

# Decolonization, Reconciliation and the Role of the Settler

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# Decolonization, Reconciliation and the Role of the Settler

- 1. Introduction, Definitions, My Story**
2. Sechelt Truth-Telling Initiative
3. Insights

# Definitions and Assumptions

**Assumption:** Canada has an unsavory colonial past. While there are examples of some individuals acting in accordance with Indigenous values and ways of life at the time of colonization, the overall attitude and actions of European settlers and the political and legal institutions they were creating were rooted in cultural chauvinism. This cultural chauvinism is still around today.

- **Colonization:** “The act of setting up a colony away from ones place of origin”...
- **Decolonization:** A process done at personal, familial, community or national level. Rooted in Indigenous framework. Working towards self-determination. Political or personal.

# Definitions and Assumptions

- **IRSS:** Schools erected for social and political reasons namely to aid in state building. Aim to eradicate Indigenous people through a process of assimilation. Stories of abuse.
- **Emancipatory:** research that seeks to empower the subjects. Criticizes traditional research practices for objectifying the participants
- **Truth-Telling:** A process that aims to shed light on a history and in doing so reveals an ignored or erroneous one

# A Personal Process

- Questioning Canada's relationship with the original inhabitants of this land
- Frustrated by degree of (willful?, convenient?) ignorance among friends and acquaintances

# A Personal Process

- Motivation to act:
  1. Interested in justice and fairness
  2. Felt inhibited by bearing the face of the oppressor
  3. Felt “responsible” to bear witness to the atrocities of colonization and address how I benefit

# A Personal Process

.....But what does responsibility look like?

And how do we ensure that our actions are truly confronting not reinforcing the colonial attitudes and structures we seek to evade?

# IGOV

- MA in Indigenous Governance, UVIC
- Focused on traditional structures and ways of governance through encompassing the values, perspectives, concepts and principles of Indigenous political cultures





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## 2. Sechelt Truth-Telling Initiative

Aim: To bring to light the impacts of the Indian Residential School System in the Town of Sechelt



# (Meaningful) Reconciliation

- Apology: Stephen Harper's 2010 Apology for the government of Canada's role in the development and the administration of IRSS.  
(A beginning of a renewed relationship? Or a symbolic gesture needing supportive action?)
- TRC (national project, locally effective?)



Truth and  
Reconciliation  
Commission of Canada

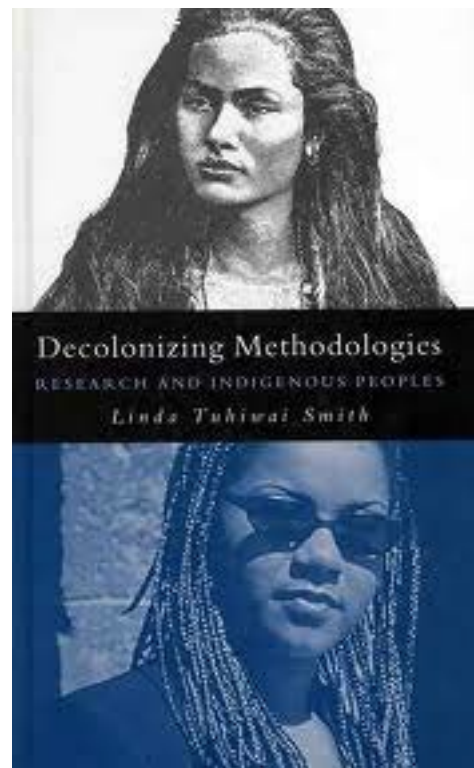
# Sechelt Truth-Telling Initiative

- The beginning



# Sechelt Truth-Telling Initiative

- Decolonizing Methodologies



# Sechelt Truth-Telling Initiative

- Before reconciliation must come truth



# Sechelt Truth-Telling Initiative

- Specific stories, tied to place
- This happened HERE



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# Insights

- This work is:

Ongoing

Personal

Best done at the local level (?)

# Insights

- Indigenous decolonization
- Idle No More...



# Insights

- Settler roles; “find your own place and that of your family in the story of North American colonization. This will tell you what you need to do to make amends for that history and point the way to grounding yourself as a true person of this place. Ask indigenous people about the promises that were made by your ancestors, the commitment that allowed for your existence here, and then decide to honor those promises right here, and right now in the best way that you can.”

# Appropriate Settler Roles

## Solidarity Work:

- Indigenous people taking the lead
- Making space

# Appropriate Settler Roles

- Work with your own people to confront Settlers own colonial mentality, moral indifference, and historical ignorance and fix the “Settler Problem” on this land ( Paulette Regan)

# work to be done

- **Educate yourself, Encourage others to join in education, Educate youth, Develop a critical lens, Get involved with groups and organizations that are taking action, Attend community events, Create your own event or initiative, Start repatriating stolen land**

# Resources

