

WHAT GETS IN THE WAY OF SETTLER DECOLONIZATION EFFORTS? A GUIDE.

Settler actions uphold colonial worldviews, which are often left unquestioned; this acceptance of colonial practices by settlers is an invisible dynamic of settler colonialism. This guide is a starting point to begin understanding what decolonization truly means.

Settler colonialism:

- based on the creation of a country (Canada), on stolen Indigenous land, because settlers never received consent to be here.
- the appropriation of Indigenous land and life by newcomers
- the land becomes the settlers' new home and a source of capital through the creation of private property.
- achieved through violence upon settler arrival, which is reasserted each day of occupation with the goal of disrupting Indigenous relations to the land.
- Continues to be upheld by current events such as ongoing violence experienced by Indigenous peoples in Canada. An example of this is the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

It is the behaviour of settlers that continues to uphold the structures of settler colonialism.



Decolonization: Decolonization at its core is an unsettling concept. Decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life and is not a metaphor for other things that need to improve.

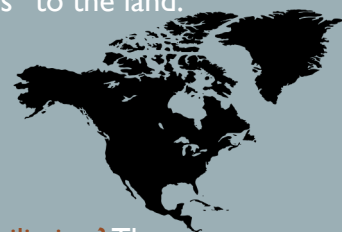
What to look out for: Decolonization is often used casually and in the wrong way. De-centering the settler perspective is not the same thing as decolonization because decolonization must be backed by action. At its core, decolonization is the repatriation of land, it is Land Back.



So, settlers moved here, does that make us immigrants?

Settlers are not immigrants.

Immigrants are held to the laws and epistemologies of the land they migrate to, whereas across Canada, settlers have disregarded Indigenous laws in favour of creating their own. This can be seen as an attempt for settlers to "Indigenize themselves" to the land.









Synonym for decolonization: A synonym for decolonization does not exist.




But what about reconciliation? The desire for reconciliation can be seen as a continuation of the settlers' desire not to deal with being on stolen land, but instead to move on and move forward to a 'normal' settler future.



Settler moves to innocence: are the ways that settlers often try to avoid decolonization and actually giving up land, power or privilege. This is often seen as a framework of excuses, distractions and diversions from doing the real work of decolonization.

- **Settler nativism:** Settlers locate/invent long lost Indigenous ancestry or “Indian blood,” while still benefitting from settler privilege and power. This upholds the Indigenous racial classifications and restrictive blood quantum rules that have attempted to eliminate Indigenous identities. 
- **Settler adoption fantasy:** The idea that someone can become “Indian”, without really ‘becoming’ “Indian”. This appropriation of Indigenous pain fantasizes a settler becoming innocent, heroic and indigenous against a backdrop of national guilt. 
- **Colonial equivocation:** This move to innocence homogenizes various experiences of oppression determining that “we are all colonized,” and therefore none of us are settlers. This avoids truly engaging with colonialism because it denies the very power dynamics at play that uphold settler colonialism. 
- **Free your mind and the rest will follow/conscientization:** Focusing on decolonizing the mind and creating critical consciousness without decolonizing the land. But, until stolen land is relinquished, critical consciousness does not turn into action that disrupts settler colonialism. 
- **At-risking/asterisking:** Rendering Indigenous peoples visible through labelling them as “at risk.” This asterisks Indigenous peoples which does not reduce the harm of white supremacy nor does it lead to decolonization. Instead it is a body count that does not account for Indigenous education, politics or epistemologies. 
- **Reoccupation/Urban Home-steading:** Centers the idea that the occupation of land is a colonial right, which reveals the limits of settler solidarity with Indigenous peoples. 

The goal of decolonization is for Indigenous peoples to have sovereignty once again over their own lands. It is not for settlers and Indigenous people to swap spots, but it is to dismantle the colonial metropole, to achieve the abolition of slavery in all its forms and to repatriate land to sovereign nations and tribes. Decolonization is not accountable to settlers, but opens the possibilities of different futures. 

Works Cited:

Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1). <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630>