Social Representations of Indigenous People within a sample of non-Indigenous Young Adults in Quebec, Canada

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history teachers regarding the transmission of the history of Aboriginal peoples within the history of Canada in Quebec. The objective is to document the extent to which federal and provincial policies resonate with francophone Quebec communities through teaching.

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Relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Quebec have been characterized by cultural and political domination by European-Canadian populations. Recently, a pro-reconciliation political movement has emerged and is trying to ease these relations. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the extent to which the pro-reconciliation discourse has succeeded in being integrated into the social representations of the youngest Quebeckers. Using a qualitative methodology, we have highlighted that a paternalistic discourse remains, as well as elements of representation that identify indigenous people as diseased, helpless and freeloaders. The discussion focuses on the dangers of a reconciliation approach that would only emphasize the place of Indigenous people without taking into account the obstacles generated by the implicit prejudice of social representations.

Introduction

Relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada are currently administrated through a national "reconciliation" policy. This reconciliation process was formally initiated in the 1990s. and, since 1998, successive federal administrations have sought to make amends by acknowledging the abuses committed by the Canadian State trough the Indian residential school system (1883-1996), where hundreds of thousands of Indigenous children were forcibly abducted and physically, psychologically and culturally abused. Political actions targeting reconciliation seem to be based on public repentance of the Canadian State and its desire to "moving forward with Indigenous partners on different paths toward reconciliation", in a nation-to-nation relationship (Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, 2019).

Today, Canada's federal and provincial governments provide specific services and administrative structures for Indigenous people. Two federal departments were created in 2017: the Ministry of Crown-Indigenous Relations and the Ministry of Indigenous Services. Celebrating the 2018 International Day of the World's Indigenous People, Carolyn Bennet and Jane Philipott, whom held the aforementioned offices, said:

> "*Prime Minister Trudeau has emphasized that there is no relationship more important to Canada than the one with Indigenous people […] Reconciliation is not just the work of governments. On this very special day, we encourage all Canadians to honor the diverse cultures of Indigenous people around the globe and to reflect upon our shared responsibility in the journey of reconciliation towards a fairer, sustainable and more prosperous Canada"* (Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, 2018).

While national policies encourage people to look to the future, the same is true at the regional and local level. In Quebec, the first Indigenous territory to be colonized by the French and home to 11 Indigenous nations and 105 000 Indigenous people, policies are aligned with the federal Government: "*As for indigenous communities, the Government will continue to support them in order to that they participate fully in prosperity of Quebec by the*

establishment and maintenance of partnerships based on development economic, social and cultural" (Gouvernement du Québec, 2018, p. 2).

From an indigenous perspective, the discourse on reconciliation and the application of the law in the context of the various treaties is worrying. For the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador, it is an ongoing struggle to have their self-determination and voice recognized in the process itself:

> "*The process must be reset to zero to ensure that it is based on our fundamental principles of participation. The Government of Canada must reconsider its strategy to be more respectful of our perspective rather than impose its own ideas. [...] The federal government will have to accept that the failure of this process is a direct result of its unilateral approach rather than a failure of our leadership*" (Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador, 2018, p. 1).

Furthermore, the Assembly remains cautious and wonders if: "*the Government of Quebec is interested in seriously addressing the recommendations of the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Rights*" (Nuovo, 2019)

In this context, the political reconciliation process appears highly superficial and settler-driven. It aims to set new rules on a way to live together on the same territory. It is hiding the psychological process that would aim to provide settlers with new mindsets on the colonial processes, their consequences, and the way they repeat themselves. Reconciliation is a "multi-level task that requires ongoing attention and effort directed towards constitution building, institutional reform and relational transformation" (Maddison, 2017). As so, it requires not only political gestures and discourses but also

education and actions directed to socio-psychological alterations in society (Maddison, 2017; Maddison, Clark, & De Costa, 2016; Regan, 2010). As stated by Davis et al., the reconciliation discourse and political process have been dismissed by Indigenous scholars "as a romantic attempt to smooth over Indigenous–settler relationships while leaving the status quo untouched" (Davis et al., 2016). Researchers from Australia, Canada, the United States and New Zealand have stated that, in addition to recognizing conflict and the history of violence towards indigenous people, work on the depth of social representations and mutual acculturation is needed to overcome the settler-led reconciliation process. (Carlson, 2017; Maddison et al., 2016; Regan, 2010; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

