

Weekly Journals

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PART 1: WEEKS 5-8

WEEK 5:

This week the article by Arthur Manuel in “whose land is it anyway?” really spoke to me. Indigenous people are fighting for their rights to their lands and the government is doing whatever it can to delay or ignore the protests that take place. In the article it states, “the federal and provincial governments have tens of millions of dollars that they use strategically to manipulate Indigenous organizations and to undermine the grassroots’ ability to move forward”.¹ This is such a waste of resources by the government. This money could be used to help the Indigenous populations. Instead, our government is determined to continue stealing “resources” from Indigenous lands. It is sad to read that there is a fear of loss of government money for those who fight for decolonization. This government money that many Indigenous people rely on. It is sad that when you have a fear of loss of government funds, you are cautious in who you elect and who you allow to be a part of grassroots movements.

These grassroots movements are highly important. They show the government that they will not sit idly by. I really liked the quote at the end of the article. “We see courageous Indigenous people doing this every day, and if we cannot join them in these actions, we should at least support them in every way we can”² It is important that

¹ McFarlane, Peter & Schabus, Nicole. “Whose Land is it Anyway: A manual for Decolonization”. Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of B.C. 2017 pg 29

² McFarlane, “Whose Land is it Anyway: A Manual for Decolonization, pg 31

people come together on this issue, Indigenous or not, and hope for a better Canada where the government respects decolonization.

From what I gathered from the reading was that the author was trying to voice how the government continues to fight against decolonization. That because of this, groups are formed as a counter to show the government they have a voice that deserves to be heard. I agree that grassroots movements can play a role in addressing the government's continued ignorance of this matter.

What I can relate this to is the group create back home in Labrador called the "Labrador Land Protectors" as a part of "Indigenous Climate Action". This group of people were protesting the Muskrat Falls hydroelectric dam that the government approved without the consensus of the Indigenous people. The people who rely on the land. This dam would affect the river that runs through communities which is a source of food for the Inuit and Innu in Labrador. I remember my mom talking about this years ago. I remember how upset she was that there was a disregard for the Indigenous people of the land³.

References

Labrador Land Protectors. Indigenous Climate Action. Retrieved from

<https://www.indigenousclimateaction.com/sovereignty-in-action/labrador-land-protectors>. (n.d.).

³ Labrador Land Protectors. Indigenous Climate Action. Retrieved from <https://www.indigenousclimateaction.com/sovereignty-in-action/labrador-land-protectors>. (n.d.).

McFarlane, Peter & Schabus, Nicole. "Whose Land is it Anyway: A manual for Decolonization". Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of B.C. 2017

WEEK 6:

This week's journal is hard to write. A part of the reason why this is hard to talk about is because my own family has experienced violent crimes against our women, have experienced sexual assaulted, and have been murdered. Because of this there are so many emotions that I am feeling as I write this. Mostly I feel sad. Sadness for the continued assault on Indigenous women in Canada. A nation that is supposed to be accepting of all nations and caring about what happens to its people. So then, does that mean the government doesn't consider Indigenous women "people"?

I feel Indigenous women are disposable in Canada, and it is apparent through the high rates of sexual assault and murder towards the Indigenous women. It states in the report that "Indigenous women from First Nations, Metis, and Inuit communities face violence, marginalization, exclusion and poverty because of institutional, systemic, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination not addressed adequately by the state"⁴. It is our own government's failures that this genocide of Indigenous women continues. What is also bothersome to me is that according to the United Nations special report it states that Indigenous women only make up 2.5% of Canada's population. Yet they are three times more likely to be sexually assaulted, three times

⁴ Visit to Canada: Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences. United Nations General Assembly. (2019).

more likely to be victimized by violent crimes and six times more likely to be a murder victim.⁵

To think that the United Nations visited Canada to complete this report and not have heard of it before this class is appalling. What's worse to me, is that according to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms "the right to liberty and security of the person is guaranteed under section 7 of the Charter, and the right not to be subjected to any cruel and unusual treatment or punishment are established under sections 7 and 12"⁶. This to me continues to show the absolute disregard for Indigenous women's rights as people.

