

WORKING PAPERS

Exploring Indigenous-Newcomer Relations in the City of Toronto: Changing Demographics, Reconciliation, and Potential of City Planning

Nico Casuncad

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Abstract

Toronto's urban Indigenous and newcomer populations are rapidly increasing. As a result, the City is facing a new demographic reality that will change how the municipal government implements its plans, designs, and programs. Indigenous and newcomer groups often have similar lived experiences of marginalization and discrimination as equity-seeking groups and can work together towards a more just city. This paper lays at the intersection of this new demographic reality, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) Calls to Action, and how planning might play an important role in supporting Indigenous-newcomer relations. A qualitative approach was used to explore the City's current level of engagement with the TRC's Calls to Action and the City's Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Communities in Toronto. Data collection included semi-structured interviews with City staff in the following divisions: City Planning; the Indigenous Affairs Office; the Newcomer Office; Economic Development and Culture; and Parks, Forestry, and Recreation.

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Introduction

Demographic Change

Toronto's urban Indigenous and immigrant¹ populations are rapidly increasing (O'Donnell & LaPointe, 2019; Statistics Canada 2017). In 2016, Toronto was home to 17.5% of all recent immigrants to the country and it currently has Canada's fourth largest urban Indigenous population (Statistics Canada, 2017). As a result, the City of Toronto is facing a new demographic reality that will change how municipal governments plan, design, and program the city. Many large and mid-sized cities across Canada such as Winnipeg and Vancouver are also experiencing the same demographic trend of increasing immigration and a growing young Indigenous population (Gyepi-Garbrah et al., 2014). At the same time, Canada is facing pressure from Indigenous communities and groups to acknowledge Indigenous people's rights, sovereignty, and self-determination (Porter & Barry, 2016). As a result of this demographic shift, in 2031, Toronto will become a so-called majority-minority, a jurisdiction in which one or more racial and/or ethnic minorities make up a majority of the local population (Statistics Canada, 2017). Given the rapid growth of immigration to Canada it is important to address how ethnocultural groups live with each other, especially how they interact with and learn about the diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples of Canada.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action and Reconciliation

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)², which was mandated to inform all Canadians about Indian Residential Schools, released their report and 94 Calls to Action urging all levels of government to work together to change policies and programs in a concerted effort to repair the harm caused by residential schools and move forward with reconciliation. Reconciliation³ as defined by the TRC is the collective effort from all peoples to revitalize the relationship between Aboriginal⁴ peoples and

¹ **Immigrant** refers "to a person who is, or who has ever been, a landed immigrant or permanent resident. Such a person has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Immigrants who have obtained Canadian citizenship by naturalization are included in this group" (Statistics Canada, 2017).

² **Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC):** The TRC is a component of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement that was approved in 2006 and began to be implemented in the following year. The TRC was a five-year mandate and was supported by a TRC Secretariat, which is a federal government department. The TRC prepared a historical record on the policies and operations of the schools and produced the Calls to Action report that includes recommendations to the Government of Canada concerning the IRS system and its legacy. The TRC hosted seven national events in different regions across Canada to promote awareness and public education about the IRS system and its impacts. The National Centre of Truth and Reconciliation research centre at University of Manitoba was established by the end of the TRC mandate, providing permanent resource that all Canadians can access (TRC, 2015)

³ **Reconciliation:** The cumulative impact of residential schools is a legacy of unresolved trauma passed from generation to generation and has had a profound effect on the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians. Reconciliation is the collective effort of all non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples to build a new relationship (TRC, 2015).

⁴ **Aboriginal** identity refers to those persons who reported to the 2016 census as belonging to at least one Aboriginal group; that is, North American Indian, Métis or Inuit, and/or those who reported

Canadian society, a goal that will take multiple generations to achieve (TRC, 2015). The TRC and its report have sparked a national discussion on redressing the colonial legacy and impacts of the Indian Residential Schools on Indigenous peoples.

