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ARTICLE

Place-based embodied pedagogies: Implications for teaching Indigenous presence in Tiohtià:ke/Mooniyang/Montreal

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Abstract

This article employs Indigenous urbanism as an analytical approach, as developed by Anishinaabe and settler scholar Heather Dorries (2023), to show how pedagogical interventions employed in the teaching of an undergraduate course at Concordia University (Montreal, Canada) contributed to an enhanced theorization of the city. It discusses the ways in which pedagogical activities shaped the students' understanding of historiography, Indigenous urban lives, and the construction of shared urban spaces. In focusing on the local histories, territorialities, and specificities of Montreal as a shared and continuously renegotiated Indigenous-settler space, pedagogical interventions used in the course prompted students to reflect on how their own positionality coproduces knowledge about the city. Understanding themselves as knowledge makers, and thus co-producers of urban spaces, students were able to better define the contours of their own relations to the Montreal urban spatialities and socialities. By generously sharing their evolving meaning-making and positionalities, students demonstrated that the Right to the City is a collective reclamation of the urban space that recognizes and affirms Indigenous peoples as rights holders and not simply stakeholders.

Keywords: *Indigenous urbanism; Montreal; Place-based pedagogies; Settler-colonialism*

> There is a common history, and, in the case of the French, it is not just a history of colonization. The schizophrenic side of the French presence in [North] America is precisely because the discourse [at the time of colonial settlement] held that there is to be a "New France," therefore a territory controlled by the French colonial authorities, whereas in reality, if you look at its dimensions, you can clearly see that these were vast territories under Indigenous sovereignty. The real territory was an Indigenous country where alliances were concluded with the French. As soon as he arrived in Quebec, Champlain understood that it was necessary to associate with the First Nations. When he met the Innu chiefs in Tadoussac in 1603, the history of Canada began with this alliance between the French and the Aboriginal nations.

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> The culmination of this policy of alliance was the Great Peace of Montreal in 1701. There was a spirit of mutual respect there that should still prevail. Returning to 1701, it is possible to review the common history and see that it is not always one of clashes and divergences. If Montreal emerged as an urban center, it is thanks to the Indigenous diplomacy which led to the paving of the lines of communication and allowed the opening of contemporary North America. Sieur Antoine de Lamothe Cadillac, who found Detroit in 1702, was able to do so following the Treaty of the Great Peace. The famous voyageurs went west for the fur trade because the passages (trails, rivers and streams) had become passable. Montreal then became the center of this trade. Once again, it was Native American diplomacy that gave birth to Montreal as it was to become. It was at this time that it took on its vocation as a major North American city. It's important to remember that. (St-Amand 2017, 157–158, personal translation)

This was the reply given by André Dudemaine, member of the Innu Nation and co-founder and director of the Montreal First Peoples Festival[1], when asked if Quebec's society was ready to accept the idea of a permanent and continuous Indigenous[2] presence in Montreal (St-Amand 2017). His contextualization of not only the historical Indigenous-state relations, but more so of the spirit and intent of these relations sheds light on the often-contested social geography of Montreal, as well as the broader Indigenous and colonial forces that have shaped this continent. Tiohtià:ke, Mooniyang, Montreal. Haudenosaunee[3], Anicinabe, Allochtone (non-Indigenous). Located at the confluence of the St. Laurence and Ottawa Rivers, Montreal has, and continues to be, a geopolitically and socially important Indigenous territory. Its Indigenous toponyms and archaeological record attest to its role as a neutral territorial site that fostered economic and social exchanges among Indigenous nations well before the arrival of settlers (Comat and Lévesque 2017). An abbreviation of Teionihtiohtià:kon, Tiohtià:ke loosely translates as "where the group divided/parted ways," signaling its importance as a convergence site for the Haudenosaunee peoples (Indigenous Directions n.d.). For the Anicinabe, who frequently sojourned on the Island, it is known as Minitik 8ten entag8giban, or "the island

[1] More than thirty years in the making, the Montreal First Peoples Festival is a yearly, week-long celebration of Indigenous presence and contribution to building just relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the city (St-Amand 2017).

[2] "Aboriginal" refers to Canada's First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples as defined by Article 35 of the Canadian Constitution. "Indigenous" is a term that initially referred to Aboriginal peoples internationally but has emerged as a preferred umbrella term for many Nations and groups. The term "Indian" is only used as part of a historical reference or used in reference to a government policy (e.g., The Indian Act, "status Indian"). When specific Nations are mentioned, the spelling and community or Nation name are used as defined by the Nation itself (e.g., Haudenosaunee, Anicinabe).

[3] Haudenosaunee means "people who build a house" and refers to the Iroquois Confederacy that united the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora nations. In Quebec, Haudenosaunee and Mohawk are sometimes used interchangeably to refer to the communities of Kahnawake and Kanasetake. "Iroquois" is used as part of historical reference (St-Amand 2017).

where there was a village," a reference to the fortified village of Hochelaga that Jacques Cartier encountered in 1535 (Comat and Lévesque 2017).

