



# DECOLONIZATION AND SOCIOLOGY

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## **Contributors**

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## Introduction

This guide is meant to help sociologists understand the basic arguments around “decolonization”, its relationship to sociology, and how to practice decolonization through pedagogy. This is a “living document”, meaning that we are adding to and adjusting the content based on ongoing conversations around practicing decolonization. The document is a collaborative effort that includes the perspectives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, professors, and local community members, including Elders.

**Section I** explains decolonization. **Section II** reviews how sociologists can incorporate the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) *calls to action* and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) *calls for justice* into their teaching and pedagogy. **Section III** provides additional definitions and resources for further reading on these subjects.

## Section I: context and definitions

### What is “decolonization” responding to?

Colonization is not a historical event, but a structural aspect of settler-societies affecting the life chances of Indigenous peoples into the present (Wolfe 2006). Decolonization is a response to 1) the structural inequities of Canadian society that disproportionately harm Indigenous peoples; and 2) stereotypes and myths about Indigenous peoples and cultures. While decolonization might be new to universities, Indigenous peoples have been resisting colonial processes and asserting Indigenous sovereignty, spaces, and self-determination since early contact with settlers.

Indigenous peoples in Canada are disproportionately affected by poverty, hunger, poor health and living conditions, have higher rates of unemployment and suicide, and lower rates of education, wealth, and income compared to average Canadians (Dickason & Long 2011; Howard & Proulx 2011; Statistics Canada 2019; Bourassa, Blind, Dietrich, & Oleson 2015; Bourassa 2008; Gordon & White 2014). Indigenous women and children fare even worse on almost every possible measure. First Nations children on reserve and off-reserve experience poverty rates of 53% and 41%, respectively, while 32% of non-status First Nations children, 25% of Inuit children, and 22% of Métis children live in poverty (Sarangi, 2020). Indigenous women and girls are five times more likely to experience violence than any other population in Canada (Assembly of First Nations 2021). From 2001 to 2014, the average rate of homicides involving Indigenous female victims was four times higher than the homicide rates for non-Indigenous female victims (Assembly of First Nations 2021). The current struggles faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada are inseparable from the country’s colonial foundation and overtly anti-Indigenous policies.

Indigenous peoples also face racial discrimination in modern Canadian society. With over a century of Eurocentric nation-building and meritocratic ideology taught in Canadian public schools (Schick & St. Denis 2005, Robson 2013) alongside broader ignorance of Indigenous cultures and colonial history (Godlewska, Moore, & Bednasek 2017), many Canadians demonstrate anti-Indigenous prejudices and interpret Indigenous struggles and trauma through racist caricatures, such as the “drunken Indian” stereotype or the widely discredited “culture of poverty” thesis (Harding 2005: 326; Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996a: 581; Vowel 2016: 151; McDermott & Vossoughi 2020). Wylie and McConkey (2019)

show how Indigenous peoples face abusive treatment, stereotyping, and reduced quality of care in Canada's healthcare system, which can discourage Indigenous people from accessing it. Education scholars have shown how Indigenous students face mockery and racial bias in public schools, including lowered expectations by teachers, which has well-documented negative effects on student outcomes (Riley & Ungerleider 2012; Clark, Kleiman, Spanierman, Isaac, and Poolokasingham 2014). Indigenous peoples are also subject to housing discrimination (Motz & Currie 2019; Cohen & Corrado 2004), racial profiling by police (Smith 2006), are denied bail more frequently when incarcerated, and continue to be sentenced to custody in greater proportions than non-Indigenous offenders, despite initiatives designed to address sentencing disparities, such as the Gladue principles (Clark 2019, see also Cardoso 2020).

