

## ***Resilience, Indigeneity, and Human Capital as a Nexus of Neoliberal Governmentality***

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Paper for CPSA, June 2019

When the idea of resilience is marshalled by the Ontario Education Minister to rationalize larger class sizes, on the grounds that high school students would better develop “coping skills” in such tough learning environments,<sup>1</sup> at least something is laid bare, and that is the elasticity of resilience and its openness to a wide variety of uses. For anyone who imagined that resilience was a concept validating the endurance and agency of the oppressed, this was a demonstration of the way that resilience can be made to rhyme with austerity.

Resilience refers to a capacity to ‘bounce back’ from adversity or adapt to stressors, as well as a positive accumulation of this capacity, through a kind of feedback loop that goes from disruption, to a response of self-reorganization and rebalancing, to a strengthened readiness for further disruption. As numerous critics of resilience discourse have pointed out, it is both vague and positivist, scientific and moral, its stretchiness allowing it to move between biological and social systems. It puts into circulation a view of the world that grounds precarity in “authoritative representations of nature,” an ontology of unalterable sources of stress, risk, and uncertainty.<sup>2</sup> Histories of the concept tend to trace its idea of spontaneous adaptability to the field of systems theory and particularly to conversations between cybernetics and biology. Resilience is a key concept in *climate change science*, but it *also* has a very interesting genealogy in the field of *developmental psychopathology*.<sup>3</sup> Part of what I want to do here is to suggest how important it is, for a critical perspective on resilience, to keep in view what resilience is and does in the ‘psy’ sciences while a knowledge of resilient systems in nature becomes the holy grail of research in the context of climate change. The production of truth around adaptability in the face of unavoidable risks today *conjoins* knowledge of biological and social processes, in deeply depoliticizing ways. I say depoliticizing because the ontology of resilience demands, not political struggle, but governmental and pedagogical knowledges and interventions to maximize *a capacity to adapt*. Resilience has become “a new ecology of rule,” the unquestioned horizon of efforts to make a better world.<sup>4</sup> One cannot *not* want resilience.

Resilience also seems to have a particularly sticky association with Indigeneity and this association is what I will be probing here, as I try to track the way an Indigenous assertion of the capacity to endure through the practice of kin-connectedness has been seized and instrumentalized. It has been converted into a *psychological science* of resilience and returned to Indigenous populations as a technique of human capital formation, through programs like Aboriginal Head Start, which I’ll be discussing in the last section of this paper. Indigenous

theorists for some time have insisted on Indigenous resilience as a way of refusing the assumption of pastness or stasis.<sup>5</sup> Resilience, in their terms, is collective and political in the sense that it is about maintaining relations within and to a land base. But Indigenous groups also have come to be *credited* with resilience insofar as they are seen as the repositories of a special kind of “ecological intelligence,” both within the business of sustainable capitalism and within global policies of disaster-risk management.<sup>6</sup> Policy reports like UNESCO’s *Weathering Uncertainty*, as Julian Reid has shown, draw on the anthropology of Indigenous survival in extreme climates in order to propose the Indigenous as “a model for the rest of humanity,” faced with “climate disasters and global ecological catastrophe.”<sup>7</sup> Canada has jockeyed for a central position within this frame by funding a new position at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, called the Indigenous Peoples Focal Point.

Indigenous resilience thus hovers between thematizations from different quarters. Indigeneity, as Isabel Altamirano-Jimenez has theorized it, is *always* a product of “articulatory practices” involving “the definition of Indigenous peoples by others [as well as] their [own] negotiation of meanings, symbols and projects” in specific contexts.<sup>8</sup> What this paper aims to do is to begin to ask what happens in that discursive space where Indigenous self-understandings get absorbed by capital, in the moment of a turn to the value-potential of resilient systems in nature and those seen to live close to it? What happens when the work of “reawakening of social and cultural resiliencies that indigenous peoples [have] used to sustain themselves”<sup>9</sup> gets captured, generalized into a model for interventions, and reapplied to Indigenous populations in contexts of neoliberal governance, in which those populations have a complex exemplary status? By asking these questions, I am asking how the association of Indigeneity and resilience at the level of climate-change know-how is connected to a less noticed association of Indigeneity and resilience at the level of the ‘psy’ disciplines.

As Altamirano-Jimenez has argued, within today’s “neoliberalization of nature,” there is a commodification of the relationship between the human and nonhuman worlds that produces a particular version of Indigeneity as the source of so-called “ecosystem services.” There are attendant pressures and incentives to perform this version of Indigeneity through a restricted set of practices reflecting the sense of a primordial “guardianship of environmental patrimony and biodiversity.”<sup>10</sup> This role possesses a new kind of strategic value within sustainable capitalism’s “hegemonic story of the ‘fragile earth’”; the role opens opportunities for Indigenous communities in the “conservation market” but it also comes with ‘supports’ and accountabilities which effectively deny those communities’ political, territorial claims and obscure Indigenous “social complexities,” in particular Indigenous women’s work and struggles.<sup>11</sup>

