

BRITISH COLONIALISM AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES:
THE LAW OF RESISTANCE—RESPONSE—CHANGE

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The structures of Canadian society harbour violence towards Indigenous peoples, and although these structures have been consistently challenged, those points of resistance have never resulted in justice. In fact, it seems the result has been a systemic reaction in which colonial powers become increasingly entrenched in their powerful positions of ontological privilege. This paper will introduce “The Law of Resistance—Response—Change” in Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS), proposing three propositions to consider when identifying the etiology of Indigenous conflicts. This paper proposes that all British colonies demonstrate this pattern of engagement and that this pattern must be dissected in order to move towards peace for Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous peoples in British colonial countries like Canada grow up under foreign societal structures and cultural norms.¹ Components of a larger colonial project, these structures have become a normalized aspect of the Canadian fabric and include such well-known systems as the legal system, child welfare system, the education system, religion, health, resource management, and post-secondary education including graduate studies. Canadians often forget that Indigenous peoples “have become part of a political system based not on their own legal traditions but created and defined by Eurocentric traditions.”² Consequently, the colonization of Indigenous/Aboriginal peoples in Canada and abroad has never ended;³ assimilation into the State remains the ultimate objective.⁴