Despite massive racial inequalities on par with the United States (Gilmore 2015), Canada is widely celebrated for its racial politics and enjoys a reputation as a "political utopia" or "progressive paradise" (The Intercept 2019, Beauchamp 2016, Joseph 2018b), an identity that many Canadians take pride in (Reitz, 2011: 18, 21, see also Tetrault, Bucerius, & Haggerty 2020, Stewart 2014). While attitudes toward Indigenous peoples have slightly improved (Neuman 2016: 12), and the Canadian government has taken steps to highlight and address some Indigenous issues, little progress has been made overall regarding the material well-being of Indigenous peoples, such as housing and poverty. In some instances, Indigenous peoples fare worse than a decade earlier, such as with increased unemployment, deteriorating health, and growing incarceration rates (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2020: ch. 2, Zinger 2020).

### What is decolonization?

While decolonization is a global project, it proposes action and change within specific lands, and amongst specific peoples. Consequently, decolonization necessitates attention to context, especially the histories and material legacies of nation-states. In Canada, decolonization is a long-term process involving two major components:

#### 1) **Visibility**

First, ***decolonization is about acknowledging Indigenous peoples, land, and sovereignty, and the myriad of ways that imperialism and colonialism continue to manifest in Canada's status quo, which disproportionately harms Indigenous peoples.*** A key feature of colonialism is making Indigenous peoples invisible.

Decolonization elevates Indigenous perspectives and knowledge while drawing attention to the issues affecting Indigenous peoples. This includes engaging with the impacts of intergenerational trauma from residential schools and the sixties scoop, ongoing struggles against corporate threats to Indigenous lands, such as pollution and pipeline expansion, how racist thinking and stereotypes about Indigenous peoples permeate Canadian education, government, popular media, and "common sense", and how Indigenous poverty and overrepresentation in the criminal justice system stems from colonial history. Colonialism also imposed European patriarchy upon Indigenous peoples, manifesting in laws such as the Indian Act, which denied Indigenous women certain rights, political power, and allowed for the removal of women's "Indian" status. Decolonization recognizes how gendered inequalities continue into the present and involves empowering Indigenous women.

For both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, the first step toward decolonization involves reckoning with how we are personally implicated in processes that can reproduce ideas and practices harmful to Indigenous peoples. For non-Indigenous persons, this means interrogating one's own beliefs about Indigenous

peoples and culture, such as asking: what assumptions am I making about Indigenous peoples? How have I benefited from colonialism? How am I reproducing harmful ideas or practices? How can I create stronger relationships with Indigenous people? How can I learn more?

## 2) Action

Second, ***decolonization involves Indigenous-led collaborations with non-Indigenous peoples to advance real material change by restoring Indigenous culture, language, and history, and through addressing power imbalances in society.*** If the first step of decolonization is recognizing the problem, the second step is working to dismantle that discourse, practice, or process, and rebuild anew to advance Indigenous self-determination, sovereignty, and material well-being. Without this second step, decolonization is little more than a symbolic gesture or tokenism. Acting on decolonization involves cooperation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and such initiatives must be Indigenous-led. The practice of introducing or increasing Indigenous influence is sometimes called “indigenization” or “indigenizing” (see Gaudry & Lorenz 2018).

Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) argue that not all forms of indigenization are decolonial. Academic writings on the limits of Indigenization or “Indigenism” originate in South American scholarship, such as works by Columbian scholars Friede, Friedemann, and Fajardo (1975). These scholars critique certain Indigenization processes for being assimilationist or reproducing the status quo, referred to as “state Indigenism” (Garcia-Bravo 2009:48). Garcia-Bravo (2009) explains how, since the 1970s, Indigenous peoples have become more involved in Indigenization processes that challenge state assimilation, which Latin American scholars refer to as “critical Indigenism”(49). A common example includes some “equity, diversity, and inclusion” (EDI) initiatives, which Indigenizes by hiring Indigenous staff. However, such efforts are not inherently decolonial, because hiring practices alone do not inherently address the root causes of social inequalities (Gaudry & Lorenz 2018). Altogether, decolonial action aspires for substantive equality, rather than formal equality. Formal equality acknowledges that all people must be treated equally, and tends to promote “equal representation” in institutions and culture. While representation is important, formal equality does not directly address how society places some groups at a disadvantage. By contrast, substantive equality involves recognizing those disadvantages that certain groups face and taking practical steps to address those inequalities. Decolonization strives for substantive equality.