Altamirano-Jimenez is one of a number of theorists who are attempting to describe the contemporary framing of Indigenous knowledge, identity, subjectivity and indeed life itself as resources or raw materials within a post-Fordist mode of production in which ‘sustainable knowledge,’ forms of social reproduction and survival, are extracted. As these theorists note,

the situation requires an expanded understanding of capital's extractive operations, to take in "modes of exploitation of the vital," and it also requires undoing any hard and fast distinction between primitive accumulation's twin processes of dispossession and exploitation.<sup>12</sup> The capacity for resilience, which some Indigenous theorists link to a "subjugated knowledge" of the sustaining power of relationships, is valued precisely *for* its subjugated relation to the dominant: thus, in relation to capital's quest for the new "frontier of valorization," Indigenous resilience is not, in any clear-cut or guaranteed sense, oppositional.<sup>13</sup>

It is from this angle that I am approaching the contemporary discursive conjunction of resilience and Indigeneity. The conjunction is apparent not only within 'sustainable capitalism' initiatives but also, as I've said, in discourses of global disaster risk management. The language accompanying the announcement of Canadian funding for the new position at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change stresses Indigenous knowledge as a "valuable asset" and the federal government's recognition of the "contribution" of Indigenous Peoples "in building resilient communities and tackling climate change" as part of Canada's commitment to reconciliation.<sup>14</sup> There's much to say here about the politics of recognition at different scales, and about Indigeneity domesticated as an "asset" and a "contribution" to sustaining global economic and political systems. What interests me, though, is the way that Indigeneity is held up as *exemplary* within this discourse of climate-change resilience, because it is via this exemplarity that a concept of Indigenous resilience can loop back, perniciously, as a set of performance criteria.<sup>15</sup>

How, then, might this exemplary resilience become disciplinary? The implication that comes with any case of 'setting an example' is that the example models something for a *wider* population: so an additional question is how does Indigenous resilience operate in the neoliberal settler societies in which it is held up as an example? How does the invocation of Indigenous resilience play out in contexts of partially acknowledged, largely denied settler colonialism? In these contexts, I want to suggest, the relatively recent framing of the positive exemplarity of Indigenous resilience is shadowed by, and in some way related to, a *negative* exemplarity with a longer history. Within settler societies, there is a complex *subtext* to Indigenous resilience, which is not necessarily apparent at the level of a United Nations Framework. This subtext is the thematization of Indigenous *dependency*. In settler situations, Indigenous resilience makes sense *in relation to* this thematization of Indigenous dependency, as its approved opposite. And it is in opposition to this negative exemplarity that Indigenous resilience acquires its positive exemplarity. Dependency and resilience are the two, inseparable sides of the same coin, and I want to suggest that by recovering their relation we can track the way climate-change resilience is related to a narrower, disciplinary resilience coming out of developmental psychopathology. This disciplinary resilience crucially narrows what kin-connectedness can mean and what it is meant to serve. It is around the problematization of Indigenous dependency as *state* dependency that Indigenous resilience is put through a neoliberal sieve, we might say. Passing through this sieve, the relationships that sustain place-based collectivity become the family support that replaces state support, the family support

that is responsible for forming resilient market participants. The political stakes of collective resilience become the stakes involved in the capacity to 'bounce back' within individual life courses.

### Indigenous resilience and Indigenous dependency as linked exemplarities

I'm going to say a few things about the multi-valent problematization of Indigenous dependency before returning to resilience. This problematization is anchored in the discourse of 'welfare dependency' but it has a second source in an *Indigenous* critique of settler colonialism as capture within a dependent relation to the state.<sup>16</sup> Dependency is thus like resilience in being problematized from different positions but in their *overlap* it becomes amenable to neoliberal uptake.

The non-Indigenous construction of dependency is linked to populist resentment of treaty entitlements as 'special treatment' or as the drain of so-called 'remote' communities on government resources, and it is of course recirculated in pathologizing representations of Indigenous poverty, addiction, and family violence. As Hugh Shewell has noted, in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Canada, the federal "government's obsessive fear of th[e] dependence" of Indigenous peoples led to relief policies based on the strictest application of a liberal moral analysis that would justify fiscal restraint.<sup>17</sup> In the case of the Indigenous, poverty was always strictly interpreted in terms of the failure to assimilate. "Relief policy," therefore, "obscured [the] darker problems created by the sale and lease of Indian lands and by the incursion of Euro-Canadians into traditional [...] economies. Admonitions to participate in the labour market diverted attention from issues of collective well-being towards those of individual survival."<sup>18</sup>

I want to push what Shewell says here by speculating that this liberal moral analysis of so-called Indigenous dependency and its causation grounds what I call Indigenous exemplarity in Canada: an exemplary status that stems from this strict subjection of a structural condition to an individualizing, liberal interpretation. Public discussions of state versus individual (as well as family and community) responsibility tend to *fold in* questions of Indigenous dependency. Perhaps this is precisely *because* foundational problems of sovereignty have to be falsely resolved, in an ongoing way, through this moral analysis. In other words, questions of state provision or socialized welfare are often debated and worked out in relation to what used to be called the 'Indian problem,' because Indigenous peoples have been violently domesticated, but in unacknowledged and incomplete ways.<sup>19</sup> And this is why there has to be an ongoing, active *framing* of their claims on the state as reflective of an unhealthy 'dependency,' as opposed to the activation of treaty rights or government obligations under the Indian Act. Perhaps a kind of Indigenous exemplarity is produced out of this settler-colonial situation, as the false resolution of a context in which sovereign entities have been strategically reframed as 'needy' populations. They can be seen to be dependent or resilient but they can never be outside the remit of settler policy-making, never outside the category of 'population' itself. By extension,

and again this is rather speculative, the so-called 'Indian problem' in liberal capitalist and now neoliberal settler societies, by virtue of its expression of an unresolved issue of sovereignty, comes to *model* questions, problems, and solutions regarding *others* whose very existence is, likewise, problematic from the point of view of the state. I am trying to think here about the discursive relationships between the Indigenous and other categories of social 'excess' or abjection, historically and presently, for example those who at one time were referred to as the 'dependent poor.'

