UNSETTLING KIN: FRACTURED GENERATIONS, INDIGENOUS FEMINISM, AND THE POLITICS OF NATIONHOOD

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Course: HIST 449, Honours Graduating Essay
Instructor: Dr. Courtney Booker

A graduating thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
in
The Faculty of Arts
History Department

We accept this thesis as confirming to the required standard

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University of British Columbia
June 28, 2018

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Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful for the guidance and encouragement of my supervisor, Dr. Paige Raibmon. She has consistently encouraged me over the course of the last year to dive into the sources, and draw out the narratives that are still waiting to be told. I thank Dr. Raibmon for both her patience and her attention to detail throughout the many drafts and revisions we have worked through.

I would also like to thank Dr. Courtney Booker, Chair of the Honours Programme, for his consistent dedication to our cohort's learning, engagement, and success. History can at times be an intimidating discipline; it is never ending. However, Drs. Raibmon and Booker have encouraged me to develop a deep sense of historical curiosity and confidence. I also thank Dr. Laura Ishiguro for her guidance under the Gold Rush Programme in the summer of 2017. She too, encouraged me to develop a deep sense of historical curiosity and confidence.

I graciously thank Senator Murray Sinclair, former Chief Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), for his willingness to be interviewed for this thesis. I am humbled to have been able to sit across from him to discuss such a topic, and for him to have been so patient and welcoming. This was also made possible through the Honours travel grant, and I thank our anonymous donors for their support of our historical pursuits.

And lastly, I thank my close friends and family. Particularly, I thank my good friends for their interest, encouragement, and kindness. I also thank the Honours cohorts of 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 for their hilarity, intelligence and drive. I thank Rosie Boxall for answering my many questions of past research projects of hers. I thank my close, extended family (Ida, Craig, Hannah, Owan and Gracie), for their abundance of love. I thank my newfound extended, biological family for welcoming myself and my immediate family in with such courage and

warmth. Ironically, without the archival research skills that this degree has taught me, I doubt that finding them would have been as easy.

And, above all, I thank my parents, and specifically my brother for consistently standing in my corner, and for cheering me on without fail. I thank those three from the bottom of my heart; merci infiniment à vous trois!

Brothers Once Removed

"Brothers once removed," he used to say about you.

I was too young to understand the weight of these words. It sounded funny to me, because I knew you were David's brother. But David and Daniel were brothers too, yet you weren't Daniel's brother. You shared David's blood, but had no recollection of him. This is what happens when someone, far away, in another city, tries to craft you an identity. You knew of David, of Emily, of Doug, of the other David too. But Daniel, David's brother, became your brother once removed.

What I remember is right before you left us, you learned that your people knew fish. They knew fish the way that I know my own name. With certainty, with ease, and with a silent nod to the way it tells me of my past. I carry the name of ancestors who have fled warzones, of a literary heroine who seeks freedom, of a mother who has loved me before she knew that I would come to be, and a father who has taught me to fight with every ounce of my being.

You were much like that with fish. It told you something, it told you of your ancestors. You did not know it, but I wonder if you carried what your people knew. My brother and I now carry that, thanks to you.

Your old boat, your cigarettes in your pocket, plastic bags in the trunk of your car. Ready to bring my bass home. With great ease and great kindness, you knew to fish. And you knew to teach my brother and I to fish. I cannot fish without thinking of how you fished with us. Without fault, every time I cast my line, I think back to how you fished.

"I am an imbecile," he said disappointed, his little body shaking. He had not caught the five-pound bass. I had caught it, screaming at first that I needed you to cut the line because it was stuck on a rock. Little me, realizing that I had caught a fish, jumping up and down. I think you might have sworn, chuckled, and clapped for me as my dad helped me reel it in.

"No imbecile would know to say 'imbecile'," you said quietly reassuring him.

Before you left us, you gave us more than I knew to recognize then. You and your brother once removed told a story. You were born at a time when your family was not given the respect they deserved. Someone, somewhere, wanted to give you an identity that differed from what you would have gotten otherwise. Because they believed yours to be wrong. You, like the brother and sister of your brother once removed, had a piece of you stolen before you even knew.

You would not meet your own blood for forty long years. You should never have been made to feel like a stranger in a room with your own. Sometimes I wonder what it would mean, if you had learned about your people and fish, long before you did. That is only one thing. But what you carried, you shared. I wonder what more you could have carried if you had been allowed to find it in the first place. I wonder what more you could have shared, if they had allowed you your identity. "Brothers once removed," he always says now.

Introduction

I would first like to begin by acknowledging my settler roots. I am a white-passing, cisgender woman whose ancestors include both white and non-white settlers. My family tree is a complex one, with both biological and non-biological branches. I have known my entire life of my mixed-heritage, and my diverse family. For that I am grateful.

Though I have faced instances of racialized injustice as a person of colour, I have not faced the systemic discrimination and violence that I outline in this thesis. It is with this in mind that I approached this project — with great care, respect and humility for the lived experiences of the women that I write about. Furthermore, I acknowledge that the majority of this thesis was written on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam people.

In the foreword to this thesis, I describe a man who was very close to my father. My father and his siblings, all adopted at a young age by my grandparents, were raised in largely white communities, despite all being people of colour. My father's siblings, adopted from Manitoba and Ontario at a very young age, are status 'Indians', of the Nishnaabeg people. As an adult, my father spent several years working with a colleague, Rod, on projects ironically related to Indigenous rights. Eventually, the two became very close friends, and after a few years, a conversation arose about how my father and his good friend had both been adopted. It was not until his forties that Rod was able to reunite with his siblings, most having been adopted into families living in other provinces.

After several decades, my family came to believe that Rod, and my father's siblings, were likely children of the Sixties Scoop. This conversation is a complicated one within my family, as it is deeply personal. I found out recently that one of my father's siblings was advertised for adoption similarly to what I explore in my second chapter. Indigenous children in

certain provinces had their photos placed in newspapers, with short descriptions, and with contact information for the adoptions office. My father's parents, my grandparents, still have the ad. I seek not to politicize the lived experiences of my close family members, but I do wish to emphasize the ways in which the history of Indigenous child welfare has played out amongst white Canadians. Told that they would be loving parents for a child that would otherwise have no home, my grandparents, like many others of their generation, adopted babies that they believed were in need.

The historical backdrop against which my extended family came together is but one instance in our country's tendency to infringe on Indigenous rights. This broader context is one which has seen different methods used to undermine the sovereignty of Indigenous nations. The discipline of history is one that has only more recently moved to include the narratives of Indigenous peoples. There is a particular gap, however, in reference to historical works which employ an Indigenous feminist lens. The following thesis focuses on the family as a site of Indigenous nationhood, relying on the works of Indigenous feminist scholars to do so.

I argue that through the systemic removal and erasure of women and children from their communities, the federal and provincial governments sought to weaken Indigenous nations by infringing upon their sovereignty. Historically, Indigenous women fared worse than their male counterparts, as a consequence of their existence at the intersections of sexism and racism. Within the broader public, Indigenous peoples faced consistent attacks on their Indigeneity. Indigenous women, however, faced simultaneous attacks on their Indigeneity and their gender, both in non-Indigenous and Indigenous circles.[1] The former demonstrates a hierarchical system of violence, whereas the latter demonstrates a lateral one, in which collective rage against the

[1] For more on the relationship between violence, gender and Indigeneity, please see: Lee Maracle, *I am Woman*, 2nd ed. (Richmond, BC: Press Gang Publishers, 1996).

colonizer "work[s] itself out in an expression of hate for one another."[2] This multi-layered discrimination and collective self-hatred confined Indigenous women to identities constructed by colonizers.

Upon the systemic internalization of these identities – that is to say, the internalization of colonial understandings of Indigeneity, particularly with respect to femininity – the erasure of Indigenous women's identities began. Bonita Lawrence traces this process of erasure back to the early days of Canada's nation-building process, explaining that the British chose to only negotiate with Indigenous men in the treaty process.[3] "Deliberately cut[ting] out the stabilizing presence of older women and the general authority that was given to their voices in major decisions concerning the land," colonial actors demonstrated that they had little regard for Indigenous women in political or quasi-political contexts.[4] Lawrence writes extensively on the experiences of Indigenous women, their historic erasure of their roles from social and political spheres, the ways in which colonialism oppressed and continues to oppress Indigenous women on the basis of both sex and race.[5] Colonial values thus began to relegate Indigenous women to apolitical environments, effectively restructuring the sociopolitical dynamics that had existed pre-contact. Colonizers viewed Indigenous men as the gateway to establishing political, or seemingly political relationships. Women, however, were seen as an impediment to the process, taking up spots that could be occupied by men.

With women excluded from Indigenous organizations, such as the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) and the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), they resorted to organize in ways that appeared to adhere to the gender divide brought on by colonizers. More

[2] Maracle, *I am Woman*, 11.
[3] Bonita Lawrence, *'Real' Indians and Others: Mixed-blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 46.
[4] Ibid, pp.
[5] Lawrence, *'Real' Indians and Others*. Particularly the following chapters: "Regulating Native Identity by Gender", "Reconfiguring Colonial Gender Relations Under Bill C-31", and "Racial Identity in White Society".

specifically, this meant that women were left to organize in environments that appeared apolitical, such as the British Columbia Native Women's Society (BCNWS) or the British Columbia Indian Homemakers Association (BCIHA). Sarah Nickel and Madeleine Knickerbocker explore this shift in British Columbia, as does Glen Coulthard.[6] Though at face value, these groups appeared to follow the circular lines of colonial understandings of private and public spheres, Indigenous women did in fact organize themselves politically, breaching this imaginary divide. While these three authors do emphasize the political re-emergence of Indigenous women, they do not distinctly recognize the role of Indigenous women in the child welfare crisis. There exists a historiographical gap with respect to the analysis of the role of women's organizations in the fight for child welfare. I intend to contribute to the historical understanding and representation of women's roles in the struggle for Indigenous control over questions of Indigenous child welfare. Indigenous women were the first to define the child welfare question as one directly related to Indigenous nationhood, and it began with their systemic erasure from their own communities.

Specifically, in Chapter 1, I examine clause 12(1)(b) of the *Indian Act, 1951* to argue that it fits within a pattern of breaches in Indigenous sovereignty, through its discriminatory approach to recognized 'Indian' status, and subsequently, its effects on the collective. This clause saw the removal of 'Indian' women's status and band membership upon marriage to a non-Indigenous man; their children would subsequently also be denied status and membership. I draw on a body of primary sources, ranging from radio interviews to Indigenous feminist newsletters, to establish

[6] Sarah Nickel, "'You'll probably tell me that your grandmother was an Indian princess': Identity, Community, and Politics in the Oral History of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 1969-1980," *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale* 34 (2014); Sarah Nickel, "'I Am Not a Women's Libber Although Sometimes I Sound Like One': Indigenous Feminism and Politicized Motherhood," *The American Indian Quarterly,* 41.4 (2017), 299-335; Madeline Rose Knickerbocker and Sarah Nickel, "NEGOTIATING SOVEREIGNTY: Indigenous Perspectives on the Patriation of a Settler Colonial Constitution, 1975-83," *BC Studies* 190 (Summer, 2016): 67-87; Glen Coulthard, "Essentialism and the Gendered Politics of Aboriginal Self-Government" in *Red Skin, White Masks* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

the historical context within which Indigenous women located their fight for equality; they argued it to be a collective question of Indigenous rights, rather than simply a case of sexism. Women's experiences at the intersections of racism and sexism granted them a diversified understanding of the inequalities faced by Indigenous peoples.

In Chapter 2, I explore the period known as the Sixties Scoop, wherein tens of thousands of Indigenous children were removed from their families and sent to live, in most cases, with white families. For this, I draw on a variety of primary sources, ranging from newspaper articles, to ads, to a recent podcast, and to reports from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. What I emphasize for both chapters, is the deeply destructive nature of 12(1)(b) and the Sixties Scoop on the collective, or more specifically, on Indigenous nationhood. Indigenous nationhood, as employed by Daniel Heath Justice, "is more than simple political independence or the exercise of a distinct cultural identity".[7] It also includes "the understanding of a common social interdependence within the community, the tribal web of kinship rights and responsibilities that link the People, the land and the cosmos in an ongoing dynamic of mutually affecting relationships."[8] Resisting the systemic violence and oppression brought on by colonizers, while simultaneously drawing attention to the presence of a similar kind of violence and oppression within the collective psyche of the colonized, Indigenous women aimed to dismantle the confines they and their children were subjected to.

Drawing on my two first chapters, Chapter 3 analyzes the Indian Child Caravan in British Columbia as a means of recapturing Indigenous sovereignty, using a collection of primary sources from the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs. I simultaneously examine the erasure

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[7] Daniel Heath Justice, "'Go Away Water!' Kinship Criticism and the Decolonization Imperative" in *Learn, Teach, Challenge: Approaching Indigenous Literatures*, edited by Linda M. Morra and Deanna Reder (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2016), 353.
[8] Ibid, pp.

of women from the historical narrative, within the context of the Caravan. I use this to ultimately highlight the ways in which Indigenous feminism accounted for the lived experiences of women and children with respect to popular understandings of Indigenous sovereignty and nationhood. I conclude by relating these three chapters to the present, and by emphasizing how current inequality can be understood to in fact be a continuation of the legacy of colonialism. My intent is to underline the relationship between recognition and reconciliation, and to provide a historical context to the status quo. Reconciliation seems impossible without first an admission or recognition of continued power imbalances; without acknowledging the historical process through which we have arrived at our current state, we simultaneously oppress Indigenous resurgence, and deny the realities of the effects of colonization.

I situate my analysis in these chapters within the growing body of decolonial and Indigenous feminist literature. First and foremost, I draw on the works of Lee Maracle to identify the persistent oppression of Indigenous women, and to identify the systemic violence that these women face.[9] Specifically, Maracle identifies the multi-faceted forms of sexualised violence that Indigenous women have faced since European contact, by challenging the heteronormativity/anti-queerness, whiteness, paternalism and patriarchal nature of settler society. Further, she describes the utterly destructive consequences of the internalization of these values: Indigenous women bear the brunt of both racism and sexism, in white and in Indigenous communities. "Decolonization", according to Maracle, "will require the repatriation and the rematriation of [the expropriated accumulated] knowledge by Native peoples themselves."[10] It is thus an active process, in the sense that Indigenous peoples participate in the resurgence of revitalization of this knowledge.

[9] Maracle, *I am Woman*.
[10] Ibid, 92.