Almost two centuries later, the Great Peace of Montreal of 1701 marks a turning point in Franco-Indigenous relations with major implications for the conflicts between France and England on Turtle Island[4]. The treaty was designed to put an end to a hundred years of conflict centered around the fur trade which pitted the Iroquois nations, British allies, and various Indigenous French allies of the Upper Great Lakes. Huron Chief Kondiaronk (Gaspar Soiaga) brokered the treaty, which was signed by 39 First Nations at a gathering in Montreal attended by more than 1300 Indigenous delegates (Comat and Lévesque 2017; Havard 2001). Although the peace was short lived, its intent of harmonious cohabitation and relationship building lives on in the ways in which "Indigeneity and urbanity continue to be co-produced" in Montreal (Dorries 2023, 113).

This article attempts to employ Indigenous urbanism as an analytical approach, as developed by Anishinaabe and settler scholar Heather Dorries (2023), to show how pedagogical interventions employed in the teaching of an undergraduate course at Concordia University (Montreal, Canada) contributed to an enhanced theorization of the city. Indigenous urbanism "highlights the dialectical relationship between Indigeneity and urbanism" that refuses colonially imposed dichotomies of city/reserve and assimilated/authentic Indigenous identities. As such, the methods and activities used in this course shaped the students' understanding of historiography, Indigenous urban lives, and the construction of shared urban spaces and socialites.

Making Indigenous Urban Space

In her recent article on Indigenous urban theory, Heather Dorries (2023) prompts us to move away from binary understandings of both Indigeneity and urbanity and instead focus on the ways in which Indigenous peoples invest urban spaces and create "alternative modes of being through anti-colonial and anti-oppressive forms of resistance that do not rely on rigid identities" (116). She proposes Indigenous urbanism as an analytical approach that "does not view space as inherently Indigenous or inherently colonial, but instead as continually contested" (115). As a product of Canadian law and policy, Indigeneity and Indigenous urbanity continue to be configured in relation to colonialism, while in the Canadian imaginary urban Indigenous peoples evoke what Peters (1996, 1) calls an "impossible contradiction." This antithetical reading of the city and urbanity considers urban Indigenous peoples as a product of assimilation, cultural loss, and "perpetual vanishing" by relegating the reserve as a "natural" Indigenous space and the city as a place devoid of Indigenous history and presence—what Glen Coulthard calls "urbs nullius," making reference to the doctrine of terra nullius that made possible the colonization and

[4] Turtle Island is a term that designates the North American continent and is rooted in Ojibwe and other Indigenous creation stories that tell the story of the turtle that carries the world on its back. It is often used to refer to Canada and US (Blight 2020).

settlement of the North American Continent (Comat 2012; Desbiens, Lévesque, and Comat 2016; Dorries 2023; Kermoal and Lévesque 2011).

Indeed, as Desbiens et al. (2016) underline, the "colonial assignation of Indigeneity in Canada was less about blood than about space," and while the hierarchical system of Indigeneity established by the Indian Act[5] was a tool to entrench Indigenous identity in the "spatial logics of the colonial state," this spatial fixity remains an illusion. Simpson and Hugill (2022), quoting Caprio et al. (2022), demonstrate how this fixity is "the great lie of settler colonialism" by tracing the historical and contemporary movements of peoples and materials and the circulations of investment capital needed to prop-up "radically uneven configurations of power in the city" (1316). By fixing Indigenous peoples to the geographical space of the reserve, settler colonial urbanism ensures future settler mobilities, while constraining those of Indigenous and other racialized peoples through processes of surveillance, policing, gentrification, and other forms of systemic racism (Dorries 2023; Simpson and Hugill 2022; Kermoal and Lévesque 2011).

Yet, in cities across Canada, multiple generations of Indigenous peoples have made the city their home, investing in urban places and spaces that uphold their political authority, reflecting a flourishing urban Indigenous civil society, and enacting "place-based ethics of care" (Lévesque et al. 2021; Radu and Wiscutie-Crépeau 2023; Till 2012). According to the 2021 Census, more than two thirds of Indigenous peoples in Canada live in urban areas, with as many as 43% living in a large urban center. In Quebec, more than half (54%) of Indigenous peoples live in cities and towns across the province (Government of Canada 2022). If today this presence is inevitable, it is nevertheless not new. The initial stages of the colonial enterprise in Canada had a paradoxical outcome: on one hand First Nations were displaced from their traditional territories (on which cities were founded) and forcibly enclosed in the ever-diminishing space of the reserve. At the same time, settler encroachment and land concessions of ancestral territories pushed some Indigenous families to establish themselves at the periphery of towns and cities. Examples in Quebec include the Huron-Wendat nation, whose reserve Wendnake was established at the edge of Quebec City, or the two Kanien'kehá:ka communities near Montreal, Kahnawake, and Kanasetake (Comat and Lévesque 2017; Lévesque et al. 2021). Nevertheless, this movement was not even across the country with each Indigenous group and region experiencing complex populational dynamics.

[5] Enacted in 1876, the Indian Act is an enduring legislation that governs relationships between the Federal government and First Nations in Canada and historically applied to Indigenous peoples that the Crown recognized as "Indians." It enables the administration of "Indian" status (and thus membership), sets rules for local First Nations governance, and administers the management of reserve lands. It is a complex law that has gone through extensive amendments, and while it continues to be hotly debated and contested by First Nations, it remains one of the few legislations that confers specific rights to First Nations and outlines governmental obligations to them. The Indian Act excludes the Métis and the Inuit peoples (for a detailed analysis of the Indian Act see Green 2001 and Coates 2008).

