

Re-Working Statistics: An Indigenous Quantitative Methodological Approach to Labour
Market Research

by

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Abstract

Indigenous labour market statistics are a key technology through which the Canadian nation-state reaffirms its possession of Indigenous land. Colonizing settler norms, values, and racialized understandings inform the dominant methodological approach to Indigenous labour market statistics resulting in the persistent production of deficit-based, racialized statistical depictions of Indigeneity. The purported objectivity and neutrality of quantitative data, however, obscures the racialized origins and parameters of dominant statistical research on Indigenous labour market outcomes. This thesis denaturalizes the dominant methodological approach to Indigenous labour market statistics.

The process of denaturalizing the dominant quantitative methodology undertaken in this thesis is twofold. First, I explicate colonizing power relations at three different levels of abstraction to expose the dominant social, cultural, and racial terrain from which Indigenous labour market statistics emerge. I engage with Marxist theories of capitalism and Aileen Moreton-Robinson's (2015) theorization of patriarchal white sovereignty to construct a general framework for theorizing colonizing settler societies, before drawing on Indigenous labour histories and critical Indigenous demography to refine this framework to the particular Canadian context. Using this framework, I conduct a critical analysis of quantitative academic research on Indigenous labour market outcomes. Second, I explore the development of an Indigenous quantitative methodology in the context of work and labour research. I discuss three strategies for advancing an Indigenous quantitative research agenda on work and labour, before translating one of these strategies into practice. Specifically, using data from the General Social Survey 2016, I explore the development of a statistical model that focuses on structural inequality rather than Indigenous deficit.

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Introduction

Information pertaining to the labour market experiences and outcomes of Indigenous peoples in Canada is integral to diverse decision-making entities, ranging from Indigenous organizations to the Canadian federal government. Statistics are a primary tool for collecting, analysing, and interpreting such information. Official statistics in particular are an authoritative source of data for measuring and evaluating the labour market performance of Indigenous peoples. These labour market statistics inform both public policy and public perceptions of Indigenous peoples. The purported objectivity and neutrality of numerical data, however, elides the social, cultural, and racial terrain from which these statistics emerge (Kukutai and Walter 2015: 317; Walter 2016: 80; Walter and Andersen 2013: 9). In Canada, productive labour for the market and statistical knowledge production about such labour reflect and reproduce settler colonizing relations.

Quantitative studies that explore the labour market and income dynamics of Indigenous peoples in Canada consistently report disparities between the Indigenous population and the non-Indigenous population. For example, in a recent analysis of the level of education-job mismatch among Indigenous workers, Jungwee Park (2021: 50) states that “Indigenous peoples are less likely than other Canadians to participate in the labour force and to be employed.” To support this claim, Park presents employment rates for the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations derived from the 2016 Census. Following a discussion of the disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals in employment participation and unemployment rates, Park (2021: 50) shifts his focus to earnings, arguing that “there exists a considerable gap in employment earnings between Indigenous and non-Indigenous workers.” Again Park (2021: 50) uses census data to support his claim, “in 2015, the median

employment income for non-Indigenous workers aged 25 to 64 was \$42,660, while the median employment income for Indigenous workers of the same age group was \$35,321.”

Evaluating the Indigenous population against the non-Indigenous population is a pervasive practice of dominant quantitative research methodologies that extends beyond analyses of the labour market to numerous socio-economic indicators.¹ According to the 2020 Indigenous Services Canada annual report to Parliament, “examining gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations is an important way of *putting numbers in context*. Without a basis for comparison, raw statistics are difficult to interpret” (Indigenous Services Canada 2020: Part 1, para. 18, emphasis added). The broad Indigenous/non-Indigenous population binary, however, collapses diverse Indigenous peoples, who each have a unique history, cultural identity, and connection to place, into a homogenous Indigenous population. The dichotomized, mostly nationally aggregated comparison erases the significant demographic, social, and cultural differences that exist within the Indigenous population (Walter and Andersen 2013: 38). In short, examining gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations removes the numbers from the context of Indigenous lived realities.

The methodological practice of comparing Indigenous outcomes to those observed for the majority non-Indigenous population is central to the formulation and evaluation of a public policy agenda in which the Canadian nation-state aims to “close the (socioeconomic) gap” between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population. Inherent in close the gap policy discourses are unacknowledged power relations that “position the Indigenous population as

¹ For example, the 2020 Indigenous Services Canada annual report to Parliament analyzes the socio-economic gaps between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations using eight different sets of indicators: income, employment, education, family, culture, housing, health, and justice.

in need of being ‘brought up’ to the non-Indigenous standard in educational, labor market, and other socioeconomic indicators” (Walter and Andersen 2013: 22). Informing the dominant methodological approach to Indigenous statistics is thus a deficit-based understanding of Indigenous peoples and communities.

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVE

Indigenous labour market statistics are indicators of two enduring problems. First, as Park (2021: 50) notes in his analysis, “Indigenous peoples in Canada have historically been limited in their access to the resources and conditions necessary to maximize their socio-economic conditions.” Put more specifically, the dispossession of Indigenous peoples is a precondition of capitalist economic development in Canada and as such the nation-state invests in a process of perpetual Indigenous dispossession (Moreton-Robinson 2015: xi), which limits Indigenous peoples’ “access to the resources and conditions necessary to maximize their socio-economic conditions” (Park 2021: 50).

In colonizing settler nation-states such as Canada, colonial state-formation, settlement, and capitalist development require ongoing state access to the land and resources that provide the material and spiritual sustenance of Indigenous societies (Coulthard 2014: 7). As such, domination and dispossession characterize the settler-colonial relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state. According to Yellowknives Dene scholar Glen Coulthard (2014: 6-7, emphasis in original):

A settler-colonial relationship is one characterized by a particular form of *domination*; that is, it is a relationship where power – in this case, interrelated discursive and nondiscursive facets of economic, gendered, racial, and state power – has been structured into a relatively secure or sedimented set of hierarchical social relations that continue to facilitate the *dispossession* of Indigenous peoples of their lands and self-determining authority.

Historically, the Canadian state implemented genocidal policies and practices aimed at the forced exclusion and assimilation of Indigenous peoples. Although discourses and institutional practices that emphasize Indigenous recognition and accommodation have supplanted policies oriented around genocidal exclusion and assimilation, Coulthard (2014: 6) argues that “the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the state has remained colonial to its foundation.”²

The ongoing colonial logics of dispossession condition the labour market experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada. At best, however, quantitative labour market studies include a brief mention of “Canada’s long history of colonization,” (e.g., Haan, Chuatico, and Cornetet 2020: 23) before proceeding with analyses that largely decontextualize Indigenous labour market outcomes from the broader relations of power that structure these outcomes. Most studies include no mention of colonization and instead make vague statements concerning limited access to resources and opportunities.

Second, the dominant methodologies that direct the collection, analysis, and interpretation of quantitative data pertaining to Indigenous peoples sustain Indigenous dispossession. Contrary to their widespread acceptance as objective measure of reality, statistics are not neutral. Rather, statistics are the product of quantitative methodologies, which are “historical, cultural, and racial artifacts” (Walter and Andersen 2013: 16).

Accordingly, quantitative methodologies shape the production of statistics in ways that accord with the underpinning methodological values, priorities, and frameworks. Indigenous

² Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2015: 196 n.1) uses the term “post-colonizing” to signify “the active, the current, and the continuing nature of the colonizing relationship” between Indigenous peoples and the nation-state in white settler societies. Echoing Coulthard (2014), Moreton-Robinson (2015: 18) explains that “Indigenous people’s position within the nation-state is not one where colonizing power relations have been discontinued. Instead, these power relations are at the very heart of the white national imaginary and belonging; they are postcolonizing.” Following Coulthard and Moreton-Robinson, I understand Canada as a “postcolonizing” settler society.

scholars Maggie Walter (palawa) and Chris Andersen (Métis) (2013: 15) explain that “dominant methodologies emerge from the dominant cultural framework of the society of their instigators and users.” In colonizing nation-states, dominant quantitative methodologies thus reflect the social norms, values, and racial understandings of the colonizer.

Rooted in a deficit-based understanding of Indigenous peoples, dominant quantitative methodologies produce a statistical depiction of the public Indigene that tends to be narrow and pejorative (Walter and Andersen 2013: 9-10). Walter (2016: 80) notes that mainstream Indigenous statistics across first world colonizing settler nation-states, focus almost exclusively on what she terms “the five ‘Ds’ of Indigenous data (5D data): disparity, deprivation, disadvantage, dysfunction and difference.” The prevalence of 5D data in conjunction with a lack of alternative narratives perpetuates the conflation of the deficit statistical Indigene with Indigenous reality. Moreover, the plethora of 5D data gives rise to the “deficit data-problematic people” correlation, a concept which Walter (2016: 83) uses to describe the misinterpretation that racial inequality is a direct outcome of racially aligned social and cultural differences. Put simply, the deficit data-problematic people correlation connects racial inequality to the behaviour and choices of the problematic people. Accordingly, the policy response to the statistically defined Indigenous problem largely focuses on behavioral intervention to address the perceived Indigenous deficits (Walter and Andersen 2013: 26).

My research aims to disrupt dominant quantitative methodologies, particularly within the context of labour market research. To do so, I first expose the dominant social, cultural, and racial terrain within which Indigenous statistics operate through an explication of colonizing relations at three different levels of abstraction: 1) the general/conceptual (i.e.,

power relations in white colonizing settler societies); 2) the particular/concrete (i.e., colonizing relations in Canada); and 3) the conceptual/particular (i.e., colonizing relations in academic quantitative research on Indigenous labour market outcomes in Canada). I then explore the development of an Indigenous quantitative methodology to advance an Indigenous research agenda on work and labour (markets).³

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Following Walter and Andersen (2013), this thesis importantly distinguishes between quantitative methods and quantitative methodologies. Quantitative methods are the specific statistical analysis techniques that researchers use, such as ordinary least squares regression, factor analysis, chi square, and correlation, whereas quantitative methodologies are the overarching frameworks that determine the ways in which researchers use those specific techniques. According to Walter and Andersen (2013: 10):

Methodology is the active element in constituting the portrait of the realities that statistical techniques eventually create; it determines why and how particular research questions are asked (and why others are not); how, when, and where the data are gathered; how they are explored; and how the resulting data are interpreted and, significantly, eventually used.

A key component of methodology is the researcher's standpoint (i.e., the researcher's epistemological, ontological, axiological, and social positioning). Research standpoint fundamentally informs the researcher's choice and use of research methods (Walter and Andersen 2013: 45). In short, quantitative methodologies, rather than statistical methods, "[contain] the cultural, social, and consequently, political meanings of research process and practice" (Walter and Andersen 2013: 65).

³ Participation in the labour market is only one dimension of the full complexity of Indigenous people's engagements with labour. Accordingly, an Indigenous quantitative methodological approach to work and labour shifts the focus beyond a narrow analysis of labour markets.

ACADEMIC LITERATURE ON INDIGENOUS LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS

Although the body of quantitative academic research examining the labour market outcomes of Indigenous peoples in Canada spans more than three decades, the studies contributing to this body of research are remarkably consistent across this time frame. Like Park's (2021) article, these studies consistently begin with a description of the dire socio-economic conditions that Indigenous peoples in Canada experience. Articles published in the 2020s reiterate the same labour market disparities reported in articles from the early 1990s. While the specific percentage values fluctuate, the general trend persists – the Indigenous population continues to lag behind the non-Indigenous population across several key labour market indicators. The statistical portrait that emerges from this body of research is thus one of persistent Indigenous deficit.

To explain the observed Indigenous/non-Indigenous differentials in labour market outcomes, researchers predominantly invoke human capital theory. Human capital theory posits a direct relationship between a worker's productive capacity and their earnings. Investments in human capital (e.g., education and training) increase the productive capacity of workers and thus increase their economic value (Becker 1962, 1964; Mincer 1958, 1974). In short, differential investments in human capital explain earnings differentials. Following human capital theory, numerous studies focus on the relationship between educational attainment and employment earnings.⁴

The most used data sources for analyzing the labour market outcomes of Indigenous peoples are the census and the Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS). The APS is a postcensal survey that collects data on “the social and economic conditions of First Nations people

⁴ See for example Calver (2015), Fan et al. (2017), and Haan et al. (2020).

living off reserve, Métis and Inuit” (Statistics Canada 2018b: 5). Both the census and the APS define the Aboriginal identity population as anyone who self-reports being “an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuit;” and/or “a Status Indian, that is, a Registered or Treaty Indian as defined by the *Indian Act* of Canada;” and/or “a member of a First Nation or Indian band” (Statistics Canada 2018a: 14; Statistics Canada 2018b: 7).

Consistent with human capital theory, the prevailing finding of this body of research is that educational attainment is a key factor influencing the labour market outcomes of Indigenous peoples. Based on this finding, many studies recommend that future policy development focus on the human capital formation of Indigenous peoples. In their analysis of the returns to education and occupation for Aboriginal people, Lida Fan et al. (2017: 2233) conclude that “having high levels of education can significantly improve the level of income for Aboriginal people. The investment in education is an important channel for human capital formation.” Fan et al. echo the findings of earlier studies. In a study examining native-white wage differentials, Arnold De Silva (1999: 68) reports that “a major explanation for the dismal labour-market performance of Aboriginal people living on reserves can be found in their relatively low educational attainments.” De Silva (1999: 81) concludes that “the main policy implication of the analysis is that probably the most fruitful approach to raising the earnings of natives to be on par with the whites is through skill development.”

De Silva’s (1999: 68) statement concerning the “dismal labour-market performance of Aboriginal people living on reserves” points to another finding commonly reported in this body of research – certain Aboriginal groups consistently fare worse than others. As De Silva (1999: 68) notes, “while natives in general are less qualified than the rest of the population, it

is much worse in the case of those residing on reserves.” The finding that certain Aboriginal groups fare worse than others has led some researchers to posit a relationship between the size of labour market disparities and the “degree of Aboriginality.”⁵ For instance, a study examining earnings inequality among Aboriginal groups reports that the earnings disadvantage relative to the non-Aboriginal population “is larger the greater the degree of ‘Aboriginal identity’” (Lamb 2013: 224). Similarly, another study contends that “the earnings disparity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal persons tends to widen the more *intensely* one identifies as an Aboriginal person” (Lamb, Yap, and Turk 2018: 228, emphasis in original).

(TOWARDS A) METHODOLOGY

I did not begin my research with a fully articulated methodology. Rather, I agree with Maggie Walter and Michele Suina’s (2019: 234) assertion that “the Western logic of statistical data are so pervasive, and the tropes of these logics in relation to Indigenous statistics so embedded, that these must be fundamentally disturbed before an Indigenous quantitative methodology can emerge.” I therefore sought to disrupt the dominant approach to Indigenous labour market statistics such that my research contributes to the development of an Indigenous quantitative methodology, particularly within the context of Indigenous labour market analyses.

As a first step in the development of this methodology, I explicate my social positioning and how it informs my research. I am a woman with Cree-Métis and Euro-settler ancestry and relationality, and I am a citizen of the Métis Nation of Alberta. I have acquired much of my knowledge of statistics through formal training in Western academic disciplines.

⁵ See for example, Lamb (2013), Lamb, Yap, and Turk (2018), and Pendakur and Pendakur (2011).

As such, my own process of disrupting the Western logic of statistical data requires continually reflecting on and challenging the assumptions embedded within my own statistical training.

For guidance in this process, I follow Walter and Andersen's (2013: 64) instruction to decouple the statistics from their dominant methodological framing. According to Walter and Andersen (2013: 64-65):

Developing heretical discourses on how Indigenous statistics are created, disseminated, and interpreted is the job of quantitative Indigenous researchers. Our first imperative is to decouple and segregate, intellectually as well as practically, the research method (statistics) from its standard methodological framing.

In the context of quantitative labour market research, decoupling the research method from its standard methodological frame requires first exposing the hidden portions of the dominant methodology. Although quantitative labour market researchers explicate in detail their methods and theoretical frames, the remaining and arguably most influential component of methodology, namely research standpoint, remains invisible. The failure to acknowledge the standpoint from which quantitative labour market research operates obscures the culturally and racially situated origins and parameters of the research practice. Consequently, such research practice appears natural and normal. A key objective of my research is thus to expose the dominant societal standpoint from which quantitative labour market research operates and denaturalize the dominant methodological assumptions that inform the production of Indigenous labour market statistics.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Research standpoint fundamentally influences theoretical framework selection (Walter and Andersen 2013: 45). As Walter and Andersen (2013: 54) explain, "sense-making, or the alignment of a particular theory with how we view our topic, is framed by the

researcher's standpoint and the original theorist and the disciplinary field to which the research and the theory are situated." The theories most often invoked to frame the analysis and interpretation of Indigenous labour market statistics emanate from a dominant societal standpoint and thus reflect Western white colonizing settler norms, values, and understandings. In particular, I argue that the theoretical frames that inform the production of deficit-based Indigenous statistics uncritically accept and thus naturalize: 1) the market in human labour power as a natural and neutral organization of social relations of production; 2) whiteness as an invisible and universal norm; and 3) the legitimacy of the sovereignty of the nation-state.

My positionality as an Indigenous graduate student situated in the disciplinary field of sociology influences my selection, or rather construction, of the theoretical framework that guides my research. Specifically, I aim to construct a theoretical framework that serves two inter-related functions: 1) provides a comprehensive understanding of Indigenous peoples' labour market experiences; and 2) denaturalizes the hidden assumptions informing statistical knowledge production about Indigenous peoples. In the area of quantitative labour market research, I seek to denaturalize the market in human labour power, make whiteness and processes of racialization visible, and challenge the presumed legitimacy of the nation-state's sovereignty.

The theoretical frames offered in the discipline of sociology do not readily align with my research standpoint. To construct my theoretical framework, I therefore reinterpret Western theoretical frames through the lens of critical Indigenous theory. I then draw on

critical Indigenous theory and Indigenous labour histories⁶ to further refine the alignment of my theoretical framework with the contextual specificities of the research topic.

Karl Marx's (1990 [1867]) analysis of the capitalist mode of production is indispensable for denaturalizing the market in human labour power. Specifically, Marx demonstrates that capitalist relations are the product of a historical process of domination and coercion. The violent process of dispossessing workers from their means of subsistence produces a class of workers who are under economic compulsion to sell their labour-power to the owners of the means of production for a wage. Exploitation of wage-labour sustains capitalist accumulation. The structure upon which the entire capitalist system rests – the market in human labour power – is thus a form of institutionalized dispossession and exploitation.

Building from Marx's work, subsequent Marxist theorists have emphasized that capitalist relations are fundamentally racialized, gendered relations. A critical weakness of most Marxist scholarship, however, is the silencing and marginalization of Indigenous sovereignties within this body of literature. In colonizing nation-states, like Canada, the possession of Indigenous lands forms the proprietary anchor of the capitalist economy (Moreton-Robinson 2015: xix). Analyses of capitalism that fail to center the ongoing history of colonization erase the sovereign presence of Indigenous peoples.

Goenpul scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson's (2015: xi) theorization of patriarchal white sovereignty explicates the ways in which colonizing nation-states reproduce and reaffirm their possession of Indigenous lands through a process of perpetual Indigenous dispossession. The possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty operate through

⁶ While I focus on labour activity within Canada, Indigenous people's engagement with work and labour cross national borders and as such my engagement with Indigenous labour histories also crosses national borders.

racialized discourse to disavow Indigenous sovereignty and thus, maintain the nation as a white possession (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 191-192). While Moreton-Robinson's theorization is indispensable for understanding the connections between white possession, processes of racialization, and Indigenous sovereignty, the relationship between the labour market and capitalist accumulation is not a focus of her work. The insights taken from Marxist theories of capitalism in conjunction with Moreton-Robinson's theorization of patriarchal white sovereignty offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the dynamics of labour market relations within colonizing nation-states.

DATA AND METHODS

Despite their longstanding association with deficit-based research, statistics remain an important research method for understanding and depicting Indigenous realities. As Walter and Andersen (2013: 135) assert, research methods are essentially tools to collect data, "and as tools, they are adaptable and malleable." The use of statistical tools has thus far largely conformed to dominant societal norms, values, and ways of understanding Indigenous reality. Following an explication of the hidden assumptions that inform the dominant methodological approach to Indigenous labour market statistics, I explore ways of decoupling the statistics from this methodological frame. Specifically, I propose three strategies for adapting statistical tools to advance an Indigenous research agenda on work and labour. The objectives of this research agenda are: 1) to generate statistical information that better addresses the needs of Indigenous communities; and 2) to counter the dominant quantitative methodological approach and its production of deficit-based statistical narratives.

The categories utilized to collect data define the conceptual and interpretive boundaries of the data (Walter and Andersen 2013: 111). The categories utilized to collect

existing sources of quantitative data, most notably official statistics, reflect dominant methodological values, understandings, and priorities. Accordingly, the most effective strategy for advancing an Indigenous research agenda requires collecting data that aligns with Indigenous peoples' self-understandings and data requirements. Official statistics, however, are an authoritative source of data and as such another important research strategy is to explore ways of working within the limits of this data to produce statistical narratives that challenge deficit-based depictions of Indigenous peoples. I therefore use data from the 2016 General Social Survey (GSS) to explore the construction of a statistical model that shifts the problematic from Indigenous deficit to processes of structural and institutional inequality. The GSS program consists of a series of cross-sectional surveys that collect information on social trends from non-institutionalized persons aged 15 and over, living in the ten provinces of Canada (Statistics Canada 2019a: 5). The GSS program follows a thematic approach in which each cycle of the survey focuses on one topic in-depth. For my statistical analysis, I use Cycle 30 of the GSS, which focused on the relationship between work, lifestyle, and well-being (Statistics Canada 2019a: 7).

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In Chapter One, I establish a framework for theorizing Indigenous labour relations. Specifically, I discuss Marxist theories of capitalism and Moreton-Robinson's theorization of patriarchal white sovereignty. In Chapter Two, I apply this theoretical framework to the Canadian context, focusing on the deployment of white possessive logics in and through legal mechanisms, census-making, and the labour market. In Chapter Three, I conduct a critical analysis of academic quantitative research that uses census data to examine the labour market outcomes of Indigenous peoples in Canada. In Chapter Four, I discuss the

development of an Indigenous quantitative methodology within the context of labour market research. Using data from the General Social Survey 2016, I explore the development of a statistical model that focuses on structural inequality rather than Indigenous deficit.

Chapter One: Theorizing the Patriarchal White Capitalist Nation-State

Understanding the labour market experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada requires an analytical framework that theorizes race, class, gender, and work/labour. Furthermore, the state plays a central role in regulating and mediating the relations between labour and capital through a range of laws and policies (Luxton 2006: 37). Accordingly, understanding Indigenous peoples' labour market experiences also requires theorizing the nature and role of the capitalist state.

In Canada, the capitalist state is also a postcolonizing settler state. The possession of Indigenous lands forms the proprietary anchor of the capitalist economy (Moreton-Robinson 2015: xix). The colonizing relationship between Indigenous peoples and the nation-state is ongoing such that Indigenous dispossession and Indigenous resistance to dispossession continue to inform the power relations that operate within this postcolonizing society (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 18). Postcolonizing power relations shape the labour market experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Thus, although seemingly comprehensive, a framework that theorizes race, class, gender, and the capitalist state may nonetheless perpetuate certain absences and erasures that contribute to the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous peoples. I argue, therefore, that theorizing race, class, gender, and the capitalist state are necessary but not sufficient criteria for analyzing the labour market experiences of Indigenous peoples. Developing a sufficiently dynamic understanding that challenges, rather than sustains, Indigenous dispossession requires (at least) three additional criteria:

1. Denaturalizing market relations
2. Denaturalizing race and whiteness

3. Denaturalizing the legitimacy of the nation-state's sovereignty

First, to uncover capitalist processes of exploitation and dispossession, the analysis must not accept the market in human labour as a natural means of organizing social relations of production. Second, the analysis must not accept whiteness as an invisible and universal norm. As Moreton-Robinson (2000: xix) notes, “as long as whiteness remains invisible in analyses ‘race’ is the prison reserved for the ‘Other.’” Third, the analysis must not presuppose the legitimacy of the sovereignty of the Canadian nation-state. Accepting the legitimacy of the nation-state's sovereignty denies the ongoing sovereign presence of Indigenous peoples.

Karl Marx's analysis of the capitalist mode of production is indispensable for addressing the first criteria but falls short of the second and third criteria. Subsequent theorists building upon Marx's analysis more adequately address the second criteria but largely fail to center the ongoing history of Indigenous dispossession and thus fail to address the third criteria. Moreton-Robinson's theorization of patriarchal white sovereignty offers the most comprehensive framework for addressing the second and third criteria and can therefore critically extend a Marxist analysis of capitalism.

This chapter consists of two parts and a conclusion. Part one focuses on Marxism and the relation between the labour market, capitalist accumulation, and the state. I begin with a brief overview of Marx's analysis of the capitalist mode of production before discussing three processes related to his analysis that subsequent Marxist theorists have attempted to correct, reconstruct, and further develop. I then discuss Marxist approaches to theorizing the capitalist state. Part two focuses on Moreton-Robinson's theorization of patriarchal white sovereignty and the relation between white possession, racialization, and Indigenous

sovereignty. The chapter ends with a discussion of the critical utility of placing Marxism in conversation with Indigenous theory.

PART ONE: MARXISM

Marxist Analysis of the Capitalist Mode of Production

Karl Marx's critique of political economy is indispensable for moving beyond a limited understanding of the economy as "neutral market forces determining the fate of humans by chance" (Bhattacharya 2017b: 69). On the surface, the economy appears as the sphere in which the owner of labour-power (i.e., the worker) and the owner of money (i.e., the capitalist) meet to engage in the sale and purchase of labour-power. The capitalist buys labour-power from the worker, who in turn receives a wage. Some wages are high, while others are low. Nonetheless, within this sphere of commodity exchange, the worker and the capitalist "contract as free persons, who are equal before the law" (Marx 1990 [1867]: 280). Such juridical rights, however, conceal the reality of exploitation. As Tithi Bhattacharya (2017b: 70) explains, "to concentrate on the surface 'economy' (of the market) as if this was the sole reality is to obscure. . . the actual process of domination and expropriation that happens beyond the sphere of 'equal' exchange." A consequence of obscuring the act of exploitation is that "the worker is caught in this sphere of juridical 'equality,' negotiating rather than questioning the wage form" (Bhattacharya 2017b: 70).

