

White Settler Revisionism and Making Métis Everywhere: The Evocation of Métissage in Quebec and Nova Scotia

Author(s): Adam Gaudry and Darryl Leroux

Source: *Critical Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spring 2017), pp. 116-142

Published by: University of Minnesota Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/jcritethnstud.3.1.0116>

Accessed: 02-07-2017 16:57 UTC

REFERENCES

Linked references are available on JSTOR for this article:

http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/jcritethnstud.3.1.0116?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references_tab_contents

You may need to log in to JSTOR to access the linked references.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://about.jstor.org/terms>



University of Minnesota Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Critical Ethnic Studies*

White Settler Revisionism and Making Métis Everywhere

The Evocation of Métissage in Quebec and Nova Scotia

ADAM GAUDRY AND DARRYL LEROUX

A recurring theme in the narration of Indigenous–settler relations is the evocation of Indigenous–settler societal unification through intermarriage. Among the earliest proponents of this view was Samuel de Champlain, who famously told his Indigenous allies in May 1633, “Our young men will marry your daughters, and we shall become one people.”¹ While the degree to which this vision resulted in the actual societal unification of Indigenous peoples and settlers is overstated, it retains an important place in the settler consciousness, particularly among Champlain’s cultural progenies, the French-speaking and/or French-descendant populations of North America. While postcontact Indigenous peoples later came into being, such as the Métis Nation on the northern prairies or the NunatuKavut in Labrador, they exist not as societies unified with settlers through intermarriage but as Indigenous peoples who emerged through self-conscious historical development *as a people*. Many French-speaking and/or French-descendant individuals, however, do not understand Champlain’s imaginative vision as merely a dream but rather as a reality where settlers and Indigenous peoples are one and the same.

These vivid constructs pose significant political problems for contemporary Indigenous claims to self-determination insofar as they receive a sympathetic hearing from dominant white settler societies. These “new Métis” identities are essentialized in ways that capitalize on settler puzzlement over forms of Indigeneity based on kinship and belonging and replace these forms with an imagined past of racial mixedness leading to supposed societal unification. This article therefore examines what we call the “evocation of métissage,”² that is, the tactical use of long-ago racial mixing to reimagine a “Métis” identity that prioritizes mixed-race ancestry and disregards the

historical development of Métis peoplehood. We do so by first presenting a brief overview of current scholarly understandings of Métis peoplehood based in the historical Red River community and its contemporary diaspora, one that clearly opposes the “evocation of métissage” that we subsequently analyze. We then contextualize our analysis by demonstrating that French policy in New France was an attempt at Frenchification and not métissage. In other words, French colonists sought to assimilate Indigenous peoples rather than produce a culturally hybrid Indigenous society. After demonstrating the thin evidence for a historical métissage at the origins of Quebec and Acadia, we then analyze the attempts to evoke a “Métis” past among French-speaking and French-descendant populations in what is now Eastern Canada.

In problematizing common forms of Acadian and French-Quebecois “indigenization,” we assembled data on two prominent self-identified Métis organizations in Quebec and Nova Scotia. The two organizations we analyze reflect French-specific claims to unification: in Nova Scotia we examine the claims of the Unama’ki Voyageur Métis Nation (which recently reformed as the Bras d’Or Lake Métis Nation), based in Cape Breton; and in Quebec we look at the Nation Métisse Autochtone de la Gaspésie, Bas-Saint-Laurent et Îles-de-la-Madeleine, based in Gaspésie. Together these organizations claim to represent over fifteen thousand individuals and are currently involved in legal efforts to have their members recognized as an Aboriginal people with Aboriginal and treaty rights protected by the Constitution Act, 1982. These efforts, however, find concerted opposition from leaders of the Métis Nation, an Indigenous people of the prairies whose homeland includes present-day Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, North Dakota, Montana, as well as parts of Ontario and British Columbia.³ While our selection of these two “Métis” organizations is not exhaustive, it is representative of efforts made by white settler communities to “indigenize” themselves in Quebec, Nova Scotia, and among French populations in Canada and the United States more generally. Our analysis of the public advocacy work and political claims of these two groups of self-identified Métis demonstrates how the indigenization of the descendants of early French settlers is fraught with colonial overtones that threaten Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. As we explain in the following pages, these organizations often locate French-speaking and French-descendant communities at the center of a discourse that disregards Indigenous peoples—ironically, the very same communities from which they claim descent—both contemporarily *and* historically.

MÉTIS PEOPLEHOOD ON THE PRAIRIES

The Métis people have been marginalized for some time within Canada's colonial management regime. Until recently, Métis were confined to provincial jurisdiction and were often lumped in with other unrecognized Indigenous people—nonstatus Indians—in Canada's legal framework. As a result, Métis were typically regarded as mixed-descent people, not as a self-governing Indigenous nation that predates the formation of Canada. These colonial strategies, as well as the common belief that the Métis are already at least partly European, have made Métis identity more open than that of other Indigenous peoples to settler appropriation and more easily reconceptualized as an outcome of the white settler project.

Métis scholar Chris Andersen has recently argued that due to the deep reservoir of bio-racism at the basis of Canadian society, the term "Métis" continues to hold a purely biological meaning—mixed-race—that undermines Métis nationhood.⁴ As opposed to a general understanding of "Métis" primarily in biological terms, Andersen proposes a specific understanding of Métis in peoplehood terms.⁵ He explains the genesis of the Métis Nation in the Red River Valley in the nineteenth century.

Red River Métis collectively created, borrowed and combined elements to form a distinctive culture and lifestyle separate from both their Euro-Canadian and First Nations neighbours, including a new language, form of land tenure, laws, a distinctive form of dress, music, a national flag and, in 1869–70, distinctive political institutions. Indeed, by Canada's formal establishment in 1867 the Métis constituted an indigenous nation of nearly 10,000 people possessing a history, culture, imagined territorial boundaries, national anthem and, perhaps most importantly, a sense of self-consciousness as Métis.⁶

To be clear, Andersen is not denying the "mixedness" of the Métis but rather is pointing out that all Indigenous peoples are mixed in ways that parallel Métis hybridity.⁷ By doing so, he aims to undermine the dominant racial classification system or what he calls the "ontological ordering" of the Métis as somehow less Indigenous than other Indigenous peoples. "Certainly those 'First Nations' living adjacent to Métis communities," Andersen argues, "were no less susceptible to the intermixing that resulted from, for example, the political economy of the fur trade. All indigeneity is—or perhaps more precisely, 'analytically can be'—hybrid."⁸ Andersen makes the case for an understanding of the Métis as an Indigenous people in the same sense as

the Anishinaabe, the Plains Cree, the Mi'kmaq, or the Sylix. In this way it is not mixedness that defines Métis people but rather their Métisness—belonging to a particular Indigenous social and political formation called the Métis Nation from what is now primarily called Western Canada.

