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Métissage in New France and Canada 1508 to 1886

Introduction: Encounter of Indians and Whites

> The "dark, glancing, fearless eye, alike
> terrible and calm; the bold outline of his
> high, haughty features, pure in their na-
> tive red."
> **James Fenimore Cooper**[1]

In his seminal book *La pensée métisse* Serge Gruzinski posed the question: "Comment penser le mélange?"[2] To think mixture in its many dimensions and particulars is to analyse the interplay of the sexes and races as they evolved from purity to blending of previously distinct parts. In the colonial world in particular, this is a writing of the history of love, power and war between conquerors and conquered. In New France, this intricate process resulted in mixed-blood offspring and in their formation into communities. The occurrence of the "Metis" as a new self-declared nation in Canada heralded the fear of loss of power and status of established White and Indian groups and individuals.[3] The presence of nationalist mixed-blood offspring seemed to question the supremacy performed by White colonialists in North America who were rivalling over new territories, positions and women. In Canada, the dictum of "pure in their native red" had through time turned into "mixed in red and white": Indians and Whites had met, mingled and formed a new people that came to be called "Metis". Analysing the process that led to and was inspired by métissage in New France is a journey through the cultures and religions of indigenous tribes[4] and those of Europeans from the continent: Indian women, tribal chiefs and medicine men on the one hand, White settlers, colonial officials and missionaries on the other. With the arrival of the latter groups, Indians saw the coming of a new age, which radically altered their lives in North America.[5] Henceforth, American Indian tribes were faced with the presence of Whites who had hunger for soil and human resources, which they wanted to agriculturally and commercially exploit. When one of the first French settlers in Canada, the apothecary Louis Hébert, decided

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1   James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* (New York, 1986), pp. 52-53.

2   Serge Gruzinski, *La* pensée *métisse*, Paris 1999, p. 56.

3   I am using "metis" with minor "m" whenever I want to designate the adjective "mixed" in general, and "Metis" with major "M" whenever I want to point at mixed-blood persons or individuals, regardless of geographic origin, who self-identify as being a "Metis" or who are identified as belonging to the Metis as nation.

4   The expression "indigenous tribes" reflects the diversity of Indians. However, I have given preference to the term "Indian" throughout my text nevertheless, while being aware of the colonialist bias inherent within it.

5   There are numerous descriptions of dream visions in which Indians saw that destruction and devastation would come with the "White man".

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to join explorers Pierre de Gua du Monts and Samuel de Champlain in their expedition of 1604, the former was not only impatient to help advancing French colony building; he was equally interested in exploring the North American flora and fauna to render it useful for medicine production to the advantage of the metropolis. This sort of métissage that took place in product exchange was one of the precursors of sexual métissage between men and women. In fact, only the unions between White men and Indian women made this product exchange possible, because the former got in contact with what the latter had been familiar with for hundreds of years before European arrival.

During the French regime in New France, Euro-Indian mixed marriages were not only the expression of sexual desires and of affection between Indian women and White men, but they also constituted a politico-military-commercial tool in the hands of the French state and the Catholic Church. The official aim was Indian assimilation to Frenchness and Christianity and the parallel augmentation of the colonial population. Despite Samuel de Champlain's sentence of 1633 expressed towards the Huron Indians, "our sons will marry your daughters, and we shall be one people", mixed marriages were not easily put in practice, thus the French started to complain that the Hurons did not ally themselves to the French through marriage. At the same time, French individuals entered into mixed marriages whenever it pleased them, either celebrated by missionaries or priests, but sometimes also without state or church sponsorship or support. They had either fallen in love with Indian women of various tribes or they had hoped for advantages to be gained for their trade with Indians. In 1657, the Christian religion was made the precondition for a mixed marriage: an edict of King Louis XIV stated that marriages of French and Indians should be officially allowed, provided that the latter turned Christian. The spreading of Christianity through missionaries was seen as vital, and mixed marriages were seen as either being performed on the basis of Christian rules or precisely as being a means to lead towards assimilation to Christian values.

The present work is both a narrative and an analysis. It focuses on Frenchmen who came to the New World to seize territories, to convert indigenous tribes and to trade with them. Many traders met Indian women, had sexual relations with them or decided to marry them.[6] In many cases unexpectedly, but also in full consciousness of mutual love metis children emerged. From the meeting of Whites and Indians to their mixture derived, in fact, a new identity that came to be finally embedded in mixed communities. This process had been accompanied by strategies of mostly missionaries and colonial officials who had worked at

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6   In English language usage this earned them the label of "squaw men", which, however, was hardly used in Canada. In fact, fur traders lived in a sphere largely apart from English settlers. With thanks to my anonymous reader for this comment.

assimilating and evangelising tribes, partly by means of mixed marriages. This phenomenon is commonly described as "métissage" - grasped in our context as intercultural encounter and biological as well as social mixture, both spontaneous as well as guided, of mostly White men and Indian women - in France's North American colony of New France. The analysis begins in the 16th century with first Indians being brought to France. It then treats volatile policies of mixed marriages in the colony and the subsequent emergence of the mixed-blood concept of "Métis" in the 17th century. This concept was defined a century later by the French *Dictionnaire de Trévoux* as "humans engendered by a father and a mother of different quality, country, colour or religion."[7] According to the Trévoux definition, mixed-bloods were not only characterized by the fact of being mixed in numerous respects, but above all by the respective different "qualities" of their parents from their two origin cultures. Applied to the context of Canadian métissage, this definition implies that the cultures of Whites and Indians involved in the process were not viewed as equal.[8] The definition refers to different social status, different so-called "quality of blood" or different character or mentality of partners involved in mixture. *Dictionnaire de la Langue Française du Seizième Siècle* held that "métis" were the offspring of "un-equal families". Similarly, *Furetière* stressed the importance of social status and cited the example of the offspring of a Moor slave and a Spanish freewoman.[9] In Canada, the fact that Indians were considered as being inferior to incoming Whites became apparent in the discourse of Frenchmen wanting to convert, assimilate and francizise the former. Métissage encompassed each of these strategies, which a colonial power applied towards an indigenous popula-tion in order to assimilate it to its own culture and to render it useful and instru-mental for long-term aims of expansion, exploitation and acculturation.[10] At the same time,

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7   Trévoux, Dictionnaire universel (Paris, 1743): "hommes engendrez de père et de mère de différente qualité, pays, couleurs ou religion".

8   Saliha Belmessous, *La vision de l'indigène américain dans la correspondance officielle des autorités françaises et britanniques de l'Amérique du nord (1672-1760)*, DEA EHESS (Paris, 1992).

