

reasons for their violent behaviour and to learn and practice new responses to the cues that trigger violence. Using quotes from inmates talking about their experiences and learning, the authors report a program evaluation that has helped shape an expanded program. As with the program described by Ellerby, helping offenders re-enter the community is considered a crucial activity. A community-based program in the same format of open and closed groups and counselling by Elders is accessible to offenders once they have been released.

Because there are few road maps, practice in Aboriginal healing and wellness requires innovation, creativity, and risk-taking. This rich collection, written in highly accessible language, shares experiences, analysis and reflection from the front line. It makes an important contribution to the emerging literature on Aboriginal healing and wellness which is of considerable benefit to practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers who are trying to design, implement, support and evaluate programs based on the needs of Aboriginal people. Scholars and students also have much to learn from this integration of research and practice. Readers might attend to a concluding chapter in which the editors have pulled together unique tidbits from all the articles that suggest directions for further discussion, research, analysis and community action—an agenda for the future.

Paul C. Rosier. *Rebirth of the Blackfeet Nation, 1912-1954*. University of Nebraska Press, 2001.

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Paul C. Rosier contributes a detailed, nuanced study of Blackfeet political economy during a timeframe little considered previously, a central factor in the book's fresh perspectives, analysis, and conclusions. The author contends that while U.S. Indian policy periods oftentimes differ dramatically from each other, their academic study as discrete and bounded units artificially constrains and limits our understanding of their implementation and impacts.¹ Rosier "bridge[s] the gap that exists between studies of the Indian New Deal [1928-1945] and the termination eras

[1945-1961]"² (2). From the Department of Interior's (DOI) perspective, Termination meant the end of "federal overlordship" and was really the last stage of the Indian New Deal, and not one of two discrete, opposed, and unrelated periods (2).

The insights developed through a trans-policy period perspective, in this case one spanning an entire period (Indian Reorganization, 1871-1928) and parts of two others (Allotment and Assimilation 1871-1928, and Termination 1945-1961) suggest there is much to be gained from untying our consideration of tribal politics from rigid definitions of federal policy periods. Rossier brackets the *Rebirth of the Blackfeet Nation* roughly from the time of Blackfeet allotment in 1907 until their establishment of a relatively stable democratic polity signified by the meaningful integration of the "full-blood" population into the democratic process, and the end of the threat, for the Blackfeet, presented by Dillon Myer's radical vision of Termination. What is revealed may come as a bit of a surprise for those, like me, schooled in anti-IRA rhetoric and studies. For the Blackfeet, the IRA provided a relatively effective "sense of political efficacy and the means to produce change" (273). Not so surprising, this accomplishment, following Rossier's evidence, can in no way be attributed to the skill, diplomacy, management, or compassion within the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA), later the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

Although specific to the Blackfeet located in Northwestern Montana, the book provides considerable insight into the politics and practices of DOI personnel involved in Indian affairs. Superintendent Frank C. Campbell, for example, embraced Blackfeet "full-bloods" and organized them into small gardening and sheep grazing cooperatives (35). His Piegan Farming and Livestock Association (PFLA) became an OIA model program. He spent considerable time off reservation promoting it to the detriment of a comprehensive economic development plan for the Blackfeet (52). His influence with the "full bloods" turned them against the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council (BTBC) and in support of the OIA and federal supervision creating a tribal split for years to come (40). Among other colonizing maneuvers, favoritism of non-Indian stockowners, "sloppy" accounting, and the "loss of more than two hundred thousand of the Blackfeet's most valuable acres" during his watch led to his reassignment on another reservation (59). Superintendents such as Campbell can be interpreted as corrupt and/or incompetent but they,

their superiors, and replacements underscore the imperialistic results of Federal Government policies during a critical time of Native "adjustment" to American democracy when official rhetoric and policy advocated Indian self-sufficiency.

Rebirth of the Blackfeet Nation, however, is far from just a chronicle of the corrupt and colonial politics of 20th century Federal Indian policy players. It also adeptly and honestly emphasizes relevant Blackfeet values, motivations, and actions retrieved through scrupulous use of government documents, local newspapers, Blackfeet tribal archives, and interviews with Blackfeet. The result is an account that traces the subjectivity of both the Blackfeet and Federal government actors in concert with each other and, especially the shifting subjectivity of Blackfeet mixed- and full- blood factions, and those in-between. The dynamics between "full-bloods" and "mixed-bloods" are not reduced to a static bifurcation; rather Rossier provides the changing motivations, tactics, alignments, and re-alignments fueling their common and disparate interests.

Early on the significant difference between full-bloods and mixed-bloods is blood quantum and geographical location, but it quickly becomes based more, but not entirely on, class consciousness (58). "A growing disparity of economic distribution and political representation" develops due to OIA ideologies and practices. The burgeoning social-economic injustice is ignored and cultivated, rather than addressed by the OIA (122). Interestingly, the "full-blood" factions at first empower themselves by contesting BTBC authority and advocating for OIA's greater control over tribal affairs. "Caught between paternalistic whites and enterprising mixed-blood Indians, many full-bloods chose the former over the latter in part because their sense of history suggested that they would be in better hands with the federal government than with the tribal government" (265). Because the "full-bloods" were persistent and vocal, if not a voting bloc, and represented marginalized Blackfeet, both the OIA and the BTBC paid attention. This minority faction "succeeded in waging a remarkable campaign to keep the "poor Indian" – both mixed-blood and full-blood – involved in and the object of Blackfeet politics" (208). Eventually, the full-bloods formed a "legitimate political opposition crossing boundaries of race, ethnicity, and class," and used IRA mechanisms for changing the tribal government, rather than just advocating for its rescinding (255). It is this careful chronicle of the "full-

bloods" who experienced the complete overhaul of their political systems from pre-reservation to reservation circumstances and saw their demographic power wane in the wake of considerable inter-marriage that defines the greatest value of the book. Rossier details how they asserted themselves, defended their sense of meaning, and then used IRA tools to empower their political voice, restore their social status, and preserve the idea of a tribe as family rather than corporate entity (265).

