

After the land acknowledgement statement: Re-centering Indigenous countries as our site of learning in university education on Turtle Island

While many universities in Canada have adopted formal land acknowledgements recognizing the traditional territory of Indigenous nations, in practice these often do very little in terms of substantially supporting Indigenous sovereignty.

THIS POSTER INVITES PARTICIPANTS TO THINK ABOUT HOW THE ACADEMY MIGHT BE TRANSFORMED THROUGH TREATING INDIGENOUS NATIONS AS COUNTRIES RATHER THAN NATIONS-WITHIN-NATIONS. WHAT POSSIBILITIES MIGHT EMERGE FROM RE-LOCATING OURSELVES WITHIN INDIGENOUS COUNTRIES INSTEAD OF "ACKNOWLEDGING TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES" WITHIN CANADA?

RECENTERING THE FACT THAT YOUR UNIVERSITY IS OPERATING WITHIN AN INDIGENOUS COUNTRY CAN..

SUPPORT and uphold the jurisdiction of Indigenous countries and their governments in everyday life and in academic practice.

PROVIDE the context needed for creating mandatory foundations courses geared towards making all graduates of your university familiar with the history and culture of the country they are studying in (See for example CBU's MIKM 2701) and increase access to Indigenous languages and place names through Indigenous language and land based curriculum.

BUILD your schools' capacity for producing graduates that follow Indigenous law while working in professional fields currently operating within Canadian legal frameworks (ex. Urban Planning, Resource Management, Business, Law).

CREATE the opportunity for the international community to engage with the wide range of Indigenous knowledge production being produced in Indigenous countries while centering scholarship produced by Indigenous scholars and their contributions to all fields of education.

EDUCATE Canadian citizens about the history of British colonialism in North America and their responsibilities to hold the Canadian government responsible when it oversteps its jurisdiction in the name of nationalism.

INSPIRE scholarship that does not centre the continuation of British rule and settler governance structures as the only possible futures for settler populations to live with Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island.

TRANSFORMING ACADEMIC PRACTICE: 3 CASE STUDIES FROM YORK UNIVERSITY

Beyond the Politics of Recognition in Urban Planning:

In Tkaronto, students who study Urban Planning are taught to embrace the profession's role in upholding Canadian rule on Indigenous land. My Master's research in Tkaronto challenged this uni-lateral approach to development by arguing that planners have a duty to uphold Indigenous law while working in Indigenous countries. My research allowed me to learn more about the Indigenous history and the colonization of Tkaronto while collaborating with Indigenous community members to talk about what upholding Indigenous sovereignty in the city might look like.

Canada 150 or British-Canada 255:

Despite the celebration of Canada's '150th birthday' by the federal government last year, the Canadian nation state operating in Indigenous countries has been a British colony under monarchy rule for the past 255 years (since the end of the 7 years war). Through unmasking British colonialism in my doctoral research, I have been able to compare North American examples of colonialism in Indigenous countries with patterns of British colonialism around the world.

Teaching International Development in Tkaronto:

Teaching International Development Studies while taking up the position that Indigenous nations should be viewed as countries has transformed my ability to teach my students to analyze development in North America as a form of international development. By allowing them to think through the nation-to-nation relationships between Canada and Indigenous nations, students begin to recognize that they do not need to look abroad to find urgent case studies of struggles for self-determination and environmental justice in development.

WHAT MIGHT TREATING MI'KMA'KI AS A COUNTRY LOOK LIKE?

Around the world, countries are seen to have jurisdiction over :

NATIONAL LANGUAGES & PLACE NAMES
CITIZENSHIP
LAND-USE
EDUCATION
JUSTICE SYSTEMS & LAW ENFORCEMENT
TAXES & FINANCES
ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION

As some of you know the Miikmaq are already global leaders when it comes to efforts for all of the above, but educating people that they live in a country under Miikmaq jurisdiction could open up a variety of new possibilities including:

The potential for the adoption of formal bi-lingualism with Miikmaq as a first language for people living in Miikma'ki and the use of Miikmaq place names on signs and public spaces.

The use of new world maps that show Miikma'ki and other Indigenous countries rather than demarcating N. America as 'Canada' and the U.S.A.

All countries including Canada and the nations in international governance bodies like the UN and WTO seeking approval for actions in Miikma'ki from the Miikmaq Confederacy.

An end to illegal seizure and extraction of natural resources from Miikma'ki by corporate and colonial authorities who do not have free, prior, informed consent.

POSTER PREPARED BY: AEDAN ALDERSON, PHD CANDIDATE AT THE FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES, YORK UNIVERSITY (AEDANALDERSON@GMAIL.COM)

AEDAN'S CURRENT RESEARCH AIMS TO COMPARATIVELY EXAMINE IRISH AND MIK'MAQ HISTORY AND THE ONGOING IMPACTS OF BRITISH COLONIALISM ON EVERYDAY LIFE IN IRELAND AND MI'KMA'KI.