9   *Dictionnaire de la Langue Française du Seizième Siècle*, éd. Edmond Huguet, Tome Cinquième (Paris, 1961). Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire usuel contenant généralement tous les mots français et tant vieux que modernes et les termes de toutes les sciences et les arts* (La Haye-Rotterdam, 1690-1701): "Cet enfant est mestif engendré d'un père esclave et d'une mère libre, d'un More et d'une Espagnole."

10   "Acculturation" understood in the sense of the ethnologist Herskovits as "appearances which result from the direct or permanent contact between groups of individuals of different culture, and in addition the thereof resulting changes in the typical behaviour and thinking of one of the affected groups." See Melville Herskovits, *Les bases de l'anthropologie culturelle* (Paris, 1967), p. 216.

colonial practice implied that métissage was a sexual encounter and subsequently led to mixture of ethnic groups.[11]

In the Canadian context, the term "métissage", not merely because it is a French word, refers to a Franco-Canadian rather than an Anglo-Canadian context.[12] Scholars of Canadian race mixture are inclined to value the French over the British colonial experience. There is an ideologically imbued acceptance that the French were more co-operative and tolerant towards Indian tribes and favourable to mixing with them.[13] The French are described as more friendly towards the Indians, and those in turn, as more benevolent towards the French.[14] The debate is dominated by the assumption that it was the Frenchmen who applied an official policy of métissage, albeit inconsistent and ambivalent, in order to realise colonial goals. The Anglo-Canadian interest towards race mixture, i.e. miscegenation, did not attain the same degree of scholarly attention due to lower quantitative dimensions and the more negative image of the British in indigenous minds.[15] In fact, it was the French explorer Samuel de Champlain who had explicitly addressed the Hurons in 1633 on behalf of the French King Louis XIII with the following prophetically expressed words, "Nos garçons se marieront à vos filles et nous ne ferons qu'un peuple". This proof of France's official desire

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11 Yet, "Indians" were composed of many different nations and tribes. The "French", on the other hand, came as Normans, Bretons, Savoyards and others. These tribal identities are often neglected when single-mindedly pointing to the "French nation" or "Indian nations".

12 There is little written evidence of Anglo-Indian métissage - with the exceptions of cases in Virginia and New England - before 1719, even 1716, in official documents of the kind of royal edicts, Samuel de Champlain's dictum towards the Huron tribe or the New France trading companies' declarations, each of which refer to mixture with Indian tribes. There is one letter, which mentions British marriage policy with Indians in Acadia in 1719. See John B. Brebner, "Subsidized intermarriage with the Indians: An incident in British colonial policy", in: *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 6 (1961), p. 33.

13 Guillaume Aubert, "The Blood of France": Race and Purity of Blood in the French Atlantic World", in: *The William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 61, no 3 (July 2004).

14 "…le nom français a toujours résonné agréablement aux oreilles des indiens des deux Amériques. (…) les Français surent se faire aimer et respecter des aborigènes. " in: Narcisse E. Dionne, "Français et sauvages. Leur amitié. ", in: *Revue Canadienne*, vol. 26 (1890), 704-718, p. 704. Likewise Comte de Chateaubriand: "Les Français s'habituent facilement à la vie sauvage, et sont fort aimés des Indiens." in: Chateaubriand, *Œuvres Complètes*. Tome 6, Mélanges Littéraires, Paris 1831, p. 419; and Pierre de Charlevoix: "Les Anglais dans le peu de temps qu'ils furent maîtres du pays, ne surent pas gagner l'affection des sauvages. " cited by Chateaubriand, p. 419.

15 With the exception of the famous case of the Indian bride Pocahontas, who was married to John Rolfe. See Karen Ordahl Kupperman (ed.), America in European Consciousness 1493-1750 (Chapel Hill, 1995).

to mix with Indians is the reason that the focus of the present study is on French North America. After 1763 when the city of Montréal was seized to British power, the study is amplified to include further contexts of métissage and an analysis of the concept of "Metis". Past works on métissage had mainly focused on the social conditions of and the role of women in métissage,[16] on the tribes and nations that have been involved in the process of racial and cultural mixing and on emerging mixed-blood individuals and communities as a result of this mixing. Although there is an extensive array of studies on several aspects and dimensions of French colonial policy of métissage and of the Métis in Canada,[17] they fail to describe systematically the changing and volatile policies of state and church authorities in the *longue durée*, decrees and policies concerning mixed marriage and the discussions on the extent and nature of métissage. The question of how mixed-blood identity in Canada was discursively and practically constructed and subsequently either accepted - even welcomed - or rejected by contemporaries and later historians needs to be highlighted.[18] Such aspects of *métissage* are essential for an in-depth examination of Euro-Indian encounter, the respective politico-administrative measures and the outcome of a new socio-legal and ethnological category for mixed-bloods.[19] This study seeks to fill this gap.

In the face of the many intricacies of colonial reality in Canada, métissage was introduced after previous assimilation strategies had failed. Yet, in this perspective métissage is not equated with assimilation, rather it is seen as one of the means with which the French state tried to enhance assimilation to white French

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16 Most prominently see the path breaking works by Sylvia van Kirk. Next to *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society in Western Canada 1670-1870*, Winnipeg 1980, see also her article: "From "Marrying-In" to "Marrying-Out". Changing Patterns of Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal Marriage in Colonial Canada", in: *Frontiers*, vol. 23, no 3, (2002), pp. 1-11.

17 See above all Gilles Havard, *Empire et métissage. Indiens et Français dans le Pays d'en Haut 1660-1715* (Paris, 2003); Saliha Belmessous, *D'un préjugé culturel à un préjugé racial: la politique indigène de la France au Canada* (Paris, 1999) and Cornelius Jaenen, "Miscegenation in Eighteenth Century New France", in: Barry Gough/Laird Christie (eds.): *New Dimensions in Ethnohistory. Papers of the Second Laurier Conference on Ethnohistory and Ethnology* (Ontario, 1983).

18 Jacqueline Peterson, Jennifer Brown and Olive Dickason have mainly focused on the 18th and 19th century Great Lakes region. Other scholars, such as Cornelius Jaenen and Isabelle Perrault, have dealt with 17th and 18th century New France, and Gilles Havard with the 17th and 18th century Pays d'en Haut or the "Upper Country".