Neocolonialism through settler cultural standards is rooted in daily behaviors and social representations. Social representations refer to modalities of knowledge of common sense that enable individuals to create meaning in the world in which they live, to orient their actions and their relationships with others (Delouvée, 2016). Unlike social cognitions, such as stereotypes or attitudes, social representations are not a person's response to the social environment, but rather a dynamic whole: they designate both the content of knowledge and the social process by which it is formed through interaction (Duveen & Lloyd, 1990). Using group position theory (a theory of prejudice based on the perception of the superiority of one group over another), Denis (2015) studied small communities in Ontario. Through 160 interviews, he unveiled that pervasive prejudice and discrimination towards Indigenous people from non-Indigenous people remained, while intergroup marriages and apparent friendship seemed to rule the community. Following similar objectives, Morrisson et al. studied prejudices and stereotypes in central Canada and detailed how Indigenous people still experience discriminations and prejudice

at different structural levels: institutional, legal, educational and medical as well as at an interpersonal level, through discriminations and racism (Morrison, Morrison, Harriman, & Jewell, 2008).

In Canada, and from the settler point of view, reconciliation may appear as a comfortable, compatible with human rights and promoting the peace-maker myth of the Canadian people (Davis et al., 2016; Regan, 2010). Hence, to achieve a "reconciliation process", it seems necessary to identify the facilitators allowing a real shift of representations, beside the political discourse. So that a bi-directional (indigenous towards non-indigenous and vice versa) acculturation can take place (Bourhis & El-Geledi, 2010).

Yet, very few studies sought to investigate the social representations that Indigenous and non-Indigenous have towards each other, in order to implement policies that would be based on facts as well as on political interests. Within a larger research program intending to evaluate the psychological aspects of reconciliation in Quebec, Canada, our research team led an exploratory study aiming to describe the social representations of Indigenous people from the point of view of non-Indigenous young adults. By studying social representations, and not only the stereotypes of non-Indigenous towards Indigenous people, we seek to understand what these representations are, but also how they have been constructed and disseminated among this generation. Hence, our objective was to evaluate the extent to which the previous colonial order remained within the youngest adult population, which could possibly affect the way to which the current reconciliation can be used as a neocolonial instrument. We hypothesized that, using social representation conceptual framework and the spontaneous evocations method (Abric, 2003), social representations in non-Indigenous young adults would remain tinged with racism and paternalism, in spite of the communication efforts from the technocratic authorities.

Methods

Conceptual framework

Social representations theory (Moscovici, 1963) is a "conceptual framework that enables to understand and explain the way individuals and groups elaborate, transform and communicate their social reality" (Rateau, Moliner, Guimelli, & Abric, 2011). Social representations constitute a knowledge system, collectively elaborated and acquired through communication (Jodelet, 1984). Their evaluation has been the subject of a large body of literature and the "hierarchical evocation" method developed by Abric is now the most commonly used way to investigate social representations in the structural perspective (Abric, 2003; Guimelli & Deschamps, 2000). It aims to reveal the central structures of a social representation (structures shared among people from the same social group), as well as its peripheral system (contents sensitive to context). More importantly, it allows to unveil the existence of a sub-structure, within the core of the representation, called the "silent zone" (Dany, Urdapiletta, & Lo Monaco, 2015; Lo Monaco, Piermatto, Rateau, & Tavani, 2017). The silent zone is constituted with counter-normative elements, which cannot be seized through direct questioning. Counter-normative elements represent elements from the social representation in contradiction with the group's values and valued norms (Abric, 2003).

The "hierarchical evocation" method uses specific techniques that release the subjects from social desirability, in order to identify these counter-normative elements called "silent zone" (Dany et al., 2015).

Instruments

In the hierarchical evocation method (Abric, 2003; Lo Monaco et al., 2017), participants are asked to spontaneously associate five words or expressions to the concept being studied. In the case of this research, non-Indigenous participants were asked: *"What are the first five words or expression that come to your mind while hearing 'Indigenous people'".* They were then asked to order their answers, ranking them from the less important to them (concerning the object being studied) to the most important.

