# Reconsiderations of Frameworks of Ethnic History: A Comparison of Métis and Ukrainian-Canadian Historiographies

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*Ethnic historians in Canada have tended to use ethnicity as a methodological framework without defining it or questioning the origins of ethnic consciousness. Many tend to conceptualize ethnicity strictly in terms of a place of origin, despite the fact that ethnic boundaries and consciousness are often transformed in the host nation. Taking the history of Ukrainian-Canadians as an example, this article argues that definitions of ethnicity based on the national and/or racial origins of immigrants must be reconsidered. It suggests that scholars of Métis history, focusing on factors that shape ethnogenesis such as economy, gender, religion, and settlement patterns, provide certain theoretical insights useful for ethnic historians. Yet the categorical division between ethnic and Native histories has hitherto hindered communication between these fields.*

Over the past three decades, ethnic, immigration, and Native histories have respectively emerged as independent fields of Canadian history. The dichotomy between the categorical terms 'ethnic groups' and 'Indians,' argues American anthropologist Jonathan D. Hill, originated in the actions of a colonial American state excluding Indigenous peoples from mainstream history while incorporating ethnic groups into it. Challenging this dichotomy, Hill claims the exclusion is the "ultimate form of hegemony."[2] Although the dominance of the mainstream in defining history cannot be underestimated, the dichotomy is further reinforced by members of ethnic and Native communities seeking to maintain their respective group boundaries by claiming a historically

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[1] This essay was submitted as a term paper for a graduate seminar in the Department of History and Classics at the University of Alberta. The author wishes to thank Professor Gerhard Ens, the seminar's students for their contributions, Rebecca Adell for her insight, and Matthew Eisler for his work as editor.

[2] Jonathan D. Hill, "Introduction: Ethnogenesis in the Americas, 1492-1992," in *History, Power, and Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Americas, 1492-1992*, ed. Jonathan D. Hill (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 16.

unique position within a nation-state. The resulting insular tendency of these groups in writing their histories hinders communication between scholars of these respective communities, thereby fostering a belief that the construction of these two forms of group identity cannot be explained by the same theory.

It would be a mistake to argue that immigrant groups originated in Old World nations and "neoteric or cenogenic"[3] societies such as the Métis went through inherently different processes of group formation. In both cases, ethnic boundaries were socially, economically, occupationally, and culturally constructed or transformed in the new land. Scholars, historians, and anthropologists in particular have been interested in the origins of Métis culture, given its neoteric nature. On the other hand, ethnic and immigration historians, while devoting much attention to the long-term generational maintenance of ethnic cultures and traditions, have not explored the roots of ethnicity, regarding place of origin and nationality as the most important elements defining ethnic boundaries. This article reviews how social theorists understand the process of neoteric and migrant ethnogenesis and how ethnic historians and scholars of Métis culture have respectively defined the emergence of identity.[4] It argues that the theories and approaches employed in studies of Métis ethnogenesis, particularly the role of 'habit' and 'enculturation' in producing prototypical ethnicity, provide ethnic historians with a new framework that avoids the tendencies to characterize immigrant groups strictly in terms of old traditions and cultures and to assume that ethnicity is a fixed framework of history.

Identifying the roots of ethnic groups is always problematic without a universal model explaining every ethnogenesis. The efforts of anthropologists and social scientists to search for mechanisms facilitating

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[3] This term, first introduced by Nancie L. Solien González, has been defined in many ways, but in general, refers to a society emerging out of the fusion of several cultures as a result of war, the expansion of capitalism, colonialism, or other major socio-economic upheavals. See Solien González, "The Neoteric Society," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 12 (1970): 1-13; and Kevin Mulroy, "Ethnogenesis and Ethnohistory of the Seminole Maroons," *Journal of World History* 4:2 (1993): 287-305.

[4] The question of ethnogenesis and ethnic boundaries has concentrated more on Native groups. See, for example, Daniel R. Mandell, "Shifting Boundaries of Race and Ethnicity: Indian-Black Intermarriage in Southern New England, 1760-1880," *The Journal of American History* (September 1998): 466-501; Mulroy, "Ethnogenesis and Ethnohistory of the Seminole Maroons;" and Gerald M. Sider, *Lumbee Indian Histories: Race, Ethnicity, and Indian Identity in the Southern United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

the emergence of ethnic groups have produced various perspectives on the nature of ethnicity. A major controversy has developed over the events, forces, and circumstances thought to shape a collective ethnic identity. At a theoretical level, this question has been addressed mainly by two conflicting groups of scholars, the 'primordialists' and the 'instrumentalists.' These groups have played a significant role in highlighting the issues with which every ethnic historian must deal. The primordialists, represented, for example, by Harold R. Issacs, Clifford Geertz, and Daniel Bell, argue ethnicity is determined by ties bestowed upon the individual at birth such as blood, race, language, and religion. Geertz states these attachments constitute a "natural" or "spiritual" affinity.[5] As such, ethnicity may often serve as an emotional shelter in the modern world.

