

PAMELA PALMATER - GENOCIDE, INDIAN POLICY, AND LEGISLATIVE ELIMINATION OF INDIANS IN CANADA

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aboriginal policy studies

**Genocide, Indian Policy,
and Legislated Elimination
of Indians in Canada**

Pamela Palmater

OVERALL THEMES

1. History of Indigenous peoples
2. Effects of policies
3. Moving forward, and reconciliation

ARTICLE'S CONTEXT

When was it published: 2014

Who wrote it: Pamela Palmater - an Mi'kmaq Indigenous woman and associate professor of Indigenous Governance

What type of writing was it: Academic writing in a journal

Where it was published: Aboriginal Policy Studies

Biases of author: Works for a major university (TMU/Ryerson), works for the Department of Politics and Public Administration

SOURCES USED

1. Lots of recent news articles
2. Other journal articles
 - a. From political journals, historical journals and Indigenous studies publications
3. Legislation
 - a. Bills
 - b. Constitution Acts
 - c. Indian act
 - d. UN declaration on Genocide and Indigneous peoples
4. Court cases

ARTICLE SUMMARY

1. Goal of policy was to ensure the eventual disappearance of Indigenous people in Canada
 - a. Resulted in status and non-status Indians
2. Framing of Indigenous people as a “problem”

Genocidal History

1. Goal of policy was to get rid of Indigenous people in order to get access to their land
2. Reserves contained them, but this was meant to be temporary
3. Canada has enacted policies and laws which fall into the categories of genocide

ARTICLE SUMMARY

Determining who is and who is not an “Indian”

1. Rules to exclude women, illegitimate children and adoption
2. Goal was to legislatively eliminate them
3. View of blood quantum freezes Indigenous people at point of contact

Importance of Indigenous identity and status

1. Benefits of status include band membership, sense of legitimization of their identity, economic, political, and legal rights
2. People seeking primarily for getting financial benefit are the exception

ARTICLE SUMMARY

Moving Forward

1. Gap between the wellbeing of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians is widening
2. Solution likely not found in amending or repealing the Indian act
3. Need to abandon policy of assimilation and create a new relationship with Indigenous peoples on a Nation-to-Nation basis

ARTICLE'S STRENGTHS

1. Large subject matter, good as an introduction to this topic
2. Good that it addresses moving forward - healing from genocides is important, particularly as Indigenous people in Canada still exist, and are still being affected by these genocidal policies
3. Fairly balanced analysis of Indigenous history - examines the motivations for policies, how they were implemented, and the effects that this had on historical and modern Indigenous peoples

BAD OR NEEDS MORE RESEARCH

1. It is from 2014, so is a little out of date
 - a. Language surrounding Indigenous resurgence has changed
 - b. Increased public recognition of Indigenous issues is important to modern reconciliation movement
2. It is a politics paper
 - a. Questions of historical legitimacy, as often politics papers are more argumentative
 - b. Strong argument in this paper that the government is failing Indigenous people
3. This paper frames the issue as one that is happening to Indigenous people, rather than placing them as active agents in their own fate
 - a. Many more modern papers on Indigenous history place them as actors, discussing how they resisted these policies, and framing them as more than just victims - this paper fails to do this

CONCLUSION

1. This article is a good starting point for people who have never thought about Canada's history with Indigenous people and the genocide associated with this
 - a. Moving forward, an examination of more aspects of Indigenous history would be required, such as the reserve system, substance abuse, over incarceration etc.
2. This article places Indigenous people as victims, rather than active agents
 - a. This is an outdated way of discussing this, and it is important to note resistances, feelings, and the agency that all victims of genocides have
 - b. Reading personal histories may be a good way to address this gap