Marx (1990 [1867]: 279), therefore, moves his analysis from the sphere of commodity exchange, "where everything takes place on the surface and in full view of everyone," to "the hidden abode of production" where domination and coercion prevail. In examining the labour process, Marx identifies human labour-power as the special commodity that sustains the entire system of capitalist accumulation. The value of the commodity labour-

power, according to Marx (1990 [1867]: 274), “is the value of the means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of its owner” (i.e., the worker). The wage that the worker receives from the capitalist is equal to the value of labour-power. The capitalist, however, aims to set the duration and intensity of the labour process such that the worker produces more than the value of labour power (i.e., surplus value). Accordingly, Marx divides the labour process into necessary labour time and surplus labour time. Necessary labour time represents the part of the working day during which the worker produces the value of labour-power (i.e., the value of the means of subsistence), whereas surplus labour time refers to the portion of the working day during which the worker produces surplus-value for the capitalist (Marx 1990 [1867]: 324-325). Capitalist accumulation rests on the maximization of surplus-value and the rate of surplus-value is “an exact expression for the degree of exploitation of labour-power by capital, or of the worker by the capitalist” (Marx 1990 [1867]: 326). Capitalist accumulation, therefore, necessitates the exploitation of human labour-power.

Moreover, the necessary precondition for the accumulation of capital is the dispossession of workers from the material means of production. Capital arises only when the owner of money finds the free worker available on the commodity-market. Marx (1990 [1867]: 272) explains that:

This worker must be free in the double sense that as a free individual he can dispose of his labour-power as his own commodity, and that, on the other hand, . . . he is free of all the objects needed for the realization. . . of his labour-power.

Without direct access to the means of production, workers, while juridically free, have no possibility of independently producing their subsistence. They are therefore under economic compulsion to sell their labour-power to the owners of the means of production for a wage. Further, as Marx (1990 [1867]: 273) notes, “nature does not produce on the one hand owners

of money or commodities, and on the other hand men possessing nothing but their own labour-power.” Rather, this relation is the result of a historical development. More specifically, Marx (1990 [1867]: 875) demonstrates that capitalist relations of production are the result of a violent and bloody process of expropriation:

These newly freed men became sellers of themselves only after they had been robbed of all their own means of production, and all the guarantees of existence afforded by the old feudal arrangements. And this history, the history of their expropriation, is written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire.

The capitalist mode of production, according to Marx, emerged from this violent history of primitive accumulation.

In sum, Marx’s critique of political economy explicates the inextricable relation between wage-labour, capitalist accumulation, and exploitation. The market in human labour-power, upon which the entire capitalist system rests, is a form of institutionalized dispossession and exploitation. Further, the capitalist relation is not a natural configuration but rather it is the product of a historical process of domination and coercion.

Racialization

Marx’s analysis of the capitalist mode of production denaturalizes market relations. Marx fails, however, to challenge the notion of race. Marx’s failure to interrogate processes of racialization results in the reification of race in his analysis. For example, in elucidating capital as a social relation of production, Marx (1902 [1891]: 35) writes:

A Negro is a Negro. Only under certain conditions does he become a slave. A cotton-spinning machine is a machine for spinning cotton. Only under certain conditions does it become capital. Torn away from these conditions, it is as little capital as gold is itself money, or sugar is the price of sugar.

As Anna Carastathis (2007: 26) contends, however:

The question, *why a Negro?* does not occur to Marx. For Marx, in the absence of these conditions which make of him a slave, a ‘Negro’ appears to remain (indeed,

always already was) a ‘Negro.’ . . .It is striking, here, that the conceptual cost of denaturalizing slavery is the fetishization of race.

This failure to adequately theorize race and racism persists in much of the inherited Marxist tradition. Marxist theorists tend to position race as secondary to class, and thus explain the relevance of race only in relation to its subsequent impact on class structure (Gordon 2007: 13). Accordingly, Marxist scholarship often reduces racism to an epiphenomenon of capitalist relations of production. This economic reductionist tendency is most clearly evident in one Marxist scholar’s assertion that “it is *capitalism*, not white supremacy, that is a structural system of oppression” (Cole 2009: 258, emphasis in original).

Despite the shortcomings of many Marxist analyses, some scholars maintain that Marxism offers valuable contributions to the critical study of race and racism. Neo-Marxist historian David Roediger (2010: 9), for instance, argues that “the major works launching the critical historical study of whiteness, especially those of Theodore Allen, Alexander Saxton, and Noel Ignatiev, represented generations of specifically Marxist thought about race.” The critical study of U.S. whiteness, according to Roediger (2010: 12), emerged in the 1990s from within a Marxist milieu “grounded in labor activism and in the ideas of C. L. R. James, [James] Baldwin, George Rawick, and above all [W. E. B.] Du Bois.” Roediger’s own *The Wages of Whiteness* (1991), which became a foundational text within the field of critical whiteness studies, shares these Marxist origins.

In *The Wages of Whiteness*, Roediger critically examines the role of racism in the formation of the US white working class and in doing so challenges the prevailing assumption that racism is merely a product of economic relations. Roediger (1991: 6) is critical of the Marxist tendency to privilege class over race, arguing that such an approach has contributed to the oversimplification of race and the naturalization of whiteness. While

attempting to demonstrate the class dimension of racism, traditional Marxist analyses of race tend to focus exclusively on the ruling class's role in perpetuating racial oppression. The workers, according to this perspective, "largely receive and occasionally resist racist ideas and practices but have no role in creating those practices" (Roediger 1991: 9). Drawing on the work of neo-Marxist historians Herbert Gutman and E.P. Thompson, Roediger (1991: 9) argues that "workers, even during periods of firm ruling class hegemony, are historical actors who make (constrained) choices and create their own cultural forms." Accordingly, Roediger (1991: 9) challenges "any theory that holds that racism simply trickles down the class structure from the commanding heights at which it is created."

Against the traditional Marxist approach, which separates race and class, Roediger argues instead for an analysis of how race and class interpenetrate. Roediger contends that the work of W.E.B. Du Bois is indispensable for understanding the dialectics of race and class in the US. Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction* (1935) demonstrates the ways in which whiteness functions as a "wage," conferring status and privileges to white workers, which compensates for alienating and exploitative class relationships. Following Du Bois, Roediger (1991: 12) argues that:

White labor does not just receive and resist racist ideas but embraces, adopts and, at times, murderously acts upon those ideas. The problem is not just that the white working class is at critical junctures manipulated into racism, but that it comes to think of itself and its interests as white.

Thus, contrary to the traditional Marxist perspective, Roediger (1991: 9) demonstrates that white workers participated in the creation of working class "whiteness" and "white supremacy."

Social Reproduction

Social reproduction Marxists and feminists argue that an analysis of capitalism that focuses exclusively on wage labourers and owners is incomplete (Bhattacharya 2017a: 2). Building from Marx, social reproduction theorists have sought to advance an understanding of the gendered and racialized forms of social reproduction that sustain capitalist accumulation. Tithi Bhattacharya (2017a: 1) explains that social reproduction theory asks: “if workers’ labor produces all the wealth in society, who then produces the worker?” Although Marx recognizes that capitalism is dependent on the daily and generational renewal of labour power that occurs outside the circuit of commodity production, he fails to adequately address this question. That is, rather than critically interrogating the processes and social relations that sustain and reproduce workers’ labour power, Marx naturalizes the reproduction of the labourer. In *Capital*, Volume 1, Marx (1990 [1867]: 718) writes, “the maintenance and reproduction of the working class remains a necessary condition for the reproduction of capital. But the capitalist may safely leave this to the worker’s drives for self-preservation and propagation.” In contrast, social reproduction theory seeks to make visible and denaturalize the vast amount of familial and communitarian work required to produce the conditions of existence for the worker (Bhattacharya 2017a: 2). Moreover, social reproduction theory, according to Meg Luxton (2006: 36-37), “shows how the production of goods and services and the production of life are part of one integrated process,” and in doing so, “it allows for an explanation of the structures, relationships, and dynamics that produce those activities.”

Social reproduction theorists, such as Lise Vogel (1983), identify the working-class family as the predominant social site for the production and reproduction of labour-power.

Rather than focusing on the internal dynamic of the household, however, social reproduction theorists examine the structural relationship of the household to the reproduction of capital and in doing so locate the socio-material roots of women's oppression under capitalism. The reproduction of capital requires female-sexed bodies "to produce the next generation of labourers so that labour-power is available for exploitation" (Ferguson and McNally 2013: xxv). Capital's dependence on biological processes specific to female-sexed bodies – pregnancy, childbirth, lactation – impels capital and its state to regulate female reproduction and reinforce a male-dominant gender order (Ferguson and McNally 2013: xxix).

The family, however, is not the only site for reproduction of labour power. Rather, myriad social relationships and institutions constitute the circuit of social reproduction (Bhattacharya 2017b: 73). As Susan Ferguson (2008: 51) notes:

Social reproduction is not just economic and biophysical. Because we live and reproduce ourselves within communities, it is also deeply cultural. As a result, education, health care, leisure and art, among other things, are invariably implicated in the process of social reproduction.

Moreover, childbirth in the family unit is not the only way of generationally reproducing the labour force. Slavery and immigration, for instance, "are two of the most common ways in which capital has replaced labor within national boundaries" (Bhattacharya 2017b: 73). Thus, the relations of production, according to Bhattacharya (2017b: 87) are "a concatenation of existing social relations, shaped by past history, present institutions, and state forms. The social relations outside of wage labor are not accidental to it but take specific historical form in response to it." In short, understanding the racialized and gendered nature of capitalist relations requires expanding the analysis beyond a narrow focus on productive labour for the market.

Primitive Accumulation

Another related aspect of Marx's writing that subsequent theorists have sought to correct and build upon is his discussion of the "so-called" primitive accumulation of capital. Marx's primitive accumulation thesis explicates the historical process that created the preconditions for the capitalist mode of production, namely the separation of workers from their means of production and subsistence which forced them into the exploitative realm of waged labour. Although the methods of primitive accumulation vary, Marx (1990 [1867]: 874) demonstrates that, contrary to classical economists' idyllic portrayal of the origins of capitalism, "conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, in short, force, play the greatest part." Following the establishment of the capitalist relation, however, the need for extra-economic force fades away. Instead, the economic need to sell their capacity to work disciplines workers. According to Marx (1990 [1867]: 899), "the silent compulsion of economic relations sets the seal on the domination of the capitalist over the worker. Direct extra-economic force is still of course used, but only in exceptional cases."

Subsequent scholars have challenged Marx's portrayal of primitive accumulation as a historical stage preceding capitalist production, arguing that primitive accumulation is an ongoing process and thus extra-economic violence is a persistent feature of capitalism. Rosa Luxemburg (2003 [1913]: 348-349), for instance, argues that capitalism in its full maturity remains dependent on "non-capitalist social strata as a market for its surplus value, as a source of supply for its means of production and as a reservoir of labour power for its wage system." Luxemburg (2003 [1913]: 329) critiques Marx's model of capital accumulation in which capitalists and workers are the sole agents of capitalist consumption, arguing that such a universal and exclusive domination of the capitalist mode of production has never existed. Instead, Luxemburg argues that capital accumulation has two aspects. The first aspect of

accumulation is a purely economic transaction between the capitalist and wage labourer. The second aspect, which “concerns the relations between capitalism and the non-capitalist modes of production,” involves the persistent use of overt political violence, predominantly in the form of colonial policy (Luxemburg 2003 [1913]: 432). These two aspects are not separate historic phases, but rather co-exist through an organic linkage. Thus, extra-economic violence, according to Luxemburg (2003 [1913]: 433), “characterises not only the birth of capital but also its progress in the world at every step.”⁷

Similarly, Marxist feminist Silvia Federici reconceptualizes primitive accumulation as an ongoing and differentiated process. Federici (2004: 12) reconstructs the history of the development of capitalism from the viewpoint of women, their changing social position, and the production of labour power. In doing so, she uncovers a set of historical phenomena that are central to capitalist accumulation but are absent from Marx’s analysis, which focused on the viewpoint of the waged male proletariat and the development of commodity production. Specifically, Federici’s (2004: 12) analysis of primitive accumulation reveals “the development of a new sexual division of labor subjugating women’s labor and women’s reproductive function to the reproduction of the work-force.” Primitive accumulation, according to Federici, not only deprives workers of ownership of the means of production, but it also deprives women of control over their bodies. Federici (2004: 12-13) further argues:

A return to the most violent aspects of primitive accumulation has accompanied every phase of capitalist globalization, including the present one, demonstrating that the continuous expulsion of farmers from the land, war and plunder on a world scale, and

⁷ Underlying Luxemburg’s analysis is a theoretical premise of underconsumption as the explanation of economic crisis, which orthodox Marxists have largely discredited (Bleaney 1976; Brewer 1990). Nonetheless, subsequent scholars maintain that Luxemburg’s formulation remains useful and have built upon her analysis (e.g., Harvey 2003; Mies 1986).

the degradation of women are necessary conditions for the existence of capitalism in all times.

Thus, like Luxemburg, Federici, challenges Marx's assumption that extra-economic violence recedes with the maturing of capitalist relations.

Additionally, Yellowknives Dene scholar Glen Coulthard reconstructs the concept of primitive accumulation as an ongoing constitutive feature of colonial and capitalist social relations in Canada. To render Marx's primitive accumulation thesis relevant to an understanding of settler colonialism, Coulthard (2014: 10) contextually shifts his analysis "from an emphasis on the *capital relation* to the *colonial relation*." For Marx, primitive accumulation is a dual process involving the dispossession of workers which results in their subsequent transformation into wage labourers. Marx focused on the capital relation and thus emphasized the transformation of the worker into a wage labourer. In contrast, by focusing on the colonial relation, Coulthard (2014: 13) demonstrates that "the history and experience of *dispossession*, not proletarianization, has been the dominant background structure shaping the character of the historical relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state." Moreover, whereas Marx viewed primitive accumulation as a violent process, Coulthard (2014: 15) argues that it persists today in ways that are not overtly coercive. Importantly, Coulthard is not arguing that unmodified colonial violence is no longer a feature of primitive accumulation. He asserts that hard violence, distributed asymmetrically across Indigenous bodies according to sex and gender, remains central to the colonial relationship and "the effects of this violence are all too clear: the premature death and disappearance of some of our community members in numbers greater than those of others" (Hallenbeck et al. 2016: 118). In the context of economic participation, governance, and land, however, the

reproduction of colonial relations now often occurs through mediated forms of dispossession, such as state recognition and accommodation (Coulthard 2014: 15).

Marxist Theories of the State

Developing a comprehensive understanding of the process of colonization requires theorizing the relation between capitalist accumulation and the state. Although Marx intended to develop a systematic theory of the state, he never completed the project (Barrow 2000: 87). Instead, his writing on the state consists of fragments that are often self-contradictory, scattered throughout his works. Subsequent theorists have attempted to reconstruct a Marxist theory of the state from these fragments and in doing so have produced competing theories of the capitalist state. Two foundational approaches to the Marxist study of the state are the competing instrumentalist and structuralist approaches. Proponents of the instrumentalist approach argue that the state is merely “an instrument in the hands of the ruling class” (Miliband 1969; Sweezy 1942: 243). In short, the state serves the interests of capital because capitalists control the state. Conversely, structuralists view the state as “the factor of cohesion of a social formation” (Poulantzas 1969: 73). According to the structuralist approach, the function of the state is to protect and reproduce the social structure of capitalist societies, which are inherently prone to crises originating from three different sources: the economy, class struggle, and uneven development (Barrow 1993: 51-52).

The instrumentalist approach reduces the state to “a mere tool of capital” and the structuralist approach reduces the state to “a neutral institution standing outside and above the class struggle” (Clarke 1991: 183). Moreover, both approaches presuppose the existence of the state. Subsequent attempts to advance Marxist state theory have sought to more adequately theorize both the state’s relative autonomy from the capitalist class and the state’s

formation. Open Marxist state theory, for instance, situates contradictory social relations at the centre of analysis and in doing so “reveals the emergence and development of the state and social classes to be a dynamic, interconnected and contested historical process” (Gordon 2007: 7). Thus, the state, according to Open Marxists, is not a structure that exists independently of struggle and human agency. Rather, the capitalist state form develops in and through the struggle to constitute a class of wage labourers that is conducive to the reproduction of capital (Bonefeld 1993; Clarke 1991; Gordon 2007: 8).

A major weakness of Marxist state theory, including the Open Marxist approach, is its tendency to theorize class and the capitalist state in race-neutral terms. Todd Gordon (2007: 11) argues, however, that despite its failure to account for race and racism, Open Marxism nevertheless, “offers a very useful opening for exploring the racial character of the capitalist state.” Thus, in an attempt to formulate an anti-racist Marxist theory of the state, Gordon uses the insights of anti-racist Marxist writings to extend the theoretical developments of Open Marxist state theory. Following Open Marxism, Gordon (2007: 13) argues that “a key role of the state in its struggle to promote bourgeois order and secure the conditions for the effective accumulation of capital is the fabrication of a class of labourers to be exploited by capital.” Open Marxism, however, theorizes this class formation independently of racialization, whereas Gordon (2007: 13) asserts that racialization is “a key moment of class formation.” Drawing on the insights of anti-racist Marxist scholars, Gordon (2007: 15) demonstrates that “there is no essential class onto which race can be grafted,” but rather, class “is always mediated by the social relations of race that shape a society.” Thus, in a critical departure from Open Marxism, Gordon (2007: 14) argues that “issues of race and

racism are not external to the state: the state exists in and through racialised social relations of domination.” The state is both capitalist and “at its core racial” (Gordon 2007: 14).

Gordon (2007: 3) develops his anti-racist Marxist theory of the state through a historical analysis of the Canadian state, which he describes as “a white settler state born out of British colonialism.” Gordon (2007: 3) asserts, however, that the racialization of state power is not unique to colonial settler states like Canada, but rather it is a central feature of the development of states more generally. Accordingly, Gordon focuses his analysis on Canada’s immigration policy, rather than Canada’s ongoing dispossession of Indigenous peoples. Gordon (2007: 15) writes:

Canada’s ongoing occupation of indigenous land and negation of indigenous national self-determination, would provide an excellent example of the racial nature of state power.... Given the spatial restraints, however, I will focus instead on immigration policy, which has been no less racist and no less central to the development of the Canadian state. Furthermore, racialised immigration policy is also an important feature of settler and non-settler advanced capitalist states alike, and so is perhaps an example less likely to confuse the issue of racialised state power in general with white settler states in particular.

By dismissing Canada’s ongoing occupation of Indigenous land as merely an example of racialized state power, Gordon forecloses an analysis of how Indigenous dispossession is integral to racial state formation. The failure to interrogate the relation between Indigenous dispossession, processes of racialization, and nation-state formation remains a key weakness of the Marxist state theory literature.

PART TWO: PATRIARCHAL WHITE SOVEREIGNTY

Moreton-Robinson’s (2015) theoretical analysis of patriarchal white sovereignty explicates the ways in which postcolonizing settler nation-states deploy regulatory mechanisms and disciplinary knowledges to maintain possession of Indigenous lands and Indigenous peoples. Indigenous ontological relations to land constitute an omnipresent form

of resistance to the possessive claims of the nation-state and challenge the legitimacy of patriarchal white sovereignty. Accordingly, the nation-state must continually reproduce and reaffirm itself as a white possession “through a process of perpetual Indigenous dispossession, ranging from the refusal of Indigenous sovereignty to overregulated piecemeal concessions” (Moreton-Robinson 2015: xi). This “excessive desire to invest in reproducing and reaffirming the nation-state’s ownership, control, and domination” underpins the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty (Moreton-Robinson 2015: xii). Moreton-Robinson (2015: 81) uses the concept “possessive logic” to denote a mode of rationalization that operates “to circulate sets of meanings about white ownership of the nation as part of commonsense knowledge, decision making, and socially produced conventions.”

Moreton-Robinson’s explication of white possessive logics reveals that race is central to the continuing appropriation of Indigenous peoples’ land in the name of patriarchal white sovereignty. Whiteness operates possessively through the process of racialization “to define and construct itself as the pinnacle of its own racial hierarchy” (Moreton-Robinson 2015: xxi). Accordingly, the racialization of the Indigenous “other” is a white proprietary exercise that functions to deny Indigenous people’s ontological existence and sovereignty claims. In short, the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty operate through racialized discourse to disavow Indigenous sovereignty and thus, maintain the nation as a white possession (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 191-192).

By articulating the inextricable link between racialization, white possession, and the disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty, Moreton-Robinson addresses both the invisibility of whiteness within Indigenous scholarship and the invisibility of Indigeneity within whiteness scholarship. First, by analyzing the operations of whiteness, Moreton-Robinson addresses the

“race blindness” of Indigenous scholarship. Indigenous scholars have primarily focused on an endogenous approach to history, language, politics, culture, and literature, which renders “the Indigenous world as the object of study” (Moreton-Robinson 2015: xv). While the Indigenous endogenous approach has produced a body of knowledge that is extremely important, the focus on operationalizing “culture” as a category of analysis, rather than race and whiteness, has “foreclosed the possibility of theorizing how racialization works to produce Indigeneity through whiteness” (Moreton-Robinson 2015: xviii). This race blindness constitutes a critical absence within Indigenous scholarship, for as Moreton-Robinson (2014: 469) argues in relation to Indigenous peoples, “‘race’ is the predominant marker by which most of the colonizers’ looking, speaking, and knowing has been and continues to be done.”

Second, by centering Indigenous dispossession, Moreton-Robinson addresses the marginalization of Indigeneity within the field of whiteness studies. The theories of race and whiteness produced within the field of whiteness studies in the United States predominantly focus on slavery and migration while eliding the appropriation of Indigenous peoples’ lands and the coexistence of competing sovereignties (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 54-55). This approach to theorizing race and whiteness places the American literature on whiteness outside of the continuing history of colonization, which forecloses an analysis of how Indigenous dispossession is integral to nation-state formation, the development of white national identity, and the existence of white supremacy. Further, the failure to address the continuing history of colonization reflects “an epistemological and ontological a priori at the heart of the whiteness literature: the unequivocal acceptance that the United States is a white possession” (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 60). This literature presupposes the legitimacy of the sovereignty of the United States and thus erases the Native American sovereign presence. As

such, the field of whiteness studies not only fails to address the socio-discursive way that white possession functions to produce racism, but it is a site in which white possession operates to displace Indigenous sovereignties.

Gender, Race, Possession, and the Foundations of Modern Sovereignty

Informing Moreton-Robinson's (2015: 177) conceptualization of patriarchal white sovereignty is the notion that "the foundations of modern sovereignty have a gendered and racial ontology: that is, sovereignty's divine being as a regime of power is constituted by and through gender and race." Furthermore, Moreton-Robinson (2015: 51) demonstrates that the various assumptions of patriarchal white sovereignty, beginning with British "settlers" and subsequently the nation-state, "all came into existence through the blood-stained taking of [Indigenous peoples' lands.]" Thus, in Australia, Canada, the United States, and New Zealand, race, gender, and Indigenous dispossession indelibly mark the formation and regulation of the nation-state and the development of national identity (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 138). Moreton-Robinson traces the roots of the gendered, racial nation-state, predicated on the dispossession of Indigenous land, to the transition from Enlightenment to modernity.

The transition to modernity precipitated the transfer of the king's sovereignty, including both the authority over a territorial area and the people within it, to the state, which in the form of the Crown, holds exclusive possession of land (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 138). Social contract theory posits that the formation of the state was contingent on a contract between men to live together, make laws, and govern. The social contract "secures the right of the sovereign in the form of the state to govern and the right of citizens to partake in that governance through the rights and responsibilities conferred on them" (Moreton-Robinson

2015: 155). Drawing on Carol Pateman's (1988) theory of the sexual contract and Charles Mills' theory of the racial contract (1997), Moreton-Robinson (2015: 155) demonstrates that the social contract underpinning the development of the modern state was a contractual relationship between white men, which "[incorporated] white women into the polity as their subordinates through the marriage contract."

The European white male represented the universal liberal individual, marking the boundaries for who can enter the social contract as full moral and political persons. Thus, sovereignty within nation-states such as Australia and Canada, is both white and patriarchal, and it enables, constrains, and disciplines subjects in varying ways. Through the gendered/racialized social contract, the nation-state confers patriarchal white sovereignty on its citizens. Race, class, gender, sexuality, and able-bodiedness are markers, however, that determine the extent to which citizens benefit from or exercise patriarchal white sovereignty (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 139).

Additionally, the transition to modernity precipitated the emergence of a new white property-owning subject and possessiveness became a constitutive element of white subjectivity (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 49). By the eighteenth century, major social, legal, economic, and political reforms had taken place, completely changing the relationship between persons and property. Legal contractual arrangements, formulated through a person's relationship to capital and the state, permitted people in Britain to own land, sell their labour, and possess their identities. The emergence of freely-owned property, both tangible and intangible, coincided with "an increasing consciousness of the distinctness of each self-owning human entity as the primary social and political value" (Davies and Naffine 2001: 33-32). In short, a rise in the concept of the possessive individual accompanied a rise

in the concept of private property ownership as a significant economic and socio-political determinant.

White possession functioned as a socio-discursive regime in Britain, informing and shaping the ontological structure of white subjectivity (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 113). At an ontological level, possession entails “the imposition of one’s will-to-be on the thing that is perceived to lack will; thus it is open to being possessed” (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 114). To make a thing one’s property, one must ascribe their own subjective will onto the thing. Willful possession, therefore, requires “a subject to internalize the idea that one has proprietary rights that are part of normative behavior, rules of interaction, and social engagement” (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 114). Thus, white possession functions socio-discursively to reaffirm the possessiveness of white subjectivity.

Through her analysis of Captain James Cook taking possession of Indigenous land, Moreton-Robinson (2015: 113-114) demonstrates how the possessiveness of white subjectivity functioned to enable the spread of empire. For Cook to be able to take possession of Indigenous land in the name of patriarchal white sovereignty he had to position Indigenous peoples as will-less things. The racialization of the Indigenous “other” was central to this exercise. By deploying racialized discourse to mark the Indigenous “other” as will-less and black, Cook “[produced] through knowledge a subject of his own making, one that he interprets for himself” (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 114). This process discursively constructs the Indigenous “others” as white epistemological possessions and in doing so obliterates Indigenous people’s ontological and epistemological existence. Thus, Cook’s white possessiveness operated ontologically and epistemologically to inhibit the recognition of Indigenous peoples as property-owning sovereign subjects. Willing away the sovereignty of

Indigenous peoples enabled Cook to claim the land as terra nullius (land belonging to no one).