But in tandem with this thematization of Indigenous welfare dependency, as I've noted, there is a thematization of dependency within Indigenous theory. A prominent voice in this vein has been Taiiike Alfred. His 2009 article, "Colonialism and State Dependency," published in the *Journal of Aboriginal Health*, calls for the "rebuilding of ... communities on traditional cultural foundations" as the "bulwark against future generations becoming dependent on the state" and as the only path to "break[ing] the bonds of dependency and creating stability and self-sufficiency."<sup>20</sup> This concern with "entrenched dependencies, in physical, psychological, and financial terms" may be dangerously recuperable insofar as it stresses the need to rebuild and practice sovereignty in non-statist terms in an era in which the energies 'beyond the state' are already valorized as more vital, natural, and efficient.<sup>21</sup> The argument is that "[c]olonial legacies and contemporary practices of disconnection, dependency, and dispossession" naturalize self-definition through the "political-legal relationship to the state" as opposed to community and land.<sup>22</sup> But that state relationship is also seen as a broad, encapsulating condition which also accounts for economic and psychological forms of dependency. As the Athabaskan theorist, Dian Million, has observed, in the late 1990s a number of Indigenous organizations in Canada embraced this link between economic and psychological dependency, on the basis of a behaviourist model of psychosocial 'under-development.' From there, they framed healing projects and programmes that "packaged" self-determination in terms of the mobilization of Indigenous culture as a form of 'treatment' for 'maladaptive' behaviours such as addiction and codependency. This was a training for a personal sovereignty that was about self-mastery and, ultimately, employability.<sup>23</sup> Culture, as I am going to show when I get to Aboriginal Head Start, eventually would become flipped to the *positive* side of the exemplarity coin, mobilized within developmental interventions to promote resilience in the early years of life as a kind of investment in human capital.

Even if they come from different quarters, then, these two problematizations of dependency, as 'welfare dependency' and as dependency induced by colonialism, converge in their way of hewing to *anti-statism*. The circulation of the Indigenous critique of the paternalist colonial state in a broader context of devolution and deregulation can lift the denunciation of state dependency above any appearance of ideological affiliation, and provide a kind of moral guarantee to neoliberal social policy. As Elizabeth Strakosch has observed, "where critics [of neoliberalism] challenge intrusive [...] attempts to reform 'dependency', *neoliberalism [can] defen[d] its projects as reflecting the choice of autonomous subjects* ('you are saying that these people are hopeless victims of circumstance, but *we* are respecting their agency and

abilities’).”<sup>24</sup> State redistributive functions, to the extent that they can be cast as interfering with the autonomy of individuals, families, and communities, become harder to defend, and this indefensibility is sharpened in an era in which governments engage in a complex politics of recognizing and redressing state wrongs—in Canada, residential schooling—which had to do, precisely, with attacking processes of social reproduction centred in the family.

Resilience is the crucial switch-point to the valorization of *strengths* as opposed to *deficits* in the individual and the family, but this switch still occurs within a problematization of state dependency. When a population which has been exemplary in its purported dependency is suddenly heralded as exemplary for its resilience, the valuing has changed but the fundamental structure of exemplarity has not. Thus, Indigenous resilience is implicated in wider debates today about what the limits of expectations of state support should be, and what kinds of risk and harm we should be able to ‘bounce back’ from, without drawing on state resources. The Indigenous resilience that is heralded as a capacity to adapt to difficult circumstances and survive by turning to resources of family and community, and to knowledges and practices of interdependency, is shadowed by the negative exemplarity I’ve described. And it is this shadow that pushes resilience in the direction of a set of corrective interventions and investments, to outfit subjects for survival in a world that is risky, not just in terms of looming environmental disasters, but, as if on the same ontological plane, in terms of the absence of socialized supports other than the collateral of family ties and obligations.

### The Kauai Longitudinal Study

I now turn to a closer examination of the disciplinary *enframing* of Indigenous life within the ‘psy’ sciences, an enframing from which, I am arguing, the Indigenous resilience that is celebrated as an exemplary ability to adapt to difficult environments at the level of global discussions of climate change, cannot be separated. The concept of Indigenous resilience is connected to a science of resilient child development, complete with tested interventions and standardized programmes, that becomes part of policy-making in the social investment states of the Anglo-American world in the late 1990s. The origins of this psychological form of resilience have a complex and unacknowledged relation to Indigeneity.

