CHAPTER 1

Colonialism and Aboriginal Peoples

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. Explain the seven stages of the colonization process.
2. Compare and contrast French-Aboriginal and English-Aboriginal relations prior to Confederation.
3. Understand how Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations have changed since Confederation.
4. Identify two key ways of establishing identity and how they differ.
5. Explain the Aboriginals' economic loss and the non-Aboriginals' gain.
6. Describe the structural racism perspective.

INTRODUCTION

How does a people become marginalized in society? The history of Aboriginal–non-Aboriginal relations in Canada reveals both an active interference and a benign neglect on the part of the federal and provincial governments as they dealt with Aboriginal people over time. The marginalization that Aboriginal people experience today is not a recent event but rather is rooted in historical circumstances. In this book we will take what is called a political-economy approach, which utilizes economic and political factors in the development of relations between governments and Aboriginal people. Such structural impacts began to affect Aboriginal people at the time of contact with Europeans and became increasingly influential as the settler population grew. As the Canadian domestic economy became integrated with the world political economy, these structural effects relegated Aboriginal peoples in Canada to a peripheral position in society. In short, what we find today in Canada bears similarities to the plight of Aboriginal people around the world who have been marginalized within their own societies.

What are these processes? How have they affected Aboriginal people? We wish to approach the problem from a perspective that involves social structural factors—e.g., the organization of the society, the alignment of social institutions, the change in demographic factors. While we will not deny that Aboriginal people are exposed to a great deal of prejudice and discrimination, their greatest obstacle is the very structure of society itself, which prevents them from effectively participating in its social, economic, and political institutions. Furthermore, we feel there is a link between structural effects (the institutional arrangements of our society) and the behaviour of groups and individuals.

Using a macro perspective allows us to present the Aboriginal community as an internal colony that is exploited by the dominant group in Canada. In this model, Canadians are seen as the colonizing people, while Aboriginal persons are viewed as colonized. By conceptualizing the Aboriginal community as an internal colony of a larger nation, it is possible to see beyond the individual factors involved in inter-group behaviour and focus on the structural arrangements.

Why were Aboriginal people so overwhelmed by European settlers? Europeans settling Canada argue that their own superiority in technology and the inferiority of Aboriginal society (e.g., they were primitive, too few in number, superstitious) contributed to their colonization. In addition to being self-serving, these arguments fail to provide an adequate explanation.

Our explanation focuses more on the structural impact of colonization in New Canada. During the 16th and 17th centuries, England and France were intent on participating in the worldwide competition for faith and fortune and turned their attention to the new lands of America. In competition with the Dutch and Spanish, they explored the new continent, established trading missions, extracted primary resources, and dispatched missionaries. The impact of their activities was devastating.

As Wright (2003) notes, " . . . the great death raged for more than a century . . . perhaps more than 90 million died . . . It was the greatest mortality in history" (Doybns, 1983: 395). Bodley (1999) estimates that from the time of first contact, 80 percent of Indigenous people have been annihilated. He estimates that 60 million Indigenous people were annihilated in the 20th century alone. European diseases such as typhus, yellow fever, influenza, and smallpox often wiped out tribes by as much as 90 percent. It has been estimated that during the first century of colonization, an average of 1.5 percent of Aboriginal people died each year from chronic and epidemic diseases (Thornton, 1987). Regardless of the original number, we know that after nearly 20 new diseases were introduced to North America over the span of five generations, less than a tenth of the original population remained. In this catastrophic loss of people, leaders, intellectuals, and military strategists, as well as spiritual and political leaders, died.

Many will object to the numbers presented above, and while they are certainly controversial, much of the opposition to these statistics is related to the myth of the **"empty land"** that was created by the white settlers—and the development of the doctrine of *terra nullius* that was incorporated into our law. Put another way, Canada developed a legal system based on the concept of discovering an uninhabited land! Canadians object to large estimates of the number of Aboriginal people killed because doing so allows them to evade the issue of genocide, which resulted from the practices of the settlers and the government.

These obvious points have eluded Canadians for the past 500 years, yet we have built stories upon these myths that support the current view that Europeans discovered Canada and built what we have today through the efforts of hardworking settlers and dedicated colonial leaders. As Wright (2003) notes, these myths become maps by which succeeding generations navigate and make sense of their world. Once the stories are told and re-told, they take on a sense of legitimacy and their veracity is rarely questioned. Canadians are loath to accept that perhaps the past is not as they think.

THE COLONIZATION MODEL

Our model suggests that historical colonialism shaped the organization of our society and set in motion a number of factors that propelled Aboriginal people to its margins. First of all, Aboriginal participation in the Canadian economy has become economically redundant over time because of changes in the structure and technology of the national economy. After the buffalo hunts ended and the fur trade all but ceased, Aboriginal people were restricted from participating in the newly emerging economy. As Canadian society moved first to an agricultural and then to an urban industrial base, Aboriginal peoples did not possess, and were not in a position to acquire, new technologies or skills. The result is that Aboriginal people found themselves operating a subsistence economy parallel to that of the more modern economy. Today their lack of education, technical expertise, and access to technology continues to keep them out of the new knowledge economy. This new knowledge economy focuses on the development of information rather than the production of goods. In other words, there are two economies in our society. The industrial, technological, and knowledge-based modern sector is dynamic: Change promotes further change. The traditional, subsistence sector, however, resists change: It clings to the old ways and is unable to adopt new technology (Wien, 1986). This suggests that, as our economy becomes increasingly knowledge-based, barriers continue to be created that hinder or prevent the entrance of Aboriginal people into the knowledge era. Certain technical and social skills are now prerequisites for entering the labour force. People without these skills will be kept from participating as full-time members in the modern national—and international—labour markets. Already, researchers have noted the "digital divide" between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

As individuals are prevented from entering the modern economy, a cultural ethos emerges that is quite different from the one expressed in the dominant sector. When the goals of higher status are denied to people, other forms of adaptation are created—for example, withdrawal and rebellion (often self-destructive)—in order to deal with the despair and hopelessness that are central to the **culture of poverty**. This encourages individuals to develop a different perspective on life and on how to deal with everyday occurrences.

Once an individual is placed outside the primary labour market, it is almost impossible for him or her to enter it. As stated above, the lack of certain technical and social skills keeps Aboriginal persons from entering the modern labour market. And as that market becomes increasingly segmented into primary and secondary markets, there is greater difficulty in moving from the secondary to the primary market. As a result, Aboriginal persons are increasingly shut out of the primary market.

COLONIALIZING CANADA'S ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

The Historical Context

Colonization first needs to be put in its historical context before we discuss the process. It emerged out of the belief that papal claims of authority provided explorers with the right to discover new lands and claim them for the "mother" country. However, by the 15th and

16th centuries, kings and queens (French and English) were signing letters of patent giving people like John Cabot and Jacques Cartier authority to explore and claim lands from heathens and infidels. By 1670, Charles II issued the Hudson's Bay Company charter, which restated their disregard for any Aboriginal claims to much of present-day Canada. Maybury-Lewis et al. (2009) note that within a short time after the Hudson's Bay Company charter was signed, the French met with Aboriginal groups and asserted French national claims to all of Canada. At the time, there was no thought about the possibility that Aboriginal people might actually own the land or its resources. By the time the English had defeated the French and won the Indian wars, ousting the French and their military, the pattern for dealing with Aboriginal people was set. The *Royal Proclamation* (1763) then became the standard policy by which the British began to base their relations with Aboriginal people. This document outlined in principle the manner in which lands would be transferred from Aboriginal peoples. However, in practical terms, the Proclamation was duly ignored by colonists and settlers in Canada.

