

Aboriginal

Aboriginal is an umbrella term that refers to the First peoples of Canada stemming from Canada's *Constitution Act, 1982*, which recognizes three groups of Aboriginal peoples: First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Indigenous scholars such as Alfred and Cornthassel (2005) reject the term as "a state construction that is instrumental to the state's attempt to gradually subsume Indigenous existences into its own constitutional system and body politic" (p. 598). In other words, *Aboriginal* can be seen as a government-imposed identity that advances the assimilation and colonial assault of Indigenous peoples.

Assimilation

Refers to the colonial process of absorbing one cultural group into another. Assimilation in Canada involves aggressive laws and policies including special confinement and the removal of children from their families and territories and forcibly placing them in residential schools.

Dispossession

The action of depriving someone of land, property, or other possessions. Manuel and Derrickson (2015) note the stark statistics of land dispossession on lands occupied by the Canadian state: Indigenous peoples now control .2 percent of the land while settlers control 99.8 percent. This, they argue, is the cause of the impoverishment of Indigenous peoples.

Doctrine of Discovery

The Doctrine of Discovery is a concept of public international law expounded which holds that when European nations "discovered" non-European lands, they had legal rights over that land, such as sovereignty and title, regardless of the fact that Indigenous peoples lived on that land, and had their own relationships with the land, including complex cultural and political systems.

Colonialism

Colonialism can be seen as a process, as dispossession of and disconnection from land, as a structure, and as a specific form of domination. Hart and Rowe (2014) define colonialism in this way:

Colonialism is the evolving processes where we, as peoples of this land, face impositions— from genocide, to assimilation, to marginalization—of views, ideas, beliefs, values, and practices by other peoples at the cost of our lives, views, ideas, beliefs, values, practices, lands, and/or resources. It is when we, as peoples of this land, are stopped, hindered, cajoled, and/or manipulated from making and enacting decisions about our lives, individually and as a group, because of being a person of the peoples of this land. (p. 35)

Alfred (n.d.) and Hart (2002) emphasize the colonial assault on the connection between Indigenous peoples and the land for the benefit of settler society, while Craft (in Carlson, Rowe, Story, & Zegeye-Gebrehiwot, 2016) says, "Colonialism is appropriation of land and rebuilding of land that's often based on doctrines of discovery, or the idea that there is no prior occupation" (2:47-2:58). Wolfe (1999) describes the structural presence of colonialism: "The colonizers came to stay—invasion is a structure, not an event" (p. 2). Leanne Simpson (2013) writes of colonialism as very present and as reproduced daily: "Colonialism was and is a choice that Canadians make every day. It is a choice to maintain and uphold a system that is based on the hyperexploitation of the land and of Indigenous peoples" (p. 53). From our perspectives, each of these definitions expose important dimensions to understanding colonialism in Canada. Also, we define colonialism similarly to the word *colonization*.

Decolonization

Just as colonialism operates and is reproduced at many levels and in multiple ways, so decolonization requires work at multiple levels and using multiple strategies, some of which may be specific to one's identity on these lands. Waziyatawin and Yellow Bird (2012) offer the following definition: "Decolonization is the meaningful and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our [Indigenous people's] minds, bodies, and lands" (p.3). They emphasize that "Decolonization is engaged for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realizing Indigenous liberation" (p. 3). Lowman and Barker (2015) frame decolonization as "an intensely political and transformative process with the goal of regenerating Indigenous nationhood and place-relationships while dismantling structures of settler colonialism that oppose or seek to eliminate Indigenous peoples from the land" (p. 111). Dine' activist Klee Benally (2013) describes decolonization as being a deeply personal as well as collective process of Indigenous communities which includes re-learning traditional languages, reconnecting with traditional food systems, learning one's prayers and cultural practices, taking down colonially imposed tribal governments, and simply reconnecting to being who one is.

Residential Schools

Residential schools were government organized and funded religious schools established to assimilate Aboriginal children into Euro-Canadian culture. Residential schools disrupted lives and communities, causing long-term and intergenerational trauma. The Residential School Era spanned from the 1800s -1997.

Indigenous

Refers to groups of first peoples who are especially protected in international or national legislation as having a set of specific rights based on their historical ties to a particular territory, and their cultural or historical distinctiveness from other populations. Some original peoples prefer to be identified by their specific nation (e.g. Anishinaabe, Dakota).

Multiculturalism

The Canadian Multiculturalism Act sees multiculturalism as a "fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity" (3b). Henry and Tator (2010) note that "while 'tolerating,' 'accommodating,' 'appreciating,' and 'celebrating' differences, [multiculturalism] allows for the preservation of the cultural hegemony of the dominant group" (p. 39). Therefore, multiculturalism does little to address systemic colonialism or systemic racism.

Oppression

Oppression requires both power and prejudice. Beyond individual prejudice, it involves the "marginalization of one social group by a more powerful social group for the social, economic, and political benefit of the more powerful social group" (OpenSource Leadership Strategies, n.d., p. 2).

Smudging

A cultural practice of some Indigenous nations, which involves the lighting of plant medicines (commonly sage, sweetgrass, or cedar) and pulling the smoke over the body or through physical spaces for cleansing purposes.

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