Whiteness as Property

Moreton-Robinson's (2015: xix) theoretical analysis of patriarchal white sovereignty draws on the work of Cheryl Harris, whom she argues is one of the few African American scholars to connect Indigenous dispossession to the formation of whiteness. Harris's (1993) legal history and analysis in "Whiteness as Property" demonstrates that whiteness became a form of property in law through the appropriation of Indigenous peoples' lands and the enslavement of Black people. Drawing on Harris's work, Moreton-Robinson demonstrates how patriarchal whiteness as a form of property accumulates capital and social appreciation while denying Indigenous people opportunities to generate wealth.

Harris (1993: 1716) examines the connection between racial domination and the origins of property rights in the United States, arguing that "it was not the concept of race alone that operated to oppress Blacks and Indians; rather, it was the *interaction* between conceptions of race and property that played a critical role in establishing and maintaining racial and economic subordination." The establishment of racially contingent forms of property and property rights resulted in the conflation of race and property such that the appropriation of Indigenous peoples' lands and the hyper-exploitation of Black labour "each contributed in varying ways to the construction of whiteness as property" (Harris 1993: 1716).

Harris (1993: 1716) first examines the relationships between slavery, race, and property. As the terms of service for white indentured workers decreased, both the demand for labour and the reliance on African labour intensified, which resulted in an increased

distinction between African and white indentured labour (Harris 1993: 1717). The racial otherness of Black people came to justify their subordinated status and by the 1660s the law codified the degraded status of Black people as chattel slaves. Racial identity subsequently converged with legal status such that “‘Black’ racial identity marked who was subject to enslavement” and “‘white’ racial identity marked who was ‘free’ or, at minimum, not a slave” (Harris 1993: 1718). Whiteness was therefore a source of privilege and protected a person from being the object of property. Thus, as Harris (1993: 1721) asserts, “slavery linked the privilege of whites to the subordination of Blacks through a legal regime that attempted the conversion of Blacks into objects of property.”

Second, Harris (1993: 1721) examines the relationships between Native American land seizure, race, and property. The original denial of Native American property rights based on a racist formulation in which only white possession was valid “embedded the fact of white privilege into the very definition of property” (Harris 1993: 1721). As Harris (1993: 1721) asserts:

Possession – the act necessary to lay the basis for rights in property – was defined to include only the cultural practices of whites. This definition laid the foundation for the idea that whiteness – that which whites alone possess – is valuable and is property.

Accordingly, the racial otherness of Native Americans permitted the reinterpretation and erasure of their rights as first possessors of the land. The perceived failure of Indigenous peoples to use the land in ways that were characteristic of white settlement rendered Indigenous property rights invisible. In effect, the rights of first possessors were contingent on the race of the possessor (Harris 1993: 1722).

Harris (1993: 1724) further argues that “the law has established and protected an actual property interest in whiteness itself.” Although whiteness is not a physical entity, it is

nonetheless within the realm of property because the concept of property refers to “a right, not a thing, characterized as metaphysical, not physical” (Harris 1993: 1725). Thus, Harris (1993: 1726) argues that “whiteness – the right to white identity as embraced by the law – is property if by property one means all of a person's legal rights.”

Harris’s work provides a theoretical framework for understanding “how white property rights are connected to the internal territoriality of patriarchal white sovereignty in the form of the nation-state” (Moreton-Robinson 2015: xix). Drawing on Harris’s work, Moreton-Robinson (2015: 179) demonstrates, in the Australian context, how the possessive logic of patriarchal white sovereignty functions “to define the attributes of personhood and property through the law.” This logic protects and reaffirms an investment in the nation as a white possession. Patriarchal whiteness, as a form of property in Australian law, determines the gendered and racialized distribution of wealth, status, and opportunity (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 66). The law recognizes white people primarily as property-owning subjects, whereas Indigenous people must “demonstrate proof in accordance with the white legal structure in courts controlled predominantly by white men,” that their lands belong to them (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 16). Patriarchal whiteness, therefore, operates proprietarily both tangibly and intangibly to confer privilege, in the form of asset accumulation and social appreciation, to those categorized as white. By diminishing Indigenous entitlements, patriarchal whiteness protects the privileges of whites, while denying Indigenous people the opportunity for asset accumulation and economic development. As Moreton-Robinson (2015: 77) succinctly asserts, “patriarchal whiteness is usable property that the law protects and values.”

Possessive Investments in Patriarchal White Sovereignty

Patriarchal white sovereignty, according to Moreton-Robinson (2015: 139), “operates ideologically, materially, and discursively to reproduce and maintain its investment in the nation as a white possession.” While patriarchal white sovereignty is most acutely manifest in the state and its regulatory mechanisms, such as the law, it pervades identity, institutions, relations, and practices in everyday life (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 34-35). A possessive investment in patriarchal white sovereignty, for instance, pervades white subjects’ sense of national identity and belonging. Within patriarchal white nation-states, whiteness is the invisible measure of who can possess the nation (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 6). The nation as a white possession confers white subjects with certain privileges that are often invisible to them, and in turn, white subjects invest in the nation as their possession. White subjects derive their sense of belonging to the nation from ownership, as understood within the logic of capital and citizenship. Self-legitimization of white possession functions discursively through white male signifiers of the nation, such as the Founding Fathers, the “pioneer,” and the “war hero” (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 52).

White possession also pervades social institutions, such as the workplace, operating through daily intersubjective relations in which white people exclude and inferiorize Indigenous people. As Moreton-Robinson (2015: xxii) argues, “these daily intersubjective relations are the mechanisms by which Indigenous people experience white possession as racist acts.” Moreover, when white people minimize the implications of race and deny the occurrence of racism, “they are speaking from a position whereby the possessive nature of their race privilege remains invisible to them” (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 108). The invisibility of patriarchal white sovereignty is a key attribute of its power (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 81). As Moreton-Robinson (2015: xiii) contends, however, “for Indigenous people,

white possession is not unmarked, unnamed, or invisible; it is hypervisible.” Indigenous people experience the pervasiveness of white possession in everyday encounters and in institutions, such as hospitals, universities, schools, bureaucracies, and the law.

CONCLUSION

Marxism offers useful tools for understanding capitalism. As Tsimshian scholar Charles Menzies (2010: 5) notes:

Marxism points to the inherent contradictions of our social formations; it highlights the ways in which power is structured through ownership; it puts the spotlight on the function of states in the accumulation of capital and the redistribution of wealth from the many to the few.

In short, “Marxism provides an analytic lens through which to examine how power operates” (Menzies 2010: 5). In particular, Marx illustrates how power operates through the labour market to sustain capital accumulation. By denaturalizing the capital relation, Marx explicates the processes of exploitation and dispossession through which the capitalist system reproduces itself. Moreover, building from Marx, subsequent theorists have demonstrated that capitalist relations are fundamentally racialized, gendered relations. A critical weakness that remains, however, is the silencing and marginalization of Indigenous sovereignties within most Marxist scholarship. Marxist analyses that fail to adequately address the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous lands and sovereignties not only produce incomplete conceptualizations of power relations but they also risk reproducing the power relations that sustain Indigenous dispossession. Conversely, Moreton-Robinson (2015) demonstrates how power operates through racialized discourse in relation to possession. The key to addressing the limitations of Marxism, I argue, is Moreton-Robinson’s theorization of patriarchal white sovereignty. More specifically, theorizing the capitalist state as a white possession, predicated on the perpetual disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty, critically advances a

Marxist analysis of how power operates and provides a more comprehensive understanding of racialized, patriarchal capitalism.

A previous attempt to place Marxist theory in critical dialogue with Indigenous theory is Glen Coulthard's (2014) reformulation of Marx's primitive accumulation thesis. Coulthard rightly argues that "in the post-fur trade period, Canadian state-formation and colonial-capitalist development required first and foremost *land*, and only secondarily the surplus value afforded by cheap Indigenous labor" (2014: 12, emphasis in original). While his analysis focuses primarily on land, Coulthard (2014: 187 n.50) is careful to clarify that Indigenous labour remained important to Canadian political economic development. Moreover, Coulthard (2014: 12) acknowledges that "indoctrinating the Indigenous population to the principles of private property, possessive individualism, and menial wage work" remained "an important feature of Canadian Indian policy." Subsequent applications of Coulthard's analysis, however, tend to eliminate any discussion of Indigenous labour and instead focus exclusively on the dispossession of Indigenous land.

For instance, in an attempt to extend the literature on racial capitalism beyond a white/black binary, Siddhant Issar (2021: 32) constructs the analytic of "racial/colonial primitive accumulation" which posits that "the capital relation is predicated on entwined, though disparate, forms of expropriation such as the colonial relation and the anti-Black relation." To explicate the colonial relation, Issar draws on Coulthard (2014) and Patrick Wolfe, arguing that colonization is "uniquely oriented towards the seizure of Indigenous *lands*, rather than the *labour-power* of Indigenous peoples" (Issar 2021: 31, emphasis in original). As such, "settler colonies were (are) premised on the elimination of native societies" (Wolfe 1999: 2 cited in Issar 2021: 33). The problem with examining colonial

power through an eliminatory logic, however, is that it “obscures analysis of the productive capacities of, for instance, those relations which are inconsistent, contradictory, and contingent among a paradigm of elimination” (Kolopenuk 2020: 23 n.12). Regarding Indigenous labour, the eliminatory logic constructs a narrative of Indigeneity as non-labour, which erases the complex ways in which Indigenous peoples in Canada have historically engaged with, negotiated, and contested wage-labour and continue to do so.

While Coulthard’s reformulation of Marx’s primitive accumulation thesis offers useful insights, I argue that extending Marx’s writing through Moreton-Robinson’s theorization of patriarchal white sovereignty provides a more comprehensive framework for understanding the labour market experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Both Coulthard and Moreton-Robinson demonstrate how the dispossession of Indigenous lands and sovereignties indelibly marks nation-state formation and thus expose the inherent limitations of Marxist analyses that treat Indigenous dispossession as merely an example of the deployment of state power (e.g., Gordon 2007). Moreton-Robinson’s theorization of patriarchal white sovereignty, however, offers unique theoretical insights into how whiteness operates possessively to produce Indigeneity through processes of racialization. More specifically, Moreton-Robinson (2015: xxi) offers a conceptual framework that explicates “the inextricable link between white possession and Aboriginal sovereignty and its articulation through the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty.” The pervasiveness of white possession renders such a framework applicable to a diverse range of contexts.

Most relevant to this thesis is the analysis of the operation of white possessive logics in and through census-making and the labour market. The quantitative literature on

Indigenous labour market outcomes uncritically utilizes census data while normalizing labour market relations. The next chapter explicates the operation of white possessive logics in and through census-making and the labour market while Chapter Three examines the implications of the quantitative literature's failure to do so.

Chapter Two: The Canadian Patriarchal White Capitalist Nation-State

White possession is a common feature that Canada, the United States, New Zealand, and Australia share. In these former British colonies, Indigenous peoples are no longer the sole possessors of their ancestral lands. Rather, British colonists claimed possession of Indigenous lands in the name of patriarchal white sovereignty through conquest, cessation, or as terra nullius (land belonging to no one). While Canada, the United States, New Zealand, and Australia all operationalize the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty to reaffirm their ownership of Indigenous lands, the specificities and manifestations of these possessive logics vary across nation-states (Moreton-Robinson 2015: xxi).

In this chapter, I focus on how white possessive logics operate in Canada, particularly within the context of the labour market and census-making. Understanding how white possessive logics operate at the level of labour market relations and census-making, however, first requires understanding how white possessive logics operate through legal mechanisms. The relation between whiteness, property, and the law, fundamentally informs the labour market experiences of Indigenous people in Canada. Furthermore, census-making in Canada deploys legal definitions to categorize Indigenous peoples. I, therefore, begin this chapter with a brief overview of the legislative mechanisms through which the Canadian state legitimates the appropriation of Indigenous land and manages the existence of Indigenous peoples. In the second and third sections of this chapter, I examine the operation of white possessive logics within the labour market and census-making, respectively.

WHITE POSSESSION AND THE LAW

The law is central to how the Canadian nation-state operationalizes its possessive logics to maintain ownership of Indigenous land and Indigenous people. In Canada, the law

serves to deny Indigenous people their sovereign rights while protecting and valuing patriarchal whiteness. Patriarchal whiteness is the defining feature of personhood and property in law, which precludes the recognition of Indigenous people as property-owning subjects (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 77). As Cheryl Harris (1993: 1716) writes in the U.S. context, “only white possession and occupation of land was validated and therefore privileged as a basis for property rights.” The possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty operate through the law, conferring legal entitlements to those categorized as white, while diminishing the legal entitlements of Indigenous people.

Furthermore, the Canadian government has treated Indigenous people as its property, arrogating to itself the epistemological authority to define who Indigenous people are. As Moreton-Robinson (2015: xxiv) contends, “you cannot dominate without seeking to possess the dominated. You cannot exclude unless you assume you already own.” Accordingly, the racial classification of Indigenous people through legislative mechanisms has been central to reaffirming the Canadian nation-state as a white possession.

Legislative attempts to racially classify Indigenous peoples in Canada began in 1850 with a piece of legislation titled *An Act for the better protection of the Lands and Property of the Indians in Lower Canada*, which included blood quantum as a factor in the legal definition of “Indian.”⁸ Blood quantum became increasingly important in subsequent attempts to define Indians as the government sought to restrict the legal definition of Indian

⁸ The *Act* (s.5) implemented the following criteria to define “Indian”:

- (i) all persons of Indian blood, reputed to belong to the particular Body or Tribe of Indians interested in such lands, and their descendants; (ii) all persons intermarried with any such Indians and residing amongst them, and the descendants of all such persons; (iii) all persons residing among such Indians, whose parents on either side were or are Indians of such Body or Tribe, or entitled to be considered as such; and (iv) all persons adopted in infancy by any such Indians, and residing in the village or upon the lands of such Tribe or Body of Indians, and their descendants.

and thus reduce the number of individuals with access to land and other Indigenous rights. In 1867, the federal government claimed jurisdiction over “Indians and lands reserved for the Indians” under section 91(24) of the *British North America Act*. Pursuant to its powers under s.91(24), the government consolidated all existing legislation concerning the governance of Indigenous people into the *Indian Act* of 1876. Through this legal mechanism the government restricted Indigenous peoples’ autonomy over their lands, political systems, communities, and individual actions (Goeman 2013: 46). Legislation in the act provided the federal government with the authority to define Indian status, determine the land base of reserve communities, and impose colonial governance structures in place of Indigenous governing systems. Under the *Indian Act*, individuals classified as Status Indians became “wards of the state” (Andersen 2014: 78). In short, “Indians” were the legal possession of the Canadian state.

Through the *Indian Act*, the Canadian state established discriminatory and arbitrary standards for defining who was and who was not a Status Indian (Stasiulis and Jhappan 1995: 114). In particular, the *Indian Act* determined Indian status, and the rights attending such status, based on patrilineality (Goeman 2013: 42). According to the *Indian Act*, “‘person’ means any individual other than an Indian” and “‘Indian’ means (i) any male person of Indian blood reputed to belong to a particular band; (ii) any child of such person; (iii) any woman who is or was lawfully married to such a person” (Hinge 1978: 107-108). Under the sexist provisions of the *Indian Act*, thousands of individuals, their families, and their descendants, lost their Indian status (Andersen 2014: 78). Further, individuals stripped of their Indian status, and thus band membership, lost the right to live in reserve communities.

In effect, the *Indian Act* legally excluded individuals without status from taking part in the life of their community.

As Bonita Lawrence (2003: 6) postulates, “the colonial act of establishing legal definitions of Indianness, which excluded vast numbers of Native people from obtaining Indian status, has enabled the Canadian government to remove a significant sector of Native people from the land.” The eventual goal of the *Indian Act* was the process of enfranchisement, through which Status Indians would lose their legal status and rights to land and become (at least formally) full citizens of the Canadian state. Through the process of enfranchisement, the Canadian government “aimed to revoke all Indigenous claims on the state by making Indigenous people legally indistinguishable within it” (McCallum 2014: 13).

A less well known, though similarly racialized, set of legal measures and policies is the scrip system through which the Canadian government sought to extinguish Métis (“Half-Breed”)⁹ claims to “Indian” title (Andersen 2014: 31). In 1869-70, the political activity of the Red River Métis forced the Canadian government to recognize the Métis as a distinct Aboriginal people entitled to a share of “Indian” title (Tough 1996: 115). The legislative outcome was the *Manitoba Act* of 1870, which included an explicit acknowledgement of Métis Aboriginal title. Section 31 of the *Manitoba Act* states:

And whereas, it is expedient, towards the extinguishment of the Indian title to the lands in the Province, to appropriate a portion of such ungranted lands, to the extent of one million four hundred thousand acres thereof, for the benefit of the families of the half-breed residents.

The implementation of the *Manitoba Act*, however, failed to secure a land base for the Métis. Rather, the government’s legislative framework for dealing with Métis claims led to the

⁹ Throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the federal government used the term “Half-Breed” to refer to Métis people (Library and Archives Canada 2012).

eventual dispossession of 85 percent of the original 1.4 million acres set aside for the Métis and the creation of restriction-free commercial property (Andersen 2014: 114). As Frank Tough (1996: 117) writes, “the government’s handling of the Manitoba Métis land grant permitted the successful intervention of the private sector (land speculators) to obtain the benefits of Métis Aboriginal title.”

More specifically, the government attempted to deal with Métis Aboriginal title through the implementation of the scrip system, in which the government issued scrip (a piece of paper redeemable for land or money) to Métis grantees on an individual basis (Tough 1996: 114). The government regarded scrip as an individualized form of surrendering proprietary interests in Aboriginal title (Tough and McGregor 2007: 36-38). Tough (1996: 141) contends, however, that “there is nothing in the process, either in the written documents reporting on the treaty talks or in the application/declaration, which indicates that individual Métis consented to extinguish Aboriginal title.” Moreover, the transfer of land and money scrip ownership from the Métis to land speculators, through means both fraudulent and nefarious, enabled speculators to obtain “land cheaply and then dispose of it on the existing commercial land market” (Tough 1996: 140). Put simply, the scrip system permitted the private purchase of Aboriginal title, dispossessing the Métis while contributing to the creation of a wealthy, regional elite (Tough 1996: 118).

The Crown’s varying approaches to Aboriginal title placed Indigenous peoples under different jurisdictions. The federal government assumed authority over individuals classified as Status Indians under the *Indian Act*, whereas the Métis “dealt with the Department of the Interior and eventually came under provincial authority” (Tough 1996: 141). In particular, the *Indian Act* made a legal distinction between “half-breeds” and “Indians,” excluding “half-

breeds” from legal Indian status.¹⁰ As I explore further in the sections below, whiteness operates possessively through the legislative categories of “Indian” and “Métis” to reproduce racialized understandings of Indigeneity.

WHITE POSSESSION AND THE LABOUR MARKET

Colonialism, broadly defined, refers to “foreign intrusion or domination” (Shoemaker 2015). As Isabel Altamirano-Jiménez (2013: 28) explains, however, “not all empires wanted the same thing from their colonies, nor were all colonized spaces the same.” Accordingly, scholars analytically distinguish between colonialism’s various forms. Nancy Shoemaker (2015), for instance, has produced a typology of colonialism, in which she identifies 12 forms of colonialism, “distinguished mainly by colonizers’ motivations.”¹¹ The relative importance of Indigenous labour to the colonial enterprise figures prominently in scholarly attempts to differentiate colonial formations. The exploitation of Indigenous labour is central to certain colonial formations, such as extractive colonialism. Conversely, the primary motive of settler colonialism is the acquisition of land (Coulthard 2014: 7; Wolfe 2006: 388). According to Patrick Wolfe (1999: 1-2), “settler colonies were not primarily established to extract surplus value from indigenous labour. Rather, they are premised on displacing indigenes from (or *replacing* them on) the land.”

¹⁰ Clause (e) of section 3 of the *Indian Act* states:

Provided also that no half-breed in Manitoba who has shared in the distribution of half-breed lands shall be accounted an Indian; and that no half-breed head of a family (except the widow of an Indian, or a half-breed who has already been admitted into a treaty), shall, unless under very special circumstances, to be determined by the Super-intendent-General or his agent, be accounted an Indian, or entitled to be admitted into any Indian treaty (Hinge 1978: 23).

¹¹ Shoemaker’s 12 forms of colonialism are settler colonialism, planter colonialism, extractive colonialism, trade colonialism, transport colonialism, imperial power colonialism, not-in-my-backyard colonialism, legal colonialism, rogue colonialism, missionary colonialism, romantic colonialism, and postcolonial colonialism. Shoemaker (2015) acknowledges that “there are probably more than these 12 forms of colonialism,” and that “different forms of colonialism might coexist or morph into each other.”

The distinction between land-based and labour-based colonial formations can be useful in understanding the different strategies of domination, as well as different strategies of resistance, that unfold in different colonial contexts (Altamirano-Jiménez 2013: 211-212). Some scholars, however, conflate the argument that settler colonialism is *primarily* interested in land with the argument that settler colonialism is *only* interested in land. Such a conflation produces an overly simplistic analysis that conceals the state's investment in and attempts to control Indigenous labour. Lorenzo Veracini (2015: 94), for instance, argues that settler colonialism “does not desire indigenous labour; it simply wishes indigenous people to vanish.” Veracini's argument forecloses an analysis of the myriad policies and practices through which the state sought to condition Indigenous labouring and selectively incorporate Indigenous peoples into the capitalist economy. Further, it obscures the complex ways in which Indigenous peoples experienced, negotiated, and resisted wage labour. In sum, by claiming that settler colonialism “does not desire indigenous labour,” Veracini erases the complex histories of Indigenous labour in settler colonial societies and thus contributes to the very process he aims to explicate – the settler colonial imperative to make Indigenous people vanish.

Modern Labour

Making Indigenous peoples vanish and rendering Indigenous labour invisible are important ways that white possession operates discursively. Moreton-Robinson (2015: 191) illustrates that the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty demand the inclusion of Indigenous subjects within modernity on terms that it defines such that “we are overdetermined as Indigenous peoples, simultaneously relegated to the past while existing in the present, saturated with meanings operationalized within racialized discourses.” Whiteness

operates possessively within racialized discourses, defining “authentic” Indigeneity in opposition to modernity. Paige Raibmon (2005: 7) contends that the notion of Indian authenticity relies on a wide variety of associated binaries:

First among them was the distinction between Indian and White. Indians, by extension, were traditional, uncivilized, cultural, impoverished, feminine, static, part of nature and of the past. Whites, on the other hand, were modern, civilized, political, prosperous, masculine, dynamic, part of society and of the future.

The implication of understanding Indigeneity in rigid binary terms was that “Indians could never be modern, and thus were (regrettably or thankfully, depending on the perspective) most certainly vanishing” (Raibmon 2005: 7). This binary logic functions to limit Indigenous claims to resources, land, and sovereignty and thus services the interests of patriarchal white nation-states.

In particular, the distinction between “traditional economies” and modern/European labour informed the racialized construction of Indigenous peoples as property-less subjects and thus served as a means of legitimating the appropriation of Indigenous land in the name of patriarchal white sovereignty. As John Lutz (2008: 6) writes, “ideas about what constitutes ‘real’ work are at the heart of Canadian history and colonial histories worldwide.” In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Europeans regarded labour as the source of all value and the basis for the right to ownership. Informing this perspective was the philosophy of John Locke (2001 [1690]: 13): “Whatsoever then he removes out of the state that nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property.” Colonists purported that the labouring activities of Indigenous peoples, including fishing, hunting, gathering, building, and even farming, did not sufficiently remove items from their “state of nature.” Conversely, European fishing,

trapping, farming, and manufacturing, mixed labour with nature and thus provided Europeans with the right to claim the land, waters, and resources as their “property” (Lutz 2008: 7).

Characterizing the productive activities of Indigenous peoples as “not labour” was paramount to declaring the land “unowned” and available for the taking (Lutz 2008: 34). Racialized knowledge operated to reaffirm the separation between Indigenous peoples and labour. Attached to the term “Indian” was a set of racialized attributes that functioned to preclude the recognition of Indigenous peoples as labouring and thus property-owning subjects. As Moreton-Robinson (2014: 475) explains, “when racialized discourse constitutes and defines the “Aborigine,” it is producing through knowledge a subject of its own making, one that it interprets for itself.” In a similar way, the term “Indian” functions as a white epistemological possession, racially signifying primitiveness, savagery, laziness, and overall inferiority.

In addition, labour allowed colonists to “value themselves in opposition to the ‘savage’ or ‘lazy Indian’” (Altamirano-Jiménez 2013: 31). The idea of Indigenous laziness contrasted with the supposed “industriousness” and “hard work,” of European nations. European perspectives about what constituted appropriate labour evolved historically as industry replaced agriculture in Europe. The highly regulated and intensified work of factory labourers became the standard for work and as such “laziness came to mean unwilling to work for fourteen hours a day at routine factory labour under quasi-military discipline for subsistence pay” (Lutz 2008: 34). Thus, added to the list of binaries distinguishing Indian and White, was laziness, which belonged to the former, and industrious which belonged to the latter. As John Lutz (2008: 36) notes “so long as ‘Indians’ were defined as ‘lazy’ or

‘vanishing’ (preferably both), their displacement by the virile, enterprising white race was seen as legitimate.”

The binary mindset that functioned to legitimate the appropriation of Indigenous land “remains widespread, deep-seated, and largely invisible” (Raibmon 2005: 14). It is evident in the argument that settler colonialism “did not desire Indigenous labour” and it persists in labour histories of Canada. A prevailing misconception is that after the fur trade Indigenous peoples in Canada remained outside the capitalist economy. For example, in his analysis of Indigenous-European relations in British Columbia between 1774-1890, historian Robin Fisher (1977: 96) argues that “Vancouver Island and British Columbia were changing from colonies of exploitation, which made use of indigenous manpower, to colonies of settlement, where the Indians became at best, irrelevant.” The tendency to omit Indigenous peoples from labour histories is a product of the racialized discourse that constructs Indigeneity as incongruent with modern labour. Labour historians “inherited the powerful colonial binary of ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ and accepted the mindset that Indians belonged to the former category, workers to the latter. ...The term *Indian worker* became an oxymoron” (Raibmon 2006: 25-26, emphasis in original).