The method also allows to reveal the silent zone of the representation, by using a "substitution technique". In this context, the substitution technique was as follows: *"According to you, if we were to ask all the students from your program what were the first five words or expression that would come to their mind while hearing "Indigenous people", what would they answer?"* This substitution technique brings the participants to mention the components of the social representation that are sensitive to social desirability and would not be spontaneously brought up using the first instruction (Lo Monaco et al., 2017).

Analyses

Hierarchical evocations. Following Abric's instructions (Abric, 2003; Dany et al., 2015), our research team used a 3-step analysis:

Step 1: all words and expressions were grouped into semantic categories sharing common meaning. Two members of the research team operated this thematic grouping task. Words used by the participants were also used as frequently as possible to name the definitive category.

Step 2: frequencies of appearance were calculated for each semantic category. In this study, categories that were used by at least 10 participants were considered into our description of the social representations. Categories that were above the threshold of 10% of the participants were considered as "highly represented".

Step 3: mean ranks were calculated for each semantic category. We considered the mean ranks from 1 to 2,49 as "important" terms and from 2.5 to 5 as "less important".

Table 1 presents the structure of the social representation, according to the method developed by Abric and considering the thresholds used in this study.

Table 1
The structure of a social representation using hierarchical evocations

	High rank (1-2.49)	Low rank (2.5-5)
High frequencies (>10%)	Central system	Periphery: 1st peripheral system
Medium frequencies (<10%)	Periphery: Contrasting elements	Periphery: 2nd peripheral system

Note: *Semantic categories were included in this structure if they were mentioned by at least 10 participants.*

Counter-normative elements are revealed through the comparison of the participants' answers to the two set of instructions. Researchers examined the variation of frequency of the semantic categories appearing while using with the substitution instruction. We selected the semantic categories that varied from more than +/-

30% (the threshold was chosen to reflect important variations) between the regular and substitution instructions. All instruments were administrated online, in French language, using Limesurvey™ solutions.

Participants and procedure

Young Canada-born adults (born in the 1990s or 2000s) with a medium to high level of education were recruited, as we sought to recruit individuals who were exposed to the Canadian culture with regards to the Indigenous people of Canada. We also sought to homogenize our sample in terms of education, seeking people who were currently enrolled in an academic program (undergraduate or graduate). By using these criteria, we hypothesized that the exposure to the governmental discourse would be similar within our sample.

Six Quebec universities were contacted in order to circulate our online questionnaire. Administrators from each program whose contact information was available online were contacted, as well as any sports or alumni association whose contact information could be found. Online students' groups (through social media) were also considered and were asked to circulate the questionnaire. The questionnaire was

released April 19th, 2018 and closed April 26th, 2018.

Results

Participants

During the seven days of the study, 821 individuals accessed the questionnaire. From those, 515 adequately completed the survey. Ninety-two participants were born before 1990 and thus entered the questionnaire in spite of the initial filter question. We decided to remove their answers from the present analyses. In this initial sample, 59 participants were not born in Canada and only 27 declared they belonged to Indigenous nations of Canada. These numbers were not high enough to run specific analysis using the hierarchical evocation method. They were removed from the present study and will be analyzed at a later stage of our research program. As several questionnaires were excluded for cumulative reasons (age, place of birth, Indigenous status), the final sample was constituted of 351 valid questionnaires from 1990's Canada-born, non-Indigenous students. Table 2 presents the final sample of this study. This sample of 23.4 mean years of age is mainly feminine. Only 7 people were born outside Quebec, giving a particular cultural homogeneity. Almost 8 out of 10 participants were undergraduate students.

Table 2
Final sample of the study

	N	%
Gender		
Male	59	16.8%
Female	289	82.3%
None of the above	3	0.9%
Mean age	23,36[20-28], *SD*=4,06	
Place of birth		
Canada (Quebec)	344	98.0%
Canada (Other provinces)	7	2.0%
Academic status		
Undergraduate	275	78.3%
Graduate	76	21.7%

Social representations

While exposed to the instruction: *"What are the first five words or expression that come to your mind while hearing "Indigenous people"?"*, the 351 participants from the final sample produced 1755 words/expressions. From these, 157 semantic categories were created. Fourty-three of these categories were used by at least 10 participants and 10

categories were used by 36 or more participants, hence reaching the 10% threshold.

Table 3 presents the social representation of Indigenous people from our sample, according to Abric's method of investigation. Table 4 presents the categorization process, with the initial wording of the participants in each semantic category.

