

Toward Indigenous Ultimate Permanence: Examining
Settler Colonialism and Genocidal Elimination in Canada
and Israel

by

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Abstract

This thesis critically compares technologies of settler colonialism and genocidal elimination in Canada and Israel. Keeping with the argument that recognizes settler colonialism as an entity that destroys to replace, genocide is taken up as a theoretical framing device that addresses comparable methods of both the material and discursive elimination of Indigenous peoples in Canada and Palestinians within and outside of Israel. At the same time as the two settler states continue to commit genocide against the original inhabitants of the lands they have stolen, Canada and Israel utilize similar self-promotion strategies that present themselves as humanitarian and democratic, a specific tool used to wash away the sins of settler colonialism and genocide. While no two settler regimes are exactly the same, this thesis identifies key structural similarities between the two states and makes the case for an international solidarity movement rooted in principles of anti-colonialism and Indigenous ultimate permanence.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Settler colonialism as a process distinct from colonialism is a global issue and one that deserves ample attention from not only Indigenous and colonized populations but from settlers across the globe as well, in the same way and with the same rigour that Genocide Studies have been taken up by scholars over the past few decades. Most notably, the late Settler Colonial Studies scholar Patrick Wolfe (2006) identified and theorized the relationship between the settler colonial logic of elimination and the genocide of Indigenous peoples, a relationship that provides a compelling entry point for this thesis. Because settler colonialism is a land-centred project with a view to destroying indigenous societies and replacing them with settler societies (Wolfe, 2006; 2015), the logic of elimination is a crucial organizing principle of the settler society. As I will show, at times the settler colonial logic of elimination manifests as genocide.

The logic of elimination operates according to the organizing grammar of race (Wolfe, 2006, p.387) which is carried out differently in different contexts. It is important to note that regimes of racial exploitation occur within the context of the existing racial state (Goldberg, 2002), whereby state technologies operate to construct homogeneity and control populations in racial terms (Lentin, 2018, p.85). Race, in the context of such regimes of exploitation – of which settler colonialism is merely one example – must not be conceptualized ontologically, but rather as a specific construction of the state and its actors with the intention of hierarchizing and othering individuals and collectives based on their perceived differences. In other words, to borrow from Alana Lentin (2015), one must not seek to understand race for what it *is*, but for what it *does*. In this vein, one might turn to Adam Hochman's (2018) definition of racialization, which he

conceptualizes as “the process through which *racialized groups* rather than ‘races’ are formed” (p.2). Collectives are thus racialized for particular political and economic purposes, and the dominant group establishes the objectives according to which the process of racialization operates, which again, varies in different contexts.

For instance, enslaved Africans in the United States have been racialized as slaves, an identity constituted by their blackness in order to help propel the Jim Crow-era slave economy. The “one-drop-rule” would see that the ranks of Africans designated as property would increase with every child born from an enslaved woman, regardless of the identity of the other parent. On the other hand, Indigenous peoples are racialized as Indian and must be eliminated in order to facilitate settlers’ unfettered access to territory rather than to preserve a stock of exploitable labour. Here, the blood quantum rule would restrict membership in the category of Indigenous peoples, facilitating their elimination as a distinct collective. The demand to go away (Veracini, 2011, p.4) structures the relationship between settlers and Indigenous peoples within the settler colonial paradigm.

It is important to note that elimination is not a one-off strategy, but functions to sustain the entire settler colonial system. At times, elimination may take the form of outright murder, but not all the time. Assimilation may present itself as the more favorable strategy depending on the circumstance, as it avoids such a stark affront to the rule of law that occurs in the context of frontier homicide (Wolfe, 2006). However, while assimilation may be a “softer” form of native elimination, it is no less detrimental than physical extermination. Native assimilation seeks to “penetrate the tribal surface to the individual Indian below” (Wolfe, 2006, p.399), rendering Indigenous peoples individuals

in the settler capitalist system such that the tribe could disappear, but the individual members would stay behind, undoubtedly facilitating settler land grab.

The link between the settler project and the overarching capitalist system must not be understated, as the existence of the latter has created the possibilities for the existence of the former. The long-term goal of disbanding the tribal or communist system and instilling within Indigenous peoples the principles of private property, individualism, and low wage work is a central feature to all capitalist settler colonial projects, as Glen Coulthard (2014) notes. This is based on the fundamentally racist assumption intrinsic to the capitalist project which posits that the assimilation of non-capitalist, non-Western, Indigenous modes of life into the dominant settler capitalist structure will, somehow, “magically redeem itself by bringing the fruits of capitalist modernity into the supposedly ‘backward’ world of the colonized” (Coulthard, 2014, p.11), a tale that obscures the inherently violent, and as I will discuss, *genocidal* outcomes of the settler state’s assimilation of Indigenous nations.

There is ample research outlining the defining features of settler colonial regimes (Coulthard, 2014; National Inquiry, 2019; TRC, 2015; Wolfe, 2006; 2015; Veracini, 2011) as well as comparative analyses of the similarities and differences in the eliminatory technologies of various settler states, yet such comparative research on Canada and Israel and their respective, yet at times overlapping practices of native elimination is relatively new territory. In this thesis, I seek to critically compare the two settler regimes, examining the ways in which Canada and Israel deploy the logic of elimination as a specific settler colonial and genocidal strategy in their respective contexts. Perhaps lack of geographical proximity paints these two states as an unlikely

object of comparison, however I argue that acknowledging the similar struggles of Indigenous nations in Canada and Palestinians within and outside of Israel has the potential to promote global anti-colonial solidarity in light of ongoing affronts to their struggle for sovereignty and self-determination. Crucially, as will be discussed, at the same time as Indigenous populations continue to contest ongoing manifestations of settler colonialism and genocide, Canada and Israel both paint themselves favourably on the global stage, vying for positive representation in an attempt to deny or leave in the past their settler colonial reputations and ongoing genocides.

1.1 Research Questions and Implications

To that end, this thesis centres around a basic question: what structural similarities can be identified between Canada and Israel, two seemingly very different settler colonial states? While all settler colonial regimes share common features and a sense of “shared destiny” (Salazar Hughes, 2020, p.228) that produces similar conditions for Indigenous populations, how do their respective technologies of elimination compare? I will explore the extent to which these settler colonial states converge or diverge when it comes to their processes of Native elimination by critically examining the way Canada and Israel have engaged with the original inhabitants of their stolen lands from the point of first contact through to the present. I situate various manifestations of genocide within the framework of settler colonialism as a primary material consequence of the logic of elimination, and question to what extent the two states have committed genocide against their respective Indigenous populations. However, at the same time as these processes of Native elimination are enacted, both states attempt to promote themselves as humanitarian and

tolerant democratic states, painting themselves favourably on the world stage despite their reputations as settler colonial and genocidal.

From here, a second question follows: how do Canada and Israel, respectively, utilize similar self-promotion strategies in order to either leave in the past, in the case of Canada, or outright deny, as does Israel, their settler colonial reputations? What are the shared interests between the two states that give way to the ironclad relationship they maintain in the international arena? I argue that the re-crafting of Canada's and Israel's images as bastions of democracy, tolerance, and humanitarianism is a specific strategy used to wash away their historic and ongoing acts of Indigenous genocide, and to efface their shared, violent interests.

A third and final question emerges following this analysis concerning the implications of this type of comparative research. Specifically, what implications might knowledge of the similarities between Canada and Israel's practices of elimination of the Native have for global anti-colonial solidarity movements? I argue that this type of comparative analysis has the potential to illuminate the common struggles of two colonized populations separated by vast geographical borders and encourage international activism and coalition building amongst diverse actors with common beliefs. Nur Masalha (2015) notes that all colonized populations share the experiences of having their "histories erased, retold or reinvented or distorted by European white settler colonial regimes" (Masalha, 2015, p.30), thus highlighting the basis for solidarity between Indigenous nations in what is known as Canada, and Palestinians within and outside of the occupying state of Israel. As has been emphasized, anti-colonialism is a global struggle that requires engagement from both Indigenous peoples and settlers alike. As

such, this research contributes to the existing field of Settler Colonial Studies and has the potential to compel wider audiences to unlearn colonial histories in favour of anti-colonial frameworks and global Indigenous solidarities.

1.2 Situating Myself in the Research: A Note on Reflexivity

Before proceeding with the analysis it is necessary to incorporate a discussion of my positionality and relationship to this research. I am here, completing this research, because I have benefitted materially from the structure of settler colonialism in what is known as Canada. My ancestors emigrated from Northern Europe and the former Yugoslavia and settled on the unceded and un-surrendered lands of the Anishinabek Nation and the traditional territory of Fort William First Nation, in what is commonly known as Thunder Bay, Ontario. They were accommodated into the web of ‘multicultural’ Euro-Canadian citizenry, established themselves within the settler economy, and raised their families on Anishinabek lands for three generations before I came into the world. They were able to do so successfully at the expense of generations of Indigenous peoples who experienced various forms of violent elimination in the name of establishing another Northern Ontario municipality within settler colonial Canada. My being able to attend university is directly related to this history.

For the past eight years, I have studied at a university, worked, and lived on the traditional unceded and un-surrendered land of the Algonquin Nation. Universities are not known for being radical spaces and have long been implicated in the epistemic and material violence enacted onto Indigenous peoples (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013). Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s (2011) important book *Decolonizing Methodologies:*

Research and Indigenous Peoples situates the role of scholarly research in the exploitation of Indigenous peoples and communities, noting that the academy is instrumental in dispelling traditional ways of knowing and upholding Western epistemic superiority (Smith, 2021, p.279). One of the most prominent colonial assumptions about Indigenous peoples across the globe was their perceived incapacity for rationality and knowledge production. Europeans therefore tasked themselves with controlling the representation of Indigenous peoples, their knowledges and their cultures, distorting their truths and ultimately bringing these false representations to life through scholarly disciplines ranging from health, to history, to the social sciences.

As a settler woman completing a graduate thesis in Sociology, I am implicated in this relation despite my well intentions and genuine belief in the necessity of decolonization for re-making the world into one defined by relationality and respect as opposed to domination and exploitation. It is necessary that I emphasize that I am not the sole producer of the knowledge put forth in this thesis. Indigenous peoples from Turtle Island to Palestine are well aware of the intricacies and intimacies of settler colonial domination and genocide and have produced immense knowledge on the subject, both through oral histories and written archives. In that sense, though the research is novel to me, what I present throughout this thesis is not “new” information. One small way I have chosen to honour this fact is by relying predominantly on the existing research of Indigenous knowledge-keepers, communities and scholars, focusing exclusively on drawing comparisons and making conceptual linkages between the practices of two settler colonial states.

Of course, when it comes to researching settler colonialism and genocide, abstract implications do not exist. The theories discussed throughout this thesis extend well beyond the conceptual realm and contribute to the range of quotidian material conditions Indigenous peoples across the globe experience in their drive for self-determination and sovereignty. It goes without saying that as a white settler woman, these are conditions that I fundamentally cannot comprehend on an intimate, personal level. When it comes to envisioning what meaningful, material decolonization looks like, I defer solely to the visions put forth by Indigenous communities and recognize my role to be one of support, of helping to amplify these voices and ensuring that I am contributing to ongoing struggles against colonial oppression and relations of domination in my day-to-day activities. As Porter Swentzell (2020) states, “each one of us is a member of an immense web of reciprocal responsibilities that stretches out indefinitely” (Swentzell, 2020, p.39), a point that must be at the fore of every researcher’s mind when it comes to writing about such issues as the ones in this thesis and doing so with integrity, transparency, and respect.

Another point that is worth stating is that this thesis in no way seeks to contribute to the global climate of anti-Semitism and racist discourses against the world’s Jewish population. Though I am steadfast in my anti-Zionism, the critique I leverage against the state of Israel is one that condemns a regime built on an ideology that negates the presence of a specific Indigenous nation on their own traditional lands. Claims that anti-Zionist politics are inherently anti-Semitic are reductive and ignore the vast amount of Jewish people who also condemn Israel’s actions against Palestinians within and outside of its colonial borders. Therefore, I must make myself incredibly clear: criticizing the

actions of a racist, genocidal, settler colonial state, as I do in this thesis, is not equivalent to demonizing a particular group based on race or faith. It is critical to recognize that Zionism is not representative of the views of the Jewish population at large, but to the extent that it characterizes the state of Israel's foundations it must be fiercely condemned, as I do throughout this work.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

2.1 Comparative Analysis as a Strong Qualitative Methodology

This research works within the bounds of several well-established theories pertaining to settler colonialism at large, but also contributes to the growing field of Comparative Settler Colonial Studies. In the field of Comparative Settler Colonial Studies, the use of this theoretical framing to understand the Palestinian experience has sparked significant outcry amongst Zionists who argue that Israel's is a particularly "exceptional case in history" (Amoruso et al., 2019, p.452) that cannot be compared to other settler colonies. Yet it is precisely through the act of comparison and the recognition of settler colonialism's "morphological continuity" (Salazar Hughes, 2020, p.222) that one can decry such notions of exceptionalism and recognize settler colonial regimes as operating under the same framework of domination.

Generally speaking, comparative analysis as a form of qualitative methodology affords researchers with numerous benefits. Far from seeking to erase differences amongst samples to prove researchers' existing hypotheses, comparative endeavours allow researchers the opportunity to broaden their understanding and awareness of a particular subject, avoid generalizations, and provide alternative solutions to issues encountered 'at home' (Esser & Vliegthart, 2017, p.2). Comparative analysis contributes to the development and testing of universally applicable theory, and heightens researchers' awareness of other systems, cultures, and patterns in such a way that enables them to critically contrast such systems with the ones with which they are most familiar.

In the context of Settler Colonial Studies, taking a comparative approach merely involves examining two or more contexts in which "one people replaces – through

violent acts of conquest and dispossession – another that had previously established its presence on the land” (Amoruso et al., 2019, p.453), arguably the most basic premise of settler colonialism as a whole. In doing so, researchers do not presume to conclude that all settler regimes are *exactly the same*, but rather demonstrate the structural similarities in the relationships that settlers establish with Indigenous populations. Such is the case for both Canada and Israel. Comparative research on the two states illustrates the common interests and practices they share in a way that denounces any claim of uniqueness or exceptionalism of particular settler colonial regimes (Salazar Hughes, 2020). Here, one can locate the justification for this type of analysis, as it is one that seeks to illuminate broad commonalities while respecting and acknowledging the differences between samples.

2.2 Situating Settler Colonialism

As has been discussed, settler colonialism must be distinguished from other forms of colonization on a foundational level. Settler colonialism as a system entails a number of defining features absent from traditional understandings of colonialism with primary objectives centred around the acquisition of territory and the elimination of Indigenous populations. As Lorenzo Veracini (2011) describes, in terms of colonial and settler colonial regimes, “both move across space and both establish their ascendancy” (Veracini, 2011, p.1), however their similarities end there. Wolfe (2006; 2013) has made important contributions to the theorization of settler colonialism as a distinct form of domination of Indigenous peoples – perhaps most importantly, the defining of settler colonialism as a structure rather than as an event (Wolfe, 2006, 388).

