Making Aboriginal People ‘Immigrants Too’: A Comparison of Citizenship Programs for Newcomers and Indigenous Peoples in Postwar Canada, 1940s–1960s

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Making Aboriginal People ‘Immigrants Too’: A Comparison of Citizenship Programs for Newcomers and Indigenous Peoples in Postwar Canada, 1940s–1960s

Abstract: Canadian citizenship is a young official category of belonging, and the relationship of Aboriginal people to that category remains contested ground: scholars debate the legal status of First Nations people within the Canadian state while other academics and First Nations leaders note that these nations never ceded their sovereignty to a foreign colonial state. While such debates have deep historic roots, more recent post-1945 government policies and programs reveal the extent to which Aboriginal peoples continued to be seen as outsiders who need to be assimilated to the ‘mainstream.’ As a historical contribution to these ongoing debates, this paper explores efforts to create a distinct and common Canadian citizenship in the years after the Second World War when, as a follow-up to the passage of the 1947 Canadian Citizenship Act, the federal government strategically chose to combine its management of immigrant admissions, reception, and citizenship with its Indian Affairs policies under the rubric of one new federal ministry, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration (DCI). From 1950 until 1966, the Indian Affairs branch was located in the DCI, where its activities were heavily modelled after the citizenship campaigns being developed for immigrants within the DCI’s Canadian Citizenship Branch. This paper reveals the ways in which ministry officials and their network of public and private groups and agencies aimed to create a one-size-fits-all category of societal Canadian citizenship. To do so they deliberately constructed Aboriginal peoples as ‘immigrants too’ and targeted both ‘Canada’s original inhabitants’ and newly arrived European refugees and immigrants with similar ‘Canadianization’ programs. The analysis of the programs targeting both groups highlights the similarities (for example, both Natives and newcomers were constructed as outsiders who needed to adopt dominant middle-class Canadian social and moral codes and pro-capitalist values) and the differences (for example, the immigrant campaigns were more tolerant of cultural differences than the Aboriginal campaigns that, despite their seemingly progressive rhetoric, effectively continued earlier assimilationist policies) as well as their gendered and class features. In offering this comparative analysis between these twinned postwar campaigns, the paper...
brings together two histories, Aboriginal and immigrant, that have usually been studied in isolation from each other.

**Keywords:** immigrants, ethnicity, reception programs, Aboriginal history, political history, citizenship, gender

Résumé : La citoyenneté canadienne est une catégorie d’appartenance officielle récente, et le rapport des peuples autochtones à cette catégorie demeure problématique. Pendant que certains universitaires débattent du statut juridique des Premières Nations au Canada, d’autres chercheurs et des leaders autochtones maintiennent que ces nations n’ont jamais abdiqué leur souveraineté au profit d’un État colonial étranger. Les racines de ce débat sont très anciennes, mais on peut constater, dans des politiques et des programmes gouvernementaux appliqués dans le dernier demi-siècle seulement, à quel point on a continué de traiter les Autochtones comme des outsiders qu’il fallait assimiler au courant principal. Cet article veut contribuer aux dimensions historiques de ce débat en examinant la création d’une citoyenneté canadienne distincte au lendemain de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Dans la foulée de la Loi sur la citoyenneté de 1947, le gouvernement fédéral a fait le choix de combiner l’administration de l’immigration à celle de ses politiques autochtones au sein d’un nouveau ministère de la Citoyenneté et de l’Immigration. Entre 1950 et 1966, ce ministère a chapeauté les Affaires indiennes et en a profondément influencé les activités en les faisant se modeler sur ses campagnes de citoyenneté destinées aux immigrants. Cet article révèle que les responsables du ministère et leur réseau de groupes publics et privés ont travaillé à créer une citoyenneté canadienne sociétale uniforme. Ils ont construit les Autochtones comme « des immigrants eux aussi » et ont voulu leur appliquer les programmes de « canadienisation » conçus pour les immigrants et les réfugiés européens récents. L’analyse de ces programmes, en plus d’en montrer les caractéristiques de genre et de classe, révèle des similitudes et des différences dans le traitement des deux groupes. Tant les Autochtones que les nouveaux arrivants étaient vus comme des outsiders auxquels il fallait inculquer les valeurs capitalistes et le code moral et social de la classe moyenne canadienne dominante. Mais les campagnes destinées aux immigrants respectaient davantage les différences culturelles que celles destinées aux Autochtones; en dépit de leur rhétorique progressiste, ces dernières prolongeaient en fait les politiques assimilationnistes d’autrefois. En faisant l’analyse comparative de ces politiques jumelles de l’après-guerre, cet article réunit deux historiographies (immigrante et amérindienne) qui se sont généralement développées séparément.

Mots clés : immigrants, ethnicté, programmes d’accueil, histoire des peuples autochtones, histoire politique, citoyenneté, genre

When a journalist asked Liberal prime minister Louis St Laurent in 1950 why, as a follow-up to the passage of the Canadian Citizenship Act in 1947, he had brought the Canadian Citizenship Branch and Indian Affairs Branch together in a new Department of Citizenship and Immigration (DCI), he replied that the goal was ‘to make Canadian citizens of those who come here as immigrants and to make
Canadian citizens of as many as possible of the descendants of the original inhabitants of this country.¹ This essay explores the contested nature of the new category of Canadian citizenship by focusing on the period when the Canadian state strategically chose to combine its management of immigrant admission and settlement with its Indian Affairs policies under the rubric of one federal ministry. Within the new DCI, the Citizenship Branch (CB) influenced and helped develop integration programs for both newcomers and Aboriginals until 1966, when Indian Affairs moved to a new ministry.² As an effort to bring together two histories (immigrant and Aboriginal) that are often studied in isolation from each other, the article examines the programs specifically aimed at Aboriginal people defined as ‘status Indians’ under the Indian Act³ and compares them to the better-documented immigration programs.


2 The new ministry was the Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources. At that time, Ottawa also created a Department of Manpower and Immigration, and the Citizenship Branch was placed under the jurisdiction of the department of the Secretary of State. See Freda Hawkins, Canada and Immigration: Public Policy and Public Concern (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1972), 89–118.

3 This paper uses the term status Indian when referring to programs and policies exclusively targeting people defined as such under the Indian Act. We use Aboriginal to refer more broadly to people who may be status Indian, non-status Indian, Inuit, or Métis according to current legal usage. We use indigenous as a general term, but in this context distinct from Métis. In the Canadian Constitution, Aboriginal peoples of Canada are defined as ‘Indian, Inuit and Métis.’ See pt 2, sec. 35, The Constitution Act, 1982, being Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (UK), 1982, c. 11. The Department of Indian Affairs originally concerned itself with Indians with status only – those registered as members of bands recognized by the federal government. During the period under review, Métis people and ‘non-status Indians’ were regarded legally as ‘ordinary citizens’ and were not officially targets of the programs discussed here. Inuit people also remained outside of the Indian Act. In 1950 there was some discussion of including Inuit people in the new Department of Citizenship and Immigration, but opposition in the federal bureaucracy to the plan meant that Inuit Affairs remained in the Department of Resources and Development until the 1966 ministerial reorganization that saw Inuit Affairs and Indian Affairs united in the new Ministry of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Indian Affairs programs generally focused on ‘status Indians’ (whether living on or off reserve) while the Department of Citizenship and Immigration typically included all Aboriginal people.
We argue that the dci’s dual mandate was part of a deliberate policy to deal with two populations perceived by the federal government to be potentially threatening: Ottawa viewed immigrants and status Indians (especially those living on reserves) as marginal and foreign groups who had to be brought into the Canadian mainstream. A comparison of the dci’s well-studied citizenship campaigns for the post–Second World War newcomers, especially the 1.5 million Europeans who entered Canada by 1965, and the hitherto little-studied post-1945 programs directed towards Aboriginal peoples more broadly, and status Indians specifically, reveals striking similarities as well as critical differences. The promotion of white middle-class society’s dominant family ideals, rigid gender codes, and pro-capitalist values informed both programs, for example, but the programs aimed at Aboriginal peoples were far less respectful of Indigenous cultural traditions and political autonomy than were the immigrant campaigns of European customs. Indeed, the Aboriginal programs showed plenty of continuity with a much older state policy of assimilation that predated Confederation. A comparison of the dci’s dual programs also sheds light on the racial, gender, and class dimensions of a misplaced experiment to create a ‘one-size-fits-all’ Canadian citizenship that, for all its talk of respect, tolerance, and common Canadian values, belonged to an ongoing project of white-settler nation building. Finally, the far greater Indigenous resistance to the dci’s programs as compared to that of immigrants is best understood as part of a larger struggle by Indigenous peoples to maintain political and cultural autonomy within a neo-colonial state.