When European settlers came to Canada, they had no interest in any aspect of Aboriginal culture. Colonists viewed the Aboriginal people as impediments to the cultivation of the land and to civilization in general. They were, in many respects, viewed in the same light as mountains or rivers: implacable obstacles that had to be dealt with. Unless the Aboriginal people vanished, which was highly unlikely, the settlers typically tried to pacify and resettle them away from the land required by the newcomers. The settlement of Canada by Europeans, with their machines and microbes, was an attempt to control the new land and its inhabitants and to turn them into a profit. It was planned that the land itself could be made profitable through the introduction of Western technology (e.g., agriculture) and a capitalist economy. However, the inhabitants of the land posed a problem in bringing this policy to fruition. Their culture was strange and diverse and did not fit into the new European way of life. It was clear that if the colonizers wanted the new land to yield a profit, they would have to harness, or at least neutralize, the activities of the Aboriginal population (Axtell, 1981).

The Colonization Process

The **colonization process** can be considered to have seven different dimensions (Kennedy, 1945; Blauner, 1969). The first concerns the incursion of the colonizing group into a geographical area. This usually takes the form of forced-voluntary entry; acting in its own interests, the colonizing group forces its way into an area. In Canada, both French and English settlement followed this pattern. Lands and resources were taken from Aboriginal people and reallocated to settlers. At present, many Aboriginal people argue that forced-voluntary colonization is still occurring in the North.

The second attribute of colonization is its destructive effect on the social and cultural structures of the Indigenous group. In Canada's case, European colonizers destroyed the Native peoples' political, economic, kinship, and, in most cases, religious systems. The values and norms of Aboriginal people were either ignored or violated. For example, after the War of 1812, when a large number of European settlers arrived, the colonial government decided that Aboriginal persons should be forced to surrender their traditional lifestyles. Official programs were developed, and, between 1830 and 1875, legislation was enacted to carry out this destructive policy (Surtees, 1969). Over time, rules and

regulations were imposed on Aboriginal people in order to stop them from engaging in traditional ceremonies (e.g., potlatches, sundances) and force them to take on more settler-like behaviour.

As Titley (1986) points out, the federal government's policies were in harmony with the demands of non-Aboriginal people. The creation of "trust authority" over Indian lands and assets demonstrates the government's commitment to dictating what resources would be exploited, in what quantities, and by whom. However, in principle, the government implemented a relationship that was more of a "guardianship" than a trust. As Cohen (1960) points out, guardianship is a relation that limits the personal and group rights of the Aboriginal, while a trusteeship is a relation that limits the property rights of a trustee and makes the trustee the servant of the trust beneficiary. As the government implemented the guardianship role with Aboriginal people, it allowed the determination of Aboriginal behaviour for what purpose and at what cost. There was a conflation of guardianship and trusteeship that allowed the government to reinterpret treaties and other agreements they had made with Aboriginal people such that government officials could carry out actions that were in their best interest. In the end, the land base of Aboriginal people was diminished and their culture undermined.

As Wright (2003) argues, it was important that the reserves be made to look "self-governing" so that they would be exempt from normal business practices and thus subject only to the unique rules established by Indian Affairs. The protests of Aboriginal people were futile, and when they took action to support their claims in the late 1860s, harsh repression followed, including the bombardment of British Columbia coastal villages by British warships (Tobias, 1976). By the late 1890s, the federal government had amended the *Indian Act* (of 1876) so that "surplus" or "idle" Aboriginal land could be made available for the use of non-Indians. In 1911, amendments to the *Indian Act* gave even greater coercive powers to the federal government. For example, Section 46 allowed portions of reserves to be taken by municipalities or companies for roads or similar public purposes with the consent of the governor-in-council (today called the cabinet) but without a surrender (Carter, 1990; Imai and Hawley, 1995).

While it was agreed that Aboriginal people were redeemable, it was also recognized that they were still in a state of "savagery," which meant they were some distance from Christianity. And, in order to redeem them, Aboriginal people needed to be first "civilized" and then educated in the Christian way of life. The major problem with Aboriginals, as seen by the colonists, was their unpredictability and their savagery—both of which emerged from their cultural deficiencies. Aboriginal peoples had to be rendered predictable if the new land was to be settled and developed. Initially, the missionaries took on this task of "Christianizing" the Aboriginal population and making them more like the settlers in ways of thought and behaviour. In short, the conversion of Aboriginal people not only focused on religion but sought to replace their culture with a European one and to change their behaviour by substituting predictable European modes of thinking and feeling for unpredictable Aboriginal modes. By aiming to control the Aboriginal way of life, missionaries lent, unwittingly or not, powerful support to the European assault upon Aboriginal people by carrying out their own subversive invasion within (Axtell, 1981).

During this time, a symbiotic relationship emerged between various churches and the state. For example, a review of all the colonial charters of the French and English during

the 16th and 17th centuries explicitly reveals the wish to extend the Christian church and to save the "savage" souls as a principal motive for colonization. Even the Recollect priests coming to Canada in the early 17th century noted that Indians were to be regulated by French laws and modes of living in order to render them capable of understanding Christianity (Le Clercq, 1834). As Christianity was enforced, names and clothing were changed, hair had to be cut, and many other cultural attributes of Aboriginal life altered. In addition, there were structural changes implemented in order to bring the Aboriginals into a state of "civilization." However, over time, the English, with their sense of cultural superiority—infused with racism—realized that Aboriginal people would remain Aboriginal no matter how "civilized" or Christianized they became. Moreover, church officials felt that because certain components of Aboriginal culture were incompatible with Christianity, they should be eradicated. They therefore convinced the state to pass legislation outlawing a variety of ceremonies that were an integral component of Aboriginal culture—for example, the potlatch.

The third and fourth aspects of colonization are the interrelated processes of external political control and Aboriginal economic dependence. In the standard practice of colonization, the mother country sends out representatives through which it indirectly rules the newly conquered land. In our model, the representative ruler is the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (known as AAND). Until 1940, what was then Indian Affairs created a "pass system" which determined who could leave reserve lands, when, and for what purpose. Aboriginal **self-government** was effectively prevented through the introduction of new techniques of selecting chief and council. Moreover, any decision taken by chief and council had to have the approval of the local Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Until the latter part of the 20th century, band funds could not be used by Aboriginal people to develop social and political organizations of their own (Whiteside, 1972).

In 2006, the federal court ruled on a case involving Indian monies that allowed a First Nations community in Alberta to control funds obtained from the development of natural resources on the reserve. After 10 years of litigation and a cost of over $50 million, the First Nations won, only to have the government appeal the decision to the Federal Court of Appeal, which overturned the initial ruling. A further appeal to the Supreme Court upheld the Federal Court of Appeal decision. This control over Aboriginal people continues today, as exhibited by Canada's refusal to initially sign the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was endorsed in 2007 by 143 countries around the world. What is particularly problematic is that the Conservatives under Prime Minister Harper have not provided an intelligible explanation as to why they would not sign the Declaration.

The minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development can suspend almost any right set forth in the *Indian Act*. Acting through cabinet, Aboriginal Affairs can also veto any decisions of band councils. For example, Section 82 of the *Indian Act* allows a band to enact money bylaws. However, cabinet must first find that the band has reached a "high state of development" before allowing the band to pass such a bylaw. Section 68 of the Act allows a band to "control, manage, and expand in whole or in part its revenue moneys." No band was actually permitted to do so until 1959, and to date, fewer than 20 percent have received permission. Section 60 allows a band "the right to exercise such control and management over lands in the reserve occupied by that band as the Cabinet considers desirable." To date, cabinet has found this desirable for less than 15 percent of

reserves. Section 35 of the Act explicitly states that reserve land can be expropriated by the federal government at any time. Unfortunately, this provision has been implemented many times over the past half-century.

As Alfred (2009) points out, political and social institutions as well as service agencies that influence and govern Aboriginal life today are shaped and organized to serve the interests of the state, not those of Aboriginal people. He argues that the structures and responsibilities of these agencies conform to the interests of governments as their source of legitimacy is found in Canadian law, not in Aboriginal interests or laws.

During early days of trade between Aboriginal people and European settlers, a pattern of dependency began to emerge. For example, while many trade goods were simple substitutions for traditional items used by Aboriginal people (e.g., cloth for animal skins, metal for stone or wooden tools), it meant that once the substitution took place, the dependency began. However, there were some items that radically transformed Aboriginal culture. Specifically, the introduction of guns and alcohol brought about large and long-lasting changes to the traditional Aboriginal way of life.

Aboriginal people remain economically dependent on the larger society because their reserves are treated as geographical and social hinterlands for Euro-Canadian exploitation. Initially, Euro-Canadian settlers claimed sovereignty over the land. They then extended this to the land's people, and today continue the process by claiming sovereignty over resources found on the land—all inanimate materials. Euro-Canadians control businesses; exploit non-renewable primary resources such as oil, minerals, water, and forest products; and ship these resources to urban industrial centres for processing. This practice has two important consequences for Aboriginal people on reserves: the development of Aboriginal-owned industries is pre-empted, and Aboriginal occupational activities remain at a primary level. As the treaties and the *Indian Act* show, federal policy has always tried to orient Aboriginal occupations toward agriculture and primary industries (Carter, 1990). Today this orientation continues with the federal government's cap on financial support for young Aboriginal people who want to attend post-secondary educational institutions.

In the colonization process, a two-level system develops in which the colonizers own, direct, and profit from industries that depend upon exploitation of colonized peoples, who provide an unskilled, seasonal work force. For example, on the reserves, the long-term result has been an Aboriginal population that lives at subsistence level, working at unskilled, seasonal jobs in primary industries and practising subsistence agriculture to survive. Although the profits from raw material production are based on reserve resources and cheap Aboriginal labour, they disappear from the reserve into the pockets of non-Aboriginal entrepreneurs. One must remember that First Nations do not own their lands. The federal government has total legal jurisdiction on these lands and manages them for the use and benefit of First Nations people.

The federal government has effectively discouraged the economic development of reserves, as the *Income Tax Act* and the *Indian Act* show. If Aboriginal people create a limited corporation to engage in business on reserves, they lose the benefit of exemption from taxation as individuals or as a band. As a result, income earned by a corporation wholly owned by Aboriginal people is subject to the same taxation as any corporation, even if the income is derived solely from activities on a reserve. While some provisions of the *Income Tax Act* have changed, the overall thrust remains the same today. The

structural complexities involved in the payment of property taxes on reserve lands also prevent Aboriginal people from profitably leasing their lands. In other cases, non-Aboriginal business interests have not developed large-scale commercial and industrial projects on First Nations reserves because of "regulatory gaps." These gaps refer to differences between provincial and federal laws with regard to economic activities taking place on the reserves. It would take more than 100 years for the federal government to finally enact the *First Nations Commercial and Industrial Development Act* in 2009 in order to rectify this situation. While this change still requires government permission for First Nations communities that wish to take advantage of the Act, they now may request permission to operate under the Act. The federal government's explanation of this gap was that they never thought that First Nations communities would want to engage in economic development projects.

A fifth attribute of colonization is the provision of low-quality social services for colonized Aboriginal individuals in such areas as health and education. This aspect of colonization has been operating for many centuries.

A survey by the former Department of Indian and Northern Affairs confirms a desperate need for adequate health and social services (Canada, 2001). As illustrated elsewhere in this book, the survey's findings show a lower life expectancy than in the general population, a higher level of support from social assistance organizations, and an unhealthy lifestyle imposed by poverty. Although some housing conditions have improved, social problems, new diseases (e.g., diabetes, AIDS), alcohol abuse, welfare dependency, and water pollution have increased. The provision of health care is normally considered a provincial responsibility, although there is considerable debate between the provinces and the federal government as to who provides social services for Aboriginal people. Kirmayer and Valaskakis (2009) further argue that it is likely that Aboriginal experiences with collective trauma, disorientation, and government policies are the major determinants of health problems experienced by many Aboriginal communities across Canada.

The sixth and seventh aspects of colonization relate to social interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and refer to racism and the establishment of a colour-line. Traditional racism is a belief in the genetic or cultural superiority of the colonizers and the inferiority of the colonized people. At the time of contact, there was widespread agreement among the colonizers that Aboriginal people lacked several basic qualities essential to being "men"—order, industry, and manners. As a result, both missionaries and colonial governments used a variety of strategies to elevate the Aboriginal's status beyond the level of "savage." There were three obstacles to overcome. First, Aboriginal people did not recognize forms of government beyond "chiefdoms." The Europeans were accustomed to kings and queens, standing armies, and bureaucratic structures (e.g., parliaments) to deal with everyday life and so "chiefs" were viewed with distain. Second, Aboriginal people were migratory and eschewed the concept of permanent settlements. Even those engaged in more sedentary activities generally moved in a seasonal fashion. Finally, colonial powers found Aboriginal people deficient in industry or what we would call "work." This didn't mean Aboriginal people didn't work in order to produce food and housing. However, for the colonial powers, it meant they did not work "laboriously" in the sense of severe, compulsory work. Colonists found "idleness" endemic to the Aboriginal way of life, which, defined in religious terms, meant "the

devil's hand." As a result, colonial action attempted to bring the Aboriginal way of life "in line" with that of the settlers.

With a colour-line, indicators such as skin pigmentation and body structure form the basis for determining superiority and inferiority. For example, a recent Environics (2010) survey found that over 60 percent of adult non-Aboriginal Canadians believe that Aboriginal people are subject to prejudice and discrimination. Interaction is found to take place only among members of the same group: Non-Aboriginals interact with non-Aboriginals and Aboriginal people with Aboriginal people. In Canada, for example, Native people have the highest rate of marriage within their own ethnic group—almost 90 percent.

In short, settlers brought with them an ethnocentric ethos and viewed Aboriginal life through that lens. What they perceived to be "disorder" and "idleness" were thought to be weaknesses that characterized Aboriginal culture as well as the individual (Axtell, 1981). However, over time this pure form of racism has transformed into what is called "structural" or "systemic" racism. The prevailing fundamental belief was that no person in his/her right mind (a civilized person) would choose to be an Indian.