Instead of rooting Métis identity in a mix of “races” and cultures, Andersen argues that the Métis emerged *as a people* capable of establishing “inter-societal norms” and who self-consciously identified themselves as Métis. That is, they used the term “Métis” to differentiate themselves from others and produced broadly accepted social norms that Métis understood as Métis norms.⁹ In a similar manner, one-time proponent of a broadly placed “Métis” existence Jacqueline Peterson now argues that only historical communities that understood themselves as Métis should be considered as such by contemporary observers, which for her means Red River as a site of Métis emergence, as opposed to either the Great Lakes or locations further east.¹⁰ Peterson looks to Métis self-consciousness as the basis for Métis identity, rather than “insert[ing] Métis consciousness into areas and eras where they did not previously exist.”¹¹ In distancing herself from a previously used “Métis-as-mixed” framework, Peterson argues that the contemporary use of the term “Métis” from the Great Lakes eastward is a “misappropriation” partially resulting from scholars projecting “Métis or métis backward in time to relabel those once known in the documentary record as ‘half-breeds’ or mixed-bloods, or by no distinct term at all.”¹² And with the appearance of the term “Métis” in the documentary record outside Western Canada, Peterson argues that “even as the terms Half-breed, métis, and metif began to appear in fur traders’ journals and travelers’ accounts after 1800, only along the Red River after 1814–16 did the term Métis come to connote a separate ethnic group—the *bois-brûlés* [who would become the Métis Nation]—who viewed themselves as a new tribe or nation.”¹³ While the term “Métis” may dot the archival record elsewhere, particularly after the Métis people entered Canadian consciousness with the Red River Resistance in 1869, it appears almost exclusively as outsider-ascription, as it is rarely used as a term of self-identification for mixed-descent French-Indigenous communities in the East. Scholars such as Andersen and Peterson have thus reoriented the discussion of Métis identity to historical self-ascription and political consciousness rather than biological descent from unspecified Indigenous ancestors.

Determining that historic Métis communities existed, however, is only one part of the process. Métis communities also exist in the present, demonstrating a kind of *historical-contemporary continuity*.¹⁴ Given these qualifications, Andersen and Peterson are correct in asserting that there is little

credible evidence that supports the existence of historically based, self-conscious Métis communities outside of the prairies (and its diaspora). While this position is at odds with more recent attempts by self-identified Métis organizations and individuals in Quebec and Nova Scotia to situate themselves as Métis people, it is nonetheless consistent with traditional Métis identity boundaries that were and are rooted in an identifiable kinship network and collective self-consciousness. Métis in the West have maintained close relations with Cree, Saulteaux, Dene, and Assiniboine kin while self-identifying as an Indigenous people for over two centuries, rooting their identity in a collective peoplehood connected with an extensive alliance of Indigenous peoples across the prairies.

The major problem with using a mixed-raced understanding of “Métis” is that it finds “Métis” everywhere and in so doing denies the more explicit peoplehood of the Métis Nation. The question has never been whether in the early days of New France colonists formed alliances and/or intermarried with Indigenous peoples; it has been whether these relations gave rise to distinct, self-aware, and historically identifiable peoples who persist today. Respecting how Indigenous communities understood themselves historically and continue to identify in the present is of the utmost importance as a matter of Indigenous self-determination.

THE CONTEMPORARY EVOCATION OF MÉTISSAGE

Thanks in part to a long, historiographic tradition that positions French colonial policy as enlightened vis-à-vis more violent British and Spanish policies in the Americas, many scholars of New France uphold a strong belief in an innate rapprochement between French settlers and Indigenous peoples. Francis Parkman’s foundational observation in his seven-volume series *France and England in North America* (1865–92) that “Spanish civilization crushed the Indian; English civilization scorned and neglected him; French civilization embraced and cherished him”¹⁵ still reigns in popular culture and in academia.

One of the most prominent contemporary advocates of the evocation of métissage is Denis Vaugeois, a former Quebec Minister of Cultural Affairs and a well-known author of twelve books. His writing crosses between popular culture and scholarly work with general ease and is recognized by a broad Quebecois audience. His most recent piece on the matter, “La nation métisse” (The mixed nation), manifests many of the most common tropes used in evoking métissage as part of Quebec national identity. For instance,

Vaugeois disregards the copious amount of scholarly evidence refuting the blood-based (genealogy) biologics of the narrative, relying instead on an anecdote from an election campaign stop in Saguenay-Lac St. Jean over three decades ago to bolster his claim to a latent “Métis” identity in this region of Quebec. On this day, we are told, René Lévesque, one of the most popular politicians in Quebec’s history, addressed a large crowd: “Those high cheekbones and bright, carbuncle-like eyes definitely betray the [inter-racial] dating that took place between the handful of white families that ‘opened up’ the region little more than a century ago and the indigenous peoples from the area. It was a remarkably successful mixture.”¹⁶ Vaugeois’s reliance on this type of decades-old bio-racial anecdote is commonplace in French-language popular culture, in which comments such as Lévesque’s are used as evidence for the presumed Indigeneity of the Quebecois.

A similar type of evocative tendency can be found in scholarly literature as well. Socio-legal scholar Sébastien Malette has made one of the boldest claims, where in a 2014 article he reimagines Quebecois and Métis identities as one and the same.

Why can’t a Quebecois be seen as Métis and Quebecois, since he bathes in a historically mixed society and carries a distinct culture from this fact? . . . According to the [Paquette] judgment, an individual can claim aboriginal rights if there is a continuous and strictly territorialized relationship between a “Métis community” that existed before the “effective control” of the colonial powers, and an individual still living in this same community. So, couldn’t the entirety of Quebec be one of these territories, since the Métis have historically roamed through and inhabited it, just like several other places in North America?¹⁷

The normative use of “métissage” relies on a specific symbolic repertoire using generations-old understandings of bio-mixedness between early French male settlers and Indigenous women.¹⁸ In particular, Quebecois narratives tell a celebratory story of unmatched French imperial genius, a story overdetermined by an incredible benevolence toward Indigenous peoples in the postcontact era.

Yet there are challenges to these evocations as well. Daniel Salée’s review of two recent scholarly histories recounts a very different kind of relationship between French settlers and Indigenous peoples. Salée argues that the authors’ attempts to center Indigeneity obscure ongoing (and often violent) forms of colonialism in Quebec, with which Indigenous peoples still

contend. Salée maintains that “the at-times quick and reckless use of the language of encounter, of métissage and of interculturalism”¹⁹ betrays the fact that

such [encounters] did not take shape in the beginnings of Quebec. The encounter between Europeans and Indigenous peoples was marked from nearly its origins by brute force, by fundamentally unequal power relations that, despite several successful indigenous movements of resistance, always turned in favor of Europeans and to the consolidation of their more and more hegemonic presence in the New World.²⁰

In most evocations of métissage, French imperial violence seems to disappear, ironically at the same time that scholars are now better understanding French imperialism as similar to that of the British and Spanish. Such creative efforts evince the historical narrative celebrating French peacefulness by building an emerging one where Indigenous peoples are advantaged by the encounter due to their deep place-based knowledge systems, which are gladly shared with the new settlers.

For example, *L’empreinte*, an award-winning documentary released in March 2015, played to unusually large crowds throughout Quebec and carried a similar representation of the past to a rapt audience. The filmmakers explain the idea behind their film: “What’s at the basis of our approach is the intuition that Quebecois culture is the result of major cultural mixing with Indigenous peoples. All seventeenth- and eighteenth-century observers testify to one long-obscured reality: we wanted to ‘civilize’ the Indians, but it was the French who became ‘savage’ instead.”²¹ If ticket sales and mainstream awards are indications, there is an impressive appetite for the message of *L’empreinte*: it is the second documentary film explicitly representing Quebecois “métissage” to be nominated in the Best Documentary Film category at Quebec’s national cinema awards, the Jutra Awards, in the past three years.²² The evocation of métissage, promoted by a variety of scholarly and popular histories in different media, positions the French-Quebecois and Acadian communities in Mi’kma’ki (loosely, Atlantic Canada) as not only innocent in the violence of settler colonialism but, increasingly, as Indigenous *tout court*.²³

Nonetheless, recent scholarship has placed this evocative discourse into question, opening up possibilities for seeing this particular history differently. Christopher Hodson and Brett Rushforth have stated that “it has become clear that Gwendolyn Hall’s assertion that the French exhibited a

unique ‘openness to peoples of other races and cultures’ is no longer tenable.”²⁴ While there is no doubt that French policies and practices differed from other European imperial powers and changed significantly in time and space, how these practices are popularly narrated today in Quebec and in French Canada more broadly have ultimately laid the groundwork for a daring narrative twist: French Quebecois and Acadians imagining themselves as Indigenous to the Americas in the form of a “Métis” society.