The article first raises some key concepts and political debates and then introduces the Canadian Citizenship Act and the dci’s twin mandate to turn both Indigenous peoples and newcomers into Canadian citizens. Next, we outline some of the major features of the immigrant campaigns. We then examine the programs aimed at Indigenous peoples, especially status Indians, assessing them in relation to the immigrant campaigns and to the Canadian state’s historical agenda for the

elimination of status Indians as a legal category. Finally, we address
Indigenous resistance to the dci and subsequent government policies.
Throughout, the historical narrative is set against a consideration of
the broader debates about different types of citizenship and the rela-
tive merits and pitfalls of different models of Canadian citizenship.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, IMMIGRANTS, AND
A MADE-IN-CANADA CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship is a complex concept and Canadian citizenship is a rela-
tively young official category of belonging. As a white settler society
and immigrant-receiving country, Canada has portrayed itself as an
enlightened nation while downplaying its history of immigrant restric-
tions, institutionalized racism, and mistreatment of Aboriginal peo-

4 See, for example, the introduction and essays by Bonita Lawrence and Mona
Oikawa in *Race, Space and the Law: Mapping a White Settler Society*, ed. Sherene
Razak (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002).

5 A tiny sample of this literature includes Alan C. Cairns, *Citizens Plus: Aboriginal
People and the Canadian State* (Vancouver: ubc Press, 2000); Will Kymlicka,
*Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Toronto: Oxford
University Press, 2001); Charles Taylor, *Reconciling the Solitudes: Essays on
Canadian Federalism and Nationalism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's
University of Press, 1993), and notes below.

6 For example, Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, and Eve Haque, "‘Multicul-
turalism within a Bilingual Framework’: Language and the Racial Ordering
of Difference and Belonging in Canada’ (PhD diss., University of Toronto),
respectively.

7 For example, Neil Bissoondath, *Selling Illusions: The Cult of Multiculturalism in
debates surrounding aboriginality and citizenship is evident from the wide range of opinions on the value of Canadian citizenship to Aboriginal peoples and the ‘uncertainty,’ to quote legal Aboriginal scholar John Borrows, regarding the place of Indigenous peoples within the Canadian citizenship regime.8

Canada’s citizenship regime began after the Second World War, when Mackenzie King’s Liberal government drafted legislation to establish a category of national citizenship independent from that of Britain. By doing so, it was acting on initiatives taken in the latter stages of the war by Secretary of State Paul Martin Sr and by senior officials who had spent the war years managing, manipulating, and, in specific cases, interning Canada’s ethnic groups as well as mediating ethnic tensions between the country’s majority and minority groups. As the Bill’s acknowledged architect, Martin Sr accentuated the advantages of promoting a Canadian citizenship defined in terms of a common set of values – democracy, freedom, liberalism – with which a diverse population could be made to identify and support.9


his colleagues were in no way rejecting the country’s British heritage. Indeed, it was to this British and Christian heritage, they argued, that Canada owed its superior values (including respect and tolerance) and institutions (parliamentary democracy).\textsuperscript{10} Rather, as Ivana Caccia observes, this largely Anglo-Protestant elite was advocating a symbolic institution of Canadian citizenship that could serve as the primary signifier of belonging to a Canadian community without reference to specific racial, religious, cultural, or linguistic characteristics. But the act also affirmed a vision of a nation composed of two charter groups, English and French, and an array of other (mostly European) ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{11} The act became law on 1 January 1947 amid much official fanfare.\textsuperscript{12}

In passing the Canadian Citizenship Act, the Liberals intended to create both a distinct legal citizenship (a category that includes the right to vote and hold a passport as well as the duty to pay taxes), and a distinct Canadian societal citizenship characterized by a sense of belonging to a shared national community – what political scientist Jean Laponce describes as ‘a sense of ethnic solidarity,’ and constitutional scholar Peter Russell refers to as ‘a unitary model of citizenship’ in which nationality and ‘ethnicity’ (as in certain shared linguistic and cultural characteristics or values or a shared history of at least some of the population) were closely tied.\textsuperscript{13} Equally important, the concept of modern citizenship also stems from two opposing principles: liberal individualism, with its emphasis on individual rights and autonomy, and the state’s obligation to ensure those values; and civic republicanism, with its stress on the active public participation of citizens and their obligation to show loyalty to the state through obedience to its laws and norms – or suffer the consequences. In the post-1945 era, as western states such as Canada, the United States, and Britain expanded welfare provisions and social entitlements in order to cushion the inequities produced by capitalism and encourage


\textsuperscript{11} Ivana Caccia, ‘Managing the Canadian mosaic: Dealing with Cultural Diversity during the World War Two Years’ (PhD diss., University of Ottawa, 2006). See also Haque, ‘“Multiculturalism”’ (which also summarizes the anti-racist critiques).

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Canadian Citizenship Act}, 1946 (10 Geo. VI).

continuing obedience to the economic order and its ruling elites – a development that some call a rights-based social citizenship – additional tensions resulted from the contradictory pulls of individual rights and social guarantees.\footnote{This discussion draws on several sources, including Robert Adamski, Dorothy Chun, and Robert Menzies, eds., *Contesting Canadian Citizenship* (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2002); Kaplan, *Belonging*; Jane Ursell, *Private Lives, Public Policy: 100 Years of State Intervention in the Family* (Toronto: Women’s Press, 1992); Boyer, Cardinal, and Headon, *From Subjects to Citizens*; references in n. 4.}

The creation of a legal category of citizenship alone could never have produced the intended sense of common Canadian-ness or belonging, given postwar social realities. These included the challenges of resettling veterans, delivering on the promises of welfare capitalism, and managing a cold war. There was also the anticipated immigrant boom that would further diversify Canada’s already ethnically diverse (albeit white) population – and renew age-old fears, especially among Anglo-Celtic Canadians, that their way of life would be threatened unless these inferior ‘others’ were Canadianized. Equally threatening was the significant increase in the Aboriginal population – another historically ‘othered’ social group. For decades, successive federal governments had assumed that what they called ‘the Indian problem’ would eventually disappear on its own, the product of demographic decline. But after reaching a low of 100,000 people in 1900, the population of ‘status Indians’ began a remarkable recovery. By the late 1930s, this population had grown 18 per cent; Indian Affairs officials were increasingly worried about the strain that such growth would place on government coffers.\footnote{For 1900, see Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History since 1492* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 242. Data for 1939 compiled from Canada, *Census of Indians in Canada* (Ottawa: 1939).}

Although ‘status Indians’ clearly met the Citizenship Act’s simple requirement for citizenship of birth on Canadian soil, they were not considered to have the rights of legal citizenship. In fact, the Citizenship Act makes no mention of Indians or Aboriginal peoples more generally. It was the Indian Act that denied them the right to vote; legally they remained wards of the federal government.\footnote{John Leslie and Ron Maguire, eds., *The Historical Development of the Indian Act* (Ottawa: Treaties and Historical Research Centre, Research Branch, Corporate Policy, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1978); Robin Brownlie, “‘A better citizen than lots of white men’: First Nations Enfranchisement – an Ontario Case Study, 1918–1940,” *Canadian Historical Review* 87, no. 1 (2006): 29–52.}

In light of their growing numbers, however, Ottawa viewed these ‘unassimilated’
status Indians as much of a potential threat to Canadian unity as immigrants from traditionally ‘non-preferred’ southern and eastern European locales. The solution, as King’s successor Louis St Laurent explained when he created the dci to implement the Citizenship Act, was to target both groups with similar citizenship programs that would foster an explicit sense of Canadian identity.17

In the ensuing years, a new discourse emerged among government officials and others engaged in immigrant reception and Aboriginal education work: Our identity as Canadians is rooted in a shared experience of immigration. In speeches, publications, and organized activities, dci staff reinforced their message that Aboriginal people were ‘immigrants too’ in various ways. One was to emphasize the growing numbers of ‘Indians’ migrating from reserve life to employment in urban centres and to predict that more would follow until few if any were left on reserve communities. Another was to portray Aboriginal people as historic or ancient migrants through repeated attention to the Bering Strait Theory. In a 1952 address to a group of mostly European newcomers in Ottawa who had completed their citizenship course, Vladimir Kaye, chief liaison officer of the dci’s Citizenship Branch, typically declared that ‘all Canadians originated from immigrant stock’ as even the Indians were ‘immigrants to this country in some earlier stage of settlement of Canada.’18 A dci immigrant booklet, The Canadian Scene, even pointed to archaeology for evidence of migrations across the Bering Strait ‘many thousands of years past.’19

The dci’s Indian Affairs liaison officers and their colleagues working with First Nations also spread this message. In a 1954 article entitled ‘From Oldest to Newest: Our Indian Citizen,’ André Renaud, an Oblate priest with experience in Indigenous education, stressed that ‘our oldest Canadians must be given the status of New Canadians or else they may never become true Canadians like the rest of us.’ (In 1957 he co-founded the National Commission on the Indian Canadian, a project of the Canadian Association for Adult Education that liaised with the cb.) Renaud insisted that movement off reserves and

17 A third ‘target’ was youth. In creating the dci, the Citizenship Branch (originally the wartime Nationalities Branch) and the Citizenship Registration Branch were moved from the Secretary of State while the Immigration Branch and Indian Affairs Branch were moved from Mines and Resources.