Despite this discourse, there are still unresolved tensions and ongoing discussions amongst Canadians, political leaders, and Indigenous communities across the country. As I conducted research for this paper in January 2020, Canadians stood peacefully in solidarity across the country with the Wet'suwet'en people as they opposed a 670-kilometre pipeline led by Coastal GasLink⁵, putting pressure on the Prime Minister to uphold his commitment to diversity and tackle the deep-rooted inequities facing Indigenous peoples. With many debates and discussions occurring, Indigenous leaders and communities are saying "Reconciliation is Dead" in the current context of the Wet'suwet'en pipeline conflict in British Columbia. As nation-wide discussions are happening around Indigenous sovereignty and reconciliation, at the municipal level, actions are being taken by City staff and council members regarding their commitments to specific areas of the TRC report and Calls to Action.

City of Toronto Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Communities

In 2010, the City of Toronto adopted the *Statement of Commitment to the Aboriginal Communities of Toronto – Towards a Framework for Urban Aboriginal Relations in Toronto* (Toronto, n.d.). The *Statement of Commitment* declared the Toronto City Council's commitment to the principle of Aboriginal self-determination and to establishing mechanisms for full civic participation by all residents in the social, economic, cultural and political life of the City (City of Toronto, 2015). In addition to the adoption of the *Statement* in 2015, the City identified eight Calls to Action from the TRC's report as priorities for implementation, in particular I am interested in calls to action 43 (reconciliation), 57 (professional development and training for public servants), and 93 (newcomers to Canada), which call on municipal governments to take action on reconciliation and ensure newcomers understand the diverse history of Indigenous people. These actions establish the City of Toronto has taken steps to ensure that at the municipal level there is initiative and action taken by staff and divisions for their commitments to Aboriginal communities.

Research Problem and Questions

Over the years, First Nations, urban Aboriginal groups and immigrant organizations have acknowledged that there is limited interaction among them (Wong and Fong, 2011). Given the demographic changes Canada is experiencing, coexistence is necessary to address inevitable conflicts such as hate crimes, segregation, avoidance, apprehension or rivalry that may arise in multicultural and diverse cities (Sandercock and Brock 2009; Guidikova and Wood, 2012). Urban planning plays an important role in establishing

being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian, as defined by the Indian Act of Canada, and/or those who reported they were members of an Indian band or First Nation (Statistics Canada, 2017).

⁵ **Wet'suwet'en Conflict:** At the centre of the Wet'suwet'en conflict is a multi-billion-dollar natural gas project and an assertion by Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs that no pipelines can be built through their traditional territory without their consent. The \$6-billion, 670-kilometre Coastal GasLink pipeline has received approval from the province, and 20 First Nations band councils have signed agreements in support of the project, including five of the six band councils in the Wet'suwet'en nation (CBC Indigenous News, 2020).

coexistence and facilitating cross-cultural dialogue and understanding in our increasingly diverse cities (Porter, 2013). In addition to avoiding conflict across differences, managing conflict is also important because Indigenous peoples are the owners and stewards of these lands, it is every person's obligation to uphold treaties in Canada. "We are all treaty people" is a phrase commonly used to describe that all people living in Canada are treaty people with their own set of rights and responsibilities. Treaties⁷ are a foundational part of Canadian society because they have been made or are being made with the original inhabitants and are living documents between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (Mishenene & Dugale, n.d.). The urban planning profession and practice play an important role in managing the natural environment, climate change, and water and land management. As such, all people living on these lands, including newcomers to Canadian cities, have an obligation to uphold these treaties. Non-Indigenous peoples must acknowledge that Indigenous peoples are at the forefront of protecting the natural environment, climate control, water quality and rights on their land (Williamson, 2012).

This paper lies at the intersection of this changing demographic in Canadian cities, nation-wide discussions about reconciliation, and the potential of City Planning to foster and support Indigenous-newcomer relations to further advance reconciliation between non-Indigenous and Indigenous people. In particular, I seek to investigate how the City of Toronto has or has not made progress in their commitments to Aboriginal communities in Toronto as expressed in the *Statement of Commitment* and their commitment to the TRC Calls to Action. This paper will explore how municipal planning has the potential to play an important role in creating spaces for Indigenous and newcomer groups to collaborate to create a just and equitable city, and to further advance reconciliation. Specifically, the research goal is to understand whether or not the City of Toronto is committing to or working towards planning with a focus on advancing reconciliation and supporting Indigenous-immigrant relations. To explore these issues, the overarching research question guiding my inquiry is:

How are municipal planners and staff in the City of Toronto engaging (or not engaging) with the City's commitment to the TRC's calls to action regarding Indigenous-immigrant relations in their practice?