Indeed, in the context of settler colonialism as an invasion, Wolfe notes that settlers “come to stay” (Wolfe, 2006, 388), establishing a new colonial society on the expropriated land base of the Indigenous population, “gaining as much land with as few natives as possible” as Ronit Lentin (2018) aptly states (p.13), rather than exploiting the labour of the Natives to facilitate resource acquisition for the mother country as has been typical of traditional colonial regimes across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific. Territory is at the heart of settler colonial endeavours, indeed, its “specific, irreducible element” (Wolfe, 2006). When it comes to labour in settler colonial contexts, Gershon Shafir (1996) offers a typology of various settler regimes and their respective labour relations. In “pure settlement colonies”, such as Israel and Canada, settlers establish an economy based on white labour, which when coupled with the forced removal of Indigenous populations, seeks to maximize the settler labour force while relying upon the lands and resources expropriated from the Indigenous population (Shafir, 1996, p.229). Settlers may also rely upon the labour of immigrants, provided that such immigrants are desirable (white) and do not disrupt the balance of power between settlers and Indigenous populations.

At the heart of settler colonial domination, of course, lies the logic of Native elimination. An organizing principle of settler colonial regimes rather than a one-time occurrence, Native elimination is necessary to ensure settlers can successfully lay claim to the territory – a hope, it seems, never fully realized in contemporary settler colonial polities. Sarah Salazar Hughes’ (2020) interventions on unbounded territoriality are important to reference as a specific strategy used by settlers when it comes to delimiting – nor rather, *not delimiting* – the particular territorial bounds of the settlement. Settlers

will actively *not* identify the limits or boundaries of their territorial control to avoid communicating a limit to their territorial expansion and sovereign authority (Salazar Hughes, 2020). Yet in addition to Indigenous elimination for territorial purposes, the logic of elimination seeks to extinguish the difference between settlers and Indigenous peoples such that this binary relationship no longer exists – the Indigenous population is either forcibly removed or assimilated into the settler polity, marking the formation of a new, completely ‘settled’ and putatively post-colonial population, albeit one in which rampant violence and the hierarchization of communities persists. Through this process, as Coulthard (2014) argues, settler colonialism moves beyond a structure that “solely derives its reproductive force from its strictly repressive or violent features” (Coulthard, 2014, p.152), but rather from its ability to produce life forms that naturalize its constitutive hierarchies.

As Veracini (2011) describes, by the end of this ‘taming’ process, the settler regime can claim to no longer be *settler colonial* and “[justifies] its operation on the basis of its future demise” (Veracini, 2011, p.2). The erasure of the colonizer-Indigenous binary is an important, defining feature of settler colonial regimes. At the heart of the endeavour is the settler desire to indigenize, to normalize their position on the land. The settler state, as Wolfe (2013) argues elsewhere, rests upon “incomplete foundations” (Wolfe, 2013, p.259), and thus requires the elimination of the Native to ease the anxiety that rigid binarism provokes amongst settlers, as the existence of the binary signals incompleteness – the territory has not been fully settled, the Indigenous population still remains. Settlers enact the logic of elimination in different ways – child abduction, policies of enforced miscegenation and religious conversions are but a few forms of

biocultural assimilation (National Inquiry, 2019; TRC, 2015) in addition to homicide, forced relocation and incarceration.

It must be emphasized, however, that the mass murder of Indigenous peoples as an eliminatory strategy is not beneath the settlers, a point which brings the question of genocide to the fore. Given that the system of settler colonialism fundamentally relies on the acquisition of territory, the logic of elimination is enacted to facilitate this process. Eliminating the Natives as a distinct social and political group enables settler expansion, however, it also constitutes genocide on the basis of the elimination of an entire *genos* of people. To the extent that settlers do not rely on the labour of Indigenous peoples to sustain their economies but rather need them to simply disappear, it is possible to examine this relation through the lens of genocide.

2.3 Situating the Genocide of Indigenous Peoples in Settler Colonial Regimes

While Raphael Lemkin's (1944) seminal theorization of genocide has undeniably Eurocentric origins, a closer reading demonstrates an explicit mention of its applicability to colonial contexts. Lemkin defines genocide as the destruction of a nation or ethnic group through a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations for the life of the group, with the aim of annihilating the group themselves (Lemkin, 1944, p.79). He includes in his articulation of this type of coordinated plan measures to promote the disintegration of political and social institutions, culture, language, feelings of nationalism, religion, and economic existence (Lemkin, 1944). In other words, the specific foundations destroyed through the process of genocide are precisely those which bestow upon the group a distinctive identity as a national collective. Genocide constitutes an attack on the group as an entity, and while

the actions undertaken in the name of annihilating the group may be taken against individuals, they are not carried out against individuals as such but as members of the targeted group.

Lemkin conceptualizes genocide as replacement, noting it has two central phases (Lemkin, 1944). The first involves the destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group through the methods identified in the above passage. The second phase involves the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor onto either those from the oppressed group that have been allowed to remain or onto the territory after the oppressed group has been removed (Lemkin, 1944, p.80). Here, one may notice the similarities between Lemkin's use of the term 'imposition' and Wolfe's logic of elimination. If settler colonialism destroys in order to replace it follows that genocide can be understood as an extension of the logic of elimination. Haifa Rashed, Damien Short, and John Docker (2014) explain that in the process of colonizing the land, "the settlers' intention to destroy is directed at those who are in the way" (Rashed et al., 2014, p.15) and people are in the way simply by remaining at home.

However, given that genocide is viewed as one of the most egregious crimes against humanity, any use of the term to refer to regimes outside of those most unanimously considered genocidal by the international community – one may think of the Holocaust or Rwandan Genocide for instance – is viewed with suspicion at best and vehemently contested at worst. Such has been the case in the context of both Canada and Israel. In the Israeli context, Rashed et al. (2014) argue that Zionism can be likened to a panopticon (Rashed et al., 2014, p.2), whereby its proponents adhere to a vigilant scholarly and ideological movement that threatens to vilify anyone who dares refer to

Israel as genocidal or settler colonial. Given that the European Jews are understood to be the quintessential victims of genocide following the Holocaust, to label the state of Israel as genocidal, the supposed ancestral homeland of the world's most persecuted minority, is to commit the ultimate act of anti-Semitism. Allegations of an Israeli genocide against Palestinians are therefore hotly contested by Zionists, to the extent that as Rashed et al. note, there is a glaring omission in the field of Genocide Studies of any reference to the Palestinian context.

Similarly, arguments that label Canada's treatment of Indigenous people as genocide are ill received by the wider settler public. The preference has been to label the state's elimination of Indigenous peoples as cultural genocide, a qualitative variation of genocide that Wolfe (2006) critiques as never amounting to the real thing, "just as patronizingly hyphenated ethnics are never real Americans" (p.401). There is a degree of softness to descriptions of cultural genocide relative to genocide proper that renders it more palpable to settlers while simultaneously denying the understandings of Indigenous peoples who recognize their experiences as stemming from explicitly genocidal policies. As Matthew Wildcat (2015) asks, "if an Indigenous person who continues to have constant experiences of trauma claims that what happened to Indigenous people in the Americas is genocide, what is accomplished by denying their claim?" (Wildcat, 2015, p.393) I will briefly outline some of the problems associated with terming Canada's structural relations with Indigenous peoples as cultural genocide rather than as explicitly genocidal.

2.3.1 "Never the Real Thing": The Pitfalls of Cultural Genocide

The concept of cultural genocide is one that has received considerable attention from scholars and other organizations interested in theorizing settler colonialism in various contexts (Davidson, 2012; Kingston, 2015; Paquette, 2020; TRC, 2012; 2015). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) defines cultural genocide as the outcome of policies enacted to destroy the social, economic, and political institutions of a particular group (TRC, 2015, p.1). Accordingly, those who use the term *cultural genocide* argue that states engaging in the process seek to destroy the structures and practices that allow the targeted group to continue existing as a group, the systematic degradation of “the integrity of the culture and system of values that defines a people and gives them life” (Kingston, 2015, p.65). In the context of settler colonialism, such processes are intentional and are enacted by states to weaken the communal ties that targeted groups maintain with one another, their histories, and their environments to facilitate settler domination.

In setting out to destroy the cultural foundations of Indigenous groups, settlers enact a variety of means including the seizure of land and forcible expulsion and relocation of Indigenous peoples, the violent prohibition of Indigenous languages and destruction of cultural artifacts, and the persecution of spiritual leaders (TRC, 2015). Importantly, education is deployed as a key method of cultural disintegration, and much of what is known about what is deemed cultural genocide in the Canadian context comes from the residential school policy, where children were forcibly taken from their families and shipped to boarding schools in order to “kill the Indian” in the child (TRC, 2015) so that they may become civilized and Christianized.

However, to problematize this notion of cultural genocide, it is necessary to return once more to Lemkin's original theorization of genocide. If cultural genocide sets out to destroy the political, economic, and social institutions that make up the life system of a particular group, how does this differ from genocide proper, which Lemkin describes as a set of policies and processes aimed at group annihilation through the destruction and disintegration of the group's "political and social institutions, culture, language, feelings of nationalism, religion, and economic existence" (Lemkin, 1944, p.79)? It appears that in carrying out what is deemed cultural genocide, Canada has enacted the very same policies that are widely understood in Lemkinian terms to be genocidal. Additionally, even if one should choose to focus on the destruction of elements of group life that fall under the domain of culture – native language retention or expressions of nationalist pride through art or poetry, for instance – these elements are still explicitly included in Lemkin's conception of genocide, which sees the imposition of the oppressor's culture and national expression as the second phase of genocide.

When one examines genocidal elimination as part of a wider framework of settler colonial domination, distinguishing between physical genocide and cultural genocide becomes a muddy territory, as both processes act in tandem to achieve the "destruction of the essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of total annihilation of the groups themselves" (Paquette, 2020, 146). Thus, one cannot separate attempts at the extermination of the culture of Indigenous nations from the actual death of Indigenous peoples themselves – the motives for genocide are the same whether it takes the form of massacre or cultural destruction (Kingston, 2015). Wolfe (2006) echoes this point, noting that in distinguishing between cultural genocide and genocide proper,

focusing on the question of degree is futile since a dead Indian and killing the Indian while saving the man are both equally as central to accomplishing the same goal: the elimination of Indigenous peoples as political collectivities to facilitate settler expansion and land grab.

Similarly, Elisabeth Paquette (2020) while less critical of the concept of cultural genocide itself than the way by which it is evoked in the context of liberal, multicultural state discourses, argues that the idea of cultural genocide has been depoliticized. Culture, she argues, tends to denote that which is considered “historical and apolitical” (Paquette, 2020, p.147), and therefore less salient than the outright massacring of a particular group. Yet, as Rashed et al. (2014) stress, it is important to recognize that “the elimination of a people from the history books and the discourse of top politicians” always implies the dangerous next step of the group’s physical extermination (Rashed et al., 2014, p.15). This view of genocide as consisting of multiple steps is consistent with Wolfe’s articulation that the difference between settler colonial genocides and non-colonial genocides is their sustained duration (Wolfe, 2006, p.400). The view that genocide is a process rather than a specific episode or event fundamentally links it to settler colonialism. My decision to use settler colonialism and genocide as the primary theoretical framing devices throughout this thesis derives from this fact.

To that end, the first comparative section of this thesis is divided into two themes: the material and the discursive elimination of Indigenous peoples in Canada and Palestinians within and outside of Israel. Since both of these types of processes are enacted to destroy and wipe from existence the distinct foundations of national groups, they are both at their core genocidal, regardless of degree. Recall once more that territory

is settler colonialism's irreducible element and the link between settler colonialism and Indigenous erasure becomes clear. The erasure of Indigenous peoples as distinct legal, political, and social entities – the primary goal of genocide – facilitates their assimilation into the settler body politic and denies existing claims to territory. The specific ways in which Canada and Israel have enacted such policies will be explored in greater detail below and used as an entry point from which I question and compare their respective structures of settler colonialism and genocide.

Chapter 3: Settler Colonial Genocide in Practice: Examining Canada and Israel

As has been discussed, the genocide of Indigenous peoples serves as a tool for facilitating settler control and territorial permanence. Because anti-colonial and Indigenous memory is threatening to settler projects, as Chandni Desai (2018) writes, material representations of indigenesness must be destroyed, given that settler projects are premised on the erasure of Indigenous histories and presence. This is due to the fact that settler colonial domination inherently rests upon shaky terrain, the settler-Indigenous binary relation starkly visible (Desai, 2018; Wolfe, 2013). At the same time as settlers set out to eliminate the Native in a material, genocidal sense, the process unfolds in a more discursive way through re-education and memoricide. Annihilation and assimilation, as settler colonial logics of elimination, can thus be understood as integral to the genocidal processes settler polities seek to enact as a means of eradicating this binary. Although Canada and Israel do not share an identical historic trajectory in their respective paths toward settler statehood, both have deployed and continue to deploy staunchly similar

methods of Native elimination against the original inhabitants of the lands they have stolen. This section looks comparatively at Canada and Israel's methods of Native elimination through a genocidal lens both materially and discursively, first through the violent interruption of communities through forced relocation, child abduction, and sexual violence and second through the use of education and toponymicide to facilitate Indigenous memoricide and replacement.

3.1 The Material Elements of Genocide: Forced Population Transfer, Child Abduction, and Sexual Violence

Recalling that Lemkin conceptualizes genocide as a set of continuous processes enacted with the intention of systematically destroying – among others – the social, economic, and political foundations of a particular group, it follows that a necessary component of this phenomenon is the destruction of familial and communal relationships, where national identity in both an abstract and material sense is transmitted across generations. This type of destruction can be conceptualized through settler policies of forced Native relocation, child abduction, and policies of targeted sexual violence in both Israel and Canada.

3.1.1 Forced Relocation in Israel and Canada

There is perhaps no greater process of forced Indigenous relocation than the 1948 Nakba, during which some 700,000 Palestinians were expelled from their homeland as a central piece of Israel's settler colonial state formation process. Briefly, the objective at the heart of Zionism has always been the creation of an exclusively Jewish national state in the biblically declared ancient homeland of the Jewish people, following centuries of

anti-Semitic persecution of Jews across Europe. As Nahla Abdo and Nira Yuval-Davis (1995) outline, during the early twentieth century while mandatory Palestine was under British imperial control, the Balfour Declaration of 1917 was enacted to signify the allegiance between British imperialism and the Zionist movement, legally enshrining Palestine as the “Jewish Homeland”, and encouraging mass European-Jewish immigration to Palestine (Abdo & Yuval-Davis, 1995). Importantly, yet also paradoxically, as Lentin (2018) points out, early Zionist leaders recognized that European anti-Semitism was a necessary component to their successful settler colonization of Palestine, as the governments of anti-Semitic states would be interested in assisting the Zionists in their quest for sovereignty since it would entail a mass exodus of Jews from within their own borders (Lentin, 2018, p.97), a reinforcement of the importance of race to the Zionist settler colonial project.

In the years immediately following the Balfour Declaration, large sections of Palestinian land were transferred to the Jewish settlers, igniting tensions between the Indigenous population and the colonizers, and sparking numerous revolts throughout the 1920s and 1930s. This context of animosity gave way to the United Nations’ (UN) official division of Palestine into two separate Arab and Jewish states (Abdo & Yuval-Davis, 1995). Of course, the creation of two separate states in the Zionists’ perceived ancestral homelands did not align with the goals of achieving an entirely Jewish state in Palestine. From 1947 to 1948, in addition to occupying the regions established by the UN as the designated Jewish state, Israel conquered over half of the territory designated as Palestine, massacring and forcefully evicting the surviving Palestinian population to nearby Arab states as part of the Zionist settler colonial drive for territory acquisition. It

is crucial to note, moreover, that this act of territory encroachment continues well into the present [Figure 1]. This disaster is memorialized by Palestinians as the Nakba, or *catastrophe*, a “step-by-step yet continuous genocide” (Abdo, 2018, p.54) that must be understood as a process of settler colonial domination rather than a particular historical moment or event – the key distinguisher between colonial genocides and non-colonial genocides.