Conversely, the instrumentalists, including Orlando Patterson and Abner Cohen, claim that ethnic affiliation is based on individual socio-economic interests, regardless of racial, linguistic, or religious origins.[6] In this sense, ethnicity is a political phenomenon that involves the manipulation of 'their' people by certain individuals on the basis of self-interest. Given the dynamic changes of ethnic boundaries and the recent rise and decline of new ethnicities, few recent scholars have supported the primordialists. Yet the instrumentalist argument, too, is unconvincing, mainly because it identifies ethnic groups with socio-economic organizations. Some social theorists reject or try to synthesize the two positions. Donald L. Horowitz, for example, discounts the primordialist view, arguing "Ethnic identity is generally acquired at birth. But this is a matter of degree."[7] Paul R. Brass suggests that a way of reconciling the two positions is by "simply recognizing that cultural groups differ in the strength and richness of their cultural traditions and

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[5] Clifford Geertz, "Integrative Revolution," in *Old Societies and New States*, ed. Clifford Geertz (New York: Free Press, 1963), 109. See also Harold R. Issacs, "Basic Group Identity: The Idols of the Tribe," in *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, eds. Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

[6] See, for example, Orlando Patterson, "Context and Choice in Ethnic Allegiance: A Theoretical Framework and Caribbean Case Study," in *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience: Urban Ethnicity*, ed. Abner Cohen (London: Tavistock Publications, 1974).

[7] Donald L. Horowitz, "Ethnic Identity," in *Ethnicity, Theory and Experience*,113.

even more importantly in the strength of traditional institutions and social structure."[8]

The argument that ethnic groups vary in the degree of primordial attachment appears to be valid, given that distinctions between instrumental and primordial identities are not always clear. Brass, however, leans more towards the instrumentalist position rather than incorporating the two views, maintaining that "the values and institutions of a persisting cultural group will suggest what appeals and symbols will be effective and what will not" when elites mobilize the group for "ethnic movements."[9] However, distinguishing a "cultural group" from "ethnic movements" not only fails to show why "cultural groups" emerge in the first place, but also limits the definition of ethnicity to the actions of politically-motivated elites. This position is more explicitly outlined by Orlando Patterson. He insists that an ethnic group be distinguished from a cultural group since ethnicity always involves "a conscious sense of belonging."[10] In this sense, it can be argued that 'ethnicity' is a matter of definition. However, a problem with this approach develops when ethnicity is used as a framework in writing ethnic histories because it leads historians to anachronistically apply currently-existing ethnic boundaries to the past. The study of ethnicity must inquire into how group cohesion emerges as a prototype of ethnicity, even though these cultural or social groups are not always coterminous with ethnic groups emerging subsequently.

G. Carter Bentley has proposed a theoretical model for this form of analysis, applying Pierre Bourdieu's notions of the "theory of practice" and "habitus" to ethnicity. This innovative theory provides historians with a significant analytical tool in the study of ethnogenesis, especially at the level of individual consciousness. Bentley argues that neither the primordialist nor the instrumentalist models address the "question of how people recognize the commonalties (of interest or sentiment) underlying claims to common identity...at base, ethnicity involves a claim to be a particular person."[11] From this point of view, it is clear that Horowitz's and Brass's arguments of ethnicity as a matter of degree only concern the conscious manipulation of symbols in response to objective

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[8] Paul R. Brass, "Elite Groups, Symbol Manipulation and Ethnic Identity among the Muslims of South Asia," in *Political Identity in South Asia*, eds. David Taylor and Malcolm Yapp (London: Curzon Press,1978), 40.

[9] *Ibid.*, 40.

[10] Patterson, "Context and Choice in Ethnic Allegiance," 309.

[11] G. Carter Bentley, "Ethnicity and Practice," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29:1 (1987): 26-27.

circumstances. For Bentley, however, "the relation between objective context and subjective consciousness of identity" is less important than "how each of these is related to habitus."[12] The latter, according to Bourdieu, consists of "systems of durable, transposable dispositions"[13] causing people to unconsciously behave in certain ways in response to material conditions such as economy. Such "habitual dispositions," inscribed in the individual at birth, determine "perception and appreciation of all subsequent experience" and occur at a subliminal level until they are put into "practice."[14] While changes in material circumstances produce a different form of habitus, "similarity in habitus necessarily underlies coordinated or collective action" because it can be understood only by those who are "competent in the underlying code."[15]

Applying Bourdieu's theory to the formation of ethnic identity, Bentley suggests that "sensations of ethnic affinity" are based on the "commonality of experiences and of the preconscious habitus it generates."[16] Although this interpretation may appear similar to the primordialist position, Bentley differs in holding that objective conditions generating habitus such as language, economy, and race need not be recognized. Only "practice underlies consciousness."[17] The general weakness of Bentley's model, Kevin A. Yelvington argues, lies in the linkage between human behaviour and ethnic identity. He makes a crucial point when he maintains that Bentley's formula cannot explain "which kinds of practices engender ethnic identification and [which kinds]...attenuate identification because everything is put down to the mysterious workings of the habitus. He is unable to say which practices are 'ethnic' and which relate to class or regionalism."[18]

Yet this criticism does not refute Bentley's point, because it can be argued that the processes by which a group of people become ethnically motivated or imagined may occur at the next level. What Bentley suggests is simply a mechanism by which the individual has been prepared to be ethnically mobilized. Bentley, responding to Yelvington, asserts that his main purpose is to demonstrate that "ethnic attachments"

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[12] *Ibid.*, 40.
[13] *Ibid.*, 28.
[14] *Ibid.*, 28. This "reproductive" nature of habitus explains why human behaviour varies from individual to individual.
[15] *Ibid.*, 29.
[16] *Ibid.*, 32.
[17] *Ibid.*, 27.
[18] Kevin A. Yelvington, "Ethnicity as Practice? A Comment on Bentley," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 33:1 (1991): 161.

cannot be "explained purely by processes of cognitive and social differentiation."[19] The role of habitus in engendering a distinctive group of people as an antecedent of ethnicity, therefore, is particularly significant in demonstrating that instrumentalists only examine a rather superficial aspect of ethnicity.