My research objectives include:

1. To investigate what the TRC's Calls to Action mean for the City of Toronto's goals and initiatives.
2. To explore the current level of engagement of municipal staff with the TRC's calls to action regarding Indigenous-newcomer relations.
3. To identify barriers, challenges and opportunities municipal staff face when engaging and working on initiatives with Indigenous and newcomer groups in their projects.

⁶ **Treaty People:** To learn more read Tara Williamson's 2012 article "We are all Treaty People".

⁷ **Treaties:** Treaties are agreements made between the Government of Canada, Indigenous groups and often provinces and territories that define ongoing rights and obligations on all sides. These agreements set out continuing treaty rights and benefits for each group. Treaty rights and Aboriginal rights (commonly referred to as Indigenous rights) are recognized and affirmed in Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 and are also a key part of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which the Government of Canada has committed to adopt. Treaties with Indigenous peoples include both historic treaties with First Nations and modern treaties (also called comprehensive land claim agreements) with Indigenous groups (Government of Canada, n.d). Ontario is covered by 46 treaties and other agreements, such as land purchased by the Crown signed between 1781 and 1930 (Smith, 2016).

Examining how municipal planners and the City of Toronto are engaging with the TRCs calls to action towards reconciliation requires a qualitative approach. The data collection method included semi-structured interviews with selected City of Toronto staff in identified divisions including the Newcomer Office; the Indigenous Affairs Office; City Planning, Economic Development and Culture; and Parks Forestry and Recreation, as I elaborate on below. The documents, initiatives, and potential interviewees were selectively chosen based on publicly available information from the City's website. Additionally, through snowballing sampling the Newcomer Office was added to the data collection process at the suggestion of the Indigenous Affairs Office. The time-frame of this paper involves documents and initiatives released after the *Statement of Commitment*, which was adopted by the City Council in 2010. The semi-structured interviews shed light on how the TRC's Calls to Action are reflected in City of Toronto's visions, goals, or actions and have helped substantiate research findings from the document and initiative scan. As I discuss below, the analysis process involved selective coding to identify important concepts and themes, and axial coding to identify links between different concepts and themes.

Indigenous History, Immigration, and Settler Colonialism in Canada

Canadian cities have been at the forefront of settler colonialism, which has led to discussions about governments taking action to advance reconciliation in this country (Porter, 2013). At the same time, municipalities are tasked with ensuring successful integration and settlement of newcomers in cities. The following literature review will dive deeper into how municipalities are responding to the demographic shift introduced in previous sections and to discussions about reconciliation. Understanding the history of Indigenous people and immigration and how differences are managed in cities will be elaborated on. I will discuss the links between Indigenous history and immigration in Canada in more detail, elaborating on the history of settler colonization, the history of immigration in Canada, and the TRC. Then, I will discuss the importance of strengthening Indigenous-newcomer relations in cities and how the demographic shift is important for planners to pay attention to. The last topic will tie all the literature together by addressing how municipalities play an important role in managing difference, co-existence, and reconciliation in urban settings.

Settler Colonialism in Canada

Indigenous Peoples have been present on the lands we know as Canada for more than 15,000 years (OPPI, 2019). The Doctrine of Discovery, which indicated that only Christians had the right of title to land, dictated the actions of European settlers across what is now North America and dispossessed Indigenous Peoples from their traditional territories (OPPI, 2019). The First Nations peoples were impacted by the contact with the first European arrivals and were further dislocated and dispossessed by European settlers who claimed land for farming, urban development, and resource extraction (Sandercock and Brock, 2009) Indigenous peoples have been dispossessed of not only their land, but also of the political, cultural, and socio-economic responsibility to govern their lands according to customary ancestral law (Porter and Barry, 2016). The state of Canada supported the assimilation of Indigenous peoples through the residential school system, the reserve system, and through federal, provincial, and territorial legislation and policy. As described by Cox (2017), settler colonialism is an ongoing system of power that perpetuates the

genocide and repression of Indigenous peoples and cultures. Therefore, Canada is an example of settler colonialism that is still perpetuated today with federal legislation and policy.