Table 3

Social representation of Indigenous people from non-Indigenous young adults in Quebec, Canada

	High rank (1-2.49)		Low rank (2.5-5)	
High frequencies (>10%)	Category	N participants	Category	N participants
	First Nations	84	[Indian] Reservation	159
	Culture	75	Alcohol	47
	Native Americans	55	Nature	45
	Community	41	Traditions	38
			Poverty	37
			Indians	36
Medium frequencies (<10%)	Category	N	Category	N
	Ancestors	17	North	33
	First comers	15	Residential schools	27
	Rights	13	Family	26
	Nations	10	History	26
			Hunting	25
			Inuit	22
			Spirituality	20
			Feathers	20
			Natives	19
			Exclusion	18
			Discrimination	18
			Defining physical characteristics	17
			Minority	16
			Fishing	16
			Traditional housing	15
			Territory	15
			Quebec	15
			Origins	14
			People	14

Isolation	13
Differences	13
Traditional instruments	13
Violence	13
Colonialism	13
Language	13
Difficulties	13
Arts	13
Beliefs	12
Assimilation	11
Injustice	10
No taxes	10
Social issues	10

Table 4

Categorization process

Final Category Regular Instruction	Words/Expressions Within The Category
[Indian] Reservation	Reservation, Blue Point, Wendake, Kanawake, Mashteuiatsh, Uashat, Kitiganzibi, Pikogan, Mistissini, Pessamit, Indian Reservation, Native Reservations, Mastheuiach, Odanak, Kanawaki, Wemontaci
Alcohol	Alcohol, Alcoholism, Alcohol / Drugs, Alcohol Problems, Fetal Alcohol, Alcoholics, Beer, Alcoholic Beverage
Ancestors	Ancestors, "I See The Face Of An Old Indian Sage", Ancestral, Older
Arts	Dance, Arts, Music, Artistic, Emerging Literature, Tales And Legends, Indian Time, Samian, Songs, Rap
Assimilation	Assimilation, Deculturation, Loss Of Identity, Forced Assimilation
Beliefs	Different Beliefs, Spirits, Beliefs, Spirit Of All, Symbol, Holistic, Cycle
Colonialism	Colonial, Colonization, Colonized People, Destroyed By Colonizers, Colonialism, Colonization / Paternalism, Colonized
Community	Community, Importance Of Community, Group, Group Of People, Ethnicity
Culture	Culture, Cultural Richness, Strong Culture, Indigenous Culture
Defining Physical Characteristics	Dark Skin, Dark Hair, Dark Skin (Tanned), Braids, Swarthy, Tanned, Dark Complexion, Almond Eyes, Dark Color, Dark, Brown Skin, Different Skin Colors, Red Skin, Dark Face
Differences	Different, They Have Their Own Rhythms, Differences, Different Mentality
Difficulties	Difficulties, Live Difficulties, Numerous Difficulties (Alcohol, Suicide, Abuse, Etc.), Difficulties: Drugs, Low Schooling, Lack Of Confidence, Personal Difficulties, Daily Struggle