Structural Racism

Today it would be difficult to find a Canadian who would publicly state that some groups of people are racially inferior to others. This is because, over time, overt biological racism has given way to a new form of racism. This new form of racism is covert, structural, and best described as the emergence of whiteness. All people other than whites are "raced." This embodies the assumption that white people are not racially seen or named, and, as such, they function as the "human norm"—i.e., white people are just people. It also conveys the message that others are something else. This perspective was necessary for conquest, colonization, and enslavement to take place. As a result, an institutional set of structures and relations was established which still determines how Canadians think about non-white people. Those who were white were able to dominate powerful positions in our organizations and institutions. Once a particular perspective (a white one) is built into the laws, norms, and mores of a society, it becomes part of the "way things are" and remains an uncontested definition of normality. Most Canadians, rather than actively refusing to comply with the law, go along with the norm, particularly if they think the law doesn't affect them personally. In short, whiteness functions as a large ensemble of practices and rules that give white people all sorts of advantages and privileges in life that they have trouble giving up. White privilege is the ability to make decisions that affect everyone without taking others into account. It is a standpoint, a location from which to see others, a product of history, and a relational category. Whites have created the dominant images of the world, and they don't see that they have constructed the world in their own image.

White culture and identity have no content (e.g., no definable attributes or "ethnic markers"); consequently, white people can't see that they have anything that accounts for their position of privilege and power. Much of this ingrained privilege is not exhibited deliberately and maliciously, but the impact is the same—it stratifies society into whites and non-whites. Today the structural arrangements are seen as "normal" even though they disadvantage non-whites. Moreover, it is not always the intent of a white person to make use of the unearned benefits received on the basis of skin colour. In fact, many go

through their day-to-day activities unaware that they are white or that it even matters. Nevertheless, throughout Canadian history, white power holders have made decisions that have affected white people as a group differently than groups of non-whites. White privilege allows white people *not* to see race in themselves and to be angry with others who do. In the end, whites live in the centre, Aboriginals live on the margins.

Whites do not recognize their unearned privileges because whiteness operates by invisibility—so ubiquitous and entrenched as to appear natural and normative. Thus, whiteness operates as the unmarked norm against which other identities are marked and realized. On the other hand, while whiteness is invisible to whites, it is hyper-visible to Aboriginals. Whites never have to "speak for their race," nor are they viewed as the "white" teacher or lawyer. At the same time, Aboriginals seldom see themselves broadly represented in the media and educational curricula, and when they do, it is usually not in a positive light. Aboriginal people have to grapple with these issues, which impose an important social and psychological cost. The advantage of being white is not to have to absorb this cost, or even to have to be aware of the benefits being received.

Today, for a variety of reasons, questions concerning the rights of Aboriginal people in Canada have taken a curious prominence in Canadian politics. The federal government has, for the past half-century, conveyed a message to Canadians that it has, or is just about to, resolve the issues that Aboriginal people are bringing forth (Churchill, 1999). Thus it is not surprising that most Canadians find it difficult to understand the demands being made by Aboriginal people. Moreover, Canadians find they are not prepared or able to link historical actions with contemporary events. In other words, it is difficult to see how historical events are causal agents of today's actions. Most people tend to see historical events as discrete events that have little or no bearing on today. One goal of this book is to show the reader how historical events, even though they may have happened 100 years ago, have an impact on today's conditions.

Consequences of Colonization

The ultimate consequence of colonization is a reduction in the resistance of Aboriginal people to a point at which they can be controlled and will disappear as a people through assimilation or elimination. Whether the motives for colonization are religious, economic, or political, the rewards are clearly economic. White Canada has gained far more than it has lost in colonizing its Aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal people have struggled to address what they see as historic wrongs and injustices. Such battles have long histories, but with long-term profits to the state and private enterprise at stake, these institutions are not about to give up easily.

In the initial stages of colonization, Aboriginal people generally accept their fate. Only later do they reject their powerless position. Aboriginal leaders on reserves today tend to be considerably more militant than those who initially signed treaties. But even if Aboriginal peoples no longer accept their subordinate status, there is little they can do to change it. Actions taken against government and the private sector must be channelled through a legal system that was created and is maintained for the existing political and economic elite. Although, as Boldt (1980a) showed, many Aboriginal leaders view extra-legal activity as a viable method of pressing their claims, others have surrendered to the current legal system and display a general apathy and dispiritedness—the long-term

impact of colonization. The process of acculturation and the demise of indigenous Aboriginal tribal associations have eroded Aboriginal self-identification. Communal bonds have broken down among individual Aboriginals and among bands, contributing to the continued failure of Aboriginal organizations. Leadership responsibilities on reserves have become further divided and are poorly defined, exacerbating this disorganization. In the political arena, Aboriginal people have been ineffectual for several reasons. Most importantly, historically they have been prevented from voting or running for office. Aboriginal persons did not receive the right to vote in provincial elections until after World War II and did not receive the federal franchise until 1960. Needless to say, this exclusion severely restricted their interest in political affairs and their ability to make political demands. Those with no voice in the political structure that governs their lives have few means of influencing or sanctioning the policies that affect them. Even after receiving the vote, Aboriginal people have continued to be skeptical of their rights, although this attitude is changing.

Aboriginal people who continued to live as Indigenous peoples after colonization were met with ridicule. Aboriginals have long been devalued by the dominant group, which has resulted in damage to their individual and collective identities. First Nations people have suffered a collective distortion in their relation to self and have internalized this negative self-image; this has prevented them from developing a healthy cultural identity of their own. This self-hate has been turned inward. Aboriginals have had to understand and deal with the source of their own disempowerment without being able to do anything about it. Alfred (2009) argues that men express the colonized mindset by channelling their rage externally (e.g., with violence), while women express it through self-destruction or suicide. Thus it has been difficult to maintain a cohesive Aboriginal community as colonialism has continued to exert its forces.

Cultural Domination

When Aboriginal people and Europeans first encountered each other, two different cultures came into contact. Aboriginal people were hunters and gatherers (although there were some agricultural tribes) who lived in harmony with their physical environment. Their limited technological developments made few demands on the ecology, and the small numbers of people meant that population pressures were light (Miller, 2000). Europeans, on the other hand, were continually developing their technology to achieve control over nature. They were ethnocentric in outlook and had a mission to Christianize the world. During the early British period of the early 19th century, officials gave little consideration to what role Aboriginal peoples would play in the development of Canadian society (Nichols, 2009).

Settlers demanded access to lands and resources that lay unused and ripe for exploitation. They saw Aboriginal people as "owning" lands yet not utilizing them to extract their potential economic benefit. As such, politicians gave way to this increasing "anti-Indian" sentiment. Lands ceded to Aboriginal people were taken back or reduced for settler and corporate exploitation. Moreover, settlers became "monitors" of Aboriginal activity in that they reported to authorities the actions of Aboriginal people if they moved away from their communities, even for short periods of time. The clash of these two cultures was resounding, and while there is no doubt that Native people have taken the brunt of

this collision, they have, surprisingly, retained considerable elements of their culture. They have, whenever possible, taken a "controlled acculturation" perspective, adopting certain behaviours and ideas from the Euro-American culture while retaining other valued mental constructs from their own. Perhaps the creation of reserves and its resulting high level of isolation for many Aboriginal people allowed this selective retention to occur (Brown, 1980; Brown and Vibert, 2003).