Figure 1: Image representing Palestinian loss of land from 1946-2010. Source: Jadaliyya Reports, 2012, <https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/26608>

Crucially, Masalha (2018) argues that these events must be conceptualized through a framework of ethnic cleansing and transfer, noting that the key drivers of the Nakba were “ethnic ideology, colonial-settlement policy and demographic strategy” (Masalha, 2018, p.9). The genocidal politics of transfer are central to Zionist strategy and ideology and the creation of an exclusively Jewish state in Palestine. Lawrence Davidson

(2012) incorporates passages from David Ben Gurion’s journals into his analysis of ethnic cleansing in Palestine, in which the first Israeli Prime Minister writes “it would be of tremendous advantage to us... for every transferred Arab, one could settle four Jews on the land” (Davidson, 2012, p.73), proving that the forced transfer of Palestinians was vital to Israel’s nation-building process. Evidently, as Davidson also points out, the term *transfer*, when used by Zionists, serves as a more polite euphemism for ethnic cleansing and the elimination of the Indigenous inhabitants of the land.

With this in mind, it is clear that the concept of race is also intrinsic to policies of genocide and ethnic cleansing, as is evident in the Israeli context. As Wolfe (2006) describes, genocide and settler colonialism more broadly necessarily employ the “organizing grammar of race” (Wolfe, 2006, p.387), and it is especially true, therefore, that as beneficiaries of European imperialism, early Zionists brought with them a deeply inculcated Western racism that characterized their behaviour throughout the settlement process (Davidson, 2012). Similar to other settler colonial regimes, one can witness the enactment of this qualitatively European brand of colonial racism¹ in the Zionist justification that Palestine be the land of the newfound Jewish state. Writing regarding the infamous “land without people for a people without land” myth, Lentin (2018) highlights that Zionists were acutely aware that the land was not *literally* empty of

¹ As further evidence of Israel’s continued processes of racialization of and colonial racism toward Palestinians, numerous national and international organizations have formally accused the state of the crime of apartheid in recent years (Adalah, 2020, web; B’Tselem, 2020, web; Human Rights Watch, 2021, web; Amnesty International, 2022, web).

Moreover, three consecutive United Nations Special Rapporteurs – Richard Goldstone (United Nations, 2009, web), Richard Falk (United Nations, 2010, web), and Michael Lynk (United Nations, 2022, web) – have, in each of their reports on the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestine Territory, confirmed that Israel is committing crimes against humanity against Palestinians.

inhabitants; rather, the perceived desolate character of Palestine came from the absence of a people in a European sense of the word and Zionist portrayal of Palestinians as of “inferior human quality” (Lentin, 2018, p.70), and lacking any distinct national character and shared history or culture. This view, premised on racism, would provide fertile ground for the step-by-step, yet continuous genocide Abdo (2018) describes, the impacts of which, and in particular of the settler policies of forced relocation or transfer, continue to be felt by generations of Palestinians within and outside of the occupying state of Israel.

The Zionist view that Palestinians lacked any distinctive, binding national culture is demonstrably false. For Indigenous nations in general, an intimate relationship to the land is an essential part of what constitutes national identity and sovereignty (Paquette, 2020); this is no different for Palestinians, for whom land is the key determinant of a sense of community and shared history, the primary source of economic, cultural, and social identity (Abdo, 2018). The systematic expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland, through methods such as the bombing of villages, the destruction of homes by drone strikes, and the large-scale massacre of civilians (Abdul Hadi, 2018) serves to facilitate Zionist settler colonial expansion, not just through territorial acquisition, but through attempts at disrupting the continuity of a people through their relationship to place. Therefore, as Davidson (2012) states, to the extent that national identity is rooted in geography, Israel’s violent and bloody forced relocation and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from their ancestral homeland constitutes genocide.

When it comes to Canada, similar settler tactics of forced Indigenous relocation are evident as well. Such a strategy has its roots in the sexist 1876 *Indian Act*, the

colonial piece of legislation which, as its original purpose, determined “Indian” Status in order to facilitate Canada’s assimilation of Indigenous peoples. The *Act* traced Indigenous lineage through the male bloodline, despite the fact that for many Indigenous nations, lineage and heritage was traced matrilineally (National Inquiry, 2019). Thus, while Indigenous men could freely marry Indigenous or settler women and retain their Status, Indigenous women would lose their Status if they married a settler or if their Indigenous husband chose to be enfranchised. Enfranchisement would extend British citizenship to Indigenous men over 21 years old who were literate in English or French, free of debt, and of ‘good moral character’ (National Inquiry, 2019, p.255), who in return would receive a small plot of land taken from the band’s communal allotment. In turn, they would be forced to relinquish their Status and the benefits accorded to it, thus decreasing the number of people for whom the government had to claim responsibility.

It is crucial to note that Indigenous peoples resisted this encroachment on their self-determination, and very few men voluntarily gave up their Status (TRC, 2015); the majority of those enfranchised were women who involuntarily lost their Status through out-marriage. As a result, the *Act* was amended to grant the state the ability to strip Indigenous peoples of their Status against their will, in a clear attempt to work toward the gradual breaking down the settler-Indigenous binary (Wolfe, 2006; 2013) through the assimilation of Indigenous peoples into the settler body politic.

In addition to the *Act*’s legislation of the sexist and demeaning treatment of Indigenous women, it was also a legal tool used to determine which lands would be reserved for Indigenous peoples, the beginning of the formalized reserve system that is still upheld today. Importantly, the legislation of lands as ‘Indian Lands’ implies that

Indigenous nations did not always have access to all of Turtle Island prior to colonial invasion and represents the same Lockean *terra nullius* view that justified Zionist settlement in Palestine, the “land without people for a people without land”. As a further assimilationist project, the *Indian Act* set out reserves for band members – a move with drastic implications for Indigenous women who had their Status revoked – though this did not imply actual ‘ownership’ of the land as the colonial state retained the power to determine whether “any purpose for which land in a reserve area are used or are to be used is for the use and benefit of the land” (National Inquiry, 2019, p.258), and could revoke the land should it determine this vague criteria had not been or would not be met.

The 1911 *Oliver Act* further intensified this process of land grab as it formally legislated the ways in which reserve lands granted to bands could be clawed back by the state. For instance, municipalities seeking to develop railways or other industrial endeavours could legally encroach upon reserve lands without penalty and at times entire reserves could be moved away from municipalities if the government deemed it “expedient” (National Inquiry, 2019, p.252). The *Indian Act* and its amendments are thus quintessential tools of colonial domination which facilitate and legislate the domination and complete rule of one people by another and ensures that Indigenous lands are freed up for settlement and transformation into Western-style individual property (Tomiak, 2017).

It is important to note, in the context of genocide, that the reserve land granted to band members was not conducive to communities’ ability to thrive. Reserves were often located on the poorest agricultural lands and created outside of traditional territories (National Inquiry, 2019). Not only did this place Indigenous peoples in economic

jeopardy as they could not harvest the arid land, the forced relocation of Indigenous peoples to different tracts of land disrupted their spiritual and cultural connection to their traditional, ancestral lands. Communities were, and continue to be, separated from one another with families forced into nuclear homes, disrupting the bonds and communal networks that promoted community wellbeing for millennia. This speaks directly to the fact that elimination entails the breaking down of Indigenous collectivities into individuals to facilitate settler permanence and domination (Coulthard, 2014). It goes without saying that such abrupt disruption of families and communities fundamentally resulted in a break in the intergenerational transmission of the values, beliefs, and cultures that comprise their distinct national identities.

A key consequence of the implementation of the reserve system is the subsequent forced relocation and urbanization of Indigenous peoples. While settlers may dispute the use of the term ‘forced’ in describing Indigenous peoples’ relocation from rural to urban areas given the fact that, unlike in the Palestinian context, Canadian settlers did not necessarily always deploy extensive militaristic violence that physically forced Indigenous peoples into the metropolises, one can still conceptualize such relocation as involuntary as a result of their need to escape the lack of services available on the reserves. The Canadian governments of the day did, however, implement various assimilation policies to entice Indigenous people to urbanize, including the 1957 Indian Placement and Relocation Program (IPRP), which promoted vocational training for adults and education for children (National Inquiry, 2019).

The employment opportunities available to those who participated in IPRP training, however, were limited and low paying, with Indigenous women’s labour

especially undervalued and underpaid relative to settler women and Indigenous men (National Inquiry, 2019). In a contemporary context, the ongoing genocide against Indigenous women and girls in Canada can be partially traced back to the devaluation of their labour in the settler wage economy. Indigenous peoples, though particularly women, were forced into low-income neighborhoods with high rates of crime as a result of being shuttled into the low-paying jobs offered by the IPRP training. Specific areas of cities became ghettoized and naturalized as spaces of violence and degeneracy due to racist views of Indigenous peoples and the areas they populated (Hunt, 2015). When violence occurs, the underlying assumption is that such violence is unsurprising, and communities should expect criminality in these degenerate spaces. This, of course, represents an egregious devaluation of the lives within these spaces, the majority of whom are Indigenous (National Inquiry, 2019), a contemporary manifestation of the constant relegation of Indigenous communities to the margins of society.

That Indigenous women are repeatedly the targets of violence points to the direct link between the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and the genocide Canada has committed and continues to commit against Indigenous peoples today. Indigenous women are holders of significant cultural knowledge and traditionally occupied a position of respect and honour within their communities as those who would transmit national identity and pride across generations. The massacre of Indigenous women and girls, an explicit consequence of Canada's policies of forced relocation and urbanization, directly severs that link in perhaps the most horrifyingly violent way. Speaking about the murder of his mother, Rande C., a participant in the National Inquiry

into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls testimonies, emphasizes this point, stating that:

“For us as Aboriginal people, it’s about misplacement. We were stripped of everything that we know. We’ve been misplaced this entire time. Urban settings such as the [Downtown] Eastside [in Vancouver] where my mom ended up, it’s because she was misplaced, identity stripped away from her, everything, the essence of who we are as Aboriginal people taken” (National Inquiry, 2019, p.275)

a powerful testimony of the logic of elimination at work in this context. These painful processes of community disruption further extend to child abduction as an additional strategy of genocidal elimination in settler colonial Canada and Israel.

3.1.2 Child Abduction as Genocide in Israel and Canada

Child abduction has always figured prominently as a preferred settler method of elimination of the Native (Cook et al., 2004; TRC, 2012; TRC, 2015; National Inquiry, 2019; Wolfe, 2006; 2013), whether the hope is to assimilate the children into the settler body politic, as is the case in Canada, or to disappear the child as is the case in Israel. Both forms of child abduction, however, strive to render invisible the settler-Indigenous binary, simply through different methods. The discussion that follows focuses on Canada’s infamous residential school policy as the quintessential form of institutionalized child abduction. By recognizing how Canada tried to first civilize and Christianize Indigenous children by removing them from their families for ‘educational’ purposes, a process that continues well into the present simply under different pretenses (Talaga,

2017), it becomes clear that the abduction of Indigenous children proves to be a key tactic of settler colonial domination and genocide.

From 1896 to 1996, residential schools were formally established across Canada with the ultimate goal of assimilating Indigenous children, who were understood to be tainted by the ontological and epistemological practices of their families into white Canadian society (TRC, 2012, p.10). Because of the close interweaving of education with spiritual and daily life in Indigenous communities, many Indigenous parents and families resisted the notion that they must surrender their children to the state in order for them to be educated – children had been educated without needing to leave their communities for millennia. Importantly, however, in the context of residential schools as a method of elimination, the schools, which more closely resembled prisons than classrooms (TRC, 2012), were not established to provide adequate education to Indigenous children, as was stipulated in the government’s treaty obligations, but rather to *end* treaty obligations by assimilating the Indigenous population into white, settler Canada.

Recalling their experiences to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, survivors describe religious and state officials showing up at their family homes and placing them one by one onto busses or into the cabs of trucks (TRC, 2015, p.38), where they were met by the cries of young children and toddlers. Once separated from their parents and families, siblings and other relatives were separated at the schools, contributing to the children’s overall isolation. It was the assumption of both the government officials behind the schools and the religious officials who oversaw the daily operations that such isolation was crucial for children to abandon their sense of identity and become more assimilable into the settler mainstream. This points to the logic behind

forcing small children to leave their home lives for the schools, as they had to be “caught young” (TRC, 2012, p.10) in order to be saved from “the degenerating influence of their home environment” (TRC, 2012, p.11). Further, settlers worried that without intervention and education, Indigenous peoples would produce an “undesirable and often dangerous element in society” (TRC, 2012, p.13), a point which speaks to what Wolfe (2006) terms the common settler reversal whereby settlers’ imagined violence of Indigenous peoples allows “Native savagery to stand in for settler self-critique” (Wolfe, 2006, p.265).

And yet, from simply an infrastructural standpoint, these ambitions of ‘educating’ and ‘civilizing’ Indigenous children through the implementation of residential schools would almost certainly fail, which of course is saying nothing of the fact that the schools amounted to one of the greatest assaults on Indigenous culture and identity. The schools were overcrowded, underfunded, and understaffed with unqualified teachers, and thus provided only very rudimentary and highly gendered education to students that offered little opportunity for advancement in both the workforce and higher education. Children were malnourished, faced a greater susceptibility to contagious disease due to the overcrowding and poor ventilation in the schools, and suffered from the traumatic experience of being ripped away from loved ones at such a tender age. The “scandalously high death rates” (TRC, 2012, p.1) of the residential schools thus come as no surprise; from uncontrolled disease epidemics to child suicide (TRC, 2015), it is clear that the schools not only failed to ‘educate’ Indigenous children, but fundamentally disrupted the life course for generations to come.

It is important to emphasize again that the settler project is a continuous structure rather than an event relegated to a particular time and that the pattern of forcing

Indigenous children and adolescents to leave their communities on reserve to attend schools in urban centres persists. Tanya Talaga (2017) discusses the extreme isolation, loneliness, racism, and settler violence that Indigenous children endure in the name of receiving an education due to their being required to leave their on-reserve communities in order to attend school in Canadian cities. Focusing her analysis on the tragic and mysterious deaths of seven children from Northern reserves who attended school in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Talaga's work demonstrates the continuation of colonial violence, as well as the complicity of settlers – city officials, healthcare workers, school administrators, foster families, and regular civilians – in the untimely deaths of these seven children as a result of the normalization of settler violence in the city, sanctioned by those with the power and responsibility to intervene and prevent it (Hay, 2019). The practice of removing Indigenous children from their communities so that they may receive a settler education did not end with the closure of the last formal residential school, but continues today under different pretenses in Canada, the impacts of which must be understood as genocidal.

