Canadian Relationships and Reconciliation for Indigenous Identity and Space

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Territorial Acknowledgement

Six Nations of the Grand River and
Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation
Overview

- Indigenous population & colonial history/current context
- Key issues in placemaking and urban development
- Conclusion (ie WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN FOR YOU)
Canadian Indigenous Peoples

The Canadian Constitution recognizes three distinct groups of Indigenous People: First Nation, Inuit and Metis.

There are approximately 1.9 million Indigenous people living in Canada.

* More than half are living in an urban environment.

* More than half are under the age of 24
  * Over half of those under the age of 24 are under age 16
1. Indigenous peoples across Canada have experienced multiple historical colonial aggression and assaults.
   - Education was used as a tool of oppression for Indigenous peoples through residential school.
   - Child welfare, health care, and segregation are also cites of intensive and invasive harms.

2. Education continues to be a site of systemic and personal oppression for Indigenous peoples across Canada.
1. What is Residential School?

- Extensive school system set up by the Canadian government and administered by churches
Indian Act 1876
Indian Act enacted these federal polices and laws that if not followed were punished by the justice system (some have since been removed in revisions of the *Act*) (Joseph, 2015):

- Denied **women status**;
- Introduced **residential schools**;
- Created **reserves**;
- **Renamed** individuals with European names
- Restricted First Nations from leaving reserve without **permission** from Indian Agent (the pass system was a policy endorsed by the government; it was never an Order In Council or Regulation but was definitely designed to keep First Nations on the reserve)
- Enforced **enfranchisement** of any First Nation admitted to university [1];
- Could expropriate portions of reserves for roads, railways and other public works, as well as to move an entire reserve away from a municipality if it was deemed expedient;
• Could lease out uncultivated reserve lands to non-First Nations if the new leaseholder would use it for farming or pasture;

• Forbade First Nations from forming political organizations;

• Prohibited anyone, First Nation or non-First Nation, from soliciting funds for First Nation legal claims without special license from the Superintendent General. (this 1927 amendment granted the government control over the ability of First Nations to pursue land claims);[2]

• Prohibited the sale of alcohol to First Nations;

• Prohibited sale of ammunition to First Nations;

• prohibited pool hall owners from allowing First Nations entrance;

• Imposed the “band council” system;

• Forbade First Nations from speaking their native language;

• Forbade First Nations from practicing their traditional religion;

• Forbade western First Nations from appearing in any public dance, show, exhibition, stampede or pageant wearing traditional regalia; [3]

• Declared potlatch and other cultural ceremonies illegal; [4]

• Denied First Nations the right to vote

• Created permit system to control First Nations ability to sell products from farms;

• Is a piece of legislation created under the British rule for the purpose of subjugating one race - Aboriginal people.
What is Residential School?

* Primary objectives were to forcibly
  * Remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families and cultures
  * To assimilate them into the dominant culture
“To kill the Indian in the child.”

Based on assumption that Indigenous cultural beliefs and spirituality were inferior and unequal to Euro-Canadian Christian ones.
Thomas Moore before and after his entrance into the Regina Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan in 1874.
Library and Archives Canada / NL-022474
July 2008 Prime Minister Harper made an official apology to Aboriginal peoples

• “Today we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country.”
Residential School Facts

- About 150,000 Aboriginal children from 1870s to 1990s
- Min of 3000 children are known to have died, 500 are children whose identities are unknown
- Disease was major killer (tuberculosis, flu)
  - Second to malnutrition, drowning, exposure
- Many victims of physical assault and sexual abuse
- Many died trying to run away or by suicide.

(Mass, 2013)
Intergenerational Trauma is a Legacy of Residential School

Intergenerational trauma

* is passed on through generations (parents to children to grandchildren) and is conducted through family and community relationships and experiences.

* Some concrete examples where intergenerational trauma is evidenced is in parenting, education, employment outcomes, interpersonal and family relationships, health and mental health...can you think of other?
Intergenerational Trauma

Vulnerability in the presence of environmental stressors for new traumas

Chronic exposures to ongoing group traumas (i.e., racism)

Historical events that continue to undermine the wellbeing of the group

Risk can accumulate across generations

Unhealthy coping strategies are modeled from parenting
2. Continued oppression

Researchers and educators have suggested that employing a Western paradigm of urban development with Indigenous peoples is a form of continued colonial oppression...and this continues to perpetuate intergenerational trauma.
An important piece to Indigenous identity and urban development is a focus on the understanding and process of healing....
Place Making

- Place making is broadly understood as employing a community’s strengths to create a presence in public spaces that reflects that community’s identity, health, and well-being.
Indigenous place making is aimed at restoring Indigenous presence in Canada through art and design that is created, produced, and driven by Indigenous communities and underpinned by Indigenous knowledges.
Place Making Continued

- A rationale for Indigenous place making at the Future Cities Summit 2018 is to support Indigenous reconciliation in Canada and to build relationships among organizations and initiatives aimed at improved outcomes for all peoples in cities.
There are three key issues in Indigenous place making germane to the Summit’s objectives.
Belonging

2. When there is no Indigenous cultural representation in space or design, Indigenous peoples do not see their identities reflected in the environment.