Counter-Discourse

Contrary to the claim that settler colonialism did not desire Indigenous labour, several historical studies highlight the value of Indigenous labour to capitalist economic development in “settler” societies.¹² In his historical analysis of Indigenous labour in British Columbia, for instance, John Lutz (2008: 279) argues that Indigenous people “were, in fact,

¹² See, for example, Knight (1996), Littlefield and Knack (1996), Lutz (2008), Parnaby (2006). In this section, I present historical case studies from diverse nations, geographies, and industries. Given that Indigenous people’s engagements with work and labour span across the borders of nation-states, I do not limit my discussion to labour within the Canadian border.

essential to the development of new industries and to the spread of capitalism in the province-to-be.” More specifically, Indigenous labour “allowed the rapid creation of an economic base, from the fur trade, to coal mining, sawmilling, and salmon canning” (Lutz 2008: 279). Similarly, in her historical study of Indigenous migrant workers, Paige Raibmon (2006) demonstrates how Indigenous labour contributed to the industrial capitalist development of Puget Sound. In the late nineteenth century, Indigenous people from diverse Pacific Northwest nations travelled south to engage in seasonal wage labour in the hop fields of western Washington. Raibmon (2006: 31) notes that “Indigenous workers constituted the vast majority of the harvest season labor force, and of these, women outnumbered men.” Raibmon (2006: 30) concludes that Indigenous labour, in addition to Indigenous land, directly underwrote the remarkable prosperity of the hop industry.

Without Indigenous labour, early capitalism in these regions could not have prospered as it did (Lutz 2008: 8; Raibmon 2006: 32). Both Lutz and Raibmon note, however, that racial stereotypes depicting Indigenous people as lazy, primitive, and inferior persisted alongside contradictory remarks concerning the value and prevalence of Indigenous labour. This racialized discourse persisted “because without assurances of white racial and cultural supremacy, the moral authority and future success of the entire colonial enterprise was suspect” (Raibmon 2006: 32). Indigenous workers’ significant contributions to the settler economy threatened to undermine easy distinctions between Indian and white workers. Accordingly, racialized discourse functioned to deny that Indigenous people “were workers at all and [insisted] that they were, above all, ‘Indians’” (Raibmon 2006: 52).

The work of Lutz and Raibmon contributes to a growing body of historical research that challenges many of the prevailing assumptions regarding Indigenous labour.¹³ Most notably, this body of research rejects the assumption that culture or tradition prohibited Indigenous people from engaging with modern capitalism. Rather, the state played an integral role in determining how, when, and where Indigenous people engaged with the capitalist economy. Although Indigenous people often engaged in wage labour “for their own reasons and of their own volition . . . , it is undeniable that colonial usurpation of hereditary lands and resources steadily narrowed the range of Indigenous economic choices” (Raibmon 2006: 27). In his economic history of northern Manitoba, for instance, Frank Tough (1996: 230) writes “as the treaty process had dispossessed Indians of their resources, they really were left with no option but to sell their labour.”

As the appropriation of land and resources restricted Indigenous people’s access to subsistence labouring, various state policies and practices also restricted Indigenous people’s access to the capitalist economy. Sarah Carter (2019), for example, documents how the federal government restricted Indigenous farmers residing on reserves from participating in commercial agriculture. Carter’s (2019: 12) historical study challenges the prevailing view that “the Indians of western Canada failed to adapt to agriculture because of their cultural traditions.” Carter demonstrates that Indigenous people responded positively to agriculture and were initially successful relative to non-Indigenous farmers in the region. Following this initial success, non-Indigenous farmers complained to government officials about “unfair” competition from Indians, claiming that “Indians are raising so much grain and farm produce that they are taking away the market from the white settlers” (1888 *Commons Debates* cited

¹³ See, for example, McCallum (2014), Hosmer and O’Neill (2004), O’Neill (2005), Sangster (2007).

in Carter 2019: 188). In response, the federal government restricted Indigenous farmers from raising and selling a surplus. Additionally, government policy restricted Indigenous farmers from investing in higher yielding methods of production (Carter 2019: 255). According to Carter (2019: ix), “government policies made it virtually impossible for reserve agriculture to succeed.” Thus, contrary to prevailing assumptions, government policy rather than Indigenous culture or character undermined the success of reserve agriculture.

Attempts to restrict Indigenous people’s access to the capitalist economy extended well beyond the agriculture industry. Through various legal mechanisms, the state conditioned Indigenous people’s engagements with capitalism in significant ways. Most notably, the *Indian Act* legally excluded Status Indians from certain industries, while severely limiting the ways in which they could participate in capitalist relations more generally. For instance, the *Indian Act* prohibited Status Indians from owning or working in establishments that sold alcohol, essentially excluding them from the hospitality industries until 1956 (Lutz 2008: 236). Moreover, the *Indian Act* severely restricted Indigenous entrepreneurship. As Lutz (2008: 237) notes “Indians did not own their own land.” Rather, the Crown owned reserve lands and held them in trust for Indians. Thus, whereas white entrepreneurs could borrow, using their house and land as collateral, to invest in stock, equipment, or more land, Indians could not mortgage to similarly raise capital. This lack of borrowing power placed Indigenous people at a disadvantage relative to white entrepreneurs, “in every industry that required capital investment” (Lutz 2008: 237).

Through the gender-segregated manual labour training of residential schools, the state further conditioned how, when, and where Indigenous people could work (Camfield 2019: 162). Residential school curricula primarily focused on instructing Indigenous boys to

become labourers and Indigenous girls to become domestic help (McCallum 2014: 29; Miller 1996). Moreover, the institutions themselves were fully dependent upon the manual labour of Indigenous students and as such “domestic training was often simply a thin veneer to induce the student labour that was needed to run the institutions” (McCallum 2014: 29). As Mary Jane Logan McCallum (2014: 31) notes, “the emphasis on labour at the schools contributed directly to their abysmal failure as academic institutions; the majority of students did not complete an elementary education.” In short, residential schools streamed Indigenous students into the unskilled workforce.¹⁴

The deployment of state power to control Indigenous labouring corresponded to the shifting demands of capital. Thus, while the state restricted Indigenous people’s access to the capitalist economy, it also actively intervened to force Indigenous people into market relations when industries needed a cheap source of labour. In their historical study of the sugar-beet industry in southern Alberta, Ron Laliberte and Vic Satzewich (1999) explicate the role of the state in mobilizing Indigenous workers from reserves and Métis communities in northern Alberta and Saskatchewan to relieve that industry’s labour shortage in the 1950s and 1960s. Laliberte and Satzewich (1999: 65) demonstrate that “various levels of the state, acting through federal/provincial manpower committees and the Indian Affairs Branch of the federal government, used a variety of paternalistic and coercive measures to help farmers in

¹⁴ In addition to providing substandard education, the residential school system also subjected many students to physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015: 45):

Many children were fed a substandard diet and given a substandard education, and worked too hard. For far too long, they died in tragically high numbers. Discipline was harsh and unregulated; abuse was rife and unreported. It was, at best, institutionalized child neglect.

The genocidal nature of residential schools not only impacted the lives of those who attended but it has also impacted the lives of the generations who followed. For further discussion of Canada’s residential school system see Chartrand, Logan, and Daniels (2006), Milloy (1999), and the TRC (2015).

southern Alberta recruit and retain Native workers.” One of the key tactics used to coerce Indigenous people into wage relations with sugar-beet farmers was to terminate social assistance benefits during the months of May and June, which was the peak period when farmers required labour (Laliberte and Satzewich 1999: 80).¹⁵ With no other job prospects in the area, the termination of welfare benefits effectively forced Indigenous people from northern Alberta and Saskatchewan to migrate to the sugar-beet fields of southern Alberta in search of employment. According to Laliberte and Satzewich (1999: 75), “the Native migrant labour force which was created by the Canadian state became a key component in the annual production of sugar beets in southern Alberta.”

The growing body of historical research on the labouring activities of Indigenous peoples importantly highlights the state’s role in conditioning Indigenous labour. Against the argument that settler colonialism did not desire Indigenous labour, this research reveals that the state not only desired Indigenous labour, but it also played an integral role in producing the particular form of Indigenous labour that it desired. More specifically, the state sought to condition Indigenous labour in ways that would facilitate the accumulation of capital while protecting white possession of markets and industries. By highlighting the role of restrictive state policies and practices, this body of research challenges the prevailing assumption that Indigenous culture is inherently incompatible with modern capitalism.

Moreover, by rejecting binary understandings of “traditional culture” and “modern labour,” this body of research challenges the linear model of assimilation and loss that pervades previous labour histories. According to the binary framework that defines authentic

¹⁵ Indian Affairs officials stopped welfare payments to Indigenous people who resided on reserves, whereas the provincial welfare agencies likewise halted welfare payments to non-Status Indians and Métis people (Laliberte and Satzewich 1999: 82)

Indigeneity in opposition to modernity, modern Indians, such as those who participated in modern wage labour, “were not Indians at all, they were assimilated” (Raibmon 2005: 9). Consistent with this binary logic, labour histories tend to focus on the decline, dependence, and ultimate irrelevance of Indian people to the modern Canadian economy (McCallum 2014: 5). Conversely, scholars, such as Raibmon (2006: 26), demonstrate that “Indigenous workers across North America commonly engaged in so-called traditional and modern economies simultaneously.” Moreover, participation in these economies overlapped and intersected as Indigenous workers adapted historically entrenched skills for introduction into new capitalist markets and used income from “modern” wage labor to meet “traditional” obligations to kin and community. As Raibmon (2006: 26) contends, “wages in their pockets did not turn Indian workers into assimilated subjects.” Rather, “Indigenous workers assigned their own meanings to wage work” (Raibmon 2006: 26).

WHITE POSSESSION AND THE CENSUS

Statistics and the census are central to nation-state building (Curtis 2001). Census-making configures social relations into a statistical form known as “population” and in doing so, renders such social relations amenable to government intervention. Censuses do not passively record aspects of social relations, but rather arrange social relations in accordance with particular political and cultural objectives (Curtis 2001: 33). “Population,” is therefore not a pre-existing empirical entity. Rather, it is the product of a socio-political process that aims to gain “purchase on dimensions of social life, by ‘investing’ social life in governmental and administrative forms” (Curtis 2001: 24). In colonizing nation-states, such as Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, the census standardizes Indigenous peoples into more administratively manageable configurations. As such, census categories reflect colonial

agendas rather than “the highly contextual collective self-understandings of Indigenous peoples themselves” (Walter and Andersen 2013: 12).

In Canada, the census relies on and reproduces the legitimacy of legal-administrative categories of Aboriginality. More specifically, Statistics Canada (2018: 14) derives Aboriginal identity from data collected in three questions: 1) Aboriginal group (Question 18); 2) Registered or Treaty Indian status (Question 20); and 3) Membership in a First Nation or Indian band (Question 21).¹⁶ Question 18: Aboriginal group includes three categories of Aboriginal peoples – First Nations (North American Indian), Métis, and Inuk (Inuit) – all of which, as Andersen (2014: 72) notes, “are heavily embedded in Canada’s colonial and taxonomical classification systems.”

Although census respondents have the agency of self-identification, “legitimacy comes only in doing so via those categories legible to the state itself” (Midzain-Gobin 2021: 1727). Accordingly, census-making in Canada operationalizes the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty. By utilizing legal-administrative categories of Aboriginality the census reconfigures Indigenous sociality into homogenized populations legible to the state and amenable to governance. As Walter and Andersen (2013: 21) contend, “the categories utilized to collect data are methodologically configured to produce only certain kinds of data.” In this section, I discuss two important ways in which census categories produce data that reaffirm white possession of the Canadian nation-state, while disavowing the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples. First, the census naturalizes a racialized construction

¹⁶ Question 17: Ethnic Origin collects information on Aboriginal ancestry (Statistics Canada 2018: 11). As Andersen (2013: 627) notes, however, Aboriginal population estimates produced using the ethnic origins question have “ceased to function as an evidence base for research relating to Aboriginal issues or social relations.” I discuss Statistics Canada’s switch from Aboriginal “ethnicity” to Aboriginal “self-identification” in the section *Deficit-Based Enumerations*.

of Métis, and in doing so marginalizes the construction of the Métis as a sovereign Indigenous nation (Andersen 2008). Second, the census produces deficit-based configurations that align with neoliberal policy objectives in which the Canadian state governs through Indigenous disadvantage. Understanding the alignment of deficit-based statistical configurations of Indigeneity with neoliberal policy objectives requires first delineating neoliberalism. I therefore prefix my discussion of deficit-based enumerations with a brief overview of neoliberalism.

Racialization of the Métis

Question 18 of the 2016 Canadian Census asked, “Is this person an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit)?” to which respondents could reply “Yes, First Nations (North American Indian),” “Yes, Métis,” “Yes, Inuk (Inuit)” or “No, not an Aboriginal person” (Statistics Canada 2018: 13). What respondents mean, however, when they check off “Yes, Métis” is unclear. The term “Métis” has (at least) two competing definitions, one national, the other racial. In nationalist terms, the Métis are an Indigenous nation with a collective political self-consciousness, history, and territory (Andersen 2014: 17). Specifically, the Métis are “a nation of Indigenous people who rose to prominence on the northern plains of what is now (roughly) western Canada at the beginning of the nineteenth century” (Andersen 2016: 73). The Métis on the northern plains of western Canada formed “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” (Andersen 2008: 350).

The racial classification central to Canadian nation-state building has naturalized a second meaning of the term “Métis.” In direct competition with a nationalist construction of Métis is a racialized understanding of Métis, in which the term merely denotes mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous ancestry (Andersen 2016: 75). Statistics Canada’s census questionnaire fails to differentiate between racialized and national meanings of Métis. Accordingly, the enumeration of “Métis” includes any Indigenous individual who self-identifies as Métis, regardless of their ancestral connections to the Métis Nation. As a privileged site of knowledge production in Canadian society, the census imbues Métis administrative categories with meanings that “are re-deployed in other arenas of social life” (Andersen 2014: 9). As such, Andersen (2008: 347) argues that “the lack of explicit Census categories to distinguish Métis Nation allegiance further naturalises a racialised construction of Métis at the expense of an indigenously national one.”

Importantly, the conflation of “Métis” with “mixedness” not only sustains the racialization of the Métis, but it also sustains the racialization of Indigenous people more generally. As Andersen (2014: 7) explains:

[The] decision to use ‘métis’ as a conceptual placeholder for mixedness both relies on and reproduces a racialized hierarchy of indigeneity premised on a chain of logic that includes two elements: (1) if Métis are mixed, then First Nations and Inuit must not be (because, if we were all mixed, the term would lose its distinguishing power); and (2) if Métis are mixed and First Nations and Inuit are not, then, *ipso facto*, Métis must be less Indigenous.

By this racialized logic, “Métis” occupies an intermediary position between Indian and white. This “in-between” position signifies the relative inauthenticity of Métis while simultaneously reproducing the idea of a pre-contact Indigenous authenticity. Conflating Métis with mixedness thus reaffirms the rigid Indian/white binary along with all its associated binaries (e.g., traditional/modern, uncivilized/civilized, cultural/political). Positioning authentic

Indigeneity in opposition to whiteness along a series of binary oppositions serves to “reaffirm the supposed superiority of the latter over the apparent primitiveness of the former” (Andersen 2009: 92). Thus, understanding the Métis in racialized, rather than national terms not only disavows the sovereignty of the Métis Nation but it also reproduces the racialized discourse through which the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty operate to disavow the sovereign presence of all Indigenous peoples. As Andersen (2014: 10-11) asserts, the racialization of the Métis is “part of a larger set of colonial projects through which administrators have attempted to usurp all the Indigenous territories upon which colonial nation-states such as Canada have been produced and legitimated and Indigenous peoples displaced and dispossessed.”

Neoliberalism

The expansive literature pertaining to conceptual discussions on neoliberalism in conjunction with the diversity of studies on neoliberalism in practice reveals that neoliberalism is “a process that involves a multiplicity of – often contradictory – effects and practices” (Altamirano-Jiménez 2013: 5). Scholars have introduced the concept of “actually existing neoliberalism” to distinguish between neoliberalism in theory and practice, while recognizing a broad correspondence between the two (Cahill 2010: 305; Brenner and Theodore 2002; Peck and Tickell 2002).

The defining features of neoliberal theory are deregulation, privatization, and marketization. Maria Bargh (2007: 1), for instance, defines neoliberalism as:

Those practices and policies which seek to extend the market mechanism into areas of the community previously organised and governed in other ways. This process involves the entrenching of the three central tenets of neoliberalism: ‘free’ trade and the ‘free’ mobility of capital, accompanied by a broad reduction in the ambit and role of the state.

Underpinning neoliberal theory is the belief that “open, competitive, and unregulated markets, liberated from all forms of state interference, represent the optimal mechanism for economic development” (Brenner and Theodore 2002: 350). In practice,¹⁷ however, the state has not diminished in size and scope, but rather continues to play a strong, active, interventionist, and coercive role (Cahill 2007: 222; Cahill 2010: 301-302). As Damien Cahill (2010: 305) contends, “it has been demonstrated that the state has maintained a pervasive presence in the regulation of economic and social life during the last three decades, thus contravening a key normative prescription of neoliberal theory.”

The centrality of the state to the project of neoliberalism represents a divergence between neoliberal theory and practice. Although the regulatory apparatuses of the state have not diminished, actually existing neoliberalism nonetheless maintains a broad correspondence with neoliberal theory. Most notably, states have transferred many public services to the private sector in the name of creating a market for such services (Cahill 2007: 225). At the core of actually existing neoliberalism is thus a reworking of the relationship between state, market, and civil society, rather than a reduction in state power (Brenner and Theodore 2002; England and Ward 2007). While no longer the direct deliverer of public services, the state continues to deploy its regulatory apparatuses to secure the formal freedoms central to neoliberal theory. Put simply, actually existing neoliberalism is “the extension of market rule and disciplines, principally by means of state power” (Tickell and Peck 2003: 165).

¹⁷ While neoliberal ideas emerged in the 1940s, many scholars link the actual institutionalization of neoliberalism to the period since the early 1970s (Cahill 2010: 302; Heynen et al. 2007).

Deficit-Based Enumerations

Andersen (2013: 626) demonstrates that Statistics Canada introduced an Aboriginal “self-identification” question to the census not to measure Aboriginal identity more accurately but rather to construct a population that more closely aligns with the nation-state’s development-based policy objectives. Prior to 1986, Statistics Canada enumerated Aboriginality as a form of ethnic ancestry. The addition of a self-identification question has produced two principle estimates of the Canadian Indigenous population: one based on Indigenous “ancestry,” and the other on Indigenous “identity” (Andersen 2013: 626). Compared to the ancestry population, the identity population is much smaller, more socioeconomically disadvantaged, and more rural (Andersen 2013: 640). In short, the “identity” category produces “reliable deficit-based enumerations of Aboriginality” (Andersen 2013: 628).

The production of deficit-based enumerations of Aboriginality is consistent with paternalistic neoliberal strategies in which the nation-state governs Indigenous peoples through their socio-economic disadvantage. A growing body of scholarship reveals the racialized effects of poverty governance in the neoliberal age for Indigenous peoples across Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.¹⁸ As Deirdre Howard-Wagner (2018: 1334) argues, in the Australian context, “governing through Indigenous disadvantage operates as a complex, overt racial project in which Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander peoples are invented, constituted and assimilated into the neo-liberal body politic through the positive paternalistic governing of their socio-economic disadvantage.” The neoliberal state reduces Indigenous peoples to a socio-economically disadvantaged sub-population (“the Indigenous population”)

¹⁸ See for example, Bielefeld (2018), Howard-Wagner (2018), Howard-Wagner, Bargh, Altamirano-Jiménez (2018), and Moreton-Robinson (2009).

within the wider population, then attempts to assimilate the Indigenous population into the mainstream economy. Governing through Indigenous disadvantage enables the neoliberal state to reconfigure Indigenous politics, dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their sovereign rights (Howard-Wagner 2018: 1334).

Poverty governance in the neoliberal age reduces Indigenous disadvantage to socio-economic circumstances, and thus ignores the past and present effects of discriminatory treatment. The solution to Indigenous disadvantage is to eliminate material inequality through measures as simple as getting an education and getting a job (Howard-Wagner 2018: 1340). Poverty governance thus addresses disadvantage through an individualistic framework in which the socio-economic conditions of the poor/disadvantaged individual are the target of intervention (e.g., lack of education, training, and employment) (Howard-Wagner, Bargh, Altamirano-Jiménez 2018: 18).

The individualism of neoliberalism, according to Moreton-Robinson (2009: 68), enables “the impoverished conditions under which Indigenous people live to be rationalised as a product of dysfunctional cultural traditions and individual bad behaviour.” In short, “Indigenous disadvantage is racially pathologized” (Howard-Wagner 2018: 1344). The linking of Indigenous disadvantage to Indigenous pathology denies the effects of colonization in producing economic dependency and thus services the legitimacy of patriarchal white sovereignty (Moreton-Robinson 2009: 70). The discourse of Indigenous pathology serves to justify a multitude of policy interventions aimed at empowering the individual Indigenous citizen to become “an assimilated productive participant in the mainstream economy” (Howard-Wagner 2018: 1346).

CONCLUSION

The labour market and the census are two sites in which the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty operate to reaffirm the Canadian nation-state as a white possession, while disavowing Indigenous peoples of their sovereign right to resources and sovereign claims to nationhood. Labour market relations and census-making both rely on and reproduce the racialization that is central to Canada's claims to legitimacy as a nation-state. In the next chapter, I examine a site in which the racialization of census-making and the labour market converge, namely quantitative academic research that utilizes census data to analyze the labour market outcomes of Indigenous populations.

Chapter Three: White Possession in Academic Quantitative Labour Market Research

A growing body of quantitative academic research utilizes official statistics to analyze the labour market outcomes of Indigenous peoples in Canada. This body of research primarily seeks to measure and explain the labour market disadvantages of the “Indigenous population” relative to the non-Indigenous population. The statistical portrait that emerges from this research is one of persistent Indigenous deficit. Despite marginal improvements in labour market participation and economic status, the Indigenous population consistently lags behind the non-Indigenous population across several key labour market indicators.

These Indigenous labour market statistics, like quantitative data more generally, operate as though they are objective measures of reality, powerfully influencing governance, social policy, and public perceptions. Statistics, however, are neither natural nor normal.

Rather, as Walter and Andersen (2013: 9) assert:

The quantitative methodologies that guide the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data about Indigenous peoples both reflect and constitute, in ways largely invisible to their producers and users, the dominant cultural framework of the nation-state within which they (that is, statistics) operate.

In patriarchal white nation-states, like Canada, the dominant cultural framework is heavily invested in reproducing and reaffirming the nation as a white possession. Accordingly, the quantitative methodologies predominantly used within patriarchal white nation-states both reflect and constitute an investment in white possession.

In this chapter, I analyze how white possession functions within quantitative academic research on Indigenous labour market outcomes. I argue that Indigenous labour market statistics operate as white epistemological possessions (Moreton-Robinson 2015) that service the interests of patriarchal white sovereignty. Population statistics are a key technology through which Indigenous peoples become known to the nation-state (Walter and

Andersen 2013: 8). The existing quantitative academic research consistently produces statistical depictions that constitute Indigenous peoples as deficient and in doing so provides an evidentiary base that supports the neo-liberal racial project of governing through Indigenous disadvantage. I begin with a brief overview of the conceptualization of research methodology that guides my critical analysis. I then provide an overview of the quantitative academic research on Indigenous labour market outcomes, before explicating the ways in which the dominant methodology underpinning this body of research both reflects and constitutes an investment in white possession.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To denaturalize the dominant methodological approach to Indigenous labour market statistics, I draw on Walter and Andersen's (2013) conceptualization of research methodology. Walter and Andersen (2013: 44) conceptualize methodology in three components: standpoint, theoretical frame, and methods. Standpoint refers to the researcher's epistemological, axiological, ontological, and social positioning. Epistemology, axiology, and ontology concern ways of knowing, value systems, and understandings of reality, respectively, while social position comprises and reflects who the researcher is socially, economically, culturally, and racially (Walter and Andersen 2013: 46-53). The research standpoint, according to Walter and Andersen (2013: 45), "is arguably the most important determinant of a research project's methodology. It pre-exists and fundamentally influences our choices of theoretical frame and method." From this conceptualization, an important distinction between method and methodology emerges. Method is a technique for gathering and analyzing data, whereas methodology "contains the cultural, social, and consequently, political meanings of research process and practice" (Walter and Andersen 2013: 65).

Many quantitative scholars, however, use the terms “methodological approach,” “methodology,” and “methods” interchangeably, and as such, often (mis)use the term methodology to describe the statistical techniques used in the analysis.¹⁹ In their review of the literature examining Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal wage differentials in Canada, Lamb et al. (2018: 227) write “even though this review is illustrative rather than exhaustive, it underscores the fact that, regardless of the dataset or methodological approach used, significant earnings disparities between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians continue to persist.” I argue that the statistical *method* (e.g., chi square, ordinary least squares regression, logistic regression) rather than the methodological approach varies across studies. The underpinning *methodology* is remarkably consistent across studies, and it is this consistency in methodology that contributes to the consistency in research findings.

The established methodological approach to quantitative research on Indigenous labour market outcomes reflects the dominant cultural framework of the Canadian nation-state and as such produces statistical portraits that conform to its underlying epistemological, axiological, and ontological assumptions. More specifically, the methodological assumptions that shape Indigenous labour market statistics are those of the white colonizer majority. Although quantitative researchers clearly state the statistical methods used in the analysis, they fail to acknowledge the culturally and racially situated origins and parameters of their methodology. Consequently, the established methodological practices of such research appear natural and normal. The apparent normalcy of these methodological practices

¹⁹ For example, Lamb (2013) uses the term methodology to describe the statistical equation predominantly used in labour market analyses. Referring to the literature examining Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal wage differentials, Lamb (2013: 225) states “the methodology generally adopted is the widely used Mincer (1974) equation, whereby earnings are a function of education, experience and some vector of observable characteristics.” See also Calver (2015), Feir (2013), Hossain and Lamb (2012), and Mueller (2004).

contributes to the presumed neutrality of Indigenous labour market statistics. The methodological practices, however, that produce Indigenous labour market statistics permit certain ways of understanding Indigeneity, while marginalizing alternative understandings.

INDIGENOUS LABOUR MARKET RESEARCH

My analysis focuses on 18 articles published in academic journals between 1994 and 2021. Criteria for inclusion include peer-reviewed articles that use quantitative methods to analyze the labour market outcomes of Indigenous people in Canada. To find articles that meet these criteria, I searched electronic databases (e.g., Academic Search Complete) using the following search terms: Indigenous, Aboriginal, income, earnings, employment, labour market, and Canada. I also obtained articles to include in the analysis from the references of articles that met the selection criteria. Table 1 provides a summary of the 18 articles used in the analysis. Specifically, Table 1 identifies the dependent variable, data source, comparison, Indigenous groups, and methods for each article.