Neither of us has a definitive “origin” point for the claims to Indigeneity we have observed, but since the inclusion of the Métis peoples as an Aboriginal people under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, the number of “Métis” organizations and groups claiming Aboriginal rights has ballooned, particularly over the past decade and a half. For instance, Nova Scotia (at 900 percent) and New Brunswick (at 450 percent) had the largest increases in Métis self-identification over the three Canadian censuses between 1996 and 2006,²⁵ and while this growth has leveled off, both Québec (at 47 percent) and Nova Scotia (at 31 percent) claim the highest provincial increases in Métis self-identification between 2006 and 2011.²⁶ For self-identified Métis in Quebec and Nova Scotia, an inherent historical mixedness is key to their evocation of *métissage*. Yet an examination of French policy in New France during this much-romanticized era demonstrates that the colonial government ensured that *métissage* was actually quite circumscribed.

EXAMINING THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE OF MÉTISSAGE IN NEW FRANCE

Gilles Havard’s research has been instrumental in understanding the nature of *métissage* in New France. He describes the early French colonial approach as one deeply rooted in European supremacy, arguing that “the children of a French father and a Christianized Aboriginal mother [did] not become ‘Métis’ in the sense of a new category with particular characteristics . . . but [became] obedient, Catholic, and Frenchified subjects.”²⁷ Importantly, Havard argues that *métissage* operated in a manner that solidified the racial inequality between Europeans and Indigenous peoples. Dominique Deslandres’s research on what she calls the “fiction of *métissage*” also casts a light on the precise types of hierarchical, patriarchal, and imperial dynamics that propelled French strategies in New France. According to Deslandres, the idea of societal unification between French and Indian people is a “chimera” since French colonial policy and religious instruction ensured that familial and sexual unions occurred only in quite limited and circumscribed contexts that suited French gender norms.²⁸ As such, patriarchal

values played a foundational role in developing French understandings of “métissage” since, “in a colony settled primarily by French men, the intermediaries targeted in the blending of people were Indigenous women. But not just any women: the French needed to find *civilized, Frenchified* wives among Indigenous women.”²⁹ Desperate for more converts, in the early seventeenth century, the Jesuits made an extraordinary decision to request formally that the Holy See allow marriages between French men and non-Christian Indigenous women, arguing that “this would oblige the natives to love the French as their brothers.”³⁰ The request was denied, and as Peter Cook demonstrates, “the literal side of the French project of becoming ‘one people’ with the Native nations of the region lost steam toward the end of the 1630s.”³¹

As opposed to the cheery, celebratory narrative of the contact zone, Saliha Belmessous further explains how a racial ideology based in biology first took root in New France through the stigmatization of mixed-race descendants: “The expression of racialized ideas in New France . . . , almost fifty years before their appearance in the metropolis, indicated that racial ideology first emerged in the colonies: in Canada, it was born out of the government’s political failure to create a uniform colonial society that would include natives and settlers.”³² In fact, based on documents from the same period, Havard describes a situation in which the French expressed a determined belief in their fundamental civilizational superiority, even during the early integrative period: “Métissage was not conceived as an equal mixture since, due to education, its Indian element [was] meant to disappear in favor of its European element. Ethnic fusion must serve the religious and cultural unity of the Franco-Indian colony.”³³ In this fashion, rather than envisioning a societal unification that was in large part Indigenous, early French policy in New France saw intermarriage as part of a broader strategy to expand its French settler population.³⁴ Crucially, métissage during this period, while currently imagined in evocatively romantic terms, occurred on a radically unequal colonial playing field where Frenchification and the eventual elimination of Indigenous peoples was the endgame.

Early French policy, which lasted no more than a few decades in New France, was certainly frayed by the time the colony came under Royal Charter. The arrival of the first *filles du roi* in 1663—young French women sent to New France by King Louis XIV—gave way to a considerably different approach to settlement by the turn of the eighteenth century. No longer necessary and increasingly frowned on by colonial officials, sexual alliances continued to occur but mixed-race children, for the most part, were reared by Indigenous women in Indigenous communities.³⁵ As Belmessous explains:

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, French administrators started articulating a new ideology that reconsidered the terms of membership in civil and political society: first, miscegenation was discouraged and intermarriage prohibited (at least discursively) for political and biological reasons . . . ; second, native policy was now firmly grounded on exploitation.³⁶

In addition to historical research that challenges contemporary understandings of the contact zone, over the past four decades a number of historical demographers have consistently argued that under the French Regime, ethnic *and* racial homogeneity were quite pronounced in New France. For instance, through analyzing the marriage contracts signed during the French Regime, Bertrand Desjardins deduces that French (mostly Norman, West, and Parisian metropolitan) ethnicities made up 97 percent of the overall ethnic composition of the population of New France by 1765 (the end of the French regime). By contrast, Acadian ethnicity accounted for 0.6 percent; English was 0.9 percent; other European ethnicities were 1 percent; and Aboriginal was 0.4 percent.³⁷ Desjardins's research does not deny French-Indigenous sexual and familial alliances, but it does offer compelling evidence of the relative *absence* of these forms of historical union. As he asserts, "all 'old stock' Quebecois probably have at least one Aboriginal person in their family tree, but the actual importance of the phenomenon remains negligible."³⁸ Not only was the particular phenomenon of French-Indigenous unions negligible in New France, but if it is *probable* that every "old stock" Quebecois has at least one Indigenous ancestor, it is much more *likely* that they have more than one English, Belgian, German, or Portuguese ancestor, who has received considerably less focus in Quebecois and Acadian identities.

The more one looks at the available "evidence" of historical métissage, the more it seems that the claim is based in the evocative realm of twenty-first-century political expediency. Whether in the form of a decade-old body of research reevaluating French colonial policy or of detailed demographic information provided by digitized written records from the period, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century métissage seems largely fantastical.

MORE MÉTIS THAN THE MÉTIS: ANALYZING TWO SELF-IDENTIFIED MÉTIS COMMUNITIES IN QUEBEC AND NOVA SCOTIA

We now turn to our analysis of two "self-identified Métis"³⁹ groups that trace their descent from French-Indigenous unions beginning in the seventeenth

century: the Unama'ki Voyageur Métis Nation (UVMN) in Nova Scotia and the Nation Métisse Autochtone de la Gaspésie, Bas-Saint-Laurent et Îles-de-la-Madeleine in Quebec (NMAG). Our primary data is assembled from the two groups' websites, legal documents and records, press releases, social media sites, government reports, as well as some newspaper articles. We identified two common themes in the material we assembled: (1) the recent "discovery" of métissage in a historical era without previous mention of its existence, and (2) an unwavering investment in the white settler-colonial project. We demonstrate how self-identified Métis groups ironically not only reimagine themselves as Indigenous to the lands their ancestors settled but also envision themselves as *more Indigenous* than the Indigenous peoples who have fought colonial disruption and displacement for generations.

