government and the Constitution: A Commentary* (Ottawa: RCAP, 1992).
- \_\_\_\_\_*Canada's Fiduciary Obligation to Aboriginal Peoples in the Context of*

- Accession to Sovereignty by Quebec*, 2 Volumes (Ottawa: RCAP, 1995).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Aboriginal Self-Government: Legal and Constitutional Issues* (Ottawa: RCAP, 1995).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *For Seven Generations: An Information Legacy of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Russell, Peter and Roger Jones, "Aboriginal Peoples and Constitutional Reform", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Sanders, Douglas. "Indigenous Peoples and Canada's Role on the International Stage", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Developing a Modern International Law on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- The Saskatchewan Federated Indian College, "Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Indigenous Student Perceptions", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- SaskNative Economic Development Corporation. "Metis Economic Development in Regina", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Saulis, Conrad. "Regional Overview of Aboriginal Child Care in Atlantic Canada", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Sinaaq Enterprises Inc. "Community Economic Case Study: Nain, Labrador", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Spaulding, Richard. "Doctrines of Dispossession: A Critical Analysis of Four Rationales for the Denial or Extinguishment of Aboriginal Rights in Canada", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Sprague, D.N. "Administrative History of Metis Claims", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Staples, Lindsay. "The Inuvialuit Final Agreement", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Stevenson, Marc G. "Traditional Inuit Decision-Making Structures and the Administration of Nunavut", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Stout, Madeleine Dion. "Family Violence in Aboriginal Communities", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Tanner, Adrian et al., "Aboriginal Peoples and Governance in Newfoundland and Labrador", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- The Teslin Tlingit Council, "Aboriginal Governments Case Study", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Thalassa Research, "Nation to Nation: Indian Nation/Crown Relations in Canada", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Tompkins, Gary N. et al., "La Loche Community Case Study, Final Report", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Turpel-Lafond, Mary Ellen. "Enhancing Integrity in Aboriginal Government", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997)..
- Usher, Peter J. "Contemporary Aboriginal Land, Resource and Environment Regimes

- Origins, Problems, and Prospects", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Valaskakis, Gail. "The Role, Development and Future of Aboriginal Communications", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Vermette, Kathy L. "Issues of Pedagogy in Aboriginal Education", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Verville, Pierre. "Le statut juridique des autochtones au quebec et le pluralisme", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Wasteneys, Clare. "Aboriginal Child Care in Ontario and Quebec", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Weinstein, J. "Metis Land Rights in Canada Research Project - Introduction", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Metis Land Rights in Canada Research Project – Conclusion", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Weinstein, Martin. "The Ross River Dena: A Yukon Aboriginal Economy", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Wicken, Bill and John G. Reid. "An Overview of the Eighteenth-Century Treaties Signed Between the Mi'kmaq and Wuastukwiuk Peoples and the British Crown, 1725-1928", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Wilkinson, Paul F. and Maria Vincelli. "The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement: An Evaluation of the Implementation of its Environmental Regimes", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Williams, C.B. "Sectoral Study: Agriculture", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Williams, Paul and Curtis Nelson, "Kaswentha", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Williamson, R.G. "Analysis of the Forces of Inuit and Southern White Interaction Until Mid-Century", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Significant Aspects of Acculturation History in the Canadian Arctic", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Winther, Neil. "A comprehensive overview of sports and recreation issues relevant to aboriginal peoples in Canada", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).
- Wuttunee, Wanda. "Aboriginal People and the Minerals Industry: Yukon and Denendeh, On Our Own Terms", *For Seven Generations* (Ottawa: Libraxis, 1997).

## Archival Materials

- Aboriginal Advisory Council, Manitoba Civil Service Commission, "Presentation to Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, December 8, 1992", (1992), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 218, File 8200-50M.
- Augustine, Stephen. "Economic Profile of Big Cove", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 154, File 7230-15.1, volume 2.1.1.14.
- Battiste, Marie. "Maintaining Aboriginal Identity, Languages, and Culture in Modern Society – Discussion Paper #5", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 123, File 6008-11B2.
- Beer, Mitchell. "When the Mirror Doesn't Lie: Confronting Racism and Promoting Understanding in Non-Aboriginal Populations", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 123, File 6008-11B1.
- Begley Consulting, "Oil and Gas Sectoral Study", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 156, File 7238-7.1, volume 2.9.6.
- Brice-Bennett, Carol. "Dispossessed: The Eviction of Inuit from Hebron, Labrador", Library and Archives Canada, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 178, File 7466-3.1, Volume 1 – 5.2.1.2.
- Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, "Aboriginal Peoples, Comprehensive Land Claims, and Sustainable Development in the Territorial North", brief submitted to RCAP (1993), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 215, File 8200-50C.
- Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, "Presentation to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", brief submitted to RCAP, Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 215, File 8200-50C.
- Canadian Labour Congress, "Aboriginal Rights and the Labour Movement", brief submitted to RCAP (1993), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/09, Box 215, File 8200-50C".
- Coates, Kenneth. "Creating a Common Past: The Search for Agency, Relevance and Authenticity in the Writing of Native History", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 131, File, 7090-5, Volume B-C1.
- Copes, Parzival et al., "West Coast Fishing Sectoral Study", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 155, File 7238-3.1C.
- Delâge, Denys. "Cultural Exchanges within the Franco-Amerindian Alliance, 1600 1760" [TRANSLATION], Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 158, File 7254-3.1D.
- Economic Development for Canadian Aboriginal Women (EDCAW), "Access to Financial Institutions", brief submitted to RCAP (1994), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 216, File 8200-50E.