Research Objective and Background

The broad objective of this body of research is to measure and explain the labour market disadvantages of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Different studies, however, focus on different labour market outcomes. Much of this research examines the wage and income differentials between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous Canadians (e.g., De Silva 1999; George and Kuhn 1994; Lamb 2013; Maxim et al. 2001; Mueller 2004; Pendakur and Pendakur 2011), while other studies focus on labour market participation and unemployment rates (e.g., Ciceri and Scott 2006; Drost 1994; White et al. 2003).²⁰ These studies consistently

²⁰ Most studies restrict the non-Indigenous population to non-minority, non-immigrant Canadians (e.g., Ciceri and Scott 2006; Feir 2013; Kuhn and Sweetman 2002; Mueller 2004). Pendakur and Pendakur (2011: 81 n.2) use “British” as the comparison group, arguing that:

begin with a description of the dire socio-economic conditions that Indigenous peoples in Canada experience. For instance, the first sentence of Belayet Hussain and Laura Lamb's (2012: 440) article is "Aboriginal Canadians are among the poorest in Canada often living in communities epitomized by economic and social adversity." Similarly, the first sentence of Mathew Calver's (2015: 27) article is "the economic and social outcomes of Canada's Aboriginal people lag far behind those of the population more generally."

Theoretical Frameworks

Human Capital.

To help explain the disadvantaged positioning of Indigenous people, researchers commonly draw on human capital theory (e.g., Calver 2015; Fan et al. 2017; Haan et al. 2020). Human capital theory posits that investing in human capital (through education and training) increases the productive capacity of individuals, thereby increasing their economic value (Becker 1962, 1964; Mincer 1958, 1974). In short, differential investments in human capital explain income differentials. Following human capital theory, researchers link the Indigenous income gap to the educational attainment gap. Accordingly, the proposed solution to income inequality for Indigenous peoples is to increase their educational attainment. Moreover, investing in the human capital of Indigenous peoples purportedly provides a means of increasing Canada's overall labour productivity performance. As Calver (2015: 27) asserts, "the low education levels of Canada's Aboriginal population offer an opportunity to

After controlling for personal characteristics such as age and education there is little difference in earnings across the majority groups (British, French, or Canadian). Thus, we interpret our results as being the difference between any given Aboriginal group and the Canadian-born majority population. Early studies (e.g., DeSilva 1999; George and Kuhn 1994) indicate that the focus of the analysis is the disparity in labour market outcomes between "natives and whites."

improve our labour productivity performance by increasing the human capital of Aboriginal Canadians.”

Signaling.

Another theory used to explain earnings differentials is signaling theory (e.g., Calver 2015). Like human capital theory, signaling theory posits a positive relation between education and income (Spence 1973; Layard and Psacharopoulos 1974). According to signaling theory, however, education signals rather than increases the productive capacity of individuals. The value of education, is therefore, not the skills learned but rather the credential obtained, which employers use to identify pre-existing differences in traits and abilities. The distinction between signaling and human capital theories has important implications for the development of education policy. In accordance with signaling theory, Calver (2015: 31 n.11) asserts:

If Aboriginal youth are not earning the credentials that provide the correct labour market signals because they lack the desired traits, then the solution is to focus on the underlying social or cultural issues which are not producing these traits among the Aboriginal population rather than changing the education system itself.

Calver (2015: 31 n.11) further asserts that eliminating the education gap without fixing these underlying problems would merely lower the standards required to earn a credential thereby reducing the quality of the signals, which would ultimately decrease average economic performance.

Assimilation.

Drawing on analyses of immigrants’ economic assimilation, Peter Kuhn and Arthur Sweetman (2002) formulate another explanation for Indigenous peoples’ labour market outcomes, which they term “the assimilation hypothesis.” Kuhn and Sweetman (2002: 331) argue that like immigrants, Indigenous peoples in Canada possess “a set of skills and cultural

traits (including language) that are not ideally suited to economic success.” By assimilating into the dominant culture, Indigenous peoples (like immigrants) acquire the skills and traits that enhance their economic success (Kuhn and Sweetman 2002: 332). The assimilation hypothesis, therefore, posits a positive relation between Indigenous peoples’ degree of assimilation into the dominant culture and their labour market success.²¹

Data Source

The most used data sources for studying the labour market outcomes of Indigenous peoples are the census and the Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS). According to Statistics Canada’s (2017: 1) “Aboriginal Peoples Reference Guide” for the 2016 Census, “there are various ways to define the Aboriginal population using data from the 2016 Census of Population, depending on the focus and the requirements of the data user.” The following five variables, constructed from answers reported in four questions, define the Aboriginal population: Aboriginal identity (derived from Questions 18, 20, and 21); Aboriginal group (Question 18); Registered or Treaty Indian status (Question 20); Membership in a First Nation or Indian band (Question 21); and Aboriginal ancestry (Question 17 – Ethnic origin). Additionally, the following variables pertaining to legally defined geographic regions are available to data users: Residence on or off reserve; and Residence inside or outside Inuit Nunangat (Statistics Canada 2017: 1-2).

First conducted in 1991, the APS is a postcensal survey that collects data on the social and economic conditions of First Nations people living off reserve, Métis, and Inuit (Statistics Canada 2018b: 5). The target population of the 2017 APS, which represents the fifth cycle of the survey, was the Aboriginal identity population of Canada, 15 years of age

²¹ For a recent application of Kuhn and Sweetman’s (2002) assimilation hypothesis see Haan et al. (2020).

and over, living in private dwellings excluding people living on Indian reserves and settlements and in certain First Nations communities in Yukon and the Northwest Territories (NWT). Like previous iterations of the survey, the 2017 APS selected its sample from respondents who reported either Aboriginal identity or Aboriginal ancestry to the Census questionnaire (Statistics Canada 2018b: 14-15).²²

The 2017 APS uses standard Statistics Canada classifications for Aboriginal identity, such that the Aboriginal identity population includes anyone who self-reported being at least one of the following: an Aboriginal person (i.e., First Nations/North American Indian, Métis, or Inuk/Inuit); a Status Indian (i.e., a Registered or Treaty Indian as defined by the Indian Act of Canada); and/or a member of a First Nation or Indian band. The 2017 APS did not measure Aboriginal ancestry directly and as such includes derived variables for Aboriginal ancestry based on data from the 2016 Census (Statistics Canada 2018b: 7-8).

According to Statistics Canada (2018b: 39), “the census and the APS are both rich sources of information on Aboriginal peoples that complement each other.” Although both the census and the APS provide information on labour market activities, the APS provides such information in more detail. For instance, the census provides information on “labour force status, class of worker, industry, occupation and work activity,” while the APS provides additional information concerning “part-time employment, permanent work, job satisfaction, looking for work, labour market attachment, past job attachment, labour mobility and other labour activities” (Statistics Canada 2018b: 39).

²² The target population for both the 2012 APS and the 2017 APS was the Aboriginal identity population. The APS sample, however, included both the identity population and the ancestry-only population “because it was noted that in past survey iterations, slightly less than one-third of the census ancestry-only population reported Aboriginal identity in the APS” (Statistics Canada 2018b: 16).

Aboriginal Groups

Some studies examine the “Canadian Aboriginal population” as a single entity (Drost 1994; Fan et al. 2017; Hossain and Lamb 2012), whereas others disaggregate the Indigenous population into different Indigenous groups. The number and composition of these groups, however, vary across studies. Kuhn and Sweetman (2002: 333), for instance, use two Aboriginal ethnic groups in their analysis: 1) “single origin Aboriginals,” which they define as individuals reporting a single ethnic origin, if that origin is Aboriginal; and 2) “multiple origin Aboriginals,” defined as individuals reporting multiple ethnic origins, if at least one origin is Aboriginal. Similarly, Richard Mueller (2004: 40) disaggregates the Aboriginal population “into those with ‘some’ Aboriginal origin and those with exclusively or ‘all’ Aboriginal origins.” In their comparative analysis of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women’s labour force activity, Jerry White, Paul Maxim, and Stephen O. Gyimah (2003: 392) construct two groups of Aboriginal women: 1) “Registered/Status Indian;” and 2) “other Aboriginal women, excluding the Inuit.” Other studies (e.g., Maxim et al. 2001; Park 2021) use four distinct groups: Registered Indian; non-status First Nations; Métis; and Inuit.

Findings

The three most consistent findings across studies are 1) Indigenous peoples continue to experience socio-economic disparities relative to their non-Indigenous counterparts; 2) educational attainment is a key factor influencing the labour market outcomes of Indigenous peoples; and 3) certain Indigenous groups fare worse than others.²³ First, these studies confirm the long-standing income and employment gaps between the Indigenous population

²³ In this section, I compare quotations from two studies – one examining income (Lamb et al. 2018), the other examining employment (Ciceri and Scott 2006) – to illustrate the consistency of findings across studies that examine different labour market outcomes. To demonstrate consistency across studies examining the same labour market outcome, I provide references to studies that report similar findings.

and the non-Indigenous population. For instance, Danielle Lamb, Margaret Yap, and Michael Turk (2018: 249) find that, “consistent with previous literature, Aboriginal peoples continue to experience sizable earnings disparities relative to their non-Aboriginal counterparts.”²⁴ Similarly, Corysa Ciceri and Katherine Scott (2006: 22) find that “Aboriginal people are less likely to be employed, are more likely to be unemployed, and more likely to be outside of the labour force all together compared to non-Aboriginals.”²⁵

Second, these studies identify educational attainment as a key factor contributing to both the income and employment gaps. For instance, Lamb et al. (2018: 249) find that “unsurprisingly, educational attainment is the most salient factor contributing to the explained portion of the earnings disparity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.”²⁶ Similarly, Ciceri and Scott (2006: 22) find that “statistical analysis confirms that lower educational attainment is a significant factor underlying Aboriginal labour force status.”²⁷ Other factors consistently found to influence the labour market outcomes of Indigenous peoples include age, gender, health status, marital status, urban residency, occupational characteristics, children, household size, intermarriage, and parental education (Fan et al. 2017; Kuhn and Sweetman 2002; Pendakur and Pendakur 2011; White et al. 2003).

Third, these studies find that relative to the non-Indigenous population, certain Indigenous groups experience larger income and employment gaps than other Indigenous groups. Lamb et al. (2018: 249) find that “Aboriginal Identity respondents living on-reserve experience the largest earnings disparity, followed by males who identify as First Nations

²⁴ See also DeSilva (1999); Feir (2013); Mueller (2004).

²⁵ See also Drost (1994); White et al. (2003).

²⁶ See also George and Kuhn (1994); Hussain and Lamb (2012); Pendakur and Pendakur (2011).

²⁷ See also Drost (1994); White et al. (2003).

and live off-reserve. Respondents who report Aboriginal ancestry, but who do not identify as Aboriginal persons, experience the smallest earnings disadvantage.”²⁸ Similarly, Ciceri and Scott (2006: 16) find that “while all Aboriginal people are less likely to be employed than non-Aboriginals, people who identify as Inuit are slightly more likely to be employed than Métis people who are more likely to be employed than First Nations people after controlling for socio-demographic factors.”

Discussion

Several studies translate the finding that certain Aboriginal groups consistently fare worse than others into a generalized relationship between the size of labour market disparities and the “degree of Aboriginal identification.” A study examining Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal earnings gaps, for instance, notes a general trend in which “the earnings disparity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal persons tends to widen the more *intensely* one identifies as an Aboriginal person” (Lamb, Yap, and Turk 2018: 228, emphasis in original). Specifically, “earnings disparities are largest for those living on-reserve, followed by those who identify as First Nations. Respondents who report having Aboriginal origins [i.e., Aboriginal ancestry], but who do not identify themselves as Aboriginal persons, experience the smallest earnings differential” (Lamb, Yap, and Turk 2018: 228). In another study examining earnings inequality among Aboriginal groups, Danielle Lamb (2013: 224), reports that the earnings disadvantage relative to the non-Aboriginal population “is larger the greater the degree of ‘Aboriginal identity.’” Specifically, the earnings gap is largest for Aboriginal people living on-reserve, next largest for individuals who report having *only* Aboriginal

²⁸ See also Lamb (2013); Maxim et al. (2001).

origins, and smallest for individuals who report *multiple* ethnic origins, one of which is Aboriginal (Lamb 2013: 225).

Similarly, Krishna Pendakur and Ravi Pendakur (2011: 62) examine the association between different “degrees of Aboriginality” and different patterns of economic disadvantage. Pendakur and Pendakur (2011: 72) report that:

The least disadvantaged group of Aboriginal people is comprised of people who report multiple-origin Aboriginal ancestry but who neither report registry under the Indian Act nor self-identify as Aboriginal. However, this group still faces a disparity of approximately 10 percent for both women and men.

Based on these findings, Pendakur and Pendakur (2011: 72) conclude that “even a little ‘Aboriginality’ is associated with poor labour market outcomes.”

Although the more recent studies no longer disaggregate the Indigenous population into “single” and “multiple” ethnic origins, they nonetheless maintain that the “degree of Aboriginal identification” has a negative association with labour market success. In these studies, the term “Métis” has replaced “Aboriginals with multiple ethnic origins” on the continuum of Aboriginal identification. Goldmann and Racine (2021), for instance, report similarities in outcomes between the Métis population and the non-Indigenous population. Specifically, “in terms of median incomes, Métis are doing better than Inuit or First Nations on- and off-reserve, who self-identify as North American Indians in the Census and are consequently closer to the Canadian average” (Goldmann and Racine 2021). To explain this finding, they cite Daniel Wilson and David Macdonald’s (2010: 9) claim that Métis “expresses mixed heritage. It would, therefore, not be surprising if that group were more integrated into the mainstream economy.”

Policy Implications

Most studies conclude with a discussion of policy implications. Indeed, for some researchers informing future policy development is an explicit aim of their analysis. Hossain and Lamb (2012: 441), for instance, state “the current research attempts to shed light on the factors affecting Aboriginal employment income with the intention of informing future policy development to accelerate closing of the gap.” Following their analysis, Hossain and Lamb (2012: 449) recommend that future policy development include “initiatives to encourage the development of social capital and good health.” Other studies recommend that future policy development focus on increasing the educational attainment of Indigenous peoples (Ciceri and Scott 2006: 22; Lamb 2013: 239; Park 2021: 68). For instance, Lamb et al. (2018: 224) state “policy programs aimed at improving educational attainment and access to employment among Indigenous peoples are likely worthwhile initiatives.”

WHITE POSSESSION AND INDIGENOUS LABOUR MARKET RESEARCH

In the remaining sections of this chapter, I discuss the ways in which the methodological practices of quantitative research on Indigenous labour market outcomes constitute and reflect dominant societal assumptions, values, and ways of understanding Indigenous reality. This discussion reveals that rather than presenting neutral summaries of reality, Indigenous labour market statistics are white epistemological possessions that reinforce a racialized discourse of Indigenous deficit.

Abstraction: The Social Relations Behind the Numbers

Abstraction is an important element of quantitative methodologies. As Walter and Andersen (2013: 11) note, “quantitative methodologies facilitate standardization and render information specific to local social relations both mobile and combinable.” Through reordering and rescaling information from the local context, quantitative researchers draw

conclusions about larger numbers of people, such as “the Indigenous population.” Thus, Indigenous populations are “statistical creations based on aggregated individual-level data, rather than ‘real world’ concrete groups” (Kukutai 2011: 47).

The “Indigenous population,” however, operates discursively to inform and shape the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the nation-state as though it constitutes a real thing (Walter and Andersen 2013: 9). Canadian census data are central to the development and evaluation of a wide range of social programs and policies.²⁹ For example, the allocation of funds for Indigenous labour market, youth, and child care programs “relies on a complex weighted algorithm of census data variables for Aboriginal respondents, including population counts” (Andersen 2014: 77). In rendering Indigenous sociality legible to state intervention, “census categories have come to stand in as exhaustive representations for the sociality itself” (Andersen 2013: 643). The authority of census categorizations marginalizes alternative ways of determining population. As such, census data are an assertion of the nation-state’s sovereignty over social relations (Curtis 2001: 32).

Academic quantitative research on Indigenous labour market outcomes relies on and reproduces the legitimacy of census categories of Aboriginality. Although some studies identify limitations of census data, the limitations identified concern the incomplete enumeration of Indigenous people into existing census categories, rather than the interpretive limits of the census categories themselves.³⁰ In uncritically accepting census categories as objective and apolitical, this body of research sustains the conflation between census

²⁹ See, for example, “How data are used” (Statistics Canada 2019b).

³⁰ For example, in a study examining the level of education-job mismatch among Indigenous women workers, Park (2021: 69) writes, “identification and estimation among Indigenous workers might be affected by the incomplete enumeration of certain Indian reserves and Indian settlements in the 2016 Census.” Similarly, Drost (1994: 54) identifies the under-enumeration of the Aboriginal population as a limitation involved in the use of Census data (see also Ciceri and Scott 2006: 10).

categories and the social relations they enumerate. This conflation fails to acknowledge the methodological assumptions that inform and shape census configurations of Indigenous sociality. As such, it erases the deep entrenchment of census categories of Aboriginality in Canada's ongoing colonial history.

Informing the construction of the Indigenous population is a quantitative methodology ontologically and epistemologically grounded in differentiation. Writing of official statistics in the Australian context, John Taylor (2011: 76) argues, "notwithstanding the opportunity for self-identification . . . the state still controls the categorisations available and, therefore, the prism through which Indigenous sociality and spatiality is constructed for the purposes of service delivery, policy deliberation and so on." Census configurations of Indigenous sociality thus align with the nation-state's attempts "to quantify and respond to the social and economic needs of Indigenous people as a separately identified homogenous group" (Taylor 2011: 72). The aim is to shift the socioeconomic outcomes of the Indigenous population closer to those observed for the wider majority population.

Canadian census categorizations similarly reflect the nation-state's specific policy objectives. Moreover, like Australia, government policies in Canada aim to "close the (socioeconomic) gap" between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. The broad Indigenous/non-Indigenous population binary functions as a mechanism for establishing difference. To compare aspects of Indigenous difference, official statistical representations of Indigenous sociality are necessarily relational to the non-Indigenous population. The outcome, according to Taylor (2011: 73) "is a substantial omission from official statistics of key aspects of Indigenous sociality." In short, the Indigenous/non-Indigenous population binary erases the multiplicity of distinct Indigenous nations. While the distinctive Indigenous

societies in Canada share broad cosmological similarities, they nonetheless differ immensely “in their internal and external governance of language, lifestyle, land tenure, and gender relations, to name but a few of many sectors of social life” (Walter and Andersen 2013: 113). For example, Walter and Andersen (2013: 113) note that “Canada’s ‘Indigenous population’ possesses more than fifty languages from a dozen different language groups.”

The Indigenous/non-Indigenous population binary “operates to place the Indigene as the Other before data are even examined” (Walter and Andersen 2013: 38). By conducting a series of gap analyses, quantitative labour market researchers reinforce the broad Indigenous/non-Indigenous binary. The methodological practice of comparing Indigenous outcomes to those observed for the majority population positions the non-Indigenous population as the normed standard. The persistent Indigenous failure against the non-Indigenous standard is the problem. Thus, the ontology informing both the collection of Indigenous data and the subsequent gap analyses is “a presumption of pejorative Indigenous racial/cultural difference and a norm of Indigenous deficit” (Walter and Andersen 2013: 35). The ontological presumption of Indigenous difference and deficit in conjunction with the tendency to conflate statistics with the underlying social relations has produced narrow and comparatively pejorative statistical depictions of Indigeneity, which data producers and users mistakenly accept as objective and exhaustive descriptions of Indigenous reality.

Individualization: The Standard Human Capital Model

In their study examining the returns to education for Canadian Aboriginal people, Lida Fan et al. (2017: 2233) write:

The results of this study confirmed our predictions and are in line with our understanding of human capital, meaning that having high levels of education can significantly improve the level of income for Aboriginal people. The investment in education is an important channel for human capital formation.

Likewise, numerous other studies report a positive association between educational attainment and income level for Indigenous people.³¹ The researchers conclude that their findings are in accordance with human capital theory.

Walter and Andersen's (2013: 54) conceptualization of methodology, however, reveals that "like data, theory is not neutral." The standpoint of methodology informs how researchers make sense of competing theoretical frameworks. Standpoint, therefore, determines which theory (or theories) researchers select as most appropriate for conducting and interpreting the research. Theoretical framework selection, according to Walter and Andersen (2013: 54), "is thus an ontologically, axiologically, and epistemologically driven task." Academic quantitative research on Indigenous labour market outcomes operates from a dominant societal standpoint. As such, the theoretical frameworks selected to analyze and interpret Indigenous labour market statistics align with white colonizer assumptions, values, and understandings of reality.

Human capital theory, in particular, aligns with the neoliberal discourse that dominates public policy formation in Canada. Following the emergence of neoliberal governance in Canada in the 1980s, social policymaking has shifted towards an emphasis on "individual responsibility and economic independence, regardless of peoples' status in society" (Howard-Wagner, Bargh, and Altamirano-Jiménez 2018: 17). The neoliberal emphasis on individual responsibility and economic self-sufficiency involves depoliticizing the labour market as fair and racially neutral based on the presumption that merit alone underpins economic success. As Moreton-Robinson (2015: 76) explains, "neoliberalism functions discursively to produce a race-blind and power-evasive discourse," which "denies

³¹ See, for example, Ciceri and Scott (2006), Goldmann and Racine (2021), Lamb (2013), and Park (2021).

the existence of the privileges conferred on white citizens through generations of white possession while simultaneously enhancing the benefits they enjoy.” This discourse maintains that all individuals have the same chances and as such “any failure to achieve is the fault of the individual” (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 76).

Likewise, human capital theory maintains that the individual worker is responsible for increasing (or failing to increase) their economic value. According to human capital theory, workers who invest in their human capital, through education and training, become more competitive in the labour market and thus increase their earnings. In short, “those who invest wisely in their education will be rewarded in the labour market” (MacKinnon 2015: 18). In accordance with human capital theory, the economic success of white individuals is a product of their wise investments in education rather than inherited race privileges and advantages. Concomitantly, a lack of investment in education, rather than structural inequalities, explains the labour market disadvantages of Indigenous people. In other words, human capital theory frames the individual, rather than structural inequalities, as the problem.

Some studies briefly acknowledge that contextual and environmental factors influence labour market outcomes. Goldmann and Racine (2021) for instance, note that “local economic conditions will certainly affect the labour market outcomes of individuals living and attempting to work in the region.” Goldmann and Racine (2021), however, dismiss such factors as “beyond the scope” of their analysis, which focuses instead on “the relationship between the attributes of the individuals and labour market outcomes.” Goldmann and Racine (2021) further argue that “human capital theory offers a robust theoretical framework on which to construct a micro-level analysis of labour market outcomes.” Similarly, another study maintains that the inability to assess the impact of

structural factors is a limitation of quantitative methodologies and as such their analysis “concentrates on human capital variables” (Ciceri and Scott 2006: 11).

In applying human capital theory to explain Indigenous socioeconomic disadvantage, this body of research frames the individual rather than structural inequalities, as the problem. Within this framework, the race privileges and advantages that contribute to the economic success of white individuals remain invisible. The quantitative research on Indigenous labour market outcomes thus reproduces the race-blind and power-evasive discourse of neoliberalism. This discourse, however, “involves a selective engagement with [racial] difference, rather than no engagement at all” (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 96). As Moreton-Robinson (2015: 96-97) argues, “race blindness functions discursively to hide the power imbalance between those who are marked by ‘race’ and those who do the marking.” Accordingly, this body of research maintains that the economic success of white individuals is independent of race, while it interprets the labour market disadvantages of Indigenous people through a racialized lens.

Racialized Interpretations: The Quantification of Indigenous Identity

As previously discussed, the inability of the census to distinguish between national and racialized constructions of Métis naturalizes the latter while marginalizing the former (Andersen 2008, 2014: 13). Research that makes use of census data to explore the contours of “the Métis population” reproduces the racialization that is at the core of this data source (Andersen 2016: 68). Quantitative research on Indigenous labour market outcomes uncritically makes use of census data to produce statistical depictions of “the Métis population.” In doing so, this body of research reproduces the legitimacy of census data and thus further naturalizes a racialized construction of Métis.

The racialization of Métis, however, extends beyond the use of data that fails to distinguish between national and racialized variants of the term. In addition to drawing on a racialized data source, this body of research uses a racialized understanding of Métis as “mixed” to *explain* the relative labour market success of the Métis population. Specifically, the literature contends that “Métis expresses mixed heritage” and as such the Métis population is “more integrated into the mainstream economy” (Goldmann and Racine 2021; Wilson and Macdonald 2010: 9). This interpretation not only further reproduces the racialization of the Métis, but it also reproduces the Indian/white binary that sustains the racialization of Indigenous people more generally. This binary framework defines authentic Indigeneity in opposition to whiteness along a series of associated binary oppositions (e.g., traditional/modern, uncivilized/civilized, subsistent/capitalist, impoverished/prosperous).³² The conflation of Métis with mixed Indigenous/non-Indigenous ancestry positions the Métis population in-between authentic Indigeneity and whiteness. The literature uses this proximity to whiteness to explain the labour market success of the Métis population compared to other Indigenous groups.

This racialized logic is also evident in the generalization that labour market disparities between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal persons tend “to widen the more *intensely* one identifies as an Aboriginal person” (Lamb, Yap, and Turk 2018: 228, emphasis in original). The posited relationship between the size of labour market disparities and the degree of Aboriginal identity reproduces what Walter (2016: 82) refers to as “the deficit data/problematic people (DD/PP) correlation.” The DD/PP correlation postulates a direct relationship between racial inequality and racially aligned social and cultural differences in

³² See Raibmon (2005: 7) for a more extensive list of associated binaries.

which “the problematic people are the ones who, through their behaviour and their choices, are ultimately responsible for their own inequality” (Walter 2016: 83). In the DD/PP correlation, racially aligned social and cultural differences replace discredited notions of biological inferiority as the cause of and explanation for socioeconomic disparity. The outcome is a discourse of non-white inferiority that is purportedly non-racist.