Shifting the focus to Israel, the state relies upon similar practices of child abduction in its ongoing project of settler colonial domination, though they manifest differently than those implemented by Canada. Rather than abducting Native children under the guise of civilizing, educating, and thus assimilating them, as is the case in Canada, the Israeli approach to child abduction as facilitating the settler project relies on the abduction and detainment of Palestinian children and their separation from their families in and of itself, without any attempt at coding the logic behind their detention as an act of benevolence. The section that follows will discuss the separation of families

through Israel's systematic detention and imprisonment of Palestinian children as a form of state-sanctioned child abduction, one that is indeed part of the ongoing settler colonial project and constitutive of genocidal elimination.

Again, at the heart of settler colonialism is Indigenous territory acquisition, therefore as Veracini (2011) notes, "the demand to go away" (Veracini, 2011, p.4) defines the relations between Indigenous nations and settlers. If the Indigenous population cannot "go away" entirely, settler states must instead implement regimes of violence and population control, processes necessitated by the principle of settler invasion (Coulthard, 2014). As Catherine Cook, Adam Hanieh and Adah Kay (2004) describe, Israel's ongoing settler occupation effort is at its core a regime of control, one that seeks to "permeate every aspect of Palestinian life" (Cook et al., 2004, p.8), and instill the message that resistance is futile. A key method of Israel's population control, and indeed one favoured by settler states across the globe, is incarceration.

The illegality of imprisoning Palestinians from the Occupied Territories in the state of Israel is a critical piece of information to maintain while examining incarceration as a form of state-led abduction and situates it alongside the institutional terror of the Canadian residential school policy. Sfard (2011) details how the systematic detention of Palestinian prisoners, detainees, and administrative detainees violates not only certain individual and collective rights, but that it is also a flagrant affront to international humanitarian law, which regulates the practices of armed conflict in which the military forces of one state effectively controls a territory outside of its own sovereign borders (Sfard, 2011, p.193). As he notes, the illegal transfer of Palestinian detainees to facilities outside of the Occupied Territories not only violates specific due process rights,

essentially placing their future at the whim of the occupying state of Israel, but also constitutes a severe injury to the community, “from whose land thousands of sons and daughters are... forcefully removed” (Sfard, 2011, p.189). This form of abduction violates the rights of Palestinians to live in their homeland and amongst their families and communities, even as prisoners.

Moreover, provisions in the Fourth Hague Convention respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land, 1907, and the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in the Time of War, 1949 categorically prohibit the removal of prisoners and detainees to detention facilities outside of the occupied territory in question (Sfard, 2011, p.194). Israel is bound to these Conventions as an occupying power yet continues to privilege its own local laws over adherence to international law. It is clear that in the context of closures, apartheid, and the strict measures enacted to prevent Palestinian entry in to Israel, the violation of these provisions is substantive, and as Sfard emphasizes, “the danger which the Geneva Convention sought to prevent is actually taking place” (Sfard, 2011, p.195), whereby the state is ensuring demographic changes to the occupied territories, and the individuals in question are fundamentally disconnected from family, community, and nation.

Recall once more Wolfe’s (2013) point that settlers internalize an ever-present yet imagined threat of violence from Indigenous peoples and the rationale behind Israel’s systematic incarceration of Palestinians, children included, begins to crystallize. Israel has largely been successful in shaping the mainstream narrative about its occupation practices, relying on discourses of national security and keeping Israeli citizens safe from the persistent “threat” of Palestinian violence to justify its practices (Cook et al., 2004).

The result of this, as Lentin (2018) notes, is the state's blind application of a "security threat" identity to all Palestinians (Lentin, 2018, p.149). In its designation of all Palestinians as security threats, the settler state thus avoids self-critique by negating the roots of this perceived Palestinian threat: the more than century-long settler colonial occupation efforts.

To return to the point in question, however, while political detainment constitutes a key part of the Palestinian national liberation struggle (Abdo, 2014), the imprisonment of children nevertheless warrants considerable scrutiny and engagement through the lens of settler colonialism and genocide. A 2017 report compiled by the Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Organization found that since the year 2000, over 12,000 Palestinian children have been detained by Israeli forces, most commonly charged with throwing stones (Addameer, 2017, web). By the end of September 2020, as is captured in a B'Tselem report, there were 157 Palestinian minors held in Israeli prisons as security detainees, though current statistics are inaccessible as the Israeli Prison Service (IPS) has withheld figures and data from October 2020 onward (B'Tselem, 2021, web).

What can be gleaned from the available reports is that the treatment of minors within the prison system amounts to torture, and similar to the experiences of Indigenous children in Canada's residential school system, has dire impacts on their psychosocial development and the preservation of a sense of self and identity. In the Addameer report cited above, the organization notes that children are deliberately targeted during mass arrest campaigns as a way of pressuring families to end their social and political mobilization efforts (Addameer, 2017, web). In this fact, one might notice a distinct similarity between the abduction of Palestinian children by the IPS and the abduction of

Indigenous children in Canada by residential school officials. Importantly, as Abdo (2014) notes, the state uses distinct fear tactics during the arrests that further traumatize Palestinian children and their families. To ensure that the “suspect” is at home, Israeli authorities often raid Palestinian homes well after midnight which also ensures minimal intervention from neighbors (Abdo, 2014, p.141). That these violent raids take place in front of the entire family – including women and younger children – position them as yet another means of terrorizing the family, which is seen as the breeding ground for Palestinian nationalist resistance, or in the eyes of the settler state, terrorism. Thus, in both cases there is an explicit settler recognition and fear of Indigenous self-determination and nationalism and the forced removal of children from their families serves as a means of preventing these processes from occurring.

The treatment Palestinian children endure throughout their detainment certainly amounts to both torture and assault on their human rights and is further comparable to the treatment Indigenous children endured at the hands of the Canadian state in the context of residential schools. During the initial interrogation process, children are beaten, threatened with sexual violence and at times forced to endure sexual abuse at the hands of prison staff (Addameer, 2017). Torture, both mental and physical, is frequently deployed as a way of breaking down the spirits of detainees, “undermin[ing] and crush[ing] the victim’s personality and identity for political purposes” (Cook et al., 2004, p.126). It goes without saying that when the victim is a child, the trauma that torture induced has the potential to fundamentally disrupt children’s sense of national identity and can greatly impact its transmission from one generation to the next. As Cook et al. (2004) note, drawing on the testimony of one victim, the purpose of torturing Palestinian children in

Israeli prisons is to “undermine [our] spiritual feelings and make [us] lose trust in [ourselves] and others” (Cook et al., 2004, p.127).

It is of equal importance to note that, while Palestinian culture is not homogenous, extended family and a sense of shared, local community makes up a large component (Abdo, 2018; Cook et al., 2004). The extended family, or *hamula* (Abdo, 2018, p.47) is a central element of life and the foundation deep-rooted beliefs of collective responsibility and community spirit. The separation of Palestinian children from families and their detainment in Israeli prisons is therefore an assault not just on the children and their immediate, nuclear families, but on communities as a whole; the suffering and stress of the individual is felt by the entire community. However, it is also through the *hamula* that support and strength is bred, as well as the stoking of the fiery spirit of resistance (Cook et al., 2004). Just as the Israeli state continues to attempt to eliminate the Palestinian population, with the abduction of children through their detainment in prisons being just one example, the population continues to resist and fight back, signalling that the Israeli settler project will never be completely successful. In addition to settlers’ reliance on violent regimes of forced Indigenous relocation and child abduction as methods of elimination, widespread policies of targeted sexual violence are also deployed as a tactic. This final section outlining the material dimensions of the ongoing settler colonial genocides looks at sexual violence as intrinsic to settler colonial projects, and as a key genocidal tool in Canada and Israel.

3.1.3 Genocidal Sexual Violence in Canada and Israel

Sexual violence, whether threatened or carried out against colonized or otherwise subjugated populations has always held a significant place in mainstream conceptions of

genocide. Bearing in mind that the United Nations, drawing on the original definition put forth by Lemkin, makes explicit mention of sexual violence in its definition of genocide, referring to the act of “imposing measures intended to prevent births” (United Nations, n.d., web) within a specific national, ethnic, racial, or religious group, it follows that sexual violence carried out during times of war and conflict is generally understood as genocidal. However, it is equally important that the sexual violence carried out against Native women by settlers be understood not only as a quintessential genocidal practice but also as one intrinsic to the colonial structure (Smith, 2015). The impacts such systematic sexual violence have on communities must be understood as the result of a process aiming at eliminating the Indigenous population as a distinct national group.

Any analysis of the specific use of sexual violence as a form of settler colonial domination and genocide must begin with the acknowledgement that sexual violence is deeply enmeshed within the workings of the colonial system. Andrea Smith (2015) argues that in the colonial imagination, Native bodies are inherently considered to be “immanently polluted with sexual sin” (Smith, 2015, p.9) as a result of the combination of sexist and racist views held by white, European colonizers. Because Native bodies are cast as “dirty” and impure in the minds of the colonizers, it follows that they are inherently violable, and that any violence against Indigenous peoples is not recognizable as such (Smith, 2015). As Sarah Hunt (2015) states, “those whose lives are negated or made illegible cannot have violence done to them” (Hunt, 2015, p.27). The result of the total dehumanization of Indigenous peoples within the colonial imaginary is the subsequent association of violable Indigenous bodies with violable Indigenous lands.

Sexual violence has also been deployed by colonizers to stifle alternative conceptions of gender identity (National Commission, 2019), to attempt to dissolve community foundations by invoking feelings of shame (Smith, 2015), and as part of wider colonial massacres (Abdo, 2011). The point to keep in mind, however, is that in all of these cases, Native women represent a threat to colonial ascendancy as “bearers of a counter-imperial order” (Smith, 2015, p.15). Policies of sexual violence carried out by settlers against Indigenous women must thus be conceptualized as attempts to wage war against Indigenous nations by attempting to control both their lands and their bodies (Smith, 2015). Such practices are visible when one considers the experiences of women living under persistent threat of settler sexual violence and the actual use of rape and other forms of sexual and reproductive violence as genocidal tools, as is the case in both Canada and Israel.

As Kathryn Medien (2021) points out, the contemporary framing of sexual violence in conflict zones largely ignores the Palestine-Israel context. Sexual violence, when taken up by feminist academics and non-governmental organizations, is generally presented as a phenomenon carried out by racialized non-state actors, ignoring the way it is also a routinized element of everyday Palestinian life under Israeli occupation (Medien, 2021). Settler sexual violence, she argues, must be understood as structural to the Israeli settler colonial project, rather than as an “add-on” to war and occupation (Medien, 2021, p.15).

Nadine Naber’s (2018) interventions on Palestinian studies and queer theory are pertinent here, as she notes that settler colonialism requires the “disciplining and regulation of Native sexualities” through a variety of means (Naber et al., 2018, p.62).

The discursive production of Palestinian sexuality, and indeed Indigenous sexuality more broadly, as non-normative, repressed, and savage strengthens the civilized-liberated-settler / barbaric-backward-native dichotomy that justifies settler domination over both Indigenous bodies and Indigenous lands. Further, giving way to Zionism's ongoing attempts at the elimination of the Palestinian Native, C. Heike Schotten (2018) defines the discursive possibilities for queer Palestinian existence under Zionism: complete invisibility or hyper-visibility, the latter intertwined in a "limited range of spurious and racist archetypes" (Schotten, 2018, p.23) relating to a backward and homophobic culture desperately in need of saving from the liberated, queer-friendly settler state.

Further, it is important to note that in the colonial imaginary, Indigenous land is inherently feminized (Lentin, 2018; Smith, 2015), with imagery of penetrating and taming the land figuring prominently. Rabab Abdulhadi's (2019) writing on the intensification of violent, state-backed, sexualized discourse against Palestinians and Palestine amongst the Israeli public following the 2014 assault on Gaza demonstrates once more the centrality of sexual violence to the Zionist regime, and settler domination more broadly. Emboldened by a global climate of white supremacy and increasing support for Zionism in the West, and particularly the United States, 2014 saw an uptick in Israeli civilians sharing racist, sexist, and Islamophobic content on social media, and public officials calling for sexual violence against Palestinian women and girls (Abdulhadi, 2019). One such example is a widely shared photo which portrays Gaza as a half-naked woman in a niqab encouraging the rape of both the women and the land itself (Abdulhadi, 2019, p.562) [Figure 2]. The association between colonial domination and territory acquisition and sexual violence as a form of Native elimination is clear.



Figure 2: "Israelis sharing misogynistic meme: 'Bibi, finish inside this time!' Signed, citizens in favor of a ground assault". Source: David Sheen (@davidsheen), Twitter, July 17, 2014, 7:08 AM, <https://twitter.com/davidsheen/status/489728463721332736>

Another especially salient example of this interlinkage is Abdo's (2011) discussion of Zionists' systematic use of sexual violence and mutilation against Palestinian women and girls during the 1948 massacre at Deir Yassin. The numerous sexual atrocities specifically carried out against Palestinian women and girls – 137 women and children in total (Abdo, 2011, p.83) – demonstrates just how tantamount sexual torture is to Israel's wider settler aims of conquest, expansion and elimination of the Native. The mass rapes and massacres of Deir Yassin intended to send a message that a similar fate awaited the Palestinians who refused to abandon their homes and submit to the Zionist settler-colonial land theft (Lentin, 2018).

In other work, Abdo (2014) illustrates the centrality of sexual violence to Israel's ongoing occupation attempts through the widespread threat and use of sexual violence against female political detainees in Israeli prisons. While sexual degradation is known to

be widely used as a method of torture, it is especially present within Israeli prisons as a way of both physically and psychologically assaulting Palestinian women by exploiting what are perceived by Israeli officers to be traditional Palestinian values and “playing on the issue of sexuality” (Abdo, 2014, p.173). It is important to recall, however, as Naber (2018) urges, that these othering constructions of Palestinian sexual backwardness and conservativeness are in themselves necessary discursive constructions that legitimize settler conquest and domination over Palestinian land and people. Of course, as Abdo (2014) notes, the women are steadfast in their resistance to such advances. While their bodies themselves become sites of resistance in these times, the widespread reliance on sexual violence and harassment cannot just be understood as a by-product of settler violence, but an intentional, calculated act of control intended to weaken, degrade, and shame detainees as well as their families and communities.

In Canada, the practice of deploying sexual violence against Indigenous women as a means of asserting settler control and facilitating the elimination of the native is also widespread and met with impunity. As Hunt (2015) has argued, Canadian colonial law has discursively positioned and naturalized Indigenous women as invisible, illegitimate subjects beginning in 1876 with *The Indian Act*. The implications of this process, she argues, are both material and discursive, as “the inability to be comprehended as a legitimate subject is both dehumanizing and deeply implicated in the normalization of violence” (Hunt, 2015, p.27), violence that is perpetrated and sanctioned by both settler civilians and state actors, as is also the case in Israel. It follows, Hunt argues, that places inhabited by Indigenous women only become visible as spaces of naturalized deviance and degeneracy where violence is bound to occur, obscuring the wider, structural forms

of violence the women endure and exonerating those who commit acts of violence against them.

A direct consequence of this pattern, and one that quite clearly serves as a reminder of the ongoing settler colonial genocide in Canada is the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. There is a widespread pattern of indifference toward the disappearance and death of Indigenous women and girls in Canada, shaped by racist and sexist views that portray Indigenous women and girls as “the lowest of the low” (National Inquiry, 2019, p.391) within Canadian society. A key consequence of the normalization of violence against Indigenous women and girls is the tendency to blame and punish victims for the violence done unto them. Survivors speaking to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls recall being met with indifference from police when attempting to call for help to escape abusive situations (National Inquiry, 2019, p.629), sexual assault by officers (National Inquiry, 2019, p.633), and systemic bias in the courtrooms in hearings about disappearances and deaths of loved ones (National Inquiry, 2019, p.664). That settler law enforcement is deeply imbricated in this epidemic of targeted violence and indifference points once more to Hunt’s (2015) arguments about the colonial violence inherent to Canadian law.

