

# Decolonization

Infographic prepared by: Molly Taylor

This factsheet is based on Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's article entitled *Decolonization is not a Metaphor*. This factsheet also provides strategies and resources for decolonization at the end.

## Territorial Acknowledgement

I acknowledge and respect the lək̓ʷəŋən peoples on whose traditional territory I made this work. I realize that a territorial acknowledgment is insufficient and that words and



## Colonialism



Offered here are definitions of external, internal, and settler colonialism. Please note that neither external nor internal colonialism utterly depicts the colonialism transpiring on Turtle Island, the Indigenous name for what is often presently called North America.

**External colonialism:** External colonialism refers to the European seizing elements of Indigenous worlds, plants, peoples, and animals to provide privilege and wealth to the European colonizer who "claimed" the land. It also brings about military colonialism that involves forming war fronts/state borders and enlisting foreign resources, land, and people into military processes.

**Internal colonialism:** Internal colonialism refers to the geopolitical and biopolitical governing of people and land within a given imperial state's borders. For this, modes of control, imprisonment, and the transport of individuals across borders mobilize to assert the metropole. Further, internal colonialism is structural and interpersonal; its strategies include divestment, segregation, criminalization, and surveillance.

**Settler colonialism:** Settler colonialism is a structure that mobilizes imperialism transnationally. It entails settlers arriving in another's territory to claim ownership over the land and to assert their sovereignty. Thus, land, water, air, and earth are central to settler colonialism as it authorizes a new tenancy and source of capital.

## Decolonization



- Decolonization is devoted to securing Indigenous futurity and sovereignty.
- Decolonization is not to reconcile settler guilt, nor is it a philanthropic process, a generic term for resisting oppression, or even an attempt to transfigure Indigenous politics to a Western doctrine of liberation.
- The Decolonization process entails nothing less than the complete reparation of Indigenous life and land; it is not concerned with "making things better" in our society.
- Decolonization is an unsettling historical process distinct from other human rights and civil-based social justice projects.
- Decolonization requires all settlers to become landless, calls for the elimination of settler property rights and sovereignty.
- Decolonization requires unsettling settlers.



## Settler Moves to Innocence



"moves to innocence—reconcile settler guilt, complicity and rescue settler futurity."

These moves to innocence are settler fantasies of more comfortable paths to reconciliation.

1.

### Settler Nativism



Settler nativism is an attempt by settlers to deflect their identity while still relishing settler privilege, inhabiting stolen land, and imagining an Indigenous past and settler future. Claiming distant Indigenous ancestry to avoid accountability for colonization is an act of settler nativism. However, claiming Indigenous ancestry does not couple with tribal membership; if you are not Indigenous, a distant Indigenous ancestor does not make you non-complicit in colonialism.

2.

### Settler Fantasies

As the word suggests, this move to innocence is a fantasy. These fantasies refer to the adoption of Indigenous practices, knowledges, and imagined settler colonial narratives in which Indigenous peoples willingly handed over their land and their very selves to settlers. This fantasy is advantageous for settlers as it fosters a love for the land, which enables this sense of belonging.



3.

### Re-occupation & Urban Homesteading

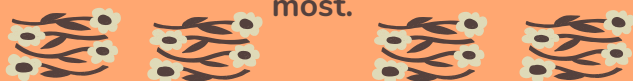


The Occupy Movement of Wall Street, on September 17, 2011, confronted the top 1% in the U.S. and called for the suitable reallocation of economic wealth. However, this idea of redistributing wealth overlooks how wealth in itself is the Indigenous land that settlers' unlawfully seized through colonization and occupation. Therefore, to "occupy everything" damages land relations and Indigenous sovereignty, impeding decolonization. For example, urban homesteading is problematic as it evades Indigenous sovereignty through its practice of re-settling land in this manner of "self-styled pioneers in a mythical frontier."

4.

### At Risk-ing/Asterisk-ing

In educational research, Indigenous peoples become depicted as either "at-risk" or asterisk peoples. "At risk" implies that Indigenous peoples are nearing extinction, are inevitable to self-destructive tendencies, and are economically and culturally deprived. Likewise, Indigenous communities become asterisk peoples since--in large data sets that inform public policy and Indigenous lives--they get depicted by an asterisk at most.