Kuhn and Sweetman’s (2002) assimilation hypothesis similarly reproduces the DD/PP correlation. Based on the presumption that Indigenous peoples in Canada possess “a set of skills and cultural traits (including language) that are not ideally suited to economic success,” Kuhn and Sweetman (2002: 331) posit a positive relation between Indigenous peoples’ degree of assimilation into the dominant culture and their labour market success. In other words, through contact with the dominant culture Indigenous people acquire the “skills, habits and attitudes that are conducive to economic success” (Kuhn and Sweetman 2002: 333). Consistent with other racialized interpretations of Indigenous labour market statistics, the assimilation hypothesis uses proximity to whiteness to explain labour market success.

The interpretation of Indigenous labour market statistics through a racialized lens produces a statistical narrative that positions Indigenous culture and identity in opposition to the economic success of the majority population. While this narrative aligns with dominant portrayals of Indigenous cultural traditions and norms as incompatible with modern capitalism, its presentation in numerical form acquires a mantle of presumed objectivity. The quantitative research on Indigenous labour market outcomes thus adds a statistical legitimacy to binary understandings of Indigenous authenticity.

CONCLUSION

In Canada, the dominant methodological approach to Indigenous statistical research reflects the dominant cultural framework of the nation-state. Thus, rather than representing neutral numerical summaries of Indigenous sociality, Indigenous statistics reflect and further the interests of patriarchal white sovereignty. Academic quantitative labour market research consistently produces deficit-based statistical portrayals of Indigeneity that position Indigenous people as responsible for their own inequality, while dismissing the race privileges and advantages conferred on white people through generations of white possession. In doing so, this body of research contributes to the normalization of white possessiveness.

Indigenous labour market statistics thus operate as white epistemological possessions. The established methodological practices guiding the collection, analysis, and interpretation of Indigenous labour market statistics conform to white colonizer epistemological, axiological, and ontological assumptions. The failure to acknowledge the racial origins and parameters of these methodological practices sustains the presumed neutrality of racialized findings. Based on racialized findings, quantitative research studies recommend investing in the human capital of Indigenous people (through improved educational attainment) to accelerate closing the socioeconomic gap.

As the evidentiary base for social policy formation, Indigenous statistics powerfully influence the nation-state's relationship with "its" Indigenous population. The production of racialized statistical depictions of Indigeneity has important consequences for how the nation-state engages with Indigenous peoples. Specifically, racialized statistics position Indigenous peoples as a social problem rather than political partners. The nation-state's

solution for ameliorating this social problem is the implementation of social policies aimed at facilitating the economic and social integration of individuals into “whitestream” society (Andersen 2014: 19; O’Toole 2010: 31). Such policies do not require the redistribution of political power and thus do not disrupt the possessiveness of patriarchal white sovereignty.

Table 1. Summary of Academic Quantitative Research on Indigenous Labour Market Outcomes

	DEPENDENT VARIABLE	DATA SOURCE	COMPARISON	INDIGENOUS GROUPS	METHODS
Goldmann and Racine (2021)	Annual employment income	2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2011 National Household Survey	Between Indigenous groups Between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous Canadians	First Nations off-reserve; Métis; Inuit	Ordinary least squares regression
Park (2021)	Over-qualification	2016 Census long-form sample	Indigenous women workers relative to Indigenous men workers, and non-Indigenous women and men workers	Registered Indian; Non-status First Nations; Inuit; Métis	Logistic regression
Haan, Chuatico, and Cornetet (2020)	Employment income	2017 Aboriginal Peoples Survey	Indigenous gender wage gap	Status First Nations; Non-status First Nations; Métis; Inuit	Ordinary least squares regression
Lamb, Yap, and Turk (2018)	Annual earnings from wages and salaries	2011 National Household Survey	Off-Reserve: Between non-Aboriginals, Aboriginal ancestry only, and Aboriginal identity (First Nations, Métis, Inuit) On-Reserve: Between non-Aboriginals and Aboriginal identity	Aboriginal ancestry, but do not identify as Aboriginal persons; Aboriginal identity – First Nations, Métis, Inuit	Ordinary least squares regression; Decomposition (Blinder-Oaxaca)
Fan et al. (2017)	Annual employment income	2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (Public Use Microdata File)	No comparison	Canadian Aboriginal people	Ordinal logistic regression
Calver (2015)	Employment rate gap Income gap Education gap	2011 National Household Survey 2006 Census 2001 Census	Aboriginal / Non-Aboriginal Between Aboriginal identity groups Total Aboriginal population on-reserve / off-reserve	First Nations; Métis; and Inuit	Descriptive statistics (education gap, employment gap, income gap); Estimation of economic impact of closing the education gap

Feir (2013)	Gross weekly earnings and salaries before deductions	2006 Long Form Census 1996 Long Form Census	Between Aboriginal and non-minority, non-immigrant Canadians North American Indians off-reserve and on-reserve	Métis; North American Indians off-reserve; North American Indians on-reserve	Decomposition (Blinder-Oaxaca)
Lamb (2013)	Earnings from wages and salaries	2006 Census master file; 1996 Census master file	Six different Aboriginal groups, using the non-Aboriginal population as a reference point	Aboriginal ancestry, but do not identify as Aboriginal persons; Aboriginal identity; Métis; Inuit; North American Indian; On-reserve Aboriginals	Ordinary least squares regression; Decomposition (Blinder-Oaxaca)
Hussain and Lamb (2012)	Employment income	2006 Aboriginal Peoples Survey	No comparison	Canadian Aboriginal population	IV ordered probit model
Pendakur and Pendakur (2011)	Earnings (total earnings from wages and salaries) Income (total income from all sources)	2006 Long-form Census (Master files) 2001 Long-form Census (Master files) 1996 Long-form Census (Master files)	Aboriginal to British-origin people Within the Aboriginal population	Seven groupings of Aboriginal people defined by their registry under the Indian Act, their self-reported identity, and their self-reported ancestry: 1) Registered Aboriginals living on-reserve; 2) Registered Aboriginals living off-reserve; 3) North American Indian (including multiple responses); 4) Métis; and 5) Inuit (Eskimo); 6) Single Aboriginal ancestry but not Aboriginal identity; and 7) Multiple-origin Aboriginal ancestry (e.g., Aboriginal-origin and British-origin) but not Aboriginal identity	Ordinary least squares regression
Ciceri and Scott (2006)	Being employed Being employed full time (at least 30 hours per week) Occupying a job that matches one's skill level	2001 Census (Public Use Microdata Files)	Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal Within Aboriginal population (Métis, Inuit, First Nation)	First Nation; Métis; Inuit	Logistic regression

Mueller (2004)	Earnings	1996 Census (Public Use Microdata File)	Non-Aboriginals versus the three Aboriginal definitions (i.e., any, some and all Aboriginal origins), and some Aboriginal versus all Aboriginal origins	“Some” Aboriginal origin; Exclusively or “all” Aboriginal origins	Ordinary least squares regression; Decomposition (Blinder-Oaxaca)
White, Maxim, and Gyimah (2003)	Labour force activity (labour force participation rate; unemployment rate; non-participation rate)	1996 Census (Public Use Microdata File)	Aboriginal women / non-Aboriginal women	Registered/Status Indian; other Aboriginal women, excluding the Inuit	Multinomial logit model
Kuhn and Sweetman (2002)	Labour force activity (employment, unemployment) Wages (annual earnings of full-time, full-year paid workers)	1991 Census (Public Use Microdata File)	Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal differentials Labour market differentials between single- and multiple-origin Aboriginals Geography-based differences among single-origin Aboriginals (Differentials between Aboriginals on- and off-reserves)	Aboriginal ethnic groups: “Single origin Aboriginals;” “Multiple origin Aboriginals”	Probit regression; Decomposition (Blinder-Oaxaca)
Maxim et al. (2001)	1) Positive reported wage and salary income for 1995 2) Wage and salary income, including zero income 3) Positive total income (i.e., income from all sources) 4) Total income, including zero income	1996 Census (Public Use Microdata File)	Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal Within Aboriginal population	Status Indians; single-origin, non-status North American Indians; Métis; and Inuit	Thiel entropy measure, coefficient of variation, Atkinson Index, Gini Index
De Silva (1999)	Annual earnings	1991 Census (Public Use Sample Tape)	Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal Aboriginals with single origins/Aboriginals with multiple origins	Aboriginals with single origins (exclusively of aboriginal ethnicity); Aboriginals with multiple origins (mixed ethnicity)	Ordinary least squares regression; Decomposition (Blinder-Oaxaca)
Drost (1994)	Unemployment rate	1986 Census (Public Use Sample Tape)	On-reserve / off-reserve Aboriginals	Single origin Aboriginals (North American Indian, Inuit, or Métis on both	Logistic regression

				paternal and maternal sides); Multiple origin Aboriginals (individuals who reported one of the Aboriginal origins in conjunction with any non-Aboriginal ethnic origin or any other Aboriginal origin)	
George and Kuhn (1994)	Annual earnings	1986 Census (Public Use Sample Tape)	Aboriginal/non-aboriginal (non-visible minority Canadians) Any/only aboriginal origins On-reserve/off-reserve Territories/rest of Canada	Individuals reporting <i>any</i> aboriginal origins, possibly in combination with non-aboriginal origins, where aboriginal origins includes North American Indians, Métis, and Inuit; Individuals who reported <i>only</i> aboriginal origins	Ordinary least squares regression; Decomposition (Blinder-Oaxaca)

Chapter Four: Exploring an Indigenous Quantitative Methodological Approach to Work and Labour Research – Recommendations and Application

Through the persistent production of deficit-based statistical portrayals of Indigeneity, the existing body of academic quantitative research on Indigenous labour market outcomes sustains rather than disrupts the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty. As Walter and Andersen (2013: 131) succinctly note, however, “methodologies, not methods, injure.” In other words, colonizer settler quantitative methodologies, not statistical methods, produce pejorative depictions of Indigenous peoples and thus reaffirm the logics of white possession. In this chapter, I explore ways of decoupling statistical methods from their dominant methodological frame. The aim is to identify avenues for harnessing the power of statistics to advance an Indigenous research agenda on work and labour markets.

This chapter consists of three parts. I begin part one with a brief overview of the dominant methodological approach to quantitative research on Indigenous labour market outcomes. I deconstruct the core methodological assumptions of this body of research before explicating its inherent limitations. Parts two and three of this chapter explore the development of an Indigenous quantitative methodology. In part two, I propose three recommendations for incorporating statistical methods into an Indigenous research agenda and in part three, I translate one of these recommendations into practice.

PART ONE: DOMINANT METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO QUANTITATIVE INDIGENOUS LABOUR MARKET RESEARCH

Core Methodological Assumptions

Informing the dominant approach to quantitative research on Indigenous labour market outcomes are three core methodological assumptions. First, this body of research assumes that the categories used to collect statistical data on Indigenous peoples are objective

and natural representations of Indigenous sociality. Second, the research assumes that the non-Indigenous population's labour market performance is the norm and as such Indigenous deviation from this norm is the problematic. Relatedly, the third assumption of this research is that the desired solution is a more efficient integration of Indigenous people into the capitalist economy.

Standpoint

The core methodological assumptions of quantitative Indigenous labour market research reflect the dominant research standpoint. Accordingly, these methodological assumptions correspond to the philosophical tenets of epistemology, ontology, and axiology. More specifically, the methodological assumptions of this research reflect dominant societal assumptions concerning knowledge hierarchies, value systems, and understandings of social reality.

Epistemology

Aboriginal census categories rely on a racialized classification system in which the nation-state assumes the epistemological authority to define who counts as Indigenous. The assumption that Aboriginal census categories are exhaustive representations of Indigenous sociality privileges the epistemological authority of the nation-state, while marginalizing alternative Indigenous self-understandings. Thus, this body of research positions Indigenous peoples as objects of knowledge rather than knowers, beginning with the very categories used to collect the data.

Axiology

The axiological frame of the dominant approach to Indigenous labour market statistics reflects an investment in white possession. The analysis and interpretation of

Indigenous labour market statistics provides the evidence base for a “close the gap” policy framework that seeks to converge Indigenous labour market outcomes with those of the non-Indigenous population. This policy framework facilitates the capitalist accumulation of the nation-state through the production of Indigenous people as economically productive participants of the mainstream economy. Thus, this body of research supports a more efficient integration of Indigenous peoples into existing power structures, rather than a redistribution of power.

Ontology

This body of research reproduces societally dominant ways of understanding Indigenous reality. Specifically, the analysis and interpretation of Indigenous labour market statistics relies on and reproduces racialized, binary, and deficit-based understandings of Indigeneity. Additionally, this body of research reproduces societally dominant ways of understanding social relations of production. Specifically, this research uncritically accepts the market in human labour power as a normal and neutral institutional arrangement and thus naturalizes capitalist exploitation.

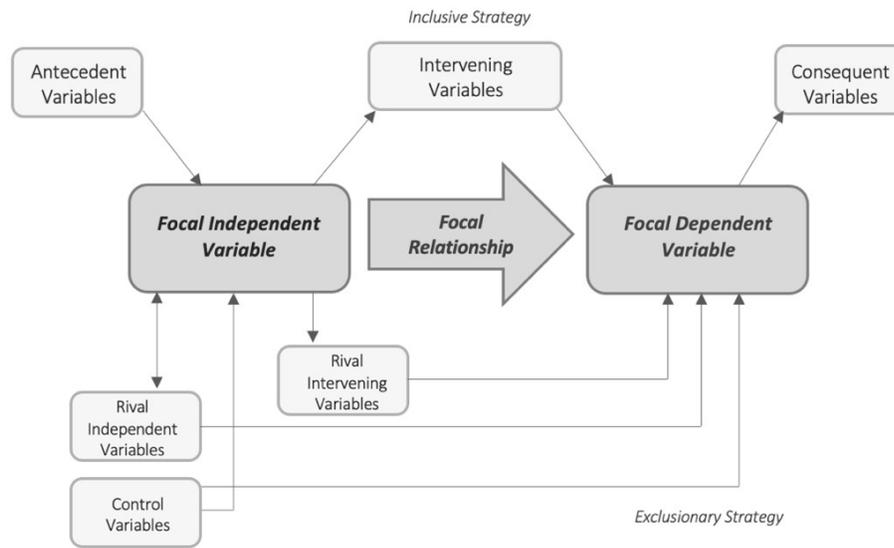
Theoretical Framework and Methods

Research standpoint informs theoretical frame selection (Walter and Andersen 2013: 54). Based on their dominant research standpoint, quantitative labour market researchers predominantly select human capital theory to understand and interpret the data. Within a human capital theoretical framework, researchers use multivariate regression techniques to assess the relationship between educational attainment and income. Figure 1 depicts the standard elaboration model for conducting theory-based data analysis and Figure 2 depicts this model using human capital theory. The purpose of the elaboration model is to account

for an empirical association between two variables, one designated as the independent variable and the other as the dependent variable (Aneshensel 2015: 8). Specifically, researchers seek to determine whether the independent variable influences the dependent variable in a manner that aligns with their selected theory. To do so, researchers systematically introduce additional variables into the analysis and evaluate how the focal relationship (i.e., the relationship between the independent and dependent variables) changes.

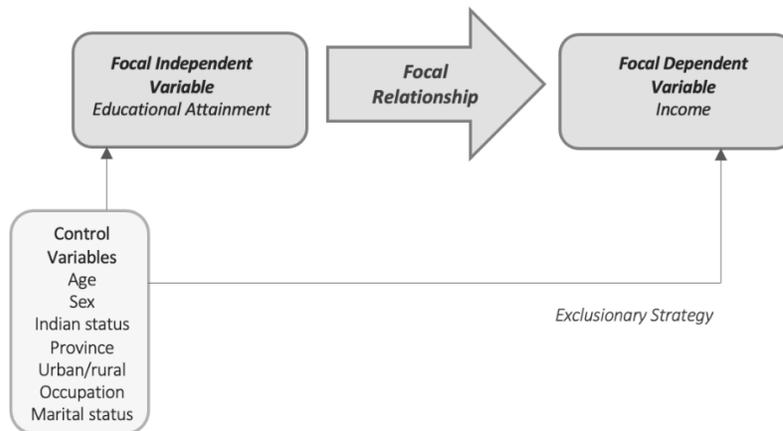
The two analytical strategies for introducing additional variables are the exclusionary strategy and the inclusionary strategy. The exclusionary strategy seeks to rule out alternative explanations for the association to substantiate the focal relationship as a causal relationship, while the inclusionary strategy situates the focal relationship within a broader network of relationships to strengthen causal inference. As a component of the exclusionary strategy, the introduction of control variables eliminates spuriousness, which is the mistaken appearance of a causal relationship between two variables resulting from their joint dependence on a third variable (Aneshensel 2015: 10-11). In an analysis based on human capital theory, the control variables often used to assess the focal relationship between educational attainment and income are age, sex, Indian status, province of residence, urban or rural location, occupation, marital status, and children.

Figure 1. The Elaboration Model of Theory-Based Data Analysis



Source: Adapted from Aneshensel (2015: 15)

Figure 2. The Elaboration Model for Human Capital Theory



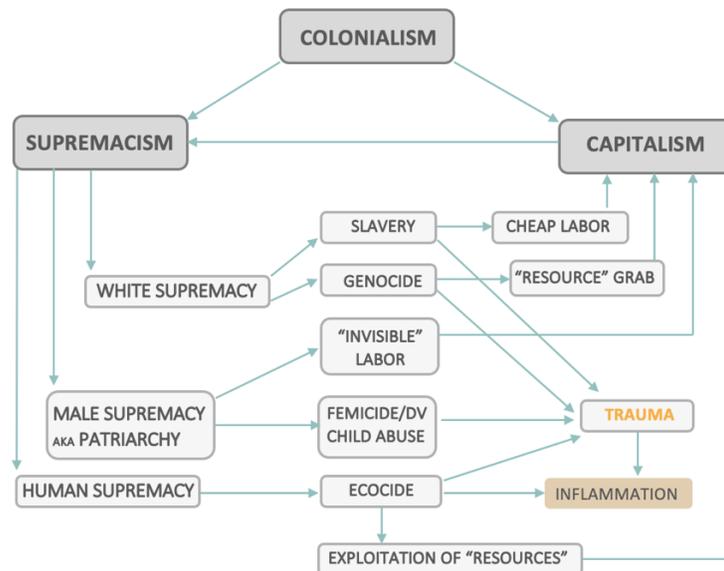
Source: Adapted from Aneshensel (2015: 15)

Limitations

In their discussion of the limitations of official Indigenous statistics within an Aotearoa New Zealand and Australian context, Tahu Kukutai and Maggie Walter (2015: 322) write, “too often contemporary forms of inequality are decoupled from the unequal institutional arrangements that structure the relationships between Indigenous peoples and the

State.” The established methodological approach to quantitative labour market research decontextualizes the analysis from institutional arrangements. Human capital theory, in particular, frames the individual rather than structural inequalities as the problem. A comparison of the diagram depicting the elaboration model for human capital theory (Figure 2) to visual representations of colonialism reveals the inadequacies of the dominant methodological approach to Indigenous labour market statistics. Figure 3, for example, depicts the interrelationships between the various structural components of colonialism, supremacy, and capitalism. Quantitative researchers who use human capital theory to understand and explain the labour market experiences of Indigenous people fail to situate their analysis within this broader network of structural relationships.

Figure 3. Model of Colonialism



Source: Marya (2020)

PART TWO: TOWARDS AN INDIGENOUS QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY

Walter and Andersen (2013: 83) define Indigenous quantitative methodologies as “methodologies within which the practices and the processes of the research are conceived and framed through an Indigenous standpoint.” Walter further delineates Indigenous

quantitative methodology through a discussion of her own research practice, *nayri kati* (“good numbers”), which operationalizes an Indigenous quantitative methodology in an Australian context. *nayri kati*, according to Walter, encapsulates two key methodological purposes:

The first is to generate statistical data through an Indigenous lens that: 1) Privileges Indigenous voices, knowledges, and understandings; 2) Does not take Euro-Australians or their accompanying value systems as the unacknowledged norm; 3) Does not take a presumption of Indigenous deficit as its starting point. The second purpose is to challenge the hegemony of Indigenous statistical practice by exposing the standpoint from which it operates (Walter and Andersen 2013: 86).

Following Walter and Andersen’s conceptualization of Indigenous quantitative methodologies, I propose three recommendations for conducting Indigenous quantitative methodological framed research, particularly within the context of the labour market. The two broad aims of an Indigenous quantitative methodological approach to labour market research are 1) to generate statistical information that better addresses the needs of Indigenous communities; and 2) to counter the dominant quantitative methodological approach and its production of deficit based statistical narratives. To meet these aims, an Indigenous quantitative methodology will necessarily take the research beyond the limits of the labour market with a more expansive approach to conceptualizing labouring and economic activity.

Research Recommendation 1: Indigenous Data Sovereignty

The most effective research strategy for dismantling the hegemony of settler colonial quantitative methodologies is to advance Indigenous data sovereignty initiatives. Indigenous nations, like all nations, require reliable information about their citizens to make strategic decisions and develop relevant policies that align with the nation’s current priorities and future development agendas (Rainie et al. 2017; Rodriguez-Lonebear 2016; Smith 2016).

The dominant methodology guiding the external collection of information on Indigenous peoples produces data that advances the aims and policy objectives of the nation-state. Accordingly, much existing Indigenous population data is ill-equipped to meet the data requirements of Indigenous nations. As John Taylor (2011: 93) explains:

What [Indigenous polities] are seeking from statistical agencies is not so much a regular reminder of national and regional gaps in outcomes but rather support for capacity building in the compilation and use of customised data as a means of promoting their full and effective participation in local governance and development planning.

Taylor (2011: 93) further asserts that Indigenous polities require “information based on how they themselves view their social and economic world and how they see opportunities and constraints towards the achievement of goals that they define.”

As C. Matthew Snipp (2016: 50) contends, however, in the context of data collection and dissemination “it seems implausible that settler states will ever be willing to fully accommodate the interests of indigenous communities.” Indigenous nations must therefore assume control over their own data collection and use. Such is the objective of Indigenous data sovereignty. While various definitions exist, Indigenous data sovereignty broadly concerns “the right of Indigenous peoples to govern the creation, collection, ownership and application of their data” (Australian Indigenous Governance Institute 2018).

Snipp (2016: 52) identifies three critical features of Indigenous data sovereignty: 1) Indigenous people have the power “to determine who should be counted among them;” 2) the data “must reflect the interests, values, and priorities of native people;” and 3) Indigenous people “have the power to determine who has access to these data.” Another related feature of Indigenous data sovereignty, according to Frances Morphy (2016: 101-102) is “sovereignty over the process of categorisation,” which involves “the assertion of

sovereignty over the choice of indicators.” In the context of work and labour research, Indigenous data sovereignty provides a means of replacing the conventional indicators used to establish and monitor the gap, with indicators that reflect Indigenous peoples’ own understandings, values, and priorities. Thus, my first recommendation for advancing an Indigenous quantitative methodology is to develop the infrastructure for Indigenous peoples to generate data that aligns with their own collective self-understandings and development agendas.

Research Recommendation 2: Organizational Level Data and Models of Structural Inequality

A second research strategy is to analyze and interpret organizational level data using models of structural inequality. This research strategy shifts the problematic from the individual to the institutional arrangements that produce and maintain inequality. For example, Dustin Avent-Holt and Donald Tomaskovic-Devey (2010) use organizational level data to examine the relational generation of wage inequality. Avent-Holt and Tomaskovic-Devey (2010: 163) contend that analyses of individual level data “[obscure] the interactional and relational contexts of inequality production.” To overcome this limitation, Avent-Holt and Tomaskovic-Devey use data from the Australian National Organization Study (AusNOS), a representative sample of Australian workplaces. These data allow Avent-Holt and Tomaskovic-Devey (2010: 169) to construct the properties of social relations, rather than individuals, within organizations, and empirically connect them to inequality outcomes. Specifically, Tomaskovic-Devey (2010: 173-174) use ordinary least squares regression to model the effects of relational differences in power and status on wage inequality between organizational positions. Based on their quantitative analysis, Avent-Holt and Tomaskovic-

Devey (2010: 162) conclude that “jobs comprising actors with higher status and greater power in the labor process are often able to use their status and power relative to others to extract greater rewards, generating wage inequality between jobs.”

Research Recommendation 3: Indicators of Structural Inequality

Generating new sources of statistical data provides a means of addressing the limitations of census categories. As Taylor (2011: 74) notes, however, “official statistics are afforded a degree of authority in the public representation of Indigenous populations.” Researchers will continue to produce authoritative representations of Indigenous populations using official statistics and as such an important direction for future research is to conceptualize ways of reframing the analysis of these data. The categories utilized to collect official statistics restrict the utility of the data. Nonetheless, analyses that shift the problematic from the individual to structural and institutional processes provide a means of countering deficit-based representations of Indigenous populations. Thus, the third research recommendation is to incorporate indicators of structural inequality into the analysis of official statistics.

Three sources of official statistics that provide information on Indigenous people’s labouring activities are the Census of Population, the Aboriginal Peoples Survey, and the General Social Survey. The statistical categorization of Aboriginal people is consistent across all three sources of data.³³ Accordingly, the racialized dynamics of these categories are also

³³ The Aboriginal identity population includes anyone who self-reported being “an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuit;” and/or “a Status Indian, that is, a Registered or Treaty Indian as defined by the *Indian Act* of Canada;” and/or “a member of a First Nation or Indian band” (Statistics Canada 2018a: 14; Statistics Canada 2018b: 7). While the census and the Aboriginal Peoples Survey generally allow for separate analyses of Indigenous identity groups, the General Social Survey does not:

Depending on the sample size of each GSS cycle and the type of output analysis required, data for First Nations people, Métis and Inuit must often be aggregated to the total Indigenous population (by combining the three Indigenous identity groups) in order to obtain population counts high enough to be reliable for publication (Statistics Canada 2019a: 6).

consistent across these sources of data. The possibility, however, of constructing a more expansive depiction of Indigenous people's engagements with labour varies across these data sets.

The Census of Population.

The five-yearly national Census of Population provides limited information on work and labour. Specifically, the census provides standard measures relating to participation in the labour market, such as labour force status, class of worker, industry, and occupation (Statistics Canada 2018a: 231-253). By deploying a narrow understanding of the term labour, the census precludes an analysis of more complex labour arrangements.

The Aboriginal Peoples Survey.

First conducted in 1991, the Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) is a postcensal survey that gathers data on the social and economic conditions of First Nations people living off reserve, Métis, and Inuit. The 2017 APS, which represents the fifth cycle of the survey, focused on “transferable skills, practical training, use of information technology, Aboriginal language attainment, and participation in the Canadian economy” (Statistics Canada 2018b: 5). According to Statistics Canada (2018b: 6), “the goal of identifying the predictive factors of employment in the Aboriginal population” informed the development of new content for the 2017 APS, which included, “barriers and levers to economic participation; labour mobility; entrepreneurship; postsecondary education; targeted skills training; reliance on government transfers; and accumulation of wealth and financial security.”