I rely significantly on the works of Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, in order to better understand both the history and historiography of Indigenous resurgence, as well as the concept of nationhood.[11] Specially, Simpson writes of the effects of colonialism on Indigenous survival, and on the role of Indigenous 'resurgence' and 'resistance' in challenging colonialism. Further, Simpson emphasizes resurgence as a fundamental part of protecting the future of Indigenous nationhood. Grounding the concept of reconciliation in Nishnaabeg beliefs, Simpson identifies regeneration as central to this process. Her critique of the "institutionalization" of reconciliation identifies our current era as one that risks ignoring the "broader set of relationships that generated policies, legislation and practices aimed at assimilation and political genocide" — we risk teaching Canadians that "the historical 'wrong'" of colonialism has been "righted", meaning that "further transformation is not needed, since the historic situation has been remedied."[12] That is to say, it is imperative that we broaden our understandings of colonial 'wrongs', which necessitates an Indigenous feminist lens to interpret the ways in which colonialism has violently taught both settlers and Indigenous peoples alike to believe in the supremacy of whiteness, heteronormativity/anti-queerness, and patriarchal values.

In terms of resistance, Simpson explains it as the "processes we engage in to prevent" colonization and assimilation.[13] This encompasses "act[ing] against political processes that undermined [traditional Indigenous] forms of governance, [Indigenous] political cultures, [Indigenous] intellectual traditions, the occupation and destruction of [Indigenous] lands, [and] violence against [Indigenous] children and women".[14] Simpson thus draws a link between Indigenous nation's ontologies and epistemologies, these forms of resistance, and the ways in

[11] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *Dancing on our Turtle's Back* (Winnipeg: Arbiter Ring Publishing, 2011); Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017).
[12] Simpson, *Dancing on our Turtle's Back*, 22.
[13] Ibid, 53.
[14] Ibid, pp.

which resurgence can be achieved. To further expand on this, I invoke the work of Glen Coulthard, who argues that our settler state is one which benefits from the "ongoing practice of dispossession" of Indigenous peoples and their resources.[15] This continuous dispossession, along with the earlier dispossession of knowledge identified by Lee Maracle, creates a state within which colonialism continues to exist — it is not a thing of the past, but rather a continued affront to Indigeneity, through its consistent extractionary and oppressive tactics. This also closely relates to Simpson's explanation of the perceived 'right-ing' of colonialism, and is of significant importance within the context of the lived experiences of Indigenous women. Coulthard also examines the internalization of colonizer values and psyche on the colonized, interpreting Fanon's theories of "negritude" and the relationship between "cultural self-recognition and projects of decolonization."[16] This self-recognition is a fundamental part of the framework that Indigenous feminism permits: it promotes the rejection of colonial constructs of Indigenous identity, and actively protests the consistent internalization of colonialism.

On this topic, the works of scholars such as Joyce Green, Kim Anderson, and Cheryl Suzack identify Indigenous feminism as a means to reject colonialism and undo its complex and oppressive control of Indigenous identity. Green defines Indigenous feminism as bringing together two distinct critiques: "feminism and anti-colonialism".[17] It is thus a "theoretical engagement with history and politics, as well as practical engagement with contemporary social, economic, cultural and political issues."[18] It is an act of resistance, by means of its constant and active opposition to white supremacy, sexism and anti-queerness. This is evident in Anderson's

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[15] Glen Coulthard, Red Skin, White Masks (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).
[16] Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks,* 133. For a primordial analysis of decolonization and the colonizer-colonized psyche, please see: Frantz Fanon, "On Violence" and "On National Culture" in *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1961); Frantz Fanon, "The So-Called Dependency Complex of Colonized Peoples," "The Negro and Psychopathology," and "The Negro and Recognition" in *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1986).
[17] Joyce Green, "Taking Account of Aboriginal Feminism," in *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, ed. Joyce Green (Black Point, NS: Fernwood Publishers, 2007), pp 23.
[18] Ibid, 25.

work, as she closely links the process of decolonization with gender.[19] "When it comes to addressing issues related to Native women," and working towards decolonization, it is essential to understand how "gendered and intergenerational relations worked in the societies of our ancestors; about how our foremothers and grandmothers defined and then lived their identities, roles, and authorities and about how much of this was lost."[20] "Indigenous feminism" promotes the "build[ing] of healthier nations."[21] Also focusing on the legacy of colonialism and its sociopolitical consequences, Cheryl Suzack and Shari Huhndorf explain that Indigenous feminism "centres on the fact that the imposition of patriarchy has transformed Indigenous societies by diminishing women's power, status, and material circumstances."[22] Suzack further explores the delegitimization of Indigenous women's lived experiences and the barriers in the expression of emotion, by analyzing official Canadian policies and court cases. With this overview of the relationship between Indigenous feminism and Indigenous nationhood, I specifically address the ways in which sovereignty can be explored through an Indigenous feminist lens.

I point to the concept of 'kinship sovereignty' to establish the grounds for my historical intervention. Establishing a relationship between kinship and sovereignty, Mark Rifkin writes that like "kinship, sovereignty is a translation, articulating native peoples' existence as polities through a comparison to the logics and structures of the settler state."[23] These two concepts are "intertwined", with the former "providing a way of variously managing, containing, and/or

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[19] Kim Anderson, *Life Stages and Native Women: Memory, Teachings, and Story Medicine* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2011), 1.
[20] Ibid, 4.
[21] Kim Anderson, "Affirmations of an Indigenous Feminist," in *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism and Culture.* Cheryl Suzack, Shari M. Huhndorf, Jeanne Parreault, and Jean Barman (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 85.
[22] Cheryl Suzack and Shari Huhndorf, "Introduction," in *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism and Culture.* Cheryl Suzack, Shari M. Huhndorf, Jeanne Parreault, and Jean Barman (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 3.
[23] Mark Rifkin, *When Did Indians Become Straight?: Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 17.

disassembling dominant ideological and institutional matrix of Anglo-American governance." The latter "refers (...) to the uneven and fraught dynamics by which the settler state recognizes/disavows Indigenous modes of peoplehood and Indigenous peoples negotiate the shifting imperatives/contingencies of settler rule."[24] I further draw out Rifkin's conceptualization of the relationship between kinship and sovereignty, to emphasize the term 'kinship sovereignty'. I choose to specify, to emphasize how the federal and provincial governments interfered with the future of Indigenous nations, but in ways that were not specifically resource-based, or geographic. In other words, it appears that when employing the term 'sovereignty' with respect to Indigenous rights in Canada, it often relates to geographic boundaries or natural resources, and subsequently, the relationship that exists between those two and the rights of Indigenous nations. Specifically, the interconnectedness of title, land, resources and sovereignty has long been explored, through landmark court cases and public activism.

Rifkin writes about the complexities of Native American lived experiences but his argument for the relationship between kinship and sovereignty is applicable to the Canadian context. Although this concept is new to the academic discipline of history, it is not new to the Indigenous leaders and activists that I discuss here. The etymology of 'nation/-hood' in scholarly discourse began around 1882.[25] In particular, Ernest Renan used it to describe a collective sense of identity and nationalism throughout the French Republic, in the aftermath of the French Revolution. Indigenous peoples' collective sense of belonging and survival, however, has existed since time immemorial. While recognising the limitations of these phrases, throughout this thesis I use the terms 'nation' and 'nationhood' in reference to distinct Indigenous collectives, their

[24] Ibid, pp.
[25] Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1882).

survival, and the means through which they ensure their survival – reflecting their use in the contemporary discourse of Indigenous activists and organizations.

These collectives share histories, languages, customs, and traditional practices which differ from the settlers who arrived across the continent. Thus, while the terminology I personally employ, as well as the terminology employed in the primary sources, is nation-based, the concept itself predates the inception of these very words. More specifically, within the Indigenous context, the collective – now commonly defined as various 'nations' – was rooted in the existence of familial lines. Geographic boundaries, Cartesian points and legal documents did not define particular peoples; kinship did. [26] One was a member of their collective through their lineage, and as families expanded physically, across regions, so did their peoples. In that particular sense, Indigenous 'nations' existed extra-geographically, or at least, somewhat independently of territory. In other words, one collective, made up of several families, could span hundreds of kilometres. Belonging was not tied to a geographic region; one was not, for example, Carrier explicitly because of where they lived. They were Carrier based on their familial connection, and through their mothers and grandmothers. This particular conceptualization of the collective, and membership with regards to the collective, is what is invoked by the female activists I outline in this thesis.

With the arrival of settler colonialism, and the subsequent identity framework that it employed, Indigenous identities were redefined along geographic boundaries. In settler discourse, this meant that Indigenous collectives began to systemically be tied to land, which meant that former, traditional methods were delegitimized by settler state. Colonial views on

[26] For an analysis of the relationship between kin, nationhood, colonialism and capitalism, please see: Jo-Anne Fiske, "Gender and Politics in a Carrier Indian Community," (PhD Dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1989).

gender and race began to enforce upon Indigenous peoples moulds of what Indigeneity could be. Heteronormative, patriarchal, paternalistic configurations of identity have continuously been thrust upon Indigenous peoples in Canada, consistently oppressing women in the process. At the intersections of racism and sexism, facing both the oppression of the colonial state and internal oppression, Indigenous women have approached nationhood and sovereignty through a far different lens than their male counterparts.[27] The following thesis explores the efforts of women to articulate and emphasize the systemic oppression they and their children faced as successive, calculated and deeply destructive breaches in sovereignty.

[27] I acknowledge the ways in which colonialism has enforced a binary understanding of gender upon Indigenous societies, and that this is one particular form of colonial violence that continues. While much of my secondary sources, if not all, make specific mention of inclusive gender terms, the primary sources I consulted exclusively made use of binary terms.

CHAPTER 1:

Women, Children, and Indigenous[28] Families — 'Indian' Women & The Politics of Belonging

"[T]he strength for the future lies in our grandchildren"

— JUANITA PERLEY[29]

This chapter analyzes the impacts of colonial legislation—the *Indian Act, 1951*—on Indigenous family structures in order to locate both the impacts and the legislation within a broader context of sovereignty breaches. To do so, I pay particular attention to activism by and on behalf of Indigenous women's organizations and individuals, surrounding section 12(1)(b) of the Indian Act that led to its eventual removal from the Act. I argue that this policy constituted much more than breaches of these women's individual, human rights: these policies are consistent with a historical pattern of attacks against Indigenous nationhood. Drawing on a collection of primary sources, including radio interviews and articles from a variety of Indigenous and feminist publications, I analyze the events surrounding the removal of 12(1)(b) paying particular attention to the tension of that era. Specifically, I examine the ways in which Indigenous women fought not only against the structural racism and sexism of federal policies, but began to publicly challenge the permeation of colonial values within Indigenous circles of governance. Further, I identify this particular period of Indigenous feminist activism as having been pivotal in the broadening of sovereignty-related discourse within Canadian public consciousness, due to the ways in which it succeeded in reframing concepts of nationhood.

[28] I use the term "Indigenous", throughout this thesis, to refer to First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. When using the term 'Indian', I do so within the legal context, as per the Indian Act. When not used in the name of an organization, I use single quotation marks ('Indian').

[29] Juanita Perley, as quoted in: Janet Silman, *Enough is Enough: Aboriginal Women Speak Out* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press and Women's Press, 1992), 220.

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Paternalistic and discriminatory in nature, the Indian Act exemplified the intersections of racism and sexism in the day-to-day lives of Indigenous women, particularly with respect to the politics of belonging. Indigenous women's identities as 'Indian' were legally tied to that of their husbands — section 12(1)(b) mandated that a "woman who married a person who is not an Indian" would concurrently lose her rights to band membership, and her status under the *Indian Act, 1951*.[30] No such clause existed in reference to Indigenous males, upon their potential marriage to a non-'Indian' woman. It is important to emphasize the distinction between band membership and the recognition of identity in a nation-based interpretation of belonging. I argue not that band membership equates to a recognition of identity. Rather, I argue that it was the dissolution of a woman's membership and the revocation of a woman's status under the law that precluded her (and her children) from maintaining a distinct, noticeable and practical tie to her nation.

This specific policy barred women and their children from accessing the physical site which acted as a host to the language, cultural practices, and ancestral historical narratives to the distinct identities of their respective Indigenous nations. Thus, this policy severed a vast number of individuals' ties to their historical identities. Emphasizing the generational impacts of 12(1)(b), a number of Indigenous female activists — namely Mary Two-Axe Early, Jeanette Lavell, Yvonne Bédard and Sandra Lovelace — defined this phenomenon as an issue of collective rights, fitting within the rhetoric related to 'self-government' that emerged in the 1960s, following Trudeau's failed White Paper proposal in 1968. This clause, colloquially referred to as 'marrying out', breached Indigenous sovereignty by revoking a woman's membership to a nation, and by denying her heirs such membership.

[30] Canada. *Indian Act, 1951*.

As for the rise of Indigenous women in public spheres, there is no single aspect to distinctly explain their emergence into federal discussions of Indigenous rights. Though Indigenous men had long organized politically and consequently undertaken methods to publicize the concerns that they observed, women had little recourse to publicize theirs. In Saskatchewan for instance, the province with the "oldest Provincial Indian organization in Canada", Indigenous women had no public representation until nearly three decades following the creation of the then Federation of Saskatchewan Indians "back in the 1930's" (now the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations).[31] Reflecting in 1981 on the prevalence of men within Indigenous politics, one public servant explained "that the Indian and Inuit people and its representative associations have always been considered as male bastions."[32]

Campaigning to form a Saskatchewan Native Women's Association in the mid 1960s, Flora Mike identified a distinct difference between the ways in which Indigenous men had organized in comparison to Indigenous women and alluded to how this further promoted inequality. "[I]n order to catch up to men," she explained, Indigenous women had to become "organized provincially and nationally": Indigenous men organized along political lines, through organizations such as the National Indian Brotherhood (now the Assembly of First Nations), or the aforementioned Federation of Saskatchewan Indians.[33] Only after organizing, could women "enjoy the same recognition."[34] This statement can be further analyzed, at which point it becomes evident that female activists identified their erasure and exclusion not only as problematic, but that this had come to shape the status quo of Indigenous communities. By leaving women out of the decision-making process, visions of strong Indigenous futures were

[31] Sol Sanderson, "The Past - Present - Future," *Saskatchewan Indian* 1.1 (July 1970), 1.
[32] Native Women's Association of Canada, Newsletter 1.2 (Ottawa: October 1981), 5. Rise Up! Feminist Archive. URL: http://riseupfeministarchive.ca/wp-content/uploads/NWAC-vol1.No_.2-Oct.pdf. Last accessed: April 28, 2018.
[33] "Indian Women Urged to Become Organized," *Saskatchewan Indian* 2.4 (April 1971), 9.
[34] Ibid.

only publicized through a male lens. As such, women began to organize. Organizing, whether provincially or federally, meant that women's interests could be legitimized through the same processes, methods and mediums used by their male counterparts. Pressure could be applied to federal and provincial governments, with the interests of Indigenous women and their children explicitly acknowledged in these organizations' mandates. As Ms. Mike affirmed, such an organization would become a "strong voice for the native women of Saskatchewan."[35]

At the same time as these developments, second-wave feminism began to arise in the early 1960s, in reaction to the realities faced by women in the aftermath of the World War II. This, too, contributed to the historical context within which Indigenous feminism grew. Most notably, Equal Rights for Native Women in 1968 — later Indian Rights for Indian Women (IRIW), in 1971— headed by Mary Two Axe Early, developed in the face of what Early determined to be the sexist tones of section 12(1)(b). Writing that "[d]uring the late fifties and sixties, women's long struggle for equality emerged here and abroad," Early explained in 1968, "we Indian women felt that the climate was right, that our time had come."[36] Having married a non-Indigenous man, Early and her children lost their status. The consequences of 12(1)(b) were far reaching— physical, cultural and emotional ramifications were relatively normal occurrences. This is echoed in a variety of primary sources from the era, which, as a result of the destruction of an Indigenous identity, detail severe communal effects.[37] This included widespread struggles with substance abuse, the breakdown of families and familial relationships, and a profound sense of loss for generations of individuals.