The roots of Métis ethnic identity have received much scholarly attention. The primordialist attempt to define this culture simply in biological terms, as the mixed-blood progeny of European men and Native women, can often be seen in pre mid-twentieth century historiography informed by the accounts of European explorers, missionaries, and traders. Such a definition has obvious limits in revealing the complex nature of Métis identity, ignoring or underestimating other social factors contributing to socio-cultural cohesiveness and reflecting prevalent social biases characterizing ethnic boundaries primarily in negative terms. In the late nineteenth century, Canadian political leaders and scholars adhering to the eugenicist principle that 'inferior' races were destined for extinction were troubled by the presence of the mixed-blood population, whose partial European ancestry made them more adaptable and resilient than full-blooded Natives.[20] Whether or how mixed-blood people became an ethnically identifiable group was not yet their primary concern. In his 1875 article, for example, Daniel Wilson warned that "the mixed descendants of Huron and French blood still, after a lapse of upwards of two centuries" showed no sign of declining, and could be seen in various places.[21] He then noted that the statement "that whole tribes and nations of the American aborigines have been exterminated in the process of colonization of the New World" was not quite accurate.[22] Wilson instead

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[19] G. Carter Bentley, "Response to Yelvington," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 33:1 (1991): 171.

[20] The tendency of scholars to define human groups in racial terms has not been confined to studies on mixed-blood peoples. Following the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, Western social theorists, scientists, and anthropologists began to use genetic distinctions as a general benchmark for judging human 'superiority' and 'inferiority.' Such 'scientific' racism informed a number of influential works produced in the United States in the early twentieth century including Francis Galton's *Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope and Aims* (London: MacMillan, 1905); Charles B. Davenport's *Heredity in Relation to Eugenics* (New York: Holt, 1911); and Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race* (New York: Scribner, 1923).

[21] Daniel Wilson, "Hybridity and Absorption in Relation to the Red Indian Race," *Canadian Journal* (July 1875): 443.

[22] *Ibid.*, 448.

believed that the presence of mixed-blood people was only a temporary phenomenon, with such individuals eventually being totally supplanted by white peoples. More importantly, he did not expect to see mixed-blood individuals coalescing into a distinctive cultural group.

The tendency of scholars to directly link physical distinctions such as 'blood' with social cohesion or ethnicity, and elevate an often negatively-defined racial category to the status of a comprehensive ethnic identity, frequently appeared in twentieth-century Métis studies. Although such studies are significant in that they embodied both the primordial and instrumental interpretations of the Métis, they generally failed to advance a theory explaining how people who shared a distinctive physical nature developed similar cultural traits forming the basis of an ethnic identity. For example, in his *The Métis in the Canadian West,* Marcel Giraud understood the Métis primarily as a mixed-blood race emerging out of European-Indian contact. Although Giraud identified some life patterns of mixed-blood people including Europeanized Métis, those absorbed into Native culture, and those with ties to both communities, he barely explores how these differences shaped cultural identity. He did not believe that mixed-blood people, at least during the eighteenth century, formed a cohesive group:

> Their dispersion was too widespread, their ambitions too limited to immediate realities, their material life as yet too peaceful and too little threatened for them to become conscious of the strength they could represent or to experience the feeling that, between the whites and the Indians, they formed a distinct 'nation,' called on to defend its own interests and to play in the history of the West a special role, in conformity with the destinies its dual ancestry might assign to it.[23]

Yet Giraud also implied that the mixed-blood population as a whole emerged as a distinctive nation in later years:

> It was with the appearance of sedentary colonization in the western plains that the Métis group, which had no history during the eighteenth century, stepped on to the stage and rapidly acquired the national consciousness which it had hitherto lacked.[24]

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[23] Marcel Giraud, *The Métis in the Canadian West*, trans. George Woodcock (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1986), 355.
[24] *Ibid.*, 356.

This simple 'instrumental' evolution of the Métis from biological unit to 'new nation,' often stimulated by the colonial-mercantilist rivalry between the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and the North-West Company (NWC), is also advocated by later scholars such as George F. G. Stanley and Donald Purich. Stanley presents a vision similar to Giraud's, holding that with "the penetration of the North-West by the fur traders, these people [the Métis] increased rapidly in numbers, and, separate alike from whites and Indians."[25] Purich also emphasizes the linkage between the pressures produced by competition in the fur trade and the birth of the Métis.[26] Although it cannot be denied that both mixed-blood origins and external economic interests played significant roles in shaping Métis identity, such scholars have neglected the complex mechanisms driving the evolution of the new racial group into a socially and culturally distinctive unit.

While earlier scholars tended to define Métis boundaries primarily in biological terms, Ukrainian immigrants were often considered a group defined by culture and nationality, as well as race. As with the Métis, the Ukrainian group boundary was negatively determined by outsiders in the early twentieth century. Assessing the social impact of immigration to Canada, these scholars and educators promoted the assimilation of the foreign population, insisting that Canada remain a racially 'superior' British nation. For example, J.T.M. Anderson, one of the federally-appointed educators of the new Canadians, defined East Europeans in racial terms when he argued in 1918 that members of this cohort could never become 'true' Canadians. He did, however, believe it possible that the second generation, if properly educated, might become culturally assimilated by the host society.[27] Similarly, Robert England, also an educator, appeared to have believed that the immigrants could only be categorized by place of origin, language, culture, and race. He wrote in 1929 that "Ruthenians remain the most backward of the [Slavic] groups," yet their "peasant homecraft...[and]... culture" are virtues in their host country.[28] In Western Canada, the Ruthenians, he continued, "stand

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[25] George F.G. Stanley, *The Birth of Western Canada: A History of the Riel Rebellions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), 6.