As I have noted, the truths of psychological resilience have to do with an individual’s unanticipated ability to ‘bounce back’ in the context of ‘risk factors.’ It is about the identification and statistical tabulation of the relative weight of ‘protective factors’ in accounting for observed resilience in certain individuals as they pass through normative developmental ‘stages.’ Chronic poverty appears as the most constant of the ‘risk factors’ in these studies but the studies *remove* it from wider structural considerations, just as they isolate intimate family support as the key ‘protective factor’ whilst avoiding any discussion of how families themselves are historical, and the relations within them “constituted and reinforced” by shaping pressures which are beyond them.<sup>25</sup>

The sequestering of poverty and family away from structural and historical understandings is apparent in one of the earliest and most influential studies, and it is important for my purposes to note that it was not just the structure of capitalism that this study's lens suppressed, but also *settler colonialism*. The Kauai Longitudinal Study, as it is called, was a multi-decade University of California study conducted in Hawaii. It worked with a cohort born in 1955 on the island of Kauai and was designed to track individual developmental outcomes across the life-cycle. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, the study was famously reporting unexpected 'invincibility' in so-called 'high-risk youth' and producing some of the first recommendations for a research turn toward questions of which factors could account for *resilience*, as opposed to pathology. The Kauai study's findings have come to be generic in resilience research: individual factors, such as self-esteem and self-control, but especially strong family relationships and informal community supports are key to the ability to thrive even in high-risk environments, to come out unscathed from the point of view of psychological functioning, or, as the study's lead author put it, to recover from "coping problems" and "move out of welfare dependence into a competitive job market."<sup>26</sup>

What is crucial to observe about the Kauai Study, for my purposes, is that it produced truths about resilience from a context of settler colonialism and from a population that would have included a significant proportion of Kanaka Maoli or Indigenous Hawaiians, but the study did not control for Indigeneity—it did not mention the specificity of Kanaka Maoli, their forced absorption into plantation and tourism economies, and their experience of dispossession and disenfranchisement under U.S. occupation. This is especially noteworthy given that the 1970s and 1980s, when the first Kauai Study results were being published, were a time of cultural and political revitalization and the growth of a movement for reclaiming Hawaiian sovereignty. But developmental psychology sifts out history and structured social relations, since it is concerned only with individuals and the 'protective factors' which buffer them from specific 'risks' to development. It is of paramount importance that one of the original and most influential resilience studies bracketed the context of settler colonialism in Hawaii as it arrived at its conclusions about the importance of family support to making individuals resilient. Indigeneity is an absent presence in this foundational study establishing some of the core ideas of psychological resilience.

The study's isolation of family as the key protective factor cannot be divorced from a research design that abstracted the developing individual from socio-historical context, and placed Kanaka Maoli youth under a lens that could not see the relevance of settler colonialism. The protective factors accounting for resilience were distilled within a laboratory in which the pressures of dispossession and assimilation were rendered invisible. Under this lens, the kin-connectedness that emerged as a 'protective factor' could not be seen as a buffer against settler-colonial violence and cultural genocide: what it was was a central factor in a successful individual trajectory to market participation. The particular meanings of family for the Kanaka Maoli—meanings which are not reducible to the presuppositions of developmental psychology or to the neoliberal approach to family as the source of investments in human capital—do not

matter in the conclusions of the Kauai study. This is important because the knowledge of how to produce resilient ‘outcomes’ has become an important justification for the turn from state support to family investments in neoliberal social policy since the earliest findings of the Kauai Study. And once resilience science was further elaborated through other studies in the Anglo-American world in subsequent decades, concretized into ‘best practice’ interventions, and built into social policy programmes focussed on the family as the site of human capital investments, it would rebound with a special intensity on Indigenous peoples, as what I’ve been calling the exemplary ‘dependents’ in settler societies. Something of the burying of historical and material conditions within the Kauai Longitudinal Study is rendered instrumental in this process, as the radically flattened knowledge that strong families make strong individuals, fit for a world of unavoidable precarity, is *re-applied* to Indigenous peoples and infiltrates even Indigenous uses of the concept of resilience. By 2003 in Canada, for example, an Aboriginal Healing Foundation Report entitled “Aboriginal People, Resilience, and the Residential School Legacy,” cites the Kauai Study, via a Health Canada publication, as it reports that a mix of ‘protective factors’ in children, including individual temperament and particular parenting styles, lead to “successful outcomes among high-risk children.”<sup>27</sup>

The rapid take-up of psychological resilience as a policy-relevant concept since the 1990s has a lot to do with the ‘evidence-based’ grounding it has been able to provide for neoliberal social policies which reprivatize social care, educational costs, and the ‘risks’ of dependency, by promoting family responsibility. In the context of this shift, knowledges of the developmental self, and in particular knowledge of the ‘protective factors’ that make resilient individuals, has gained a central place, foregrounding the child as the privileged object of social policy. The figure of the developmental person helps to naturalize the argument that family support provides the best insurance against risks and the most valuable investments in ‘human capital.’ But in settler societies, especially in Canada where there has been a public process of recognizing the ‘historical wrong’ of state actions that wrenched Indigenous families apart, this process of refamilialization plays out in particular ways. It can tap into an additional sense of the moral *necessity* of empowering family to do its natural work. In this context, as resilience interventions are applied to Indigenous peoples, there is an additional sense of the importance of family and community taking back control over children’s futures. As I have suggested, there is also the deeply layered, historical exemplarity of the Indigenous in the realm of welfare, the longer history of Indigenous populations being forced to model adaptability, self-reliance, and moral discipline.