19 For other French colonies in later periods see the study on the legal category for mixed-blood individuals by Emmanuelle Saada, *La "question des métis" dans les colonies françaises: socio-histoire d'une catégorie juridique (Indochine et autres territoires de l'Empire français: années 1890 - années 1950)*, EHESS (Paris, 2001).

culture as the presupposed and desired dominant culture to be spread in North America.[20] As such, métissage was both a *form of policy* and a *socio-political reality*, with pertinent consequences for new territories rather than being restricted to a theoretical, intellectual or humanistic concept in the void.[21] Métissage was not formulated as an explicit colonial programme - if we take Champlain's exclamation rather as a guarded intention - but it nevertheless came to reign in territories that saw the encounter of different groups, nations and races, inherent with a triple inequality in terms of power, knowledge and resources - that between men and women, that between Indians and Whites and that between colony and metropolis. Furthermore, shifts in métissage policy and reality occurred and the task is to explain when and why these happened. The point is precisely to demonstrate that métissage was neither a consistent or linear policy, nor a straight process toward Indian assimilation to Frenchness. Rather this process was marked by discontinuities, inequalities and ambivalences. New France, in fact, provides an exemplary situation in order to explain changing trends of métissage. Thus, the aims of métissage politics are compared to actual results and previously neglected contradictions, conflicts and failures inherent in métissage policies in New France - often volatile and inconsistent - are revealed. Conflicts were, for instance, prevalent because those who engaged in mixed marriages and relationships without state and church sponsorship or consent were faced with a range of obstacles, hostility or outright rejection. The debates and discussions that the celebration of mixed marriages engendered on an official and a practical level are highlighted, and it is explored why they were accepted in some cases and rejected in others and how they established new social and political orders, either with or without the express approval of authorities.

Furthermore, the extent to which French agents held different opinions in their attitudes to métissage and their endorsement of particular policies of mixed marriages are analysed. Not only were the French competing with their British rivals in terms of colonial performance, but French agents also competed themselves over the best strategies in order to either realise métissage in the colony (whenever it was deemed useful) or to prevent it from happening (whenever it proved counterproductive to intended aims). There was considerable discontent as to implementing policy schemes with regards to métissage. The question is under which specific conditions métissage as a strategy was at times dismissed. An analysis of the sources reveals that agents sometimes opted against the idea

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20   See also Sherene H. Razack: "Introduction. Droit, espace et racialisation. La fabrique d´une colonie de peuplement blanche/Law, Race and Space. The Making of a White Settler Nation", in: *Revue Canadienne Droit et Société/Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, vol. 15, no 2 (2000).

21   Roger Toumson, *Mythologie du métissage* (Paris, 1998). Jacques Audinet, *Le temps du métissage* (Paris, 1999). René Duboux, *Métissage ou barbarie* (Paris, 1994).

of promoting mixed marriages when they saw that the envisaged goal of assimilation was not matched in this way. In fact, while Indian assimilation was promoted throughout the whole period of the French regime, Euro-Indian marriages were at intervals disapproved of since they were considered to hinder the French assimilation project. In New France, the policy of mixed marriages therefore had never been a value in itself, but they were composite to the official aim to assimilate Indians to French culture.

Guiding questions are: how did political and social agents involved in colony building understand "métissage" and how did they want to see it implemented into life of the colony? How were métissage politics and policies linked to other forms of empire building? In how far did attitudes towards "métissage" differ according to agents and institutions involved and how far did their co-operation and competition shape the process of métissage? How did métissage contribute to and establish French hegemony in Canada before it was superseded by British dominance? How can one account for the failure of métissage in New France in terms of low numbers of Christian converts, scant acceptance of official marriage policies and the virtual non-acceptance among Indians of French language and customs? How did the concept of "Metis" come into being as a result of discourses on and descriptions of mixed bloods and the negotiations of Metis leaders? Further issues are how this concept and identity and respective communities evolved, how this development was perceived by contemporaries and observers and why this new identity did not wholly merge into White or Indian society. The present study follows an "order of things"; although respective measures were not enacted in chronological manner, rather they overlapped.

The narrative begins with the taking of Indians to France where they were exposed to French manners and were supposed to become multipliers of French culture in the colony. Parallel to this measure, the French initiated settlements of French colonists in New France and tried to animate Indians to settle in their vicinity. The narrative proceeds by showing further strategies employed by the French in order to build up the colony by augmenting its population size through assimilation and frenchification measures: civilising, instructing and converting Indians, and finally mixed marriages between the groups of French and Indians, as well as marriages of French colonists and French brides from the metropolis.

In general, the goal of assimilation was inscribed into a grander design of colonizing and restructuring newly discovered territories along the example of the French metropolis under the precepts of "profit", "status" and "mission".[22] European expansion over the oceans was designed to extent power, gains and influence of European monarchies in distant corners of the world. Such colonial

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22 Wolfgang Reinhard, "Entstehung der Kolonialreiche", in: *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch*: Kolonialismus und Kolonialreiche: Teil I, 34. Jg. 3 Vj. (1984), 241-246, p. 243.

expansion meant that cultures and populations hitherto unaware and ignorant of each others' existence came into contact, often in violent circumstances.[23] France never formulated a coherent colonial doctrine on which basis to act, however.[24] Its colonial endeavour had economic, political, cultural, social, religious and administrative facets that seemed to be unrelated with each other. The only common denominator was initially the notion of "assimilation", later accompanied by "association".[25] The purpose was to render colonies not only useful, but also similar to the mother country in institutions and reigning ideologies of religion, civilisation and education, and to attach it through institutions and government. In 1874, Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, one of France's prominent theoreticians of the movement for colonization, explained this process from hindsight in the following terms, thus borrowing understandings of imperial power from the ancient Greeks and Romans: "Colonisation is an expansive force of a people, it is its power to reproduce, its dilatation and multiplication through spaces, it is the submission of the universe or a vast part of it to one language, to its customs, its ideas and its laws. A people that colonizes, is a people, which throws the assets of its *grandeur* into the future and of its coming supremacy."[26] Prime to this understanding was national prestige, which had held a prominent role since the times of Cardinal de Richelieu with a growing consciousness making of the nation as a value and a concept to be defended. In this discourse, the modern idea of the nation was to become the culmination point of civilization and its declared values of honour, grandness and stability were to be mobilised and strived for. In France, this was enforced in the 19th century after a major French military defeat against Germany in 1870/71 in order to be able to draw on a new feeling of *grandeur*.[27] Since France was interested in *gloire*, its self-declared "génie civilisatrice" was less intended - even in the early modern period - to enrich the

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23 Frédéric Mauro: *L'expansion européenne 1600-1870*, Paris 1996.