For over 100 years, Aboriginal children were removed from their families and sent to institutions called residential schools. The government-funded, church-run schools located across Canada were established with the purpose of eliminating parental involvement in the spiritual, cultural and intellectual development of Aboriginal children (TRC, 2015). During this chapter in Canadian history, more than 150,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children were forced to attend these schools some of which were hundreds of miles from their home. The cumulative impact of residential schools is a legacy of unresolved trauma passed from generation to generation and has had a profound effect on the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians.

Legislation by the Canadian government during and after Confederation, and up to the present day have further served to dispossess Indigenous Peoples from their traditional territories, cultures and traditions (e.g. *The Indian Act - 1876*). The Indian Act is a federal law that governs matters related to Indian status, bands, and reserves. Throughout history, it has been paternalistic, as it authorizes the Canadian federal government to regulate and administer in the affairs and day-to-day lives of registered Indians and reserve communities, and it still retains its original form (Hanson, 2009). An Indian Reserve is a tract of land set aside under the Indian Act and treaty agreements for the use of that land under an Indian Band. Those Bands have the right to live on reserve lands and have administrative and political structures in place (Hanson, 2009).

The reserve system had and still has implications for aspects of Aboriginal life on reserves. The reserve system disrupted social networks and long-established kinship systems that determined roles for people who could hunt, fish, and gather (Hanson, 2009). Another impact on reserves was the Crown's responsibility for the construction of housing on reserves. These houses were designed with the Western nuclear family unit in mind and were not culturally appropriate for the diverse groups of Indigenous people (Hanson, 2009). The housing system on reserves across the country have become symbolic of the dominant power system of the federal government as a result of colonial policies (McCartney, 2016). McCartney et al (2018) further explain that housing evaluation systems have played a critical role in the ongoing subjugation of First Nations peoples and their culture through their role in supporting ongoing state intervention in housing systems.

After centuries of dispossession of land and impacts on the social, economic, and physical aspects of Indigenous peoples through legislation, the reserve system, and the Indian residential school system, there has been a shift to a nation-wide discussion between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples on moving forward from the injustices committed to discussions around reconciliation (Bauder & Reesor, 2019). As result of this history, Canada is built on the dispossession of Indigenous land and people, immigration and the composition of the foreign-born population has changed considerably in the past 150 years, with censuses revealing a shift in the places of birth of Canada's foreign-born population (Statistics Canada, 2017). As a result of these trends, immigration has changed a great deal since Confederation, becoming the main driver of population growth in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017).

Indigenous-Newcomer Relations

Today, there are ongoing discussions amongst political leaders, Indigenous leaders, and stakeholders across the country about reconciliation, Indigenous sovereignty, and

land/resource management. However, at the same time, there is an increasing focus on the importance of further exploring Indigenous-newcomer relations (Bauder, 2019). Canada also faces a new challenge of ensuring that newcomers are aware of and educated on Indigenous peoples, cultures, and histories to ensure that the process of reconciliation is ongoing between non-Indigenous and Indigenous people. Newcomers often come to Canada with little or highly distorted knowledge of Indigenous people. However, De Costa and Clarke (2011) argue that the nature of Canadian social diversity and change has not been attended to in discussions on reconciliation. An assumption of an undifferentiated category of “non-Aboriginal Canadians” is no more of a useful way to proceed than is the persistent generalization of Aboriginal people in a range of cultural discourse and policy discussions.

Bauder (2019) revealed a gap that typically characterizes public debate related to Indigenous peoples in Canada and immigration and settlement. On the one side, we see Canada as a nation of immigrants that provides newcomers with a new home, no matter where they come from. On the other side, we see Indigenous peoples’ claim to belong to the land because they have always been here. According to the author, we tend to separate these two narratives, choosing to discuss either immigration or reconciliation, but not how the two are related or how they can be reconciled. However, the links between colonization and immigration are clear and longstanding. First, European colonizers and settlers displaced Aboriginal peoples, appropriated their land, and denied them a political voice. This type of settlement through appropriation set the stage for the establishment of a new community built on large-scale immigration that excluded Aboriginal peoples (Bauder 2011). In this way, a clear material link exists between immigration and Aboriginal experiences (Bauder 2011).