### Aboriginal Head Start

What I turn to now is some discussion of Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) programmes as the terrain of active psychological training for resilience, the terrain of *disciplines against dependency*. AHS is a federally-funded Indigenous early-learning programme that activates the so-called ‘best practices’ produced by resilience research, targeting children who are seen to be exposed to



cumulative ‘risks’ or “socio-demographic vulnerability,” as well as their parents, with education for “self-esteem and self-efficacy.”<sup>28</sup> As support for my argument about the exemplarity of Indigenous dependency and resilience in settler societies, it is crucial to observe that in Canada, from the beginning, Head Start programmes have been implemented to target *Indigenous populations specifically*. In the U.S., where Head Start originated as a ‘school readiness’ and parenting education programme targeting low-income children, legislation in 1981 called the Head Start Act *expanded* the programme in the context of policy reforms based on the view that the state should “take an active pedagogical role in cultivating proper family values among the welfare and non-welfare population alike.”<sup>29</sup> In Canada, in contrast, perhaps because of the more historically visible problematization of Indigenous dependency,<sup>30</sup> Head Start programmes were set up in a much more focussed way, targeting Indigenous children and families specifically.<sup>31</sup>

The Federal-Provincial-Territorial Council of Ministers on Social Policy Renewal in 1997 announced a *National Children’s Agenda* for the general population; around the same time new tax credits “provide[d] families with supports and services, outside of social assistance,” reorganizing income supplementation in such a way as to recognize family responsibilities whilst at the same time inducing parents’ workforce participation.<sup>32</sup> When it came to Indigenous children, though, by 1997 there was *already* an early childhood intervention initiative in place: two years before the *National Children’s Agenda*, Aboriginal Head Start for Urban and Northern Communities had been created as a set of locally-run centres targeting Indigenous pre-school children and their parents. In 1998, AHS was expanded to children living on-reserve.<sup>33</sup>

AHS is funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, which also lays out the program components for the centres. They are operated by local non-profits and provide half-day programming. By 2017, AHS programmes were being run in at least 70 reserves and 134 off-reserve locales. The AHS centres are encouraged to shape their half-day programming according to local needs but there is an AHS curriculum with a number of specific components going beyond school readiness to include health promotion, culture and language, and parent education.<sup>34</sup> “Parental involvement” is one of the lauded centrepieces of AHS, with the oft-repeated claim that the programme “reaches family in addition to children and also focusses on the community,” indicating the reach of its intended pedagogies.<sup>35</sup>

Prior to the establishment of AHS, the Assembly of First Nations had demanded child care initiatives to “support parents, individuals, and communities [...] in moving towards self-sufficiency”<sup>36</sup> and RCAP had called for the development of Indigenous-specific child care services that would serve as a means of reinforcing culture and language.<sup>37</sup> But on the evidence of reports published in the course of 25 years of AHS there are good reasons to think that both of these priorities—building community “self-sufficiency” and fostering cultural resurgence—have been mobilized in a strategy of exemplary devolution and responsabilization.<sup>38</sup> Fiona MacDonald has shown how, in the area of child *welfare* services in the case of Manitoba,

delegation of responsibility to First Nations authorities has worked as a kind of offloading of the consequences of austerity to the “private or domestic domain of [the ... ] ‘minority’ or ‘national’ group”; as she notes, “the shift is not directly from the public to the market or the family (although these trends are also detectable).”<sup>39</sup> As a programme that is about the pedagogy of family relationships rather than the provision of services, AHS makes the responsabilization of family much more visible.

The devolution exploits a moment of public reasoning around the importance of the autonomy of the Indigenous family but makes this reasoning serve a ‘conducting of conduct’ within Indigenous communities around individual resilience: its fostering, its measurement, its pursuit as the central collective objective. AHS programmes are run by local communities, including parent volunteers. But involvement in AHS programming means involvement in program monitoring, outcome measurements, and continuous improvement in relation to evidence-based child development.<sup>40</sup> It is important to ask, therefore, whether AHS mobilizes desires to take back control of social reproduction but in a way that channels these into a project which “characteriz[es] the *individual* as that which should be the result of collective action.”<sup>41</sup> The Indigenous child imagined as the beneficiary of AHS is set on a trajectory towards market-readiness. AHS outcomes are measured in terms of transition to school and school performance, but also “success in life longer-term,” including avoidance of criminal involvement, mental illness, and demonstration of a desire for “lifelong learning.”<sup>42</sup>

No one would argue that these ‘outcomes’ are undesirable, but the question is what is being *absorbed* and *reconstructed* within AHS: what happens to the different sense of resilience as collective, political persistence, and what happens to the different sense of family relationships as part of wider connectivities anchored in place, when these are channelled through AHS pedagogies? AHS is informed by resilience science’s focus on the question of how proven ‘protective factors’ can be mobilized to produce the ‘cascading’ of positive effects in an individual life-course. What is valued is already valued *within* an extension of market and investment logics to the figure of the developmental person, so that desires for justice are deferred to a future horizon in which early affective inputs are realized in adaptive, entrepreneurial selfhood. It is key to underline, in this regard, that AHS is *not* a programme designed to share the work of child care but a responsabilization of the already-exhausted family. Even though RCAP stressed the “need of families for support and respite while they struggle with personal and economic problems” in a context in which most Indigenous families do not have access to subsidized daycare,<sup>43</sup> AHS provides pedagogy rather than respite.