While communities such as Wendake "became" urban because cities around them expanded, initial colonial land-grabs were followed by legislative amendments targeting First Nations women and their families. The 1951 Indian Act[6] amendment forcibly enfranchised First Nations women married to non-Indigenous men, effectively terminating their Indian status and their right to live on reserve. Forced to leave their home communities and establish themselves in unfamiliar urban spaces, these families began to organize themselves in cities and towns across the country giving rise to the friendship center movement. As their name indicates, friendship centers began as volunteer-based and operated community hubs that supported Indigenous individuals and families to adjust to life in the city, fostered a sense of community, and provided a meeting place (Desbiens, Lévesque, and Comat 2016; Kermoal and Lévesque 2011; Lévesque et al. 2021). Today, there are more than 100 Friendship Centers and Provincial or Territorial Associations that make up the National Association of Friendship Centers. In the past six decades, friendship centers have become the country's largest urban Indigenous service delivery network providing culturally relevant programs and services based on an ethics of care that respects multiple and shifting Indigenous identities and sense of belonging, as well as cultivating rich social ecologies of Indigenous urban place (Lévesque et al. 2021; Newhouse 2011; Radu and Wiscutie-Crépeau 2023; Till 2012).

Indeed, the friendship center movement is perhaps the most eloquent illustration of Indigenous urbanism. Friendship centers are "status-blind" organizations providing services to anyone in need[7], thus refusing colonially imposed identity politics. As self-determined, membership-driven institutions they foster a strong Indigenous civil society and invest themselves in creating "vibrant forms of Indigenous urban lives" (Dorries 2023, 112). Their advocacy for improving Indigenous quality of life is not only a form of settler colonial resistance, but a conscientious transformational process of renegotiating and reconfiguring urban process across the country. Through a vision and form of diplomacy reminiscent of the Great Peace of Montreal, friendship centers lead societal transformations centered on urban spaces through alliances with municipal and reserve-based institutions.

Place-based Pedagogies and Decolonial Knowledge Mobilization in the Classroom

Mr. Dudemaine's call to remember the role of Indigenous diplomacy and Indigenous lives in building urban spaces in Canada activates a collective politics of memory that forces us—Indigenous and settler alike—to engage in individual and collective memory-work. This memory-work is about confronting our shared settler colonial history in order to foster

[6] For a detailed overview of the implications of the Indian Act for urban First Nations in Canada see Newhouse and Peters (2011) and Lévesque et al. (2021).

[7] While their programming has a priority focus on Indigenous people, non-Indigenous individuals can access services. For example, at various locations, daycares run by friendship centers accept non-Indigenous children and extent their services to their families.

the conditions for an inclusive process of negotiating the past and the future and to take responsibility for social transformation towards more just urban spaces (Murray 2018). This perspective guided the pedagogical choices employed in the teaching of a *Globalization and Indigenous Peoples* undergraduate course in the First Peoples Program[8] at Concordia University during the 2018 academic year. The course examined the political, social, economic, and cultural impacts of globalization, compared various forms of Indigenous resistance to globalization, and assessed the tension between globalization ideologies and Indigenous worldviews. Often courses that explore globalization focus on the political economy of international relations since the early 1970s without paying much attention to its colonial roots, which are firmly latched onto infrastructures of empire (Banerjee and Linstead 2001). While the course explored the globalizing impacts on Indigeneity, development, and Indigenous resurgence, a particular focus was placed on how such processes are inscribed in and emanate from Montreal. As Murray (2018) contends, "treaty education starts at home, and indeed by interrogating the very idea of home" (256). As a first-generation settler-immigrant of Romanian decent living in Montreal and working in Indigenous contexts for more than two decades, questions of belonging, amending settler-Indigenous relations, and settler responsibility have always guided my pedagogical choices. In designing the course assignments presented below, I was inspired by the seminal work of oral historian and my former PhD co-supervisor Steven High (Mills, Rochat, and High 2020), as well as other scholars who engage with knowledge mobilization, sharing authority, and reflexive practices in the classroom (Mengist et al. 2021; Murray 2018; Tupper 2014).

Course assignments were therefore designed to help students better understand the contested nature of making urban space through active Indigenous participation in the historicity of the city. The first assignment asked students to critically assess the city's archival material and produce short "exhibit panels." This work was reinforced by a guided site visit to the City of Montreal archives. To help students become familiar with recent municipal reconciliation initiatives, a conversation with the city's Commissioner for Relations with Indigenous Peoples was also arranged. A research-creation assignment pushed students to produce research outcomes for a non-academic public, including an end-of-term conference that is open to the university public and non-academic guests (either students' research collaborators, local Indigenous communities or organizations, or family members).