24 Peter Grupp, "Das Kolonialreich der französischen Dritten Republik", in: *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch*, 34, Jg, 3. Vj. (1984), 282-288, p. 282. Although Grupp deals with the Third Republic his argument is valid for earlier periods as well, and, he, in fact, makes a general statement on French colonial policy as a whole.

25 Hubert Deschamps, *Méthodes et Doctrines Coloniales de la France* (Paris, 1953).

26 Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, *De la colonization chez les peuples modernes*, 5th edition (Paris, 1902), vol. 2, p. 704 (identical with 1st edition in 1874). The French original reads: "La colonisation est la force expansive d'un people, c'est la puissance de reproduction, c'est sa dilatation et sa multiplication à travers les espaces; c'est sa soumission de l'univers ou d'une vaste partie à sa langue, à ses mœurs, à ses idées et à ses lois. Un peuple qui colonise, c'est un peuple qui jette les assises de sa grandeur dans l'avenir et de sa suprématie future."

27 See Deschamps, *Méthodes*, and Lüsebrink, *Métissages*.

mother country in the first place than to demonstrate its superiority to far away peoples in distant regions.[28]

First economic exploitations on the North American continent had led to change in the mentality of Natives and their view of the world at the face of unprecedented developments bringing about a new form of economy and social order. Yet, systematic re-education in terms of new national values and colonial styles was to take a long time. According to 19th century writer Léopold de Saussure, who was trying to rhetorically back France's colonial mission, "national character" evolved in a long process, only at the end of which a "race historique", in his view composed of "sentiments", "intérêts" and "croyances" emerged. De Saussure was aware that attempts to assimilate a foreign race could lead to superficial adaptations on the side of the Natives.[29] This was not only true of language, he held, but also of religious beliefs and cultural customs. The understanding with hindsight that the goal of assimilation in colonial context was destined to produce meagre results may be unsurprising. Yet, at the time of contact most French authorities had disregarded any objection to cultural conquest in the colonies.[30] They had been eager instead to realize assimilation plans and were driven by the expectation that Indians would adopt Frenchness and form a single "one nation" with the incoming French. This aim was peaceful in intent, but it did not anticipate that Indians would react with hostility, repugnance and disinterest in order to preserve their age-old cultures from alien intruders. What began as repulsion often ended in destruction, and the established native balance was thus considerably shaken.[31]

The very attempt on the side of the French to impose language, customs and religion upon foreign tribes was destined to failure at the face of strong native

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28 It is no accident therefore that British and Dutch colonial endeavours turned out to be economically more prosperous. Voltaire's bitter polemics on the wasteful Canadian experiment seemed to have a rightful place.

29 "Ce n'est qu'en apparence qu'un peuple transforme brusquement sa langue et sa constitution, ses croyances et ses arts." Léopold de Saussure, *Psychologie de la colonisation française dans ses rapports avec les sociétés indigènes* (Paris, 1899), p. 51. James Axtell has held that the numbers of converts and the addition of baptisms, communions and Christian weddings actually said little on conversion successes since such numbers could hardly tell whether Christian values were internalised by proselytes. Axtell, 1982, p. 35. There is reason to believe that many Indians just pretended to have adopted Catholicism in order to satisfy the zeal of missionaries and to escape further harassments.

30 Such as that expressed by philosophers such as Montaigne in the 16th and Voltaire in the 18th century.

31 Urs Bitterli: "Begegnung, Beziehung und Zusammenstoß von Kulturen", in: *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch*, Nr. 3 (1984), p. 235.

identities and opposition to assimilation endeavours.[32] The core of this métissage process consisted in the policy and practice of mixed marriages,[33] which signified the very failure of previous tactics in settling, converting and francisizing Indians in order to assimilate them to French lifestyle. Since the latter three strategies - settlement, conversion and frenchification - accompanied the means of mixed unions as part of assimilating Indians, it makes sense to subsume them under the heading of "métissage". Métissage thus does not only denote mixture, but it accompanies the struggle over superiority and inferiority and the conflict over the separation of public and private spheres:[34] while encounter and mixing of Indians and Whites engendered new ways of living, they also made apparent conflicts between private realms to be protected (such as in religious and marriage rituals) and public spheres of influence and domination through policy schemes, laws and prohibitions. As such, mixing was a debated issue because even for those who favoured it, it meant the merging of peoples, which were considered different, in fact unequal. The aim of mixing was not to acknowledge or respect the other but rather to make it disappear, giving primacy and priority to all things European. The irony is that the seeds of failure of this colonial conception were already planted at the beginning. Precisely because it represented a

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32   Peter Grupp traces the will to impose French culture from its beginnings of the "gesta dei per francos" of the crusades through the 17th and 18th centuries up until the revolution of 1789. Grupp, *Kolonialreich*, p. 283.

33   This was at some time not only encouraged by the French state and its authorities, but also by fur traders, mostly of French origin, i.e. the North West Company. The English-speaking Hudson's Bay Company came under increased pressure at the face of trading advantages to be gained from an allowance for intermarriage and therefore lifted its prohibition of mixed marriages towards the end of the 18th century. A British policy directive preceded this in 1719, which spoke of encouragement of mixed unions. See Brebner, *Intermarriage*, p. 33-36. Brebner believes that the policy objective of allocating money and territory to subjects of Her Majesty who married an Indian woman or man was never actually acted upon. Geoffrey Plank argues, "in 1719 the British Board of Trade directed Philipps [governor of Nova Scotia from 1718 onwards] to adopt measures designed to lead, in the long run, to the full incorporation of the Mi´kmaq into British colonial society." See Geoffrey Plank, *An Unsettled Conquest. The British Campaign Against the Peoples of Acadia* (Philadelphia, 2001), p. 69f. The author even argues that Philipps became governor "with the assimilation of the Mi´kmaq as an official, long-term aim." He concludes, however, that Philipps could not successfully adopt this policy since some New England fishermen established permanent colonial settlements along Nova Scotia's Atlantic Coast, which aroused Mi´kmaq resistance and led to war in 1722. The peace treaties of 1725 and 1726 finally acknowledged that the Mi´kmaq could govern their own affairs. p. 70.