Discrimination	Discrimination, Victims Of Discrimination, Second-Rank Citizen
Exclusion	People Sidelined, Exclusion, Excluded From Society, Excluded, Social Exclusion, Lack Of Inclusion, People Left To Themselves, Excluded, Sad Exclusion
Family	Family, Family And Group Culture, Intergenerational, Intergenerational, Big Family, Fraternity, Culture (Family Values)
Feathers	Feathers, Makeup / Feathers
First Comers	First-Comers, Those Who Populated And Inhabited America Through Beringia, First, First Nations, First Inhabitants, First Resident Of A Place, First People
First Nations	First Nations, Iroquois, Montagnais, Cree, Innu, Naskapi, Mohawk, Anishnabe, Micmacs, Atikamekw, Anicinabe, Algonquians, Maliseet Of Viger, Wendat
Fishing	Hunting And Fishing, Fishing, Hunting, Fishing And Gathering
History	Ancient Civilization, Old Times, History, Sad History, History Of Quebec, 1700, Duplessis, Ancient Times, Past Pain, Stories Ignored, Ancient Nations
Hunting	Hunting
Indians	Indians, American Indian
Injustice	Injustice / Social Issues, Injustice
Inuit	Inuit, Inuit / Husky
Isolation	Isolation, Separated, Isolation, Isolated, Isolation Of Rest Of Quebec, Isolated People
Language	Language, Native Language, Orality, Different Language, Different Language, Language Barrier, People Speaking English Or Others, Kuei, Culture And Language
Minority	Minority, Visible Minority
Nations	Nations
Native Americans	Native Americans
Natives	"From The Country Where He Lives, Whose Ancestors Lived In This Country" (From The Dictionary), Indigenous, Aborigines, Native, Indigenous Title, Indigenous, Native Montrealer.
Nature	Life In The Forest, Away, Nature, Star, Needing Nature To Live, Outdoors, Forest, Snow, River, Natural Products, Lake, Nature Connection, Earth Connection, Deep Relationship With Nature, Fire, Rock, Manwan, Environmental Defense, Relation To Nature (Different From Western Culture)
No Taxes	No Taxes, Tax Exemption, Pay No Tax
North	Northern, Northern Quebec, Far North, Northern Canada, North Plan
Origins	Origins
People	People
Poverty	Poor, Poverty, Financial Difficulties, Misery, Deprived, Underprivileged, Social Misery

Quebec	Pierreville, Chibougamau, Hochelaga, Maniwaki, Abitibi, Nunavik, Lac Simon, Quebec, Sept-Îles, James Bay, New France, Gaspésie, Roberval, Gatineau
Residential Schools	Convent, Residential Schools, Residential School History, Native Boarding Schools
Rights	Rights, Rights And Freedoms, Human Rights, Indigenous Rights, Rights Acquired
Social Issues	Delinquency, Social Issues
Spirituality	Spirituality, Spiritual Wealth, Spiritual
Territory	Ancestral Territory, Territories, Region
Traditional Housing	Tipi, Longhouse, Wigwam, Hut
Traditional Instruments	Dreamcatcher, Bark Canoe, Drum, Dinghy, Calumet, Feather Hat, Inukshuk, Sock Rackets, Woolen Clothing
Traditions	Traditions, Respect Of Traditions, Party, Ancestral Knowledge, Celebration
Violence	Violence, Murder, Dangerous, Crime, Aggressiveness, Cover Episode, Crime, Maltreatment

Substitution Instruction	
Alcohol	"It's An Indian. It Does Not Support Alcohol", Alcoholism, Alcohol, Alcohol / Tobacco, Alcoholics, Drunk People In Front Of The Building, Alcohol Issues, Alcohol Problem, Drunk
Ancestors	Ancestral, Ancestors, Elder, Respect To Elders
Arts	Art And Culture, Primitive Art, Emerging Literature, Music
Community	Other Communities, Clan, Community, Indigenous Community, Life In The Community
Defining Physical Characteristics	Black Hair, Dark Skin Color, Dark Skin, Dark Skin, Red Skin, Dark Complexion, Slanted Eyes
Different Culture	Other Culture, Cultural Barrier, Different Culture, Culture Specific To Them, Cultural Difference, Cultural Differences, Different Cultures, Different Ways Of Life, Diversity, Cultural Diversity, Intercultural, Multiculturalism, Intercultural Relationship, Different Values
Drug Addiction	Substance Abuse And Alcohol, Substance Abuse, Drug / Alcohol / Suicide, Drugs And Alcohol, High Alcohol, Tobacco And Drugs, Poisoning, Alcohol And Drug Problems, Toxicism Issues, Tobacco And Drugs, Substance Abuse
Drugs	Drugs
Feathers	Feathers
Freeloaders	"It's A Gang Of Freeloaders!" (Some Would Think That :(), Social Welfare, Social Welfare, Welfare, Freeloaders, Supported By The Government
Homelessness	Homelessness, Itinerant, Homeless
Injustice	Injustice, Injustice To Them.
Isolation	Isolated, Isolation, Social Isolation, Isolate, Isolated, Isolated, Isolated Population, Seclusion, Withdrawal From Other Populations, Solitude, Live Away
Nations	Another Nation, Nation.
Natives	Indigenous, Indigenous, Native