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[35] Ibid.
[36] Mary Two-Axe Early, "Indian Rights for Indian Women" in *Women, Feminism and Development*, eds. Huguette Dagenais and Denise Piché (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 430.
[37] Women's groups held workshops and placed ads in newspapers to address broader communal issues. Furthermore, they also created group and foster homes, as an alternative to non-Indigenous placement. Please see: Fran Smith, "Our Children, Our Homes," *Indian World* 3.6 (1980): 25.

Two-Axe Early explained that women "suffered banishment from their tribal roles, loss of family or tribal inheritance, and forfeiture of any ownership of property."[38] The significance of this formal erasure of Indigenous women from their communities is perhaps best exemplified by briefly examining Nisga'a traditions. In historically matrilineal and matriarchal nations, for instance, this meant the loss of knowledge for the nation as a whole. The Nisga'a Nation, in the Nass River Valley, is one that has historically been matrilineal and matriarchal. Matriarchs (*Sigidimhaanak*), held notable roles with respect to the ways in which oral histories (*Adaawak*) preserved "family hunting, fishing, and gathering territories" (*Ango'oskw*). Thus, in forcibly removing certain women from communities and nations such as these, the knowledge they carried with them risked being lost. In banishing women from their tribal roles, the collective was weakened by the absence of what Indigenous women were traditionally thought to bring to their communities.

On the topic of women in relation to the collective, one young Indigenous poet described her grandmother as a "Woman of wisdom / Mother of nature / Bearer of children / Teacher of culture / Holder of history / Doctor of medicine (…)".[39] Though not in direct response to the activism of the era, this poem appeared around the height of the dispute surrounding Indigenous women's rights (in 1980), and reflects a young woman's understanding and views on the importance of Indigenous women relating to the protection and transmission of culture and knowledge. Further, the young female poet identifies her own grandmother as a particular source of this is her own life, and emphasizes the grandmother's role in relation to the collective. As a healer (or doctor of medicine), carrier of knowledge (woman of wisdom and holder of history), and transmitter of tradition and customs (teacher of culture), her grandmother stands out as a

[38] Early, "Indian Rights for Indian Women," 430.
[39] Darlene Tallio, "A Day in the Life of a Grandmother," *Indian World* 3.4 (1980): 34.

unique actor within the concept of Indigenous nationhood. I choose to emphasize this writer's poem in order to underline her grandmother's tie to the collective. In order to maintain and ensure the survival of what the grandmother was known to bring to the collective, her role within the community had to be protected.

Thus, the banishing of Indigenous women from their traditional roles and places within Indigenous nations can be understood on this micro-level: had the grandmother been banished, the knowledge she carried with her risked also being lost. The physical presence of Indigenous women was a fundamental aspect of the survival of Indigenous nations. Ironically, this very same relationship between ancestral lands and the keeping of customs was also emphasized by male leaders. Writing in a 1975 UBCIC report on cut-off lands and land claim negotiations, one male author explained reserves to be the "remnants", or "bits and pieces" of "[Indigenous] sovereignty, of [Indigenous] culture that have survived."[40] "Reserve lands", as one UBCIC position paper declared, "should provide a base for [Indigenous] cultural identity."[41] They would not, however, listen to very similar discourse from their female counterparts.

Having established the context for the emergence of these female activists, I now establish the ways in which these women approached inequality. In a letter to the editor in *Indian World*, one woman described this as a form of "genocide", with women losing "all [their] rights, heritage, cultural values."[42] In identifying these systemic practices with discourse related to genocide, activists began to highlight the severity and urgency of the situation their nations faced, and did so against the backdrop of global, post-war politics. Specifically, the charge of genocide evoked the implementation of international standards and protocols with respect to the

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[40] Reuben Ware, *Our Homes Are Bleeding: A Short History of Indian Reserves* (Victoria: Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 1975), 6. UBCIC Digital Collections.
[41] Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, *A Declaration of Indian Rights: The BC Indian Position Paper* (Vancouver: 1970), 7. UBCIC Digital Collections.
[42] Letter to the Editor, *Our Indian World* 3.6 (1980), 33. UBCIC Digital Collections.

United Nation's 1948 *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*. Aiming for proper representation on provincial and national platforms, Indigenous women began to engage with both non-Indigenous and Indigenous public consciousness through discourse with political connotations. Though not legally binding, the *Convention* responded to historical instances of mass extermination and violence and presented the stance taken by the predominantly Western world powers. It defined genocide as any act "committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group" by means of "[k]illing members of the group", "[c]ausing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group", "[d]eliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part", "[i]mposing measures intended to prevent births within the group", and "[f]orcibly transferring children of the group to another group."[43] By invoking the recent definition of genocide, activists emphasized the ways in which 12(1)(b), though seemingly exclusively discriminatory towards Indigenous women, conformed to a particular set of practices that intentionally sought to eliminate or significantly weaken a collective.

Women and their children were, according to Two-Axe Early, "stripped of their Indian cultural identity, evicted from their homes, separated from their family and friends, and denied burial on their sacred burial grounds beside the mothers who bore them and the fathers who begot them."[44] Not only were these women subject to the legal denial of their Indigenous identity, but in doing so, they also lost the aspects of Indigenous identity related to customs, tradition and community. These consequences, together, effectively severed — as estimated in

[43] Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, United Nations General Assembly, December 9, 1948, Article 2. United Nations Treaty Series.
[44] Early, "Indian Rights for Indian Women," 430.

1981 — 100,000 non-status individuals from their nations.[45] It was with this in mind that Indigenous women fought 12(1)(b), arguing that such high numbers constituted a collective crisis, rather than one explicitly related to women; nations were losing their women and children, through no policies of their own. Before a parliamentary committee on the rights of Indigenous women in 1982, Jane Gottfriedson, the then-president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, emphasized the collective. "[W]hile sex discrimination is the issue before the Subcommittee," she explained, "Indian women are also concerned about a larger issue": "the denial of *Indian* rights to *Indian* women through sex discriminatory federal legislation."[46]

This seemingly sexist legislation was a way to infringe on what Gottfriedson referred to as Indigenous "unity".[47] Further, there existed a "crying need for the Indian people of this country to be unified in their struggle to achieve recognition of Indian Governments".[48] In Gottfriedson's view, and the view of other female activists, Indigenous self-government, or Indigenous sovereignty, could not be achieved without the inclusion of women in the process. NWAC and other Indigenous women's organizations explicitly argued that this same "unity" partially depended on "securing the right of Indian women and their first generation children to be reinstated into their bands."[49] Understanding the financial and resource-based effects of reinstatement based on early estimates, Gottfriedson also indicated that NWAC sought a separate subcommittee to deal with "additional financial and land resources, and mechanisms for

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[45] "Taking the Power Back: Native Women Organize," *Our Native Land*, CBC Digital Archives. Original air date: August 30, 1974.
URL: http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/taking-the-power-back-native-women-organize. Last accessed: April 27, 2018.
[46] Native Women's Association of Canada, Newsletter 1.65 (Ottawa: September 1982), 9. Rise Up! Feminist Archive. URL: http://riseupfeministarchive.ca/wp-content/uploads/NWAC-newsletter-vol1no65-Sept.82.pdf. Last accessed: April 29, 2018. My emphasis on "Indian".
[47] Ibid, pp.
[48] Ibid, pp.
[49] Ibid, 4.

reinstatement" for an estimated 22,000 women and 46,000 children.[50] Indigenous women were prepared to engage politically and legally, just as their male counterparts had continuously done. Identifying federally-instituted sexism as a means of impacting Indigenous peoples across the country, Indigenous women continued to publicly challenge the legality of 12(1)(b). In particular, one activist with the NWAC referred to these provisions as lacking "any concept of nationhood [or] citizenship".[51]

Later reflecting in the 1990s on her involvement and her critique of 12(1)(b), Early explained that the patriarchal nature of status outlined in the Indian Act was irreconcilable with her traditional "Iroquoian Indian" customs, which were rooted in matrilineal understandings of belonging. A Mohawk of Kahnawake, Early's nation was one that had ancestrally associated 'citizenship', or belonging, with one's mother. Also problematic in this respect, section 12(1)(b) directly forwent ancestral conceptualizations of belonging and identity, promoting and enforcing a sexist and culturally irrelevant framework upon various matrilineal Indigenous nations. Early and other activists repeatedly emphasized the collective in their fight against this particular clause, maintaining that abolishing 12(1)(b) was in the interest of all, and not exclusively women. Emphasizing the toll that this policy had on the collective, Early indicated that she "was outraged by the grave psychological effects, experienced by so many of [her] sisters, of being expelled from their families and from their communities, stripped of their cultural identity and banished from their bands and their tribal roles."[52]

Activists argued that 12(1)(b) was culturally incompatible with historical Indigenous practices, and its sexism was in fact detrimental to all. Women sought to strengthen Indigenous

[50] Ibid, pp.; Estimates were published in an INAC report, quoted in "Indigenous Women Fight for Equal Rights," *Our Native Land*, CBC Digital Archives. Original air date: March 2, 1985. URL: http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/our-native-land-native-women-fight-for-equal-rights. Last accessed: April 26, 2018.
[51] "Indigenous Women Fight for Equal Rights," *Our Native Land*, CBC Digital Archives.
[52] Early, "Indian Rights for Indian Women," 431.

self-government, though they were continuously accused of seeking their own rights at the cost of the collective. Women identified the impacts of sexism and racism within Indigenous communities, or disrupting the status quo, was a way of freeing Indigenous nations of the chains of colonialism. As Early put it, "[I]f Indian nations reclaimed their old cultural values of community caring and sharing, of respect and love for women and children, of Indian communities where women received the recognition of their importance to community life", the collective would benefit from "unity".[53] As Early explained, unity meant that communities would be better suited to "address the problems of poverty and despair that affect[ed] so many" Indigenous peoples by acknowledging the value of women's lived experiences.[54] Just as male chiefs identified numerous federal policies as tainted by racism and assimilatory tactics, Indigenous women identified their exclusion from formal organizations and consultative processes as another weakness in the future of the collective. In excluding women, and exiling them from their nations, federal legislation contributed to a societal imbalance that severely affected Indigenous communities. Regaining control over citizenship, through the recognition of Indigenous self-determination, was thus touted by female activists a way to counter colonialism.

Tension eventually grew, as women began to advocate on behalf of themselves. Sarah Nickel explains that in the eyes of male leaders, "colonialism caused gender inequality, so decolonization would solve it", and attempts to simply address gender inequality did so at the cost of activism and attention that could be directed towards decolonization.[55] Referring to decolonization, an article written in 1975 by a young female author points to how Indigenous communities' pursuit of "self-sufficiency" would counter "the dominance of European culture

[53] Ibid, pp.
[54] Ibid, 433.
[55] Nickel, "I Am Not a Woman's Libber," 318.

and its adverse effects".[56] Indigenous women were forced to develop particular strategies to de-emphasize what male leaders had promoted within Indigenous public consciousness, in order to demonstrate that male attempts at decolonization or 'self-sufficiency' did not sufficiently acknowledge or address the ways in which sexism weakened Indigenous nations.

Articles published in *Saskatchewan Indian* indicate the extent of the exclusion of women from federal and Indigenous exchanges between leaders: "A Joint Cabinet and National Indian Brotherhood Committee has been established to carry on discussions and dialogue."[57] Thus, the vision for the future was in reality only being shaped by men. Women argued that female and male Indigenous groups were attempting to achieve the same goal: Indigenous self-determination, or as commonly referred to at the time, self-government. As Jane Gottfriedson explained, both male and female-led Indigenous organizations "advocated Indian self-determination and Indian self-government."[58] Male leaders, however, did not believe this to be true.

Reflecting in 1984 on important moments in the fight for Indigenous rights, the host of *Our Native Land*, Canada's first all-Indigenous radio programme, acknowledged that, in the mid 1970s, there was a "dramatic increase in the level of Native activism in Canada."[59] Those who appeared on the program, both men and women, focused largely on education, healthcare and housing. Again, those leading these national movements, however, were largely male. Indigenous women continued to be excluded from conversations of Indigenous self-determination, garnering very little support from men in leadership roles. Though these men

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[56] Verna J. Kirkness, "Canada's Indian Peoples," *Saskatchewan Indian* 5.12 (July 1975), 8.
[57] "History of The Indian Act (Part One)," *Saskatchewan Indian* 8.3 (March 1978), 5.
[58] Native Women's Association of Canada, Newsletter 1.65
[59] "Rise of the Indigenous Rights Movement," *Our Native Land*, CBC Digital Archives. Original air date: February 4, 1984. URL: http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/our-native-land-rise-of-the-native-rights-movement. Last accessed: April 26, 2018.

were convinced that the Indian Act "was made by Parliament and not by Indian people", women apparently did not need join in on the fight for Indigenous nationhood.[60]

Following in Early's footsteps, Yvonne Bédard and Jeannette Corbiere Lavell appeared before the Supreme Court of Canada in 1973 in *Lavell v. Canada*. Together, the two also challenged 12(1)(b), on the grounds that it was discriminatory in nature. In a radio interview, Lavell decried 12(1)(b), stating that it was not "from an Indian point of view at all— it was done from a European, White point of view. They took their own attitudes and background and said women do not have any rights."[61] This strongly echoed the logic and arguments put forward by male leaders on the topic of the Indian Act, yet Indigenous women were persistently attacked for what opponents viewed as selfishness and individualistic rights. Women, however, rebutted by emphasizing the consequences of 12(1)(b) on the collective. Indian Rights for Indian Women (IRIW), for instance, asserted that their interests lay in speaking "on behalf of women as far as the rights of women are concerned and as far as the rights of their children go."[62]

A former president of the Native Women's Association of Canada determined questions of "citizens", "nationhood", and "citizenship" as a fundamental part of self-government, thus the automatic enfranchisement of Indigenous women and their children denied Indigenous bands (and nations) the authority to do so themselves.[63] This demonstrates that Indigenous women directly identified this struggle as one that pertained collectively to questions of 'self-determination', 'self-government' and sovereignty, which were increasingly important topics for the male-led Indigenous groups in that era. Following the loss of the Lavell case in Canada's highest court, Indigenous women were left with little legal recourse. This marked a change in the

[60] "History of The Indian Act (Part Two)," *Saskatchewan Indian* 8.4 (April 1978), 20.
[61] "Rise of the Indigenous Rights Movement," *Our Native Land.*
[62] "Taking the Power Back: Native Women Organize," *Our Native Land*.
[63] "Rise of the Indigenous Rights Movement," *Our Native Land.*

historical narrative, as it created a situation in which Indigenous women understood that they would receive little support from the federal government or other existing Indigenous groups.