Evoking a "Métis" History

In both Quebec and Mi'kma'ki,⁴⁰ the common claim of self-identified Métis is a long-ago mixedness with an Indigenous ancestor. However, this mixedness and its equation with "Métis" identity belie a reduction of this identity to a racial hybridity that results in "Métis" peoples forming wherever European colonists (usually French) *may have* procreated with Indigenous women. The reduction of Métis to such a bio-historical process is at odds with recent scholarship that situates the emergence of the Métis Nation in a specific time and space well away from large-scale European settlement.⁴¹ As a distinct Indigenous people, historic Métis political relationships with other Indigenous peoples were managed by complex diplomacy, alliance making, and cohabitation on shared territories on the prairies of what is now primarily Western Canada.⁴²

In reconstructing Métis as a bio-historical process, members of UVMN root themselves in racial mixing dating back to earliest New France. Initially they suggest, "The first Métis in Canada is said to be born in the 'New France' known today as Nova Scotia, approximately in and around 1628."⁴³ Seemingly contradicting this claim, the UVMN also traces its origins to an earlier time, arguing that in 1605 French missionaries baptized the first French-Mi'kmaw child, naming the child "Métissage" (although there is no existing record of a child by this name). Moreover, in an open letter to Métis National Council President Clem Chartier, the group also claims racial mixing at an even earlier time, where "L'Acadie was first settled by the Portuguese in 1525 . . . in the Cape Breton area mixing with the Mi'kmaq until leaving in and around 1675 for unknown reasons."⁴⁴ Despite the multiple

starting dates and geographies and the radically different social and political contexts involving competing colonial powers, the UVMN maintains that it is the product of five centuries of racial mixing that cohered into the singular culture of a distinct postcontact people.

While historians generally treat Acadians as a European settler people with distinct cultural forms,⁴⁵ the UVMN mythologizes Acadians as a mixed-race people whose culture was generated out of the bio-historical mixing of French (and Portuguese?) and Mi'kmaq people. The result is that the UVMN defines Acadians as “French and Indian” and considers this mixedness “the fundamental makeup of the Acadian History.”⁴⁶ The UVMN then relies on a “hidden history,” in which years—or in this case centuries—of purported racial exclusion caused self-identified Métis families to hide their Métis identity.⁴⁷ A central discursive strategy used among self-identified Métis groups is to equate historical purity with historical suffering, the latter represented by the trauma of having to hide one's Métis identity and thus one's “true self.”

As a way to respond, the UVMN repurposes colonial struggles that did not specifically involve its members or record them as evidence of “Eastern Métis” persecution. For example, the UVMN identifies seventeenth-century British–Acadian conflict as evidence of their historical persecution as a mixed-race people.

The Acadian Metis and Mi'kmaq fought side by side, rewarded only by gifts from the French for over sixty years against the British but eventually became outnumbered in the mid 1700's resulting in the suffering of Genocide, burning our ancestors homes, destroying records, killing men, women and children . . . sending them to unknown lands far away from their new homeland.⁴⁸

While Acadian “Métis” are said to have “suffered a very similar tragic past as the western Metis,” their history is ultimately distinctive: “we suffered something that the western Métis fortunately have never encountered . . . ‘Genocide.’”⁴⁹ The genocide referred to here is the Acadian Expulsion (1755–64), whose historical trauma was so devastating that it forced self-identified Métis families into hiding until very recently. By reworking the Acadian Expulsion into “Métis” trauma (and downplaying the undeniable genocidal push directed at the Métis Nation in the West),⁵⁰ the “Acadian Métis” can locate a kind of historical suffering that is either on par with or greater than “other” Indigenous peoples.

To be clear though, as horrific as the Acadian Expulsion was, it was not an attempt by the British to eliminate mixed-race Indigenous people; it was a British attempt to eject competing European settlers in order to ensure space for Anglo-Protestant settlement in the aftermath of the generations-long Wars of Religion in Western Europe. Without a doubt, Acadians faced a form of aggressive ethnic cleansing, *ante litteram*, in part because they were European settlers who spoke the wrong language and practiced the wrong religion. All the same, Acadians were not deported because of their Indigeneity, as the English most certainly differentiated Acadians—fellow European settlers—from the Mi'kmaq, who faced not deportation but other forms of genocidal terror.⁵¹

But even those Acadians who managed to stave off the Expulsion or who later returned to Acadia are said by the UVMN to have faced colonial persecution based on racial difference. These self-identified Métis were forced to hide their culture, “never hav[ing] the advantage of the Western Métis [who had] their history recorded by camera or Government officials.”⁵² Even without documented evidence of their origins, the UVMN is now confident of its own existence as an Indigenous people and believes that “it is time for the Métis of Nova Scotia to come out from the dark shadows and [be] seen [in] the public eye.”⁵³ Many evidentially have, since thousands of people in Nova Scotia have now taken up the bio-historical narrative of mixedness that flourishes in spite of a lack of empirical evidence.⁵⁴

Nearly one thousand kilometers west of Unama'ki (Cape Breton) on the Trans-Canada Highway lies New Richmond, Quebec, home to the largest self-identified Métis organization in Québec—the Nation Métisse Autochtone de la Gaspésie, Bas-Saint-Laurent et Îles-de-la-Madeleine (NMAG).⁵⁵ As of March 2016, the organization claims to have ten thousand members in a territory that stretches nearly seventy-five thousand square kilometers. Much like the UVMN, the Gaspésie-based organization has resignified a major historical event that occurred between French and British forces during the Seven Years' War (French and Indian War) in the eighteenth century as part of its origin story. The Battle of Restigouche took place during the spring and summer of 1760, nearly a year after Quebec City fell to the British and five years after the beginning of the Acadian Expulsion further east. The battle featured a French flotilla carrying urgent provisions to Montreal. The flotilla encountered a British naval force intent on blocking its cargo slightly upriver in the St. Lawrence. It eventually made its way down the Atlantic coast and up the Restigouche River, where the assembled French, Mi'kmaw, and Acadian alliance suffered a decisive defeat at the hands of the

British, hastening the fall of Montreal two short months later. In their press release memorializing the historic event, the NMAG explained that it would mark the “painful fact of our history” with a two-day event in the region that aimed to “honor our Métis ancestors who fought . . . to defend their country and their rights at the cost of their lives.”⁵⁶

Part of its effort took place during the fourth annual *Assemblée des communautés métisses historiques du Québec* (Meeting of the Historic Métis Communities of Quebec), which featured “all of the historic Métis communities in Québec.”⁵⁷ It is notable how the NMAG resignified the Battle of Restigouche in a manner similar to how the UVMN described the Acadian Expulsion. In its press material, the NMAG called the Battle of Restigouche the “Batoche of the East,” referring to the Battle of Batoche in the Saskatchewan country in 1885, over a century later. However, these two battles, while both decisive moments in geopolitical struggle, share few other similarities. Most notably, at Batoche, Métis were a universally recognized party in the conflict. It was a struggle organized around Métis land rights and Métis governance norms.⁵⁸ Historically speaking, at Restigouche, “Métis” were not an identifiable party in the battle, nor are they currently credited as being an actor in the struggle. In fact, at Restigouche, colonial powers—Britain and France—were the primary players; at Batoche, Métis and First Nations allies fought a single colonial power: Canada. While Métis built an alliance to resist Canadian encroachment onto their lands, the alliance system was anticolonial and Indigenous at its core and was meant to resist settler authority.⁵⁹ Batoche, simply put, was an anticolonial struggle pitting Indigenous peoples against a colonial power, while Restigouche was a battle to determine which colonial power—French or English—would colonize Indigenous lands. Thus, the equivalency between the Battles of Batoche and Restigouche effectively inserts, as Peterson previously suggested, “Métis consciousness into areas and eras where [it] did not previously exist.”⁶⁰

Both the UVMN and NMAG evoke métissage to construct self-identified Métis selves. In the first case, the UVMN conflates the historical experiences of Acadians and Métis, weaving a bold narrative in which Acadian “Métis” experienced forms of historical suffering such as invisibility that explain their political and social absence from public space since the eighteenth century. Thus, their authenticity as an Indigenous people is intact. In a similar fashion, the NMAG identifies the participation of French settlers in the Battle of Restigouche as the actions of a Métis people. The NMAG appropriates Métis historical suffering, in the form of the Battle of Batoche, to evoke its own claims of suffering as “Metis.” The NMAG also fashions a

“Batoche of the East,” centering its suffering at the hands of British settlers, thus establishing its own legitimacy as a colonized “Métis” people. The element that both organizations have in common is a deep belief in the bio-racial basis of “Métis” identity and an interest in using this logic to refashion their ancestors as Indigenous and themselves as the inheritors of Indigenous lands and rights.