This clear link has the potential to further strengthen social and cultural bonds between Aboriginal peoples and newcomers which can be increased by their mutual recognition of common histories of colonialism in countries of origin and in Canada and by the socioeconomic challenges and racism encountered in Canadian cities (Gyepi-Garbrah et al. 2014). In fact, equity-seeking groups such as immigrants or Aboriginal people experience discrimination, racism, and are treated differently and are often disengaged or discouraged by the planning process (Gyepi-Garbrah et al., 2019). The changing demographic shift is important for planners to understand our changing populations in cities. This is also important to create space for collaboration between Indigenous and newcomer groups, reduce negative stereotypes, reduce racism and discrimination, and contribute meaningfully to society. Despite this fact, this gap between Indigenous and newcomers needs to be bridged with open dialogue and policy changes.

An important step towards reconciliation is that the settlement of newcomers begins with learning about this land and who it belongs to, while acknowledging the histories of settlement, genocide, displacement, and treaties (Reesor and Bauder, 2019). Similarly, Mathur et al., (2011) understand that reconciliation through cultural diversity is critical for newcomers to Canada to understand the history and relationship that Aboriginal people have had with the Crown, as it is different from other Canadians. Indigenous peoples and immigrant newcomers are embedded economically, culturally and politically in the urban fabric of modern settler states (Gyepi-Garbrah et al. 2014). This paper starts from the assumption that the planning process has the potential to catalyze meaningful cross-cultural learning about the legacies of colonialism, and that planners can improve community relations (Porter & Barry 2016). However, even though Indigenous and immigration matters are closely connected there is a lack of attention given to Indigenous-newcomer relations on a nation-wide scale. For instance, in the context of Toronto, no known research has been done on Indigenous-newcomer relations. However, studies have been completed on

Indigenous-newcomer related topics in immigration settlement and community organizations in other cities.

The increasing Indigenous and immigrant newcomer population in Canadian cities poses challenges for municipalities that aim to build relationships and understanding between the two groups. The clear link between Indigenous' and immigrant newcomers' lived experiences provides an opportunity for municipalities and city planning. At the same time, there is increasing acknowledgement of the injustices of colonial dispossession experienced by Indigenous peoples with ongoing national discussions about reconciliation with the TRC's Calls to Action and the City of Toronto's *Statement of Commitment*. In light of these ongoing national discussions, there are also discussions around how planning has been complicit with the exclusion and marginalization of Indigenous and immigrant communities.

Role of Municipalities in Managing Differences and Supporting Co-Existence, Diversity and Reconciliation

In cities, people share spaces with those who may not have the same backgrounds and we must find ways of co-existing in these spaces, from the next-door neighbour to the street, neighbourhood, city and region (Sandercock, 2000). Cross-cultural understandings and communication enable all marginalized inhabitants to use their collective powers to oppose various forms of oppression. As Gyepi-Garbrah et al. (2014) state, "there is great potential for building intercultural relationships among Indigenous peoples and immigrant newcomers as a means of decolonising Western cities" (p. 1). Indigenous and immigrant communities could collaborate in transforming their city through place-making to work towards the same goals of creating inclusive and just cities (Nejad, 2018; Nejad et al., 2019; Nejad and Newhouse, 2019). Cross-cultural dialogues can provide a common space for self-reflection, listening, and learning from the multiple histories, experiences, and narratives that remain unheard in the mainstream (Mitra, 2011). As a result, place-making would play an important role for these cross-cultural dialogues to occur in cities, as they provide a platform for collaboration between Indigenous and newcomer groups.

Therefore, understanding the importance of cross-cultural dialogue between Indigenous and newcomer groups will help identify areas of opportunity within place-making and city planning. Indigenous community-based organizations and Indigenous-led projects and initiatives are an important part of planning and advancing reconciliation and thus critical to moving forward and leading Indigenous-newcomer relations. Planners have a skill set that allows them to be collaborators, facilitators, and communicators to support city planning in the process of helping with cross-cultural dialogue and further collaboration with Indigenous-led community organizations in cities. Reconciliation will require meaningful relationship and trust building in order to start any city planning process between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Municipalities face many issues when it comes to city management, policy, and the maintenance of quality of life. Federal and provincial governments have many different priorities and portfolios compared to municipal governments, and they perform many functions, especially when it comes to city planning and immigrant settlement and integration. Fawcett et al. (2015) argue that collaborative governance arrangements between municipal governments and Indigenous leaders and organizations with representative legitimacy could potentially benefit both urban Indigenous groups and local governments through mutual learning and shared responsibility. Barry (2012) as cited in Fawcett et al. (2015), concludes that institutional structures such as municipal governments will need to be modified to make long-term collaborative planning possible between

Indigenous and non-Indigenous urban communities for a better-balanced surface of power relations.