18 ‘Address by Dr. V.J. Kaye to graduating class of new Canadians at the High School of Commerce,’ Ottawa, 21 Mar. 1952, file 1952, vol. 11, Vladimir Julian Kaye Fonds, Canadian Citizenship Branch series, MG31 D69, Library and Archives Canada (hereafter lac).

assimilation into white settler society would not only end government paternalism and save the state large sums of money but reverse the sad fact that most ‘off-reserve Indians’ in Canada’s cities ended up ‘on the fringe and margin of our community, if not physically, at least socially and economically.’

For Renaud, as for the DCI officials and other activists, this policy involved applying the programs being developed for training, settling, Canadianizing, and ‘modernizing’ newcomers, especially rural men and women from peripheral Europe accustomed to ‘primitive’ living conditions, to Indigenous peoples, who, from the government perspective, had lived too long in the more-or-less foreign world of the rural-based, underdeveloped, and often isolated reserve. Citizenship campaigns also demand conformity to dominant norms, or moral regulation, and here, too, officials, experts, and volunteers intended that, like their immigrant counterparts, Aboriginal youth and adults would adopt Canadian social mores, including pro-capitalist values. The programs that targeted these youth and adults shared other similarities with their immigrant counterparts, and also diverged from them. But before we can more fully examine the campaigns directed at Aboriginal peoples, we need to briefly consider the better-documented programs that targeted immigrants.

Making Canadians out of Immigrants

In keeping with a welfare capitalist agenda, the postwar Canadian state, through the DCI and other federal as well as provincial and municipal departments, supplied job placement and social services, language and citizenship classes, emergency unemployment handouts, and limited family supports to newcomers in an effort to ensure their successful incorporation into the body politic. The two-tiered gender

20 André Renaud, ‘From Oldest to Newest: Our Indian Citizen,’ in Food for Thought, repr. (Canadian Association for Adult Education, 1954), box 270, file 5, American Federation of International Institutes Collection, Immigration RG3, Immigration and Refugee Services of America Records, Immigration and History Research Centre Archives, University of Minnesota. The file includes the newsletter and other materials concerning the CAAA’s National Commission on the Indian Canadian, whose members also included federal senior civil servants involved with Indian Affairs.

21 See, for example, Franca Iacovetta, Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006); Adele Perry, On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of Empire (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Mariana Valverde, The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885–1925 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).
bias of immigration and welfare policies also meant that state resources were disproportionately distributed to male immigrants. More specifically, recent studies have shown that the postwar immigrant campaigns exhibited a contradictory mix of liberal discourses of tolerance, respect, and cultural pluralism echoing Martin's concept of a more inclusive Canadian citizenship, and intrusive tactics reflecting a certain continuity with earlier immigrant campaigns demanding high levels of conformity to Canadian models and the rise of a 'national insecurity state' fighting a domestic cold war against all perceived threats to mainstream society.

Drawing on this scholarship, we offer a few examples of these competing dynamics. First, citizenship officials portrayed themselves as enlightened liberal integrationists who, unlike earlier assimilationists, would guide, not dictate, the newcomers' adaptation to Canadian society, yet their speeches and publications also revealed an ideological agenda of a ruling elite that encouraged new groups to 'flourish' so long as they did not threaten the authority of the dominant groups. An array of dci booklets that informed immigrants about Canada noted the many freedoms under democracy but also its reliance on an actively loyal and obedient citizenry. Similarly, citizenship officials were prepared to work with ethnic Canadian organizations, save for Communist ones (which they worked hard to destroy), on the grounds that already Canadianized groups could ease acculturation by providing war-weary, frightened, and even emotionally damaged newcomers with information in their language, material aid, and psychological and social support. Such efforts also helped to provide a defence against

the kind of individual anomie or group disorder that could endanger Canada’s social fabric and/or entail huge health costs. While not solely Cold War goals, all this activity fit well with the state’s national security agenda to ensure a contented and conformist citizenry.

Second, the integrationists sough to foster national unity by encouraging mutual understanding and cultural exchange between established and new Canadians, but their acceptance of diversity was restricted to the comparatively safe cultural arena. In his many upbeat speeches, Kaye used colourful metaphors to convey the state’s role in encouraging ‘unity-in-diversity,’ comparing the newcomers to the musicians of a Canadian orchestra or to the tasty ingredients of a Canadian salad. Along with liberal-minded food writers who occasionally featured ethnic recipes, Kaye praised ethnic foods for saving Canada from standardized blandness in eating regimes. At the same time, his department endorsed programs that sought to Canadianize (modernize) immigrant women’s food customs by encouraging them to abandon the outdoor ethnic markets with their live pigeons and Old World haggling for modern grocery stores with their clean aisles, well-stocked shelves, Cellophane-wrapped meats, and nutritious ‘Canadian’ items (enriched bread, milk, canola oil). Aware that a sense of belonging was a necessary ingredient to inculcating patriotism and citizenship, liaison officers worked with cultural groups to organize immigrant exhibits, concerts, and folk fairs that showcased the newcomers’ art, handicrafts, dance, and music for Canadian audiences. As they also well understood, such strategies for celebrating individual talents or mounting cultural performances did not challenge existing power structures or mainstream society.

Third, familiar class and gender dynamics emerged as middle-class professionals encouraged stateless, working-class, or impoverished newcomers to aspire to the bourgeois nuclear family model according to which breadwinner fathers, homemaker mothers, and well-adjusted children lived within ‘proper’ single-family households, preferably in suburbia, and performed their appropriate gender roles. The dci’s

23 Iacovetta, Gatekeepers, chap. 3.
25 Iacovetta, Gatekeepers, chap. 3.
promotional materials celebrated individual men’s (and, less frequently, women’s) entrepreneurial, professional, or artistic achievements, while its teaching tools for women, including films from the National Film Board, featured consumer images of the ideal homemaker and the many modern conveniences – fridges, stoves, model kitchens – that defined the Canadian way of life. The huge gap between these images and the overcrowded (and often kitchen-less) flats or multiple-family houses in which many newcomers initially lived reflected the working-class realities of men and women who had been recruited from the Displaced Persons (DP) camps or admitted from European countries to fill labour shortages in largely low-skilled jobs. That many men who toiled in resource industries, factories, and construction or other outdoor jobs failed to earn a breadwinner wage prompted many more women beyond the original domestic labour recruits to enter the workforce to keep family finances afloat. In response, the DCI did not ignore immigrant women workers, though the government-supported training programs for the manufacturing sector and other low-skilled jobs where so many immigrant women could be found were inadequate. Moreover, just as the DP domestics were expected eventually to marry and raise families, the main message to immigrant women workers was to strive for a largely bourgeois-defined domesticity.