More broadly, Canada has fundamentally relied upon the sexual exploitation of Indigenous women and girls as foundational to its formation as a modern settler state; violent encounters were key to dominating and controlling the Indigenous population such that the settler demand for territory might be met with Indigenous acquiescence. The dehumanization of women through sexual violence serves as the ultimate form of attack on their power and agency, and is a key attempt at dissolving community bonds,

dismissing Indigenous resistance, and “eradicate[ing], replac[ing], and destroy[ing] Indigenous Peoples and culture” (National Inquiry, 2019, p.233). Just as Israeli settlers use sexual violence against Palestinian women and children to relay a message of fear and conquest, the same is true in the Canadian context, where sexual violence against Indigenous women and girls represents a further instance of settler entitlement to land and bodies.

Further, just as in Israel, settler sexual violence against Indigenous women in Canada must not be relegated to a distant past, as part of a regrettable colonial era out of which the state has now grown. As has been mentioned, Canada is in the midst of an ongoing epidemic of targeted violence against Indigenous women and girls, with sexual violence figuring prominently in many cases. While robust police data is difficult to come by – the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) notes that there is no consistent protocol regarding how police gather information on Indigenous identity beyond the visual assessment of the woman by the officer involved (NWAC, 2020, p.2) – NWAC maintains the only national database on the number and circumstances of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada, with data primarily gathered from community reporting. NWAC makes an estimate of nearly 1200 reported cases of violence against Indigenous women and girls since the 1980s (NWAC, 2020), but notes that only 53% of the murder cases in their database have been solved, compared to a rate of 84% of cases across the country (NWAC, 2020).

This fact speaks to the indifference that law enforcement displays toward Indigenous women and girls, as well as their disposability in the eyes of the settler colonial state. In addition to systematic neglect, the settler state also engages in direct

forms of systematic sexual and reproductive violence against Indigenous women. A particularly noteworthy example of this violence, and one that is perhaps the most quintessentially genocidal, is the forced sterilization of Indigenous women. Just as the *Indian Act* initially sought to manage and control Indigenous women's biological reproduction through determining their citizenship status (Clarke, 2021), *The Act* later paved the way for the application of provincial legislation to Indigenous women after a 1951 amendment. The *Sexual Sterilization Acts* passed in British Columbia and Alberta granted provincial eugenics boards the power to assess the mental capacity and fitness of women to bear children, which disproportionately targeted Indigenous women (National Inquiry, 2019).

Importantly, this practice is not historical but has continued well into the present, as Chaneesa Ryan, Abrar Ali, and Christine Shawana (2021) report that between the years 2015 and 2019, over 100 Indigenous women from various parts of Canada have reported being coerced into sterilization (Ryan et al., 2021, p.278). The intent was and is undeniably for Canada to eliminate the Indigenous population through the prevention of births (National Inquiry, 2019), efforts that directly align with both the United Nations' definition of genocide discussed previously, and the settler colonial principle of elimination. This severe violation of women's bodily autonomy underscores that settler colonialism must not be understood as an event, but once more as a structure that continues across time as the settler project is never completely finished.

3.2 The Discursive Elements of Genocide: Education and Toponymicide in Canada and Israel

The material elements of genocide shared by Canada and Israel are numerous and treacherous and amount to systematic policies geared toward the elimination of the Native population. Whether through the forced removal of Indigenous peoples from their homes, the abduction of children from their families, or the sexual violence committed against women and girls, Canada and Israel have fundamentally engaged in genocide against the Indigenous peoples of the lands, in distinct though structurally similar ways. Returning to the definitions of genocide and settler colonial assimilation points to additional methods that are less bloody, but just as destructive as the practices discussed above. The following section incorporates a discussion of the Canada and Israel's use of education and toponymic practices as tools for not only settler colonial domination, but for the discursive elimination of Palestinians and Indigenous peoples, respectively

3.2.1 Educating for Erasure: Education as Memoricide in Canada and Israel

In his ground-breaking work, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Franz Fanon (1963) argues that colonization entails not just the physical invasion and exploitation of one nation of people by another, but also the implantation of the colonizers' values into the minds of the colonized (Fanon, 1963). Though Fanon writes from a psychiatric perspective, his articulation that colonized populations, in the process of forced assimilation, must "pawn off" their own intellectual possessions (Fanon, 1963, p.15), namely their epistemological and ontological principles, is a useful lens for analyzing the role of education in settler colonial contexts. Education is a necessary component of achieving settler goals as well as a site of profound epistemic violence as Indigenous

populations are solely taught the histories and values of the settler society in an attempt to replace one collective history with another, what Ilan Pappé (2006) terms *memoricide*. The knowledge produced about the Indigenous populations contributes to their elimination, as they are relegated to a historical past or disregarded completely, as is the case in both Canada and Israel.

Education is a central tool to facilitate the land-grabbing and assimilationist policies of the two settler colonial states. Just as Indigenous populations were thought to be incapable of successfully dominating the land under Lockean principles of *terra nullius*, so too were they thought to be incapable of educating themselves and their children; this responsibility would fall on the benevolent settlers. Indigenous communities in Canada were informed that “the Queen wishes all her red children to learn the cunning of the white man” (TRC, 2012, p.9), a paternalistic and domineering tone that is equally present, as Ismail Abu-Saad (2019) notes, in the Israeli Ministry of Education’s assertion that there not be a single child in Israel who “did not learn the Jewish and Zionist knowledge and values” (Abu-Saad, 2019, p.100). In both cases, it is clear that education is used primarily as a tool for controlling Indigenous populations. With this in mind, I turn to an examination of both states’ settler education systems and their policies, with a particular focus on the two respective colonial schooling systems, their curricula, and the consequences of epistemic violence and poor quality of education for Indigenous peoples in Canada and Palestinians.

As has been discussed previously, Canada’s most widely known colonial educational policy is that of the residential schools, the horrors of which have been well-documented (TRC, 2012; 2015). However, in terms of their impact on the assimilation of

Indigenous children, an important point to stress is their highly gendered quality in terms of both curriculum and treatment of students. While girls were solely taught homemaking skills, boys' education was geared toward manual labor and tending to the land. Students were often pulled out of class to assist with labour around the schools, almost guaranteeing they would receive an inferior education relative to the children of white settlers (TRC, 2012, p.15).

That the students would not acquire the necessary education to succeed in the labour market upon their graduation was not so much a coincidence as it was a matter of policy, as can be evidenced in a statement by the Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs of the time, in which he states that “residential school children should not be educated to ‘earn their bread by brain-work rather than by manual labor’” (TRC, 2012, p.25). In other words, even if Indigenous children were to be ‘successfully’ assimilated into the settler culture, in that they relinquished their Status and the rights accorded to them, they would almost necessarily occupy the lowest socioeconomic echelons of settler society.

This formal gendering of early settler colonial education is not limited to Canada. In the Palestinian context, education under the early British colonial rule was equally as split along gender and racial lines and functioned to keep Palestinians in the lower ranks of society. As Abdo (2011) describes, rather than providing them with the necessary skills to succeed economically, education for Palestinian girls was primarily focused on “women keeping in their ‘right place’ in the home” (Abdo, 2011, p.150), outside of the public sphere. Similar to the Canadian context, the administration argued that “Jews should be in business; Arabs would farm and work the land” (Abdo, 2011, p.149), setting the stage for a widening socioeconomic gap amongst the two groups. As in Canada, the

British colonial education system was itself premised upon racist notions of needing to civilize the Palestinian population, an idea that did not change once Zionist settlers took control of the system.

Unique to the Israeli educational system, however, is its close ties to the state's ongoing total militarization efforts. Katherine Natanel (2016) describes total militarization as the specific conditions wherein "preparation for war becomes part of social routine and is no longer considered a matter of public debate or political struggle" (Natanel, 2016, p.8), and where the boundaries between private life and the military frontier are blurred. Education becomes encompassed within the total militarization of Israeli society in order to teach settler students how to continue the occupation efforts. As Natanel notes, "today's pupils are transformed into tomorrow's combat soldiers" (Natanel, 2016, p.10), with lessons and field trips specifically designed to prepare students for military service.

The question of language repression is another interesting example by which to compare the settler colonial education practices of Canada and Israel through the lens of Indigenous elimination. While British and French settlers explicitly prohibited Indigenous children from speaking their mother tongue while attending residential schools in order to assimilate them into the Canadian body politic, there is a somewhat different dynamic at play in the Israeli context. Today, although Arabic is one of two official languages in the state of Israel, students are not required to study the language in school, a conscious omission attempted to repress and disrupt the transmission of Palestinian values and culture through language. Especially interesting here, as Abu-Saad

(2019) notes, is that while Arabic is not seen as valuable for educational and cultural purposes, it is incredibly valuable for militaristic aims.

Indeed, the goal of Arabic language studies is to “produce intelligence officers for the military, while at the same time preventing the use of the language as a vehicle for developing positive relationships” (Abu-Saad, 2019, p.103). This speaks once more to Natanel’s (2016) point that education is encompassed within Israel’s broader politics of total militarization. In both cases, Indigenous languages are seen as a threat to settler permanency (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013), and in the settler education systems, are either forbidden altogether, as in the Canadian colonial context or neglected, save for use by military officers in the ongoing occupation efforts in Israel. This picking and choosing of specific, settler-focused elements to include in school curricula further entrenches the system of settler colonialism as an entity seeking to destroy to replace (Amoruso et al., 2019).

As has been emphasized throughout this work, settler colonialism involves the rewriting of its history in order to cover its tracks. Eve Tuck and Ruben Gaztambide-Fernandez (2013) note that this rewriting of history in settler contexts involves the use of “mythologies that conceal the teleology of violence and domination that characterize settlement” (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013, p.74) to present a rosier picture of the settler state’s origin. Veracini (2011) echoes this statement, arguing that settler colonialism is fundamentally shaped by a “recurring need to disavow the presence of indigenous others” (Veracini, 2011, p.2), a goal settlers attempt to achieve through a variety of means, and importantly, through the use of school curricula to further the settler narrative.

As Nadia Sa'd Al-Deen (2017) describes, education in the state of Israel is deployed as a key tool of Judaizing the region, as any attempts by Palestinians to improve or propagate the educational system are obstructed (Sa'd Al-Deen, 2017). Far from seeking to provide Palestinian students with adequate education such that they may develop the necessary skills to succeed economically, the key aim of the Israeli educational system is to foster a deep love for the state of Israel and sympathy for the Jewish people as they "re-establish their national existence on the land" (Sa'd Al-Deen, 2017, p.343) despite the historical presence of Palestinians. This necessarily involves an intensely Jewish-focused curriculum at the expense of Palestinian culture and knowledge.

Textbooks, Abu-Saad (2019) explains, "participate in creating what a society has recognized as legitimate and truthful" (Abu-Saad, 2019, p.101), therefore rendering them inherently political. What can be made of this when settler populations omit reference to Indigenous histories and epistemologies in their school curricula? Whether one considers sociological textbooks that tell a one-sided story of colonial conquest and genocide (Abdo, 2011), or the removal of maps of Palestine from history textbooks (Sa'd Al-Deen, 2017), what becomes officially recognized as truthful are the histories, geographies, and cultural practices of the Israelis while those of the Palestinians are erased. This strategic omission of all knowledge pertaining to Palestinian life lends particular credence to the fact that such indoctrinated education facilitates Indigenous memoricide and genocide in settler colonial Israel.

In Canada, Godlewska et al. (2020) argue that the settler educational system promotes ignorance of Canada's colonial history, such that amongst university students, there is a fundamental gap in the knowledge of Indigenous peoples and their histories, the

result of “structural methods of not-knowing” (Godlewska et.al, 2020, 152) that are socially sanctioned by the state. Through a survey distributed to over 800 Ontario university students spanning numerous academic disciplines, the authors determined that a vast majority of students have a deeply distorted view of Canada as a settler-colonial nation, most importantly a relegation of Indigenous peoples and their traditional territories to a distant past and a view that Indigenous peoples are today “passive beneficiaries of settler generosity” (Godlewska et.al, 2020, p.156) with regards to differences in taxation. This is clearly demonstrative of a school curriculum that provides a one-sided view of Canadian history in a way that furthers the settler-colonial rewriting of the national narrative.

The erasure of Indigenous peoples and histories from Canadian elementary school curriculum is widely recognized amongst Indigenous communities, to the extent that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 2015 report on reconciliation explicitly lists amongst its Calls to Action an entire section devoted to education for reconciliation. The Committee calls on the Canadian government to implement such actions as “developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools” (TRC, 2015, p.331), and increased teacher education on the necessary means to achieve the above goal. Actions such as these are direly needed to subvert the trend of ignorance that Godlewska et.al (2020) note amongst university students, who, as they state, are poised to become the future educators, social scientists, and medical professionals of the state (Godlewska et.al, 2020, p.170).

Suffice it to say, the Canadian educational system as a whole contributes in large part to harmful knowledge production about Indigenous peoples and their practices. From the perspective of the generations of Indigenous children forced to attend residential schools as part of Canada's settler assimilation project, the result has been generations of children taught to not only disregard but to disavow their communities' epistemologies and ontologies. As one survivor recounts, the primary aim of the schools was to "teach children to hate [their] own people" (TRC, 2012, p.79) through associating indigeneity with primitivism and savagery. This process inherently subverts Indigenous nationalism and sovereignty and thus reinforces the dominance of the settler state, as Indigenous children are taught to negate the ways of their communities in favour of settler ways of being.

From the settler perspective, the erasure of Canada's colonial history and present from current school curricula signifies to settler students that Indigenous peoples are a vanishing race and secondary characters in the story of Canada's coming to be as a white nation. As Godlewska et.al (2020) emphasize, students are "trained to denigrate, devalue and dismiss Indigenous realities in the subtlest and most intimate ways" (Godlewska et.al, 2020, p.151), contributing to the narrative of replacement (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013) that is so characteristic of settler-colonial states. It goes without saying that this systematic negation of Indigenous histories and epistemologies constitutes genocide in Lemkinian terms and is a glaring example of Pappe's conception of memoricide.

With regards to Palestinians living under Israeli occupation, the knowledge produced as a result of the Israeli educational system functions similarly to that of the

Canadian context, where particular knowledge is deployed as a means of maintaining settler control of the region. As Abu-Saad (2019) explains, the Israeli educational system is deeply committed to “the denial and non-recognition of indigenous Palestinian Arab history” (Abu-Saad, 2019, p.101), favouring instead the Israeli narrative of a divine land for a divine people. In addition to curricula that negate Palestinian existence in Israel, the goal of imparting solely pro-Israel knowledge onto students is further achieved through the vigorous screening of teachers to ensure educators adhere to the hegemonic settler narrative within their classrooms.