Full-blood maintenance of their sense of Indianness and adaptation to democratic political life is not the only factor leading to the success of the IRA on the Blackfeet reservation. Other factors also contributed to its success. First, prior to a vote on acceptance of the IRA, Blackfeet had already transitioned to democratic forms of organization. In 1915, the BTBC organized after years of intense factionalism, adopting a Constitution and by-laws in 1922, years before the introduction of the IRA (3). Hence, the Blackfeet were more politically "developed" by the New Deal period than many Native nations (85). Second, the BTBC prior to the IRA vigorously pursued economic development and consistently confronted OIA obfuscation and favoritism towards non-Indian landowners and interests (69). Government reports circulated among the Blackfeet documented pervasive OIA corruption in its handling of Blackfeet resources and monies (59). The IRA provided the political power needed to control their own resources and access to credit to develop those resources, things they had been requesting for 20 years (90). Third, their "acceptance of the IRA was the result of an open and organized debate about the tribe's future and remembrance of a past largely influenced by the vagaries of OIA management" (96). On a stormy winter day, 46% of eligible Blackfeet voters favored IRA acceptance. Of the 994 votes cast, 171 voted against it (96). Unlike other IRA acceptance elections where very small minorities within tribes carried the decision to accept,³ the Blackfeet started with solid tribal support for an IRA form of political organization. Moreover, and to the point of Rossier's book, the Blackfeet success derived from their collective persistence and willingness to productively negotiate with each other over core values essential to a functioning Native American Indian nation-state.

For example, the question of whether natural resources, significantly oil and pastureland, should benefit individual entrepreneurs or tribal members as a whole answered in favor of a tribal benefit (58).⁴ This value was sustained in the face of 20 years of OIA bias toward individual

development including implementation of paternalistic rules preventing collective development (69). Distribution of per capita payments from tribal revenues, an important focus of the book, consistently challenged and ultimately helped define core tribal values. Under the BTBC's IRA Charter it had the authority to determine the amount of tribal revenues for per capita distribution (127). Revenues could also be reinvested in tribal infrastructure such as irrigation and livestock (147). Many Blackfeet, especially the "full-bloods," perceived per capita payments as analogous to the give-away, a Blackfeet method of wealth distribution. For most Blackfeet, revenues produced through communal oil fields and grasslands were "psychological and financial gifts from Mother Earth" and necessarily should be distributed per capita amongst tribal members (215). Infrastructure development, like irrigation and livestock purchases, did not equally benefit everyone. Council members "faced constant pressure from relatives, friends, and constituents to release funds in per capita payments or loans" (240). The pressure caused council members to juggle financial records so as to be able to make per caps; the practice was "endemic and not isolated to one or two professional politicians" (239). Commentators familiar with the Blackfeet do not characterize the Blackfeet value of generosity, institutionalized in the give-away, and later under the IRA as tribal loans (never to be paid back) and per capita payments, as corruption like many in the OIA did, but rather as a syncretic form of cultural tradition (240).

Certainly under non-Indian standards the emphasis on distributing per capita payments slowed the economic development of the tribe (268). Rossier's focus on the role of per capita payments in formulating Blackfeet self-determination and vice versa under the IRA however is never loaded with non-Indian judgment and values but rather seeks to interpret as far as possible Blackfeet perspectives. With regard to per capita distributions of tribally owned assets, he concludes that they "represented both a form of economic justice and a symbol of the Blackfeet Nation "taking care of its own," an institutional form of the give-away custom that governed traditional Blackfeet social relations" (266). In 1946 and 1947, the Blackfeet chose to make per capita payments "rather than continue to fund a social worker and a tribal welfare program." In this way, each Blackfeet received "the same dividend from any revenue generated from tribal enterprises" (228).

In conclusion, Rossier documents how the unique historical and so-

cial context of the Blackfeet, as well as their determination to preserve and extend core cultural values within the IRA framework, provided the means for the Blackfeet to successfully use it as a means of self-determination.

- 1 A commonly known exception being the surfacing and discussion of Removal — removing Native American Indians from the eastern part of the nascent US to west of the Mississippi river — documented in Secretary of War Henry Knox's report to Congress in 1789. Yet, the official start of the policy period is marked by the passage of the Removal Act in 1830, some 40 years later. Getches, David; Charles F. Wilkinson; Robert A. Williams Jr. (1988). *Cases and Materials on Federal Indian Law*, 4th ed. St. Paul, MN: WestGroup. 94, 98.
- 2 The policy period timespans I rely upon are those demarcated in the popular law school casebook, (*ibid.*).
- 3 Getches, Wilkinson, and Williams, 199.
- 4 This response however does not imply that all Blackfeet subscribed to it, or that it has been actualized even today.