Beyond any specific lessons in ‘healthy nutrition’ and ‘active lifestyle,’ what AHS stresses for parents is that they are, as a Public Health Agency of Canada paper puts it, “the child’s first and most influential teacher.”<sup>44</sup> It is important to ask what this lesson about the dyadic parent-child relationship within the nucleated family, and the centrality of parental influence, is answering to, in the context of Canada’s post-apology public culture and what Eva Mackey has called the “construct[ion] of Aboriginal families and communities as essentially problem-ridden and

deviant based on psychological criteria.”<sup>45</sup> There is a perceived governmental problem, a problem of human-capital formation, being addressed through AHS’s parent-focussed programming. AHS is a technical solution that corresponds to the emergence of something called “residential school syndrome” as a measurable ‘risk factor’ in the design of other kinds of ‘psy’ and health interventions today.<sup>46</sup> Here we see the return of one of the key findings of the early Kauai Longitudinal Study, the isolation of a flattened conception of family, understood in terms of attachment relationships, as a potential ‘protective factor’ conducive to individual resilience. In Canada’s AHS, this lesson is re-applied to Indigenous populations who are now specifically targeted for interventions in relation to settler-colonial history isolated as a neutral ‘risk factor.’

Aside from targeting parents with health-promotion lessons, AHS programmes provide pre-school children with Indigenous language learning and cultural teaching through craft-making activities, ceremonies, and storytelling. Cultural resurgence is an important element of AHS and was built into programme requirements in response to government- and AFN-funded studies in the 1990s which stressed that early childhood education was important both to the preservation and transmission of Indigenous culture and to addressing barriers to education and employment.<sup>47</sup> Again, as with the injunctions around parental involvement, the question regarding the way a demand for *respect for culture* has been built into AHS programming is how culture is *framed* and *mobilized* in relation to individual developmental trajectories. This is how the enclosures of neoliberalism operate.<sup>48</sup> The shadowing of resilience by a problematization of dependency in settler contexts is relevant to the way that AHS activities coded as ‘cultural’ are associated with the building of self-esteem. Self-esteem is seen as key to the capacity to access educational and employment opportunities. I am not here to dispute the good news of psychological research, that a sense of individual ‘efficacy’ in the world can be statistically correlated with rootedness in a person’s Indigenous culture;<sup>49</sup> rather, I want to draw attention to the subtle enclosure happening when culture is absorbed within a human capital frame, its worth measured according to the developmental outcomes with which it can be associated, and those outcomes, in turn, normatively tilted to adaptation to a world of risks which are, themselves, seen as fundamentally unalterable. ‘Culture’ is not the source of political energies that would question the production of those ‘risky’ conditions; it is, rather, a tool in accommodating oneself to them.

In closing, I will return to the Kauai Longitudinal Study, the study which I’ve suggested grounds the foundational insights of resilience science in a foundational blindness to settler colonialism. In the early 2000s, there was a follow-up study to the famous one begun in the 1970s, as a different group of researchers *returned* to Hawaiian youths, this time drawing on two decades of resilience research in the ‘psy’ disciplines and this time also attempting to *correct* for the earlier study’s omission of Indigenous identity in its statistical calculations. The later study compared factors contributing to resilience in Indigenous and non-Indigenous Hawaiians. Their findings reinforced the original study’s conclusion that everything pivots on family: they found that Kanaka Maoli youths experienced “more family adversity” but also were “more likely to

have higher levels of family support” and that family was the most significant factor in their well-being.<sup>50</sup> What they added to this was crucial: that “community” factors, including involvement in the sovereignty movement, had a “negative influence” on resilient development.<sup>51</sup> Thus, the later study suggests what can happen when resilience science is *re-applied* to Indigenous groups, when it rebounds on them as a specifically targeted population, as it does in AHS. Critical Indigenous Studies, as I have noted, has already identified this danger and so Dian Million cautions that it is necessary to “acknowledge the tight and fine line between sabotaging helpful effort and acknowledging that ... ‘healing interventions [may] remain embedded in a discourse [that] ... by its very nature denies [the] relationship with organized violence.’”<sup>52</sup> It is not that a programme like AHS is ineffective, then, but that it may act to filter political energies.<sup>53</sup> It may engage the Indigenous family as an instrument of adaptation to the socio-economic world created by settler colonialism and neoliberal capitalism.

Thus it is critical to track the way that Indigenous resilience is shadowed by the idea of state dependency, and by a history of special moral disciplines and fiscal restraints applied to a population category which has been held up as exemplary for its purported dependency long before its current association with resilience. As I have argued, the resilience techniques applied to the Indigenous in a program like AHS are the ‘solution’ to state dependency, although their focus on the mobilization of ‘assets’ and ‘strengths’ make them seem, simply, coincident with the Indigenous resilience to climate change that is held up as exemplary at this moment. But both the contemporary imperative to applaud resilience and the rebounding of this capacity onto Indigenous groups as a set of expectations related to an exemplary population, I am proposing, are aspects of settler societies in an era of neoliberal governance. Understanding the way that Indigenous dependency is constantly problematized in settler contexts is crucial to re-politicizing a discourse of Indigenous resilience that can seem benign, or just a long-overdue capacity-recognition. Once we grasp this shadowing, it becomes more apparent that the ability to offer Indigenous resilience as a marketable “asset” is indissociable from a reorganization of Indigenous social reproduction and subjectivities.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-education-minister-lisa-thompson-increases-class-sizes-high-school-benefits-1.5064285>

<sup>2</sup> Mark Vardy and Mick Smith, “Resilience,” *Environmental Humanities* 9.1 (May 2017), 176.