An Investment in the Canadian Settler-Colonial Project

A second common theme that emerges from these source documents is that the NMAG and UVMN are both deeply invested in white settler colonialism, despite bold claims about their own supposed Indigeneity. The common denominator in the documents we analyze here is not Indigeneity but Frenchness; in other words, self-identified Métis in these regions retain a primary settler-colonial identification rather than an Indigenous one. It is because of this dynamic that we trace the origins of the self-identified Métis phenomenon in the Atlantic region to a settler-colonial commitment to the conceptual eradication of Indigenous peoples steeped in a founding Frenchness.

The UVMN locates its origins in the inland fur trade, a key marker of which is its voyageur heritage; the organization describes its ancestors in masculine terms such as “carrying 40’ Birch Bark (masgwi) canoes, through undiscovered dangerous terrain, backpacking food and equipment twice their own weight . . . without restriction or hesitation.”⁶¹ This hardy voyageur society is constructed as an inherently mixed society that “play[ed] an integral part in forging and forming Canada.”⁶² It is in this sense that the UVMN situates itself as a founding people for a *Canadian* project rather than as contemporary allies of Indigenous peoples aiming to regain control of their territories. Notably, the UVMN argues that its voyageur ancestors were responsible for “exploring uncharted lands for the purpose of . . . being recognized by the British Crown”⁶³ in a way that denies the ability of Indigenous peoples to have “discovered” their own territories prior to European arrival. The UVMN thus establishes itself as major contributors to the Canadian colonial project: explorers who opened up lands that were unknown, undiscovered, and open to appropriation by mixed-race Acadian “Métis” voyageurs, regardless of prior control by the same Indigenous peoples from which they claim descent.

In the present, the UVMN’s members also connect their legitimacy as Canadians by repeatedly highlighting their standing as “taxpayers.” In this perplexing yet normative white settler understanding, the “chief” of the

UVMN argues that the Province of Nova Scotia allows the thirteen-member Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs to “dictate” government policy: “So what we have here . . . are 13 chiefs who do not vote, don't pay taxes, receive Millions from the taxpayer, telling government how to run the province dictating Aboriginal Métis rights, [for Métis] who do vote and who do pay taxes.”⁶⁴ Their sarcastic suggestion is to “abolish [*sic*] government, [and] let the 13 chiefs run the province.”⁶⁵ The UVMN thus constructs its members as taxpaying and voting Canadian citizens whose claims to Aboriginal rights are perhaps more robust than those of the Mi'kmaq. Indeed, it is Canadian government recognition that seems to damn the Mi'kmaq, who are counterintuitively reconstructed as a politically powerful Indigenous people who deny the “Acadian Métis” their just rights. In addition to this posturing, the UVMN has seen additional conflict with the Mi'kmaq, as they have at times disputed Mi'kmaw treaty rights in order to assert their own hunting interests. In one instance in November 2013, UVMN hunters attempted to exercise their “Métis Aboriginal rights” in Mi'kma'ki (rights that neither the Mi'kmaq nor Canada recognize) but were notified by the police that “a band of [Mi'kmaw] warriors . . . in the Cape Breton Highlands [was] prepared to protect their hunting territory from Métis hunters.”⁶⁶ The UVMN's strategy for political recognition actively undermines Mi'kmaw sovereignty and self-determination by appealing to racist discourses circulating in Canadian society about Indigenous life—in this case, that Mi'kmaq do not pay taxes or vote but nonetheless exercise illegitimate political power to the detriment of non-Indians, and ultimately work against “Métis” rights.⁶⁷

While attempting to undermine Mi'kmaw political positions in order to access supposed Aboriginal rights, the UVMN paradoxically distances itself from First Nations cultures, something still largely treated as foreign or primitive. Subsequently, UVMN ancestries, while said to be mixed-race in origin, are also positioned as foundationally European.

Our culture has been greatly influenced by the mixture of Scottish Culture, as well as the Irish Culture of song, dance, and dress more than First Nations. That is what makes our culture so unique. . . . I think there is a great misunderstanding with the Métis Culture in Nova Scotia thinking that we are a major part of the First Nation Culture, that is ever so wrong.⁶⁸

Thus, the UVMN claims an Indigeneity that is distant from contemporary Indigenous existence, preferring instead more familiar cultures known to white settlers. This move situates its members in a properly Euro-settler

civilizational lineage while avoiding identification as the racialized Indigenous Other.

Similarly, the NMAG often portrays its members as the only authentic Indigenous people in “their” territory at the same time as they display their normative white settler sense of national belonging. As a participant in a number of provincial government consultations, the NMAG repeated a version of its history that completely erases the ongoing presence of both Mi’kmaw and Maliseet peoples and communities in the same territory: “By 1850, on the Gaspé Peninsula, the only Indigenous people who remained were the Métis.”⁶⁹ Taking this logic even further, the NMAG (along with the *Communauté métisse de l’Estrie*) made several audacious historical claims in a public document that the organization prepared for a government commission. For starters, the NMAG asserts that the Quebecois “Métis” are the only remaining Indigenous people in all of Quebec: “We present this document to you as the only direct descendants of Québec’s First Peoples whose members were not all killed by microbial shock. We stand as witnesses to the errors of Official History, which teach us that there are Métis and Indians while there is only one Indigenous Nation in Quebec.”⁷⁰ In this case, the Quebecois “Métis” construct themselves as withstanding biological elimination due in part to their European lineage, which offered them immunity to disease. The organization’s statement continues by further setting out its logic for representing the only truly authentic Indigenous people in Quebec.

Your creation of reserves, which began in 1831–32, forced only the most miserable among us to live there. . . . [We] refused to die on “your” reserves. We assert before you and the Quebecois descendants that we accepted on our soil that we are not on “federal” land, but on Quebecois “provincial land.” . . . We assert that our ancestors refused the reserves and that we remained free due to [our] inhuman efforts. Diseases that came from Europe . . . killed the [Indigenous] half of ourselves. Only the descendants mixed with Europeans survived these plagues.⁷¹

In this revisionist narrative—one that erases the ongoing existence of over 100,000 Inuit, Cree, Innu, Mi’kmaw, Maliseet, Anishinaabeg (Algonquin), Mohawk, Huron-Wendat, Abenaki, and Atikamekw people across more than 1.5 million square kilometers—the Quebecois “Métis” insist that what makes them distinct as a people is their stubborn insistence on remaining free from control of the federal government, a concern they would likely

share with Quebec nationalists of all stripes. In their narration of history, the very existence of Indigenous peoples in present-day Quebec is due entirely to the presence of a European lineage. Presumably, the more European ancestors found among any given historic Indigenous people, the more likely they are to survive into the present.

While the NMAG's logic departs somewhat from the UVMN's in that it focuses primarily on the biological strength of Euro-settler blood, both organizations express a fundamental belief in the superiority of European peoples. In fact, for the Quebecois "Métis," resisting reserve life, where the majority of Indigenous peoples in Quebec either live or have connections,⁷² is a badge of honor that defines their existence as an "Indigenous" people today. Status Indians are constructed as "sell-outs" for having "chosen" to live on reserves and for adopting Indian Act provisions, while the Quebecois "Métis" are lionized for their resistance to (British) government encroachment and their commitment to freedom. Once again, the self-identified Métis claim a monopoly on historical suffering. Remarkably, despite what the NMAG claims to be historic familial relations among them and present-day on-reserve populations, nowhere does the group outline in any form its current collaboration or solidarity with those widely recognized as Indigenous peoples in Quebec, ultimately sharing UVMN's hostility toward contemporary Indigenous peoples.