Nature	Needing Nature To Live, Connection To The Land, Water, Fire, Link To Nature, Nature, Nature (Proximity To), People Living Along Rivers, Outdoors, Rock
No Taxes	"He Should Pay Taxes Like Us!" (Some Would Think That :(), Tax Free, Tax Exemption, People Who Do Not Pay Taxes, Do Not Pay Taxes, Non-Payment Of Taxes , Pay No Taxes, No Taxes, Save Taxes
North	Northern Quebec, Northern, Northern Canada, Nordic
Origins	Origin, Native
Physical/Mental Health Problems	Difficult Acceptance Of Care, Comorbidities, Depression, Psychological Distress, Diabetes, Dialysis, Lower Health Status, Low Dental Hygiene, Hypertension, Disease, Illness, Lack Of Care, Unhealthy Eating, Not Healthy, Health Problem, Mental Health, Transcultural Care, Care, Psychological Disorder, Disorders, Mental Disorders, Psychological Disorders
Poverty	Underprivileged, Deprived, Low Income, Misery, No Money, Poor, Poverty
Prejudice	Population On Which Many People Have Prejudices, Prejudices, Prejudices Conveyed In Society Towards Them, Stereotypes
Social Problems	Multiplicity Of Social Problems, Social Issues, Social Issues, Societal Issues
Spirituality	Spirituality, Spiritual
Taxes	Taxes
Territory	Land, Territory
Tipi	Tipi
Traditional Housing	Longhouse, Tent, Hut, Igloo
Traditions	Ceremonies, Traditional Knowledge, Customs, Folklore, Heritage, Traditional Knowledge, Traditions, Ancestral Traditions, Knowledge Transfer
Vulnerability	Risk Factors, Population At Risk, Vulnerable Population, Risk, Vulnerability, Vulnerable,

The core of the representation (high frequency / high rank) gathers the most descriptive features of the Indigenous people. "First Nations" (84 participants, 24% of the sample), "Culture" (21%), "Native Americans" (16%) and "Community" (12%) were the main components of the central structures of the social representation.

In the periphery of the representation, we found:

a) Frequent and low-rated categories regarding the social/geographical environment of Indigenous people were found ("[Indian] Reservation" (45%), "Nature", "Tradition", "Indians), as well as "Alcohol" (13%) and "Poverty" (11%). These concepts complete the central elements of the representation.

b) Less frequent, high-rated categories, similar to those found in the central nucleus ("Ancestors", "First comers", "Nations"), suggesting that the core elements of the social representation (stable shared structures) are mainly descriptive of First nation people or based on what essentially distinguishes the *First Nations* from non-Indigenous people.

c) Less frequent, low-rated categories referring to the colonialism and the oppression of the Indigenous people ("Residential schools" (8%), "Exclusion" (5%), "Discrimination" (5%), "Violence" (4%), "Colonialism" (4%), "Difficulties" (4%), "Injustice" (3%)). Among the overall sample, 27.6% of participants used at least one of those terms.

Substitution technique

The substitution technique (*"According to you, if we were to ask all the students from your program what were the first five words or expression that would come to their mind while hearing the "Indigenous people", what would they answer?")* allowed to identify variation in the categories from the regular condition. Table 5 synthetizes the categories that were less frequently (-30% and below) named by participants with the substitution instruction while Table 6 presents the semantic categories that were more frequently (+30% and over) quoted in the substitution technique. Categories that were used by at least 10 participants in one or the other conditions were considered.

Table 5
Semantic categories that were less frequently named in the substitution condition

Semantic category	N participants (substitution instruction)	N participants (regular instruction)	Variation
Origins	3	14	-78%
Arts	5	13	-62%
Traditional housing	6	15	-60%
Defining physical characteristics	8	17	-53%
Injustice	5	10	-50%
Spirituality	10	20	-50%
North	19	33	-42%
Nature	26	45	-42%
Feathers	12	20	-40%
Ancestors	11	17	-35%
Territory	10	15	-33%
Natives	13	19	-32%
Traditions	26	38	-32%
Community	28	41	-32%
Nations	7	10	-30%

Table 6
Semantic categories that were more frequently named in the substitution condition

Semantic category	N participants (substitution instruction)	N participants (regular instruction)	Variation
Physical/Mental health problems	24	3	+700%
Drug addiction	17	4	+325%