[26] Donald J. Purich, *The Métis* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1988), 20-24.

[27] J.T. M. Anderson, *The Education of the New Canadian: A Treatise on Canada's Greatest Educational Problem* (Toronto and London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1918), 9.

[28] Robert England, *The Central European Immigrant in Canada* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1929), 56, 59.

much closer together" than any other group.[29] Given that the project of Anglo-Canadian nation-building was often motivated by a sense of British superiority, the stereotyping of the foreign population is not surprising. The problem with these studies is that they conceived of immigrants as separate groups strictly in terms of place of origin and racial and cultural criteria, thus imposing an artificial and inflexible ethnic boundary.

Given the limits of racial and/or cultural explanations of ethnicity, historians and other scholars have paid much attention to other possible factors contributing to ethnic identity formation. In the historiography of Métis studies, they have generally focused on the problems of why not all mixed-blood peoples developed a collective identity, how the Métis differed from Indians or Europeans, and what factors were most decisive in determining 'Métisness.' However, a new way of investigating Métis culture has been pioneered by historians and anthropologists. Though the specific approaches vary, these scholars have produced a number of significant studies on the role of economy, religion, locality, gender, and class in the formation of a distinctive group. However, they have been less successful in showing when and how Métis social cohesion became identifiable in ethnic terms. The connection between a pre-existing society, whether occupationally or economically defined, and ethnicity, is particularly important, both because it shows that ethnicity can be understood as one form of collective human behaviour and because it determines how the ethnic group differs from other forms of social cohesion.

Jennifer Brown and Jacqueline Peterson's collection of essays employs a multi-disciplinary approach in analyzing how Métis identity was formed in a wide range of communities. Peterson regards the fur-trading communities that emerged around the Great Lakes region and the economic networks linking them as the precondition for Métis ethnic cohesion.[30] She argues that members of these societies were "not self-consciously Métis before 1815," but were "in the process of becoming."[31] While these communities became heterogeneous after the

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[29] *Ibid.*, 57.

[30] She makes a similar argument in "Ethnogenesis: The Settlement and Growth of a 'New People' in the Great Lakes Region, 1702-1815," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 6:2 (1982): 23-64.

[31] Jacqueline Peterson, "Many roads to Red River: Métis Genesis in the Great Lakes Region, 1680-1815," in *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America*, eds. Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer Brown (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985), 39.

British replaced the French regime, Peterson maintains that for the most part, they were characterized by "occupational and material homogeneity."[32] Using maps and registers of births, marriages, and deaths, she describes how the population of Michilimackinac, for example, increasingly became Métis.

Similarly, Olive Patricia Dickason suggests that despite the general reluctance to accept intermarriage even when the French government encouraged such union, the mixed-blood population dramatically increased, often facilitated by economic activity relating to the fur trade. The most important forces crystallizing the emergence of the Métis as a distinctive people in the far Northwest, she observes, were "isolation, slowness of settlement, and the enduring importance of the fur trade."[33] She particularly emphasizes the rise of a power structure that benefited the Métis and made them a distinctive people, highlighting their bargaining role in trading exchanges.[34] While these authors successfully show how economic opportunities on the frontier produced a racially and functionally distinctive people, their emphasis on the circumstantial, material, and objective forces that created this society obscure the subjective dimension of community-building.

Social cohesion or 'community' is often brought about by shared experiences, value systems, and behaviours. With the Bourdieu-Bentley thesis in mind, it can be argued that habitual dispositions generated by race, the frontier environment, and economic opportunity in the fur trade, mediated by daily interaction between community members, produced subjective but subliminal 'Métisness,' especially prior to the nineteenth century. The application of this theory to studies of the Métis, evident in the work of Jennifer Brown and John Foster, was first proposed in David V. Burley, Gayel A. Horsfall, and John D. Brandon's anthropological study of Métis ethnicity. Ironically, however, these anthropologists, the only scholars who explicitly advocate the Bourdieu-Bentley thesis, tend to interpret the genesis of Métis ethnicity in a very simple form, arguing that "Both the relative isolation and interaction of European and native economic and social skills and attitudes provided the Métis with experiences from which *habitus* might be structured (italics added). In combination with their external ascription as a 'racial' category distinct from European traders, Canadian freemen or Indian peoples, *habitus*

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[32] *Ibid.*, 41.

[33] Olive Patricia Dickason, "From 'One Nation' in the Northeast to 'New Nation' in the Northwest: A look at the Emergence of the Métis," in *The New Peoples*, 15.

[34] *Ibid.*, 14.

provided a key ingredient to the final structuring of a unified collective consciousness."[35]

This description of Métis identity construction may be valid, but the question remains as to how this process occurred.[36] On this point, Burley, Horsfall, and Brandon rely on Brown and Foster. Brown's *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company and Families in Indian Country*, while not focusing specifically on Métis identity, stresses the differences between the corporate policies of the HBC and the NWC that may have differentiated Métis from non-Métis mixed-blood peoples. She argues that mixed-blood offspring of HBC employees generally received more paternal attention and formal education from the company, while NWC officers were less interested in their mixed-blood progeny. This afforded "more freedom" to people of mixed ancestry, who became much more socially and geographically mobile as a result.[37] In this dispersed and "centrifugal" lifestyle, Brown implies, Métis cultural traits began to emerge.[38] Although a "simple dichotomy" between English and Native identity had disappeared, with mixed descent constituting a distinctive category in the HBC's records by the late eighteenth century, these peoples had not yet become Métis.