34   Jürgen Habermas holds that "privateness" is realised once this sphere is free of any legal regulations. As such mixed marriages were never a private, but a public affair because rules and regulations were imposed upon them. See Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (Berlin, 1971), p. 158.

foreign and inferior element in the eyes of incoming White colonialists, instead of disappearing the native population remained omni-present. Mixing rather produced a new category, that of the Métis, whose biological and cultural heritage remained distinct from that of the colonialist. By the 19th century, not only the French imposed this distinction. The Métis themselves who claimed to be a „distinct indigenous people" also revindicated their status. In part, this revindication was possible because the superiority of Europeans was hard to sustain in an environment in which they were a minority that depended on the Indians as a group for survival in an unfamiliar setting and that often adopted native customs and ways of life. This revindication was also possible because, despite fusion, what remained distinct and un-dissolvable, first in the eyes of Europeans, and than in the eyes of the Métis, was the Indian part.[35] As such, in colonial reality métissage was not an expression of true mixture. Métissage politics were never meant to produce a balanced synthesis of different people and cultures but it rather remained a political strategy in favour of the French. As such, métissage was a colonial phenomenon and a directed strategy and policy while also being a natural biological and cultural process and development. While French colonial authorities in New France lost control over the former, the latter unfolded in unexpected ways.

In order to come to an understanding of the nature of métissage in historical context, it is vital to look at official discourse parallel to historical practice itself. It is held that since métissage discourse differed markedly from métissage in actual agency, the process has to be understood both on a discursive level, and at the same time be grasped as a political, social and cultural process in practice.[36] In order to understand métissage, it is important to cognise the difference between these two levels. While on a discursive level it was held that métissage was necessary in order to implement French cultural and political superiority in the colony, the results were - according to reports by colonial authorities – mostly French assimilation to indigenous customs and lifestyle, which contrary to intent seemed to be a proof for Indian superiority. Fascination for the exotic way of life of Indians had aroused European curiosity at home where the image of the "noble savage" circulated in the minds of educated elites.[37] In the colony, those who encountered Indians, were surprised to find a multitude of tribes with customs as various as their languages and with beautiful women whose dress,

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35 With thanks to Tamar Herzog for these observations.

36 Joël Dauphine has analyzed the biological aspects of métissage with a view to New Caledonia. See Joël Dauphine, "Le métissage biologique dans la Nouvelle-Calédonie coloniale (1853-1939)", in: *Colonies, territoires, sociétés,* ed. A. Saussol et J. Zitomersky (Paris, 1996).

37 Jennifer Dyar: "Fatal Attraction: The White Obsession with Indianness", in: *The Historian*, vol. 65, no 4 (June 2003), pp. 817-836.

ornaments and body paintings were conceived of in terms of exoticism. In fact, images of Indian womanhood were considerably more positive since male desires; fantasies and needs were projected onto them. The Indian woman was not only to act as intermediary between the groups of Whites and Indians; she was also to behave as the lover of the White man, with all exotic projections inherent in this subordinate role. In fact, presupposed superiority of French culture implied that the Indians were seen as less worthy because - according to official discourse - they were considered to lack manners that were deemed "civilized" and "pious" according to European standards.[38]

Parallel to the means of frenchification through language instructions, settlement policies were enacted in order to sedentarize mostly nomadic Indians to exercise state control over them and to make them familiar with and accustom them to agricultural activity. Religious conversion to Catholicism was made a precondition of mixed marriages, while it was hoped that cultural assimilation would follow as a by-product, which was at the same time employed in language teaching. The utmost aim was to augment population numbers in the colony to create a French nation overseas. This French nation was to be made up of assimilated Indians, married Indian women to French settlers with their respective French offspring. The premises of "civilising", "francizizing" and "evangelising" were seldom questioned or put into doubt by social and political agents in New France; agents merely favoured one approach over the other, they gave up one at the expense of another or they mingled all three objectives.[39] This illustrates that agents did not know how objectives could be properly realised: it was asked whether a converted Indian would be more easily "civilised" or francisized, or would, in turn, an Indian who first learned French readily adapt to Catholic rituals? The Jesuit missionary and French historian Pierre de Charlevoix was convinced that "the best mode of Christianising them [the Indians] was to avoid frenchifiying them"[40], led by the assumption that Christianity and Frenchness should be considered as separate, yet not incompatible values. Religious assimilation was to hold prime of place before cultural assimilation. And yet: The question of whether Indians were interested in becoming French subjects was never posed. It was presupposed - since French culture was considered to be closer to God and religion[41] - that Indian tribes would accept incoming

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38   Saliha Belmessous, *Aspects of the Natives' Instrumentalization by the Colonial Authorities under the French Regime*, Working Paper 97022, International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World (Harvard, 1997).

39   Isabelle Perrault, *Le métissage en Nouvelle-France* (Montréal, 1980), p. 106.

40   Pierre de Charlevoix, cited in: James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York/Oxford, 1985), p. 43.

41   This comes to the fore in many utterances of agents, which will be described in the following chapters.

"salvation" brought from France. The French "mission" had an emancipating impact by creating the vision of universal Frenchness to be spread over the Atlantic with the parallel acquisition of political rights. The idea that everyone willing to adhere to French ideals could become a French citizen was both appealing and at the same time deceptive: to be *named* French was not the same as *being* French and in particular cases it did not undo inequality and discrimination derived from ethnic origin or skin colour. Historian George Fredrickson holds, "the belief that it was possible and desirable to assimilate native populations through intermarriage drew on both strains of French universalism - the counter-Reformation Catholicism that had inspired Jesuit missionaries in Canada and the Enlightenment or Revolutionary assertion of human equality and fraternity."[42] According to colonial theoretician Frantz Fanon the principle of the equality of all men found its illustration precisely in the colonies at the moment when the colonised pretended to be equal to the coloniser.[43] This equality was never real, however, since the French ruled over Indians on the assumption that a French nation was to be created on behalf of the idea of French superiority over everything Indian. I adhere to Edward Said's view that colonialism requires a particular interpretation, since in its core lays a mental attitude and an "ideological formation".[44] It is imbued with racist, or at least discriminatory thinking and acting, and as such it requires an attentive analysis. In his seminal study on *Orientalism* Said set out to analyse the ways in which Europe and its scholars confronted the Orient, "the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other."[45] Said argued that "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self."[46] That is, it used an image of the Orient in order to set itself apart and above all: superior. Said could convincingly show that knowledge on a particular region that is subject to domination by colonial powers is imbued with projections, ideologies and interests. Power, domination and cultural hegemony are the central vectors of the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. Just as the oriental experience of Western, mainly British and French powers has resulted in a whole array of academic disciplines solely engaged in trying to grasp the nature and essence of everything oriental, the experience in reverse direction, the Occident, has resulted in a similar occupation of writing everything down that had emanated

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42   Fredrickson, *Mulattoes,* p. 107.
43   Frantz Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* (Paris, 1968/2002), p. 47.
44   Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London, 1992), p. 8.
45   Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1995), p. 1.
46   Ibid., p. 3.