These troubling narratives persist in light of critically destabilizing historical and demographic evidence, due in part to what Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang call a "settler adoption fantasy."⁷³ Settler adoption, which may or may not include individuals with Indigenous ancestry, involves the supposed ritualistic adoption (or in many cases *self*-adoption) of outsiders into Indigenous communities. These newly indigenized individuals then assume responsibility for safeguarding ancient ceremonies, protecting Indigenous rights, or reestablishing Indigenous governance on Indigenous lands.⁷⁴ In these imaginings, Indigenous continuity into the present is downplayed in favor of a mythic past that holds out a more fulfilling social and cultural rootedness than the anomic present,⁷⁵ all of which presumes that Indigenous peoples have lost connection to said past, and thus much of their own Indigeneity. The task of those adoptees who remain is the revival of the past, on terms that best suit them.⁷⁶ They are not only inheritors of this past through the limited (or purported) blood of their Indigenous ancestors but *the* inheritors, often denying the ability of contemporary Indigenous communities to make similar claims. The NMAG expresses the adoption fantasy quite clearly: "Claims to the effect that the essence of Indigenous

spirit can be found on reserve, despite the fact that it's a subculture (reserve culture) and that the people who live there all originally come from our Métis communities, are false."⁷⁷ As we can see, the self-identified Métis become the protectors and practitioners of authentic Indigenous culture by virtue of a centuries-old genealogy, however distant (or nonexistent) those blood relations are.⁷⁸

It follows that self-identified Métis generally understand themselves as *more Métis than Métis*, and *more Indigenous than Indigenous peoples*. In the rediscovery of their Indigenous ancestors and their authentic "Métis" selves along with it, the self-identified Métis are likely to locate authenticity in the past rather than in the present by repeatedly evoking métissage in the early contact period. Further, not only do they denigrate nearby First Nations, but they deny Métis nationhood by claiming a new origin story for the Métis Nation itself.⁷⁹ For example, the NMAG explains the decisive Quebecois "Métis" role in the founding of the Red River Settlement:

Those people [the government] called "Métis" for the first time were those of us, our mixed parents, who followed the beaver trail northwest and avoided the [British] Conquest [prior to 1765]. It was people who were already "Métis" from the East (New France and Acadia) who founded the Métis out West. . . . Thus, from East to West, it's the same single nation. The same families, as Indigenous as you are Quebecois.⁸⁰

In other words, the Métis Nation is based not in its own understanding of history but in the same genealogies now claimed by the self-identified Métis in today's Eastern Canada. According to the NMAG and the UVMN, the self-identified "Métis of the East" are thus the older, more legitimate "true Métis" from whom the Métis Nation is a mere descendant. Such a narrative, which lacks both historical and genealogical evidence, is at odds with Métis origin stories, most of which revolve around events on the prairies in the nineteenth century. Métis do not acknowledge Eastern origins, even if they do recognize that some of their pre-Métis ancestors migrated from places in what is now Eastern Canada.

The evocation of métissage is consistent with the emerging self-identified Métis belief in a "Métis" reawakening across Canada, and the "return" of these self-identified Métis groups to their rightful place at the "center" of Métis culture. While the reality of mixed unions in the fur trade is undeniable, the creation of distinct communities that were both self-aware and identified themselves *as Métis* was historically restricted to the West. The

idea that easterners brought an already-existing “Métis” culture with them to the prairies is disproven by the prairie-centric, Cree- and Saulteaux-related economic, political, social, and cultural institutions that the Métis Nation maintains today. This culture was rooted in buffalo hunting, fur trading, and an extensive diplomatic network on the prairies. Like all Indigenous peoples, the Métis Nation is place based, rooted in time, and aware of itself as a collective. While Métis have faced substantial colonial pressures, genocidal policies, and a lack of government recognition, the Nation has persisted and as such is recognizable in both the past and the present. It has the substance and visibility that self-identified Métis organizations lack, and unlike self-identified Métis, the Métis Nation is able to document its historical continuity and self-ascription of the term “Métis” for almost two centuries.

CONCLUSION

Eastern Canada has seen a meteoric rise in the evocation of *métissage*, which is indefensible historically and hopelessly bound to a settler-colonial project of Indigenous expropriation and elimination. Through this evocation, self-identified Métis groups have manufactured an inherent Métisness for French-descendant populations who may have nominal descent from Indigenous ancestors but remain deeply invested in settler-colonial ascendancy. Ironically, while these groups claim descent from an array of Indigenous peoples, they regularly denigrate and undermine Indigenous rights, imagining a superior Indigeneity to those whom they claim as relatives.

While the material we examine is quite specific to French settler politics and history, other scholars have highlighted similar tendencies among white settler peoples, alerting us to the crucial work of considering the comparative dynamics of present-day indigenization efforts. We find similarities, for instance, with Stephen Pearson’s exploration of self-indigenization among white settlers in Appalachia. Pearson suggests Appalachian settlers “employ indigenization in late settler-colonial contexts in order to negotiate land claims and other inequalities among White settlers.”⁸¹ They thus construct the entire region “as the rightful possession and homeland of one group of settlers (but not another)” in a manner that “forbids the land restoration and repatriation that Indigenous theories of justice and decolonization” entail.⁸² Perhaps more analogous, however, is the self-identified Cherokee phenomenon in the United States, a situation that has reached epidemic proportions—only one-third of those who claim a Cherokee identity are

enrolled in one of the three federally recognized Cherokee tribes.⁸³ Circe Sturm suggests that “race shifting” among white Americans to Cherokee identity is, like efforts by self-identified Métis, an attempt to “reclaim or create something they feel they have lost, and . . . to opt out of mainstream white society.”⁸⁴ The end result, however, has been the proliferation of self-identified Cherokee “tribes” with minimal connections to Cherokee communities, often constructing themselves as “more Cherokee” due to their hidden past uncorrupted by the influence of federal Indian policy.⁸⁵

As we have shown in the case of self-identified Métis in Quebec and Nova Scotia, the logic for this type of settler-colonial self-adoption fantasy is rooted in the evocation of particular elements of French colonial policy, which rhetorically constructed a unified French-Indian society, but in practice resulted in similar colonial policies to other European powers. Conflating this rhetorical construct with the Métis Nation and a bio-racial concept of métissage, self-identified Métis have envisioned métissage as the founding feature of their (fundamentally French Quebecois or Acadian) culture. While we have shown that this logic is deeply flawed, it retains significant explanatory power, a reality that must be confronted if we are to contest the violence and injustice of the Canadian settler-colonial project.

ADAM GAUDRY is Métis and assistant professor in the Faculty of Native Studies and Department of Political Science at the University of Alberta. He studies nineteenth-century Métis political thought, the formation of a Métis–Canada treaty relationship in 1870, and the subsequent nonimplementation of that agreement. His work explores the “Manitoba treaty” between the Métis people and Canada. Gaudry has published articles in *Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS)*, *Wicazo Sa Review*, *aboriginal policy studies*, and the *Canadian Journal of Native Education* along with several chapters in edited collections on research ethics and methodology.