On this point, John Foster demonstrates the process by which HBC children became a distinct "country-born" population. While their experience as intermediaries between the Home Guard Cree and the HBC often paralleled that of the Métis, the critical factor distinguishing them both from the purely Aboriginal groups and the Métis was their migration to the Red River settlement.[39] There, Foster argues, they began farming and were shaped by the strong influence of Anglican mission

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[35] David V. Burley, Gayel A. Horsfall, and John D. Brandon, *Structural Considerations of Métis Ethnicity: An Archeological, Architectural, and Historical Study* (Vermillion: The University of South Dakota Press, 1992), 34.

[36] Burley, Horsfall, and Brandon reconstruct the socio-cultural traits of the Métis by using architectural sources. Such an approach may provide a useful tool for historians attempting to determine Métis identity.

[37] Jennifer Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade, Company, and Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), 158.

[38] Jennifer Brown, "Fur Trade as Centrifuge: Family Dispersal and Offspring Identity in Two Company Contexts," in *North American Indian Anthropology*, eds. Raymond J. Demaillie and Afonso Oritz (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994).

[39] John E. Foster, "The Origins of the Mixed Bloods in the Canadian West," in *Essays on Western History*, ed. L. H. Thomas (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1976), 77.

and British secular education.[40] Both Brown's and Foster's arguments helped demonstrate how mixed-blood populations, subjected to slightly different conditions and circumstances, developed quite different forms of social cohesion and identity. However, these studies concentrate on the social environment produced by two different trading company systems at the macro level and devote less attention to how these factors informed the behaviour of mixed-blood offspring.

Admittedly, applying the Bourdieu-Bentley thesis to the study of ethnogenesis is more difficult than it appears. While Brown and Foster attend to much more specific situations shaping the formation of Métis behaviour and culture, they still have difficulty demonstrating how individuals who lived in similar circumstances unconsciously came to embrace a "habitual commonality" and what particular habitus shaped Métisness. This, however, does not mean that historians must necessarily employ psychoanalysis. The best way to apply habitus as an analytical framework to the study of ethnogenesis may instead lie in the identification of habitual and decision-making patterns both at the individual and collective levels. By examining the stages and processes by which common behaviour emerged and by determining what factors (occupation, economy, environment, and gender) shaped Métis social behaviour, historians may find some commonality among a certain group of people. More practically, questioning what elements distinguished some people from others may be a valid starting point for any analysis of ethnogenesis.

Arguing that "no longer are mixed ancestry and the social circumstances which gave rise to it sufficient explanation for the origins of the Métis on the western Plains,"[41] Foster observes that the practice of freemen "wintering in Indian country" was a crucial process by which the Métis emerged as a distinctive group.[42] He identifies two stages in the process of Métis ethnogenesis. The first was the construction of three relationships: "the country marriage between an outsider male and an Indian woman of the band, the sociopolitical alliance relating the outsider male to the male kinsmen of the woman and the friendship that bound outsider males in an economic and social relationship."[43] The second stage, which began with a Montréal-based company servant's decision to become a freeman, involved the enculturation of the servant's

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[40] *Ibid.*, 77-78.

[41] John E. Foster, "Wintering, the Outsider Male and Ethnogenesis of the Western Plains Métis," *Prairie Forum* 19 (spring 1994), 1.

[42] *Ibid.*, 3.

[43] *Ibid.*, 7.

children "in circumstances distinct from that of the band or the post."[44] As such, it was "behaviours" engendered from the "shared experience" of daily interaction in wintering villages that generated Métisness.[45] Among the elements that reinforced the uniqueness of Métis behavioural patterns, Foster stresses the roles of "folk" Catholicism and family life based on "patrifocality."[46]

However, this analysis is the subject of some controversy. Jennifer Brown, for example, has argued that "matrilocality," rather than "patrifocality," contributed to the creation of the Métis, both because daughters tended to remain with their Native mothers, marry European traders, and produce Métis offspring, and because only a small portion of mixed-blood children attracted the attention of their fathers.[47] Although the selectivity of European fathers appears relevant, Brown does not demonstrate the process by which "matrilocality" shaped the behaviour of the mixed-blood population. Furthermore, the debate on the role of gender produces the methodological problem of who became 'more' Métis than others.

Susan Sleeper-Smith incorporates religion, gender, and kinship in her study of the Fort St. Joseph community. Using the case of Marie Madeleine Réaume, an Iliniwik woman, Sleeper-Smith successfully shows how these three elements, strongly linked with the Native woman's interests in the fur trade, produced an integral social network for mixed-blood children. Kin relations, established over generations through marriage, were often strengthened by the Catholic practice of godmothering. Sleeper-Smith argues that "identity was embedded in [these] kin networks" and that "the residents of eighteenth-century Fort St. Joseph" were not "a distinct Métis people."[48] Yet Madeleine's repeated marriage and adoption of godmothering in building a solid trading network was "habitual," stimulated primarily by economic motives. Thus, it can be argued that proto-Métisness seems to have emerged at a subliminal level. Together, these authors present a

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[44] *Ibid.*, 8.
[45] *Ibid.*, 7.
[46] *Ibid.*, 3.
[47] Jennifer Brown, "Woman as Centre and Symbol in the Emergence of Métis Communities," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 3:1 (1983): 41.
[48] Susan Sleeper-Smith, "Furs and Female Kin Networks: The World of Marie Madeleine Réaume L'archevêque Chevalier," in *New Faces of the Fur Trade: Selected Papers of the Seventh North American Fur Trade Conference, Halifax Nova Scotia, 1995*, eds. Jo-Anne Fiske, Susan Sleeper-Smith, and William Wicken (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1998), 62.

significant 'subjective' aspect of the formation of proto-ethnicity, although they generally remain weak in their explanation of what specific behaviours determined Métisness.