Fourth, the adoption of pluralist approaches did not entirely eliminate older assimilationist expectations that the newcomer undergo a profound change in cultural values and social behaviour, nor did it displace the experts’ presumption that they were authorized to intervene in the lives of newcomers who seriously transgressed Canadian norms. Often conveniently ignoring the patriarchal character of Canadian families, the family and child experts invoked stereotypes of domineering European fathers and submissive mothers as explanations for ill-adjusted children, immigrant juvenile delinquency, and other ills. They received the DCI’s endorsement for a variety of well-intentioned but intrusive front-line programs that, whether inner-city school lunch programs or settlement house nursery schools and mothers’ clubs, reflected their goal of reducing immigrant parents’ Old World influences over their children and speeding up the process of Canadianizing them. Social agency staff who introduced immigrant mothers to available social services to help them deal with sick or dis-

abled children, or assisted a couple in resolving a family crisis, frequently dismissed women's customary healing rituals as dangerously backward and the family's suspicion towards them as a manifestation of outmoded values that had to be broken down. In an effort to improve parenting skills, they employed familiar social work approaches, such as home visits and family budgets, meant to expose mothers but also fathers to 'modern' child-rearing regimes.27

The DCI staff also participated in direct efforts to Canadianize immigrant children and youth through organized recreation programs – such as summer camps (which included leadership camps for the most talented teenagers), boys' sports leagues, girls' crafts classes, and teen dances) that also provided outlets for youthful energy and sexuality while simultaneously instilling principles of participatory democracy. These programs reproduced gender stereotypes and hierarchies, as in crafts and charm school for immigrant girls, sports for boys, though girls also had access to some organized and even competitive sports. In an era marked by alarmist declarations of escalating immorality, including a supposed epidemic in female promiscuity, it is not surprising that such programs were often accompanied by a heightened concern to protect the sexual virtues of immigrant girls. This societal concern with girls' vulnerability to sexual deviance also reflected racial-ethnic hierarchies that, at a time before the post-1967 waves of newer immigrant women of colour from the Caribbean and elsewhere, considered certain 'non-preferred' newcomers, such as southern Europeans like the 'well-developed' Italian girls chastised for 'hanging out with boys,' or east European refugee victims of wartime sexual assault viewed as 'damaged goods,' to be more susceptible to promiscuity than Canadian girls.28

However, as the large body of scholarly research on immigrants in postwar Canada has also documented, the European newcomers were


not simply passive pawns in the processes described. Nor was the dci’s model of integration simply assimilation by another word. For all of the heavy-handedness, even hypocrisy, involved in these campaigns, European newcomers were not subjected to ruthless assimilation policies, and many of them found ways to resist or, more commonly, modify external pressures to adopt Canadian ways. When immigrants resisted intrusions, or negotiated their terms, they were exercising some choice and agency over the pace and degree of acculturation, and this process of adaptation led to various hybrid patterns, whether in parenting styles, children’s play, or family relations. Moreover, in the long term, the postwar Europeans changed Canadian society and influenced national discourses of democracy and later, multiculturalism, even as their own customs were being modified.29

Certainly, the newcomers differed in their capacity to re-establish themselves, and we should not discount the class distinctions that, for example, differentiated middle-class refugees who rebuilt professional careers or businesses from the much larger number of impoverished peasants and workers who remained more firmly within the Canadian working class. Still, immigrants across the class divide exhibited significant rates of citizenship and homeownership and their children and grandchildren would experience upward mobility. The cultural pluralism of the postwar era, however limited, encouraged the European immigrants to transplant cherished cultural forms that helped them to rebuild meaningful lives, families, and communities that also made a mark on the Canadian landscape. Talented and ambitious poets, artists, and dancers fuelled Canada’s postwar highbrow art culture. Ethnic foodways helped to transform cultural landscapes, especially of immigrant receiving cities that, like Toronto and

Montreal, witnessed an expansion in the number and range of ethnic shops and restaurants and various forms of culinary experimentation and hybrid diets in both immigrant and Canadian households.  

Similarly, the newcomers’ anti-Communism affected postwar Canada, even directly influencing how politicians, citizenship teachers, judges, and even ordinary Canadians discussed the value of democracy, freedom, and Canadian citizenship. The critical presence of the anti-Communist Europeans also allowed the Canadian state to meet its long-standing objective of undermining the influence of the left-wing ethnic press, though the 1956 revelations about Stalin, the crushed Hungarian revolt, and other international events also mattered. In sum, the 1950s and 1960s saw not only the incorporation of some 2.5 million immigrants from Europe, Britain, and elsewhere into the Canadian polity without massive societal rupture or institutional crisis, but a more decidedly multicultural (if not more egalitarian) society emerged out of the many dynamic interactions, conflicts, and accommodations — over food, family, rituals, politics, folk culture, and more — that took place between ‘new’ and ‘old’ Canadians.

Making Canadians out of Aboriginal Peoples

In the 1960s, the population of ‘Indians with status’ was roughly one-tenth of Canada’s immigrant population, or 190,000 persons. But Aboriginal peoples nevertheless remained the fastest growing ‘ethnic group’ in Canada (to use the government’s problematic term). As the title of a 1955 film that Ottawa produced with the National Film Board put it, Indians were No Longer Vanishing. Like their dci collea-

32 The government’s use of the term ethnic group to describe Aboriginal peoples could reduce the status of the First Peoples to one of Canada’s many immigrant and ethnic groups. On its application, see, for example, speech of Minister Ellen Fairclough, in Douglas Leachman, ‘The Meeting of the Ways,’ in The Indian in Transition: The Meeting of the Ways, Learning for Earning, dci (Indian Affairs) (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1961), 10.
33 National Film Board, No Longer Vanishing, 1955 (the film shows Aboriginal people moving off the reserve and working alongside ‘Canadians’ in a range of occupations: teaching, nursing, and military service); dci, Annual Report, 1955–6, 45; dci, The Indian in Transition: The Indian Today (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1962) 3; and dci, The Indian in Transition: The Meeting of the Ways; Learning for Earning (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer 1963), 6.
guessed involved in the immigrant programs, the Indian Affairs Branch staff took very seriously their citizenship mandate to Canadianize (‘modernize’) Indigenous peoples. They, too, celebrated what they viewed as successful transformations in the gender dynamics of family and community life: speaking of the Shamattawa Band in northern Manitoba, for instance, Indian Affairs officials reported with approval that ‘formerly it was the women’s job to provide the fuel while the men hunted and trapped. Shamattawa men have realized that this is not suitable women’s work.’ However, there were also critical differences between the immigrant and Aboriginal campaigns, including the virtual absence of any explicit discourse of cultural pluralism or unity-in-diversity in the Aboriginal programs for the period under review. Instead, these programs were characterized by a more marked policy of racial assimilation into white society.

Our exploration of the dci-era programs reveals that the Indian Affairs Branch concentrated many of its assimilation efforts on specific educational programs: formal schooling for children, and leadership and vocational training for adults. A sample of the headlines that appeared in the branch periodical Indian News, which beginning in 1954 was distributed free to status Indians across Canada, reveals how staff defined progress through a celebration of people who participated in mainstream Canadian society: ‘Indian Accomplishments Increase Admiration of Canadian Public,’ ‘Miss Hoff Proves Valuable Clerk,’ ‘Shalath Girl Receives Nursing Diploma,’ ‘Sales Manager Found Life Varied, Never Dull in Successful Career,’ ‘Indian Magistrate Holds Respect of All,’ ‘Career in rcaf,’ ‘Ambitious Mohawk Actress Studies Radio, Television,’ and ‘Handicapped Indian Fine Barber Says Boss.’ A 1964 article titled ‘Domestic Service Proves Useful Step’ explained how fifty-four ‘Indian girls from Southern Alberta’ found jobs as ‘domestics, babysitters and housekeepers’ in Calgary. As in the case of immigrant domestic schemes, the job training was also expected to equip these young women for eventual marriage and modern homemaking. Another article, simply titled ‘Achieves Success by Hard Work,’ featured a couple who had saved enough money from various jobs to purchase their own farm outside of the reserve – thereby becoming what the government desired: property-owning and capitalist-

[34] See, for example, the files containing reports and proposals during the 1940s and 1950s for raising standards of citizenship and for certificates, Immigration and Citizenship Committee, pt 1, file 1-24-1, vol. 26, MG 28 I 17, LAC.

oriented Indians. In every issue of Indian News, at least one article addressed off-reserve employment possibilities and profiled people in those jobs: a 1962 instalment was entitled ‘Why I Became a Nurse.’

The importance of education to the project of moving people off reserve and assimilating them into Canadian society was clearly understood by the entire Department of Citizenship and Immigration. In a 1961 dci publication, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Ellen Fairclough was quoted as saying that ‘the fundamental aim of the government’s policy towards Indians is the gradual integration of our country’s fastest growing ethnic group into the Canadian community.’ Education, she felt, was ‘the key to a promising future for the Indians.’ The author of the piece, Douglas Leechman, went on to underscore the government’s intention to use education and training as part of a tool to depopulate reserves: ‘It is anticipated that, by 1970, two-thirds of our Indian people will have left the reserves. Some of the elderly ones, born and brought up there, can obviously never leave, but their children can, and their grand-children will.’

