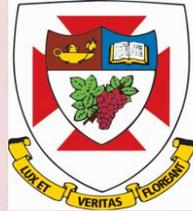


**Misguided Mosaics:**  
Intersections of Sustainable  
Allyship, Religion, and Indigenous  
Spirituality in Canada

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# Introduction



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WINNIPEG

- Masters in Development Program
  - Indigenous Specialization
  - Assumes that there is no fundamentally important political, social, economic, and cultural issue of our time that does not affect, and that is not affected by, Indigenous Peoples. There is no development process that can unfold successfully without understanding Indigenous ways of life and Indigenous world views.
- The “Misguided Mosaic”
  - Canada’s national multicultural narrative
- Positioning ourselves

# Indigenous Thoughts and Worldviews

“Our resistance is not abstract, this is about our ways of life, about the integrity of being Anishinaabe. If the land’s integrity is compromised, our integrity is compromised”

Wab Kinew

- Re-contextualizing sustainability
  - Must go hand in hand with prioritizing Indigenous knowledge
- Spirituality
  - “All My Relations”
- Traditional practices
- **Our program is not reflective of Canada as a whole**



# Replacing the Vacuum with a Voice: The Role of Colonialism

- Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP)
  - 4 stages: Separate Worlds, Contact and Cooperation, Displacement and Assimilation, Negotiation and Renewal

*“Canada is a test case for a grand notion – the notion that dissimilar peoples can share lands, resources, power and dreams while respecting and sustaining their differences. The story of Canada is the story of many such peoples, trying and failing and trying again, to live together in peace and harmony.*

***But there cannot be peace or harmony unless there is justice.***

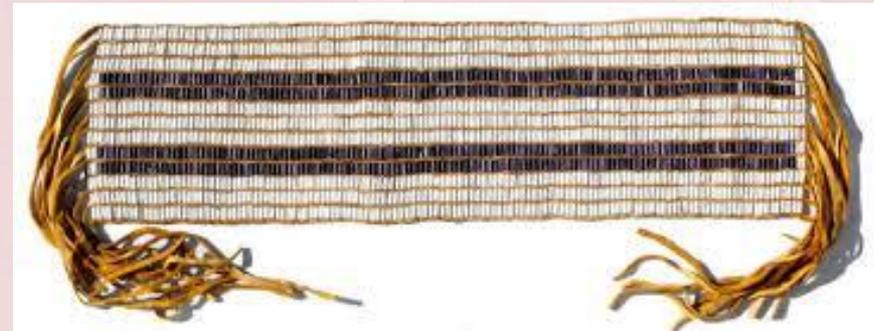
*It was to help restore justice to the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada, and to propose practical solutions to stubborn problems, that the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was established.”*

# I. Separate Worlds (Before 1500)

- It is problematic to look at Indigenous history as beginning with European contact
  - Doctrine of discovery, “terra nullius”
- Divided by an ocean, Indigenous peoples and Settlers developed their unique political, economic and cultural lifestyles
- Creation stories
  - Ex. “People of the Dawn” – Mi’kmaq; “The Vision of Three Crosses” - Iroquois

# II. Contact and Cooperation

- Two-Row Wampum Belt (1613)
  - One of the earliest treaty relationship agreements
  - Iroquois response to the initial treaty proposal by Settlers: “You say that you are our Father and I am your Son. We say, “we will not be like Father and Son, but like Brothers. Neither of us will make compulsory laws or interfere in the internal affairs of the other. Neither of us will try to steer the other one’s vessel”.
- Indigenous upper hand
  - Sharing of knowledge
- Fur trade
- Military alliances
  - Resisting American expansion
- Population decline



# III. Displacement and Assimilation

- Indian Act, 1876 (a decade after Confederation)
- Cultural and moral superiority
  - “Indian” considered “non-person”
- Paternalism
  - Identity
  - Governance, land use, healthcare, education, bands and reserves
- Residential Schools
- Potlatch and Sun Dance ban (1884, 1885)
- Any “Indian” congregation (more than 2 people) could face prosecution for conspiring against the government

# Indigenous Women

- Disproportionately affected
- Status was patriarchal
  - Disconnection to land, knowledge, spirituality
- Directly linked to continued cases of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women



# The Colonial Legacy

- Colonization did not end with the closing of the last Residential School door
- HDI rankings
  - Canada: 8<sup>th</sup>
  - Indigenous population: 63<sup>rd</sup>
- Complicates human rights framework
- Less deficit, more strength based solutions
- The process of decolonization is ongoing. Requires acknowledgement not just of the ways in which Indigenous peoples helped Settlers survive, but how they actively contributed to the social, political, and economic development of this country through a distinct and valuable worldview

# IV. Negotiation and Renewal

“Our central conclusion can be summarized simply: **The main policy direction, pursued for more than 150 years, first by colonial then by Canadian governments, has been wrong.**”

– page x, A Word From Commissioners.

- Takes us to present day, and relies on non-Indigenous society’s admission of the failure of its assimilationist approach

- **Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2008-2015)**

- 42<sup>nd</sup> Federal Election (2015)

# Election 42 and the Niqab

- In 2008, Zumera Ishaq arrived in Canada
  - Was not allowed accommodation to remove her niqab in the presence of female officers
  - Ishaq vs. Canada
  - Harper: “that’s not how we do things here”
  - Ramifications for election results
    - Saw direct impact on NDP vote in Quebec specifically

“Based on what I heard from friends and in my English literature class, I believed my new home would be a bastion of freedom and tolerance”.

# Response from Indigenous Women

- **#DoIMatterNow**

- Promotes solidarity and highlight frustration with Herper's insistence on attacking religious freedoms of immigrant women when he continues to ignore the protection of Indigenous women
- Marginalizing the human rights of two subgroups of women, which opens them up to many forms of violence



# Conclusion

- Canada's multicultural mosaic is an idealistic narrative, but not a truthful one
- Re-considering Allyship
  - The way forward is to promote a framework of allyship that is rooted in the worldview of the marginalized
  - But this is complicated by intersectional narratives of marginalization in Canada
- The cultural mosaic is a deeply fractures national narrative, and it is one that does not need to be put back together, but completely dismantled and reworked to better reflect an accurate understanding of the successes and issues that arise every single day in our country through and despite conflict

**Thank you!**