Compared to the census, the APS collects more detailed information concerning the labour market participation of First Nations people living off reserve, Métis, and Inuit. Additionally, the APS collects information on Aboriginal people's participation in “other

labour activities.” The four types of other labour activities included in the 2017 APS were hunting, fishing, or trapping; gathering wild plants (e.g., berries, rice, or sweetgrass); making clothing or footwear; and making carvings, drawings, jewellery, or other kinds of artwork (Statistics Canada 2022). The questions related to other labour activities allow for the conceptualization of a more expansive understanding of labour arrangements.³⁴

The General Social Survey.

The General Social Survey (GSS) program is a series of annual surveys that collect data on social trends to monitor changes and inform social policy on issues related to the living conditions and well-being of Canadians (Statistics Canada 2019a: 5). The specific topics explored vary across cycles of the survey. Most relevant to an analysis of Indigenous people and labour is Cycle 30 of the GSS program, “Canadians at Work and Home.” The mandate of Cycle 30: Canadians at Work and Home is “to explore people’s views about work, home, leisure and well-being, and the relationship between these” (Statistics Canada 2017). Regarding “the work sphere,” the survey explores a range of topics, including “work ethic, work intensity and distribution, compensation and employment benefits, work satisfaction and meaning, intercultural workplace relations, and bullying and harassment” (Statistics Canada 2017). The questions concerning workplace discrimination included in the survey provide a means of exploring the relationship between conventional labour market outcomes and discriminatory systems.

The Scope of the Present Analysis and the Range of Quantitative Methodologies

Developing the infrastructure for Indigenous data sovereignty is beyond the scope of this thesis. Accounting for structural inequality, however, is not beyond the scope of the

³⁴ I discuss Indigenous people’s complex engagements with labour further in the *Indigenous labour densities* section below.

present analysis. Nor is accounting for structural inequality beyond the range of quantitative methodologies as some researchers claim (e.g., Ciceri and Scott 2006: 11). Rather, I argue that the inability to assess structural factors is a limitation of settler colonial quantitative methodologies, rather than all quantitative methodologies. In the next section, I explore the possibility of analyzing and interpreting existing data within an Indigenous quantitative methodological frame to challenge the deficit-based statistical narratives of Indigenous people's labour market performance.

PART THREE: RESEARCH RECOMMENDATION 3 IN PRACTICE

Research Standpoint

Social Position.

My positionality shapes my research. I am a woman with Cree-Métis and Euro-settler ancestry and relationality, I am a citizen of the Métis Nation of Alberta, and I am a graduate student situated within the Department of Sociology at a Canadian university. My research methodology is a manifestation of the interactions between who I am, what I do, and from where I do it. As an Indigenous graduate student conducting research, using primarily quantitative methods, from within a Western discipline, I must first reconceptualize the research methods and disciplinary knowledges that I learn within my graduate program before I can incorporate them within a research framework that aligns with my standpoint. Both quantitative methods and the discipline of sociology have deep entanglements with colonial practices, and both have generated damaging research on Indigenous peoples.³⁵

³⁵ For a discussion of sociology's entanglements with empire see Connell (2010, 2018). For a discussion of the representations of Indigenous peoples in Canadian sociological research see Watts, Hooks, and McLaughlin (2020).

Epistemology.

My research centers Indigenous knowledges at both the methodological and theoretical level. My development of an Indigenous quantitative methodological frame draws on Walter and Andersen's (2013) conceptualization and operationalization of Indigenous quantitative methodologies. At the theoretical level, Indigenous scholar knowledge informs my understanding of the broader colonial context within which labour market relations unfold. Critical Indigenous theory informs my engagement with theoretical frameworks from the Western canon (e.g., Marxist theories of capitalism), shapes my critique of the dominant approach to Indigenous labour market statistics, and influences my construction of a model that accounts for structural inequality.

Axiology.

My research embodies an axiological commitment to disrupting racialized structural relations of power and the dominant quantitative methodological practices that sustain these relations, particularly within the context of the labour market. Accordingly, the purpose of the analysis is not to identify opportunities for the more efficient integration of Indigenous people into the capitalist economy. Rather, the analysis aims to demonstrate the limits of the existing methodological approach and explore ways of re-situating the data within the context of racism and colonialism. Specifically, I aim to explore ways of developing a statistical model that accounts for the institutional arrangements that create and sustain inequality.

Ontology.

At the level of ontology, I reject the rigid binary framework that defines Indigeneity in opposition to modernity. As Andersen (2009: 92) explains, "Indigeneity is often (still)

positioned in opposition to white/colonial identity along a series of binary oppositions which labour to reaffirm the supposed superiority of the latter over the apparent primitiveness of the former.” Against this binary logic, Andersen (2009: 92) articulates the concept of Indigenous density to denote the numerous subject positions that Indigenous peoples occupy within relations of modernity. Density accounts for the complex set of relations between Indigenous communities and whitestream society. Specifically, Indigeneity “is inevitably and irrevocably constituted in and by the fields of power we cohabit,” and “these fields of power are inextricably located within relations of modernity” (Walter and Andersen 2013: 72). Understanding Indigenous ontologies in terms of density, rather than difference, facilitates a research agenda that “does not assume that a movement *toward* modernity necessarily means a move *away* from Indigeneity” (Walter and Andersen 2013: 17).

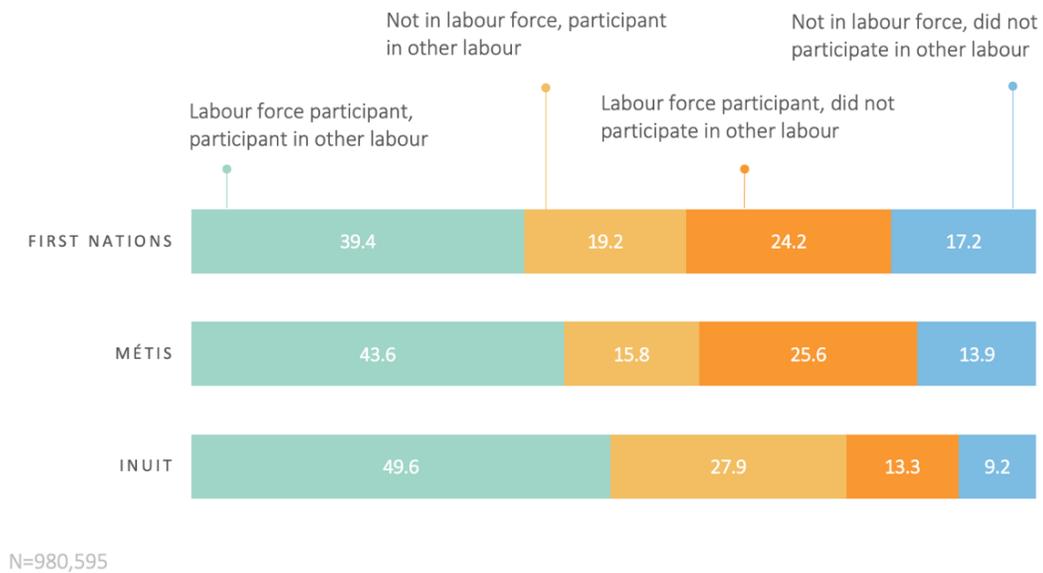
Indigenous labour densities.

Indigenous people’s engagements with labour exemplify Andersen’s concept of density. Associated with the rigid traditional/modern binary is a parallel subsistent/capitalist binary (Raibmon 2005: 7). According to binary logics, participation in the capitalist economy entails an end to “traditional/subsistent” labour activity and with it a degree of Indigenous authenticity. Indigenous people’s complex engagements with labour, however, defy the rigid dichotomy between so-called traditional and modern economies. Based on data from the 2017 Aboriginal Peoples Survey,³⁶ Figure 4 and Figure 5 depict Indigenous people’s labour

³⁶ For the calculations presented in this section, I use data from the 2017 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) Public Use Microdata File (PUMF). The target population of the 2017 APS is the Aboriginal identity population of Canada, aged 15 years and over, living in private dwellings, excluding people living on Indian reserves and settlements and in certain First Nations communities in Yukon and the Northwest Territories (Statistics Canada 2018b: 13). The APS PUMF contains 20,849 respondents and a person-level weight variable for deriving population estimates (Statistics Canada 2020: 5). As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, the categories used to collect official statistics on Indigenous people in Canada are a product of colonial and racialized classification systems. In this section, I use APS data to illustrate the complexities of Indigenous peoples’ labour participation. Moreover, I disaggregate the data to indicate that the “Indigenous population” is not

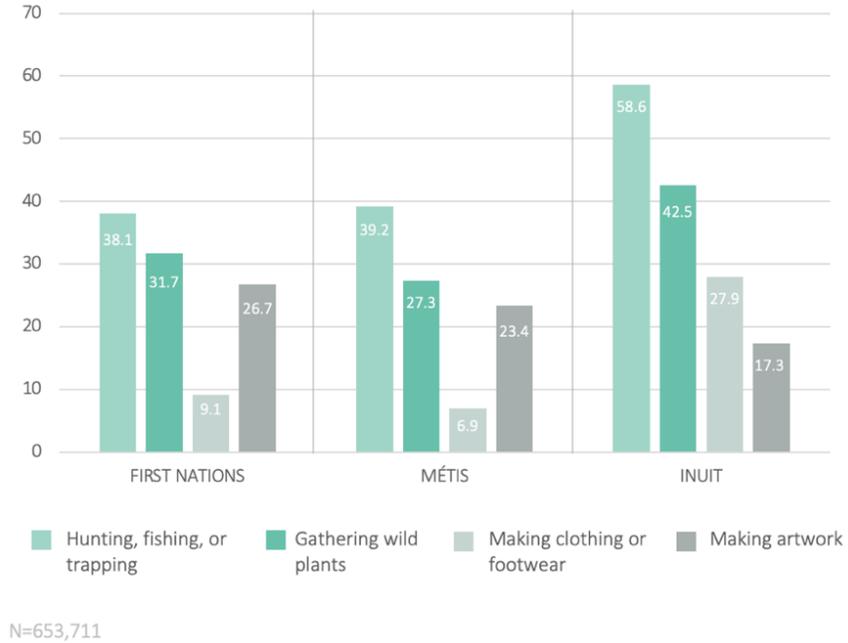
participation. Among the various combinations of labour activities, the largest proportion of Indigenous people (39.4% of First Nations, 43.6% of Métis, 49.6% of Inuit) participated in both the capitalist labour force and other labour activities (i.e., hunting, fishing, or trapping; gathering wild plants; making clothing or footwear; making artwork). Moreover, a small proportion of Indigenous peoples have incorporated their participation in other labour activities into the capitalist market, with 5.5% of First Nations, 4.0% of Métis, and 14.9% Inuit reporting that they participated in other labour activities for money or to supplement their income.

Figure 4. Labour participation rates of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people



homogenous. I recognize, however, the limits of interpreting the values of the population estimates constructed using these categories.

Figure 5. Proportion of labour force participants who participated in other labour activities



Thus, rather than understanding and interpreting Indigenous labour within a rigid binary framework, my research situates Indigenous labour within a complex arrangement of capitalist and non-capitalist relations. While colonialism and capitalism condition the possibilities of engagement with non-capitalist forms of labour, participation in the capitalist economy does not preclude participation in other labour activities. In short, my research does not assume that a move *toward* modern capitalism necessarily means a move *away* from Indigeneity.

Reframing the gap.

Research questions generated from an ontological frame of Indigenous deficit tend to be “what” questions (e.g., what is the gap in Indigenous/non-Indigenous labour market outcomes). Walter and Andersen (2013: 35) contend that “from an Indigenous ontology the more important question is not what differences exist, but why?” A reversal of the ontological lens “[resituates] the problematic from the ‘deficit’ Indigene to ask how the

processes of colonization remain inextricably entwined on contemporary patterns of settler privilege” (Walter and Andersen 2013: 35). Thus, rather than presuming deficit as an ontological feature of Indigeneity, my analysis aims to uncover the structures that produce and maintain disadvantage. Concomitantly, rather than uncritically accepting Euro-Canadians as the norm, the analysis aims to explicate the race privileges and advantages that contribute to and sustain their dominant positioning.

Research Questions

My research aims to address two questions: 1) How do the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty shape labour market outcomes? 2) How does racial discrimination moderate the relationship between educational attainment and income level? By constructing a statistical model that explores the second question, I aim to generate insight into the first question.

Theoretical Framework

The possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty.

Moreton-Robinson’s (2015) theorization of the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty provides a framework for understanding the inextricable connections between white possession, race, and Indigenous sovereignty. Maintaining the nation-state as a white possession requires a process of perpetual Indigenous dispossession. Accordingly, patriarchal white nation-states operationalize their possessive logics to reproduce and reaffirm their ownership of Indigenous lands. Racism is central to the operationalization of white possessive logics. As Moreton-Robinson (2015: xx) explains, “racialization is the process by which whiteness operates possessively to define and construct itself as the pinnacle of its

own racial hierarchy.” Racist techniques, conventions, laws, and knowledges are therefore the mechanisms through which white possession disavows Indigenous sovereignty.

Furthermore, Moreton-Robinson (2015: xii) contends that “subjects embody white possessive logics.” As a form of property, whiteness accumulates capital and confers social worth, authority, and ownership to white citizens such that white subjects have a possessive investment in whiteness. White possession and power therefore “operate in tandem through identity, institutions, and practices in everyday life” (Moreton-Robinson 2015: xix). At the level of intersubjective relations, Indigenous people experience possessive logics as racist acts. Racial discrimination within the workplace is thus a manifestation of white possession (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 94-95).

Stratification economics.

Stratification economics is a subfield of the wider discipline of economics which developed in response to the inadequacy of conventional economics to explain racial inequalities (Darity Jr., Hamilton, and Stewart 2015: 2; Wilson and Darity Jr. 2022: 2). Conventional economics interprets racial disparities in labour market outcomes using individual-centered models (e.g., human capital theory) that underemphasize or neglect structural and institutional factors. Informing this conventional approach is the presumption that discrimination and market competition are mutually exclusive. Accordingly, conventional economics fails to adequately account for the discriminatory systems that maintain racial hierarchy, which leads to explanations of racial inequality predicated on group-based deficits in individual responsibility and cultural practices (Darity Jr. 2005: 144; Wilson and Darity Jr. 2022: 23).

Stratification economics rejects cultural and behavioral dysfunction as explanations for labour market disparities (Darity Jr. et al. 2015: 3). Such explanations, according to William Darity Jr. (2005: 144), “are an ideological mask that absolves the social system and privileged groups from criticism for their role in perpetuating the condition of the dispossessed.” Thus, stratification economics explicates the structural processes that create and sustain racial inequalities. Moreover, stratification economics rejects the standard assumption that competitive processes in market economies will eliminate discrimination. Scholars have demonstrated, both theoretically (e.g., Mason 1993, 1995) and empirically (e.g., Agesa and Hamilton 2004; Mason 1999), that discrimination can and does persist alongside competition.

According to stratification economics, discrimination is not only compatible with competition, but it also serves a functional role in preserving hierarchy. More specifically, discrimination functions as an instrument through which the privileged group maintains their relative status (Darity Jr. et al. 2015: 4). As Valerie Wilson and William Darity Jr. (2022: 23) explain, “persistent racial disparity arises when a dominant group seeks to maintain the hierarchy that affords it some degree of social or economic privilege.” Stratification economics thus explores the connections between racial disparities and the power imbalances inherent in social structures.

Stratification economics closely aligns with Moreton-Robinson’s theorization of the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty. The theories of stratification economics provide “a framework for understanding the mechanisms that maintain unearned or inherited advantage or privilege in a world of unequal rewards and differential opportunity” (Darity Jr. 2001: 980). Applied to an analysis of labour market disparities within patriarchal white

nation-states, stratification economics explains the mechanisms through which the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty operate. In patriarchal white nation-states, the dominant group invests not only in white identity but also in white possession, an investment that perpetuates the dispossession of Indigenous peoples.

The elaboration model.

An elaboration model based on human capital theory generally consists of educational attainment as the focal independent variable, income level as the focal dependent variable, and a range of sociodemographic characteristics as control variables. Quantitative researchers assess the focal relationship between educational attainment and income level while controlling for the sociodemographic variables to rule out alternative explanations for the focal relationship (see Figure 2). For my analysis, I draw on Moreton-Robinson's theorization of the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty and theories of stratification economics to construct a more expansive version of the elaboration model that situates the relationship between education and income within a broader network of racialized structural power relations.

The inclusive strategy of the elaboration model introduces additional variables into the analysis to connect the focal relationship to a surrounding network of other relationships. For instance, the inclusion of antecedent variables, which are determinants of the focal independent variable, extends the focal relationship back in time (Aneshensel 2015: 12). Within the context of racial disparities in labour market outcomes, antecedent variables introduce "premarket" characteristics into the analysis. According to stratification economics, the dominant group influences the premarket characteristics of the members of the subaltern group to preserve racial hierarchy. As Darity Jr. (2001: 980) explains, "a

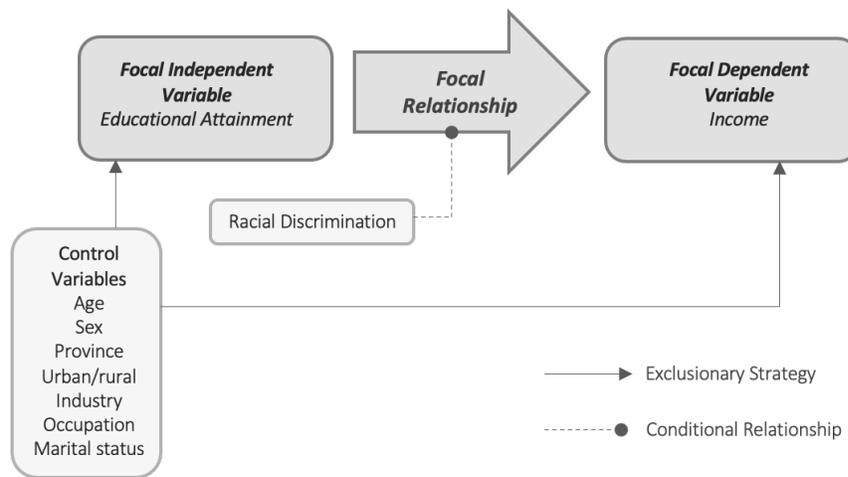
dominant group can seek to structure and control access to the credentials required for preferred positions to insure admission of their own and to keep out members of the subaltern group.” One mechanism through which the dominant group structures and controls access to credentials is the deprivation of subaltern group members of schooling, including both in quantity and quality. As discussed in Chapter Two, the residential school system in Canada streamed Indigenous people into the unskilled workforce.

Stratification economics also posits that the intergenerational transfer of resources preserves the relative status of the dominant group (Darity Jr. 2005: 144; Darity Jr. et al. 2015: 3). Regarding the inter-relationship between schooling and the intergenerational transfer of resources, research demonstrates that continuing-generation post-secondary students have several advantages over first-generation students (Pascarella et al. 2004). For example, Stephens et al. (2012) conducted a series of quantitative studies and concluded that the institutional norms of American universities undermine the academic performance of first-generation students. Thus, possible antecedent variables to introduce into the analysis include measures of intergenerational asset accumulation and indicators of residential school attendance (self or descendent).

Another analytic strategy for constructing a more expansive model is the introduction of a moderator variable. The purpose of introducing a moderator variable into the analysis is to more precisely determine for whom and under what circumstances the focal relationship applies (Aneshensel 2015: 13). Introducing a measure of discrimination into the analysis as a moderator variable provides a means of connecting the relationship between human capital acquisition and labour market outcomes to broader structural processes. Stratification economics posits that “more direct forms of in-market discrimination only become necessary

as pre-market efforts to preserve the established racial hierarchy in the occupational structure become less effective” (Wilson and Darity Jr. 2022: 24). Accordingly, “investments in human capital that make members of the excluded group more qualified for preferred positions can increase the likelihood that they will experience labor market discrimination” (Wilson and Darity Jr. 2022: 24). Based on the available data (i.e., a self-reported measure of discrimination), the present analysis will explore racial discrimination as a moderator acting on the relationship between educational attainment and income level (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Elaboration Model: Patriarchal White Sovereignty and Stratification Economics



Source: Adapted from Aneshensel (2015: 15)

Data and Methods

For the present analysis, I use the Public Use Microdata File (PUMF) of the 2016 General Social Survey (GSS) on Canadians at Work and Home (Cycle 30). The GSS program consists of a series of cross-sectional surveys that collect information on social trends from non-institutionalized persons aged 15 and over, living in the ten provinces of Canada (Statistics Canada 2019a: 5). The GSS program follows a thematic approach in which each cycle of the survey focuses on one topic in-depth. Cycle 30 of the GSS focused on the relationship between work, lifestyle, and well-being (Statistics Canada 2019a: 7).

The 2016 GSS PUMF contains 19,609 respondents and a person-level weight variable for deriving population estimates (Statistics Canada 2018c: 11). My analysis aims to generate insight into how the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty shape labour market outcomes. To accomplish this objective, I incorporate a measure of workplace discrimination into the analysis of Indigenous/non-Indigenous disparities in labour market outcomes. Accordingly, I exclude visible minorities, immigrants, and non-workers from the analytic sample.³⁷ After removing respondents with missing data, the analytic sample consists of 7,603 (weighted sample size=11,717,447) individuals.

Focal dependent variable.

The focal dependent variable is personal income. The GSS does not ask personal and family income questions but rather obtains income information through a linkage to tax data for respondents who did not object to this linkage (Statistics Canada 2018: c). The 2016 GSS PUMF records respondent's personal income in an ordinal-level scale with six levels ranging from 1 = less than \$25,000 to 6 = \$125,000 or more. To construct an interval variable for OLS regression, I assign the midpoint of categorical income responses. The unit of measurement is thousands of dollars.

Focal independent variable.

The focal independent variable is educational attainment. The 2016 GSS asked, "What is the highest certificate, diploma or degree that you have completed?" From the responses to this question, I construct dummy variables for each education level: less than

³⁷ The possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty also shape the labour market experiences of visible minorities and immigrants in Canada. My analysis, however, focuses on challenging the positioning of Euro-Canadian outcomes as the unacknowledged norm. For a discussion of the relations between white possession, non-white migrancy, and Indigenous dispossession in the Australian context see Moreton-Robinson (2015: 3-18). I further explain the rationale for excluding non-workers in the *Moderator variable* section.

high school, high school, trade, college, university below the bachelor's level, bachelor's degree, and university above the bachelor's level.

Control variables.

I use Aboriginal identity as a control variable in the analysis. The 2016 GSS asked, “Are you an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations, Métis or Inuk (Inuit)? First Nations includes Status and Non-Status Indians.” The 2016 GSS PUMF does not allow for separate analyses of Indigenous identity groups. Additional control variables include age, sex, marital status (married, living common-law, widowed, separated, divorced, single), population centre size (large urban, small urban/rural, Prince Edward Island), province of residence, employment type (paid employee, self-employed), industry (19 categories), and occupation (10 categories). The 19 categories for industry are 1) agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; 2) mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction; 3) utilities; 4) construction; 5) manufacturing; 6) wholesale trade; 7) retail trade; 8) transportation and warehousing; 9) information and cultural industries; 10) finance, insurance, and management of companies and enterprises; 11) real estate and rental and leasing; 12) professional, scientific and technical services; 13) administrative and support, waste management and remediation services; 14) educational services; 15) health care and social assistance; 16) arts, entertainment and recreation; 17) accommodation and food services; 18) other services; and 19) public administration. The 10 categories for occupation are 1) management; 2) business, finance, and administration; 3) natural and applied sciences and related; 4) health; 5) education, law and social, community and government services; 6) art, culture, recreation and sport; 7) sales and service; 8) trades, transport and equipment operators and related; 9) natural resources, agriculture and related; and 10) manufacturing and utilities.

Moderator variable.

The moderator variable is discrimination. The 2016 GSS asked, “In the past 12 months, have you experienced unfair treatment or discrimination while at work?”³⁸ To assess the moderating effect of discrimination on the relationship between educational attainment and income, I construct a series of interaction terms using the moderator variable and educational attainment variables.

Analytic strategy.

The elaboration model is a method of data analysis that uses “third variables” to explicate the theoretical interpretation of the association between the focal independent and focal dependent variables. Accordingly, the elaboration model necessarily employs multivariate regression. The general analytic strategy of the elaboration model entails comparing regression coefficients across models that introduce various types of third variables into the analysis (Aneshensel 2015: 125). I first calculate descriptive statistics for the analytic sample, before using a series of ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models to estimate the association between education and income, while adjusting for various third variables.

For the OLS regression, the equation takes the form, $\hat{Y} = a + b_1 \times X_1 + b_2 \times X_2 + \dots + b_n \times X_n$, where \hat{Y} is the dependent variable (income); X_i corresponds to the independent variables (Aboriginal identity, education, age, sex, marital status, population centre, province, employment type, industry, occupation, discrimination); a is a constant term; and b_i

³⁸ The universe for questions pertaining to workplace discrimination included only respondents who were currently self-employed or paid employees, which precludes an analysis of experiences of workplace discrimination among unemployed respondents. Given the missing information on workplace discrimination for unemployed respondents, I exclude them from the regression analysis. Accordingly, the analysis is unable to assess the relationship between discriminatory practices and job turnover.

is a regression coefficient of the variable X_i . The regression coefficients represent the expected change in the dependent variable for a 1-unit change in X_i , holding all other terms in the model constant. The equation for the conditional model, which includes the interaction term, is, $\hat{Y} = a + \dots + b_f X_f + b_m X_m + b_p (X_f \times X_m)$, where X_f is the focal independent variable; X_m is the moderator variable; and b_p represents the extent to which the effect of X_f varies as a function of X_m (Aneshensel 2015: 323).

Results

Descriptive Statistics.

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics for the analytic sample. Relative to non-Aboriginal people, Aboriginal people have lower incomes, lower levels of education, and are younger. The proportion of males and females is similar for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, with slightly more males than females. The largest proportions of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are married. Relative to non-Aboriginal people, however, Aboriginal people are more likely to be single. Non-Aboriginal people predominantly live in large urban centres. While Aboriginal people are more likely to live in small urban/rural centres relative to non-Aboriginal people, the majority of Aboriginal people live in large urban centres. The largest proportions of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people live in Ontario. Relative to non-Aboriginal people, however, larger proportions of Aboriginal people live in western Canada (i.e., Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta).