I agree with the report done by the United Nations. The information gathered over a period shows the continued disregard for Indigenous peoples lives, more importantly Indigenous women's lives. It demonstrates how Canada is in violation of human rights and social justice because of its treatment of Indigenous peoples.

I'm including a link to a news article that was just posted October 7, 2024, regarding the murder of my cousin, Loretta Saunders. I sat in silence for a few moments after I read this news article. The woman involved in the murder was granted a 30-day pass from prison so that she can live in a halfway house, volunteer and attend

⁵ Visit to Canada: Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences. United Nations General Assembly. (2019).

⁶ Visit to Canada: Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences. United Nations General Assembly. (2019).

programs⁷. All I can think about is how our family member will never return to us. That all she is to the government is another statistic that will be ignored.

References

Rhodes, Blair. Woman convicted in murder of Loretta Saunders granted 30-day pass from prison. *CBC News*. Retrieved October 10, 2024.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/convicted-killer-granted-pass-from-prison-1.7344994>

Visit to Canada: Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences. *United Nations General Assembly*. (2019).

Week 7:

For this week I have chosen to write about “Consent as epistemic recognition: Indigenous Knowledges, Canadian Impact assessment, and the colonial liberal democratic order”. It made me really think about our government and how not much has changed in the colonial sense. It mentions in the paper that Conservative politicians didn’t want to sign on with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) because they were concerned that the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) meant that Indigenous people would have the right to veto a decision on future projects,⁸ and that would impede on projects they have planned or will be planning. It also frustrates me that Canadians become upset with the stalled projects

⁷ Rhodes, Blair. Woman convicted in murder of Loretta Saunders granted 30-day pass from prison. *CBC News*. Retrieved October 10, 2024. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/convicted-killer-granted-pass-from-prison-1.7344994>

⁸ Lajoie-O’Malley, Alana. ‘Consent as epistemic recognition: Indigenous Knowledges, Canadian Impact Assessment, and the Colonial Liberal Democratic Order’. *Social Studies of Science*, 2023, 53(4), 545-571.

from resistance of Indigenous groups⁹ . What upsets me is that after all the talks about Truth and Reconciliation, there are still individuals who feel “entitled’ to Indigenous lands and territories.

It states in the UNDRIP that “Indigenous peoples have the rights to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own Indigenous making institutions”¹⁰. The reason I chose this quote is because I feel it represents how I feel about the article in that Indigenous peoples are still fighting for their right to sit at the table and plan along side projects or veto it all together. What really struck a chord was when I read that how the final decisions on whether the government must respect Indigenous rights rests with the Supreme Court. Indigenous peoples are gaining a voice through assisting with impact and environmental assessments. However, if there is any stalemate then the final decision rests in the colonialist practice of the Supreme Court.

My final thought about this article is regards to Indigenous knowledge and western knowledge and how they should be equally valued. This doesn’t make sense to me and makes me question whether or not its possible for Indigenous knowledge and western knowledge to have the same standing in decision making.

⁹ Lajoie-O’Malley, “Consent as epistemic recognition: Indigenous Knowledges, Canadian Impact Assessment, and the Colonial Liberal Democratic Order’

¹⁰ “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”. United Nations, 2007, retrieved on October 18, 2024 from: chrome extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf

What I gathered the main point of the article to be is the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge in impact and environmental assessments and what that looks like. I somewhat agree with the authors main point, that Indigenous knowledge has an abundance of history of the land and is beneficial to work alongside project developers or the government. What makes me question is that there is a colonialist history that continues to this day and doesn't value the oral history Indigenous knowledge has to offer. I did however find the article to have offered a compelling argument.