The reader might claim that people are far more enlightened today. To be sure, most people today would not argue that one group of people are biologically inferior to another. However, this biological racism has been supplanted by a new form of social/cultural racism that focuses on the inferiority of a group's way of life, their ethos, and their assumptions about the world. In taking the latter view, people may escape being accused of "biological racism"; they are prepared to accept the biological similarities of different groups of people. However, they are not prepared to accept cultural equality or the impact of historical structured inequality. As such, individual racism has given way to structural (systemic) racism. Examining **structural racism** allows one to focus on the way discrimination is built into systems of power and institutions in Canada (Nichols, 1998).

Some readers will be angered by these statements and indignant that Canada should be labelled racist. After all, they will claim, they do not engage in individual racist activities. They will point out that other history books do not make such claims. But history is humanity's way of recording past behaviour; historians are extremely susceptible to the political and social forces that prevail while they are writing. What Aboriginal people have been encouraged to write histories? And when Aboriginal histories have been written, why have they been dismissed as fabrications?

The history of hostility and conflict established between Aboriginal people and political and legal enforcement bodies has contributed to the contemporary relationships between them, which are based on suspicion, disrespect, and mistrust on both sides. Through enactments legislated through colonial parliaments, the institutions in this country have been used to segregate Aboriginal peoples from the dominant culture and to legitimize paternalistic control over all aspects of their lives. However, while being granted rights (in their own country) may have helped Aboriginal people alleviate some of the consequences that emanated from the horrific colonial era, no attempts have been made in political or judicial quarters to address the discriminatory and biased legal provisions that were used to deny them parity and equality with their dominant counterparts. The historical situation provided the initial conditions, and, by apathy and indifference rather than intentional exploitation, those conditions have continued to exist. While the introduction of the ***Charter of Rights and Freedoms*** in 1982 was assessed as a significant step toward enacting a degree of reform in this area, the Aboriginal population found little comfort in it because of the inadequacies that were attached to its legislative jurisdictional powers.

The old ways by which non-Aboriginal people look at and relate to Aboriginal people have been reflected in the way government has treated them. Moreover, they have become a forgotten people. However, some of these old views are now coming under scrutiny and being challenged. Weaver (1981) points out that the ***Penner Report*** on Aboriginal self-government (Penner, 1983) and the *Coolican Report* on comprehensive land claims (DIAND, 1986) broke new ground in conceptualizing issues involving Aboriginal

people. The **Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples** brought into focus what Aboriginal people were thinking and reflects their current view of how they should fit into Canadian society.

What is this new conceptualization? First, a new idea about the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people is presented. Whereas non-Aboriginal people previously tended to view the linkages as eventually resulting in the "termination" of Aboriginal persons and/or their full integration into non-Aboriginal society (i.e., assimilation), these reports view the relationship as parallel over time, with the two cultures adjusting to each other as time and context change. In other words, they see the relationship as equal, flexible, and evolving.

Second, the courts have recently brought about a new relationship between governments and Aboriginal people. This new relationship focuses on the notion of sanctioned rights, which is defined as those rights recognized by the state as justified claims against its actions toward a particular group. At the public level, there is a new commitment to being direct, honest, and honourable in government dealings with Aboriginal people. This new ethic has been brought to the forefront not by government but as a result of a number of court decisions that have gone against the government. From these decisions, governments have been forced to rethink their relationship with Aboriginal peoples. In many cases the courts have found that the old rules don't apply and new methods of relating to Aboriginal peoples have to be forged. However, in many cases, the results of these limited judicial decisions have been negated when their application is implemented in real life (e.g., the duty to consult) because existing structural arrangements continue to neutralize the impact of courts' decisions.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples noted that if the social position of Aboriginal people is to change, then the relationship must be restructured. These new ideas have begun to challenge the old views, but before they can become dominant in government thinking, old conceptualizations will have to be dropped. As the government reflects on possible changes, their agent, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, has undergone turbulent times in recent decades as proponents of each perspective try to make their position the basis for action. This is one reason why the government seemingly takes contradictory stands in dealing with Aboriginal people. For example, Sanders (1990) points out that even the Supreme Court has not been consistent in its rulings with regard to Aboriginal people. In some cases the inconsistencies reflect the evolution of doctrine, while others defy explanation. Yet the changes do seem to reflect the emergence of a new perspective and a new place for Aboriginal persons in Canadian society. However, whether or not this new view of First Nations people will become the dominant one remains to be seen.

Confrontations and Conflict

Press reports on confrontations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people tend to focus on specific complaints, overlook broader issues, and reflect an old definition of Aboriginal people and their role in Canadian society. Hence, in many cases where conflict emerges, Aboriginal persons are labelled as malcontents, troublemakers, and opportunists—labels that can only be defended through a distorted and abbreviated view of history (Lambertus, 2004). For example, the Oka confrontation in 1990 was defined by

the media as a "law and order" problem that, once interpreted in this manner, required and justified the harsh and extraordinary measures that the federal government took. A similar definition has been applied to the more recent Caledonia conflict in Ontario. This conflict involves a dispute between a housing developer and Aboriginals who claim that the land upon which houses are being built was illegally taken from First Nations people many years ago.

As at Oka, the stage for clashes between Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian people has generally been set by historical facts and existing structural relations, though few people are interested in examining these. For example, the Lubicons in Alberta, who have blockaded roads and shut down oil pumps, have generally been depicted as irresponsible troublemakers. Yet surely the reasons for their protests were linked to the fact that the band has been fighting for land to be set aside for a reserve promised 50 years ago, and for compensation for energy and forestry development that has taken well over $5 billion in natural resources from the area. More broadly, they are protesting on behalf of the Aboriginal children who die before their first birthday, the Aboriginal people who are unable to get jobs, and the large number of Native people who are unable to secure adequate housing. Nevertheless, when confrontations erupt, the implication is that the fault (and the cause) lies largely with Aboriginal people. This assumption reveals a biased and short-term perspective. Such an assumption ignores the subtle violence that has been perpetrated against Aboriginal people since the arrival of the European explorers. It also serves those who want to remain in power and maintain a status quo that excludes Aboriginal people from a share in their country's bounty and that allows them to remain hungry, uneducated, and inadequately housed in the midst of plenty.

WRITING A HISTORY

An author's explanation of social events depends on an individual point of view. Because overt social behaviour can be interpreted in many different ways and one can't always ask the individual why she/he did something, the historian must always infer the actors' motives, whether discussing individuals or groups.

Until recently, our historians have largely been Euro-Canadian; as a result, they have largely based their inferences on the same primary assumptions and have therefore presented similar views of social reality (Trudel and Jain, 1970). Canadian histories written before the 1980s barely mention Aboriginal people when discussing the history of Canada after the 18th century. Those authors who did write about Aboriginal peoples were colonial elites who had an interest in representing Aboriginal peoples' social and cultural life as "barbaric." As the 20th century began, a lack of technological skills relegated Aboriginal people to second-class citizens. While many history books acknowledge the interaction of Aboriginal people and Europeans, they tend to characterize Aboriginal persons as passive, always responding to actions taken by Europeans. In short, descriptions of the interaction between the two parties usually portray Europeans as the proactive agents, asserting their vision of Canada regardless of Aboriginal people. There are some exceptions to this general pattern (Miller, 2000), but the history of Aboriginal–Euro-Canadian relations in Canada has generally been told from the perspective of non-Aboriginal people. As Dickason (2002) points out, problems of interpretation become problematic when considering Europeans' accounts of their exploits in the new America.

She notes, for example, that there can be differences in the connotations of words as used in the 16th or 17th centuries versus today. She also points out that in the case of published historical accounts, what appears in print may not be what the author wrote. Historically, publishers were more interested in the economic value of material than in its veracity.