For action to occur, context is central, as Indigenous peoples are not homogenous, nor are their struggles or interests. This means that there is no grand theory of action nor “one size fits all” approach to decolonization and indigenization. Instead, taking action means constant local engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, communities, and institutions. A school district Indigenizing a curriculum, for instance, can consult Indigenous communities whose land the schools were built upon. Workers programs can collaborate with Indigenous communities to determine their economic and employment needs. Universities can build Indigenous community partnerships for creating and disseminating knowledge.

Altogether, decolonization involves developing contextual, practical, and realistic goals, and recognizing the barriers and challenges to achieving those goals. Meaningful action must also demonstrate how certain decolonial practices have worked, or explain why they have not worked.

While there are many competing views about decolonization, there tends to be agreement that through action and collaboration, change can occur (Ritskes 2012). Decolonization is also an *ongoing process*, rather than an end-product. In other words, we cannot “arrive” at decolonization, nor a “post”-colonial institution or society. Just as colonialism is a permanent fixture of our collective histories and identities, conversations and collaborations to decolonize must also be permanent.

As Sium, Desai, and Ritskes (2012) put it, decolonization is a “tangible unknown”. While we can be certain about the present issues facing Indigenous peoples and the initial steps for pursuing action (outlined here), the future pathways to healing, restoration, and reclamation are uncertain. Decolonization is a necessarily exploratory process encouraging practical self-reflection, self-discovery, and relationship-building to better address the urgent issues affecting Indigenous people and communities.

## Section II: practicing decolonization as a sociology instructor

### What is sociology’s relationship to de/colonization?

While sociology is important for critiquing colonialism, the discipline began as a project of social control promoting Western-colonial thought (Connell 2018). Auguste Comte coined the word “sociology” in 1839 as part of an initiative to not only understand the social world, but also to *manage* it. As Go (2017) explains, the word “social” originally meant the space between nature and the spirit realm – which resonated with 19<sup>th</sup> century European elites to make sense of and regulate social upheaval and resistance from workers, women, and Indigenous peoples (see also Owens 2015; Steinmetz 1990). Sociology also played a key role in promoting scientific racism during this period. Sociologist Herbert Spencer, one of the most influential European thinkers of his time, coined “survival of the fittest”, a social Darwinist phrase used to justify racial hierarchies and colonialism, and later inform the policies of racial segregation and eugenics. Sociologists also played a crucial role in justifying and developing South African apartheid. The first professor of sociology appointed in South Africa was apartheid’s central architect (Taylor 1989).

As scholars such as Dorothy Smith (1989) and Patricia Hill Collins (2000) have shown, sociology also repressed worldviews inconsistent with the white patriarchal status quo, such as the study of race and gender issues. Dominant scholars often dismissed these areas of study as subjective and serving “special interest groups”, as though dominant sociology had not been defined by the subjectivities and “special interests” of white men (see Go 2017). For example, Morris (2015) outlines how the discipline marginalized the first Black sociologist, W.E.B. DuBois. For decades, Du Bois faced discrimination in the university and sociologists neglected his cutting-edge contributions to understanding crime, race, and social problems more generally, as well as his methodological contributions to mixed methods and historical inquiry. Many dismissed Du Bois’ work on the basis that the experiences and struggles of Black Americans were a “special interest” topic. In Du Bois words: “We rated merely as Negroes studying Negroes, and after all, what had Negroes to do with America or Science?” (Du Bois 1944: par. 52).

As Ritskes (2012) puts it: how we decolonize is directly connected to how we are implicated in colonial traditions. Sociology has played a notable role in justifying, reproducing, and creating colonial projects. While the discipline has developed a rich tradition of decolonial theory since the 1950s, there is much work to be done as researchers and educators (Connell 2018). The following sections explore some ways that sociology educators can practice decolonization.