The theme of education as the key to children’s success dominated Indian News. Students were praised for winning scholarships, perfect attendance prizes at residential schools, and one for achieving ‘the Grand Award for Residential School pupils in the Tuberculosis Poster Competition.’ The president of the Edmonton Indian Residential School reported in 1954 that ‘Indian children rated high in tests of mental ability compared to other Canadian boys and girls of the same age.’ Students who acquired post-secondary education were singled out for praise, as were those who entered the military or undertook careers in policing, nursing, and social work. As with the immigrants, an acknowledgement of individual accomplishments


39 The following references are all to Indian News: ‘The Professions,’ 1, no. 4 (July 1955): 2; ‘Heads Branch at High School,’ 1, no. 4 (July 1955): 3; ‘Indian Nurse,’ 2, no. 1 (Jan. 1956): 5; ‘First Indian to Join the Mounties,’ 3, no. 1 (June 1958): 7; ‘Indian Students at University of British Columbia,’ 7, no. 2 (Mar. 1964): 8.
reinforced the state’s mandate to promote pro-capitalist and liberal ideologies. The stakes involved were far greater for status Indians, however, because until the Indian Act was amended in 1961, any person with Indian status who achieved post-secondary education could be deemed ‘enfranchised’ by Indian Affairs and thus would be removed from the register and no longer be a legal member of their band.\(^{40}\)

That Canadian officials and their network of professional and volunteer colleagues hoped to encourage Indigenous women (like immigrant women) to aspire to emulate a largely bourgeois-defined domesticity is clearly indicated by the favourable coverage in \textit{Indian News} of the Homemaker’s Clubs in reserve communities. Having grown out of similarly named clubs created for newcomer prairie women in the early 1900s and the Women’s Institutes of Ontario (begun in 1897), these clubs aimed to bring the science of home economics to rural women, and to extend middle-class values into the countryside. By the 1950s, many of the Saskatchewan Homemakers Clubs began outreach to First Nations reserves on the ground that, as Jennifer Milne observes, programs of ‘personal improvement and community service’ could help Indian ‘integration into mainstream society’ and ‘ultimately lead them out of a life of poverty.’\(^{41}\) The clubs were relatively popular with Aboriginal women – for example, the number of Aboriginal clubs on Saskatchewan reserves increased from one to twenty-five between 1937 and 1954. These clubs, according to \textit{Indian News}, were committed to service, ‘to make life on the reserves better and happier.’\(^{42}\)

Still, there was a clear racial divide: the reserve-based clubs for Aboriginal women remained entirely separate from the main organization, despite the latter’s stated interest in encouraging Indian integration into white society. (The clubs did share the motto ‘For Home and Country,’ while the Indian Homemakers’ Clubs had a different badge: ‘a maple leaf with an Indian woman’s head.’)\(^{43}\) By contrast, the immigrant mothers’ clubs and related programs in major cities created


\(^{42}\) ‘Homemakers Clubs Hold Three Regional Conventions This Year,’ \textit{Indian News} 1, no. 1 (Aug. 1954): 3.

\(^{43}\) Milne, ‘Cultivating Domesticity,’ 63n59. ‘Homemakers Clubs,’ 3.
comparatively more opportunities for cross-cultural conversations among Canadian volunteers and newcomer women and among different groups of newcomer mothers. At best, Indian News was able to report (with approval) that a few meetings between white and on-reserve Aboriginal Homemakers Clubs had taken place in other provinces and, in 1962, that Aboriginal women from seven Ontario reserves had attended the 17th Annual Homemakers Convention.44

Notwithstanding the lofty language of integration and success, there was a clear class component to the dci’s citizenship programs for Natives; they promoted Aboriginal assimilation to the Canadian working class. Government officials had specific and limited ideas of how Aboriginal peoples would be permitted to exercise their right to Paul Martin Sr’s ‘full partnership in the fortunes and in the future of the nation.’45 As superintendent of Indian Affairs, J.W. Pickersgill elaborated on these ideas in 1956, when he described his department’s training opportunities. The boys would be trained for farm work and parcelled out to farmers, while girls would receive instruction in ‘the rudiments of household science, with a view to equipping them to take employment as domestic workers or as workers in hospitals or institutions.’46 As many Indian News features made clear, the most basic vocational training would be the norm while post-secondary training would be the exception. In addition to the ‘three R’s,’ girls at Portage la Prairie Indian Residential School learned ‘domestic science – cooking, sewing, handcrafts’ to become ‘good homemakers’ while the boys practised ‘building an open-air rink and painting and decorating the rooms of the school.’ In addition, the 4-H Clubs had ‘the school farm to practice on, with 16 fine cows to milk and eggs to gather from 150 hens.’47

As these examples suggest, Indian Affairs encouraged the adoption of white middle-class cultural values but structured educational opportunities to ensure that these young people remained firmly in the

45 When introducing the citizenship act, Martin declared that Canadian citizenship ‘means more than the right to vote’ and ‘to hold property’ and ‘to move freely under the protection of the state’ but also ‘the right to full partnership in the fortunes of the nation.’ Cited in Boyer, Cardinal, and Headon, ‘Introduction,’ in From Subjects to Citizens, 2–3.
47 ‘Portage La Prairie Students Are Happy, Boys and Girls Have Busy Program at Indian Residential School,’ Indian News 2, no. 3 (Mar. 1957): 12.
working class and were best ‘qualified’ to work in essentially unskilled positions. Of course, many immigrants also joined the working class. But there were also some differences. For example, at least in the case of young men, the ‘dp’s’ and other immigrants recruited on low-skilled labour contracts as miners, loggers, construction workers, and farm labourers were expected to move on to better-paying jobs after completing their one-year contract, and many did so by, for example, developing on-the-job trade skills (such as bricklaying and carpentry) or taking three-month or longer vocational programs (in welding and fabricating, appliance-serving, electrician, and other trades), and earning Canadian trade certificates in the cities where they settled. By contrast, many Indigenous boys had access to much shorter training courses and were effectively being trained for lower-skilled hired help, such as all-round farmhand (see below). Indeed, in many respects, these ‘new’ training programs effectively continued the curricular approach of nineteenth-century residential schools, where Indigenous students attended class for part of the day and received vocational training as farmhands or in domestic service for the remainder.

The Onion Lake Residential School garnered particular attention in *Indian News* for its novel approach to teaching ‘home economics.’ The school had constructed a special three-room house in which the girl students could take turns playing ‘housewife.’ The house was equipped with a wood and coal stove, hot water reservoir, gasoline-operated washing machine, sewing machine, ironing boards and hand irons, all of the type which can be purchased easily by a young couple on a budget suited to their means . . . Subjects they are taught include cleanliness, laundry, sewing (including Indian handicrafts) and cooking (family-sized meals).

This description highlights another important racial divide: while both Indigenous and newcomer women faced campaigns of domesticity, the model house at Onion Lake was far removed from the celebrated modern homes that cb officials and others encouraged new Canadians to aspire to eventually purchasing. Indeed, it more resembled the con-
ditions of wartorn or impoverished European regions. One could argue that Indigenous peoples were not expected to aspire to the same level of modernity as white Europeans. In part these lower expectations of potential to ‘modernize’ may have reflected the more rural and dispersed nature of reserve populations, especially compared to the more concentrated urban focus of postwar immigration. At any rate, the ‘model home’ of Onion Lake fit with the limited expectations of assimilationists such as Renaud, who argued that while ‘the off-reserve Indian could achieve integration if the non-Indians would deal with him as they do with the newcomer from Europe,’ an indigenous person ‘might not climb the social ladder as fast, since he comes from an absolutely classless society where acquisitiveness and personal ambition are not considered virtues. But at least he would not find company and recognition exclusively among the marginal elements of our own society.’

As these comments indicate, another long-standing cornerstone of government policy towards status Indians specifically was to encourage relocation from reserve communities to urban centres. Such a policy was attractive for three reasons. First, income earned off-reserve is generally taxable, especially if the employee also lives off-reserve. Second, off-reserve employment was preferable to and easier than encouraging economic development on often isolated reserves. Third, off-reserve employment increased the likelihood that people would meet and marry non-status people and stay put in urban centres, and thus they (or their children) would no longer be the financial responsibility of the federal government.