These pedagogical approaches were designed to encourage students to experiment with their own artistic, multimedia, or other "non-academic" interests and skills that are

[8] The First People's program at Concordia University was launched in 2013. More than 10 years in the making and the first in Quebec to offer a Major and a Minor, the Program was developed and is delivered by a mostly Indigenous faculty "from a First People's perspective." It offers courses covering historical and contemporary aspects of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Quebec and Canada, "with a strong focus on ethical research" and community engagement (for details see https://www.concordia.ca/indigenous/academic/curricula.html).

traditionally undervalued in undergraduate studies, and as such, maximize student agency over their own learning and research choices (Mengist et al. 2021). They were intended to disrupt traditional hierarchies and power structures about knowledge creation, learning, and critical reflexivity through knowledge mobilization beyond the academy (Greenberg, London, and McKay 2020; Lechasseur, Lazure, and Guilbert 2011; Maurer et al. 2021). They also aimed, in a broader sense, to support students, who came from very different backgrounds and lived experiences (Indigenous students, settler Canadians, and first-generation immigrants), as they reflected on how universities should decolonize knowledge to support social justice and transform Indigenous-settler relations. Indeed, the student population at Concordia, as well as in the class, reflects the multicultural socialites of Montreal, and as such, their knowledge of and reaction to colonial settler history, Indigenous knowledge systems, and decolonization is diverse and often triggers deeply felt emotional responses (Maltais-Landry and Radu 2022; Murray 2018; Tupper 2014). As the Great Peace of Montreal intended, and similar to the treaty education approaches in western Canada, the pedagogical interventions employed in this class were designed, first and foremost, to bring awareness to the fact that we are all treaty people, and as such, hold responsibilities for each other and for the future relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. As Murray (2018) succinctly states, "construing ourselves as treaty people holds the promise to reclaim, humanize, and activate relationships that have become locked into unjust and dysfunctional bureaucratic state processes" (255).

Indeed, the pedagogical interventions echoed Heather Dorries's (2023) call to center Indigenous urbanism as an analytic, which "would entail more than simply parsing settler-colonial relations but would also make apparent the various ways in which Indigeneity is mobilized and transformed by urban processes as well as the ways in which Indigeneity transforms what constitutes 'the urban'" (114). As presented in the following section, students were encouraged to contextualize and critically analyze archival sources, foregrounding not only the historicity of the city, but also drawing links to key historical events in Canada and the ways Indigenous peoples resisted and contested colonial processes.[9] Finally, in wrestling with questions of whose knowledge counts and in what ways, as well as with the politics of memory and heritage, the course fostered a sense of active citizenship and responsiveness to the city and its inhabitants, thus "imagining different urban futures" in which Indigenous peoples are active co-creators of urban lives (Till 2012). As such, by positioning themselves in relation to history-making processes, students' choice of archival material and research topics revealed how Indigenous peoples reconfigure urban processes and spatialities by making visible relations of power and contested nation-building narratives.

[9] When I designed and taught this course in 2018, I did not envision documenting the course for publication. I have attempted to contact the former students whose work I reflect on in this article, but I have not been able to reach all of them. I have included student names with their permission; other students remain anonymous.

Tracing Colonial Flows and Indigenous Resurgence: A History of Montreal in Six Acts

In focusing on the local histories, territorialities, and specificities of Montreal as a shared and continuously renegotiated Indigenous-settler space, the course prompted students to reflect on how their own positionality (as an Indigenous person, recent immigrant, or Francophone/anglophone settler Canadian) coproduces knowledge about the city and how that knowledge fashions the way in which they relate to Montreal urban spatialities and socialities. As such, the first assignment asked students to dive deep into the available City of Montreal archives or the archives available at local museums, such as the McCord Museum, that hold important historical collections on the Indigenous presence in the city. They chose an archival source and wrote an analysis of its contents, providing a sense of the themes covered and interesting stories that may have surfaced. The analyses were first discussed in class in order to connect various local sources to larger colonial flows and inspire students to think about their research-creation project. Students were then asked to prepare a one page "exhibit panel" of their analysis that will be displayed at the public end of term conference.

As an iterative collective exercise, this assignment provided an interesting and eclectic historical journey through the city that engaged with important contestations of public knowledge, heritage, and dominant social-political discourses and practices of making urban place. Starting with the Dawson Site, the Iroquois fortified town of Hochelaga first visited by Jacques Cartier in 1534 and subsequently abandoned by 1600 for unknown reasons, one student explored the site of the commemorative plaque erected in 1922 on the McGill University campus (Figure 1). She argued that the site "is not just about place but also about colonial attempts to displace, relocate and eradicate Indigenous peoples," physically, but also narratively. She stated "I believe that, especially as settler/colonial descendants, it is important to self-educate about the histories and realties of the places which we inhabit. In other words, to move forward toward an Indigenized future it is important and necessary to ask *Where do I stand*?" (emphasis in the original).

Figure 1. Dawson Site plaque. 2007-CED-SDC-008, Parks Canada.

Located in the historic Old Port neighborhood and commissioned for the 250th anniversary of the city, the Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve monument celebrates the contributions of the city's founding members to strengthening the French control over the fur trade. Holding the flag of the King of France, the statue of Maisonneuve, founder and first governor of Ville-Marie (Montreal), sits atop the main column (Figure 2). On the northwest side a statue of an "anonymous Iroquois warrior" illustrates the various battles between the French colonists and Iroquois Confederacy in the early decades of the city's foundation. Referencing the detailed bas-reliefs of the monument depicting Maisonneuve's killing of a Haudenosaunee chief the student explained: "for me, this peace is a clear proof of the presence and oppression of First Nations in the beginning of the city's foundation. It is a clear visual of the tragedies and discrimination that Indigenous people lived and still live due to European settlement and oppression." Indeed, during the semester, after many decades of criticism from Indigenous groups, the monument plaque, which made reference to Maisonneuve killing the chief "with his own hands," was changed and the new "message excluded the line about Maisonneuve's busy hands" (Valiante 2018, 1; see also Keating 2017).