## Basic considerations in the classroom

Indigenous peoples in Canada disproportionately struggle with mental and physical health, and intergenerational trauma can negatively affect domestic life for Indigenous students. Promoting decolonization and creating an inclusive classroom requires compassion and vigilance regarding the potential needs of Indigenous peoples. The following are basic pedagogical principles when teaching and interacting with Indigenous students:

1. **Many Indigenous peoples are impacted by crime, violence, and/or sexual violence** (especially Indigenous women). Instructors can minimize re-traumatization by providing content warnings before difficult material, including lectures about colonization (such as discussing residential schools).
2. **Indigenous students may require more time for assignments.** This can be related to personal mental or physical health issues, as well as family life. For instance, the mortality rates for Indigenous peoples can be up to five times higher than the non-Indigenous population (Friesen 2019). Consequently, Indigenous peoples attend funerals at much higher rates, which can lead them to fall behind in school or work. Many Indigenous students are also parents and must balance family obligations with university work. Instructors can accommodate Indigenous students with more lenient deadlines and should not inquire about why the extension is needed.
3. **Do not treat Indigenous students as “experts” on Indigenous cultures**, such as asking them to speak on behalf of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Indigenous cultures and communities are extremely diverse, making this an impossible task that creates emotional pressure for the student. When discussing Indigenous issues, instructors should emphasize the incredible diversity of Indigenous peoples and cultures.
4. **Indigenous students often feel isolated and/or marginalized in the classroom** due to discrimination on campus, a lack of Indigenous curriculum, and/or general ignorance about Indigeneity by university instructors or staff. Demonstrating knowledge and teaching about Indigenous issues and decolonization can help Indigenous students feel welcome and their education feel more meaningful.
5. **Spend more time on introductions for students, instructors, and Indigenous scholars.** Personal introductions are important in many Indigenous cultures and there is no “correct” way to introduce oneself. Introductions can involve acknowledging your cultural background and relationship to the land, and discussing your ancestry (see Koschack 2018). Instructors can also spend time introducing Indigenous scholars, such as by outlining their ancestral lands and culture.
6. **Teach or incorporate the TRC’s calls to action or National Inquiry’s calls for justice.** As discussed below, the TRC and National Inquiry outline dozens of concrete ways that we can help support Indigenous peoples and communities. These calls apply to almost all areas of life and might be relevant to course material you’re teaching.

## Sociological education and the TRC Calls to Action, MMIWG Calls for Justice

Scholars such as Emberley (2007), Cote-Meek (2014), and Anderson (2012) have outlined pedagogical philosophy and strategies for Indigenizing courses. Borrowing from post-structural theory, decolonial pedagogy “de-naturalizes” taken for granted assumptions that students tend to hold about society and social issues and groups. In particular, this approach draws students’ attention to how mainstream norms and knowledges are based on colonial mythology rather than being “natural”, scientific, or rational, such as the popular assumption that wealth inequality in Canada is a result of personal merit, rather than the country’s colonial legacy and other

structural elements. Indigenizing the classroom also borrows from critical race theory, emphasizing how racism is normative, pervasive, and systemic. This often involves challenging the popular assumption that racism is primarily a problem of bad attitudes and personal prejudices. Instead, scholars such as Anderson (2012) center the discussion on how the status quo reproduces unearned privileges and material disadvantages. Finally, this approach rejects the popular idea that “equal treatment under the law” is enough to achieve racial equality. For example, “treating everyone equally” wrongly assumes that we begin on an even playing field and does nothing to address issues such as racialized poverty or mass incarceration, where Indigenous people now make up almost half of the incarcerated population despite representing only 5% of the general population in Canada. Moreover, “equal treatment under the law” was never possible considering that the Indian Act exists. Addressing Indigenous issues requires developing race-cognizant policies and practices that help uplift Indigenous peoples and communities.

There are various strategies instructors can take to Indigenize their classrooms. Anderson (2012), for instance, suggests that instructors draw more attention to local contexts and whiteness. Oftentimes, teachers discuss racism and colonialism as abstract and happening “someplace else”, such as historically, and/or among other areas of society (74). Moreover, universities are populated predominantly by non-Indigenous students. He suggests localizing this discussion by encouraging students to reflect on their relationships with Indigenous peoples, and for non-Indigenous students to consider how they have benefited personally from colonialism and whiteness.