I'm including a link to a news article that I came across at the end of September and has stuck with me since. The article is titled "BC Conservatives want Indigenous rights law UNDRIP repealed. Chief pushes back". It relates to the article I have chosen in that it speaks to the Free, Prior and Informed Consent that was established when the nation adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights on the Rights of Indigenous people¹¹. It angers me to think that the Conservative government is still in favour of repelling the UNDRIP after all these years. Have they learned nothing? It's almost scary to think as well about the upcoming election and the potential for the Conservative government to take power. If this happens, then were looking at a regression instead of progression regarding Indigenous rights.

References

¹¹ Brenna, Owen. BC Conservatives want Indigenous rights law UNDRIP repealed. Chief pushes back. Global News, 2024. Retrieved on October 18, 2024 from: <https://globalnews.ca/news/10785147/bc-conservatives-undrip-repeal-indigenous-rights-law-john-rustad/>

Brenna, Owen. BC Conservatives want Indigenous rights law UNDRIP repealed. Chief pushes back. *Global News*, 2024. Retrieved on October 18, 2024 from: <https://globalnews.ca/news/10785147/bc-conservatives-undrip-repeal-indigenous-rights-law-john-rustad/>

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"United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples". United Nations, 2007, retrieved on October 18, 2024 from: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf

Week 8:

This week I chose to respond to Nicole Schabus' "Implementing Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action". Indigenous laws are different from Aboriginal Law in that Indigenous Laws "are the legal traditions of the respective Indigenous people that continue to exist independent of the western legal system".¹² Aboriginal laws are the "constitutional protection of the rights of Indigenous peoples under the Canadian constitution"¹³The Indigenous law is complex and is broken down

¹² Schabus, Nicole. "Implementing Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action". Academic Lead, Retrieved from <https://implementingtrc.pressbooks.tru.ca/part/introduction/>

¹³ Schabus, "Implementing Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action"

into four subsections including sacred law, natural law, deliberative law and customary law. All equally important.

The reason this book spoke to me is because I wasn't fully aware that Indigenous peoples have their own laws, with each territory having its own set of laws. It brings out feelings of frustration when you think about our legal system and how it's considered the only legal system in Canada. Indigenous law gets completely ignored as a valid source, even though their law traces back through oral history.¹⁴

I can relate this book to one of last weeks readings, "Consent as epistemic recognition: Indigenous Knowledges, Canadian Impact Assessment, and the Colonial Liberal Democratic Order" by Lajoie-O'Malley. Where I find there is a connection is that Indigenous oral history is still not considered "valid" history as there is no "science" behind it or written language. That there still is this western and Indigenous rift that has yet to fully come together. It makes me question whether they can ever come together in a legal sense. I think what the author is trying to get across is that Indigenous laws are complex and unique to each territory, which I agree with and that there is much to be learned from the oral history of Indigenous peoples.

Personally, it makes me sad to think that I didn't grow up learning about our Indigenous laws as there wasn't much passing on of oral history in my family. The closest thing I could find for Nunatsiavut laws, the Inuit government of Labrador that I belong to, was the Labrador Inuit Constitution which I feel is a westernized form of law. I didn't even

¹⁴ Schabus, "Implementing Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action"

know about the Labrador constitution. It's something that I feel I need to explore further, to better understand what we consider "law" and what it means to the Inuit people. I also want to explore further with family and ask if there was ever any knowledge of laws passed through the generations that I never experienced.

Reference

Labrador Inuit Constitution. *House of Assembly*. Retrieved on October 23, 2024.

Lajoie-O'Malley, Alana. 'Consent as epistemic recognition: Indigenous Knowledges, Canadian Impact Assessment, and the Colonial Liberal Democratic Order'. *Social Studies of Science*, 2023, 53(4), 545-571.

Schabus, Nicole. "Implementing Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action". *Academic Lead*, Retrieved on October 23, 2024.