DARRYL LEROUX is associate professor of sociology and Atlantic Canada studies at Saint Mary’s University. He studies the dynamics of race, racism, and colonialism among French settlers in present-day Quebec and Canada. His commitment to this work stems from his own experiences as a French settler and, specifically, from the knowledge that several members of his extended family have sought to claim an “Aboriginal” identity at the same time as they have quite explicitly supported ongoing forms of colonialism and racism. As a way to challenge French settler normalcy, his most recent project examines the ways in which genealogy (family history) and

genomics (DNA ancestry testing) are reconfiguring understandings of race and difference in Quebec.

NOTES

1. Champlain's words came directly following a stirring declaration of loyalty by a Wendat leader and were met with friendly laughter by many of his closest allies. Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610–1791*, vol. 5, *Québec: 1632–33* (Cleveland, Ohio: Burrows Brothers, 1897), 209, http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/relations/relations_05.html.

2. We use the term “evocation” with intention, since its three primary meanings speak to the problematic we discuss herein: (1) imaginative re-creation of images or events, (2) summoning of supernatural entities, and (3) elicitation of information that stimulates action.

3. Clem Chartier, president of the Métis National Council, cautions Métis Nation citizens about these “fly-by-night groups” who “do not have a mandate from the Métis people nor any capability of achieving anything.” Clem Chartier, “Message from the President: July 2015,” Office of the President, <http://www.metisnation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Newsletter-July-2015.pdf>.

4. Chris Andersen, *Métis: Race, Recognition, and the Struggle for Indigenous Peoplehood* (Vancouver, B.C.: University of British Columbia Press, 2014).

5. This presumption has also had a long-standing impact on government policies that have shaped Métis identity. See Adam Gaudry, “Respecting Métis Nationhood in Matters of Métis Identity,” in *Aboriginal History: A Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Kristin Burnett and Geoff Read (Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 2016), 152–63.

6. Chris Andersen, “From Nation to Population: The Racialisation of ‘Métis’ in the Canadian Census,” *Nations and Nationalism* 14, no. 2 (2008): 350.

7. Chris Andersen, *Métis*, 5.

8. *Ibid.*, 38.

9. *Ibid.*, 83–84.

10. Jacqueline Peterson, “Red River Redux: Métis Ethnogenesis and the Great Lakes Region,” in *Contours of a People: Métis Family, Mobility, and History*, ed. Nicole St-Onge, Carolyn Podruchney, and Brenda Macdougall (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 30.

11. *Ibid.*, 28.

12. *Ibid.*, 26–27.

13. *Ibid.*, 27.

14. Adam Gaudry, “Communing with the Dead: The ‘New Métis,’ Métis Identity Appropriation, and the Displacement of Living Métis Culture,” *American Indian Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (2017).

15. Francis Parkman, *The Jesuits in North America in the Seventeenth Century*, pt. 2, *France and England in North America* (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, 1867), 131, <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/6933/pg6933-images.html>.

16. Denis Vaugeois, "La nation métissée," *Liberté*, no. 304 (Summer 2014): 44. All translations are the authors' unless otherwise noted.

17. Sébastien Malette, "L'identité métisse au Québec: Le fil du fléché retrouvé," *Policy Options Politiques*, November 2, 2014, <http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/policyflix/malette/>.

18. See Darryl Leroux, "Now I Am Métis: How White people Become Indigenous" (speech, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, March 12, 2015), <https://soundcloud.com/indigenoustudiesusask/native-studies-speakers-series-darryl-leroux-now-i-am-metis-how-white-people-become-indigenous>.

19. Daniel Salé, "Les peuples autochtones et la naissance du Québec: Pour une réécriture de l'histoire?," *Recherches Sociographiques* 51, nos. 1–2 (2010): 154–55.

20. *Ibid.*, 156.

21. L'empreinte, "À propos du film," <http://lempreinte.quebec/a-propos-du-film/>.

22. *Québécoisie*, released in October 2013, was nominated for the Jutra Award in 2014 and tells a similar story.

23. Darryl Leroux, "The Spectacle of Champlain: Commemorating Québec," *Borderlands* 9, no. 1 (2010): 1–27.

24. Christopher Hodson and Brett Rushforth, "Absolutely Atlantic: Colonialism and the Early Modern French State in Recent Historiography," *History Compass* 8, no. 1 (2010): 107.

25. Andersen, *Métis*, 169.

26. Karen Kelly-Scott and Kristina Smith, "Aboriginal Peoples: Fact Sheet for Canada" (Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ont., 2015), <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-656-x/89-656-x2015001-eng.pdf>.

27. Gilles Havard, "Nous ne ferons plus qu'un peuple': Le métissage en Nouvelle-France à l'époque de Champlain," in *Le nouveau monde et Champlain*, ed. Guy Martinière and Didier Poton (Paris: Les Indes Savantes, 2008), 98.

28. Dominique Deslandres, "... Alors nos garçons se marieront à vos filles, & nous ne ferons plus qu'un seul peuple: Religion, genre et déploiement de la souveraineté française en Amérique aux XVIe–XVIIIe siècles—Une problématique," *Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique Française* 66, no. 1 (2012): 31.

29. *Ibid.*, 29.

30. Peter Cook, "Ontario Gives Birth: How the French in Canada Became Fathers to Their Indigenous Allies, 1645–73," *Canadian Historical Review* 96, no. 2 (2015): 178.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Saliha Belmessous, "Assimilation and Racialism in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century French Colonial Policy," *American Historical Review* 110, no. 2 (2005): 345.

33. Havard, "Nous ne ferons plus qu'un peuple,'" 92.

34. In this interview, Hubert Charbonneau, the cofounder in 1966 of Québec's first university-based genealogical research institute, explains that thirteen Aboriginal women are recorded in the marriage registries in New France prior to 1680 (out of a population of nearly 3,700 other "founders"). Yves Beauregard, "Mythe ou réalité: Les origines amérindiennes des Québécois: Entrevue avec Hubert Charbonneau," *Cap-aux-Diamants: La revue d'histoire du Québec*, no. 34 (Summer 1993): 38–42.

35. Havard, “Nous ne ferons plus qu’un peuple,” 101.

36. Belmessous, “Assimilation and Racialism,” 347–48.

37. Bertrand Desjardins, “La contribution différentielle des immigrants français à la souche canadienne-française,” *Annales de Normandie* 58, nos. 3–4 (2008): 72.

38. *Ibid.*

39. We have elected to use “self-identified Métis” to refer to groups who claim Métis descent but lack obvious cultural, political, or genealogical ties to the Métis Nation. As we argue later, Métis identity that is based primarily in self-identification without substantial connection to the historic Métis people or contemporary Métis community does not meet the threshold for contemporary Métis peoplehood.

40. Mi’kma’ki refers to Mi’kmaw territory (coterminous with Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, northern parts of New Brunswick, and parts of the Gaspé Peninsula in Quebec).

41. See Andersen, *Métis*; Gaudry, “Communing with the Dead”; Peterson, “Red River Redux.”

42. Robert Alexander Innes, “Multicultural Bands on the Northern Plains and the Notion of Tribal Histories,” in *Finding a Way to the Heart: Feminist Writings on Aboriginal and Women’s History in Canada*, ed. Robin Jarvis Brownlie and Valerie J. Korinek (Winnipeg, Man.: University of Manitoba Press, 2012), 124.

43. Unama’ki Voyageur Métis Nation, “Home Page,” <http://unamakivoyageurs.org>. The UVMN subsequently has changed its name and this information is now available as Bras d’Or Lake Métis Nation, “A Message from Your Chief,” <http://brasdorlakemetisnation.org>.

44. Unama’ki Voyageur Métis Nation, Open letter to Clem Chartier, President of the Métis National Council, May 22, 2014, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=688181934550898&id=575266769175749. The UVMN Facebook page was subsequently renamed the “Bras d’Or Lake Métis Nation.”