The question of social cohesion is also addressed by the many studies of the Red River settlement, where the crystallization of Métis identity could be seen most explicitly. The role of locality is particularly important, as it not only determined the geographical boundaries of a given group, but also contributed to the formation of a territorially-based new nation. At this level, social cohesion seems to have emerged as a 'conscious' process by which people were either included in or excluded from the Métis community. The conventional understanding of the significance of the Red River settlement in the development of Métis identity has focused on the rivalry between the HBC and the NWC. As seen in A.S. Morton's study, this interpretation suggests that the notion that "the land" belonged to the Métis originated in the NWC's political and economic interest in hindering the establishment of the Selkirk settlement.[49] Jennifer Brown adds that the Métis intended to"formulate and express their own [political and economic] demands" in this process.[50]

Works emphasizing the role of the Red River settlement as a catalyst for the development of Métis identity at a psychological level have been supplemented by more specific studies on the formation of 'community.' Gerhard Ens's *Homeland to Hinterland* stresses the significance of the Red River settlement as an economic "refuge" for the Métis as opportunities decreased elsewhere. Ens argues that the Red River Métis constructed a cohesive society based mainly on small-scale farming and seasonal hunting, often performed in a communal way regardless of racial and cultural origins.[51] He implies that the causes of internal social conflict in this society, whose elite consisted of retired company officers and Anglican and Catholic clergy, were mainly economic, rather than ideological.[52] Conversely, Frits Pannekoek argues that ideological animosity was at the root of the discord, observing that "white looked down on mixed-blood, Catholic suspected Protestant, Country-born

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[49] A.S. Morton, "The New Nation, The Métis," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 33:2 (1939):137-145.
[50] Brown, *Strangers in Blood,* 173.
[51] Gerhard J. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Métis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 27.
[52] *Ibid.*, 50-56.

distrusted Métis, and clergymen opposed commissioned gentlemen."[53] Given the increasingly racist mood in Canada at that time, ideological factors shaping Métis identity and behaviour in this highly stratified society should not be underestimated. Yet the emphasis on racial and religious factors neglects possible economic and class divisions that might have transcended these fixed categories.[54]

While scholars of Métis culture have produced a number of different views on the dynamics of identity construction, there is a dearth of analysis of ethnogenesis in Ukrainian-Canadian historiography. This appears to stem mainly from the tendency of ethnic historians to adopt the tradition of early twentieth century mainstream educators of defining immigrants in terms of nationality and culture, treating ethnicity as an immutable framework of history. This approach, as Fredrik Barth suggests, suffers from a lack of flexibility exacerbated by "a preconceived view of...significant factors in the genesis, structure, and function of such groups."[55] According to Barth, cultural distinctiveness does not necessarily define ethnicity, both because different ethnic groups may share the same culture and because an ethnic group may consist of culturally diverse sub-groups.[56] It may have seemed reasonable to posit that prior to the Second World War, most Ukrainians emigrating to Canada were more or less united by culture, kin, and friendship,

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[53] Frits Pannekoek, "The Anglican Church and Disintegration of Red River Society 1818-1870," in *The West and the Nation: Essays in Honour of W. L. Morton*, eds. Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook (Toronto: McClelland and Steward, 1976), 73.

[54] Studies on European frontier settlements emerging in the early twentieth century present a more complex picture of social divisions among settlers. In multiethnic communities, British settlers often regarded themselves as morally superior to people of other ethnic origins. They were often among the community elite, occupying such positions as postmaster, registrar, and justice of the peace. However, many were also poor farmers and in some cases, economically and materially inferior to other immigrants. This suggests that British settlers did not always play the most influential roles in the community; rather, power relation always shifted according to circumstance. See, for example, Jean Burnet's *Next-Year Country: A Study of Rural Social Organization in Alberta* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951). For a more general framework, see John W. Bennett and Seena B. Kohl's *Settling the Canadian-American West, 1890-1915:Pioneer Adaptation of Community Building* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

[55] Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Differences* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), 200.

[56] *Ibid.*, 202.

considering that late-nineteenth and early- twentieth century migration patterns indicated that individuals from the same villages in Galicia and Bukovyna moved *en masse*. Yet the fact they variously identified themselves as 'Austrian,' 'Ruthenian,' 'Galician,' and 'Bukovynian' suggests that such immigrants did not constitute a homogenous, ethnically-conscious entity during their early years in Canada. Their ethnic identity both at the subliminal and supraliminal levels was largely socially, politically, and culturally constructed in the context of the new land.

David Mittelberg and Mary C. Waters have developed a theoretical framework of migrant ethnogenesis, identifying three factors that define ethnicity: the individual immigrant's role in determining "his or her own identity" and attaching "a positive or negative valence to that identity," the role of the host society in defining the immigrant's identity, and the response of "the proximal host," the "co-ethnic" group in the host society.[57] When these three forces operate simultaneously, they argue, "little ambivalence and little change" occur "in the process of ethnogenesis."[58] While this theory can be a useful analytical tool, it should be stressed that this process usually involves the individual's habitus emerging unconsciously in response to objective circumstances.