Ayman K. Agbaria (2018) notes that this screening – which is disproportionately forced onto Palestinian educators – results in a co-option of academics since such screening promotes “technocratic and apolitical teachers” (Agbaria, 2018, p.27) which halts the production of Palestinian nationalist pride within classrooms. Teachers must adhere to the Ministry of Education’s approved curriculum, which, in addition to portraying Palestinians in a racist and Orientalist manner, forces students to “sympathize with Israeli causes while suppressing their own national identity development” (Abu-Saad, 2019, p.105). As a result, the education system fosters settler colonial racism toward Palestinians, as they are understood to be a violent stain on the ongoing Zionist project and are subsequently criminalized for honouring their histories, including but not limited to their recognition of the Nakba as opposed to Israeli Independence Day.

Moreover, in both the Canadian and Palestinian contexts, the settler colonial education systems arguably contribute to the discrepancy in educational attainment amongst Indigenous and settler populations. In addition to curricula that demonize Palestinians, Yousef Jabareen (2006) details how the gaps in the Israeli government’s

allocation of educational resources between Jewish and Palestinian schools create two very different educational experiences for students, with the latter group forced to attend overcrowded, underfunded schools that are poorly equipped to provide an adequate education. Drop-out rates amongst Palestinian and Israeli pupils, Jabareen argues, consistently demonstrate that Palestinian students are “3 to 4 times more likely to drop out of school” (Jabareen, 2006, p.1060) than are their Jewish counterparts, and yet, Palestinian schools receive exponentially less funding than Israeli schools for dealing with dropouts (Jabareen, 2006, p.1060).

When one further disaggregates the dropout data by gender, as does Abdo (2011), it becomes clear that education in settler colonial contexts is also marked by gender inequality. Abdo (2011) cites a 1993 report which contrasts the rate of Palestinian women who had dropped out of high school compared to their Jewish female counterparts, with the rate of the former nearly doubling the rate of the latter (Abdo, 2011, p.170). In terms of post-secondary education, the report demonstrates a similar trend, whereby Palestinian women’s representation in post-secondary education was less than half of that of Jewish women. Since then, the trend has shifted, as Abdo demonstrates that Palestinian Arab boys have surpassed the girls in terms of drop-out rates (Abdo, 2011, p.172), a fact she attributes to Palestinian girls taking their educational development very seriously, but the discrepancy between Palestinian students’ educational attainment and that of their Jewish counterparts persists.

One might consider that the inadequately funded schools Palestinians are required to attend, as well as the vigorously censored curriculum they are required to learn may lead to their feeling alienated from school and contribute to their higher rates of dropouts,

relative to those of the Israeli students. Given that education is invaluable to socioeconomic success, it follows that those who fail to graduate will necessarily encounter much more economic hardship in the future. Bearing in mind this discrepancy amongst Palestinian and Jewish students in terms of educational attainment, it becomes clear, as Abu-Saad (2019) argues, that the Israeli settler education system plays “an essential colonizing role, keeping Palestinians dependent, vulnerable, and subordinate” (Abu-Saad, 2019, p.103).

There are similar factors at play in the Canadian context that can be linked to discrepancies in educational attainment between settler and Indigenous populations. If one returns to the question of residential schools, one will recall that the schools themselves were established to end treaty obligations as opposed to providing adequate education and opportunity for socioeconomic mobility to the Indigenous peoples. That these schools did not offer high school-level education to students (TRC, 2012, p.7), choosing instead to focus on preparing students for manual labour and housework has resulted in generations of Indigenous peoples in Canada fundamentally unprepared to attain higher education or secure substantive employment. That Indigenous people in Canada are more than twice as likely than non-Indigenous Canadians to live in poverty (NCCAH, 2010, p.2) is an attestation to this fact.

It is clear that the Canadian and Israeli settler education systems both explicitly and implicitly work to maintain the relationship of settler dominance and Indigenous subjugation and contribute to the elimination of the Native through memocide. Children are taught from the settler perspective, contributing to a loss of a sense of identity and culture rooted in a sense of place and national belonging. However, this re-writing of

history is not limited to what children are taught in schools, but also takes place on a national level through the mass erasure and renaming of Indigenous places and landscapes. In this final comparative section on Canada and Israel's technologies of settler colonialism and genocidal elimination, I examine the latter as it manifests through the disruption of Indigenous nations' relationship to the environments around them through the practices of toponymicide in Canada and Israel.

3.2.2 Indigenous Toponymicide in Canada and Israel

As has been emphasized previously, Davidson (2012) states that for many Indigenous nations culture and the sense of national identity it bestows upon communities is firmly rooted in place. The relationship Indigenous communities have with the environment surrounding them is often captured within the nomenclature of lands, villages, valleys, rivers, and other surroundings, inscribing both ecological and biological information. Lauren Beck (2021) drawing on the work of Gwilym Lucas Eades argues that Indigenous processes of place naming exhibit high degrees of complexity, providing details about "the nature of the landscape and the abundance of its contents" (Beck, 2021, p.8) and offering information about the climate, the flora, and the fauna of the lands. Place names are to be understood as sites around which communities construct national memory and identity at the individual and collective levels (Masalha, 2015). In this way, toponymic memory functions as a signifier of culture, with significance that extends beyond the realms of solely the geographical or the spatial (Beck, 2021).

Masalha (2012; 2015; 2018) has argued that the power and importance of toponymy is also recognized by settlers, though in a different way. While Indigenous nations acknowledge and honour the complexity, history, and cultural significance that is

behind the name of a particular place, settlers use toponymy to exert power and permanence, and as a form of elimination of the Native through the process of history revision. State authorities use renaming strategies to erase “earlier political, social, and cultural realities and to construct new notions of national identity” (Masalha, 2015, p.4) – paradoxically recognizing the power and significance of Indigenous place names as necessary for their erasure. The erasure of Indigenous place names from the colonial map facilitates settler land grab by delegitimizing Indigenous presence and legitimizing settlers’ claims to the land. This process of historical and cultural erasure and memoricide through settler toponymic projects is what Masalha terms toponymicide (Masalha, 2012; 2015; 2018).

While Masalha’s conception of toponymicide is very much based in the Palestinian context, he notes that Palestinians share common experiences with other Indigenous nations who have “had their narrative denied, their material culture destroyed, and their histories erased or reinvented by European white settlers” (Masalha, 2012, p.88), and that all European settler colonial powers, not solely Zionists, recognize the power and importance of geographical renaming and remapping as a tactic to uproot Indigenous social memory. In Canada, Leanne Broadhead (2020) notes that settlers today reside on the territories of various Indigenous nations across the country that are not shown on settler maps, an act of elimination in and of itself. Further, she argues that settler cartographic and toponymic practices must be analyzed through the principle of *terra nullius*.

To reiterate, as Broadhead does, the notion of *terra nullius* did not always necessarily refer to literally empty lands, but lands empty of people deemed to be in

possession of the attributes of civilized society (Broadhead, 2020, p.335). Through projects of map-making and place-naming, settlers fixed the boundaries and named all settlements and natural resources in their own image, using these new maps to establish their claims to the land in line with the story of their transformation into a ‘modern’ territory. These processes of renaming are inherently violent and point to, as Travis Hay (2019b) describes, a co-constitutive relationship between settler place names and socioeconomic structures of Indigenous dispossession, dislocation, and exclusion (Hay, 2019b, p.283) – structures that give way to genocidal elimination.

Hay’s (2019b) work highlights the violent back-stories of settler toponymic projects in Thunder Bay, Ontario which replaced traditional Anishinaabe place names with those of prominent Anglo-Scottish men. For instance, the mountain known as *Anemki-waucheu*, often translated to “Thunder Mountain”, is a sacred land formation to the Ojibway and other Indigenous peoples in the region but is commonly known to Thunder Bay settlers and tourists as Mount McKay, after a mythic Scottish settler [Figure 3]. Hay notes that this particular settler is celebrated in the municipality’s history as a founding father who captures and marries an Ojibway woman after murdering her lover (Hay, 2019b, p.284), a testament to the fact that such renaming practices are far from banal and necessarily entail stories of violence against Indigenous peoples. The various other street names, neighborhoods, and natural sites Hay describes in this work follow similar patterns pointing to the relationship between settler material domination of the land and its resources and the renaming of such places after settlers who played significant roles in that process.



Figure 3: The welcome sign for *Anemki-waucheu* or "Mount McKay" in Thunder Bay, ON. Source: Brandon Pullian, Grippled Magazine, September 8, 2020, <https://grippled.com/profiles/adventures-with-b-animikii-wajiw-mount-mckay-in-thunder-bay/>

Thunder Bay is by no means the only Canadian city to undertake such settler colonial toponymic projects. Bryan Smith's (2017) study of Toronto subway stations situates Canada's most populated city within a cartography of settler colonialism that reproduces knowledge about the relationship between colonizers and Indigenous populations. Bloor Street, for instance, is named after Joseph Bloore, who was once a prominent land developer and brewer in the area. Smith notes that Bloore's fame and power was marked by "his capacity to do well what is central to settler-colonization: "develop land, build infrastructure, and adhere to prominent political and religious discourses central in colonial logics" (Smith, 2017, p.41).

Importantly, Smith also notes that toponymy and cartography projects in Canada have been deployed in the official English and French languages, pointing not only to which spaces are intelligible, but what language is needed to make a space intelligible in

the colonial lexicon (Smith, 2017, p.36). Similar practices can be witnessed in Israel's efforts to Judaize Palestinian place names in the creation of the state of Israel. As Masalha (2015) states, Israelis use such processes of modern map-making, archaeology, and toponymy to assert "proof" of Jewish roots in Palestine (Masalha, 2015), which speaks once more to Wolfe's (2006) theory that settlers constantly try to indigenize themselves as the original inhabitants of stolen lands.

When it comes to policies of re-naming, Masalha notes that the acceleration of settler toponymic projects was a key Zionist strategy aimed at Palestinian memoricide and erasure following the 1948 Nakba. Palestinian place names have evolved throughout millennia through the embrace of tradition and preservation of the land's diverse cultural heritage, with many places named after local food staples and plants, an indication of the social and cultural significance of Palestinian toponymic memory. Crucially, Masalha notes that in attempting to destroy the Palestinian connection to place, the Israeli government sought input from the settler polity to "uproot the foreign names... and master the new Hebrew names" (Masalha, 2015, p.29), which were actually created by mimicking the sounds of the original Arabic names in order to create a similar-sounding, Hebrew name. Wiping away names with deep cultural significance just to replace them with meaningless, settler imitations is a particularly disturbing instance of attempted elimination of the Native.

Another striking example of erasure and memoricide in the context of toponymy that Masalha describes is the official Israeli road signs, which he notes are often written in Hebrew, Arabic, and English. Rather than reflecting the original Palestinian Arabic names, the Arabic and English names are transliterations of the new Hebrew place name,

which he argues is designed to “remind the indigenous Palestinians inside of Israel of the need to internalise the new Hebrew place names... making Arabic complicit in the de-Arabisisation of Palestine” (Masalha, 2015, p.20) [Figure 4]. In Canada, the co-optation of Indigenous place names by the settler state is also common, as Christina Gray and Daniel Ruck (2019) describe. For instance, Wetaskiwin, Alberta is the corrupted version of the Cree word wītaskiwinihk, which means “the hills where the peace was made” (Gray & Ruck, 2019, p.1), while Nose Hill and Medicine Hat, both in Alberta, are rough English translations of existing Indigenous place names.



Figure 4: An Israeli road sign that omits Jerusalem's Arabic name (Al-Quds), instead using the transliteration "Urshalim". Source: Umar Al-Ghubari, +972 Magazine, November 22, 2015. <https://www.972mag.com/how-israel-is-erasing-arabic-from-its-public-landscape/>

As Smith (2017) reminds us, cartography and toponymy projects communicate messages to us. Mapped spaces, he notes, “are complicit in telling a story that itself is a consequence of judgements about what is important to know” (Smith, 2017, p.36) with regards to the surrounding environment, a position that simultaneously invalidates certain other features that are not captured within the map. The naming and mapping of

geographical space is thus an inherently political process, and in the context of settler states such as Canada and Israel, has served to facilitate Indigenous memoricide in the drive for settler legitimacy and permanence. Whether places are renamed after mythologized settlers or simply phonetically distorted, the central goal of such processes remains the same: to fundamentally disrupt Indigenous peoples' relation to place and discursively eliminate them from the colonial map.

At this point, after having compared the various elements of settler colonial elimination and genocide that Canada and Israel have deployed against Indigenous populations from the first point of contact to today, a question remains. How is it that both states continue to paint themselves favorably on the world stage, despite their reputations as settler colonial and genocidal? In what ways do their respective agendas converge such that the two settler states maintain a strong relationship in the realm of international relations? This section examines the various ways in which Canada and Israel downplay, distance themselves from, and outright deny their settler colonial character to maintain global reputations as humanitarian, tolerant, liberal democratic states.

Chapter 4: Wiping the Slate Clean: Canada and Israel's Self-Promotion Strategies and Shared Interests

Considering Canada and Israel's respective use of self-promotion strategies in the face of their ongoing settler colonial violence and genocide of Indigenous nations proves to be an interesting exercise in comparison. As two settler states which have long deployed similar methods of elimination against the Indigenous populations whose lands they have stolen, the two share similar aims and objectives as they continue to attempt to

solidify the legitimacy of their existence. As settler states, Canada and Israel are both fundamentally committed to the violent acquisition of territory and elimination of the native population, though these manifest slightly differently in the two respective contexts as I have shown up to this point.

In order to obscure these inherently violent aims, the two states utilize very similar self-promotion strategies in order to shift international focus from the heinous crimes of settler colonial violence and genocide onto carefully curated images of themselves as humanitarian, tolerant, and democratic. Where their practices diverge, however, lies within their engagement with their reputations as settler colonial, as Canada feigns remorse for a regrettable yet *distant* past, while Israel blatantly denies any instance of a settler colonial structure both past and present. However, despite differing degrees of engagement with the settler colonial question, the respective tactics of discursively closing a dark chapter of history and of outright denial serve the same purpose: washing away the sins of settler colonialism and genocide.

4.1 Promoting Humanitarianism, Tolerance, and Democracy in Canada and Israel

The ultimate goal of settler colonial states, as has been argued, is the eventual supersession of the conditions of their operation such that they may be considered *settled*, the settler-Indigenous binary no longer visible (Amoruso et al., 2019; Coulthard, 2014; Salazar Hughes, 2016; TRC, 2015; Wolfe, 2006; 2013; Veracini, 2011). Importantly, though domination is initially used to facilitate Indigenous elimination in settler colonial contexts, Coulthard (2014) notes that settlers take up practices of recognition, and reconciliation as additional modes of ensuring Indigenous disappearance. It is this fact

that is of particular relevance when it comes to examining the ways in which the two settler states deploy such practices as a way of re-crafting their national images.

Instead of using terms such as “violent”, “dispossessing”, or “occupying” to describe themselves, the terms favoured by Canada and Israel when it comes to the act of self-description are “humanitarian”, “tolerant”, and “democratic”. Beginning with the first of the claims, that which posits that Canada and Israel are among some of the world’s greatest humanitarian states, it is important to point out the degree to which both states’ reputations as such rely on their involvement in aid and relief endeavours outside of their own borders, intentionally omitting any discussion of the settler violence that is inflicted upon Indigenous peoples daily.