Another way to Indigenize the classroom is to incorporate suggestions by the “Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada” (TRC) and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) into your pedagogy. As part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the Canadian government introduced the TRC, a five year mandate to gather knowledge and educate Canadians about Indian Residential Schools (IRS) and their harmful legacy. The TRC’s 2015 report introduced 94 “calls to action” to help address these problems. In 2016, the government launched the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), responding to the TRC’s call to action #41, addressing the “causes of, and remedies for, the disproportionate victimization of Aboriginal women and girls”. The MMIWG inquiry introduced 18 “calls for justice” (including 231 recommendations) concerning issues such as health and wellness, security, media representation, transportation, policing, prisons, and social work as they relate to Indigenous women, children, and the LGBTQ2S community. While both the TRC and MMIWG reports have their critics (Niezen 2013, APTN 2016), they are useful starting points for practicing decolonizing pedagogy. This section explores how sociologists can incorporate the calls to action and calls for justice into their teaching.

While each report contains specific calls to action and justice for educators, sociology courses train people across disciplines such as health and medicine, social work, government, religion, and the criminal justice system, etcetera. Some sociologists also engage in teaching and research alongside community partners. Consequently, we have outlined all the calls to action and justice that are relevant to education and teaching generally:

### **Education and the TRC Calls to Action:**

The following excerpts are summaries of the TRC’s “Calls to Action” related to education.

- 1) Educate students about the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations (call to action #57).

2) Teach students about the church's role in colonization, the history and legacy of residential schools, and why apologies to former residential school students, their families, and communities were necessary (call to action #59).

3) Educate students about Indigenous peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada (call to action #62i).

4) Educate about Indigenous spiritual beliefs and practices (calls to action #64).

5) Create media initiatives that inform and educate the Canadian public about Indigenous issues, and connect Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians (calls to action #85ii, #86).

6) Educate students about Indigenous athletes in history (call to action #87).

### **Education and the National Inquiry into MMIWG's Calls for Justice:**

The following excerpts are summaries of the National Inquiry to MMIWG's "Calls for Justice" related to education.

1) Teach students to identify and challenge sexualized stereotypes of Indigenous, girls, and LGBTQ2S peoples (call for justice #2.6).

2) Support Indigenous people sharing their stories, from their perspectives, free of bias, discrimination, and false assumptions, and in a trauma-informed and culturally sensitive way (call for justice #6.1, ii).

3) Educate about the unique health struggles faced by Indigenous peoples and communities (call for justice #7.1)

4) Create awareness of the issue of grooming Indigenous children for exploitation and sexual exploitation (call for justice #7.9, #11.2).

5) Educate and create awareness about missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and LGBTQ2S people, and how violence against these groups are related to Canada's colonial history and current government laws and policies. This should involve teaching Indigenous history, law, and practices from Indigenous perspectives and using Their Voices Will Guide Us with children and youth (call for justice #11.1).

6) Educate about the relationship between resource extraction and other development projects to violence against Indigenous women, girls, and LGBTQ2S people (call for justice #13.4).

7) Teach students about Indigenous history in your local area. Celebrate Indigenous Peoples' history, cultures, pride, and diversity, acknowledging the land you live on and its importance to local Indigenous communities, both historically and today (call for justice #15.2, #16.25, #17.24).

8) Educate about discrimination against LGBTQ2S people, especially homophobia and transphobia, in policing (call for justice #18.13).

9) Teach students about pre-colonial knowledge and teachings about the place, roles, and responsibilities of Indigenous LGBTQ2S people, and the history of non-gender binary people in Indigenous societies (call for justice #18.15, #18.19).

## Section III: Resources and further reading

This section provides helpful resources related to decolonization, including links to official reports and documents, as well as definitions for related concepts.