Marking the NIB's first appearance at any national Indigenous women's meeting, chief Noel Starblanket attended the fourth annual meeting of Indian Rights for Indian Women (IRIW) in October 1977. An article written by a female reporter in the weeks following, and published in a feminist journal, details how IRIW sought support from the NIB, the only federally-recognized Indigenous group "as having input on the present Cabinet committee on the revision of the Indian Act."[64] Women were committed to having their voices heard, and it led to noticeable tension. Starblanket, in his speech, "made no commitment" other than to quietly meet with "native women to discuss their concerns" — he would not grant Indigenous women's groups a seat at the constitutional table. Further, Starblanket implored women's groups to discuss their concerns "in a reasonable, logical, rational way" and to "put aside emotions."[65] This reflects the ways in which the NIB viewed Indigenous women in this context as unreasonable, illogical and irrational, and driven by emotion. Male leaders feared that reopening the Indian Act, with women leading the charge, would result in further losses of authority. Interviewing a number of Tobique activists, Janet Silman contends that "although the Indian Act has constrained aboriginal people, it also has defined their special status. This is one reason why Indian women seeking to eliminate sexual discrimination from the Indian Act met with resistance from some sectors of their own community."[66]

As the only nation-wide body representing status 'Indians' at the time, the NIB wielded notable authority and political weight. By seemingly denouncing female activists and their

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[64] Esther Shannon, "Indian Women Meet to Discuss Rights," *Upstream* 2.2 (November 1977), 1. Rise Up! Feminist Archive. URL: http://riseupfeministarchive.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Upstream-02-01-Nov-1977.pdf. Last accessed: May 13, 2018.
[65] Ibid, pp.
[66] Silman, *Enough is Enough,* 10.

organizations, the NIB minimized the perceived legitimacy of the fight for women's rights. Starblanket continued by insinuating that including IRIW or female activists in federal conversations could "compromise" the "principles that [he] had been given", one of which being the "joint NIB Cabinet committee and the Indian Act consultative process."[67] As Grand Chief, Starblanket appeared unable to reconcile the interests of the NIB and NWAC, believing NWAC's position to be incompatible with the changes his organization sought in the Indian Act. The NIB's official position was to support bands' right to decide upon membership in cases of enfranchisement under 12(1)(b), but they did not support the federal implementation of changes (through the Indian Act) to rectify gender inequality. In the same article, the article's female author argues that "[r]eferring resolution of Section 12-1-b back to the Indian bands is nothing less than a refusal by the NIB to deal with this issue."[68]

At the conclusion of the annual meeting, a number of female activists left feeling discouraged and disappointed by the fact that the highest ranking Indigenous group in the country would not support them in the fight for equality. IRIW thus resolved to "continue putting pressure on every level to get recognition and to regain the rights that we [women] have lost" — women at the annual meeting demonstrated that though they had met sexism at nearly every turn, they would not be ignored. As the author of the article concluded her piece, she makes evident that in the decade since Mary Two-Axe Early's challenging of 12(1)(b), female activists' voices continued to be ignored: "still nobody is listening."[69] To provoke national attention, one woman would bring the fight to an international level, using the United Nations and Canada's public image as leverage.

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[67] Ibid, pp.
[68] Ibid, pp.
[69] Ibid, pp.

Following years of fighting for the recognition of inequality within her own community and watching Canada continuously fail to rectify its federally-protected discrimination against Indigenous women, Sandra Lovelace would conclude the saga of 12(1)(b). Lovelace, a member of the Tobique Women's Group, brought the issue to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, who in 1981, found Canada "in breach of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights."[70] Embarrassed by the implications, Canada began working on amending the Indian Act, but did so begrudgingly.[71] While female activists celebrated the victory, frustration and resentment among male leaders only grew. In a radio interview describing her involvement in the fight against 12(1)(b), Lovelace invoked the continuous commitment of other activists: "we're strong fighters and we won't give up."[72] In demonstrating unwavering commitment to the fight for equality, Two-Axe Early, Lavell, Bédard, and Lovelace emerged as targets for groups which viewed potential amendments as a way of further weakening the power of the NIB and Indigenous nations. Lovelace, in particular, described receiving threats of physical violence against herself and her children. Though labelled a "troublemaker" by her band, and with the Assembly of First Nations (formerly the NIB) indicating that they believed this would lead to "severe consequences" on budgets and the "dilution of [Indigenous] government", Lovelace persisted.[73]

Budget constraints and resources were the main arguments used by male leaders to promote anti-feminist sentiment. Though there was much truth to the question of insufficient funds, specifically with respect to housing on reserves, it appears that this fear was exaggerated. This was perhaps a veiled tactic at increasing resentment within communities, to promote public

[70] Ibid, 14.
[71] "The decision was an embarrassment to Canada." as stated in: Mary C. Hurley and Tonina Simeone, "Bill C-3: Gender Equity in Indian Registration Act," prepared for the Social Affairs Division (Ottawa, Library of Parliament, Parliamentary Information and Research Service, 2010), 3.
[72] "Indigenous Women Fight for Equal Rights," *Our Native Land*.
[73] Ibid.

disapproval of Bill C-31. As the government had not committed to an increase in funding, it left band councils in a position with more questions than answers. The tension continued between the configuration of individual versus collective rights, though women had continuously fought to emphasize the collective. Comments made by the then Minister of Indian Affairs indicated that the government participated in furthering this divide, by directly referring to the situation as one which sought to compromise the rights of the collective in order to protect individual rights.[74] When these tactics failed however, male Indigenous leaders attempted to paint the movement as an extension of colonialism, with the head of the AFN arguing that this was merely a way of satisfying "white women" who had "no business in the affairs" of Indigenous peoples.[75]

Ironically, having examined a collection of white feminist journals published across the country from the 1960s to the late 1990s, very few articles mentioned the plight of Indigenous women.[76] This is not to say that second-wave feminists did not engage with the rhetoric surrounding early Indigenous feminists, but it does somewhat discount the narrative that Indigenous women were somehow under the guidance of white women, in the pursuit of their specific rights. Thus, though Indigenous feminism emerged against the backdrop of second-wave feminism ('White women' and their definition of feminism), it was not a derivative concept. Rather, it was a rejection of colonial values with respect to women, as a number of Indigenous nations and female activists pointed to the presence of matrilineal societies. This being said, the AFN declared that the reinstatement of women "made a mockery" of Indigenous governments and band councils, as these new policies of reinstatement were effectuated by INAC and not

[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.
[76] As found in: "Publications," RiseUp! Feminist Archives. URL: http://riseupfeministarchive.ca/publications/. Last accessed on: May 3, 2018.

Indigenous governments.[77] With women leading the charge on this particular configuration of self-determination, it appears that male leaders viewed Canadian-Indigenous politics as a zero-sum game. In addressing the questions raised by women, male leaders feared that they would no longer garner the same federal attention.

Countering questions of costs and a lack of resources years prior, NWAC's president had previously acknowledged that while there would indeed be costs involved in reinstating Indigenous women's status, the "cost to the Indian women involved has been immeasurable."[78] These women had paid "psychologically, economically, socially, culturally, and politically" for decades, and refused to continue to be relegated to subservient positions in the eyes of the government, both federal and Indigenous.[79] In the years surrounding the implementation of Bill C-31, it became increasingly clear that Indigenous women had long been denied a seat at the table and that their activism had elicited significant discomfort at many levels. In a parliamentary report, the authors diplomatically state that the debate surrounding 12(1)(b) and Bill C-31 "emphasized fractures within the Aboriginal community."[80] Writing in the aftermath of Bill C-31, Lovelace and a number of women reflect on their involvement with the Tobique Women's Group, detailing the ways in which they faced not only the structural sexism of the Indian Act, but sexism within their own communities.[81] These women did not gather initially to "change the Indian Act, but to improve local living conditions for women and children."[82] Their focus, in organizing, was not individualistic — it was to address questions of inequality that these women

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[77] "Indigenous Women Fight for Equal Rights," *Our Native Land*.
[78] Native Women's Association of Canada, Newsletter 1.65 (Ottawa: September 1982), 10. Rise Up! Feminist Archive. URL: http://riseupfeministarchive.ca/wp-content/uploads/NWAC-newsletter-vol1no65-Sept.82.pdf. Last accessed: April 29, 2018.
[79] Ibid, pp.
[80] Megan Furi and Jill Wherrett, "Indian Status and Band Membership Issues," prepared for the Political and Social Affairs Division (Ottawa: Library of Parliament, Research Branch, 1996), 4.
[81] I further explore distorted gender roles in Chapter 3.
[82] Silman, *Enough is Enough,* 9.

identified as occurring on their reserve, that had gone completely unaddressed by male leadership. Still, these women faced constant criticism, threats of violence, and actual occurrences of violence after publicly challenging this inequality. Labelled "anti-Indian" in the process, these women would finally be vindicated.[83]

Following years of Indigenous feminist activism, and only in the face of international embarrassment did the federal government agree to change section 12(1)(b) in June 1985.[84] In announcing the changes that would be implemented under Bill-C31, the Minister for Indian Affairs at the time expressed that he had consulted over 300 chiefs and band councils to help formulate the new bill. History tells us that very few of these could have been women, meaning that even in its supposed efforts to counter sexism, the Canadian government did so inadequately. Furthermore, early government estimates pinpointed the number of women being automatically reinstated at 22,000, and the number of children at 46,000 — most of which lost their status under 12(1)(b).[85] Later data would indicate that in the first five years following its implementation, Canada's status 'Indian' population grew by 19%.[86] And with 360,241 status 'Indians' recorded in 1985, ten years later the number had grown to 586,580.[87] The sheer vastness of these numbers and the discrepancies between the projected and actual numbers point to four important conclusions.

First, these numbers proved what Indigenous women had been arguing for years: section 12(1)(b) had employed blatant sexism to dramatically reduce the number of status 'Indians', and it resulted in harming the collective. For those who received reinstatement of status, this marked the official recognition of the fact that they had once been legally barred from any connection to

[83] Nickel, "I Am Not a Woman's Libber," 318.
[84] Furi and Wherrett, "Indian Status and Band Membership Issues," 4.
[85] "Indigenous Women Fight for Equal Rights," *Our Native Land*.
[86] Furi and Wherrett, "Indian Status and Band Membership Issues," 7.
[87] Ibid, pp.

their nation. Second, the eventual success of women's activism affirmed their relevance within the political sphere. For far too long, they had been ignored by male leaders, who neglected to fully value their female counterparts in political spheres. I further explore the separation between political and private spheres in the final chapter.

Third, these numbers helped broaden the way that Indigenous self-determination, or sovereignty, could be configured. Women had proven that the protection of their nations was not necessarily inherently physical, in the sense that it did not exclusively relate to resources (such as fishing rights, land rights based on geographic boundaries, or resource extraction). Thus, women contributed to the expansion of discourse, based on their unique experiences at the intersections of sexism and racism, and challenged the concept that men were best-suited to lead the charge on questions of Indigenous rights. Lastly, in achieving the implementation of Bill C-31 following severe backlash from male leaders within the NIB/AFN, female activists publicly identified and challenged the internal sexism of Indigenous politics. Demonstrating the deeply-rooted consequences of colonial values, Indigenous feminism would emerge as a way of decolonizing Indigenous peoples, as it emphasized the relationship between Indigenous sovereignty and the unlearning of internalized colonialism.

In the years following the implementation of the amendments, it became apparent that inequalities remained. One particular clause, colloquially referred to as the "second generation cut-off clause", was identified in a parliamentary report as the "most important target of criticism".[88] This resulted in the loss of status for children "with two successive generations of non-Indians."[89] One must keep in mind that these changes emerged against the backdrop of the historical erasure of Indigenous women from their nations. Female activists focused on the

[88] Ibid, 8.
[89] Ibid, pp.

reinstatement of status and the removal of gender-based discrimination within the Indian Act. They achieved both. In doing so, women identified Indigenous feminism as a way of confronting colonialism, and asserting the sovereignty of their nations.

CHAPTER 2:

Stolen Children, Lost Years — Sovereignty Breaches Through Apprehension

"Just because I was taken from there doesn't mean I don't belong there."

— CLEO SEMAGANIS' SISTER,
CHRISTINE CAMERON

Having identified the effects of colonial sexism on the collective, I now identify the ways in which other policies impacted Indigenous nations through the systemic removal of their children. In this chapter, I identify what is commonly known as the "Sixties Scoop" as a profound breach of Indigenous sovereignty. Similarly to the forcible removal of women from their communities and the severing of their ties to their nations, a highly disproportionate number of Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families. Almost entirely fostered and adopted by white families, these children were denied the ability to develop any significant aspect of an Indigenous identity: language, traditional knowledge, Indigenous epistemologies, and spiritual and cultural practices. These were all casualties of the erasure of their Indigeneity. The following chapter will outline the ways in which Indigenous activists categorized this systemic removal of children not only as an affront to the rights of the children, but also as a means of undermining Indigenous sovereignty. To contextualize this period historically, and to successfully establish it as one example of breaches in Indigenous sovereignty, I draw primarily on the story of Cleo Semaganis. I employ this microhistorical approach to emphasize the ways in which the Semaganis family's narrative is but one instance of over eleven thousand. Using a collection of investigative journalism pieces, ads from the Adopt Indian Métis (AIM) program in Saskatchewan, and articles published in *Saskatchewan Indian* by Indigenous women, I identify

this historical period — the Sixties Scoop — as a continuation of intentional breaches in Indigenous sovereignty.