In the context of Israel, a simple browse of the Israel Defense Force’s (IDF) official blog boasts a timeline of its involvement in mitigating humanitarian and natural disaster crises around the world, from Greece to Kenya (IDF, n.d., web). Images of smiling IDF soldiers holding rescued children and tending to wounded civilians paint a picture of a compassionate and selfless institution, rather than one that fundamentally originated with the goal of protecting and defending a state built on settler violence and the ongoing genocide of Palestinians [Figure 5]. Nicola Perugini and Neve Gordon (2015) analyze these types of images in their work and are especially critical of a particular promotional poster entitled “#IDFWithoutBorders”, a spin on the internationally recognized humanitarian organization, Doctors Without Borders. By mirroring the language of such a prominent humanitarian organization, Perugini and Gordon argue, the IDF is “cast within a moral framework of global humanitarianism”

(Perugini & Gordon, 2015, p.5), despite the fact that it is the primary entity of violence, dispossession, and death for Palestinians in the occupying state of Israel.



Figure 5: Promotional image circulated online of IDF agents assisting families in the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. Source: Benjamin Doherty, The Electronic Intifada, November 18, 2013, <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/benjamin-doherty/idfwithoutborders-israels-bluewashing-campaign-philippines>

When considering the massive emphasis on militarism and the immense presence of the IDF in Israel, all claims of it being the “most moral army” (Lentin, 2018) aside, it is worth recalling once more Wolfe’s (2013) point about the fear amongst settlers of an imagined violent uprising of Indigenous people, where settler excesses are attributed to their victims (Wolfe, 2013, p.265). Wolfe continues, noting that when it comes to the fear of expulsion, one can think of the “oft-expressed fear on the part of the Israelis, who, having driven the majority of the Natives into the sand in 1948, returning to the attempt

in 1967, insist that it is they themselves who are in danger – of being driven into the sea” (Wolfe, 2013, p.265). Militarism is thus essential to ongoing efforts toward establishing settler permanency and elimination of Native populations – two key facets of settler colonial domination.

Therefore, far from existing as an entity devoted to humanitarian missions and protecting disaster victims around the world, the purpose of the IDF is to protect and strengthen the security interests of the settler state a context of ongoing, substantial Palestinian resistance and condemnation of such settler violence from activists and academics around the world. Perhaps this is why, as Natanel (2016) describes, Israel’s total militarization efforts are so crucial to the settler state’s self-legitimization efforts. Discursively shrouding a climate of total militarization under a cloak of supposed humanitarianism is therefore a key tool for denying that the settler colonial structure defines Israel’s statehood.

Like Israel, Canada also takes immense pride in its global reputation as a humanitarian state. Whether one considers Prime Minister Trudeau’s very public welcoming of over 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada between 2015 and 2016 (Government of Canada, web, 2020) or the ongoing promotion of Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) which seeks to promote Western-feminist values across countries in the Global South, Canada’s reputation as a humanitarian state is firmly situated on the global stage. However, just as is the case in Israel, these efforts are directed toward impoverished and otherwise oppressed populations outside of Canada in ways that obscure the ongoing settler violence against and systemic neglect of Indigenous peoples within Canada’s colonial borders.

One might consider, for instance, the ongoing disputes taking place on Gidimt'en clan territory in northwest British Columbia, as Wet'suwet'en land defenders and their supporters continue to occupy a Coastal GasLink pipeline to prevent drilling under the sacred Wedzin Kwa, or Morice River. There is ample evidence pointing to the detrimental effects of these types of settler extraction projects on the survival of Indigenous nations in the targeted areas (Smith, 2015; WEA & NYSHN, 2016; National Inquiry, 2019). A 2016 report co-authored by the Women's Earth Alliance (WEA) and the Native Youth Sexual Health Network (NYSHN) highlights both the biological and the socio-environmental impacts of the deliberate proliferation of industrial development projects across Canada, as well as how these outcomes are specifically gendered. The pollution of bodies of water such as Wedzin Kwa is known to result in increased rates of reproductive health issues for women, including birth defects and infertility (WEA & NYSHN, 2016, p.13), as well as the spread of cancer and other fatal diseases that are contracted through the contaminated water source. These instances cannot be regarded as mere coincidence but must be understood as genocidal tactics of slow violence (Nixon, 2011) aimed at eliminating the Indigenous population in order to facilitate economic growth for the settler state.

The influx of these worksites across remote areas of Canada and the large number of transient male workers that they attract also pose a safety risk to Indigenous women and girls who face an even higher risk of sexual and physical violence (National Inquiry, 2019). In one such instance, James Anaya, former United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, recalls a group of Indigenous girls who were sexually assaulted while walking to school by a group of visiting workers who, importantly, were

operating under a concession provided by the government requiring the extraction of forestry resources in the traditional territory of the Indigenous people (National Inquiry, 2019, p.586). The settler state therefore plays an intimate role in the ongoing crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls through the systematic prioritizing of capital gains over the safety of Indigenous communities yet commends itself on the world stage as a global leader and champion of women's rights.

Wet'suwet'en land defenders are all too aware of these outcomes and have steadfastly resisted the corporate encroachment of their traditional territory since late 2019. In response, Canada has increased its military presence at the blockade (Simmons, 2021, web), which, just as in Israel, points to the settler state's reliance on enhanced militarism and policing as tactics for territory acquisition and Native elimination. Choosing to publicly prioritize external aid missions while simultaneously enlisting the armed forces to terrorize Indigenous land defenders demonstrates the way in which Canada's "humanitarianism" only extends so far, and again, just like Israel, not at all to those within its colonial borders. These are deliberate acts designed to help wipe the slate clean of the settler colonial genocide of which Canada and Israel are guilty, and re-craft an image of benevolent humanitarianism.

The second important tactic of self-promotion is the two states' insistence on their reputations as tolerant, liberal democracies. There is extensive literature on Israel's efforts at branding itself as a part of Europe (Hawari et al., 2019; Lentin, 2018; Puar, 2011) and aiming to promote itself as a like-minded ally of Western states. This of course is not a new phenomenon, but dates back to early Zionism which sought to be internal to Europe, "a civilized nation-state thoroughly European in culture and allegiance" (Lentin,

2018, p.90). As a result of the early Zionists' decision to occupy and claim Palestine as the rightful home of the Jews of Europe, the fact that Israel is *not* situated within Europe, but instead in a region of the world perceived as especially dangerous and uncivilized in the Western imaginary points to the necessity of selling the image of Israel as a "stable bastion of 'civilisation'" (Hawari et. al, 2019, p.156) to a global audience.

One of the primary ways in which this is done is through the promotion of Israel as a safe haven for members of the LGBTQ2+ community in an otherwise hostile region of the world, in a way that obscures the everyday violence of the occupation. Scott Lauria Morgensen (2012) and other scholars argue that this process of discursively linking Israel to the defence of LGBTQ2+ human rights *pinkwashes* the settler state's simultaneous violations of the human rights of Palestinians, and importantly, attempts to align international queer movements with Israel rather than with queer Palestinians, for whom the occupation is a central condition of their oppression (Morgensen, 2012, p.175). As Jasbir Puar (2011) states, in the realm of international politics, "to be gay-friendly is to be modern, cosmopolitan, developed, first-world, global north, and most significantly, democratic" (Puar, 2011, p.138). The crafting of Israel's image as all of the above qualities is more than just a strong public relations move but, as Yara Hawari, Sherri Plonski, and Elian Weizman (2019) state, is reflective of the way in which Israel cultivates hegemony over how the international community views and understands Palestine. It is "knowledge produced in support of a settler colonial common sense" (Hawari et al., 2019, p.159), and it resonates in Canada, as well as in other settler colonial states, as these very processes occur to varying degrees within the context of their own settler projects.

Canada also boasts of its reputation as a queer-friendly country, and in doing so, reinforces its positionality as progressive, modern, and democratic on the world stage. Cameron Greensmith (2018) notes that in 2012, the Canadian government updated the study guide used by new immigrants preparing for their citizenship test entitled *Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship* to include depictions of gay and lesbian Canadians in the section portraying Canada's diversity. While some celebrated this representation as a positive step for queer communities, it must be noted, as Greensmith does, that this act of inclusion and queer recognition are heralded through "an investment in Canada's violent present" (Greensmith, 2018, p.58). This emphasis on Canada's progressiveness and tolerance with regards to gender and sexual diversity similarly works to obscure the wider settler colonial structure upon which the country was founded, and upon which it continues to function. It is a deliberate tool used to deter from Canada's systematic and ongoing genocide of Indigenous nations, and it is another instance in which Canada and Israel, as two distinct settler colonial states, exhibit remarkably similar patterns as they attempt to achieve the same settler aims of territory acquisition and Native elimination.

Cultivating reputations as like-minded, liberal, progressive states allows for the conditions in which a strong allegiance can be formed between the two settler states. For Canada, this partnership results in a strategic foreign ally, a fellow 'Western' state in a volatile region but one with a powerful military presence and access to nuclear weaponry. For Israel, this results in an expansion of the hegemonic pro-Israel discourse, whereby Canada reinforces the notion that "the politicisation of Israel is... unruly, unscholarly, and ideologically led" (Hawari et al., 2019, p.160). This is visible in statements by

Canadian officials, such as that of former Minister of Foreign Policy, Chrystia Freeland, in which she promotes celebration of the 70th anniversary of Israel's founding, the bloody genocide memorialized by Palestinians as the Nakba, and reiterates Canada's "unwavering and ironclad" commitment to Israel's security (Freeland, 2018, p.369). It is visible in the adoption of legislation which equates legitimate critique of Israel with anti-Semitism, and in so doing, infringes upon the academic freedom of Canadians in solidarity with Palestine (Paradkar, 2020). This relationship means that one settler colonial state aligns itself with another thus reinforcing both of their positions as such. But what does this mean for the ways in which both Canada and Israel negotiate the settler colonial question themselves? As a final opportunity for comparison, it is necessary to examine the politics of denial and of reconciliation, respectively, as the final strategies of image distortion in Canada and Israel.

4.2 Addressing the Settler Colonial Question: The Politics of Denial and Reconciliation in Israel and Canada

The ways in which settler colonial states engage with their reputations as such vary; one might visualize these various processes as part of a spectrum. On one extreme end of the spectrum one can witness a process of outright denial. There is no redress, no accountability, for the state refuses to recognize itself as structured by settler colonialism. On the extreme other end of this spectrum lies meaningful decolonization whereby the settler colonial structure is dismantled, the relation of domination is broken, and land is repatriated to its original inhabitants. Somewhere in the middle, yet much more aligned with the politics of denial, are the politics of recognition and reconciliation, in which the contentious relationship between Indigenous nationhood and settler state sovereignty is

reconciled through the accommodation of Indigenous identity claims in some form of renewed legal and political relationship with the settler state (Coulthard, 2014). While Israel's collective response to accusations of settler colonialism falls within the domain of denial, Canada's response can be analyzed through the lenses of liberal recognition and reconciliation. Despite these differing responses, what remains the same is a commitment to clearing their names of the crimes of settler colonial violence and genocide against Indigenous people.

In the Israeli context, Lentin (2010) notes that Zionists employ various and at times contradictory techniques of denial when it comes to addressing Israel's settler colonial character and particularly the events of the Nakba. These strategies, she argues, have their roots in the founding myths of Israel's birth as a state. First, by resorting to the infamous "land without people for a people without land" trope Zionists deny the presence of Palestinians on the land thus nullifying any accusations of settler colonialism, since there was not an existing civilization on which to erect another. The second element that aids in this process of denial is the distortion of the facts of the Nakba, namely through acknowledgement that a conflict took place, but denial of its severe moral and practical implications (Lentin, 2010). Some Zionists argue that while there was a conflict, it consisted of an unfair battle between an Arab 'Goliath' and a Jewish 'David', an assertion that has been proven as consisting of no factual reality (Lentin, 2010). According to this myth, the state of Israel was not established through settler colonial domination, but instead resulted from the perseverance of a persecuted minority who overthrew a violent group hellbent on curtailing the foundation of a safe haven for the European Jews.

This type of denial is also visible when one considers that following the events of 1948, the remaining Palestinians left in Zionist-occupied territories were re-cast as “Israeli Arabs”, rather than as distinctly Palestinian (Lentin, 2018). Lentin notes that this decision was largely the result of widespread demographic anxiety over the need to maintain a Jewish majority and an expressly Jewish character of the state (Lentin, 2018, p.30), a move which can also be understood as an instance of the discursive elimination of the Native population. Further, the Palestinian refugees who were expelled from their land during the Nakba, as well as their descendants, are denied the right of return as the settler state instead argues that they are the responsibility of the neighboring Arab states (Masalha, 2003). The violence of the Nakba is further masked by the language of voluntary flight, as Zionists claim that the Palestinians miraculously “escaped” (Lentin, 2010) from their homes, which were almost immediately raided and demolished. Thus, the national mythology behind the foundation of the state of Israel is bolstered by a nation-wide campaign of denial and memoricide.

Despite my critique of the Zionist politics of denial, it is important not to place too much of a positive emphasis on state processes of recognition that are not followed by meaningful, material decolonization, as is the case in Canada. The mere acknowledgement of the wrongdoings of previous institutions and commitment to “recognizing” the political autonomy and land rights of Indigenous nations are hollow words that do not alter the structure of settler colonialism. Coulthard (2014) advances this argument, noting that while federal Indian policy was previously overtly assimilationist, a nation-wide discursive shift brought with it the emergence of a policy shrouded in terms of “mutual respect” and “recognition”. Crucially, this relationship is still, at its core, a

colonial one, and reproduces the very conditions that traditional claims for Indigenous recognition sought to transcend (Coulthard, 2014). It is critical to recall, moreover, that this is a relatively new stance adopted by the state, considering that as recently as 2009, Canadian leaders still touted the myth that Canada “had no history of colonialism” (Coulthard, 2014, p.106).

However, to return to Canada’s current image-enhancing strategy, Coulthard defines the politics of recognition as

“the expansive range of recognition-based models of liberal pluralism that seek to ‘reconcile’ Indigenous assertions of nationhood with settler-state sovereignty via the accommodation of Indigenous identity claims in some form of renewed legal and political relationship with the Canadian state” (Coulthard, 2014, p.3).

In a practical sense, these recognition-based processes include land settlements, economic development initiatives, and self-government agreements, all of which are understood to operate under the core objective of returning segments of land, capital, and political power from the settler state to Indigenous nations (Coulthard, 2014). There is a distinct emphasis on the recognition of cultural rights within this framework, which can be problematized on the grounds of both essentialism and anti-essentialism, in the sense that culture is seen as something that must be at once fixed and immutable, and flexible and open-ended, reinforcing the subjectifying power of the state (Coulthard, 2014). The focus on culture in this framework also invites the same criticism leveraged earlier in this thesis, where culture is viewed as something inherently apolitical and historic (Paquette, 2020) and evokes sentiments of a “lesser than” quality, relative to the political and economic rights of a specific nation. The emphasis on culture and cultural rights, while

potent and relevant in relation to the elimination of Native populations, in this context appears to diminish the structural harms created and sustained by the settler colonial state system and treats Indigenous communities' claims as those of any other ethnic group enmeshed in a wider web of multicultural citizenry, rather than as the demands of distinct, separate nations.