45. See Christopher Hodson, *The Acadian Diaspora: An Eighteenth-Century History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), for a wide-ranging account of eighteenth-century Acadian history. Hodson’s “Atlantic” approach follows Acadians postdeportation across three continents as, for example, urban poor in metropolitan Philadelphia and Boston, farmers in rural Georgia and South Carolina, laborers under royal wage in rural France, and slaveholding landowners in the northern peninsula of Saint-Domingue (later Haiti).

46. Unama’ki Voyageur Métis Nation, Acadian Métis are less Aboriginal and more Irish or Scottish, April 23, 2014, <https://www.facebook.com/575266769175749/photos/a.575282839174142.1073741826.575266769175749/674249245944167/?type=1&theater>.

47. See Gaudry, “Communing with the Dead.”

48. Unama’ki Voyageur Métis Nation, Open letter to Clem Chartier, President of the Métis National Council.

49. *Ibid.*

50. *Ibid.*

51. For example, in 1749 Governor Edward Cornwallis signed into law an ordinance offering a bounty for Mi’kmaw scalps. There is currently an active social movement in Halifax opposing all public monuments marking Cornwallis’s life.

52. Unama'ki Voyageur Métis Nation, Open letter to Clem Chartier, President of the Métis National Council.

53. Unama'ki Voyageur Métis Nation, Be a proud Métis, originally posted on Facebook on October 24, 2014; the post has since been removed.

54. For instance, in the 2011 National Household Survey, approximately 1 percent of Nova Scotians (just over ten thousand people) identified as "Métis." Shirley Li, "Aboriginal Peoples: Fact Sheet for Nova Scotia" (Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ont., 2016), <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-656-x/89-656-x2016004-eng.htm>.

55. The organization was simply called Communauté Métisse de la Gaspésie when it was founded in 2006. Since then, its name has changed, first to Communauté métisse autochtone de la Gaspésie, Bas-Saint-Laurent et Îles-de-la-Madeleine and most recently to Nation Métisse Autochtone de la Gaspésie, Bas-Saint-Laurent et Îles-de-la-Madeleine (Gaspé Peninsula, Lower St. Lawrence and Magdalen Islands Metis Aboriginal Nation). All the statements included in this article are taken from when it was known by its original name.

56. Nation Métisse Autochtone de la Gaspésie, Bas-Saint-Laurent et Îles-de-la-Madeleine, "Communiqué Bataille de Ristigouche," July 4, 2010, <http://metisgaspesie.com/files/bataille%2orestigouche.pdf>.

57. Nation Métisse Autochtone de la Gaspésie, Bas-Saint-Laurent et Îles-de-la-Madeleine, "Assemblée des communautés Métis historiques du Québec," July 10–11, 2010, [http://metisgaspesie.com/files/ASSEMBLÉE%20DES%20COMMUNAUTÉS%20MÉTISSES%20HISTORIQUES%20DU%20QUÉBEC%20\(ACMHQ\).pdf](http://metisgaspesie.com/files/ASSEMBLÉE%20DES%20COMMUNAUTÉS%20MÉTISSES%20HISTORIQUES%20DU%20QUÉBEC%20(ACMHQ).pdf).

58. See, for example, George F. G. Stanley, *The Birth of Western Canada: A History of the Riel Rebellions* (Toronto, Ont.: University of Toronto Press, 1961); George F. G. Stanley, *Louis Riel* (Toronto, Ont.: Ryerson Press, 1963). While both works are foundational to understanding both Métis and Western Canadian history, Stanley's treatment of Métis has been roundly criticized. He did, however, recognize Métis as central and agential actors who had deep influence during the nineteenth century.

59. John Lagimodière, "Historians Chided for Misinformation," *Eagle Feather News* 10, no. 9 (2007): 1, 6.

60. Peterson, "Red River Redux," 30.

61. Unama'ki Voyageur Métis Nation, "Home Page."

62. *Ibid.*

63. *Ibid.*

64. Unama'ki Voyageur Métis Nation, Not using the court system, November 24, 2013, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=608167885885637&id=575266769175749.

65. *Ibid.*

66. Unama'ki Voyageur Métis Nation, Letter to the RCMP about Métis hunting and firearm rights, October 20, 2013, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=592190527483373&id=575266769175749.

67. Unama'ki Voyageur Métis Nation, A politician who can't speak the truth, May 5, 2014, <https://www.facebook.com/575266769175749/videos/679616172074141/>.

68. Unama'ki Voyageur Métis Nation, Acadian Métis are less Aboriginal and more Irish or Scottish.

69. Communauté Métisse de la Gaspésie, "Mémoire présenté par Communauté Métisse de la Gaspésie au Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE) Versus Projet de mise en place d'un parc éolien à New Richmond (par Venterre NRG)," 2, <http://www.bape.gouv.qc.ca/sections/mandats/eole-new-richmond/documents/DM3.pdf>.

70. Communauté métisse de l'Estrie Inc. and Communauté Métisse de la Gaspésie Inc., "Un peuple 'oublié' depuis des siècles," October 2007, http://www.autochtones.ca/portal/fr/ArticleView.php?article_id=469.

71. Ibid.

72. Karen Kelly-Scott, "Aboriginal Peoples: Fact Sheet for Québec" (Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ont., 2016), 3, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-656-x/89-656-x2016006-eng.pdf>.

73. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang. "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 14.

74. Ibid.

75. See Circe Sturm, *Becoming Indian: The Struggle over Cherokee Identity in the Twenty-First Century* (Santa Fe, N.M.: School for Advanced Research Press, 2010), 61.

76. Ibid.

77. Communauté métisse de l'Estrie Inc. and Communauté Métisse de la Gaspésie Inc., "Un peuple 'oublié' depuis des siècles."

78. The NMAG's narrative stands in stark contrast to the Mi'kmaw understanding of its centuries-long presence in the Gespe'gewa'gi (Gaspésie in French) Peninsula. See Gespe'gewa'gi Mi'gma'wei Mawiomis, *Nta'tugwaqanminen Our Story: Evolution of the Gespe'gewa'gi Mi'gmaq* (Halifax, N.S.: Fernwood Publishing, 2016).

79. Anthropologist Denis Gagnon has developed an alternative Métis "ethnogenesis" along these lines that is contrary to almost all existing Métis scholarship (see notes 4–14 for examples of the latter). His argument is based on a settler-colonial vision of the two founding nations of Canada that sees language (French or English) as the principal category of analysis. "All of these Métis and former Métis people [from the East] are excluded," Gagnon laments, "and only the Métis descendants of the formerly francophone Métis of the Red River, who have since anglicized and indigenized, can claim a métis identity for themselves. . . . It has been a few years now that the Western Métis reclaim their Indigenous heritage and ignore, perhaps unintentionally (but this is doubtful), their French-Canadian heritage." Yet language was never a primary division in Métis communities, which come together around kinship, language (Michif, French, English, Cree, Saulteaux), governance, and spirituality, among other factors, *as an Indigenous people*. Denis Gagnon, "La création des 'vrais Métis': Définition identitaire, assujettissement et résistances," *Port Acadie: Revue interdisciplinaire en études acadiennes / Port Acadie: An Interdisciplinary Review in Acadian Studies*, nos. 13–14–15 (2009): 305.

80. Communauté métisse de l'Estrie Inc. and Communauté Métisse de la Gaspésie Inc., "Un peuple 'oublié' depuis des siècles."

81. Stephen Pearson, "The Last Bastion of Colonialism': Appalachian Settler Colonialism and Self-indigenization," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 37, no. 2 (2013): 168.

82. *Ibid.*, 178.

83. Sturm, *Becoming Indian: The Struggle over Cherokee Identity in the Twenty-First Century*, 15.

84. *Ibid.*, 10.

85. *Ibid.*, 136.