Figure 2. *Monument Maisonneuve à la Place d'Armes 1938*. CA M001 VM094-Y-1-17-D0200. Ville de Montréal. Section des archives.

Connected to the city's founding, the Mountain Mission established in 1676 by La Congrégation de Notre-Dame de Montréal was the realization of the fundamental objective of the colonial enterprise—to educate and convert Indigenous communities to Christianity. The 1920s postcard caption reads: "Marguerite Bourgeoys y ouvrit une école pour les petites sauvagesses en 1676" ("Marguerite Bourgeoys opens a school for little savages in 1676", Figure 3). Intended for young Indigenous women and girls, the school was a precursor to the Canadian residential schools that would be established in the rest of the country staring in the 1880s and whose civilizing ambitions will lay bare the cultural genocide of more than a hundred years of operations (TRC 2015). As the student succinctly stated,

> throughout my research I found ample information on the life of Bourgeoys, but very little on the experiences the young Indigenous women and girls who attended these schools had. The dynamics between the recorded selfless motives of the missionaries coupled with the perceived naturalness and inevitability of "western progress" and the huge lack of representation and acknowledgement of Indigenous experience work extremely efficiently to minimize, if not completely erase Indigenous histories (Sydni J., 2018).

Figure 3. *Montréal, les tours du séminaire, Marguerite Bourgeoys y ouvrit une école pour les petites sauvagesses en 1676.* O. Allard, Artiste-Photographe. 0003738151, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec.

In the late 1800s, the Huron-Wendat and W8abanakiak, two urban First Nations, participated actively in the tourism and sport hunting industries both in Montreal and elsewhere in the province. Mentioned only as an "Aboriginal person with objects to sell," a picture of Francois Gros-Louis (also known as La Plume) who was a hunting guide and craftsperson, connects him to the building of the intercolonial railway that was written as a condition into the Constitution Act of 1867 and was used to entice the other colonies across Canada to enter confederation (Figure 4). Commissioned by Colonel Rhodes, former Director of the Grand Trunk Railway Company of Canada (GTRC—precursor of the Canadian National Railway), the portrait is one in a series of Rhodes and other Indigenous peoples posing for hunting scenes, enacting the colonel's love for caribou hunting. Nonetheless, the stylized scenes obscure the unsolved murder of Gros-Louis a couple of years later, as well as the violence perpetrated against Indigenous peoples during the forced displacement necessary for the building of the intercolonial railway. "For Colonel Rhodes," the student wrote, "his time in the army was considered 'peaceful' but this was after years of war and his eventual role as director of the GTRC still makes him an active agent of British imperialism. The fact that Rhodes hired and posed with Indigenous guides, should not negate the overall climate of Canada that shaped him."

Figure 4. *Aboriginal person with objects to sell, Montreal, QC, 1866* [Francois Gros-Louis (La Plume)]. Notman Photographic Archives. I-20033, McCord Stewart Museum.

The intercontinental railway, a foundational settler infrastructure, enabled the nascent confederation to suppress and control Indigenous resistance. In fact, the railway was the decisive factor in the repression of the second Métis rebellion, also known as the North-West Rebellion of 1885, by facilitating the movement of the army from eastern Canada to the prairies. During the first Red River Rebellion (1869) and at the time when the railroad had yet to reach the prairies, the Métis and their Cree allies, led by Métis leader Louis Riel, were successful in securing land rights and constituting a provisional government that formed the basis of the Manitoba Act of 1870 (Kermoal 2009). A picture of the Montreal Garrison Artillery, prominently displaying "six Indian scouts" in the foreground, attests to the role the city played in the larger constitution of the Canadian state and in the country's first independent military venture (Figure 5). At the time, while French Canadians supported the suppression of the rebellion, they nonetheless vehemently protested the hanging of Riel in 1885. Documents from the general assembly of the Montreal municipal committee held on November 16 chronicle the committee's approval of a general protest stating that the hanging was politically motivated and amounted to "a heinous violation of the laws of justice and humanity," including a direct affront to the Catholic and French roots that Riel represented. According to the students' archival analyses, "Louis Riel represented both the oppression and disenfranchisement of the Indigenous [peoples] and the Quebecois during a period of dramatic change for the country," and "although the Northwest Rebellion was related mostly to Indigenous issues, the French saw themselves

as possible victims in the future, vulnerable to losing their culture and identity by their English government who is only interested in promoting and pursuing their idea of the Nation."

Figure 5. *Montreal Garrison Artillery and Aboriginal scouts, North West Rebellion, 1885*. MP-1993.6.2.31, McCord Stewart Museum.