- Emery and Associates, "You moved us here...: A Narrative Account of the Amalgamation and Relocation of the Gwa'Sala and "Nakwaxda'xw Peoples", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 178, File 7466-6.1, Volume 1, 5.2.1.5.
- The Federation of Canadian Municipalities in co-operation with the Canadian Association of Municipal Administration, "Municipalities and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada", submission to the RCAP (1993), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 215, File 8200-50C.
- First Nations Consultants, "Aboriginal Economic Development in Canada: A Policy Paper", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 151, File 7220-2.1.
- Fulham, Richard Scott. "A Historical Review of Metis Agriculture and its Current Status in Canada", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 155, File 7238-2.1F.
- Galloway, Brent and Steve Wolfson, "Education in Aboriginal Languages: Goals and Solutions for Canada - Discussion paper #6", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 123, File 6008-11G1.
- Goodstriker, Joyce and Marie Smallface Marule, "Treaty and Status Indian Perspective – Discussion Paper #3", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 123, File 6008-11G2.
- GTA Consultants, "Aboriginal Fisheries in the Maritimes", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 155, File 7238-3.1G
- Hatton, William J. "Metis Involvement in Northern Saskatchewan Mining", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 156, File 7238-4.1H, Volume 2.9.3.
- Inuvialuit Regional Council. "Political Developments in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 142, File 7156-16.1, Volume 1.5.1.15.
- Knockwood, Jean. "A Case Study in Grassroots Economic Development from a First Nations Perspective", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 142, File 7156-14.1.
- Lamonthe, Louis. "Today's dream, Tomorrow's Reality – Discussion Paper #4", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 123, File 6008-11L2.
- La Rusic, Ignatius. "Subsidies for Subsistence", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 152, File 7220-9.1.
- LeBrasseur, Margot M. and Rose-Alma McDonald-Jacobs, "Education Reform: Preparing for the Global Classroom – Discussion Paper #2", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 123, File 6008-11L1.
- Little Bear, Leroy et al., "Relationship of Aboriginal People to the Land and the

- Aboriginal Perspective on Aboriginal Title", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 162, File 7278-3.1.
- McDonald-Jacobs, Rose-Alma. "Aboriginal Education: Respect for the Past – Confidence in the future - Discussion Paper #1", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 123, File 6008-11M1.
- Metis Settlements General Council, "Metis Settlements General Council Aboriginal Economies Report", brief submitted February 1994, Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 153, File 7230-7.1, Volume 2.1.1.6.
- Native Association of Friendship Centres, "Final Report to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples", Intervener Participation Program Report (1993), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 219, File 8200-50N.
- Native Council of Canada, "The First Peoples Urban Circle, brief submitted to RCAP (1993), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 219, File 8200-50N.
- Newhouse, David et al, "The Six Nations Economy: Its Development and Prospects". This report is available at Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 154, File 7230-11.1, Volume 2.1.1.10.
- Pierce, Jon and Robert Horal, "Aboriginal People and Mining in Nunavut, Nunavik and Northern Labrador", October 1994, Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 179, file 7474-4.1, volume 5.2.4.3.
- Spence, Debi. "Rebuilding the Spirit of the Urban Aboriginal Under Class", brief submitted to RCAP (1993), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 220, 8200-50S.
- United Steelworkers of America, "Aboriginal Studies Project" (1993), Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 222, file 8200-50U7.
- Warrior, Roxanne. "Case Study of the Economy of the Peigan Nation", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 153, File 7230-6.1, Volume 2.
- Westcoast Development Group, "Aboriginal Economic Development Institutions", Library and Archives Canada, RG 33, Series 157, Accession 1997-98/089, Box 151, File 7220-3.1.