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Lasting nearly two and a half decades, the Sixties Scoop inflicted serious trauma upon children, their families, and their communities. While the paragraphs below will analyze these topics in detail, I must first briefly survey the history of Indigenous child apprehension in Canada. Perhaps the nation's most well-known policy of assimilation, Canada's residential schools were rife with physical, sexual and psychological abuse, rooted in a deep disgust for Indigenous peoples and their culture. For instance, physical abuse was often employed as a tool to dissuade children from speaking their languages, or as punishment for running away;[90] sexual abuse was often rooted in the belief that "Indians were simply 'unmoral'" and the perverted belief that they "mature[d] much earlier than the whites";[91] and emotional abuse ranged from "individual acts of profound cruelty" to sustained attempts at instilling self-hatred in Indigenous children.[92] The horrific abuse to which Indigenous children were subjected, in combination with the overt attempts at erasing these children's identities as Indigenous youths, indicates far more than the oft-cited attempts at 'civilizing' the 'Indian race'. What the Canadian government was attempting to do was to systemically, beginning with the first generation of students of residential schools, force the destruction of nations. Children would often return to their communities unable to speak their ancestral language, ashamed and unable to participate in customary cultural practices, and generally presenting symptoms of loneliness and self-loathing.

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[90] Please see: Bev Sellars, "St. Joseph's Mission = Prison", "Pain, bullying, but also pleasure" and "The Body was no Temple" in *They Called Me Number One: Secrets and Survival at an Indian Residential School* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2013); John S. Milloy, "The Parenting Presumption: Neglect and Abuse" in *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999).
[91] Milloy, *A National Crime*, 296.
[92] Ibid, 155. Also see Sellars, *They Called Me Number One*, 112.

These effects were widespread, and felt on a communal level. The trauma that was inflicted was felt not only by those who attended Residential School, but was also felt intergenerationally. In forcibly removing an estimated 150,000 children from their homes, officials effectively severed these children's ties to their nations, attempted to destroy their Indigenous identities, and publicly enforced the notion that Indigeneity was incompatible with proper parenting, and further, that it was detrimental to the notion of civilized individuals.[93] What these institutions perpetuated was the falsehood that Indigenous children could not remain within their communities, and nor could they retain strong ties to their nations, in order to prioritize their wellbeing. To guide official policy decisions, the Canadian government relied on archaic and racialized understandings of Indigeneity. Much has been written on the internalization of these practices, and the subsequent effects. On the intentions behind the creation of such institutions, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission found that intergenerational impacts were not only likely, but anticipated. One inspector in particular explained that "[i]t was from the children of graduates, that [he] expect[ed] to see the fruit of the system."[94]

Over the course of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, thousands of survivors gave testimony which detailed their time spent at Residential School. Organized thematically by common experiences, one of the sections in the TRC Reports pays particular attention to the question of despair. Two survivors detail the ways in which their suicide attempts, or those of their classmates, were met with complete cruelty at the hands of their

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[93] For further information, please see: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: The Legacy (Volume 5)* (Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

[94] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: The History Part 1, Origins to 1939 & Part 2, 1039-2000(Volume 1)* (Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), 164.

educators.[95] Not only were children taught to feel utter shame over their Indigeneity, such as through physical traits or through the dissemination of stereotypes, but what this demonstrate is that they were directly made to feel like they had no place in society. This collective dismissal and shaming of Indigeneity in children resulted in the internalization of these beliefs, and shaped the ways in which these children would turn into adults. Detailing her time at residential school, Bev Sellars explains how a combination of self-hatred, colonial sexism, systemic abuse, and the weight of the experiences of those around her, resulted in an inability to parent.[96]

Meant to keep Indigenous children within the "circle of civilized conditions", and in order to counter what colonizers viewed as an "inherited aversion to labour", policy-makers used residential schools as a way of intentionally diminishing the number of individuals who could reasonably preserve and display their Indigeneity.[97] This was a deliberate breach of Indigenous sovereignty and nationhood, by denying such a vast number of individuals both the choice to develop an Indigenous identity based on their collective membership, and impeding Indigenous nations from reasonably transmitting their distinct epistemologies, ontologies, and laws to both current successive generations of their own people. Thus, the intergenerational transmission of fundamental aspects of Indigenous identity — such as language, spiritual beliefs, cultural practices, and ancestral teachings — were not only made nearly impossible for the children who attended these schools, but also their descendants. In addition to these consequences, dysfunctional parent-child dynamics have been widely detailed.[98] This often resulted in a cyclical pattern of abuse, and apprehension.

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[95] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, "Despair" in *The Survivors Speak : A Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), 117.
[96] Sellars, *They Called Me Number One.*
[97] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Final Report: The Legacy (Volume 5)*, 12.
[98] For a firsthand account, please see: Bev Sellars, "Life on the Reserve" and "One Day I Realized I had Survived," in *They Called Me Number One*.

Parents that had themselves been subjected to various failed child welfare policies often had their own children apprehended: "Their children suffered because of their suffering."[99] The communal effects of this suffering are evident in child welfare records. In one article written by a Supervisor at the Department of Welfare in rural Saskatchewan in 1970, the author notes that the community of Sandy Bay First Nation displayed problems "of poor housing, poor education, poor health, and alcoholism."[100] It is evident in this particular source that there existed a link between this social crisis, and the ways in which it contributed to what child welfare officials viewed as grounds for apprehension. Interestingly, the author appears to be somewhat sympathetic to historical ties between Indigenous children and nationhood, as he mentions the "community's customary manner of sharing some responsibility for caring for children".[101] Describing the ways in which communal Indigenous involvement in child rearing had actually reduced the number of children this supervisor could identify as suffering from 'neglect', he wrote that "such wide community involvement provided built-in deterrent to overuse of the [child welfare] system".[102] This respect of the relationship between children and traditional Indigenous methods of child rearing, in addition to the relationship between an Indigenous child and their nation, was largely overlooked during the Sixties Scoop.

During the Sixties Scoop, certain provinces undertook various methods of facilitating inter-racial adoptions, repeatedly leaving Indigenous parents and families out of the process. In fact, non-Indigenous parents were even called on to adopt Indigenous children as a way to demonstrate that adoptive parents were committed to fighting racism.[103] There are perhaps

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[99]Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Final Report: The Legacy (Volume 5)*, 12.
[100] Len Soiseth, "A Community that Cares for Children," *Canadian Welfare* 46.3 (May-June 1970): 8.
[101] Ibid, 26.
[102] Ibid, 10.
[103] The Minister of Welfare in Saskatchewan argued that racism was stopping potential white parents from adopting "Indian and Métis children". The Minister, trying to convince white parents to adopt Indigenous children, stated that "Indian and Métis children have the same potential as whites." As quoted in: CBC News Investigates, "Episode 8:

unintentional references to this intergenerational cycle of apprehension in a number of adoption ads. In Saskatchewan, the Adopt Indian and Métis program (AIM) ran advertisements akin to the classified sections in various newspapers.[104] The rhetoric often used in these ads insinuated mistreatment of these children at home, and that they were unwanted by their families, which further perpetuated the notion that Indigenous peoples had an inherent inability to parent. In addition to this, it dehumanized the children in question by reducing them to ads in newspapers — this was not done in cases of adoption of white children. I further explore the impact of the AIM program in the paragraphs below, but I return to the Residential School System in order to emphasize the relationship between its existence and that of the Sixties Scoop.

The Residential School System not only isolated the individual children who attended, by deliberately isolating them from their parents and siblings, but also from the teachings of their communities. The loss of children to the residential school system was thus two-sided: children lost their ties to their families and their nations, and nations lost a part of themselves. Families and their children were intentionally targeted based on their Indigeneity, or, based on their identifiable belonging to a group that was perceived to be inferior to white Canadians. These children were forcibly removed from their homes, separated from their language, culture,

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Salesperson of the Year," *Missing and Murdered: Finding Cleo*, Podcast audio. Original air date: March 20, 2018. URL: http://www.cbc.ca/listen/shows/missing-murdered-finding-cleo/episode/15529720. Last accessed May 14, 2018.

[104] Newspapers such as the Saskatoon Star Phoenix and The Regina-Leader Post ran ads from the late 1960s to mid 1970s, advertising Indigenous children. For an example of these ads, please see Figure 1 in the Appendix. In one recorded instance, the biological mother of six children found two of them advertised under different names. Indigenous children were sometimes referred to as "Canada's refugees," with officials urgently insisting on the risk of these children "never being able to find permanent homes." However, it was uncommon for the provincial courts to let Indigenous children remain with extended family members, so they were often sent to non-Indigenous families across North America. For the quoted material, please see:
"Adoption agency seeks homes for Indian and Métis children in 1968," *CBC Saskatoon*, CBC Digital Archives. Original air date: May 30, 1968. URL: http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/adoption-agency-seeks-homes-for-indian-and-metis-children-in-1968. Last accessed May 11, 2018. "Interracial adoption: 'The children nobody wants'," *Tabloid*, CBC Digital Archives. Original air date: March 24, 1960. URL: http://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/interracial-adoption-the-children-nobody-wants. Last accessed May 11, 2018.

spirituality, and traditions, based directly on their Indigeneity. This would only be amplified through the Sixties Scoop. Beginning in 1947, non-Indigenous child welfare agencies lobbied the federal government to adjust existing policies with respect to Indigenous child welfare. Prior to World War II, child welfare for status 'Indians' fell under federal jurisdiction, in comparison to non-Indigenous Canadians who were subject to their provincial or territorial legislation. In the aftermath of the war, however, the federal government amended its policy on Indigenous child welfare, which thus allowed for "provincial and territorial social work professionals to intervene in the problems that they believed were occurring on Indian reserves."[105]

Without consulting Indigenous communities or Indigenous agencies related to child welfare, the government and non-Indigenous child welfare agencies resorted to racialized policies, similar to what had been used in the justification of residential schools. That is to say, the federal government accorded provinces and territories substantially inequitable authority over matters directly related to Indigenous nationhood. At a time when public scrutiny had begun to emerge surrounding the effectiveness of the original mission of residential schools, and following "general unanimity among policymakers in Ottawa in 1948" that the official residential school system should be terminated, this represented another means of exerting colonial control over Indigenous nations.[106] The Sixties Scoop was thus an extension of the Residential School System, which emerged from colonizers' desire to erase Indigenous identities and perpetuate this erasure intergenerationally. I argue then that the Sixties Scoop was an intentional way of breaching Indigenous sovereignty, as it must be understood as a continuation of the beliefs that allowed for the creation of these schools. I outline striking similarities between the two below, to further to support my argument.

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[105] Jo-Ann Episkenew, "Policies of Devastation" in T*aking Back Our Spirits: Indigenous Literature, Public Policy, and Healing* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2009), 65.
[106] Milloy, *A National Crime*, 211.

Having established the grounds for the implementation of alternatives to the Indian Residential School System, I now define the Sixties Scoop. First employed in 1983 by Patrick Johnson, the term "Sixties Scoop" refers to the period between the 1960s to the mid-1980s, in which the "number of Native children coming into care increased dramatically".[107] Deriving its name from the ways in which "social workers would, quite literally, scoop children" from their families, this phenomenon occurred across the country, affecting children ranging in age from newborns to 18 or 19 (depending on the province).[108] Data indicates that roughly 70% of children apprehended were placed in non-Indigenous homes, despite families' attempts to have children placed in the care of other relatives.[109] Government records identify 11,132 "status Indian children" as having been adopted between 1960 and 1990, though activists believe the actual number to be much higher.[110] This number does not include non-status children, however, and does not include the number of children placed in foster care. The refusal, on behalf of the provincial governments and their child welfare organizations, to consult Indigenous communities within the context of such disproportionate rates of apprehension demonstrates, at the very least, an unwillingness to acknowledge Indigenous agency. At worst, it indicates a complete disregard for traditional, communal methods of childrearing that had traditionally been used by Indigenous peoples, based on the colonial belief that Indigenous peoples were uncivilized.

Communal methods of childrearing emphasized the child's connection to the collective, which demonstrates a historical tie between Indigenous nationhood and children. Thus, the survival of Indigenous nations was strongly connected to what would be instilled in children, and the role of those children within their communities. In primary sources, this is evidenced by the

[107] Patrick Johnson, *Native Children and the Child Welfare System* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1983), 24.
[108] Ibid, pp.
[109] As evidenced by: Raven Sinclair, "Identity Lost and Found: Lessons from the Sixties Scoop," *The First Peoples Child & Family Review* 3.1 (2007): 65-82.
[110] Raven Sinclair, "The Sixties Scoop," National Indigenous Survivors of Child Welfare Network. URL: http://niscw.org/sixties-scoop/. Last accessed April 4, 2018.

Native Women's Association publications during the Sixties Scoop. In one ad, the Regina Native Women's Association explains that "[i]f [their] children are to maintain and *cultural awareness*, it is important they have contact with their people."[111] With the understanding that children had particular roles within the protection and transmission of Indigenous culture, the notion of 'cultural awareness' can reasonably be understood to include their ancestral histories as well as the beliefs, values and teachings of their people. On this topic, Kim Anderson describes in great detail the ways in which "Eurowestern" values differed greatly from particular Indigenous nations.[112]

Anderson draws on Miller's work to identify "common elements of traditional Indigenous childrearing" as including "positive role modelling, the use of games, storytelling, and rites-of-passage ceremonies."[113] It is not to say that all nations parented in the ways described, but Anderson demonstrates a stark contrast between Eurowestern values and certain nations' ways of raising children. The values traditionally instilled in Indigenous children "were taught throughout childhood and reinforced in a formal way at coming-of-age ceremonies." [114] Drawing on the teachings of Cree, Algonquin and Métis elders, Anderson describes a communal approach to child raising, which emphasized "collective care and responsibility for children": "All children belonged".[115] Children, as per Anderson, rest at the heart of a community, surrounded by elders, women, and men (in that order). This means that the balance "lies in the interconnected roles and responsibilities of all members of the community."[116] What Indigenous understandings of childrearing demonstrate is the centrality of the child to the community. It is

[111] Print ad, "Native Foster Care". G-1-17, 7.18, 'Children in Care', GR245: Family Services Bureau of Regina, Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina. My emphasis on "cultural awareness".
[112] Kim Anderson, "The Good Life and the Fast Life" in *Life Stages and Native Women* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2011).
[113] Ibid, 68.
[114] Ibid, 69.
[115] Ibid, 70.
[116] Ibid, 169.

precisely this notion of community that I emphasize, but employ contemporary discourse to relate Indigenous childrearing to nationhood. Furthermore, the role of children in the keeping of traditions and the ways in which they were understood to protect and preserve aspects of culture, within Nishnaabeg beliefs is explained by Leanne Simpson. Nishnaabeg belonging, or "citizenship", also meant that one had "responsibilities embedded" within that role.[117] As children grew into adults, their responsibilities changed, but it is crucial to my argument that I outline particular Indigenous beliefs with regards to the relationship between community survival and children.