In 1959, Montreal and Canada celebrated the completion of the St. Lawrence Seaway, a series of channels and locks that connects the river to the Great Lakes and facilitated a new maritime commerce infrastructure, thus cementing Montreal as an important site in the global flows of capital investment and trade (Figure 6). Heralded as a beacon of modernity, the project condemned 1,262 acres of land that belonged to Kahnawake, which translates as "by the rapids," and displaced many families, not only in Kahnawake but also Akwesasne (a Kanien'kehá:ka community south of Cornwall, Ontario). Community members lost access to the St. Laurence River, both for pleasure and for food (fishing), and massive ecological impacts are still felt to this day. The student contextualized the picture of ships sailing the seaway with this: "The archival information exudes the vast technological advancements of the economy and the imperial hegemony that would increase more import/export activities. … Little was mentioned of the political, environmental, economic changes to happen to the people whose lifestyle heavily depended on the water. … The people of Kahnawake are able to watch the boats go by daily; for some a constant reminder of mistreatment of federal government and for others the deep wound of culture loss and everyday life." A claim alleging Canada's breach of its fiduciary and legal obligations in regard to the land expropriations was filed by Mohawk Council of Kahnawake in 2008. While the claim remains unsettled, the community leads an ambitious restoration project that aims to rebuild cultural, social, and ecological relations to the river (Deer 2020).

Figure 6. *Voie maritime du Saint-Laurent 1959*. RG53, Box number: 79, Library and Archives Canada.

Global flows are not unidirectional, and Indigenous agency continues to resist and subvert settler colonialism. The "Indians of Canada" Pavilion at Expo 67 (Figure 7) was a space and place where, for the first time, Indigenous peoples in Canada took charge of their own representation on the world stage and where "the fantasy of integration was replaced by a more realistic narrative that was more fitting with the reality of colonialism" (student statement). Guided by the question, "What do you want to tell the people of Canada and the World when they come to the Expo in 1967?," the Pavilion provided a glimpse not only on the history as understood and expressed by Indigenous peoples, but also how they imagined a just Indigenous-state relationship if reconciliation was truly intended. Perhaps one of the most controversial pavilions throughout the entire fair, it garnered significant attention from non-Indigenous peoples in the city and beyond at a time when Indigenous-state relationships were strained. Although its legacy remains contested, "by taking control of the messages, the art, and the narrative of the pavilion, Indigenous people were essentially choosing to which extent they wanted to be part of the non-Native Canada narrative. It meant that they were able to draw the line between the two cultures and create the image they wanted the world to have of First Nations in Canada" (student statement).

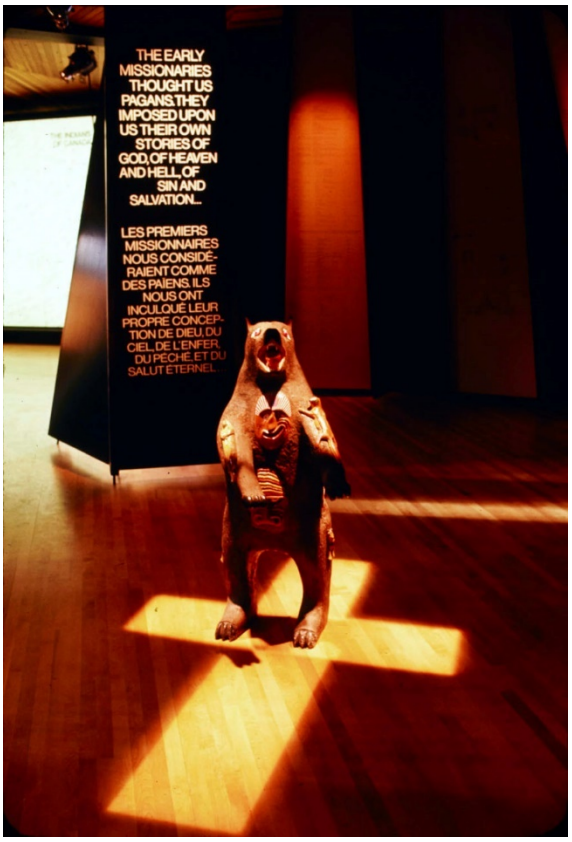

Figure 7. *Indians of Canada pavilion – exhibition 1967*. RG71, Box number: TCS 00866, Library and Archives Canada.

"Where Do I Stand?"

These historical snapshots demonstrate how students explored the ways in which physical and narrative settler-colonial infrastructures linked the city to the broader national and imperial state-making ambitions. They also show how Indigenous peoples reconfigured and contested the very same nation-building processes. They are but a few in the kaleidoscope of urban historical transformations in which Indigenous peoples actively participated. But what about the present, and what vision for the future? To further contextualize these transformations and make evident the ways in which Indigenous peoples have negotiated their claims on urban space, a guided visit of the City of Montreal archives was arranged, as well as a welcoming with the newly appointed City of Montreal Commissioner for Relations with Indigenous Peoples. Spurred by the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC 2012), as well as increasing lobbying by Indigenous groups in the city, since 2016 Montreal has taken important steps towards recognizing and making visible Indigenous contributions to city making. Some of these actions include renaming of streets and other city landmarks with Indigenous toponyms, changing the city flag and coat of arms in recognition of Kanien'kehá:ka's

original role of land stewardship, hosting a Summit on Reconciliation, and launching the city's Reconciliation Strategy 2020-2025, among others.