Taxes	19	5	+280%
Different culture	20	6	+233%
Drugs	20	7	+186%
Prejudice	13	5	+160%
Freeloaders	10	5	+100%
Social problems	19	10	+90%
Homelessness	13	7	+86%
Vulnerability	12	7	+71%
Alcohol	80	47	+70%
No taxes	16	10	+60%
Isolation	20	13	+54%
Poverty	53	37	+43%
Tipi	18	0	-

As Table 5 shows, using the substitution technique, we found that participants associated less descriptive categories to the concept "Indigenous people". Except for the term "Injustice", most of the categories that were less used with the substitution instructions referred to the characteristics ("Origins", "Nations", "Territory", "Defining physical characteristics", "Native", "North", "Community") and the romanticized indigenous way of life ("Arts", "Traditional housing", "Spirituality", "Ancestors", "Feathers", "Nature", "Traditions").

In contrast, as shown in Table 6, a number of categories appeared or were most frequently associated with the "Indigenous people", while using the substitution technique. A few categories referred to stereotypes ("Different culture", 6%; "Taxes", 5%; "Tipi", 5%; "No taxes", 5%), whereas the majority of the terms refer to specific flaws ("Alcohol", 23%; "Poverty", 15%; "Physical / Mental health problems", 7%; "Drugs", 6%; "Isolation", 6%; "Social problems", 5%; "Drug addiction", 5%; Homelessness, 4%; "Vulnerability", 3%; "Freeloaders", 3%). According to our conceptual framework, the categories that raised or appeared in the substitution technique are characteristic from the counter normative elements of this social representation.

Prejudice (4%) is the only term participants used to describe negative attitudes towards the settler State. It is the only category from this list which carries this attitude, while 9 out of 15 categories (Alcohol, Poverty, Physical/Mental health problems, Drugs, Social problems, Drug addiction, Homelessness, Vulnerability, Freeloaders) from the silent zone were tainted negatively. Among all participants, 43.9% used at least one term from these 9 categories.

Discussion

In 2017, to celebrate the 375th anniversary of Montreal's founding, the City council (where no Indigenous sat then) offered to the First Nations communities to choose a new symbol to appear on the Montreal flag. Besides the traditional Fleur-de-Lys, Rose of Lancaster, shamrock and thistle representing the French, English, Irish and Scottish colonization of the province, the White Pine was chosen to represent the Indigenous origins of Montreal.

This paper presented the results of a study, which is part of a larger research program entitled "The White pine's roots", seeking to evaluate the relation between the political and psychological aspects of the "reconciliation" process, in Canada. This study sought to investigate the nature of the social representations of Indigenous people in

Canada, among the youngest Canadians adults (Millennials) living in the Quebec province of Canada.

Results show that a two-level social representation emerged from our sample. When asked what they would immediately associate with the term "Indigenous people", participants used romanticized and stereotyped terms. Terms such as "First Nations", "Nature", "Ancestors", etc. were widely used, showing a cultural homogeneity with regards to *who Indigenous people are*. These terms are characteristics from the current public discourse on Indigenous people, sustaining the reconciliation policy currently implemented by the federal government of Canada. Searching for counter normative elements of the social representation, we identified counter-normative (but central) elements of the social representation. Amongst these elements, negative associations with the *Indigenous people* were found in the participants' answers. Reference to alcohol, drug or dependence, to poverty, violence, social problems, vulnerability or homelessness, to health problems, mental health problems and isolation were found in 43.9% of our sample. The words and expressions that disappeared when asking participants to substitute to their social group were related to community features of Indigenous communities. In contrast, words that appeared were related to individual flaws, disorders, or illnesses.

With regards to the present state of the art, our results confirm and detail the pervasive forms of romanticism and paternalism in the youngest non-Indigenous people in Canadian adults; it also brings attention to the new forms of stigma that affect Indigenous people.