Throughout recorded time, empowered groups have been able to define history and provide an explanation of the present. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Canadians were focused on finding the best route to the Pacific coast in an attempt to tie Ontario to the West and the Asian market. However, during this period, little thought was given to Aboriginal people and their way of life. It would not be until after the American Civil War and the purchase of Alaska by the Americans that Canadian politicians realized they would have to engage in some defensive expansionism to block the American seizure of all of North America. It should be noted that no notice was given to tribal groups or their claims to the land. Government policies relating to Aboriginal people were, as Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie (1877) noted, cheap, humane, just, and Christian. As such, Indian affairs were kept far from the centre of political debate. The only attention Aboriginal groups received during the early years was when they were needed as economic partners or were involved in land cessions. For example, in the 1783 *Treaty of Paris,* the Mohawks and the Iroquois (who had been allies with the British Americans in the Revolutionary War) discovered that their contributions and the promises made to them were to be ignored. As such, these Aboriginal groups moved into present-day Ontario partly through the urging of Canadian officials. During this time, Canadian officials encouraged Aboriginal peoples to resist American demands and welcomed them into Canada. They encouraged Aboriginal people who moved to Canada to maintain their American ties as a strategy to weaken and disrupt American control over the West.

In the history books, when Aboriginal people attacked a non-Aboriginal village or fort and won, the result was called a massacre. If Europeans attacked an Aboriginal village and won, it was described as a victory. Because the colonist is able to make these interpretations and definitions, it is also able to keep others from initiating alternative explanations or definitions. History gives credence and legitimacy to a society's normative structure; to legitimize its power, the dominant group must reconstruct social history whenever necessary. The early reconstructions of Canadian history were effective: Today, most Canadians continue to associate "savage" and "heinous" behaviour with Canadian Aboriginal people. As Churchill (1999) points out, the standard European/Canadian depiction of Aboriginals has been one of a small number of people who wandered about in scattered bands, grubbing out an existence through hunting and gathering, never developing writing or serious appreciation of art, science, or mathematics. It has been believed that, aside from utilizing furs and hides for clothing and housing, there were few attributes that distinguished Aboriginal people from other higher orders of mammalian life.

In another example, Euro-Canadian history reveals that scalping was a notorious activity carried out by Aboriginal people. Few Canadians know that scalping was not practiced by Aboriginal people prior to colonization. It began in 1694 when the General Court of Massachusetts passed an act that offered bounties for every hostile "Indian" adult or child that they could kill or bring to the authorities as a prisoner. However, the question remained as to how you could tell whether a hostile Indian had been killed. Since 50 pounds (later increased to 100—an incredible amount of money at the time) was

provided for each "kill," authorities had to be sure that a hostile Indian had indeed been killed. The issue was resolved by demanding that the scalp of the Indian be provided to authorities to authenticate the kill (Washburn, 1957). Hence scalping was one that was introduced and sanctioned by settlers and the colonial powers.

As Patterson (1972) points out, alien history is pulled down and discredited, and national history replaces it. Continuity of tradition for any group is truncated when the communication channels are taken over by others who wish to transmit different information. How often have we known something to be true only to find out many years later that the government, or some other group, distorted information that might have led us to believe something quite different? Brown (1971) and Andrist (1964) have vividly portrayed American-Indian history from an alternative point of view. Their information concerning Aboriginal–non-Aboriginal relations is quite dissimilar to that provided by "established" historians. Recent histories by such authors as Miller (2000), Churchill (1999), Warry (2006), and Nichols (1998) portray a more balanced perspective of events and reveal the Aboriginal side of Canadian history.

Readers have reacted quite differently to books by Cardinal (1969), Pelletier (1970), and Waubageshig (1970) than to books by Morton (1963), McInnis (1959), and Lower (1957). The layperson typically rejects the conclusions of the first three authors as the product of bias. But the same person tends to accept the explanations provided by the second group of "established academic" authors. We are not suggesting that the first are right or the second wrong, but both groups deserve to be read and judged fairly. As a new generation of Aboriginal authors emerge (Waters, 2004; Cajete, 2000; Bastien, 2004), new data and views of history are being presented to readers. While some resistance to the new history still exists, many readers have responded with "I didn't know that," reflecting a grudging acceptance.

Walker (1971) characterized Canadian historians in their analysis of Aboriginal people in Canada as ignorant, prejudiced, and, in some cases, dishonest. But we do not have to attribute motives of deliberate falsification. In any reconstruction of the past, the author shapes an interpretation of events according to individual perceptions, memories, analytical preferences, and social background. Whether deliberately or unconsciously, a reshaping of the past occurs. No historian is free of bias; no history is capable of presenting only the facts.

A Western perspective asserts that the history of North America began with the arrival of the settlers. In short, there was no "history" before they arrived. Many authors argue that there is no written history prior to the settlers' arrival and thus a history cannot be presented. Others will note that, while we have few written materials regarding many ancient civilizations, we are still able to use artifacts to reconstruct the history of a people. Nevertheless, in Canada, history traditionally begins with the arrival of European settlers. While there is certainly a history of Aboriginals presented as they came into contact with settlers, there is a built-in assumption that as Aboriginals were assimilated, their history would disappear. As Dockstator (2005) points out, a Western historical perspective involves three factors regarding Aboriginal people: (1) they are a vanishing race; (2) they are a single homogenous group; and (3) Aboriginals are a mixture of what he calls simultaneous contrasts—e.g., noble yet savage, robust yet dying, existing but not really existing. For example, settlers had little interest in Aboriginal perspectives, and from the duality of their perspective, Aboriginal people were nations when it came

to signing treaties but not nations once they were signed. In the end, from a Western perspective, Aboriginals are always placed at the margins of mainstream activity. There has been, and continues to be, a belief that Aboriginals will, through various legal acts (e.g., treaties, Indian acts, federal bills) disappear and the end of their history will be written.

When contact occurred, Aboriginals recognized Western culture as legitimate yet found it perplexing that the settlers and colonial powers did not recognize their own culture with the same respect. And, while Aboriginals regarded the newcomers as their equals, settlers always viewed themselves as superior. Aboriginals interpreted the negotiation of treaties as reflecting a principle of equality. As Dockstator (2005) concludes, Aboriginals believed in the equality of the two nations, although they certainly understood that the indicators of equality would change over time. Aboriginals never viewed themselves as a vanishing race nor as a single homogeneous group. They were keenly aware of the cultural and linguistic differences among their various groups. Over the past four centuries, Indigenous peoples have consistently maintained that their concept of nationhood originated long before the settlers came, and it remains intact. They also argue that even after contact with the settlers, a balanced relationship between themselves and the settlers reflected two nations of equal status.

Canadians are mostly unaware of the "underside" of history and our relationship with Aboriginal peoples. This is one more attribute of a colonial society in that only the settlers' side of the story is told and perpetuated through myths and stories. As Alfred (2005) notes, government and law manifest in fictive legal constructs that legitimize non-Aboriginal people's usurpation. This is turn becomes a feigned legitimacy in order to normalize the structure of racism. Over time, it is integrated into the literature and art that further demonstrates the "facts" required to justify colonial privilege.