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from encounters with American Indians. This sort of *Occidentalism* made a virtue of scrutinizing and evaluating the latter's customs, beliefs, languages, diets, dresses, sexualities and dream worlds according to European standards. The encounter with the "other" was not an experience or exercise in accurately understanding him. It was rather a "mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles", a discourse that was inevitably rarely veridical.[47]

In order to describe the social and political conditions of métissage in a colonial setting, a theoretical framework is required that allows making a critical examination of the sources. At the same time, it has to show how métissage evolved over time, how it was ideologically constructed and argued in discourse, on the one hand, and actually practiced in reality, on the other. That is, a theory that allows all three levels - source criticism, discourse and agency - to be taken into account in order to write an "adequate history". The theory that fulfils these criteria of description is the *history of concepts* because it precisely looks at the evolution and implications of concepts through time. And métissage is indeed a concept, which means that it has to be interpreted rather than defined because of its several layers and the ambiguity of its meaning. Furthermore, history of concepts holds that "the social and political conflicts of the past must be interpreted (...) in terms of the mutually understood, past linguistic usages of the participating agents".[48] The history of concepts is the ideal tool to take a look at the volatile competition and co-operation of agents and at their linguistic performances in order to achieve the goals of assimilation and evangelisation, which were indeed the cause for numerous conflicts in New France. A classical history of concepts à la Koselleck has to illuminate how the idea of métissage gained ground in the politics and language of colonial agents and how, as a result, a new category - the Metis - emerged unexpectedly, as much as an affair of words as an affair of parallel as well as later political deeds.

The history of concepts deals with the reconstruction of the genesis of social and political concepts in historical perspective and, thus, takes into consideration a wide scope of analysis. Situated between the history of ideas and the history of words, history of concepts is devoted to analysing the *variance* and the causes for the *change* and *success* of concepts.[49] We have to bear in mind, however,

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47   Ibid., p. 2.

48   Reinhart Koselleck: "Begriffsgeschichte and Social History", in: ibid., *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York, 2004), p. 80.

49   The theoretical foundations of the history of concepts have their origins in different countries: In France *Annales* historians Marc Bloch and Lucien Fèvre introduced the history of concepts into the French intellectual sphere in the late 1920s. The English, American and Australian schools refer to the traditional history of political ideas, i.e. political theory and philosophy as represented, for instance, in writings of John Pocock

that any writing of history of concepts is confronted with the difficulty to describe the social practice, i.e. the conditions for the production of knowledge, and if we are to introduce discourse analytical terminology: the place from which one speaks in order to generate this knowledge:[50] Who has defined what, when, why, and how have such speakers pushed through their ideas (assuming that history generates its facts by the discovery of those who read the production of knowledge in the sources, the images and the literature).[51] It sounds simple when Reinhart Koselleck pointed out that the history of concepts sheds light on past meanings and their translation into the present. It is, in fact, the task of the historian of concepts to reflect this procedure methodologically by adding a *diachronic* dimension to a *synchronic* analysis. While the term *diachronic* refers to the chronological sequence of events and „states of being" within a system and stresses historical development of phenomena, the term *synchronic* refers to the elements within a system; the stress is on the parallelism of phenomena. In short, the history of concepts looks at different usages of concepts throughout different epochs by employing a method of parallel as well as chronological analysis.[52] Koselleck points at a further distinction between language with "indicator function" and language as "factor function". The former conceives of language as representation and reproduction (*Abbild*), while the latter means language as instrument of linguistic agency (*sprachliches Handeln*). Applied to the Canadian Metis, this means that first the indicator function of language led to the naming of a new ethnic group as the result of mixture of two distinct parts. Metis were represented and reproduced in language and as such their existence came to be acknowledged. The factor function of language comes in, once this turns into linguistic agency with which language follows the political demands of the epoch.

Koselleck also distinguishes source language (*Quellensprache*) from descriptive language (*Beschreibungssprache*). The latter succeeds the former, i.e. descriptive language interprets source language. An interpretation of source language takes place while later descriptive language provides the interpretation of the actual facts. One can discern a constant distension of concepts, which shifts

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and Quentin Skinner. In contrast, the German school has been influenced by social history and discourse analysis. See Metzler, p. 42 and Lucian Hölscher: "The Theoretical Foundations of "Begriffsgeschichte" (History of Concepts)", Lecture given at the summer course "New cultural history" at San Lorenzo de Escorial, 25th to 29th July 1994. See also Metzler, *Lexikon*, p. 42.

50   For a critique on the limits of the history of concepts see the article by Achim Landwehr, in: http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/2007-1-127.

51   With thanks to Marc Schindler-Bondiguel for this observation.

52   Reinhart Koselleck, „Begriffsgeschichte und Sozialgeschichte", in: idem, *Historische Semantik und Begriffsgeschichte* (Stuttgart, 1979), p. 25.

meaning back in time. Non-simultaneity is caused through the fact that the respective concepts are initially defined in source language and that only afterwards temporal caesura is introduced in descriptive language (while source language and descriptive language may at times be the same). Therefore the history of concepts looks at the usage of words, addressees, intention, context, counter concepts and social diffusion. It is at this point that social history and the history of concepts meet and mingle. The question of the social duration of a concept is thus addressed: how long has a concept prevailed in a certain context and why has its meaning changed? A diachronic principle takes the concept out of context and analyses it throughout the passing of times, and thereby historical analyses of concepts develop into a proper history of concepts. The social duration of a concept can be analysed on two levels: first, it is linguistic history and second, it is structural history. Thus, it is not about a collision of linguistic change with a change of meaning, but about the clash of "simultaneity of non-simultaneity". To give an example: the process of North American colonial Euro-Indian métissage (beginning roughly in the 1600s in New France) predates the creation of the concept of *métissage* (around 1830s in Paris). Koselleck has drawn further attention to the fact that there also exists a difference between *words* and *concepts*: whereas the former have several meanings at the same time, but only a single one in a specific context, the latter remain ambiguous even in a specific context. While a concept is always more than a word, the meaning of a word, although it can be polyvalent, always points at the signified. Social and political language knows of a range of catchwords, which appeared throughout the ages.[53] With "métissage", however, this is not the case: it is a modern word for a development, which had started well before the onset of modernity. History as a science indeed depends on the analysis and usage of words, which prevailed in the subject area of the set of questions to be treated.[54] Historians have to deal with the vocabulary that contemporaries used in order to describe historical events of their time, and have to unveil covered meanings and offer layers of interpretation on hidden and not so explicit intended motives. The authors of the classic dictionary on the history of concepts, the "Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe", for example, argue that source language of a specific period is in itself a metaphor for history of which historians try to grasp insights;[55] "metaphor" understood in Rhetoric as a trope, i.e. types of improper designation, and

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53   See in: "Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe", ed. by Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, Reinhart Koselleck, Bd. 1 (Stuttgart, 1972), p. XIII.