Despite the attempts of social theorists and anthropologists to propose a new analytical framework, the tendency to define ethnic boundaries primarily in terms of nationality and culture, and then to fill these 'vessels' with 'content,' still dominates the methodology of Ukrainian-Canadian historiography.[59] In this regard, no clear standard or theory as to how historians should determine ethnic boundaries has been established. In addition, scholars have not seriously investigated the question of ethnic membership, assuming that every Ukrainian immigrant fits into their ethnic category.

This bias has generated the question of how immigrant social behaviour is influenced by occupational or geographical differences contributing to ethnogenesis, a process that remains largely unexplored. For example, Orest Martynowych's comprehensive study on pioneer

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[57] David Mittelberg and Mary C. Waters, "The Process of Ethnogenesis among Haitian and Israeli Immigrants in the United States," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 15:3 (July 1992), 416.

[58] *Ibid.*, 416.

[59] Abner Cohen makes a similar point when he argues that Barth's dichotomy between "vessel" and "content" tends to render ethnicity static. See "The Lesson of Ethnicity," in *Theories of Ethnicity: a Classical Reader*, ed. Werner Sollors (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1996), 375.

Ukrainians does address a number of socio-economic considerations including rural farmers, frontier labourers, and religious institutions, but hardly questions how this diversity produced different cultural practices.[60]

An examination of the role of such factors could enrich these histories in some aspects. For example, gender may well have been important in the formation of Ukrainian identity, given that rural settlements often consisted of family units and frontier industries dominated by single males. Frances Swyripa's study on Ukrainian-Canadian women emphasizes their role in promoting their families' "sentiments toward things Ukrainian."[61] Furthermore, the socio-economic "insecurity and uncertainty"[62] that characterized the lives of frontier labourers may have produced different attitudes toward their ethnic identities. Similarly, geographical factors deserve more attention.

Martynowych does consider regional disparities as an important ethnogenetical determinant, suggesting that not all rural and frontier 'Ukrainian' districts developed 'Ukrainian' cultural and religious traits.[63] However, he does not note how the absence of such practices influenced the formation of ethnic boundaries. A much narrower study on Ukrainian bloc settlement in Alberta, edited by Manoly R. Lupul, focuses on how Ukrainians maintained their own traditional ways of life and adapted them to the new land. Most contributors, however, assume the Ukrainian bloc merely reproduced old village society and do not consider the possibility that new ethnic boundaries might have emerged in the settlement process. For example, while Andriy Nahachewsky does recognize certain circumstantial difficulties encountered by Ukrainian settlers such as isolation and severe weather, he also argues that their "religious convictions, language, folk songs, traditional prose, superstitions, folk medicine and numerous minor customs" were maintained.[64] However, such linear explanations of cultural transformation fail to provide for the examination of possible new

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[60] Orest Martynowych, *Ukrainians in Canada: The Formative Years, 1891-1924* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1991).

[61] Frances Swyripa, *Wedded to the Cause: Ukrainian-Canadian Women and Ethnic Identity, 1891-1991* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 42.

[62] Martynowych, *Ukrainians in Canada*, 111.

[63] *Ibid.*, 283.

[64] Andriy Nahachewsky, "The First Imprint: The Burdei in the Wilderness," in *Continuity and Change: The Cultural Life of Alberta's First Ukrainians*, ed. Manoly R. Lupul (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1988), 83.

political meanings that immigrants may have added to their customs and values in the new setting and do not allow for the consideration of how such syncretism contributed to the development of a 'habitual commonality' underpinning an ethnic identity.

Another difficulty is that historians of Ukrainian-Canadian history have tended to place undue emphasis on the awakening of an ethno-national political consciousness. This is manifested in the now-popular belief that Ukrainian nationalists mobilized 'their' people as ethnic representatives in order to gain upward political mobility in Canada during the interwar period. This is not to deny the significance of the instrumental strategy that fostered Ukrainian ethnicity in Canada. Rather, these scholars assume the existence of an *a priori* Ukrainian ethnic category and do not consider whether the political activism of ethnically-motivated elites was itself a factor in triggering primordial attachments or question how cultural symbols came into being. Martynowych instead investigates the processes by which Ukrainian Catholic or Orthodox priests and newly emerged socialist or nationalist elites forged a "new nation" and a Ukrainian identity through church or secular institutions.[65] His focus on the objective conditions that delineate an ethnic boundary leaves little room for the analysis of how these institutions actually shaped behaviour and the choice of the mass of rural immigrants in 'becoming ethnic.'

Similarly, Lubomyr Luciuk and Stella Hryniuk's collection of essays on Ukrainian identity generally concentrates on the instrumental or political formation of Ukrainian ethnogenesis at the elite level. Oleh W. Gerus, for example, assumes the existence of social cohesion when he argues that the Ukrainian nationalist intelligentsia "responded to [grassroots assimilation to Canada] by organizing community institutions that would sustain the settlers in their traditional culture."[66] Yet he never identifies what the 'traditional culture" was and how it emerged. As a result, Gerus presents a false depiction of Ukrainian immigrants as a cultural unit easily mobilized as an ethnic group. In these studies, the Ukrainian ethnic boundary is hardly dynamic.

Finally, Ukrainian-Canadian historiography, concentrating heavily on pioneer immigrants arriving in Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, does not account for the evolving character of this population as different migrant cohorts entered the country, particularly

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[65] Martynowych, *Ukrainians in Canada*, 265-305.