### COVID-19 and Indigenous peoples resources

#### ▲ First Nations Response to COVID-19

Yellowhead Institute. (2020). COVID-19 in Community: How are First Nations Responding? Issue 58. Yellowhead Institute.

LINK: <https://yellowheadinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/covid-respo-nse-brief.pdf>

#### ▲ General report on Indigenous peoples and COVID-19

Mashford-Pringle, A., Skura, C., Stutz, S., & Yohathasan, T. (2021). *What we heard: Indigenous Peoples and COVID-19*. Government of Canada.

LINK: <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/corporate/publications/chief-public-health-officer-reports-state-public-health-canada/from-risk-resilience-equity-approach-covid-19/indigenous-peoples-covid-19-report/cpho-wwh-report-en.pdf>

#### ▲ Indigenous Peoples in Prison

Tetrault, J.E.C. (2022). Indigenizing Prisons: A Canadian Case Study, In Tonry, M., & Bucerius, S., *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research Volume 51: Prisons and Prisoners*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

LINK: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/363496609\\_Indigenizing\\_Prisons\\_A\\_Canadian\\_Case\\_Study](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/363496609_Indigenizing_Prisons_A_Canadian_Case_Study)

#### ▲ Indigenous Peoples in Prison and COVID-19: see pages 501-502.

Ricciardelli, R., Bucerius, S.M., Tetrault, J.E.C., Crewe, B., and Pyrooz, D. (2021). Correctional services during and beyond COVID-19. *FACETS* 6(1):490-516.

LINK: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350730984\\_Correctional\\_services\\_during\\_and\\_beyond\\_COVID-19](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350730984_Correctional_services_during_and_beyond_COVID-19)

#### ▲ COVID-19 and Treaties

Starblanket, G., & Hunt, D. (2020). COVID-19, the Numbered Treaties, and the Politics of Life. Yellowhead Institute.

LINK: <https://yellowheadinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/yi-special-report-covid19-and-treaties.pdf>

## General resources:

### ▲ TRC, Summary of the Final Report:

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future. Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

**LINK:** [https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Executive\\_Summary\\_English\\_Web.pdf](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Executive_Summary_English_Web.pdf)

### ▲ TRC's Calls to Action:

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. Winnipeg, MB.

**LINK:** [https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

### ▲ National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls:

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (2015). Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls,

**LINK, Volume 1a:** [https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final\\_Report\\_Vol\\_1a-1.pdf](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1a-1.pdf)

**LINK, Volume 1b:** [https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final\\_Report\\_Vol\\_1b.pdf](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1b.pdf)

**LINK, Calls for Justice:** [https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls\\_for\\_Justice.pdf](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls_for_Justice.pdf)

### ▲ Information on the Sixties Scoop

**LINK, Indigenous Foundations.arts.ubc.ca:**  
[http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/sixties\\_scoop/](http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/sixties_scoop/)

## Related concepts

**Allyship:** In the context of decolonization, allyship refers to the practical support of decolonial movements by non-Indigenous people and groups. Allyship has increasingly come under scrutiny, as those identifying as "allies" sometimes co-opt decolonial discourse and Indigenous struggles to further their own self-interest and status, or use the movement as an extracurricular activity to feel better about themselves (Swiftwolfe 2019). Consequently, community leaders and

activists have provided guidelines on how to become an ally to Indigenous peoples. Swiftwolfe (2019), for instance, calls for allies to engage in self-education and self-reflection, and to consistently “check in” with their motivations and debrief with Indigenous community members. As she explains, allyship - like decolonization - is a continual process and a way of life. More helpful information can be found in Swiftwolfe’s (2019) *Indigenous Ally Toolkit*.

**Indigenous research methods:** From the perspective of colonized peoples, the term “research” is inseparable from European colonialism, as for hundreds of years academics created and imposed knowledge about Indigenous peoples to justify and reproduce harmful colonial systems (Smith 2008). Indigenous research methods are not simply an Indigenous perspective on certain issues, it is an approach to ethical knowledge creation that engages Indigenous persons as investigators or partners and has benefit for Indigenous peoples and communities.