<sup>3</sup> Jennifer Henderson and Keith Denny, “The Resilient Child, Human Development, and the Post-Democracy,” *Biosocieties* 10.3 (2015) 352-378.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Watts, “A Political Ecology of Environmental Security,” cit. in Vardy and Smith, op cit., 177.

<sup>5</sup> See Patricia D. McGuire - Kishbakabaykwe, “Exploring Resilience and Indigenous Ways of Knowing,” *Pimatisiwin: A Journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Health* 8.2 (2010) 117-131; *Resilient Systems, Resilient Communities: Intersections of Sustainability*, edited by

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Jordan B. Kinder and Makere Stewart-Harawira (Edmonton: University of Alberta/Kias Kule Institute for Advanced Study, 2018). Cognate terms are ‘resurgence,’ as it is used in Leanne Simpson’s *Dancing On Our Turtle’s Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence* (Winnipeg: ARP Books, 2011) or Gerald Vizenor’s ‘survivance,’ *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1994). Shane Merritt, (Kamilaroi) provides an early caution against taking back definitions of resilience from Western psychology in his “Resilience needs to be defined from an Indigenous context,” *Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Journal* 31.5 (September/October 2007) 10-12.

<sup>6</sup> Julian Reid, “The Risks of Resilience to Indigenous Peoples in the Arctic,” *Arctic Journal* (January 2017).

<sup>7</sup> Reid, [2].

<sup>8</sup> Isabel Altamirano-Jimenez, *Indigenous Encounters with Neoliberalism* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013) 16, 17.

<sup>9</sup> McGuire, op cit., 120. McGuire stresses the importance of distinguishing Indigenous resilience from the “survival of the fittest” and emphasizes a “place-based resilience” which is about sustaining peoplehood and relationships with the land. It is a geographically-located and spiritual form of knowledge, concerned with “interconnected relationships in a specific place,” 124.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 75, 74.

<sup>11</sup> Altamirano-Jimenez, 73-74. The approved, commodifiable practices focus on “male subsistence activities” and ignore women’s harvesting activities, according to Altamirano-Jimenez: 81, 85.

<sup>12</sup> Santiago Castro-Gomez, “The Missing Chapter of Empire,” *Cultural Studies* 21.2-3 (2007), 443. See also Veronica Gago and Sandro Mezzadra, “A Critique of the Extractive Operations of Capital: Toward an Expanded Concept of Extractivism,” *Rethinking Marxism* 29.4 (2017) 574-591.

<sup>13</sup> McGuire, 125; Gago and Mezzadra, 585.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2018/12/government-of-canada-creates-new-position-to-promote-indigenous-peoples-knowledge-and-participation-in-the-united-nations-climate-negotiations-and-.html>

<sup>15</sup> As Reid notes, Indigenous groups can then be categorized as either as succeeding or failing and in this sense the trope of Indigenous resilience can function to “discipline the Indigenous themselves into performing their own resilience.” [3]

<sup>16</sup> See Hugh Shewell, *Enough to Keep Them Alive’: Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004): “The ‘problem’ of Indian welfare dependence was and is purely a construction of the dominant state, defined and measured within its lexicon and dealt with through the discourse of its institutional power arrangements” 338. Shewell’s history of Indigenous welfare policy stresses the basically unrelenting adherence to a principle according to which relief would be kept to a bare minimum for the Indigenous. Whether through anachronistic application of principles of charity, the provision of relief in the form of food rations, the barring of the able-bodied from relief, the promotion of nuclear family patterns or tightly-controlled leadership training, welfare has been a tool of moral and economic integration—and it is in this sense, I am suggesting, that Indigenous populations may

be seen to have been constructed through a negative exemplarity, as state dependents, even before the circulation of specifically neoliberal discourses of anti-statism and empowerment.

<sup>17</sup> Op cit, 328.

<sup>18</sup> Op cit, 329.

<sup>19</sup> See Elizabeth Strakosch, *Neoliberal Indigenous Policy: Settler-Colonialism and the 'Post-welfare' State* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2015).

<sup>20</sup> Taiake Alfred, "Colonialism and State Dependency," *Journal of Aboriginal Health* (National Aboriginal Health Association, 2009), 45, 55

<sup>21</sup> Alfred 42.

<sup>22</sup> Taiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel, "Being Indigenous: Resurgences Against Contemporary Colonialism," *Government and Opposition* (2005), 599, 600.

<sup>23</sup> Alfred 42. Dian Million, *Therapeutic Nations: Healing in an Age of Indigenous Human Rights* (University of Arizona Press, 2013), 105, 113. Million cites Marie-Anik Gagné (1998), whose work on Indigenous psychological dependency draws on the centre-periphery theory of underdevelopment, drawing a connection between enforced colonial dependency, the prevention of adaptation, cultural genocide and "residential school syndrome."

<sup>24</sup> Strakosch 39.

<sup>25</sup> Elizabeth Harrison, "Bouncing Back? Recession, Resilience and Everyday Lives," *Critical Social Policy* 33.1 (2012), 109.

<sup>26</sup> Emmy Werner, "Resilience and Recovery: Findings from the Kauai Longitudinal Study," *Focal Point: Research, Policy, and Practice in Children's Mental Health* 19.1 (Summer 2005), 12, 13.