RELATIONS BETWEEN PEOPLES

The balance of this chapter will provide an overview of the history of the relations between the two dominant Canadian groups and Aboriginal peoples. Before discussing Aboriginal–non-Aboriginal relations, we should point out that Aboriginal–Aboriginal relations are also an important component in the way Canada developed. Europeans were able to establish themselves in Canada partially due to the fact that a large number of Aboriginal people allowed them to and supported them in doing so (Trigger, 1985; Dickason, 2002). Since in the beginning Aboriginal people controlled the fur trade and were militarily superior to the newcomers, European entry onto the land could not have been accomplished without their cooperation (Coates, 1991).

A major shift in government–Aboriginal relations in Canada emerged after the British solidified their position in Canada. After the American Revolution, more than 100 000 American refugees were invited to come to Canada and they settled near Aboriginal populations in Ontario. In order to provide land for these refugees, government officials began to expropriate land from Aboriginal groups. At first, small parcels of land were provided to the refugees, but over time, through force or fraud, more and better portions of the land were taken. Moreover, most of these Americans (United Empire Loyalists) had strong anti-Aboriginal prejudices, which perpetuated more myths and spread violence to other areas of Canada. As Maybury-Lewis et al. (2009) point out, Canadian

dealings with Aboriginal people can be characterized as the government doing as little as possible until circumstances dictated that they take some action. By the 1800s, Aboriginal people in Ontario discovered—too late—that earlier agreements with Canadian officials were no longer being honoured and more and more land was being expropriated for the use of settlers.

Once Britain (and earlier, France) took over control of what is now Canada, they took the stance that their earlier recognition of Aboriginal nationhood and sovereignty were no longer relevant political positions. While they certainly endorsed such political statements in their earlier relations with Aboriginal people when they needed them as allies against other European competitors, once control over what is now Canada was secured, such positions were dropped. As Alfred (2009) points out, the British ignored the earlier recognition of Aboriginal nationhood and sovereignty as well as the legal guarantees to land ownership established by the treaties. Moreover, by this time, the Aboriginal population had been decimated by disease and hardship, so they were no longer a formidable military force nor a potential political opponent. As such, the British could act freely and without opposition to consolidate their control over Canada. They were now able to pursue a political course that focused on the elimination of First Nations as legal and political entities, on the implementation of a reserve system to control them, and on a movement to gradually civilize the Aboriginal population (Rotman, 1996). The end result of such activities produced a long-lasting "dependency" of Aboriginal peoples on mainstream society.

Colonialism produced a new Aboriginal existence as the new capitalist economy was introduced. As Alfred (2009) points out, every aspect of their lives was affected by the implementation of capitalism. Wotherspoon and Satzewich (1993) note that Aboriginal peoples' lives were destroyed as they were not given any opportunity to participate in this new economy. Exclusion and limitations upon Aboriginal participation in the larger economy still echo today. The continued and cumulative impact of natural resource extraction on and near First Nations lands continues to disrupt traditional patterns of existence through pollution, disruption of flora and fauna, and the rejection of any meaningful Aboriginal involvement. In other cases, government action stymied Aboriginal involvement in the fisheries through federal and provincial regulations. Newell (1993) shows how regulatory laws were passed under the guise of environmental regulation (conservation), although their impact was designed to ensure cheap Aboriginal labour for the canneries and to prevent Aboriginal people from becoming competitors with non-Aboriginal economic interests. Her work reveals both the covert and overt actions taken by government to keep Aboriginal people from participating in the fisheries industry.

French–Aboriginal Relations

With the establishment of Quebec in 1608, the French created a centre for the growing fur trade. Their policy was to treat Aboriginal people with consideration, avoid violence with them, and transform them into Frenchmen (Dickason and Newbigging, 2010). With early settlements short of French women, intermarriage, or "wintering in," between French trappers and Indian women soon became common practice and was encouraged by French authorities who wanted to strengthen Aboriginal relations so that the fur trade would continue. These marriages between French men and Indian women were not meant

to be exploitative; the relationships were stable, and the man was considered legally responsible for his wife and offspring (Brown, 1980). However, the reader should understand that intermarriage was not a policy that originated in Canada. The French had used this technique when they colonized Brazil a century earlier. Moreover, intermarriage was eased for the French by the belief that Aboriginals were really white, turning brown because they ate certain foods and were out in the sun. If one looks at formal records of intermarriage, the incidence would indicate a small number. However, other documents suggest that the rate was quite high and was supported by the missionaries as a form of concubinage. Thus both economic and religious institutions supported intermarriage between Aboriginal women and French men. Nevertheless, by the mid-18th century, the practice was no longer supported by the structures that had earlier facilitated its process.

In general, the French tried to expand their territories in North America by peaceful means (Francis, 1983). Usually they succeeded, because their agricultural style of existence only minimally disrupted Aboriginal life. Because they used the seigneurial system of agriculture, the French always remained near major waterways and did not intrude into the interior of New France. After they had settled a territory, the French asked the Indians to join in a treaty to acknowledge submission to the king of France. In this way, the French usually won territory without actually expropriating it. In 1611, Champlain sealed a pact of friendship with Chief Anadabijou, which allowed the French to establish themselves on Montagnais territory. In entering this alliance, the French were following a practice that they had developed a century earlier in Brazil and that was successful in establishing trade relations (Wright, 2003). The French had long come to realize that diplomatic protocol and negotiations (by means of gift distributions) were the process by which alliances could be built with Aboriginal people. However, the process was not always peaceful, and the French were certainly prepared to use force when they found it expedient to do so. When the Marquis de Tracy was placed in charge of Canada in 1663, his commissions included a provision for the use of arms to subjugate the Aboriginal peoples if necessary.

The two strongest ideological influences in 17th-century New France were Roman Catholicism and **mercantilism**. The latter was the economic theory that had prevailed in Europe during the 18th century and had two basic tenets: The mother country was entitled to accumulate wealth in any form, and the mother country was entitled to exploit its colonies as a source for raw materials and a market for finished products, thereby maintaining a favourable balance of trade. As well, the French utilized the missionary zeal of the Catholic clergy to convert Aboriginal people.

Thus, with the full support of the French monarchy and its colonial officials, Catholic missionaries began the process of "civilizing" the Aboriginals and converting them to Christianity. Both Jesuit and Recollet missionaries dealt with Aboriginal groups from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Georgian Bay, encouraging them to take on a sedentary life and to adopt the beliefs and values of Catholicism (Furniss, 2000). French policy, rather than treating Aboriginal people as distinct and inferior, tried to make them into French citizens, at least in Canada. Two additional factors contributed to the relatively peaceful relations between the French and the Indians: the military alliance of the Huron, the Algonkian, and the French; and the fact that the French settled in an area occupied by the Algonkian, who were migratory hunters (Jenness, 1937) with no real tribal organization and were themselves recent arrivals in the area (Cumming, 1969). This ideology of "**Frenchification**" is illustrated in various exchanges of letters between religious and state leaders of the day.

When war broke out with England in the 18th century, the demand for fur decreased and the French mercantilistic philosophy came to an end. War also brought a change in the French policy toward Aboriginal peoples (Jaenen, 1986). Aboriginal land rights began to be systematically ignored (Harper, 1947: 131). Letters signed by Louis XV at this time gave companies headed for New France full ownership of the land, coasts, ports, and havens of New France, and full right to dispose of these properties in any way they desired (French, 1851). Similar provisions can be found in the privileges, power, and requirements given to the Company of One Hundred Associates by Cardinal Richelieu nearly a century earlier.