**Intergenerational trauma:** Also called transgenerational trauma or historical trauma, intergenerational trauma is a psychological term referring to how trauma can be transmitted through generations of people. For Indigenous peoples in Canada, this term is often used to describe how historically violent experiences such as the Sixties Scoops and residential schools have traumatized survivors and impacted their families into the present. This trauma can manifest in anxiety, depression, domestic violence, substance abuse, emotional detachment, and suicidal and homicidal thoughts.

**Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG):** A human rights crisis regarding the extreme numbers of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada. Indigenous women are murdered at a rate between seven and twelve times higher than the national rate. Depending on the year, Indigenous women represent between 16% and 24% of women homicide victims, even though they make up only 4% of the population of women. For many, the crisis represents a fundamental failure of Canadian institutions, and is indicative of a society that does not care about or value the lives of indigenous women.

**LGBTQ2S:** Shorthand for the gay/queer community. “2S” refers to “two-spirit” (2 Spirit or 2S), meaning a person with both a feminine and masculine spirit living in the same body. Some Indigenous cultures and people describe their sexuality, gender identity, and/or spiritual identity as “two spirited”.

**Post-colonial theory:** Postcolonial theory asserts that we cannot understand or respond to the current world without critically interrogating histories of imperialism and colonialism. While the term “postcolonial theory” was not coined until the 1980s, academic works critical of colonialism extend back to the 1950s with Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks*, and Edward Said’s *Orientalism* in 1978. While academics have debated the “post” prefix in postcolonial theory (some opting for de-colonial), the term is not meant to suggest that colonialism has ended nor that it can end.

**Racial colour-blindness:** Racial colour-blindness refers to an ideology where people insist they do not notice race or skin colour – a position which denies how historical legacies of racism affects life chances (Bonilla- Silva, 2014; see also Bell and Hartmann, 2007). Adherents of colour-blindness tend to deny systemic racism and assert that racism is a problem of bad attitudes and ideologies held by a small part of the population (Bonilla-Silva, 1997). Racial colour-blindness is often connected to “post-racist” thinking: the “common-sense” belief that Westernized countries have conquered racism, that race and ethnicity no longer matter; and that “the problems afflicting people of colour are fundamentally rooted in their pathological

cultures” (Bonilla-Silva, 2014: 13). Decolonization rejects “colour-blindness” because it acknowledges and foregrounds how colonial policies have led to modern racial disparities, and consequently calls for race-cognizant responses and policies. Being “race-cognizant” does not mean promoting the idea that race is a “real” biological or scientific category, but rather, acknowledging that the history of race and racism has had consequences into the present.

**Racism:** Racism can be broken down into two main types that often overlap: racial prejudice and systemic racism. Racial prejudice refers to how people can hold biases or hostility toward individuals or groups based on racial stereotypes. This can be a conscious or unconscious racial bias. People acting on these prejudices can lead to racial discrimination and/or interpersonal violence. Racial prejudice also includes “affinity bias”, where a person shows favoritism to a racialized group, such as favoring people who look or act like them, or who they ascribe “positive” stereotypes (typically associated with whiteness). Systemic racism refers to how current racial inequalities (such as racialized poverty and mass incarceration) are lingering consequences of the history of white supremacy and colonialism, which legislated structural advantages to white people, while oppressing Indigenous peoples and people of colour. Dominant institutions and cultural practices in society reproduce these inequalities. Anti-racism (and decolonization) consequently involves acknowledging and identifying systemic racism while taking practical steps to address it.

**Reconciliation:** In Canada, reconciliation has come to mean the official capacity to which the Canadian government manages its legacy of colonialism by attempting to better its relationship with Indigenous peoples, defined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report as follows: “Reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour”. While the official definition differs little from “decolonization”, many have criticized reconciliation as little more than a symbolic gesture to prevent real material change by the Canadian government. Scholars have also critiqued the word itself. As Chrisjohn and Wasacase (2009) explain, “reconciliation” suggests returning to a previously harmonious relationship that, in the context of Canadian colonization, never existed in the first place.

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