54   Ibid.

55   Ibid. It is the intended aim of the authors to describe the transition from the dissolution of the old world to the occurrence of the modern world in the history of its conceptual grasping, i. e. from roughly 1700 to the present. One wonders therefore why the concept of "métissage" is not listed whereas "race" prominently figures.

in contrast to tropes having a similarity in the relation between that which is literally said and that which is figuratively meant. While the duration and change of concepts is addressed, all concepts are witness of a changing relation to nature and to history, to the world and to time, in short: to the modern era.[56] One of the latter's characteristics is that concepts can be ideologicalized, i. e. they can be used in the service of a specific ideology to further political and economic interests of the participating agents. Kari Palonen accurately reminds us that, "conceptual history offers us a chance to turn the contestability, contingency and historicity of the use of concepts into instruments for conceptualising politics. The alternative, indirect mode of political theorizing Skinner and Koselleck practise consists of a *Verfremdungseffekt*, which helps us to distance ourselves from thinking in terms of contemporary paradigms, unquestioned conventions, given constellations of alternatives or implicit value judgements. In the Skinnerian variant the conceptual changes are made intelligible through analysis of the rhetorical redescriptions among the political agents, whereas Koselleck thematizes the differences in the temporal index of concepts. The subversive aspect in the history of concepts consists of the explication and historical variation of the tacit normative content in the use of concepts."[57]

If one follows Reinhart Koselleck's distinction between "words" and "concepts", there is reason to assume that *métissage* is a concept rather than merely a word. Its specific referents and components - the cultures and individuals involved - differ according to the geographical areas and historical epochs in question. Its general meaning, however, appears simple to pin down while being ambiguous and difficult to define at the same time: "métissage" seems to point at some sort of mixing of cultures, i.e. customs and languages, as well as that of races. As such, it lies at the crossroads of society, politics and genetics. Yet, it would be too simple to translate *métissage* into "mixture" or "mixing", since it has to be explained what mixed, why mixed, and, above all, how mixed. Many authors of métissage mingle three dimensions, i.e. the social, the biological and the cultural, and turn métissage into an unidentifiable process or something that becomes so common that it is presumed to be all-pervasive. However, a phenomenon that is all-pervasive needs not be explained, because it is taken for granted. Yet, métissage has been far from being taken for granted. It has been a battlefield of conflicting ideologies, changing strategies and competing truths.

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56 Ibid., p. XV. In fact, the authors hold that from 1750 onwards there has been an accelerated change in the meaning of socio-political terminology, while at the same time a whole range of new terms were invented and old ones differentiated. This is partly due also to the upsurge in new printing materials and to the extension of knowledge from some groups in society to others, i. e. from the aristocracy to jurists and intellectuals.

57 Kari Palonen: "The History of Concepts as a Style of Political Theorizing", in: *European Journal of Political Theory*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 91-106 (2002).

The first three chapters of this study encompass the period from 1508 to 1763 in order to show which policies French authorities favoured until their British counterparts took over. The last three chapters take a broader perspective up until the year 1886, in which *The Act of Savages* legally distinguished between the groups of "Indians" and "Metis". The first chapter looks at how the French combined different approaches of assimilation: the taking of Indians to the metropolis and the incitement of Indians to settle in the vicinity of colonial settlements in order to encourage Indians to accustom to sedentary French way of life. It is asked when and why the French favoured one approach over the other and how Indians reacted. Chapter two deals with the parallel means of assimilation by religious conversion policies and language instruction, with how objectives were linked and were made a precondition of each other: language instruction formed part of the cultural assimilation process and at the same time it facilitated conversion. The chapter asks how missionaries were involved in the métissage design and how they used their position in order to pursue their own ideas of conversion. Chapter three poses the question of which positions agents took with regard to mixed marriages and why changing trends adjusted to the living conditions and the moral climate in the colony. Differences in favouring mixed and non-mixed marriages will be shown and the preconditions that were asked of both.

In the second part, the study unfolds first as an affair of numbers, then of words and finally of deeds. Chapter four asks why there were geographical, social and tribal differences in métissage practices and which of these favoured or hindered métissage. It turns out that approaches taken by authorities depended on the circumstances in specific regions. Chapter five analyses the specific formation of Metis identity and Metis communities and the question of definition guided by political demands. It answers the question why Metis communities emerged although the initial tendency had been to amalgamate Metis either into Indian or White society. Finally, it addresses the question of how as a result the concept of "Metis" evolved in historical, ethnographical, economic and nationalist discourse of contemporaries and historians. It will be answered how the Metis were initially perceived as "many identities" that were difficult to grasp (unless by a multitude of designations) and how they then were accepted, or further differentiated by categorizing all mixed-blood individuals in the category of "Metis". Chapter six discusses the community formation of the Metis, which includes the perception of Metis by outside observers and attempts at Metis nation building. This chapter looks at the question of Metis singularity in Canada - mixed-blood community formation and the recognition of distinct status.

The conclusion summarizes the failure of métissage as envisaged by French agents and factors that contributed to this failure. At the same time, there was limited success in creating a new category for mixed-blood individuals and in

forming the Canadian state, partly on the basis of previously employed strategies of métissage through co-operation and competition of numerous social and political agents. It has to be stressed that the creation of a category for mixed-bloods in Canada is paralleled by the experience of Cape Coloureds in South Africa. Thus, this event marks a decisive milestone in miscegenation history, while at the same time adding to racist discrimination of mixed-bloods by categorizing them with specific cultural labels. At the same time, the changing positive and negative conceptions of mixed-blood culture and identity and its position in societal order, the hierarchies that built will be analysed and debates over the concept of métissage will be critically reviewed. In all chapters, métissage, métisation, Metis individuals and communities are differentiated. *Métissage* was the process whereby Indians and Europeans mingled in various ways and which was encouraged or prohibited by official authorities. *Métisation* was the natural process whereby metis offspring increasingly married among their own kin and thus helped to increase metis tribalisation, thereby adding to the numbers of Metis individuals and Metis communities in the long range.