The visit and discussions with the Commissioner supported students in developing their research-creation projects, which focused on contemporary forms of creating a sense of belonging and political community in urban space. Taking up the threads of the archival research, the final projects dived deeper into Indigenous resurgence and mobilization both in the urban context more broadly, but also locally in Montreal. For example, inspired by recent contestations of heritage monuments in the city, two students traced the impacts of colonial map-making on erasing Indigenous sovereignty and presence in Montreal. The project also aligned with the Montreal Indigenous Community NETWORK (a local Indigenous umbrella organization) mandate to Indigenize public spaces in the city. Their project used counter-mapping to identify important Indigenous sites in Montreal and provided a summary of recent similar initiatives in Canada, Aotearoa, and Australia. They concluded:

> Although Indigenous people support the renaming of places, Indigenous resistance is focused more on aspects of Indigenous life and realities that requires immediate structural actions. Place names are an easy place to start reconciliation, especially when it comes to naturalizing Indigenous presence amongst non-Indigenous people. … What is clear, however, is that globalization has created new forms of marginalizations and resistances, that manifest in complexing ways. … However, a part of us also wonders, is reconciliation truly possible in a capitalist economy?

Like Dorries's examples of Indigenous decolonial aesthetics, this project engaged with contemporary critiques of state-driven reconciliation, underlining the need for an intersectional reading of contemporary Indigenous priorities and understanding of decolonization. In other words, decolonization involves structural transformations that are material and explicitly assert Indigenous sovereignty.

Another project focused on the contributions of Indigenous, and specifically Kanien'kehá:ka, iron workers to building urban infrastructures across the continent, highlighting the intersection of Indigenous labor, capitalist growth, and globalization. This theme emerged after the visit to the City of Montreal Archives where the class was presented with material pertaining to the contribution of Kanien'kehá:ka, iron workers in building two main bridges linking the island of Montreal to the south shore. Throughout her paper, the student provided insightful reflections on the "chronically undocumented" lives of laborers in the city archives, but also of the rich oral histories that are circulated informally among family and friends:

> In doing research for this paper, there was virtually no information in the Manhattan online city archives that detailed the inclusion of Kahnawake people in the construction jobs. There were online communities of indigenous ironworkers (for example, a facebook group called "Mohawk Ironworkers from Kahnawake locals 40

> and 361") where family members of people who worked in iron and steel would post their personal photographs of men on construction sites. There are multiple podcasts and recordings of interviews with ironworkers that can also be found online, but very little from the city archives. In my research creation project, I made a video using royalty-free footage of current Manhattan architecture and of ironworkers. The juxtaposition of the two brings capitalist aesthetics into a new context—a context that ties it to its production, and inherently changes our understanding of the city (Kayla J., 2018).

Understanding the city as a place built by Indigenous hands, this project highlighted the materiality of Indigenous space-making and the invisibility of Indigenous labor contributions to urban landscapes in municipal archives. Importantly, it also showed the richness of relational networks extending from city to city that produce distinctly urban forms of Indigeneity and the kinds of vibrant forms of Indigenous urban life that Dorries alludes to.

One student produced a zine that linked Canada's obligations to the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the principles of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) as defined in the Convention on Biological Diversity, to analyze the city's commitments to sustainability and the Indigenous opposition to sewage dumping in the St. Laurence River in 2015. Municipal and provincial legislation was critically analyzed to assess whether it upholds FPIC and how, and if, Indigenous peoples contributed to its the development and implementation. She concluded:

> While considering the case of Montreal's sustainability action plan (2016-2020) and Quebec's climate change action plan (2013-2020), failure to comply with all Aichi Biodiversity Targets, has already been established. It is evident that participation from Indigenous peoples was not present in the planning or implementation (of these policies). … In many ways, Montreal is failing to reflect Canada's agreements to both the CBD and UNDRIP. This prompts Indigenous activism and supports colonial systems. In this way, Canada is continuing to disenfranchise Indigenous people, prevent effective reconciliation and contribute to the erasure of Indigenous peoples (Emily M., 2018).

This project emphasized the centrality of land-based relations in shaping Indigenous identity and political authority in urban settings. Often associated with non-urban contexts, these land and other-than-human relations provide guiding principles for Indigenous social movements that uphold Indigenous legal traditions and speak to Indigenous participation in policy decision-making.

An article published by two students in the university newspaper, *The Concordian*, highlighted Indigenous ethnobotanical knowledge and medicine practices, including the creation of the First Nations Garden (FNG) at the Montreal Botanical Gardens as a place of belonging and healing for Montreal's Indigenous population (Almahr 2018). For this assignment the students visited the gardens in the fall, took pictures, and coordinated with

the *The Concordian* editorial team. Their research paper engaged with questions of decolonizing knowledge production as well as the potential pitfalls of appropriation and subordination of knowledge systems in a globalizing world. As stated in their *Concordian* article:

> In the city, places like the First Nations Garden are reflections of how Indigenous spaces are distinct and cordoned off, instead of being incorporated into the population's everyday life. The colonial impact on Montreal is felt everyday, but is practically invisible to settlers. … At a time when we are finally beginning to acknowledge the cultural, ecological and spiritual value of Indigenous peoples, it is crucial to also question the European foundation of Montreal. By fostering more Indigenous places in cities, like the Native Friendship Centre of Montreal and the First Nation Garden, we can challenge the hegemony of European settler values and knowledge systems (Almahr 2018).

