



Research Question

What Are the Intergenerational Effects of Residential School Attendance on Cultural Retention in Indigenous Communities?

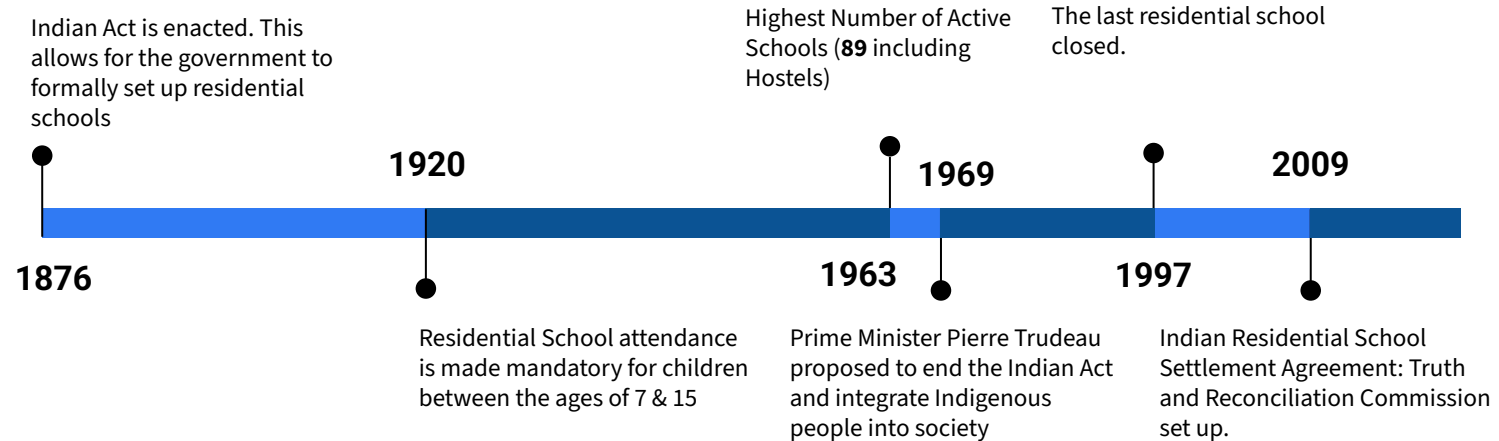
Undergraduate Research Symposium
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5th Year Economics Honours
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WE are Not
accepting verbal
apology this
year. ONLY change
BEHAVIOR
#10256

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Historical Context



(National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation [NCTR], 2025) (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [TRC], 2015)

Data & Empirical Strategy

Methodology

Data:

2001 & 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Surveys by Statistics Canada

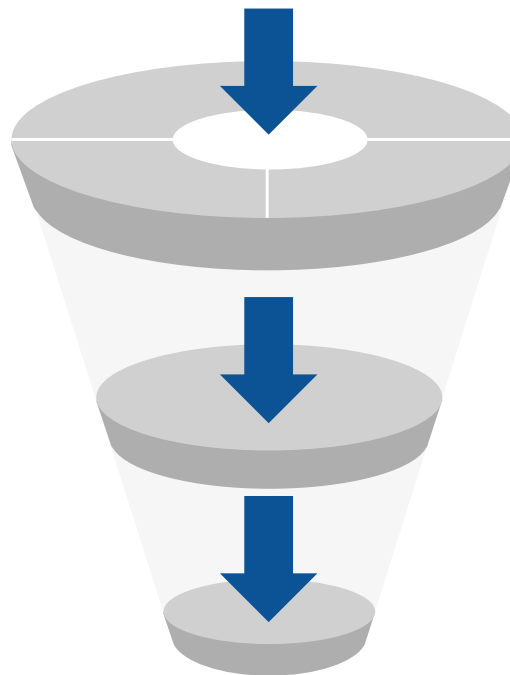
Empirical Strategy:

The Problem: Raw comparisons are misleading, as the two cohorts differ fundamentally in average Age, Income, Gender, and Education.

The Solution: An Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression model acts as a mathematical filter, holding these demographic imbalances constant.