Brock (2009) argues that municipalities must create community dialogue around issues of diversity, immigration and multiculturalism is important. Governments and staff, therefore need to look at strategies for the creation of long-term engagement in cross-cultural dialogue between members of the host society and immigrant populations. Senior levels of government, particularly federal governments, are usually the drivers behind immigration policy and the creation of opportunities for new immigrants to come to Canada and other polyethnic nations (Brock, 2009). As part of their responsibility for implementing this strategy, senior levels of government need to focus energy and resources on effectively co-integrating new immigrants and current residents. To accomplish this, they need to explicitly support programming in cities that attract the most immigration (Brock, 2009). This would be a vital step towards creating an environment conducive to effective immigrant settlement and integration including learning about the history and current context of Indigenous peoples and communities.

The training of public service staff is also an important tool that cities can utilize, as the TRC Call to Action #57: Professional Development and Training for Public Servants suggests. To be effective, diversity training and cross-cultural communication initiatives must create long-lasting changes in people's behaviour (Brock, 2009). Rather than merely focusing on rights and responsibilities, this pedagogical approach focuses on developing critical insights into issues of power and inequality (Brock, 2009). Increasingly, in planning discourse and other literature on social change, the transformational role of stories and storytelling is explored especially through community arts, undertaken with a community engagement approach, offering unique opportunities to create dialogue between groups (Brock, 2009).

Overall, the growing population of Indigenous and immigrant newcomers in Canadian cities presents a new challenge for municipalities. At the same time, there is increasing acknowledgement of the injustices of colonial dispossession experienced by Indigenous peoples, as indicated by the TRC. In light of the topics previously discussed, there is a role for municipal planning in further advancing reconciliation in regard to supporting and strengthening Indigenous-newcomer relations. This leads to the analysis of what the City of Toronto is currently doing after it has committed to engaging with Indigenous peoples through the *Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Communities in Toronto* and with the TRC Calls to Action.

Indigenous-Newcomer Relations at the City of Toronto

Early Stages of Action and Implementation at the Municipal Level

The City work of Indigenous-newcomer relations is in the very early stages; however, this is a sign of a cultural shift in immigration-focused divisions. Divisions such as the Newcomer Office and the Indigenous Affairs Office can further initiate this cultural shift by raising awareness of the significance and why other divisions should be involved. Fraser & Viswanathan (2013) examine the role of municipal planning in relation to the duty to consult and conclude that municipal-First Nations engagement will require both legislative change and a cultural shift in how planning is done and what is included in the professional planning curriculum. As discussed by Community Development Officer 1 in the Newcomer Office, much work still needs to be done in providing immigrant-refugee sector organizations more information about the TRC Calls to Action and in making progress:

I think it has been more gradual, and to be honest I think that the TRC in certain communities across the country was a bit more of a prompt for some of the work to start. I have not felt that has not been the case in Toronto necessarily. I would say that within the immigrant-refugee serving sector/community, there unfortunately does not exist information about the TRC calls to action to begin with. I think that is the number one challenge because to have to respond to them you have to know about them. If you don't know about them, it's not quite clear what your roles or responsibilities or what your commitment should be to them. So, there is one place that we can do better, in terms of where the sector is concerned. But yeah, we haven't responded as we should be.

As identified by the Economic Development and Culture's Senior Policy Advisor 1, projects and initiatives that relate to reconciliation and Indigenous-newcomer relations will have to take some time to communicate and develop in order to produce any policy direction or initiatives to implement in the future:

It's going to take a long time. I am not going to be surprised if it takes a year or two to really make it moving forward. It's about building relationships, and that's not easy, and there is quite frankly some distrust well-earned on the other side, so I think it will take years. And I think that's okay. We have to continue to push, but it's also important to be patient.