Briefly, it is necessary to problematize this tactic. Canadian discourses of multiculturalism and pluralism work to de-centre legitimate critique and instead create the illusion of a post-racial, post-colonial state (Masoumi, 2020). Drawing on the critiques leveraged by various critical race scholars, Azar Masoumi's (2020) work critiques the representation of Canadian multiculturalism as a sort of celebration, a reinvention of Canada's narrative as a tolerant, diverse state when in fact it allows for the reproduction of white supremacy, given that only some racial groups are members of the 'real' culture, while others are relegated to "peripheral multicultures" (Bannerji, 2000 in Masoumi, 2020, p.706). However, as important as this assertion is to the establishment of legitimate criticism toward liberal multiculturalism, it is crucial to recall that racialized immigrants are still settling on stolen land. Therefore, the lumping of Indigenous people into the web of ethnic groups comprising multicultural Canada obscures the ways in which other ethnic groups' immigration to Canada was facilitated by processes set forth by the Canadian state to displace and dispossess its original inhabitants (Kumar Karki, 2021).

To return to the discussion at hand, however, most recently the politics of recognition have converged with those of reconciliation, as manifested through the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the influx of national

inquiries, public forums, and official apologies in recent years. Coulthard (2014) argues that the term reconciliation, when applied to settler colonial contexts, is invoked in three different ways. Reconciliation is understood to involve both the establishment of a positive relation-to-self as well as the restoration and strengthening of political and social relationships. The third instance, and arguably the most crucial one, is that of rendering things consistent, namely “rendering consistent Indigenous assertions of nationhood with the state’s unilateral assertion of sovereignty over Native people’s lands and populations” (Coulthard, 2014, p.107), which undermines the possibility of achieving the first two forms of reconciliation. This is done through situating settler colonialism within a particular historical place relative to Canada’s development as a nation, rather than recognizing it as an integral, structural piece of the state’s functioning to this day.

A striking example of this temporal displacement can be located within Canada’s first official apology in 2008, when then-Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, issued a statement on behalf of all Canadians to the former residential school students. The first line of the speech refers to the schools as part of “a sad chapter in our history” (Government of Canada, 2010, web), and in emphasizing that *today, we* recognize that this policy was wrong, works to distance the present, benevolent, remorseful administration from that of a distant and shameful past. The apology, of course, makes no mention of colonialism as an entire system of which the schools were just one part, but treats the residential school system as a stand-alone event that can be overcome and reconciled by compensation, education, and mutual respect between “Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians” (Government of Canada, 2010, web). Note once more that “other Canadians” is used in place of the more politically accurate term, settlers.

Over thirteen years later in 2021, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau issued a statement on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation that displayed similar tactics of temporal displacement however couched in more liberal vernacular, such as his feeling “inspired” by the story of survivors, and “honoured” to partake in commemoration ceremonies (Government of Canada, 2021, web). In reference to the uncovering of mass unmarked graves at the sites of former residential schools, Trudeau reminds the audience of “the impacts of colonialism and the harsh realities of our collective past” (Government of Canada, 2021, web), as well as “the work that is paramount to advancing reconciliation in Canada (Government of Canada, 2021, web) in the present sense. Both statements, by discursively linking the singular event of residential schools with colonialism, advance the same idea that while Canada may have, at one time, been considered a colonial state, it is no longer such, and the present focus must revolve around *moving forward*, and rectifying the wrongs of the past. Once more, this stance fails to articulate the fact that Canada was and is settler colonial at its core. Settler colonialism is a structure, not an event.

It is clear that while Canada and Israel each have their own distinguishing features when it comes to their respective settler colonial systems, they share several important similarities. Firstly, as has been discussed in earlier sections of this thesis, the two settler states function according to the principles of territory acquisition and Native elimination – the irreducible elements of settler colonialism (Wolfe, 2006). I have shown that, despite differing contexts, both Canada and Israel have committed genocide against the Indigenous peoples whose land they occupy and use strikingly similar methods of elimination. Both states’ practices can be examined through the lenses of material and

discursive erasure, with the former involving forced displacement, child abduction, and sexual violence as tools for the elimination of Native populations, and the latter involving the use of education and toponymicide to facilitate Indigenous memoricide and the rewriting of history.

In order to paint a more favourable image of themselves on the world stage, both Canada and Israel employ carefully crafted image-enhancing techniques that simultaneously promote themselves as humanitarian, tolerant, liberal democratic states while obscuring their settler colonial and genocidal roots. Attention is directed toward benevolent military endeavours, feminist foreign policy, and a climate of queer-friendly liberalism in order to deflect from the ways in which the two states continue to violate the Indigenous nations within their own colonial borders. Finally, when it comes to addressing the question of settler colonialism, the two state's respective paths briefly diverge, as Israel outright denies its settler colonial structure while Canada locates its own within a distant and regrettable past, only to converge once more when one considers that both these strategies – that of denial and that of temporal displacement through recognition and reconciliation – work toward the same goal of washing off the sins of genocide and settler colonial domination.

The purpose of this analysis is to provoke consideration of how, as two settler colonial states, Canada and Israel operate according to similar logics and objectives rather than concluding that they are exactly the same. By focusing on, as Francesco Amoruso, Ilan Pappé, and Sophie Richter-Devroe (2019) state, “analysis of the context-specific relations that settler collectives establish with indigenous peoples” (Amoruso et al., 2019, p.461) in a comparative sense, this type of analysis aids in debunking any

claims of the exceptionalism of particular settler states, while strengthening the conceptual frameworks of settler colonialism and genocidal elimination through demonstration of their applicability in various contexts. The process of identifying commonalities between two seemingly very different states, separated by vast geographical borders creates space for one to consider what implications knowledge of these commonalities might have for global anti-colonialism movements. To conclude, I turn my attention to this final question, emphasizing the importance of international solidarity movements amongst Indigenous peoples and their allies around the world.

Chapter 5: Pathways for Solidarity

5.1 Theorizing Global Anti-Colonial Resistance

By way of conclusion, and to shift the analytical focus of this work from the technologies of the settler state to toward Indigenous resistance, I feel it is important to explore some potential pathways for solidarity that emerge when one considers the structural similarities between the oppression of Palestinians within and outside of the occupying state of Israel and of Indigenous peoples in what is known as Canada. It is crucial to recall that settler invasion is ongoing and unfinished, and while the structure attempts to eliminate Indigenous people, it fails to do so. This is evident in the multiple Indigenous-led movements resisting occupation, land grab, extraction, and other settler colonial technologies of elimination, as well as through the formation of cross-border alliances pushing toward decolonial liberation. Before exploring how this looks in practice, however, it is necessary to re-visit some key theoretical perspectives on decolonization and settler decolonization.

Fanon (1963) famously refers to decolonization as an agenda for total disorder, in that it requires ongoing and persistent challenge to the colonial structure as a whole, eradicating its economic, political, educational, and legal systems, and freeing the minds of the formerly colonized from colonial epistemologies. Always a violent event, Fanon conceives of decolonization as “quite simply, the substitution of one ‘species’ of mankind by another” (Fanon, 1963, p.1), in a process that fundamentally alters the social fabric of the nation. While his definition invokes a particular revolutionary spirit, it is true that his work focused primarily on the Algerian context which saw a mass exodus of French colonizers following Algeria’s national liberation movement and subsequent independence in 1962. When one recalls the structurally different relations of colonialism and settler colonialism, as has been discussed earlier, it is necessary to consider as various scholars do (Coulthard, 2014; Salaita, 2016; Veracini, 2011) the necessarily different pathway toward decolonization in settler colonial contexts.

As Veracini notes, decolonization, in theory, ruptures the colonial cycle (Veracini, 2011, p.7). However, he argues that this may give way to reverse or reciprocal circumstances, whereby in the former the colonizers would work for the formerly colonized, and in the latter the colonizers would be eliminated. Crucially, as he points out, while there may be justice in this form of reciprocity, these relations still maintain a relation of domination. He draws on the conclusions of Mahmood Mamdani, who remarks that “in privileging the indigenous over the non-indigenous, we turned the colonial world upside down, but we did not change it” (Veracini, 2011, pp. 7-8). Settler decolonization must result in Indigenous ultimate permanence, and a restructuring of the system in ways that do not further entrench relations of domination and exploitation,

therefore pointing to decolonization as part of a widespread liberation from the global capitalist system.

This type of thinking – of settler decolonization as part of a global struggle – renders clear the compelling case for Palestinian and Indigenous solidarity. As has been argued throughout the entirety of this work, Palestinians inside and outside of Israel and Indigenous peoples in Canada share remarkably similar struggles against a similar oppressor. In fact, Steven Salaita (2016), making the case for solidarity amongst the Indigenous peoples of America and Palestine, argues that Zionism’s commitments are “concordant with and constitutive of the many pressure points affecting the vulnerable and powerless” (Salaita, 2016, p.33), and that recognition of this fact is crucial to mobilizing solidarity movements between those directly harmed by the Zionist state and those who simply hold with them a broad commitment to justice. Therefore, anti-Zionism, though a distinct movement in and of itself, falls quite nicely into place within the existing world of anti-racism, anti-sexism, and queer organizing.

5.2 Mutual Solidarity in Practice: A Brief History of Indigenous-Palestinian Solidarity

To return to the potential for solidarity amongst Indigenous peoples and Palestinians, Mike Krebs and Dana Olwan (2012) offer a powerful perspective which sees solidarity as something deeply entwined with what it means to be Indigenous. In this sense, indigeneity is extended as a site for shared struggle and kinship, and necessarily involves resisting other nations’ occupation and exploitation, recognizing that these oppressive forces stem from the same wider source. Specifically, drawing on the statements made by the late Lee Maracle, and Hanna Kawas of the Canada Palestine

Association (CPA), the authors assert that indigeneity means to stand in solidarity with other Indigenous people, “to recognise, understand, and resist settler colonialism in its various manifestations and to make historical links between its interconnected racial logics. It is to refuse to support, enable, or sanction settler colonialisms in any context” (Krebs & Olwan, 2012, p.142). This of course implies that this type of solidarity is not something that can be confined to borders.

Salaita’s work emphasizes this point, noting that in order to achieve mutual liberation, colonial powers “must be rendered diffuse across multiple hemispheres through reciprocal struggle” (Salaita, 2016, p.ix), a process and a politics part of what he terms inter/nationalism. Salaita defines inter/nationalism as a politics that emphasizes cross-border action and dialogue involving not the nation-state, but the nation itself, “as composed of heterogeneous communities functioning as self-identified collectives attached to particular land bases” (Salaita, 2016, p. ivx), and in a way that fundamentally opposes the parameters of the nation-state. In this case, the shared goal of Palestinians and Indigenous peoples engaging in inter/national solidarity work is a better future premised upon liberation from the settler colonial structure. Acknowledgement of their common struggle lays the groundwork for this relationship, and for broader, global anti-colonial solidarity movements to form.

This is not to assume, however, that Indigenous-Palestinian solidarity is merely hypothetical and rooted in theoretical comparison. On the contrary – Desai (2021) reminds us that this relationship of mutual recognition and solidarity can be traced back to the 1970s, when Palestinians joined the Vancouver protests organized by Red Power activists opposing the arrest of Leonard Peltier, a leader of the American Indian

Movement who was falsely accused of killing two officers during the military siege of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota (Desai, 2021). Later, in the 1990s, Palestinian activists directly supported Indigenous land defenders at the siege of Kanehsatà:ke and Kahnawake and participated in the demonstrations. Desai notes that Mohawk leaders looked to the 1987 Palestinian intifada as a model that “could be looked at and used [by Indigenous people in Canada] because it involved large numbers of people who weren’t armed but carried out militant resistance” (Desai, 2021, p.49), which points to a deep-rooted recognition of shared struggles against a similar oppressor.

In 2006, as Krebs and Olwan discuss, activists from the Niagara Palestinian Association (NPA) put their bodies on the line and directly supported Onkwehonweh land defenders during the Six Nations reclamation. The Palestinian flag was hung beneath the Mohawk flag at the demonstrations, displaying a profound symbolic showcase of the solidarity between Palestinians and Indigenous peoples and their common struggles and aspirations (Krebs & Olwan, 2012, pp.155-156). More recently, Desai notes that Wet’suwet’en land defenders opposing the Coastal GasLink pipeline have hung the Palestinian flag and worn the keffiyeh as a way of demonstrating “to the oppressors that we stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters across the globe because we share the same fight, seemingly against the same oppressor” (Desai, 2021, p.47), pointing to a politics of mutual, anti-colonial recognition amongst colonized people [Figure 6].



Figure 6: Palestinian flag hung at a demonstration against Coastal GasLink pipeline project in 2020. Source: Shree Paradkar, *The Toronto Star*, May 30, 2021, <https://www.thestar.com/opinion/2021/05/30/the-surprising-bonds-that-link-palestinian-black-and-indigenous-liberation-movements.html>

In addition to stepping up in times of crisis, the solidarity between Indigenous peoples and Palestinians can be located in Indigenous support for the Boycott, Divestment, Sanction (BDS) movement (Salaita, 2016), and formal statements of solidarity from Idle No More, Wet'suwet'en land defenders, and the Canadian BDS Coalition. Salaita further points to the ways in which such solidarity is reflected in the academic world, with Indigenous and Palestinian scholars conjoining in the Critical Ethnic Studies field, and Palestinian scholars migrating from Middle East Studies into various areas of Indigenous Studies (Salaita, 2016, p.xvii). These actions undeniably

gesture toward the strengthening of an inter/nationalist grassroots movement for settler decolonization.

5.3 Looking to the Future: Building Radical Resurgent Solidarity

With this activism in mind, it is worth considering the kinds of relationships that can be formed from this dynamic. It is necessary to keep in mind that solidarity, as Desai (2021) states, cannot be assumptive, but must be built politically (Desai, 2021, p.57). Therefore, in the act of “making relatives”, as Nick Estes describes, an important part of indigeneity that involves “making those seen as different into familiars” (Estes in Desai, 2021, p.46), it is important not to flatten important historical and contextual differences in the name of forging a relationship based solely on commonality. Throughout this work, I hope to have conveyed the principle that while Canada and Israel, as settler colonial states operating under the same logics of elimination and territory acquisition, utilize similar methods and strategies in order to attempt to lay claim to their surroundings, this does not mean that they are exactly the same, or that important distinctions cannot or should not be made.

Krebs and Olwan (2012) emphasize this point, urging activists to join hands in struggle but not to do so at the expense of asking critical questions and holding one another to account. Genuine solidarity must be built without reproducing the same colonial logics and asymmetrical power relations that are foundational to settler colonialism (Krebs & Olwan, 2012, p.160). Desai’s (2021) conception of radical resurgent solidarity is perhaps the most compelling account of what this relationship might look like. Based in deep histories of relationality and years of organizing and intended to build longer-term strategic relationships between movements, radical

resurgent solidarities move beyond the more reactionary actions of solidarity in times of crisis. She argues that resurgent solidarities are necessary aspects of co-resistance and while they require a politics that avoids collapsing differences, their joint-struggle approach acknowledges the common fight, and as such, necessitates “economic disruption, material and symbolic support, radical visions... as well as cultural production to sustain our spirits amidst violence” (Desai, 2021, p.61), and works to remake life across and beyond borders.

At times, this may be difficult to envision. A fundamental shift in the world order from one sustained by relations of settler colonial domination and exploitation to one characterized by justice and Indigenous sovereignty is a daunting task. However, as is the case for both Indigenous people in settler colonial Canada and Palestinians inside and outside of the occupying state of Israel, as well as for all other colonized populations and their supporters around the world, a better future is attainable through the coming together of people united by their solidarity. This work is my small contribution to such a future.

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