In the 1950s, DCI officials spoke of promoting ‘immigration’ to the cities by providing, through the Indian Affairs Branch, a placement officer in a number of major cities to ‘help make the changeover from reserve to city as easy and as successful as possible.’ The branch also provided very short courses of two to three weeks’ duration in a variety of low-skilled trades and occupations. (Immigrant training courses were longer or involved several courses). At one such Indian Affairs program ‘devoted to homemaking and agriculture’ in Prince Albert, SK, the thirty-eight men and seventeen women attendees were grouped by gender into a training course: the men reportedly studied

51 Renaud, ‘From Oldest to Newest.’
52 For the implications of identity legislation such as the Indian Act and amendments to it, see Bonita Lawrence, ‘Real’ Indians and Others: Mixed-Race Urban Native People, the Indian Act, and the Rebuilding of Indigenous Nations (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).
‘motors and machinery, care of livestock, and welding and carpentry’ and the women ‘homemaking with cookery, laundering, sewing and family health emphasized.’ Indian Affairs officials steered members of reserve communities towards employment off-reserve in lower-skilled working-class positions as farm labourers, lumberjacks, miners, construction workers and (low-level) mechanics as well as domestic servants and fish plant and cannery workers. The expressed hope was that those trained in a trade or service would relocate to urban settings and establish themselves as ‘property-owners and wage earners,’ albeit at the bottom end of the socio-economic spectrum.\textsuperscript{53}

As for teaching the lessons of democratic citizenship, Indian Affairs officials stressed the need to inculcate ‘leadership skills’ by running ‘leadership courses’ where students were exposed to recreational planning or community development programs based on mainstream ‘Canadian’ values. In this regard, the leadership courses developed for Indigenous peoples, like those targeting immigrants, were part of a larger postwar recreational movement and its aim of encouraging a participatory form of liberal democracy.\textsuperscript{54} Topics at typical Aboriginal leadership courses, such as health, education, recreation, home management, and family relationships, echoed those featured in immigrant leadership camp and other programs. In addition, the Aboriginal courses addressed such topics as ‘the role of Indian leaders and the part credit unions and co-operatives could play in the economic development of reserves.’\textsuperscript{55} There were leadership training programs that focused on how to run social clubs or cottage industries or covered topics such as ‘the new problems which have resulted from changing family life and customs’ and ‘the proper relationship of the Homemakers’ Club to the band council.’\textsuperscript{56} Articles in \textit{Indian News} continually reported ‘great interest’ on the part of bands for such training.\textsuperscript{57} All of this suggests that while Indian Affairs hoped to ultimately

\textsuperscript{53} It is not yet known how effective the program officers were. ‘Employment Horizon Broadens for Indians, New Placement Service Aids Jobhunters,’ \textit{Indian News} 3, no. 1 (Sept. 1957): 1–2.
\textsuperscript{54} Shirley Tillotson, \textit{The Public at Play: Gender and the Politics of Recreation in Post-War Ontario} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); Allan Irving, Harriet Parsons, and Donald Bellamy, \textit{Neighbours: Three Social Settlements in Downtown Toronto} (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 1995), chaps. 13–14.
\textsuperscript{56} ‘Leadership Courses Continued to Interest Indian Bands,’ \textit{Indian News} 1, no. 4 (July 1955): 7.
\textsuperscript{57} See ‘Leadership Courses’; see also ‘These Adults are Learning by Doing,’ \textit{Indian News} 5, no. 1 (June 1961): 1.
eliminate reserves, it was nonetheless compelled to provide some response to the needs and demands of Aboriginal reserve communities.

Predictably, given the alarmist declarations of officials and experts who railed about declining families and spreading immorality, Indigenous youth, like their immigrant counterparts, were targeted by state-supported programs that sought to prevent juvenile delinquency with organized recreational programs. Particularly in regard to female sexuality, however, it must be noted that while the racism and sexism of the day made both 'non-preferred' newcomer girls and Indigenous girls more vulnerable than others to moralizing judgements, the latter faced far greater gender stigmatization, as evidenced by the shameful history of rape, murder, and excessive incarceration of Aboriginal women in Canada.58 As for the proposed remedies to youth problems, the experts relied on familiar methods, such as recruiting Indigenous teenagers into youth training courses, which also stressed leadership skills. Here, too, ‘leadership’ was a trope for the inculcation of white, middle-class values, including gender expectations (girls cooked and sewed, boys fished and farmed), though, in certain cases, girls as well as boys could choose elective subjects such as weaving, leatherwork, film projection, photography, and dramatics.59

Other activities were explicit in their aims of reshaping Aboriginal cultures. In an effort to inculcate more capitalist values, a course set up to teach Cree and Chipewyan youth in northwest Saskatchewan ‘how to care for their home and improve its appearance,’ for example, trained the men in ‘the preparation and preservation of pelts for the best markets’ without regard to the traditional role of women in this task.60 The women’s familiar domestic program also included lessons

59 ‘They’re Learning,’ 6.
on how to can and preserve fruits and vegetables, suggesting a plan to introduce healthy ‘Canadian’ items into what nutritional experts considered to be an inferior Indigenous diet. Similar efforts were made with immigrant women. But, as Krista Walters shows, the follow-up campaigns to ‘modernize’ Aboriginal women’s food customs would involve highly intrusive social surveys that dismissed the value in Indigenous diets and pathologized them as the most ‘backward’ or ‘ignorant’ of mothers in Canada.61

By the late 1950s, the Citizenship Branch, which had been carving out new roles for itself within the government bureaucracy, and instigating more collaborative ventures with Indian Affairs, switched its main focus from reception to social adjustment, a project that easily incorporated work meant to prepare Aboriginal peoples for their eventual assimilation into the Canadian mainstream. Initially, this meant concentrating on meeting the needs of status Indians who moved to urban environments and were underserviced by Indian Affairs programs. By the mid-1960s, the cb was also loaning leadership experts to Indian Affairs for projects on reserves, sponsoring voluntary agencies, and getting directly involved in on-reserve projects.62 cb liaison officers, quick to seek opportunities to expand their influence, strove to develop an expertise on Aboriginal peoples that could parallel their knowledge of immigrants. In 1957, the head of the branch’s Research Division entered into discussions with the University of Toronto, proposing a survey of Ontario Indians. Regional liaison officers were soon making direct contact with Indigenous people who had moved to cities; the regional officer based in Saskatoon, for instance, familiarized himself with vocational programs in order to offer guidance services to status Indians leaving reserves. At the end of 1957, the cb’s work among status Indians was mentioned in the department’s Annual Report for the first time. By 1959, cb officials were also being invited to Indian Affairs Branch functions, such as the Regional Conference of the Indian Homemaker’s Club held in

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62 The annual reports, quarterly reports, and meeting minutes of the Citizenship Branch reveal ever-increasing efforts at cooperation with the Indian Affairs Branch. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the ia budget increased tremendously, partly as a reflection of the rapid increase in the Aboriginal population, while the cb budget remained comparatively small. Dci Annual Report, 1953–4, and Annual Report, 1964–5.
Toronto. In Alberta, officials of each branch ‘met frequently to co-ordinate their programs with respect to Indian integration and settlement in various communities.’ The department’s Annual Report for 1958–9 formally acknowledged co-operation between the two branches, especially in liaising with ‘voluntary organizations interested in the settlement of Indians in urban communities.’

Throughout the 1960s, the cb extended its efforts well beyond the social integration of status Indians who had relocated to urban areas. The Alberta liaison officer ‘held discussions with the psychology and sociology departments of the University of Alberta concerning possible further research on Indians and Immigrants.’ Staff members were also loaned to Indian Affairs. Despite its tiny budget, the cb’s activities were now continually highlighted at the front of the dci’s Annual Report, and the 1961 report first mentions on-reserve activity by the branch. By 1963, the branch was planning ‘a number of co-operative projects’ in Saskatchewan to promote ‘wider areas of co-operation between Indians and non-Indians.’ The department published a booklet, Citizenship Projects among Indians, that described particularly successful joint programs, such as Camp Gold Eye, where twenty Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth were taught citizenship skills.