This emphasis on the collective is most present in the Nishnaabeg concept of *Naakgonike*, "a culturally embedded concept that means to carefully deliberate and decide when faced with any kind of change or decision."[118] To prevent *Zhaaganashiiyaadizi*, colonization or forced assimilation, *Naakgonike* was a fundamental aspect of protecting an entire community; Simpson asserts that it "encourages one to deliberate and consider the impacts of decisions on all aspects of life and our relationships — the land, the clans, children, and the future."[119] In this process, the significance of children to the collective is again emphasized. Just as the Residential School System had forcibly contained Indigenous children within their walls, and deliberately aimed to "kill the Indian in the child", as an intentional extension of such a system, the Sixties Scoop can be understood to have done the same.[120] Colonial views on Indigeneity and parenting promoted the removal of these children from their families, in both situations; the roots for their removal were identical. In both cases, Indigenous peoples were viewed as incapable parents. Thus, children were removed based on their membership to an Indigenous nation. Having

[117] Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*, 90.
[118] Ibid, 56.
[119] Ibid, 57.
[120] Truth and Reconciliation Report, *Final Report: The Legacy (Volume 5)*, 104.

established the relationship between children and Indigenous nationhood, based in traditional understandings of the protection and preservation of culture, I will now outline the effects and amplitude of the Sixties Scoop, drawing on the story of Cleo Semaganis.

Originally of Little Pine First Nation, in Saskatchewan, Cleopatra Nicotine Semaganis was born in 1965, to a mother who had herself been subjected to the horrors of the Indian Residential School System. Cleo was adopted several years later by an American family. With a total of six siblings, Cleo and her family were separated across North America, with each child placed with non-Indigenous families. Never to meet her birth mother again, Cleo was placed in multiple foster homes before being officially adopted under the name Cleo Madonia. It would take decades for Cleo's biological siblings to gain access to any information on her. With no record of her birthdate, her adoptive name, or the correct state to which she was sent, Cleo's siblings grieved not only the fact that they had lost her, but that they would meet little support in finding her. Under the impression that she had been murdered, based on misinformation, Cleo's siblings searched in vain for any information. Eventually, with the help of investigative journalists, Cleo's sister discovered her grave in Medford, New Jersey — over two thousand miles from Cleo's place of birth.[121] For many families of children who were apprehended throughout this historical period, little closure would ever be given to them.

Carrying a profound sense of guilt nearly his entire life, Johnny, Cleo's older brother, remembers trying to protect her as she was apprehended. Crying out to him and clearly terrified, Cleo sought reassurance from her brother. Promising that he would find her again one day in an effort to try and calm her, Johnny would later feel great pain over this: "what a silly promise for

[121] Cleo Semaganis' story is told in ten parts, and can be found here: CBC News Investigates, "Listen to Missing & Murdered: Finding Cleo," *Missing and Murdered: Finding Cleo*. Originally published: April 1, 2018. URL: http://www.cbc.ca/radio/findingcleo/click-here-to-listen-to-missing-murdered-finding-cleo-1.4557887. Last accessed May 14, 2018.

a thirteen-year old to make."[122] This incident would mark the beginning of the erasure of the Semaganis children's Indigenous identities, combined with consistent traumatic experiences. Christine, Cleo's sister, speaks to the roots of this erasure upon arriving at her new home: upon adoption, her family insisted that she would become a "white person".[123] This was often the case with Indigenous children placed in non-Indigenous homes, as they were left with no reasonable or practical way of maintaining any part of their Indigenous identity, of learning their language, of practising fundamental aspects of culture.

These children were shown two things through this process. First, this systemic removal demonstrated that Indigenous parents and families were not believed to be good parents. Second, by making no reasonable effort to preserve their Indigenous identity, this system demonstrated that children should by default, desire a white identity. This resulted in deeply-rooted and problematic views of self for large numbers of children. Reflecting on how she was made to feel, Christine describes a profound feeling of being "expendable"; she was not appreciated, encouraged, or supported.[124] This is one notable point that Residential Schools and the Sixties Scoop have in common. Christine explained that in "denying a whole race of people, of kids" a "community, a heritage, a culture, a language, a whole lifestyle that [they] were made for", these children "were dumped into something (...) segregating and isolating."[125]

Further, the abuse that is detailed in a variety of sources indicates continued similarities between the Indian Residential School system and the Sixties Scoop. Reports of sexual and

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[122] CBC News Investigates, "Episode 5: Afraid of the Dark," *Missing and Murdered: Finding Cleo*. Podcast audio. Originally aired: March 19. URL: http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1185014339790/. Last accessed May 14, 2018.
[123] CBC News Investigates, "Episode 3: A Little Lie," *Missing and Murdered: Finding Cleo*. Podcast audio. Originally aired: March 19, 2018. URL: http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1177980995815/. Last accessed May 14, 2018.
[124] CBC News Investigates, "Episode 9: Reunion," *Missing and Murdered: Finding Cleo*. Podcast audio. Originally aired: April 1, 2018. URL: http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1196265539877/. Last accessed May 14, 2018.
[125] CBC News Investigates, "Episode 1: Stolen. Murdered Missing." *Missing and Murdered: Finding Cleo*. Podcast audio. Originally aired: March 19, 2018. URL: http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1177983043687/. Last accessed May 14, 2018.

physical abuse have emerged in recent years, as survivors begin to share their stories amid the historical recognition of this period.[126] Raven Sinclair contends that even in cases of relatively successful stories, adoptees display "evidence of traumatic identity crises, psychological trauma, and behavioural problems" based on experiences of "extreme" abuse.[127] The prevalence of abuse in these children is something echoed by the Semaganis siblings. At least three suffered both physical and sexual abuse at the hands of their foster families and or adoptive families, which permanently affected their sense of self. As Christine explained, they became "hopeless" knowing that no one was going to "save" them from the abuse to which they were subjected.[128] As with Residential Schools, children were repeatedly made to feel like that they had no place in either white or Indigenous communities.

Akin to the ways in which children were forcibly returned to these schools upon running away, there are a number of narratives that explain how children of the Sixties Scoop tried in vain to either return to their communities or flee the homes in which they lived. Cleo's story speaks strongly to the sense of isolation and erasure that these children felt; she tried repeatedly to find a way to return to Saskatchewan.[129] Each time, she was returned to her adoptive parents, in Medford, New Jersey. A former teacher of Cleo's explains both how hopeless she felt at the thought of not knowing where she came from, and that she displayed a deep sadness at the thought of having been taken from a family who loved her.[130] Shortly following her last attempt to return home, Cleo took her own life at the age of thirteen, feeling completely alone and out of place. Buried in New Jersey, Cleo was never allowed to return home to Little Pine First Nation. She was not once allowed to know of her siblings' names, of her peoples' language, or of their

[126] Sinclair, "Identities Lost and Found," 74-75.
[127] Ibid, pp.
[128] CBC News Investigates, "Episode 9: Reunion".
[129] CBC News Investigates, "Episode 10: Cleo's Letters," *Missing and Murdered: Finding Cleo*. Podcast audio. Originally aired: April 1, 2018. URL: http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1200120899775/. Last accessed May 14, 2018.
[130] Ibid.

customs. She was permanently and deliberately distanced from her nation, her history and every single aspect of her culture.

There is much to be said about the commonalities between residential schools and the Sixties Scoop. Residential schools presented a physical site for the active and deliberate erasure, destruction and shaming of Indigenous ways of life. Though not occurring on one physical site, the Sixties Scoop maintained the colonial tradition of often physically removing children from their nations, and confining them to other sites. In both cases, Indigenous nations were deliberately targeted by means of their children; to stifle the presence of Indigeneity and the survival of Indigenous nations, officials knew that children were their most effective resource. On the federal attempts at destroying Indigenous ways of life, the TRC explained that in separating children from their families and communities, as was done throughout the period of residential schools, "these measures were part of a coherent policy to eliminate Aboriginal people as distinct peoples and to assimilate them into the Canadian mainstream against their will."[131] I apply this logic to the Sixties Scoop. While not one official piece of legislation or policy, the Sixties Scoop perpetuated the notion that Indigenous parents were subpar parents. Established at the time as an alternative to the failing residential school system, the Sixties Scoop was a way of continuing to allow for the systemic removal of Indigenous children from their nations.

Disregarding Indigenous views on the relationship between children and their nations, policymakers brought it upon themselves, at the second half of the twentieth century, to continue to erase Indigeneity in the name of civility. To do this, children were again targeted. A number of former social workers, who worked with the AIM program in Saskatchewan during the era of the Sixties Scoop, have recently gone on record denying the claims that their program had the intent

[131] Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *The Final Report: The History, Part 1 & 2 (Volume 1)*, 4.

to commit cultural genocide or to negatively affect Indigenous peoples. Otto Driedger, the original architect of AIM, acknowledges that survivors of the Sixties Scoop feel that they were "taken away from their identity".[132] But he denies that his intentions were ever to remove children and only place them in to "white families", believing that little attention is paid to stories "that turned out well", and that half of them would have happy endings. I respond to this by pointing out that identical rhetoric was used in early responses to the residential school system, and reiterate the work of Raven Sinclair and the growing number of survivors who speak to their experiences.

What Driedger's beliefs demonstrate is that actors within the system at the time genuinely thought that they could improve the lives of children they perceived to be in distress. What is crucial to understand however, are the effects of colonization on public consciousness and the ways in which this shapes understandings of power, social hierarchies, and fundamental aspects of identity. In the same way that the architects of Canada's Residential School System viewed Indigenous children in need of saving from their culture, based on racist and colonial understandings of primacy and civility, the Sixties Scoop operated within that same framework. The use of rhetoric that implored audiences of mostly white parents to 'save' these children by adopting them speaks to a painful history in which Indigenous peoples were continuously painted as bad parents, as uncivilized, and incapable of taking care of themselves without the assistance of colonizers or Europeans. This has resulted in the internalization of these beliefs, and I argue that though Indigenous activists have long decried this injustice, Driedger's statements point directly to the ways in which these views have become an ingrained, unconscious bias. It is precisely this that has allowed for colonization to continue, and for

[132] CBC News Investigates, "Episode 8: Salesperson of the Year," *Missing and Murdered: Finding Cleo*. Podcast audio. Original air date: March 20, 2018. URL: http://www.cbc.ca/listen/shows/missing-murdered-finding-cleo/episode/15529720. Last accessed May 14, 2018.

sustained attacks on Indigenous sovereignty to take place across the decades since residential schools.

CHAPTER 3:

On The Move — Behind the Shift in Indigenous Child Welfare Policies

"The future of the Indian people lies with the Indian people"
— GEORGE MANUEL, former head of the NIB[133]

In response to the Child Welfare programs that I outline in the previous chapter, Indigenous activists protested the sweeping removal of their children. One of the most significant in British Columbia, and in Canada, was the Indian Child Caravan in 1980. This action provides an instance in which Indigenous activists clearly articulated the connection between child welfare decisions and the survival of their nations. The future thus depended on how Indigenous peoples could protect their nations. Originally sparked by women's organizations, the Indian Child Caravan represents a particularly significant moment in the narrative of colonial politics and their impacts on Indigenous family structures. The story that the Indian Child Caravan tells is multi-layered. At first glance, it demonstrates the assertion of agency and the distinct recognition of child welfare as a fundamental facet of Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty. Upon further analysis of the sources, however, the Indian Child Caravan also serves as a historical example of the erasure of Indigenous women's voices from conversations related to sovereignty and self-determination. No scholarship recognizes this historical erasure, and I contend that this is a misrepresentation of the narrative of the Indian Child Caravan itself. I aim to rectify this misrepresentation by emphasizing the origins of this movement at the hand of women's organizations in British Columbia.

[133] "Indians Told Fight for Their Rights," *Saskatchewan Indian* 2.1 (1971), 4.

Though little historical scholarship exists on the Indian Child Caravan, much information can be found in a collection of primary sources made available by the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC).[134] These sources illustrate the complex relationship between colonialism, gender equality, and questions of Indigenous sovereignty. Further, in analyzing the absence of women from the historical narrative – that is to say, the narrative recorded in the primary sources, in combination with secondary sources – I illustrate the ways in which the erasure of Indigenous women took on many forms.[135] Taking place over Thanksgiving weekend in 1980, the Indian Child Caravan saw the Spallumcheen Indian Band and their supporters travel from Prince George to Vancouver to draw attention to the crisis affecting the province's Indigenous children. With thousands of Indigenous children apprehended and placed in non-Indigenous homes, the Spallumcheen Indian Band responded by adopting their own bylaw to rectify what could be identified as an Indigenous child care crisis. Chief Wayne Christian, of Spallumcheen, argued that by systemically allowing the apprehension of thousands of children, the government had infringed upon Indigenous sovereignty by impeding the growth of various nations, resulting in an "unbearable" situation.[136]

Analysis of the collection of primary sources made available by the UBCIC demonstrates that the Indian Child Caravan was a particularly strong moment in the historical assertion of Indigenous sovereignty. It followed the decades-long work of female activists, who urged

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[134] For secondary scholarship on the Indian Child Caravan, please see: Sarah Nickel (see Introduction); Leslie T. Jones and Brian Wharf, eds., *People, Politics, and Child Welfare in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 51-52, 92-93, 108-110; Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald Derrickson (see below).

[135] In *Unsettling Canada*, the authors make a point of tying the success of the Indian Child Caravan to the future political authority of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs: "In 1980, the Union led a massive march on Victoria to demand the government stop scooping our children from our reserves and placing them outside of the community. The impetus for this action came from a young Splatsin Chief, Wayne Christian, who had passed a resolution in his community insisting that Indian children would be cared for in the community, except in the most exceptional circumstances. (...) The Child Caravan was the opening shot in that ultimately successful Union battle." from Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald Derrickson, *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-Up Call* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2015), 54.

[136] Sadie Worn-Staff, "INTERVIEW: Chief Wayne Christian - Leader of the Indian Child Caravan," *Our Indian World* 3.6 (1980), 5.

Indigenous leaders to broaden the ways in which sovereignty was understood, and consequently, what Indigenous organizations would seek on a federal level. The Caravan also demonstrates the effects of colonial values on Indigenous politics, specifically in reference to the roles delegated to men and women. With far-reaching colonial structures and policies —such as the residential school system, the Indian Act, or the reserve system— the government maintained a highly inequitable amount of authority over the ways in which Indigenous identities could be developed or passed on to future generations. This had severe and generational consequences of the roles of women within Indigenous communities, erasing them from positions of power. Understanding questions of gender and sexuality are of particular importance to this chapter, as I demonstrate that in erasing Indigenous women from authoritative roles, Indigenous men began to monopolize conversations related to the survival of their nations. With respect to the Indian Child Caravan, this is evidenced by a resounding historical silence in the primary sources — Chief Wayne Christian, in his fight for reform of child welfare policies, excluded Indigenous women from the narrative. I further explore these circumstances below.