Concerning employment type, the vast majority of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are paid employees, rather than self-employees. The most concentrated industry category is health care and social assistance, with similar proportions of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people working in this industry category. Relative to non-Aboriginal people,

Aboriginal people are overrepresented in accommodation and food services, and underrepresented in educational services. The most concentrated occupation category is sales and service, with a larger proportion of Aboriginal people than non-Aboriginal people working in this occupation category. Relative to non-Aboriginal people, Aboriginal people are also more likely to work in the trades, transport and equipment operators, and related occupation category, and less likely to work in management. More Aboriginal people than non-Aboriginal people report experiencing discrimination while at work.

Table 2. Description of the analytic sample

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Income		
Less than \$25,000	33.7	20.9
\$25,000 to \$49,000	29.9	28.5
\$50,000 to \$74,000	20.3	22.6
\$75,000 to \$99,000	7.6	14.3
\$100,000 to \$124,000	4.3	6.2
\$125,000 or more	4.2	7.4
Education		
Less than high school	12.3	8.1
High school	36.9	24.2
Trade	8.4	10.8
College	25.3	24.5
University below bachelor's	4.8	3.7
Bachelor's	10.6	19.8
University above bachelor's	1.8	8.9
Age		
15-24 years	19.6	12.2
25-34 years	23.8	21.0
35-44 years	19.2	21.6
45-54 years	23.3	23.4
55-64 years	12.3	18.1
65-74 years	1.4	3.2
75+ years	0.4	0.4
Sex		
Female	44.7	46.7
Male	55.3	53.3
Marital status		
Married	40.5	48.0
Living common-law	15.1	17.9
Widowed	1.3	1.1
Separated	3.8	2.2
Divorced	5.6	4.0

Single	33.7	26.8
Population centre		
Large urban	68.3	80.6
Small urban/rural	31.7	19.4
Province		
Ontario	30.2	34.9
Newfoundland	3.6	1.8
Prince Edward Island	0.3	0.5
Nova Scotia	3.9	3.1
New Brunswick	3.1	2.6
Quebec	10.4	27.0
Manitoba	11.3	3.5
Saskatchewan	6.8	3.4
Alberta	16.9	12.9
British Columbia	13.5	10.3
Employment type		
Paid employee	91.8	86.4
Self-employed	8.2	13.6
Industry		
Manufacturing	6.8	8.9
Agriculture	1.9	2.6
Mining	3.7	1.9
Utilities	1.3	1.2
Construction	8.5	7.4
Wholesale trade	3.6	3.4
Retail trade	9.2	10.9
Transportation	5.6	4.5
Information	1.3	2.3
Finance	1.5	4.2
Real estate	0.8	1.9
Professional	6.7	7.4
Administrative	5.5	3.4
Educational	4.5	8.3
Health	12.8	13.2
Arts	1.5	2.4
Accommodation and food services	12.1	5.1
Other	4.0	3.7
Public	8.7	7.6
Occupation		
Manufacturing	4.0	3.9
Management	6.0	10.6
Business	15.1	16.5
Natural sciences	8.2	7.3
Health	5.3	7.7
Education	10.3	13.4
Art	1.7	3.2
Sales	26.3	21.3
Trades	18.5	13.9
Natural resources	4.6	2.2
Discrimination		

No	85.4	92.7
Yes	14.6	7.3
Weighted Sample Size	568,164	11,149,283
Percentage of Sample	4.8	95.2

N=11,717,447

Multivariate Regressions.

Table 3 presents the regression results for the first series of OLS models predicting income. Model 1 establishes baseline differences in income between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Model 2 introduces educational attainment into the analysis. Model 3 controls for key socio-demographics: age, sex, marital status, population centre, province, employment type, industry, occupation, and discrimination. Model 4, the interaction model, examines whether discrimination moderates the association between educational attainment and income. The results of Models 1 and 2 are consistent with the existing body of research on Indigenous labour market outcomes, specifically Aboriginal people earn lower incomes relative to non-Aboriginal people and income increases with educational attainment. Likewise, the results for key socio-demographics, employment type, industry, and occupation align with previous studies.

In general, income increases with age. Men earn more than women. Relative to married individuals, those who are living common-law, separated, divorced, or single earn less whereas, those who are widowed earn more. Residents of small urban/rural centres earn less than residents of large urban centres. Relative to Ontario residents, residents of Alberta and Saskatchewan earn more, whereas residents of all other provinces earn less. Self-employed individuals earn less than paid employees. Relative to the manufacturing industry category, individuals working in mining, utilities, finance, and professional industries earn

more, whereas individuals working in all other industries earn less. Relative to the manufacturing occupation category, all other occupations earn more.

The analysis departs from the existing research with the introduction of the measure of discrimination. Individuals reporting experiences of discrimination earn less than those who do not report experiences of discrimination. The interaction model (Model 4) indicates that the interaction between educational attainment and discrimination is antagonistic at the two highest levels of educational attainment (i.e., BA and University above the bachelor's level). Put differently, the (positive) effect of these two levels of educational attainment on income diminishes in the presence of discrimination.

Table 3. OLS regression results predicting income: Model series A

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Intercept	57.11*	39.70*	23.95*	24.02*
Aboriginal				
No (ref)				
Yes	-11.73*	-6.16*	-5.13*	-5.33*
Education				
Less than high school (ref)				
High school		3.84*	1.29*	0.98*
Trade		16.70*	6.96*	6.49*
College		16.36*	5.47*	5.34*
University below bachelor's		21.12*	11.09*	10.00*
Bachelor's		28.64*	17.36*	17.82*
University above bachelor's		47.56*	33.08*	33.30*
Age				
15-24 years (ref)				
25-34 years			13.74*	13.65*
35-44 years			24.38*	24.26*
45-54 years			29.93*	29.80*
55-64 years			28.94*	28.81*
65-74 years			23.41*	23.24*
75+ years			27.50*	27.11*
Sex				
Female (ref)				
Male			11.82*	11.78*
Marital status				
Married (ref)				
Living common-law			-3.11*	-3.13*
Widowed			2.42*	2.54*

Separated	-1.17*	-1.11*
Divorced	-1.34*	-1.27*
Single	-9.42*	-9.48*
Population centre		
Large urban (ref)		
Small urban/rural	-3.51*	-3.52*
Province		
Ontario (ref)		
Newfoundland	0.01	0.12
Prince Edward Island	-8.70*	-8.47*
Nova Scotia	-4.41*	-4.32*
New Brunswick	-6.90*	-6.81*
Quebec	-4.84*	-4.79*
Manitoba	-1.23*	-1.13*
Saskatchewan	3.17*	3.26*
Alberta	6.55*	6.50*
British Columbia	-2.29*	-2.27*
Employment status		
Paid employee (ref)		
Self-employed	-10.86*	-10.81*
Industry		
Manufacturing (ref)		
Agriculture	-21.05*	-20.89*
Mining	29.03*	29.24*
Utilities	27.82*	27.88*
Construction	-3.99*	-3.90*
Wholesale trade	-0.80*	-0.77*
Retail trade	-11.34*	-11.37*
Transportation	-3.27*	-3.20*
Information	-2.04*	-2.21*
Finance	6.14*	6.18*
Real estate	-7.93*	-7.90*
Professional	1.03*	1.04*
Administrative	-14.81*	-14.58*
Educational	-8.64*	-8.52*
Health	-9.30*	-9.23*
Arts	-10.80*	-10.84*
Accommodation and food services	-14.28*	-14.38*
Other	-10.72*	-10.70*
Public	3.45*	3.42*
Occupation		
Manufacturing (ref)		
Management	20.88*	20.98*
Business	4.2*	4.39*
Natural sciences	11.74*	11.81*
Health	16.80*	16.86*
Education	7.57*	7.67*
Art	1.47*	1.83*
Sales	1.49*	1.60*
Trades	7.21*	7.33*
Natural resources	11.49*	11.38*

Discrimination				
No (ref)				
Yes			-3.07*	-4.01*
Discrimination*Education				
Discrimination*Less than high school (ref)				
Discrimination*High school				4.23*
Discrimination*Trade				5.61*
Discrimination*College				1.45*
Discrimination*University below bachelor's				10.10*
Discrimination*BA				-5.93*
Discrimination*University above bachelor's				-2.81*
	R²	0.005	0.134	0.430
				0.431
*p < 0.001				
N=11,717,447				

Table 4 presents the results for the second series of OLS models predicting income. Like the first model series, Model 1 establishes baseline differences in income, Model 2 introduces educational attainment, and Model 3 controls for key socio-demographics, employment type, industry, and occupation. Unlike the first model series, however, Model 3 includes interaction terms for Aboriginal identity and educational attainment, while Model 4 controls for discrimination. The interaction models indicate an antagonistic interaction between Aboriginal identity and educational attainment for High school, Trade certificate, University below the bachelor's level, and University above the bachelor's level. The (positive) effect of these levels of educational attainment on income decreases for Aboriginal people.

Table 4. OLS regression results predicting income: Model series B

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Intercept	57.11*	39.70*	23.48*	23.81*
Aboriginal				
No (ref)				
Yes	-11.73*	-6.16*	-3.14*	-3.07*
Education				
Less than high school (ref)				
High school		3.84*	1.58*	1.56*
Trade		16.70*	7.23*	7.32*
College		16.36*	5.26*	5.32*
University below bachelor's		21.12*	12.34*	12.47*

Bachelor's	28.64*	17.37*	17.46*
University above bachelor's	47.56*	33.26*	33.39*
Age			
15-24 years (ref)			
25-34 years		13.61*	13.67*
35-44 years		24.41*	24.46*
45-54 years		29.91*	29.93*
55-64 years		28.85*	28.90*
65-74 years		23.51*	23.44*
75+ years		28.01*	27.91*
Sex			
Female (ref)			
Male		11.99*	11.85*
Marital status			
Married (ref)			
Living common-law		-3.24*	-3.18*
Widowed		2.07*	2.19*
Separated		-1.23*	-1.35*
Divorced		-1.52*	-1.44*
Single		-9.64*	-9.51*
Population centre			
Large urban (ref)			
Small urban/rural		-3.48*	-3.51*
Province			
Ontario (ref)			
Newfoundland		0.03	-0.05
Prince Edward Island		-8.74*	-8.76*
Nova Scotia		-4.29*	-4.37*
New Brunswick		-6.85*	-6.94*
Quebec		-4.70*	-4.82*
Manitoba		-1.25*	-1.27*
Saskatchewan		3.10*	3.09*
Alberta		6.46*	6.49*
British Columbia		-2.42*	-2.38*
Employment status			
Paid employee (ref)			
Self-employed		-11.00*	-10.96*
Industry			
Manufacturing (ref)			
Agriculture		-21.05*	-21.10*
Mining		29.02*	29.06*
Utilities		27.86*	27.77*
Construction		-3.77*	-3.69*
Wholesale trade		-0.67*	-0.70*
Retail trade		-11.36*	-11.24*
Transportation		-3.25*	-3.15*
Information		-2.10*	-2.08*
Finance		6.23*	6.19*
Real estate		-8.09*	-7.84*

Professional	0.92*	0.90*
Administrative	-14.83*	-14.68*
Educational	-8.63*	-8.54*
Health	-9.22*	-9.23*
Arts	-10.97*	-10.78*
Accommodation and food services	-14.17*	-14.07*
Other	-10.72*	-10.67*
Public	3.43*	3.56*
Occupation		
Manufacturing (ref)		
Management	21.27*	21.00*
Business	4.36*	4.11*
Natural sciences	12.01*	11.84*
Health	16.93*	16.71*
Education	7.70*	7.45*
Art	1.74*	1.48*
Sales	1.59*	1.37*
Trades	7.33*	7.19*
Natural resources	11.68*	11.59*
Aboriginal*Education		
Aboriginal*Less than high school (ref)		
Aboriginal*High school	-3.90*	-3.51*
Aboriginal*Trade	-7.83*	-7.92*
Aboriginal*College	4.57*	4.2*
Aboriginal*University below bachelor's	-21.75*	-21.47*
Aboriginal*BA	0.59*	0.64*
Aboriginal*University above bachelor's	-15.68*	-15.12*
Discrimination		
No (ref)		
Yes		-2.89*
R²	0.005	0.134
	0.431	0.431

*p < 0.001
N=11,717,447

Table 5 presents the results for the last OLS model predicting income (Model C), which includes key socio-demographics, employment type, industry, occupation, discrimination, and an interaction term for Aboriginal identity and discrimination. The positive coefficient for the interaction term in this model indicates a dampening of the (negative) effect of Aboriginal identity on income. Taken together, the various interaction models indicate that discrimination diminishes the effect of higher education on income, the effect of educational attainment on income is not the same for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal

people, and accounting for discrimination in models reduces the observed negative effect of Aboriginal identity on income.

Table 5. OLS regression results predicting income: Model C

	Model C
Intercept	24.05*
Aboriginal	
No (ref)	
Yes	-5.51*
Education	
Less than high school (ref)	
High school	1.25*
Trade	6.96*
College	5.47*
University below bachelor's	11.07*
Bachelor's	17.35*
University above bachelor's	33.07*
Age	
15-24 years (ref)	
25-34 years	13.69*
35-44 years	24.35*
45-54 years	29.90*
55-64 years	28.90*
65-74 years	23.36*
75+ years	27.46*
Sex	
Female (ref)	
Male	11.83*
Marital status	
Married (ref)	
Living common-law	-3.11*
Widowed	2.43*
Separated	-1.16*
Divorced	-1.34*
Single	-9.45*
Population centre	
Large urban (ref)	
Small urban/rural	-3.51*
Province	
Ontario (ref)	
Newfoundland	0.02
Prince Edward Island	-8.69*
Nova Scotia	-4.40*
New Brunswick	-6.90*
Quebec	-4.85*
Manitoba	-1.24*
Saskatchewan	3.19*

Alberta	6.53*
British Columbia	-2.27*
Employment status	
Paid employee (ref)	
Self-employed	-10.88*
Industry	
Manufacturing (ref)	
Agriculture	-21.04*
Mining	29.05*
Utilities	27.80*
Construction	-3.98*
Wholesale trade	-0.81*
Retail trade	-11.34*
Transportation	-3.26*
Information	-2.07*
Finance	6.13*
Real estate	-7.92*
Professional	1.04*
Administrative	-14.79*
Educational	-8.66*
Health	-9.30*
Arts	-10.78*
Accommodation and food services	-14.32*
Other	-10.74*
Public	3.42*
Occupation	
Manufacturing (ref)	
Management	20.86*
Business	4.20*
Natural sciences	11.70*
Health	16.78*
Education	7.57*
Art	1.44*
Sales	1.47*
Trades	7.18*
Natural resources	11.50*
Discrimination	
No (ref)	
Yes	-3.30*
Aboriginal*Discrimination	2.78*
R²	0.43

*p < 0.001
N=11,717,447

Discussion

The basic premise of human capital theory is that a worker's earnings are directly related to the worker's productive capacity. Investments in human-capital-enhancing

activities (e.g., education and training) presumably enhance the worker's productivity and thus increase the worker's earnings (Wilson and Darity Jr. 2022: 18). The results of the present analysis undermine this basic premise. Introducing a measure of discrimination into the analysis situates the association between education and income within a broader network of structural and institutional processes. Discrimination moderates the relation between education and income such that human capital acquisition does not guarantee increased earnings. Consistent with stratification economics, in-market discrimination operates to preserve racial disparities despite increases in human capital acquisition.

By ascertaining the role of discrimination in moderating the relationship between education and income the analysis generates insight into how the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty shape labour market outcomes. The present analysis, however, is only an initial step towards uncovering the full impact of white possessive logics on Indigenous labour. Further elucidating white possessive logics requires broadening the analysis. For example, the present analysis fails to capture the full range of *in-market* discriminatory practices. The universe for the GSS question pertaining to workplace discrimination, from which I constructed the measure of discrimination used in the analysis, included only currently employed individuals. A measure of discrimination that only captures the experiences of employed individuals necessarily excludes individuals who are unable to obtain employment despite their qualifications, due to discrimination.

Furthermore, as stratification economists explain, "more direct forms of in-market discrimination only become necessary as pre-market efforts to preserve the established racial hierarchy in the occupational structure become less effective" (Wilson and Darity Jr. 2022: 24). Indigenous people's lower levels of educational attainment are an indicator that pre-

market efforts to preserve the established racial hierarchy persist. Thus, understanding how white possessive logics shape labour market outcomes also requires examining pre-market forms of discrimination.

An analysis of the impact of white possessive logics on Indigenous labour is incomplete if it fails to connect in-market and pre-market discrimination to discriminatory practices beyond the market, or more specifically the discriminatory practices that condition Indigenous people's engagements with non-capitalist forms of labour. Examining the relation between capitalist and non-capitalist labour requires foregrounding the relation between land and labour. As Marx explains, the violent dispossession of land forces workers into the exploitative realm of wage labour. This dispossession is not a one-time occurrence but rather an ongoing imperative of capitalist accumulation.

In Canada, the existence of the capitalist economy requires ongoing access to Indigenous land and as such the nation-state deploys its possessive logics to reproduce and reaffirm its control and ownership of Indigenous land. A diverse range of discriminatory laws and practices reserve land ownership for whites and thus "guarantee colonial and settler access to Land for colonial and settler goals" (Liboiron 2021: 77; Pulido 2017: 258). The discriminatory laws and practices that maintain racialized access to land thus mirror pre-market discrimination in which the dominant racial group structures and controls access to the credentials required for preferred positions to preserve the established racial hierarchy. In sum, white possessive logics operate in tandem through in-market and pre-market discrimination, and discriminatory practices beyond the market to condition Indigenous labour.

Conclusion

Official statistics drive mainstream agendas and reflect colonizing settler norms, values, and racial understandings (Rodriguez-Lonebear 2016: 261; Walter 2016: 79). Accordingly, these data are ill-equipped to meet the data needs and requirements of Indigenous communities. Nonetheless, official statistics are authoritative sources of information about Indigenous people. Working within the confines of these data, I attempted to conduct an analysis that challenges deficit-based statistical depictions of Indigeneity. While my analysis produced a wider picture of the relationship between educational attainment and income, relative to a human capital framed approach, it captured only a small portion of the full complexity of the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty. Continuing to conceptualize ways of incorporating indicators of structural inequality into the analysis is important for advancing an Indigenous research agenda on work and labour. More important, however, is the need to generate data that aligns with and supports Indigenous peoples' own collective self-understandings and aspirations.

Conclusion

In the introduction to this thesis, I differentiated quantitative *methods* from quantitative *methodologies*. Quantitative methods are the specific statistical analysis techniques that researchers use (e.g., ordinary least squares regression), whereas quantitative methodologies are the overarching frameworks that determine the ways in which researchers use those specific techniques. In short, methodologies *produce* statistics (Walter and Andersen 2013: 10). Conversely, in the literature on Indigenous labour market statistics, quantitative researchers frequently use the terms method and methodology interchangeably, suggesting that the statistics are the methodology. This conflation between the statistics and the methodologies that produce them echoes the popular misconception that “the numbers speak for themselves.” By failing to acknowledge the standpoint of their methodology, these researchers obscure the ways in which colonizer settler norms, values, and understandings fundamentally shape the story that the numbers tell.

The dominant methodological approach to research on Indigenous labour market outcomes produces a statistical story of persistent Indigenous deficit. This body of research primarily seeks to measure and explain the labour market disadvantages of the Indigenous population relative to the non-Indigenous population and in doing so positions Euro-Canadian outcomes as the unacknowledged norm. Quantitative labour market researchers attribute the persistent Indigenous failure against these normed standards to a lack of human capital and an excess of Indigenous identity. Specifically, researchers report a negative relationship between the degree of Indigenous identity and labour market success. Quantitative labour market researchers thus analyze and interpret Indigenous statistics through a racialized lens in which whiteness is the invisible norm. Through this racialized

lens, researchers understand the economic successes of Euro-Canadians as independent of race, while racially aligned social and cultural differences account for Indigenous people's poor labour market outcomes.

The central aim of this thesis has been to disrupt this dominant methodological approach to Indigenous labour market statistics. The process of disrupting the dominant quantitative methodology unfolded in two stages. I first sought to expose the dominant social, cultural, and racial terrain within which the research operates (Chapters One to Three). I then explored the development of an Indigenous quantitative methodology in the context of work and labour research (Chapter Four).

In Chapter One, I established my theoretical framework. I outlined three criteria for a theoretical analysis of Indigenous people's labour market experiences that challenges, rather than sustains, Indigenous dispossession. First, to expose the inherently exploitative nature of capitalism, the analysis must not naturalize the market in human labour power. Second, to make whiteness and processes of racialization visible, the analysis must not accept whiteness as an invisible, universal norm. Third, the analysis must not presume the legitimacy of the nation-state's sovereignty. Such a presumption disavows the sovereign presence of Indigenous peoples. While Marxist theories of capitalism are useful for denaturalizing labour market relations, these theories largely sustain the silencing and marginalization of Indigenous sovereignties. To address this critical weakness, I drew on Moreton-Robinson's theorization of patriarchal white sovereignty. Moreton-Robinson's theorization demonstrates that patriarchal white nation-states operationalize possessive logics through racialized discourses to reaffirm their control and ownership of Indigenous lands.

While Marxist theories of capitalism in conjunction with Moreton-Robinson's theorization of patriarchal white sovereignty offer a useful framework for theorizing labour market relations within colonizing nation-states, the specificities of these relations vary across nation-states. Accordingly, in Chapter Two, I sought to refine my theoretical framework to align with the specificities of the Canadian context. To do so, I examined the deployment of white possessive logics in and through legal mechanisms, the labour market, and census-making. My analysis of white possession and the labour market began with a discussion of typologies of colonialism. I argued that overly rigid distinctions between colonial formations, in which the colonizer's primary motivation singularly defines the colonial formation, foreclose an analysis of the full range of strategies of domination and strategies of resistance that unfold in specific colonial contexts. In particular, the tendency to conflate the argument that settler colonialism is *primarily* interested in land with the argument that settler colonialism is *only* interested in land obscures analysis of the state's investment in and attempts to control Indigenous labour. Moreover, it disregards the complex ways in which Indigenous peoples experienced, negotiated, and resisted wage labour. Against the assertion that settler colonialism "does not desire Indigenous labour" (Veracini 2015: 94), I explicated myriad policies and practices through which the state sought to condition Indigenous labouring and selectively incorporate Indigenous people into the capitalist economy. I also discussed the ways in which Indigenous people's historic engagements with labour elide the rigid traditional/modern dichotomy.

Binary understandings of Indigeneity, however, remain widespread and pervade scholarly knowledge production about Indigenous peoples. In Chapter Three, I conducted a critical analysis of academic quantitative research on Indigenous labour markets and showed

how this body of research reproduces the binary logics that position authentic/traditional Indigeneity in opposition to modern capitalism. I first discussed how this body of research accepts census categorizations of Indigeneity as meaningful to the extent that they conflate statistical categories with the underlying social reality. This conflation erases the racialized socio-political processes involved in constructing statistical categories of Indigeneity and thus naturalizes racialized understandings of Indigenous peoples. I then discussed how the posited relationship between the degree of Indigenous identity and the size of labour market disparities relies on and thus further naturalizes the racialization of Indigenous peoples. Researchers use a racialized understanding of Métis as mixed Indigenous/non-Indigenous ancestry to explain the relative labour market success of the Métis population, such that the Métis population's proximity to whiteness accounts for their relative labour market success. The theoretical framework guiding the analysis and interpretation of Indigenous labour market statistics, namely human capital theory, focuses solely on individual attributes, rather than structural and institutional processes. Accordingly, within a human capital framework, the economic success associated with whiteness is a result of a productivity increase rather than the intergenerational accumulation of wealth and race privileges.

In Chapter Four, I explored ways of decoupling statistics from this dominant methodological frame. I discussed three strategies for harnessing the power of statistics to advance an Indigenous research agenda on work and labour, before translating one of these strategies into practice with a statistical analysis of data from the 2016 General Social Survey. Using official statistics to produce alternative narratives that challenge deficit-based statistical depictions of Indigenous peoples is important. Census categories of Indigeneity, however, restrict the possibility of using this data to meet the data requirement needs of

Indigenous communities. Accordingly, I reiterate my initial research recommendation concerning Indigenous data sovereignty: continue to develop the infrastructure for Indigenous peoples to generate data that aligns with their own collective self-understandings and development agendas.

I close this thesis with two final recommendations for scholarly knowledge production: 1) make Indigenous labour visible in studies of settler colonialism; and 2) make colonizing settler relations visible in studies of Indigenous labour. In this thesis, I have shown that theorizations of settler colonialism that focus exclusively on land are not only incomplete, but they also reproduce an eliminatory logic through the erasure of Indigenous labour. Likewise, analyses of Indigenous labour market outcomes that fail to explicate colonizing settler relations are not only incomplete, but they erase the ongoing appropriation of Indigenous lands and the sovereign presence of Indigenous peoples.

The existence of the capitalist economy in Canada requires the possession of Indigenous land. Controlling Indigenous people's access to wage labour is one of the ways the Canadian nation-state deploys its possessive logics to maintain ownership of Indigenous land. In turn, Indigenous people have negotiated, adapted to, and resisted wage labour. Indigenous labour is therefore central to understanding the full range of practices of domination and strategies of resistance that unfold in the settler colonial context. Likewise, colonizing settler relations are central to understanding the structural and institutional processes of dispossession that condition Indigenous labour market outcomes.

Rather than focusing exclusively on land or labour, this thesis examined land, labour, and the relation between them. Following Marx, land dispossession establishes the conditions of possibility for capitalist wage labour. Following Moreton-Robinson (2015: 17),

Indigenous people's "ontological relationship to land is a condition of our embodied subjectivity." This ontological relationship exists outside the logic of capital and is thus incommensurate with a relationship to land configured through private property (Moreton-Robinson 2015: xxi). Accordingly, Indigenous ontological relations to land continually disrupt white possession. In sum, the reproduction of capitalist social relations in Canada requires the perpetual separation of workers from the means of production (i.e., ongoing primitive accumulation) and the perpetual disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty to reaffirm white possession of the Indigenous land that forms the proprietary anchor of the capitalist economy (i.e., the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty). Unmasking this multifaceted process of perpetual dispossession reveals the inextricable link between Indigenous land, labour, and sovereignty.

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