[66] Oleh W. Gerus, "Consolidating the Community: The Ukrainian Self-Reliance League," in *Canada's Ukrainians: Negotiating Identity*, eds. Lubomyr Luciuk and Stella Hryniuk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 159.

following the Second World War. Even though these two immigrant groups formed significantly different identities, the tendency of historians to define ethnicity solely in terms of nationality or place of origin has persisted.

Some studies of post-war migration often conceptualize the different experiences of pioneer and post-war immigrants in terms of internal conflicts and collaboration within a single ethnic community. For example, Lubomyr Y. Luciuk emphasizes the role of Ukrainian-Canadians in lobbying for the immigration of Ukrainian Displaced Persons (DP) to Canada after the Second World War. Luciuk, reviewing the political procedures of relief and replacement efforts, suggests some interesting factors that might have influenced the ethnogenesis of DPs. He argues that for a Ukrainian-Canadian soldier and activist like Bohdan Panchuk, uniting his compatriots for humanitarian efforts was a "duty." Panchuk also believed that the arrival of these immigrants would strengthen the existing Ukrainian-Canadian socio-cultural fabric.[67] The thesis of ethnic motivation is seen in Panchuk's idea that Ukrainian-Canadians had to act quickly because the displaced person's "sense of belonging to a Ukrainian people was being eroded."[68] In another study, Luciuk suggests that the Ukrainian-Canadian nationalist elite increasingly became aware of a great ideological gap between themselves and the DPs, producing factional infighting that the nationalists attempted to downplay.[69]

Second, Luciuk notes the Canadian government's sensitivity to pressure from Ukrainian-Canadian organizations, given its "long experience of Ukrainian emigration" and the question of "the loyalty of this ethnic population."[70] On this point, Myron Momryk presents a more complex picture of the government's attitudes toward Ukrainian DPs. He argues that the flow of DPs into Canada was strictly regulated by a "very small number of senior public servants" controlling immigration policy, a clique

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[67] Lubomyr Y. Luciuk, "A Troubled Venture: Ukrainian Canadian Refugee Relief Efforts, 1945-51," in *The Refugee Experience: Ukrainian Displaced Persons after World War II*, eds. Wsevolod W. Isajiw, Yury Bshyk, and Roman Senkus (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1992), 437, 450.

[68] *Ibid.*, 437.

[69] Lubomyr Y. Luciuk, "'This Should Never be Spoken or Quoted Publicly:' Canada's Ukrainians and Their Encounter with the DPs," in *Canada's Ukrainians: Negotiating Identity*, eds. Lubomyr Luciuk and Stella Hryniuk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991),108.

[70] Luciuk, "A Troubled Venture," 440.

possessing "the stereotyped view of the Ukrainian Canadian as farmers and industrial workers."[71]

Luciuk and Momryk have devoted scant attention to the reaction of DPs to official repression and don't couch their arguments in terms of ethnicity, yet these historical events have been particularly significant in determining Ukrainian ethnic boundaries in Canada. Closer attention to the process of DP ethnogenesis, particularly to how identity and habitual dispositions were constructed in the relationship between Ukrainian-Canadians and the Canadian government, is warranted.[72]

This essay demonstrates how scholars of Métis and Ukrainian-Canadian history have respectively conceptualized the origins of ethno-cultural identity. Their approaches to ethnicity are quite different. Scholars in the early twentieth century often described the Métis primarily in terms of race, while ethnic historians saw nationality, culture, and race as the most important factors in determining Ukrainian ethnic boundaries. However, the neoteric nature of the Métis has motivated historians and anthropologists to question the processes informing the development of this distinctive people. This approach has produced a number of significant studies on Métis behaviour and identity emerging out of the fur trade, gender, and lifestyle. As a result, such scholars have successfully demonstrated the dynamic nature of Métis ethnic boundary formation. In the field of ethnic history, however, boundaries remain static, owing mainly to the tendency to define ethnicity solely in terms of cultural traits and nationality. The problem is

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[71] Myron Momryk, "Ukrainian DP Immigration and Government Policy in Canada, 1946-52," in *The Refugee Experience*, 428.

[72] Nazil Kibria, investigating immigrant ethnogenesis, notes an interesting phenomenon in the United States. She argues that a pan-Asian American identity has emerged "among second-generation middle-class Chinese and Korean Americans" as a result of intermarriage. This process of ethnogenesis provides a good example of how 'ethnic' identity is constructed across existing ethnic lines. See "The Construction of 'Asian American:' Reflections on Intermarriage and Ethnic Identity among Second-generation Chinese and Korean Americans," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 20:3 (July 1997): 523-524. In a similar study, Gustave Goldman argues that recent years have witnessed changes in ethnic affiliation, especially among four ethnic groups, Chinese, German, Jewish, and Ukrainian. Using sociological methods, he concludes that the transformation of ethnic affinity cannot be explained by natural demographic patterns. See "Shifts in Ethnic Origins among the Offspring of Immigrants: Is Ethnic Mobility A Measurable Phenomenon?" *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 30:3 (1998): 121-148.

compounded when scholars attempt to insert individuals and cultures into this ethnic category. In this sense, the established boundaries of historical categories have produced a serious problem for historical scholarship.

The predilection of ethnic historians to stake out 'distinctive' pasts has hitherto hindered communication between this field and studies of the Métis. These scholars would do well to realize that their categorical frameworks must be flexible and that current ethnic boundaries do not necessarily define ethnicity as it may have existed in the past. It is for this reason that historians should inquire into ethnic origins, as migration is a process of ethnogenesis. In this regard, the approach employed in studies of the Métis, one that reconstructs the origins of cohesive human behavioural processes, may provide ethnic historians with a useful analytical tool.