I refute the notion that Indigenous women were apolitical, or that they had little to do with the fight for Indigenous self-determination. Rather, I emphasize the ways in which these women addressed questions left ignored by their male counterparts. It was due to their forced positioning in the private sphere that Indigenous women could highlight questions of collective inequality or sustained breaches in Indigenous sovereignty, with relation to the family. Sarah Nickel posits that between the 1950s and 1980s, women's organizations were "not only highly political but also explicitly, strategically, and sometimes problematically tied to Indigenous understandings of motherhood and family."[137] This period saw the rise of women's voices within Indigenous rights and sovereignty movements as discourse surrounding Indigenous sovereignty

[137] Nickel, "I Am Not a Woman's Libber," 310.

began to broaden, moving beyond questions exclusively of land title. As such, though Indigenous women had long been excluded from questions directly related to the negotiation of land or treaty processes, when the understanding of the complexities of Indigenous sovereignty began to evolve, their roles as participants in the assertion of sovereignty could be reconfigured. That is to say, by branding Indigenous women's identities as caregivers, mothers and participants in the private sphere, colonial values would later unintentionally create a situation in which Indigenous women's voices on matters of family-centred debates had a distinct value, in comparison to their male counterparts.

Pre-dating Wayne Christian's stance on the child welfare crisis, the British Columbia Native Women's Society of Kamloops drew attention to the question of Indigenous sovereignty regarding Indigenous children and their care in 1979. They explicitly targeted the effects of the Sixties Scoop in BC. Entitled "Indian Homes for Indian Children", the article described child welfare policies at the time as "paternalistic," "not representative of Indian concerns" and reflecting "non-Indian adults' concerns rather than interests of the Indian child."[138] These policies had led to over 1,500 status 'Indian' children "and even a greater number of non-status children" to be placed in care or up for adoption, largely in non-Indigenous homes.[139] Writing that the BCNWS "believe[d] it up to [them] to pursue the rights of Native Indian children," the authors positioned themselves as the first activists in the fight for the rights of Indigenous children, with respect to the collective.[140]

In representing both status and non-status children, Indigenous women again defied colonial confines of identity. Men, in comparison, organized distinctly along lines of 'status' — that is to say, the colonial definitions of Indigeneity, as per the Indian Act. The NIB strictly

[138] BC Native Women's Society, "Indian Homes for Indian Children," *Our Indian World* 2.7 (1979), 10.
[139] Ibid, pp.
[140] Ibid, pp.

represented status Indians, and the Native Council of Canada (NCC; now the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples) represented non-status and Métis peoples at a national level. Women, however, effectively rejected these same colonial definitions of Indigeneity, by operating outside of the oppressive identity that colonialism sought to enforce or deny. I posit that this is one significant example of resistance, in the sense that women both addressed the oppression they and their children faced, but countered this same oppression using methods inconsistent with their colonizers' tendencies. This evokes Audre Lorde's intersectional feminist theories on oppression: these women began dismantling the master's house with tools of their own.[141]

Though not directly referring to 'nationhood', the BCNWS emphasized that "[c]ommunities' continual existence" depended upon the "development of the complex relationship" between the child's Band, their family, and them as individuals.[142] In the eyes of the BCNWS, there could be no future for the collective, the nation, if the systemic removal of children continued in such a way. Their intent was to recognize the rights of Indigenous communities, or nations, in situations of child welfare, to challenge the fact that there was "no direct Indian participation" in most cases of apprehension.[143] Arthur Manuel, in summarizing the ways in which male-led Indigenous organizations approached self-government, quotes his father, the former head of the NIB:

> Self-determination has to be our goal in our quest to recover the lands, energy, resources and political authority that we have entrusted to the White political institutions. We are saying that for the past hundred years we gave you, the White government, the responsibility to manage our lands, energy, resources and our political authority. You have mismanaged that trust and responsibility. Now we are taking it back into our hands and we will manage our own resources through our Indian political institutions.[144]

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[141] Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1984), 112.
[142] BC Native Women's Society, "Indian Homes for Indian Children," 10.
[143] Ibid, pp.
[144] Manuel and Derrickson, *Unsettling Canada*, 54.

Men appeared to have one particular view of sovereignty, and it was largely related to geography and the control and protection of resources. As men fought for land or resource-based facets of sovereignty, through federal negotiations and judicial methods, women identified forms of colonial encroachment that differed from their male counterparts. More specifically, I categorize this, too, as fitting within the concept of kinship sovereignty that I outline in the introduction.

Soon after the publication of this article, the wellbeing of children and the family as a whole, which had previously been relegated to the private sphere —and by extension, women— became a question of great significance in conversations of Indigenous sovereignty. Historian Margaret Jacobs indicates that as early as 1968, one particular member of the BCIHA was quoted as saying that "men don't really understand what we're trying to do," and that though "Indian women ha[d] much to say," "no one [was] listening and no one [was] interested."[145] More specifically, the BCNWS had identified the child welfare crisis as having a direct link to the survival of Indigenous nations, through the transmission of culture, customs, language and identity.[146] Tensions, however, existed surrounding the issues being raised by Indigenous women and the apparent ignorance of male-dominated Indigenous organizations.

The original BCNWS article points to the importance of Indigenous sovereignty over questions of child welfare, explaining that what "Indian children become will be reflected in what the community is going to be."[147] Further, the sustained loss of culture, language, transmission of teachings, and lack of parenting risked "destroy[ing]" the child.[148] Employing the BCNWS view on the relationship between the child and the collective, these activists conveyed

[145] Margaret Jacobs, "The Indigenous Child Welfare Crisis in Canada," in *A Generation Removed: The Fostering and Adoption of Indigenous Children in the Postwar World* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014.), 186.
[146] BC Native Women's Society, "Indian Homes for Indian Children," 10.
[147] Jacobs, *A Generation Removed,* 186
[148] BC Native Women's Society, "Indian Homes for Indian Children," 10.

the damage that was being inflicted upon the collective by emphasizing the potential trauma that would be inflicted upon every child. Through their emphasis on the relationship between child welfare and the future of their communities, these women identified the question of child welfare as a political one, situating it within the interests of the public sphere as opposed to the sexist and colonial interpretation of Indigenous women's roles within the private sphere.

Presented to the UBCIC, the article written by the BCNWS appears to be the first in British Columbia to publicly identify the political ramifications of the child welfare crisis, arguing that the government was "committing an act of genocide" by forcibly ensuring that Indigenous children had little to no ties to their ancestral culture or nations.[149] And while the UBCIC pledged to "support and work with the BC Native Women's Association," the discourse surrounding Indigenous sovereignty with respect to child welfare would soon be taken over by male-dominated groups. This cannot be overlooked, as it pertains to the ways in which colonial values favoured a paternalistic and patriarchal model of political engagement, meaning that female activists and their related organizations were seen – by the federal government and male-led Indigenous organizations – as less legitimate or less powerful than their male counterparts. I have already established that colonial values forced Indigenous women to be relegated to societies or organizations explicitly reflective of the private sphere, though it must be restated in order to emphasize the significance of the BCNWS's article in the longstanding fight for Indigenous children's rights, at the hands of the BCNWS and the BCIHA.[150]

Though at face value these organizations appeared apolitical, this was not at all the case. Indigenous women organized themselves politically, as evidenced by "Indian Homes for Indian

[149] Ibid, pp.
[150] Both the BCIHA and the BCNWS supported Indigenous-based child welfare by running workshops for parents, establishing group homes for single mothers and their children, helping establish Indigenous-run group foster homes, and offering other resources when needed. This was done long before the Spallumcheen Band's Indian Child Caravan.

Children", and did so in ways which subverted patriarchal politics. As Nickel emphasizes, Indigenous women were in "unique positions" to vocalize experiences of inequality related to "colonialism and gender discrimination".[151] "Though an alliance against colonialism" would have made much more sense, "male Indigenous leaders consistently resisted women's mandates, either ignoring their political participation or arguing that their political claims to citizenship and gender equality undermined the overall Indigenous rights movement."[152] I argue that male chiefs believed that in branding the question of child welfare as one directly related to female activists and Indigenous feminism, this would essentially delegitimize it. This meant that in order for such a struggle to be brought forward into the *political* sphere, it could no longer lie within the hands of those associated with the *private* sphere — women. As women had demonstrated a convincing effect on the collective, reframing the ways in which sovereignty could be understood, men began to listen. Unfortunately, the voices of men would soon drown out those of lifelong female activists. To assert this, I tread carefully as to not speak for male chiefs of that era, but instead point to the language by used the former chief of the National Indian Brotherhood, in reference to women's groups attempting to gain a position at the federal level of Indigenous politics.

At the time, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) sought recognition at the federal level during constitutional consultations, and for further authority with respect to input on matters related to Indigenous self-determination. As quoted in Chapter 1, Starblanket implored that women's organizations act "in a reasonable, logical, rational way" and to "put aside emotions."[153] The implications are clear: that in using tactics similar to their male counterparts, women were seen to have crossed the imaginary divide, and made a mockery of Indigenous politics. Thus, male leaders viewed themselves as the only ones capable of properly

[151] Nickel, "I Am Not a Woman's Libber," 299.
[152] Ibid, 302.
[153] Shannon, "Indian Women Meet to Discuss Rights," 1.

bringing attention to the child welfare crisis. Though this specific instance occurred at a federal level, it demonstrates that the single most powerful Indigenous organization in the country believed that women were incapable of being reasonable, logical or rational. Male-dominated groups held a monopoly at both the federal and provincial levels. Not only did women's groups have to fight against the sexism and racism of the federal government, but also against the sexism evidenced by male-led Indigenous groups of that era.

Continuing the historical trend of erasing Indigenous women from nation-based discourse, Christian made no mention of them in his initial call to action with regards to the child welfare crisis. Echoing what had been already been laid out months previously by the BCNWS, though with no mention of them, Christian of the Spallumcheen Indian Band published an article in *Indian World*, entitled "Our Children Our Survival". This historical silence is an example of the tension between Indigenous sovereignty and Indigenous feminism, illustrating a divide between the ways in which male voices and female voices were heard. A movement that would later become famous at the hands of a male chief, and largely backed by male-dominated Indigenous groups (such as the UBCIC) was in fact rooted in the tireless activism of Indigenous women's organizations. Asserting in July 1980, that "[t]he little people of the Indian world are the most vital resource to our survival as the first people", Christian effectively repeated what had been argued by female activists.[154] The number of children apprehended throughout the province reached such high numbers that Christian feared losing an entire generation "to the white world".[155]

[154] Wayne Christian, "Our Children Our Survival," *Our Indian World* 3.4 (1980), 10-11.
[155] Ibid, 10.

With similar terminology to that used by the BCNWS, Christian accused the government of engaging in genocide by forcing Indigenous children to live "in non-Indian society".[156] Describing other organizations as having "talk[ed]" about the rights of Indigenous children, but having done little to assert these rights, Christian declared that it was time to take action against the provincial government's apprehension of Spallumcheen Band children.[157] Christian makes no mention of the article published months previously by the BCNWS, though it appeared in the same journal, maintaining that other organizations had done little to effect sustainable change. This was entirely false, and a misrepresentation of the activism and dedication of women's groups. Nickel writes that the BCNWS and BCIHA had "long incorporated child welfare concerns into their mandate," as they viewed this question as "an integral part of the organizations' equality and sovereignty platform," based on the disproportionate number of apprehension.[158]

Prior to Chief Christian's article, in April of that same year, the Spallumcheen band council passed the *By-Law for the Care of Our Indian Children: Spallumcheen Indian Band By-Law #3-1980*. The bylaw, as Nickel describes it, "declared unprecedented band control over child welfare issues in response to endemic numbers of Splatsín children in care, as well as the disproportionately high number of non-Indigenous adoptive homes used to house Secwépemc children."[159] Out of a community of nearly eight-hundred inhabitants, the provincial government had apprehended roughly one-hundred children.[160] This bylaw came at a time when the UBCIC itself had identified the removal of Indigenous children from Indigenous communities as highly problematic, and a threat to the survival of Indigenous culture, traditions and nationhood. "The

[156] Ibid, pp.
[157] Ibid, 11.
[158] Nickel, "I Am Not a Woman's Libber," 321.
[159] Ibid, 322
[160] Ibid, pp.

Right to Grow Up Indian," published by the UBCIC in the January, 1980 edition of *Indian World*, explains that "[c]hildren who have been removed from their own communities to be raised by non-Indians have been deprived the rights to their own heritages and they have been deprived of their identity as Indian people."[161] To counter the disproportionate rate of children apprehended and placed in non-Indigenous homes, the UBCIC had begun working with the Department of Indian Affairs and "other Indian organizations" in order to collaborate on the DIA's suggested Child Welfare Study. Calling the study "long overdue", the UBCIC's goal was to "improve child care by strengthening Indian government and its ability to deal with child welfare problems."[162] Again, in this source there is no acknowledgement of the child welfare movement as having initially been brought forward by Indigenous women, nor are Indigenous women's groups recognized as key political players; in terms of negotiations or meetings with the Indian Affairs, the UBCIC appeared to have somewhat of a monopoly.

With the attention paid to male chiefs, child welfare in relation to Indigenous sovereignty emerged as an identifiable crisis in communities throughout the province and throughout the country. In September 1980, the UBCIC published an interview with Christian, in which the latter identified children as the "most valuable resource" in Indigenous communities, because children were the "mainstay in the foundation for building stronger communities in [the] future."[163] Out of a population of 300, Chief Christian stated that 100 had been apprehended and placed in "non-Indian" homes.[164] The interview also made clear that the Spallumcheen Band sought support from other Indigenous communities, calling on other bands to join them in the fight for the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty over matters of Indigenous families. It is in

[161] "The Right to Grow Up Indian," *Our Indian World*, 2.8 (1980) 18.
[162] Ibid, pp.
[163]Sadie Worn-Staff, "INTERVIEW: Chief Wayne Christian - Leader of the Indian Child Caravan," 4.
[164] Ibid, pp.

this interview that the Indian Child Caravan began to take shape, outlining the route and setting the dates. On a more personal note, Christian identified the ways in which this particular crisis had affected his own family. Having gone through "hell", his brother had recently committed suicide after reaching a point of "total helplessness and desperation from not knowing who he was".[165] What Christian described was the erasure or destruction of his brother's identity as an Indigenous man, having been removed from his nation as a child and placed in a non-Indigenous home. Stuck within the dichotomy of identities created by colonial policies, his brother fit neither the mould of the assimilated White Canadian, nor an Indigenous identity defined by ancestral traditions or cultural heritage. What had so deeply affected Christian's brother as he described it in his interview, could be tied back to the broader context of wide-sweeping child apprehension, and the subsequent placement of Indigenous children in non-Indigenous homes.