What is & What is Not

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## Conscientization

Shifting the focus away from renouncing stolen land is a move to innocence. Conscientization is a diversion to relieve settler guilt and privilege whilst avoiding the need to give up power, privilege, and land. "Decolonizing the mind" or adopting critical consciousness does not disrupt settler colonialism or embody decolonization. If you are a settler, your efforts might be more harmful than productive and thus, be mindful.

## Importance & Significance

This infographic is a distillation of Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's 2012 article, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor." They are concerned with how decolonization's sole purpose has become distorted into a mere metaphor. Decolonization as a metaphor is inappropriate. As a metaphor, it recenters the settler, renders innocence to the settler, and envisions a settler future, destroying the possibility for actual decolonization. Drawing from Indigenous activists and scholars who have founded frameworks and theories of decolonization is needed to understand the Indigenous struggle for sovereignty and land. Unfortunately, sustaining this decolonization protocol has been challenging as the concept is becoming domesticated, or put differently, it is being appropriated. Decolonization must be un-tamed and returned to its unsettling state.

5.

## Colonial Equivocation

Colonial equivocation suggests colonization as a homogenizing concept. Put differently, it views various experiences of oppression as colonization, even when they are not. Equivocating is problematic for Indigenous peoples because it ignores how colonialism has impacted land, power, wealth, and settler law in its specific context. This matters as even people of color can become subordinate settlers once they attain cultural and legal entitlement. Therefore proceed with caution in discourse, and remember that colonialism is not the source of all experiences of oppression.

"Settlers are diverse, not just of white European descent, and include people of color, even from other colonial contexts."



## Incommensurability



"Incommensurability is an acknowledgement that decolonization will require a change in the order of the world."

The "ethic of incommensurability" posits how decolonization projects differ from civil and human rights-based projects. Decolonization is incomparable to other anti-colonial struggles; much of it is incommensurable. Therefore, this concept is considerably unsettling for settlers as it involves forfeiting settler futurity, deserting this idea of reconciliation, and undoing settler innocence.

## Closing Remarks

Decolonization concerns the utter reparation of all Indigenous land. Likewise, decolonization requires Indigenous life, sovereignty, and futurity. I encourage you to use the link below to give Tuck and Yang's article a read!

Link:

<https://clas.osu.edu/sites/clas.osu.edu/files/Tuck%20and%20Yang%202012%20Decolonization%20is%20not%20a%20metaphor.pdf>

Below are two additional resources—the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Final Report—if you want to explore decolonization further.



## United Nation's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted on September 13, 2007, by the General Assembly. In total, the Declaration consists of 46 articles that frame the rights of Indigenous peoples. I encourage you to enhance your learning by looking at the declaration yourself; the link is below!

Link:

[https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf)

Additional Resources

## Truth and Reconciliation



### Commission



After six years of hearings and testimonies from Residential School survivors, on June 2, 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) released its summary report. The TRC's summary report included 94 Calls-to-Action that call upon the Canadian state to address the "cultural" genocide it perpetuated against Indigenous peoples. Below is a link to the TRC's 94 Calls-to-Action and another resource that includes '150 Acts of Reconciliation' for you to attempt.

150 Acts of Reconciliation:  
<https://activehistory.ca/2017/08/150-acts-of-reconciliation-for-the-last-150-days-of-canadas-150/>

TRC's 94 Calls-to-Action:  
<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524494530110/1557511412801>

Links:

## Self-Location

\*Self-location: my name is Molly Taylor (She/Her/Hers), and I identify as a cisgender female of mixed European (mother) and Metis (father) descent. I was born and raised on Treaty 1 territory (Winnipeg, Manitoba) but currently reside on the unceded territory of the ləkʷəŋən peoples (Victoria, B.C.) to attend the University of Victoria. As a person of mixed descent, this topic perplexes my identity. However, I acknowledge that I need to unpack my identity to better position myself in relation to colonization.



## Works Cited



Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2012). Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action.

Tuck, E., & Yang, K. (2012). Decolonization is not a Metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1). pp. 1–40.

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