Beginning in the 1950s, but accelerating rapidly in the 1960s, the Citizenship Branch was involved in sponsoring, funding, and monitoring the activities of voluntary groups (such as church organizations) and volunteer agencies and academic experts dealing with Aboriginal people in urban settings. Voluntary groups such as the Indian Eskimo Association, the Canadian Welfare Council, and the


65 Walter M. Hlady, ‘Directed Social Change and the Agencies Involved,’ Indian-Eskimo Association, Learned Societies Meeting, 1960; 5; ‘Indian Research Seminar,’ Queen’s University, sponsored by Indian-Eskimo Association, June 1960; Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada, The Urban Indian Canadian: A Handlist of Voluntary Organizations Working with People of Indian Background in Canada’s Towns and Cities (City: Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada, 1962); A Moon in His Moccasins (United Church pamphlet), Emanuel Library Collection, Victoria University.
Friendship Centers had tremendous power over the lives of Aboriginal people: Their executives often testified before the Special Joint Committees on Indian Affairs. As their briefs from the early 1960s suggest, these groups were committed to encouraging – and, if necessary, cajoling – people to leave the reserves and assimilate into white settler society.\textsuperscript{66}

Government and voluntary associations saw little if anything wrong with their programs for transforming Aboriginals into Canadian citizens. To a considerable degree, the views of even the best-intentioned citizenship educators reflected a familiar politics of nation-building – one predicated on a two-founding-nations construction of Canada – that excluded all Aboriginal peoples from that nation-building project. (By contrast, ‘ethnic Canadians’, especially of European origins, belonged to that category of ‘the others’ whose contributions to Canadian development also deserved recognition.) Despite the geography of their birth, in order to be considered citizens, Aboriginal Canadians had to ‘immigrate’ from peripheral reserves to mainstream Canadian communities in a manner metaphorically similar to the journey taken by the refugees who left Europe’s DP camps and immigrants who fled its impoverished regions. Furthermore, just as citizenship officials and activists encouraged social mingling among old and new Canadians and among different groups of newcomers, the staff of both the Indian Affairs and Citizenship branches emphasized the value to be gained from ensuring association between Indigenous and immigrant persons and promoted contact between the two groups. An issue of Indian News reported that ‘the Indian’s pride in his heritage and his privileges as a Canadian citizen were well illustrated one evening at a Vancouver YMCA when Indians attending part of a leadership training course there decided to visit with a group of new Canadians who had just finished a course in the English language.’ ‘The occasion,’ it continued, ‘became a warm and friendly one as the Indian group made friends with the newcomers and told them of the fine things Canada holds for them.’ The same issue also featured a photo of a 1960 dance at the Toronto Indian Youth Club that showed a young woman from the Sarnia Reserve dancing modestly with a male immigrant from Italy. Citizenship activists considered dance an effective tool of integration, and such photos visually recreated a Canadian state discourse

linking Aboriginals to immigrants.\textsuperscript{67} So, too, did the multi-ethnic folk festivals celebrating the Canadian mosaic: alongside the colourfully costumed Ukrainian folk dancers, Hungarian choral singers, and Scottish bagpipers could be Iroquois dancers who ‘show us some of the traditions and customs of our Indians of Ontario’ and prairie Indians performing the ‘dances and folklore from bc, the Plains, and southwest Indians.’ While delivering a liberal message of pluralism, these cultural spectacles, which enjoyed \textsuperscript{68} support, had the effect of reducing Native peoples to one of Canada’s many ‘ethnic groups’ and both groups to primitive ‘folk’ bearing quaint customs.

Still, government officials did have to face the reality that Aboriginal people were born in Canada, and this finally led to some refinement of thinking. Whereas in 1949 St Laurent clearly stated that Canadian citizenship was something status Indians needed to acquire, by 1956 Pickersgill, as head of Indian Affairs, was noting that, while technically ‘the Canadian Indians were already citizens of Canada,’ they were ‘citizens with a difference’ because ‘the Indians have privileges, which other Canadians do not have, and other citizens have privileges and responsibilities, which are not shared by the Indians.’\textsuperscript{69} For Pickersgill and others, citizenship was linked to taxation. Since status Indians living on reserves did not pay tax, by Pickersgill’s reasoning they were citizens who were not entitled to certain citizenship (legal) rights, such as the franchise. This logic had to be abandoned in 1960 when John Diefenbaker’s Conservative government, responding in part to the rise of human rights movements within Western nations and the international community’s criticism of Canada’s treatment of Aboriginal peoples, granted the federal vote to status Indians with no loss of status and no impact on treaty rights or obligations. As a newly middle-ranked nation keen to increase its international status, Canada had at least to give its Indigenous peoples the semblance of full political partnership by granting status Indians the franchise. Suddenly, all

\textsuperscript{67} \textit{Indian News}, 4, no. 2 (May 1960): 2, 3.

\textsuperscript{68} Program, ‘Eighth Annual John Madsen Folk [School] Festival, 23 June 1956,’ and program, ‘Seventh Annual John Madsen Folk Festival, 25 June 1955,’ both in file 1957 Folk Festival, International Institute of Metropolitan Toronto, MU6416, Ontario Archives. The dci also discussed plans to create a folk school for Quebec Indians. While these schools promoted the preservation of ‘old’ customs and craft traditions, they, too, encouraged the ‘folklorization’ of both immigrants and Aboriginals. Franca Iacovetta, ‘Spectacles of Citizenship,’ (unpublished).

Aboriginal people were transformed by key political figures like Minister Ellen Fairclough into ‘our oldest citizens . . . these ancient Canadians,’ who now needed to acquire specific skills in order to ensure their ‘economic survival.’ Nevertheless, the government’s assimilationist goals remained the same.

The postwar programs were particularly insidious in that they largely represented a continuation of earlier campaigns meant to disavow the historic treaty relationships between the Crown and First Nations and to promote assimilation into white settler society. While such aims arguably date back to the arrival of Europeans in the seventeenth century, the more coercive and legislated measures really began in the 1840s, when colonial governments in Canada ceased viewing Aboriginal peoples as allied nations and instead turned to programs of ‘civilization and improvement’ as a way to reduce government expenditures for annual treaty payments. Despite Aboriginal resistance, many of the recommendations of the Bagot Commission of 1842–4, including the use of individualized land ownership as a means of hastening assimilation, formed the basis of subsequent legislation prior to Confederation, and the Indian Act in 1876. Following Confederation, the aim of federal Indian policy continued to be the assimilation of Aboriginal peoples or, at the very least, the elimination of status Indian as a category and the ending of historic treaty relationships. In 1913, the superintendent of Indian Affairs, poet

71 Dickason discusses the ‘early attempts at social engineering’ by the French in Canada’s First Nations, 141–3.
72 Ibid., 225–31.
74 For the Bagot Commission report (published in two parts in the Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada), see Appendix to the Fourth Volume of the Journals . . . 28th Day of November, 1844, to the 29th Day of March, 1845 (Montreal: Campbell, 1845), appendix E.E.E., and Appendix to the Sixth Volume of the Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada, from the 2nd Day of June to the 28th Day of July, 1847 (Montreal: Campbell, 1847), appendix T.
75 A well-established body of scholarship not only explores government intentions, programs, and policies but also assesses how effective these programs were. In addition to Dickason and Miller, see Robin Brownlie, A Fatherly Eye, Indian Agents, Government Power, and Aboriginal Resistance in Ontario, 1918–1939 (Don Mills, on: Oxford University Press, 2003); Sarah Carter, Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990); J.R. Miller, ‘Owen Glendower, Hotspur, and Canadian Indian Policy,’ Ethnohistory 37, no. 4 (1990): 386–415; John Sheridan
Duncan Campbell Scott, echoed this policy objective by stating that ‘the happiest future for the Indian race is absorption into the general population.’ The decision in 1949 to move the Indian Affairs Branch from Mines and Resources into the Citizenship and Immigration portfolio marked a continuation of previous policy. If the DCI citizenship programs aimed at Aboriginals appeared at times to adopt a ‘gentler’ approach towards ‘Indian integration’ than in the past, perhaps because of their coupling with immigrant campaigns, they were every bit as repressive as the residential schools and other assimilationist state policies. The same logic applied: Once status Indians were made into Canadian citizens, there would be no further need for the Indian Affairs bureaucracy.

Most Indigenous peoples resisted the Canadian state’s ruthless policy of assimilation into white society, and their opposition to the DCI citizenship programs should be understood within the broader historical context. Since the earliest contacts with European newcomers, Aboriginal peoples have continuously articulated their own visions of the relationships between their nations and settler societies. They have rejected assimilation and continued to assert their distinct identity. Even a Department of Indian Affairs history prepared in 1978 acknowledged that ‘the government’s aggressive “assimilation” and “citizenship” policies after 1880 had not been as successful as expected,’ and that ‘in spite of the special prohibitions they faced under the [Indian] Act, most Indians refused to surrender their separate legal status, treaty rights, and privileges to take on the responsibilities of citizenship.’ For them, accepting the ‘responsibility of Canadian citizenship’ meant abrogating their responsibility to their own nations and peoples. While Native resistance took many forms, with the differing positions often reflecting urban–rural and gender divisions within

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77 Leslie and McGuire, The Historical Development of the Indian Act, 151. See also Dickason, Canada’s First Nations, 327.
communities, one generalization can be made: First Nations with treaty rights continued to assert those rights whenever the federal government wished to shift the focus of discussion to assimilation, regardless of the name of the program.