Data published in that same interview indicated that in 1978 alone, 1,786 Indigenous children had been apprehended in British Columbia.[166] In 1980, there were reportedly 2,800 Indigenous children in care. This equated to roughly 40% of the provincial population's entire number of children in care, despite Indigenous peoples representing merely 5% of the provincial population. What was consistently revealed through the publication of such data, in combination with the interviews and articles featuring Chief Christian, was an image of colonial control over Indigenous nations via their children. Through what had been referred to as genocidal politics — the direct removal of Indigenous children from their communities, and the subsequent erasure of their Indigenous identities— the painfully disproportionate number of Indigenous children in care demonstrated that the province, whether intentionally or not, was effectively destroying the Indigenous identities of thousands of children. The damage would not end with those children,

[165] Ibid, 5.
[166] Ibid, 4.

however, as their future descendants would subsequently bear no ties to their communities. The Caravan, under Christian's leadership, was an attempt to address this wide-sweeping crisis. He explained the Caravan as having three main goals: to "stop the needless apprehension of [their] children", to "have those children returned and reunited with their families", and to "promote and tell the people that there has to be Indian Government control of child welfare."[167] For a full outline of the five days, please refer to Figure 2 in the Appendix, based on information published in two articles in *Indian World*.[168]

Having gained considerable momentum and media coverage, Christian and delegates from the UBCIC subsequently secured a meeting with Grace McCarthy, provincial Minister of Human Resources (whose portfolio included Child and Family Services), on October 16. I have found little to indicate that Christian included representatives from BC's women's organizations. McCarthy recognized the Spallumcheen Band's concerns, later signing an agreement "whereby the Band [could] reclaim the children [then] in non-Indian foster homes as long as the children wanted to return to the reserve."[169] Declaring that their "hard work [had] paid off", Christian and members of the Indian Child Caravan asserted that the "goals of the Indian Child Caravan [had] been achieved in principle."[170] Unfortunately, frustrations would soon erupt again against the tense backdrop of the patriation of the constitution. An article published in *Indian World*, while noting the feat that had been achieved, explained that "[t]here was no time for celebration" and that the arrival of a "new Canadian constitution that could terminate all those rights for which we've fought so fiercely during the last 113 years" could not be ignored.[171] Thus, the success of the Indian Child Caravan has been perhaps understated in scholarly circles, and evidently

[167] Ibid, 6.
[168] For an outline of the Caravan's movements, please see Figure 2 in the Appendix.
[169] "Indian Child Caravan," *Our Indian World* 3.7 (1980), 15.
[170] Ibid, pp.
[171] Ibid, 16.

understudied, due to the ways in which it does not appear to stand out against this specific period of constitutional activism. This must be deconstructed, however, as the child welfare movement —as embodied by the Indian Child Caravan— fits within the discourse surrounding this constitutional era of activism. As evidenced in Chapter 1, as well as this particular chapter, a wave of activism emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s surrounding configurations of Indigenous sovereignty. This included shifting the ways in which women's rights were understood, as female activists pushed to have their collective oppression recognized as a method used by the state to undermine Indigenous sovereignty as a whole.

Though the politics of the patriation of the constitution is beyond the scope of my work, it is worth understanding the historical relevance of such a time. National political discourse in that period, with respect to Indigenous rights, remained focused on the Canadian Constitution and the ways in which it would assert particular aspects of Indigenous sovereignty. The result was that men dominated political conversations in these years, as a wave of tension and frustration washed over Indigenous organizations in the face of the 1982 patriation. In a follow-up article written by Christian, he extends a "very warm thank you" to all those who participated in the Caravan, writing that there "was much sharing of anger, love, humour, emotion, and hope."[172] This mention of 'unity' is of particular importance, as it is demonstrative of how male chiefs were in a favourable position to draw attention to a crisis which had come to paralyze Indigenous nations across the country. Supporters from across the province, belonging to various nations, strongly identified with the Caravan. This succeeded in demonstrating a sweeping display of 'unity' in an era that was largely marred by government attempts which sought to further fracture or divide Indigenous nations, arguably in the hope of weakening their power on a federal level.

[172] Wayne Christian, "Indian Child Caravan," *Our Indian World* 3.11 (1981), 30.

As evidenced in the first chapter, Indian Affairs quietly participated in creating disunity among activists, by promoting the notion that Indigenous sovereignty would be weakened by the inclusion of Indigenous feminist rhetoric, emphasizing trying to reconcile individual and collective rights. Christian's article conveys a particular sense of urgency or tension, as he refers to the era as a "Constitutional war", meaning that though the Indian Child Caravan was in itself a victory for Indigenous nations, Indigenous peoples were facing serious fears of losing out against federal powers.[173] Thus, displays of unity in the face of such a war, would become their strongest asset. Unfortunately, these constitutional years proved to be extremely challenging for female activists — as Indigenous men rushed to seat themselves at the federal table, Indigenous women were left fighting for a spot. What this thesis has proved, however, is that in continuously fighting for the recognition of themselves and their children, Indigenous women broadened the ways in which Indigenous sovereignty could be understood.

[173] Ibid, pp.

CONCLUSION:

'1,181'

Throughout these three chapters, I have explored the ways in which Indigenous feminism provides a distinct lens through which Indigenous sovereignty can be understood. Specifically, I have sought to demonstrate how female activists approached the protection of Indigenous nationhood in ways that differed significantly from their male counterparts. I demonstrated a gap within the historiography related to women's roles in the fight for sovereignty. I also employed numerous primary sources to draw a link between the systemic erasure of women and children, and the survival of nations. I contend that this deliberate and intentional erasure fits within a broader history of destruction. That is to say, in Chapters 1 and 2 I argued that rather than sexism and good intentions with regards to child welfare, colonial policies circumvented collective Indigenous rights, in the goal of permanently weakening Indigenous nations.

Chapter 1 further demonstrated how women identified section 12(1)(b) as a collective issue, by identifying the roots of its sexism in colonialism. As a group, Indigenous peoples were collectively oppressed by racism, paternalism and distinct views on identity. Indigenous women faced an added level of violence, through the propagation of patriarchal and sexualized concepts of female identity. In challenging this dual form of oppression, women challenged the ways in which internal colonialism had shaped their communities. This led me to Chapter 2, in which I explored the beginnings of the child welfare movement at the hands of women. Women maintained that the removal of their children was a similar tactic of weakening their nations, and systemically destroying these nations' futures. Specifically, the Sixties Scoop can be understood to be a continuation of destructive sovereignty breaches, based on the ways in which Indigenous feminists fought for the recognition of child welfare as a collective issue.

What Indigenous feminists allowed for was the broadening the public understanding of Indigenous sovereignty, as they fought repeatedly in the public eye to have their children protected. As carriers of Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, cultures and laws, women and children presented one aspect of nationhood that had yet to be acknowledged in the same ways and land and resources. Upon the eventual public recognition of their importance, however, this crisis became highly publicized by men. Women were once again erased from the narrative.

Chapter 3 identifies the Indian Child Caravan in British Columbia as one specific instance of this second form of erasure. I explore the Caravan as a means through which Indigenous leaders did eventually come to recognize child welfare as an Indigenous issue, rather than an issue put forward by women that did not fit within male conceptualizations of nation-based discourse. As male leaders focused on Constitutional matters and title-based politics, women fought relentlessly to protect themselves and their children, with the same motivations as their male counterparts: protecting their nations and ensuring their future resurgence.

As I draw this thesis to a close, I seek to delve a little more deeply into the historical relevance of my work. In my introduction, I referenced Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's views on this period of reconciliation. Writing as a historian is a great privilege; it gives writers the power to speak of the past, with the benefit of understanding its impacts on the present. I write on this particular era with the benefit of seeing how women eventually succeeded in their arduous battles, and with a profound sense of gratitude for their sacrifices and their courage. Because of this same courage, our country now approaches questions of Indigenous nationhood far differently than it has in the past. And while the status quo has improved in many ways, Indigenous women, and children, continue to bear the brunt of Canada's lasting legacy of colonialism. Oft-cited statistics point to the severity of the current situation, wherein Indigenous

women are over 2.5 times more likely than non-Indigenous women to be victims of domestic violence,[174] 7 times more likely to be homicide victims,[175] and three times more likely to be victims of sexual violence.[176] An estimated 1,181 Indigenous women and girls have gone missing or been murdered between 1980 and 2012.[177] This disproportionate and highly violent trend is a brutal reminder of the inequalities that Indigenous women, Two-Spirit and non-binary individuals continue to face. In response to this, the federal government announced that an official inquiry would take place into the murders and disappearances of these women and girls. Its mandate is to "examine and report on the systemic causes of all forms of violence against Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQ individuals in Canada by looking at patterns and underlying factors."[178]

The reality is that Indigenous women and children are denied the same justice as their non-Indigenous counterparts. They are the most vulnerable of oppressed peoples, and face consistent reminders that colonialism is alive and well. In failing to acknowledge the present as a continuation of the past, we further contribute to the erasure of Indigenous peoples. What is most distressing is that, for decades, Indigenous activists have fought to identify colonialism and state-sanctioned breaches in sovereignty. The systemic violence that Indigenous women and children face is not a new crisis—it is one that began with first contact, as Europeans ignored women, striding arrogantly past them to address Indigenous men. We are complicit in the silencing of Indigenous women and children, and their subsequent systemic abuse, every time that we fail to identify colonialism as a continued practice. If we are to 'right' our historical wrongs, we must

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[174] Vivian O'Donnell and Susan Wallace, "First Nations, Métis and Inuit Women," in *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, July 2011): 40.
[175] Ibid, 42.
[176] Ibid, pp.
[177] Royal Canadian Mounted Police, "Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview" (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2014), 7.
[178] "Our Women and Girls Are Sacred," Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. URL: http://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/. Last accessed June 9, 2018.

appropriately understand the past and its relationship with the present. We have not closed the 'chapter' on colonialism.[179] To say that we have done so is untrue, unjust and a dangerous way of asserting settler control over Indigenous narratives. It is a misrepresentation of history to insinuate that we have somehow concluded this colonial narrative.

We are in the midst of this very narrative. We add a figurative line to this narrative each and every time a child is taken from their home, without it being the absolute last resort. In Manitoba, for instance, 10,000 of the 11,000 children in care are Indigenous.[180] These are current numbers; they are a current display of the ways in which Indigenous peoples continue to face colonial encroachment on their nations. It is an affront to the dignity of these children to insinuate that we have 'righted' colonialism, when they continue to live in its grips.

Again, we add a figurative line each and every time that an Indigenous woman is treated with an utter lack of respect and understanding through our judicial processes. We actively tell Indigenous peoples and the broader public that the lives of Indigenous women do not matter each and every time we deny them justice in the courts. When the system continues to discriminate against Indigenous women, based both on their gender and their race, we have not closed the chapter on colonialism. For women such as Cindy Gladue, injustice continues even in death. [181] It must be said bluntly, so as to avoid confusion: we have not 'righted' the historic wrongs of colonialism. If history is any indication, we continue to perpetrate the same injustices that

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[179] Please see: "Prime Minister Harper offers full apology on behalf of Canadians for the Indian Residential Schools system," Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (June 11, 2008). URL: https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649. Last accessed June 11, 2018.

[180] Kyle Edwards, "Fighting Foster Care," *The Globe and Mail* (publication date unknown). URL: https://www.macleans.ca/first-nations-fighting-foster-care/. Last accessed June 10, 2018.

[181] Please see: Kathryn Blaze Carson, "More Than a Tragic Headline: Cindy Gladue Dreamt of a Happy Life," *The Globe and Mail* (May 15, 2015). URL: https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/the-death-and-life-of-cindy-gladue/article24455472/. Last accessed June 9, 2018.

activists decried decades ago. We must recognize our historical continuation of colonialism if we are to do right by women such as Cindy Gladue and children such as Tina Fontaine.[182]

We must be cognizant of current instances in a broader history of colonialism; we have not stepped outside of these historical confines. Oppression and violence go hand in hand, and we enable the continued erasure of Indigenous women and children when we do not actively address it. We contribute to this violence by ignoring its existence; it flourishes in obscurity, each time we fail to recognize the continuation of colonialism. We cannot achieve true and meaningful reconciliation if we do not understand the relationship between the past and present. Thus, we must broaden the ways in which we identify colonialism, acknowledging it as an ongoing process rather than a tragedy of our past, if we are to move towards reconciliation.

[182] Last accessed June 9, 2018.; Nancy Macdonald, "Justice for Tina will come from all of us," *The Globe and Mail* (February 23, 2018). URL: https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/tina-fontaine-death-missing-murdered-indigenous-women-inquiry/article38104065/. Last accessed June 9, 2018.

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Appendix

Figure 1: Ad for the Adopt Indian and Métis Program (AIM)

Howard was advertised in *The Regina Leader-Post* on November 20, 1973. He appears to be the youngest child listed for adoption that year.

Figure 2: Timeline of the Indian Child Caravan

Date	Main Location (end of day)	Notable Events	Estimated Numbers and Participants
October 9, 1980	People from the North (Fort St. John) and Burns Lake arrive at Prince George, and people from the South arrive at Neskainlith.	A feast and rally took place at the Neskainlith Indian Government Hall for those of the Kootenays and Kamloops areas. Rally in Prince George.	200 in Neskainlith (though some would not continue on the journey) and 200 in Prince George.
October 10, 1980	The Caravan stops over at Williams Lake and Lillooet.	Feast and rally at Lilllooet, with traditional song and dance. Rally in Port Hardy in preparation for those continuing on to Nanaimo.	Roughly 100 people left Bella Coola.
October 11, 1980	The Caravan stops at Mt. Currie and Nanaimo.	At the entrance to the Mt. Currie Reserve, caravans travelling from the Kootenays, Central Interior and northern regions were met by Councillor Albert Nelson, who carried the Indian Government flag. This was the last rally before arriving in Vancouver.	Roughly 350 participants in Mt. Currie, totalling 55 vehicles.
October 12, 1980	The Caravan arrives in Vancouver.	All caravans converge at Oppenheimer Park, on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, to prepare for the next day's main rally.	Roughly 350 people.
October 13, 1980	Main rally at Oppenheimer Park (Vancouver).	The day begins with a main rally at Oppenheimer Park, then travels to the home of Grace McCarthy, Minister of Human Resources for the province. McCarthy was not home at the time.	Roughly 600 people gather at Oppenheimer Park.