<sup>27</sup> Madeleine Dion Stout and Gregory Kipling, *Aboriginal People, Resilience, and the Residential School Legacy*, (Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2003) 11. The AHF report cites Emmy Werner as she is 1993 cited in another report, from 1995, *Resiliency: Relevance to Health Promotion*, co-authored by Colin Mangham et. al, the Health Canada Office of Alcohol, Drugs, and Dependency Issues, and the Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre.

<sup>28</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada, "Promising Practices from Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities," The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Institute on Early Child Development, June 2, 2017, Toronto.

<sup>29</sup> Melinda Cooper, *Family Values: Between Neoliberalism and the New Social Conservatism* (New York: Zone Books, 2017) 68. Designed for low-income and migrant children in the U.S., Head Start was at first denounced as a "communist plot." See <https://www.childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/19/02/edward-f-zigler-architect-head-start-dies-88>

<sup>30</sup> Margo Greenwood, "An Overview of the Development of Aboriginal Early Childhood Services in Canada" (2001).

<sup>31</sup> See Martha Friendly and Laurel Rothman, "Miles to Go: The Policy Context of Child Care in Canada," *Child Welfare* 74.3 (1995) 503, n3.

<sup>32</sup> Greenwood 33.

<sup>33</sup> When AHSUNC expanded in 1998 to on-reserve children, it became funded by Health Canada, Medical Services Branch. The latter now forms part of Indigenous Services Canada. Jane P.

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Preston, "Enhancing Aboriginal Child Wellness: The Potential of Early Learning Programs," *First Nations Perspectives* 1.1 (2008), 98-120.

<sup>34</sup> Op cit., 101.

<sup>35</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada, *Promising Practices*, 36.

<sup>36</sup> Greenwood 32.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> See Greenwood 14-15: AHS corresponds to a policy direction adopted by INAC in 1986, based on the long-term objective of devolving "native problems to native communities from the federal government for resolution through negotiation of local community plans" (Greenwood here cites a 1985 Memorandum to Cabinet).

<sup>39</sup> Fiona MacDonald, "The Manitoba Government's Shift to 'Autonomous' First Nations Child Welfare: Empowerment or Privatization?" *First Nations, First Thoughts*, edited by Annis May Timpson Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2009), 185. See also Shewell 336 and Greenwood 11-13.

<sup>40</sup> Jennifer Chalmers, *Ten Years of Aboriginal Head Start in the NWT, 1996-2006* (Public Health Agency of Canada).

<sup>41</sup> Harrison, 110. Harrison cites *Resilient Nation*, a 2009 Demos publication: "Next generation resilience relies on citizens and communities, not the institutions of the state," 111.

<sup>42</sup> Mai Nguyen, "Closing the Educational Gap: A Case for Aboriginal Early Childhood Education in Canada, A Look at the Aboriginal Headstart Program," *Canadian Journal of Education*, 34.3 (2011), 229-248.

<sup>43</sup> Greenwood, 32. Preston, 2

<sup>44</sup> Preston, 101.

<sup>45</sup> Eva Mackey, "The Apologizers' Apology," *Reconciling Canada: Critical Perspectives on the Culture of Redress*, edited by Jennifer Henderson and Pauline Wakeham (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 53.

<sup>46</sup> On this point I am indebted to Heather Howard, "Historification, Healing, and the Precarity of Being Well: 'How we remember, teaches us how to live.'" Keynote presentation to the Memory at the Intersection of Mass Violence and Socioeconomic Inequality workshop. Saint Paul University, Ottawa. 14 April 2018.

<sup>47</sup> Greenwood 31.

<sup>48</sup> As Greenwood has noted, where the *National Children's Agenda* mentions Indigenous children, it refers to them as "individuals having unique histories [but] there is no mention of their membership in diverse collectives that are recognized and guaranteed in the Constitution and legislation of Canada," 31.

<sup>49</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada, *Promising Practices*.

<sup>50</sup> Barry Carlton et al, "Resilience, Family Adversity and Well-Being Among Hawaiian and Non-Hawaiian Adolescents," *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 52.4 (2006), 293.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 304. This negative influence was interpreted as possibly being due to "a level of community adversity that pertained to Hawaiians and the experience of being minorities in the islands" or to "the additional stressors" associated with involvement in the sovereignty movement. In contrast, Canadian epidemiological researchers Michael J. Chandler and Christopher E. Lalonde have shown in their work on the relation between youth suicide risk in

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First Nations and what they call “cultural continuity factors,” “including efforts to regain legal title to traditional lands and to re-establish forms of self-government,” that there is a strong correlation between these and decreased suicide rates. Chandler and Lalonde, though, endorse a model of “‘lateral’ or community-to-community” exchange of Indigenous knowledge and interventions, rather than the application of resilience science: 238, 246. “Cultural Continuity as a Moderator of Suicide Risk among Canada’s First Nations,” *Healing Traditions: The Mental Health of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*, edited by Laurence J. Kirmayer and Gail Guthrie Valaskakis (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2009) 221-248.

<sup>52</sup> Million 171.

<sup>53</sup> A February 2018 CBC news story reported Indigenous Services statistics showing that only 18-19 per cent of eligible Indigenous children are served by the AHS on Reserve program and noted that “funding and access problems with the Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve program have been known for some time. A Health Canada memo from January 2016 stated that the program ailed to provide a level of assistance comparable to that which is available to the general population.” <http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/childhod-gaps-firstnation-1.4536959>