When, in 1947, Ottawa convened a Special Joint Commission on Indian Affairs to which Aboriginal witnesses were invited to speak for the first time, delegates forcefully asserted their status as distinct people, raising complaints about unfulfilled treaty obligations and requesting self-government. This expressed Native concern with treaties and treaty rights continued through the 1950s and 1960s (and to this day). During the Special Joint Commission hearings held in 1961, Commissioner Judy LaMarsh noted that status Indians focused on treaty rights and obligations while non-Aboriginal government officials and church and voluntary groups recommended ‘integration.’ When asked to comment on the government’s policy of ‘integration,’ First Nations witnesses spoke clearly. At the 1947 Joint Commission Hearings, Reginald Hill, from the Six Nations reserve near Brantford, on, explained, ‘[W]e as a people bitterly resent these suggestions of assimilation or absorption, and cannot accept such as inevitable.’ Fifteen years later, at another commission hearing, George Manuel, president of the North American Brotherhood of Indians, referred to the white position that ‘the Indian question can be solved by abolishing the reserve systems and assimilating the Indian into non-Indian society’ as ‘the greatest tragedy that could befall Indian people.’ Many Aboriginal leaders saw through the government’s discourse of ‘integration’ and understood that it meant abandoning the culture, language, and values handed down to them from their parents.

Even a Department of Indian Affairs internal history noted that in

78 Thanks to Susan Hynds for her insights into the diverse responses within First Nations communities to government programs.


80 Canadian Welfare Council, Submission to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs, 22 Mar. 1961, 161.

81 Canada, Indian Act, Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, no. 22, May 1947, 1279–80, 1309.

82 George Manuel, ‘Respect the Old Ways and Accept the New Ways,’ Indian News 6, no. 1 (July 1962): 3.

1950 ‘many Indians equated “integration” with “assimilation” and strongly opposed that objective.’84 Indian News occasionally included articles by Indigenous critics such as Clive Linklater, who stressed that what was actually ‘taking place in the name of Integration’ was the erosion of Indigenous cultures, values, and languages.85

By 1966, the federal government, frustrated by the slow pace of assimilation through citizenship programs, commissioned the University of British Columbia to undertake an exhaustive review of Indian Affairs in Canada. The resulting Hawthorn-Tremblay report declared that ‘integration or assimilation are not objectives which anyone else can properly hold for the Indian’ and recommended that Indian Affairs concentrate instead on ‘specific middle range objectives’ such as ‘increasing the educational attainments’ and ‘real income’ of Indians and ‘adding to their life expectancy.’86 Ottawa ignored this advice and continued to insist on assimilation as its ultimate aim. In 1969, the Trudeau government introduced a new, and now infamous, policy that recommended dismantling the Indian Act, giving status Indians title to reserve land in fee simple, and ceasing operations of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development – all on the grounds that these actions would bring ‘true equality’ between Aboriginal people and settler society.87 The tremendous outcry from status Indians forced Ottawa to retreat. Political scientist Richard Sigurdson has called this the most significant policy defeat in Canadian history for the proponents of liberal individualism. Indians with status were not interested in the government’s model of unitary citizenship, and the federal government had failed to persuade or coerce them to accept otherwise.88 Instead, leaders such as Harold Cardinal promoted the recommendation of the Hawthorn-Tremblay report to regard Aboriginal peoples as ‘citizens plus.’89 Today, First Nations continue to

84 Leslie and Maguire, The Historical Development of the Indian Act, 146.
87 Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy, 1969, 6.
89 Indian Chiefs of Alberta, Citizens Plus (Edmonton: Indian Association of Alberta, 1970). This document called for Aboriginal peoples to be regarded as ‘citizens plus’ – as people who possess ‘the normal rights and duties of citizenship’ but also ‘certain additional rights as charter members of the Canadian community.’
struggle with the federal and provincial governments to negotiate a place for themselves with the Canadian federation.

CONCLUSION

In the aftermath of the passing of a Canadian Citizenship Act that sought to create what Russell describes as ‘a unitary sense of Canadian citizenship through symbolic engineering,’ the newly created Department of Citizenship and Immigration was instructed to make Canadians out of Canada’s newest arrivals and the descendants of its First Peoples. From 1950 until 1966, it carried out this shared mandate by defining Canadian citizenship not only as the attainment of legal and political rights but also an embrace of what Martin Sr called common ‘Canadian’ values of respect, tolerance, and liberal democracy, and a demonstrated conformity to Canadian models of social behaviour.

As the first comparative analysis of those programs, this essay highlighted the similarities and differences involved. In carrying out these campaigns, citizenship officials, professional experts, reform groups, and volunteers operated within dominant paradigms of the era, which normalized conventional bourgeois ideals of proper gender roles, family forms, and restrictive sexual codes that affected both men and women but also exposed the greater vulnerability of women and girls to accusations of sexual immorality or bad mothering. But there were also critical differences that spoke to the greater receptivity of white settler society to European over Indigenous peoples and customs. Indeed, our evidence indicates that by constructing Aboriginal peoples, especially status Indians, as ‘immigrants too,’ Ottawa experimented with a new if short-lived strategy to downplay the Crown’s special relationship to status Indians under the guise of new citizenship education programs while continuing the assimilation policies of Indian Affairs.

On one level, then, we can attribute the strategy’s failure to the limitations of a unitary model of Canadian citizenship; in critiquing such a model, Russell, for example, has argued that Canadians ‘need to get used to “asymmetric” or “discordant” citizenship because that’s what we have at present and what option will be open to us in the future.’

Such suggestions, however, cannot adequately address an Aboriginal history of disenfranchisement and continuing colonialism or the con-

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temporary reality of Canada’s current immigration laws, which create pools of non-citizens and ‘unfree’ labour, such as Caribbean and Filipina domestics and homecare workers and other migrant workers. Nor can it resolve the dynamic raised by Aboriginal scholars and activists who argue that immigrants arrive on what is effectively Native land.91

While the solutions to such complex issues lies outside the scope of this essay, our case study contributes to ongoing debates about the complex interplay of multiculturalism, aboriginality, and Canadian citizenship by revisiting and assessing a little-known experiment in the history of Canadian state relations with both newcomers and Indigenous peoples. A comparative analysis of the dci’s programs for Indigenous and immigrant peoples during the period 1950–66 sheds light on how the Canadian government and other groups within the nation-state – both those on the delivering and receiving end of citizenship campaigns – grappled with ways of assigning meaning to Canadian citizenship, or rejecting it outright.

Not coincidently, similar debates and experiments in citizenship were taking place elsewhere, including in Australia, where similar terminology and, to a lesser extent, practices were deployed in relations to Indigenous and immigrant groups. In a postwar era marked not only by Cold War polarities but independence struggles, civil rights movements, human rights lobbies, and the challenges of post-colonial relations with Indigenous peoples, former white dominions such as Canada and Australia, which desired fuller independence from Britain but wished to maintain certain British traditions, had to explore ways of facing their troubled histories of racism towards both immigrants and Indigenous peoples, and of mapping a route for full national citizenship and unity.92 That road would be paved with many misplaced assumptions and problematic policies, of which the dci experiment of 1950–66 was only one. Significantly, however, this and other

91 A tiny sample of this literature is Lawrence, ‘Real’ Indians; Patricia Monture-Angus, Thunder in My Soul: A Mohawk Woman Speaks (Halifax: Fernwood, 1995); Nandita Sharma, Home Economics: Nationalism and the Making of Migrant Workers in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); Daiva Stasiulis and Abigail B. Bakan, ‘Negotiating Citizenship: The Case of Foreign Domestic Workers in Canada,’ Feminist Review 57 (Autumn 1997): 112–39.

programs premised on the trope of Indian as immigrant have left their stamp on public discourse as the supposed universality of a shared pan-Canadian immigration experience persists in present-day discussions about Canadian citizenship and identity. One need not look far for examples. In a cbc Radio 1 public forum on immigration aired in June 2008, host Michael Enright opened discussion by reminding Canadians that ‘we are a country of immigrants and we are here in Vancouver, a city of immigrants. Everyone who lives in Canada is here because an ancestor decided at some point to move in search of a new life, new opportunities, and a future for their children.’ Similarly, in a February 2009 interview with Maclean’s magazine, Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff explained that ‘we have a multicultural society in Canada based upon the fact that we’re all immigrants.’ Such claims are at odds with the historical reality of Canada but in line with objectives of the federal government’s Department of Citizenship and Immigration from 1950 to 1966.93


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