The pervasive romanticism and paternalism

In 2010, Lynne Davis raised concerns about the "best intentioned deeds when they are not rooted in a critical, self-reflexive consciousness […] and how instead then can

perpetuate and deepen paternalistic colonial relationships" (Davis, 2010). Our results show that, in a population of non-Indigenous young academic students, knowledge and awareness do not come together. Core components of the social representation of Indigenous people were characteristics of a romanticized image of the Indigenous-as-a-noble-savage, perpetuating a form of racist paternalism. The young adults from our sample were raised within a very self-righteous context where the *reconciliation* (as a political construct) was at the heart of Indigenous-Settlers relationships. Thus, their social representation of Indigenous people include (a) descriptive features of the Indigenous as a specific culture as it could have been read in a school manual and (b) paternalistic features, when it comes to characteristics that move away from description. The social representation is perfectly aligned with the current political and media speeches on Indigenous people. It gives evidence of how the paternalistic conception of the Indigenous can be carried on from generation to generation. In this Millennials generation, the traditional romanticized representation (North, Nature, Ancestors, Culture, First comers) is completed with paternalistic descriptions of the Indigenous (Poverty, Difficulties). It gives support for the hypothesis that, besides supporting the status quo, the reconciliation discourse has created a representation of the powerless Indigenous, victim of the previous generations' reprehensible assimilation policies. It is coherent with Dion's (2009) research on the way Canadian schools are set to promote the colonial narratives. In a more recent publication, Davis and colleagues (Davis et al., 2016, p. 399) asked "What will help shift the consciousness of contemporary Canadians to a new story, where Canadians recognize and acknowledge themselves as occupiers of Indigenous homelands, perpetrators of cultural genocide and sustainers of settler colonial practices in the present?". If this radical assumption that critical awareness on past history constitute

the key for newer and sound relationships, the second contribution of our results casts a shadow on this promising (though ambitious) guideline.

The new forms of prejudice and stigma

It is now accepted that settler cultural dominance has created a very oriented narrative of the Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships. We saw that Millennials have integrated the main components of this narrative and can display it together with compassion for the Indigenous people. However, new forms of prejudice have raised from oppression and discrimination. Collective precariousness, isolation, stigma, social discrimination and political violence have transferred into individual struggle. What was a collective abstraction (the *good Indigenous people*) has become an individual reality (the *sick Indigenous*). When pushed to leave the social desirability behind the substitution technique of our social representation inquiry, participants from this study described elements from this representation composed of the Indigenous-as-a-diseased-individual (poor health, depressed and drug user), helpless (isolated with social problems and vulnerability) and a freeloader (uses the system while not paying taxes). This study revealed that, besides paternalism and basic colonialist rhetoric, academic Millennials have integrated a new form of implicit racism (Olson, 2010) targeting Indigenous people. This implicit racism is constituted by contents describing Indigenous individual flaws. Wolfe (2006), as well as Regan (2010) and Davis (2016) stressed that colonialism was an ongoing social system of thought. For Wolfe, colonialism cannot be exclusively explained through history. This study validates that hypothesis, showing that paternalist narrative were found pervasive within the youngest adults of Quebec. It also shown that implicit racism could transform into new generations of social representations. Indigenous people, who were previously

found as oppressed and in need for settlers' help are now also seen in the eyes of the youngest generations of adults as diseased, helpless and unfairly taking advantage of the social structures. As it has been demonstrated that implicit prejudice was associated to social behaviors (Olson, 2010), one can find that the numerous initiatives within the policy of reconciliation, aiming to promote Indigenous culture and achievements may not be the most effective way to challenge the negative side of the social representations. Non-indigenous people in Canada, and specifically in Quebec might want to work further in understanding the conditions *within the non-Indigenous dominant society* that would allow to go beyond stereotypes and paternalism. This will contribute to reach ethically acceptable objectives (identifying the obstacles to inclusion, avoiding the pervasive paternalistic initiatives...) for non-Indigenous Canadians.

The results of this study question us, as community psychologists, about the ways social change can take place from the perspective of institutions. Public institutions have, to a large extent, chosen to consider information (to their employees, to their constituents) as a lever for transforming relations between non-Indigenous and Indigenous people. While the intention to inform is commendable, our results show that social representations convey many barriers to quality relationships, which information cannot overcome. Within our larger research program, we have developed partnerships with community organizations as well as with public institutions, so that these social representations are better known and better taken into account in the willingness of non-Indigenous institutions to participate in social change.

The study of social representations seems to us to be relevant for community psychologists in both fundamental and applied research. It allows us to better grasp the implicit content organizing inter-group relations. It also

allows us to define relevant levers for large-scale population interventions. But this remains valid only from the point of view of non-indigenous people and should not mask the pre-eminence of political decisions (with reparation in the first place), which prevail for the implementation of reconciliation and self-determination processes.

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Disclosure statement