The king of France understood that, if he was to colonize Canada, he would have to spend time, money, and energy in maintaining alliances with the Aboriginal peoples. He also realized that they were important allies in times of war, and they would support the French if treated properly. Others have noted that the French used their Indian allies as "outposts" in the new world and thus reaped the benefits of low costs and accurate information. In the end, as Dickason (2002) points out, the French dealt with Aboriginal groups on a practical basis. It was a blend of give-and-take: giving when alliances were necessary, taking when the profits of the fur trade allowed. However, French domination in New France came to an end when the *Treaty of Paris* (1763) was signed and the French handed over their vast territory to the British. Moreover, Aboriginal people found that they now occupied a new niche in New France, devoid of any bargaining between the French and English. This niche was characterized by a loss of protection of their land and a halt to the recognition of Aboriginal leaders and the provision of gifts to them.

British–Aboriginal Relations

As the English cemented their control over North America, Aboriginal people found themselves in a very different world. Their experience with the English was considerably more negative than that with the French. This was partly due to the operation of different structural variables—e.g., a new religious ideology, new racist philosophies, a different economy, and the intrusion of thousands of new settlers on the land. Mercantilism as an economic theory had been discarded and the importance of the fur trade was dwindling; colonization in its true sense was now important. In addition, the religious ideology of the British had a very different basis than that of the French. As other religious denominations entered Canada, they continued the expansion of Christianity. Finally, the British based their actions on the ideology that no natural community exists on its own through natural processes. They believed that group life was an artificial creation and that the individual's needs and interests would always come into conflict with the desire to create a homogenous society. In creating a society, the state has to use systematic violence (supported by the rule of law). Out of this philosophy, British colonists insisted that the creation of political order required that laws had to be capable of coercive enforcement. As such, as they settled in what is now Canada, their intent was to create a centralized state and reject any other social organization exhibited by the Indigenous people. As the British continued their colonization of the new country, their political and social systems moved further away from the ideas of justice and equality toward the increasing use of force. As such, the underpinning of their empire was increasingly based upon a philosophy of violence toward Aboriginal people. Henderson (2008) argues that the British built their Canadian empire out of cruelty and the destruction of the Indigenous population. Specifically, he notes:

> Eurocentrism established its primary elements of individual and subjective interests in the construction of an artificial political and social order regulated by violence and punishment. (pg. 15)

Thus it seemed reasonable to deal with Indigenous peoples, who were seen inferior, from a perspective that legitimized the use of violence (Catellani, 1901).

As Thomas (1972) points out, Aboriginal people were not even mentioned in discussions when land was given to companies or settlers as they took over control of what is now Canada. Until 1755, the English followed a policy of expediency they had developed and refined in dealing with Aboriginal people in the Thirteen Colonies (now the eastern United States). At first, they chose to ignore the Aboriginal population. When allies were required, Aboriginals were courted and provided with resources. Later, when this was no longer necessary or feasible due to westward expansion, the English chose to isolate Aboriginal people through the reserve system or to annihilate them, as with the Beothuk of Newfoundland. As far back as 1755, Indian agents, today called superintendents, were appointed, formally establishing Canada's policy of treating Aboriginal peoples as wards of the state. Significantly, the Indian agents initially placed in control of the reserves were always military men.

By 1830, the government questioned the value of the Aboriginal person in developing Canada's future. Although it remained a concern for some, invasion from the south by the United States was no longer an immediate and direct threat. Because there were no other potential attackers, Aboriginal people were not likely to be needed for support in military efforts. Without their status as military allies, Aboriginals had no value for a "white Canada." Thus, in 1830, Indian affairs were removed from military control and became a branch of the public service (Surtees, 1969). This change of jurisdiction allowed the British to adopt a more humanitarian attitude toward Aboriginal people (Doerr, 1974). The new image of Aboriginals reflected a more general humanitarian ideology that had arisen through various social reform movements in Britain and the United States (Furniss, 2000). It also gained widespread popularity through the writings of individuals such as James Fenimore Cooper and George Grant as well as by the paintings of artists of the day.

By the mid-1880s, most areas in Canada had been claimed by some religious denomination. Manifest Destiny and the Hamlite rationalization pervaded the British secular way of life, exemplified in the Protestant ethic that hard work and no play would bring salvation. The philosophy of Manifest Destiny, though usually associated with American expansion, was more broadly a belief that Europeans should control the world, or at least large parts of it. A related belief, the Hamlite rationalization, was a belief taken from the Bible that Ham was cursed by God and turned into a non-white person so that "he and his descendants should remain cursed and be subservient to Whites from then on." To the British, the Indians were clearly descendants of Ham.

During this time the interests of the various settler groups—e.g., fur traders, missionaries, settlers, and government officials—were sometimes in agreement, while at other times they conflicted. For example, missionaries and fur traders supported each other, although traders were more pragmatic in their dealings with Aboriginals. Traders also saw disruptions to Aboriginal communities as against their interest—i.e., they would hinder their ability to gather furs for trade.

POST-CONFEDERATION ABORIGINAL–NON-ABORIGINAL RELATIONS

The French chose to exploit resources by encouraging settlers to remain permanently on the land while the British exploited resources through the fur trade (Satzewich and Liodakis, 2010). Nevertheless, the colonizers, under the watchwords of law, order, and peace, justified their violence against Aboriginal people. This justification continues to provide the legal underpinnings of a British philosophy that is now accepted by most Canadians. Moreover, this philosophy of life and action is not viewed as a "privileged norm" but rather is argued to be a universal and general philosophy that all other societies must embrace. Under the terms of the *British North America Act*, the federal government took on legal responsibility for "Indians and Indian lands." The first *Indian Act* after Canadian Confederation was passed in 1876, bringing together a number of disparate pieces of legislation relating to Aboriginals. The intent of the Act was to control and manage the operation of reserves. It was first revised in 1880 (and placed under the Department of Indian Affairs), and received minor alterations in 1884 and 1885. For the next 65 years, the Act underwent annual minor changes. However, in 1951, a major revision was undertaken and, although there have been subsequent alterations, only one or two major changes have been made since that time. Interestingly enough, the 1880 version of the Act and the present one are remarkably similar, indicating that the Indian Affairs Department has not yet undergone any major ideological shifts in the past hundred years of dealing with the Aboriginal population.

Diffusionism

Since Confederation, Canadian officials have borrowed the earlier British philosophy and built upon it when it comes to dealing with Aboriginal people. Specifically, they created what has been called by Henderson (2008) "epistemological **diffusionism**." This philosophy is based on a basic tenet that most human societies are uninventive, although there are some that are highly innovative and thus become permanent centres of cultural change. Thus, it was no stretch to argue that British (and European) society was the single inventive, progressive culture while Aboriginal people were historical, stagnant, and unchanging. Only British people were intellectually able to create, imagine, or innovate. Blaut (1993) argues that this belief became the normal and natural way of viewing Indigenous peoples and informed relations with them as the settlers continued to take over the land.

Table 1.1 outlines the basic attributes of diffusionism. Colonialism brings civilization, which in turn brings innovation and change. Only if the Aboriginal people would accept the colonial way of life would they escape their stagnant and unimaginative one. This belief is still with us today in that the Department of Justice refuses to acknowledge the existence of "Aboriginal knowledge." Their response is that there is "traditional Aboriginal knowledge" but it is just that—traditional, and it cannot ever be modern.