Focusing on the process of knowledge making, rather than the material product, this project spoke directly to Indigenous urbanism as a process of "life making" and as a space in which Indigenous ethics of care are enacted. Indeed, it highlights how Indigenous knowledge systems co-produce urban place by "attending to, caring for, and being cared for by place" (Till 2012, 5; Dorries 2023).

Finally, taking up the destruction of the riverfront in Kahnawake, a group of students focused on food sovereignty in Kahnawake that is informed by Kanien'keha:ka creation stories and restores agroecological practices and intergenerational knowledge transfer in the community.

> What we are really talking about goes well beyond food sovereignty. It is food security. It is land reclamation. It is health. It is safety. It is living in concordance of natural laws. It is one of our many connections to the land. Our land is our understanding of the world, whether acknowledged or not in mainstream society. It is the thing that connects us all. Colonization has severed Indigenous peoples from their lands but not the spiritual connection. We are seeing the nations of Turtle Island returning to the land to heal it and to heal themselves in many ways including food sovereignty.

In keeping with this understanding of food sovereignty as a springboard to unpack relationships to land and life, the group arranged for a traditional Kanien'keha:ka meal to be served at the end-of-term conference (Figure 8). Community members were invited to speak about the cultural and social significance of ancestral agricultural practices, especially those centered on the cultivation of corn. As such, this project and its public outcome can be seen as circling back to demystify the vanishing Iroquois village commemorated by the Dawson Site by fixing Montreal within the Haudenosaunee and other Indigenous territorialities. It brings equal attention to colonial displacement and dispossession and to place-based initiatives that reappropriate and reconfigure Indigeneity based on how Indigenous peoples live their lives in urban contexts.

Figure 8. Traditional food by Kanien'keha:ka caterer from Kahnawake: cornbread and moose meat, stuffed pumpkin and wild rice, mush with berries. Photo by author.

Building Infrastructures of Affect

These brief sketches of the students' projects provide insights in to how they expanded their understanding of the city as an ever-evolving space that centers debates about reconciliation and decolonization in Canada and Montreal. These were but a few that stood out from a remarkable range of topics and approaches, but essentially they point to the role that education and place-based pedagogies can and should play in fostering political empowerment and capacity building of a generation that carries the burden of settler-colonialism into the Anthropocene. Taking their point of departure as one of the foundational nodes in the network of "infrastructure of empire," the pedagogical interventions presented in this article followed the physical and narrative co-construction of the City of Montreal. From contestations of commemorative monuments and urban toponomies to examples of Indigenous active participation in shaping municipal reconciliation strategies and leading restoration projects that give land and life back, students explored how an Indigenous ontology of relationality makes urban places. In so doing, they gained a better appreciation of the multiple ways in which Indigenous peoples negotiate the terms of their engagement with physical and narrative urban transformations and reconfigurations and "how Indigenous urbanism emerges as a set of practices that connect people to place by highlighting practices of relationality and life making" (Dorries 2023, 116).

These modest contributions to a better understanding of Indigenous urban heritage and lives helped students shift their historical thinking by tracing both the impacts of settler-colonialism and Indigenous mobilization, thus escaping binary understandings of

Indigeneity and urbanity. By taking on archival research, students engaged in critical heritage practice and explored the politics of memory-making, therefore, understanding the city as a place and space constituted by "an ongoing relation between nations" where their own positionalities have the potential to fashion and activate Indigenous-settler relationships into the future (Murray 2018, 252). By learning about how Indigeneity was transformed by urban processes and how, in turn, it transformed urban socialities, students engaged in a collective exercise of memory-making that made clear the ephemeral and contested imaginaries of place and the city. By exploring various forms of Indigenous resistance and re-appropriation of the urban space in Montreal, including acquaintance with municipal reconciliation initiatives, they moved beyond a singular understanding of Indigenous urbanity as a consequence of colonialism towards a more nuanced understanding of a specifically urban Indigenous place-based ethics of care. Such an ethics of care aims to heal colonial wounds by building an infrastructure of affect that honors everyday lives, builds social capital, and insists on just relationship-building, without bracketing settler-colonial legacies and contemporary realities of urban Indigenous peoples. Indeed, this is the life making towards which Dorries gestures.

One cannot assert definitively that such pedagogical interventions correlate to future city-making interventions. While the course was not specifically designed to track students' shifting understanding of the city as an Indigenous space, my overall analysis is based on the statements parsed from their final research-creation assignments (which I have included here) as well as the evolution of our collective conversations about Indigenous urbanities and identities as they intersected with historical and contemporary settler nation-building. Indeed, while the course provided historical and theoretical perspectives on globalization, the archival research and the research-creation assignments showed how the students deftly traced the unequal power configurations in the city and beyond, both in their historical and contemporary forms. By generously sharing their evolving meaning-making and positionalities in class discussions, the students demonstrated that the Right to the City is a collective reclamation of the urban space that recognizes and affirms Indigenous peoples as rights holders and not simply stakeholders. Echoing Mr. Dudemaine's call to remember the spirit and intent of the Great Peace of 1701, Indigenous urban infrastructures of affect, long deemed invisible, are restoring their materiality within the ephemeral urban landscape. Ultimately these infrastructures of peoples and imaginaries not only make visible structural and institutional injustice, but more importantly, they foster relational obligations to place across multiple generations.

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