- When this happens, Indigenous peoples can feel like they don’t belong in that space whether it’s a room, a building, a neighborhood, or a city.
1. Lack of Representation

The first issue is that there is currently limited to no Indigenous cultural representation in public spaces in Canadian cities.

- When Indigenous peoples feel like they don’t belong, they may not want to be in that space, and this can be reflected in unequal access to education, health care, and social services.
Further, this lack of cultural representation may reinforce racist attitudes of the lack of belonging and legitimacy of Indigenous peoples in Canada.
2. Lack of Recognition

A second issue in Indigenous place making is that there is limited land acknowledgement or recognition of Indigenous presence in Canada.

- Due to the history and current context of European colonialism, in which land was taken (often illegally) from Indigenous groups, there is often no acknowledgment that Canadians reside on Indigenous lands.

- This has resulted in natural environment harms and destruction.
Most Canadians are not aware of the history of Indigenous peoples or the history of how Canada was built

• including, information regarding
  • the Doctrine of Discovery and
  • the Indian Act
  • (Two key documents to the creation and maintenance of Canada as an illegally occupied colonial territory.)
Were Canadians to understand and acknowledge the history of their country’s relationship to Indigenous peoples, the way land is used and shared today might be different and create more equity for Indigenous peoples socially, economically, and in health outcomes, as well reduce or eliminate
Thirdly, Indigenous peoples have not been consulted or involved in the process of building and development of urban public spaces.

Because Indigenous peoples do not have the same human rights as non-Native people in Canada due to Federal systemic policies, Indigenous peoples have been ignored when developing communities, services, buildings, and any infrastructure that directly or indirectly affect them.
Further, when Indigenous peoples attempt to have input regarding natural resource or building development that may have a negative impact on the natural environment (including in their traditional territories), they are often
- silenced
- Punished, or
- disregarded
- (for example, Oka crisis 1990, Keystone Pipeline protest 2017).
Collaboration

- Building relationships among Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups and organizations that are based on trust, equity, and shared goals is one way to address these issues and meet the objectives of the 2018 Future Cities Summit.

- Urban Indigenous communities have a strong emphasis on collaboration, are grounded in traditional values/principles, work with traditional Knowledge Keepers, such as Elders and healers, and can provide strong resources to help move the agenda forward on Indigenous place making.
So where does this lead us...?
The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) published 94 recommendations, after six years of research, to address the current and historic impacts of the residential school system on the lives of individuals and communities, and to restore relations between Indigenous peoples and non-Native Canadians. The recommendations focussed on 4 areas identified as the most impacted by the residential school experience:

Child welfare

Education

Health

Justice
Now…what are you thoughts about calls to action?

Our reflections:

• The issues raised in this report are not going to disappear…even if the report does.

• This report is an excellent tool to educate and to begin a national and international discussion on solutions.

• Canada wants to know “what do Natives want from us? The TRC report provides this in concrete terms.

• It is up to you to take action; Native people seem to be taking responsibility for their own healing, what are you doing?
Why is it up to Canadians to take action regarding reconciliation of colonization (residential schools, child welfare, health care, etc.) of Indigenous peoples?
Conclusions...

- **Racism and negative stereotypes** of Aboriginal people continue to be a major issue for Canadian, as they are ostracized and isolated from mainstream society, and this immediately evident in lack of Indigenous culture and identity in most urban spaces.

- The influence of family, community, and knowing the history and background of one’s ancestors, and **having reflected in the environment in terms of physical space and programming**, especially at a young age creates pride and strengthens Indigenous identity, increasing efficacy in health, education and employment (Stewart et al, 2011, 2012, 2015).
Connection to culture through ceremony, language, peers and involvement with other community members strengthens identity but without buildings, structures, streets, parks, and more that reflect this identity, it is near IMPOSSIBLE TO REALIZE...
Holistic Approach to Urban Development & Healing

* Holistic approach in an Indigenous contexts means incorporating the spiritual, the emotional, the physical and the mental ways of being into urban development at multiple levels (Stewart 2011/12/13)
Mahsi cho!

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