In order to put factual evidence on "metis" and "métissage" into perspective, an ample textual corpus is required. In order to conduct my research, I have consulted libraries and state and clerical archives in Ottawa, Montréal, Québec, Chicago, Paris, Aix-en-Provence and Rome. The empirical basis and the source material includes missionary correspondence, i.e. reports and letters, partly published as *Jesuit Relations*, which were printed annually with the aim of spreading the propaganda of a successful evangelical mission overseas. These texts are available online and also as an edition by Reuben Gold Thwaites, who was the secretary of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, which holds transcripts. Camille de Rochemonteix has divided Jesuit documents into four categories: a) personal letters which were not destined to be published, b) those written to members of the society, c) annual letters, translated into Latin, whose publication ended in 1654 and d) letters explicitly addressed to the public - the actual "Jesuit Relations" which were initiated by Pierre Biard in 1616 and continued by Father Jerome Lalemant in 1629.[58] The fathers did not write everything in their annual letters. They were more expansive in letters to their superiors who wanted to be amply informed on the developments that took place in the colony.[59] Furthermore, we have to bear in mind that the Jesuit fathers took personal

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58   Camille de Rochemonteix: *Les Jésuites de la Nouvelle-France au XVIIe siècle d'après beaucoup de documents inédits*, vol. I (Paris, 1895).

59   Rochemonteix, *Les Jésuites*, p. XIVf.

stances and did not always comply with rules and expectations of their superiors and nor did they necessarily follow the dictates of the public.[60]

I have also consulted letters of authorities in Versailles and Paris to those in Quebec/New France and vice versa; reports and letters by Recollect, Capuchin and Sulpician missionary orders and by female orders; history books, travel accounts, diaries, medical and psychiatric reports, philosophical works and economic tractates. In Ottawa, the *Public Archives* provide material on Red River Metis in the 19th century and missionary reports that treat religious conversion and supervision of Metis communities. In Montréal, the *Bibliothèque Nationale* and the *Archives Nationales* were valuable in terms of finding sources on further missionary activity in Canada, baptismal records of Metis individuals and marriage contracts. The bulk of correspondence between Québec and Paris/Versailles was found in the *Archives Nationales* (CARAN) in Paris and in the *Centre d'Archives d'Outre-Mer* (CAOM) in Aix-en-Provence, which both contain sources on the history of the colonial period. Especially series C11A in "fonds des colonies" and other series contain edicts, letters, reports, despatches and orders accumulated by the Ministry of Marine, which refer to French administration in the colony, to relations with Indians, as well as mission, trade and military policy.[61] These consist of letters exchanged between French agents in the metropolis and the colony, between governors and intendants, military personnel and missionaries reporting back to the Parisian or Roman metropolis.[62] Yet, administrative sources have to be questioned for their heuristic value.[63] Thus the writing of métissage history has to be complemented by descriptions on the actual social practice that prevailed at the time. As such, administrative sources can only provide the frame of reference for the actual policies that were implemented differently and according to various circumstances. Thus, in sum a more

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60 Marie-Anne La Fleur has held that the Jesuits were not acting as "dutiful reporters" but rather as "wilful individuals". See Marie-Anne La Fleur: „From Missionaries to Seigneurs: The Contributions of the Jesuits to the development of the St. Lawrence River Valley in the 17th Century", in: *The Jesuit Encounters in the New World 1549-1767* (Rom, 1997).

61 Series C13A deals with Louisiana. Series C11C, C11D, C11E, F3 and F5 were also helpful.

62 I thus contest Urs Bitterli's view that in the study of North American cultural contact it is less the official reports that are examined than the memoirs and testimonies of private individuals, such as settlers and travellers. Precisely, for a writing of the history of métissage in French North America, official policies have never been subject to a detailed analysis as seems necessary in order to understand why métissage established new social orders and why policies were so volatile in this respect. See Bitterli, *Begegnung*, p. 231.

63 With thanks to Heinz-Gerhard Haupt for this valuable critique.

differentiated history can be written by taking into account several levels of discourse matched against the prevalent practice.

In Paris, *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* contains books, manuscripts, microfilms and special collections of source materials on the period of New France. In Montréal, the *Archives of the Ursulines* contain the letters of Ursuline nun Marie de l'Incarnation, which relate to her work with Indian girls. I also consulted materials in the *Archives of the Seminary of Québec* and of the *Archbishopric*, where I found many sources on the celebration of mixed marriages. In Rome, the Jesuit archive *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu* contains letters and reports of Jesuit missionaries on their conversion and assimilation work. The *Vatican Archives* and the *Archivio della Propaganda Fide* contain documents on New France on discussions between clerical superiors and missionaries regarding the celebration of mixed marriages and church policies with respect to conversion in the colony. Sources here deal with sending Indians to the metropolis, with their sale as slaves and with demands for dispenses asked of Roman authorities in order to get licence to celebrate marriages in the colony. In these sources, metis individuals and métissage are both difficult to identify. That is, historical sources describe, for instance, the refusal of an Indian girl to marry a French coureur de bois, the celebration of a mixed marriage by a local priest or the complaints of missionaries on the unwillingness of Indians to co-operate with local colonial authorities. Some such incidences can be found in the *Jesuit Relations*. Here, as in many other sources of European provenience, we mainly find White perspectives and the Indian viewpoint is mostly silenced. Furthermore, in most of the sources the term "métissage" is not mentioned, and the term "metis" in the early period only rarely. In fact, discourses on "métissage" are rather couched in various contexts: they refer to material circumstances of ethnic encounter, to agents´ experiences of cultural and economic exchange, and to the results of the encounter such as religious syncretism, cultural customs or new ethnic groups. That is, discourses do not explicitly contain utterances on race mixture and its equivalent terms, but refer to marriage, exchange and cooperation and competition of antagonistic groups, their religious practices as well as their cultural patterns. These processes are couched in the terms "culture", "contact", "francisation", "assimilation", "conversion", "colonisation", "débauches", "libertinage", "mariages mixtes", "désordre", "illicit sexual relations/commerce", "missions" and according verbs and English equivalents.[64] Indians are interchangeably referred to as "indien/nes", "amérindien/nes", "métis", "autochthones", "aborigènes", "canadien/nes", "natives", "sauvages/ses", "infidèles" and "barbares". Thus, the chosen corpus of texts has to be analysed according to

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64 Isabelle Perrault has extended this list to imply "développement", "peuplement" and some further terms. See in: Perrault, *Le métissage*, p. 63.

such keywords. In addition to the sources, a selective analysis of the vast secondary literature on the history of New France and Canada, métissage, Euro-Indian relations and Indian tribes is included.