The Result: This achieves a precise "apples-to-apples" comparison, allowing me to accurately quantify the isolated, intergenerational impact of familial residential school attendance.

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 IRS_i + \beta_2 Identity_i + \beta_3 (IRS_i \times Identity_i) + \delta X_{it} + \gamma_t + \epsilon_{it}$$



Raw Survey Data

Regression:
Holding Age, Income, and
Education Constant

**Pure Intergenerational
effect**



Table 2: Linear Probability Model Estimates: Cultural Retention

	(1) Traditional Activities <i>Coefficient (SE)</i>	(2) Language Speaker <i>Coefficient (SE)</i>
Family IRS History	0.040*** (0.009)	0.029** (0.010)
IRS History × Métis	-0.019 (0.022)	0.076** (0.024)
IRS History × Inuit	-0.239** (0.073)	-0.134 [†] (0.079)
Demographic Controls	Yes	Yes
Observations	10,642	10,642
R ²	0.247	0.154

Main Findings

Those with parents or grandparents who attended residential schools are...

4.0% more likely to participate in traditional activities

2.9% more likely to speak their traditional language

Why do we see this?

When minority groups face marginalization and forced assimilation, they will often adopt an oppositional identity. (Bisin et al., 2011)

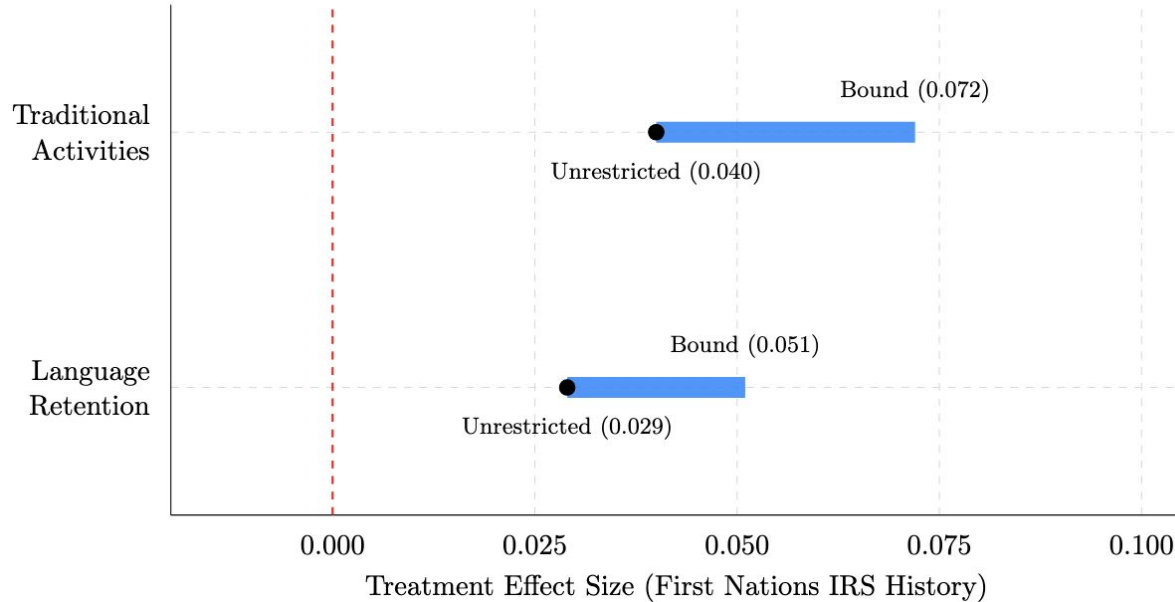
In the US, studies have found that children of those that attended Indian Boarding schools actually had stronger cultural ties (Maruthiah, 2025)



Results

Oster (2019) Robustness Bounding Sets

Ranges do not cross zero, indicating robustness to unobservable selection



Conclusion

- Family history of residential school attendance leads to stronger cultural ties
- In the long run, forced assimilation policies can fundamentally backfire.
- This research calls for future study into the mechanisms of intergenerational cultural resistance and reclamation.

References

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- Oster, E. (2019). Unobservable selection and coefficient stability: Theory and evidence. *Journal of Business & Economic Statistics*, 37(2), 187–204.
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