Another example identified by Senior Policy Advisor 1 from Economic Development and Culture was that the process of relationship building for City projects requires time and commitment:

Not everybody in the public service is comfortable with that uncertainty and pace, but I think it is what it is. I am more confident in what I know, and I just speak the truth, and when I get pushed about it, I just say "sorry, it's going to take longer", and that's one of the reasons in the inter-jurisdictional review that I emphasized that all the other case studies took two years to work on it and that it's just not something that you throw together. I mean, if you think about it, you don't build a relationship in two weeks, right? You need to continually demonstrate.

Even though City staff are in the early stages of pursuing Indigenous-newcomer initiatives, there are some ideas of where there are future opportunities in City Planning. As described by Chief Planner 1 and Project Manager 1 at City Planning, planning studies, the development of policies on affordable housing, and a city-wide Indigenous place-making framework are some ideas:

Future opportunities for creating and facilitating Indigenous-immigrant relations may include planning studies in neighbourhoods with significant immigrant populations (ex. Jane-Finch, which is in proximity to a significant archaeological site that consists of the remains of a Huron-Wendat village) or the development of policies around affordable housing, or the development of a city-wide Indigenous place making framework to guide the work of all City divisions (in the very, very early stages).

Overall, more work still needs to be done by the City to strengthen Indigenous-newcomer relations because it will take a long time to work with community members to identify the purpose and ultimate goals. To build meaningful relationships and trust between different community groups, it will take time. A barrier for Indigenous-newcomer relations to

unfold is that project management requires deliverable outcomes, and, at this stage, staff do not know what the end goals would be.

Demographic Shift & Immigration Settlement Challenges in the City

Immigrants are often faced with structural challenges such as racism and discrimination or access to services and resources (Tuohy & Talen, 2017). As a result, newcomer relationship building becomes less of a priority because there are more problems in settlement that immigrants experience such as finding affordable housing or access to transportation. As explained by Community Development Officer 1 from the Newcomer Office:

Both of these communities are the fastest growing in Canada, that it's only a matter of time that they take up space and would not have a choice but to interact. And to be able to live in a cohesive and inclusive society, in a peaceful society, relationships need to be built. It has to happen. It's not for lack of interest on both sides; it's just not having opportunities to connect because when you look at the newcomer community, when they arrive in Toronto, they are faced by a number of challenges relating to their integration and settlement, and, often times, relationship building, specifically newcomer-relationship building, falls on the wayside of becoming a priority for several reasons. But it has to happen given the context that we live in. More than 52% of Toronto's residents have a direct link of immigration as it is, so it is only a matter of time that immigration numbers are rising, and we have to start focusing on building relationships between the two communities.

This suggests that the immigrant-refugee serving sector may not prioritize strengthening Indigenous-newcomer relations because there are more pressing issues that will determine their quality of life in Toronto. Additionally, as the Newcomer Office's Community Development Officer 1 stated:

I think the two communities [Indigenous & newcomers] have a lot more in common than most people focus on. Oftentimes, they both have been exposed to underemployment, poverty. A bulk of newcomers come from communities that have a colonial past in history. They have faced trauma and can relate on those things; they face different kinds of vulnerabilities and are marginalized on so many levels in our City alone, and I think that shared experience could help empower the two communities to have a lot of feedback and input into how the city that they live in should be and look like.

Therefore, it is important to recognize that Indigenous and newcomers have a lot in common in terms of lived experiences. To open dialogue and move towards policy change and action, it is important for municipal staff to focus their work on effectively co-integrating new immigrants and Indigenous peoples. To accomplish this, municipal staff need to explicitly support programming in cities that attract the most immigration (Brock, 2009). This is an opportunity for City Planning; Parks, Forestry and Recreation; and Economic Development and Culture to work together on Indigenous-newcomer relations through policy, programming, or creating spaces for dialogue. This would be a vital step towards creating an environment conducive to effective immigrant settlement and integration, including learning about the history and current context of Indigenous peoples and communities. The Newcomer Office and the Indigenous Affairs Office can further collaborate together to strengthen Indigenous-newcomer relations by supporting the divisions listed above. As

discussed in the document and initiative scan, divisions often work in silos with Indigenous communities and newcomer communities. This is an opportunity for greater cross-divisional collaboration to occur since Indigenous-newcomer relations are in the early stages. Through the conversations that come out of the discussions the Newcomer Office is having with their Indigenous-newcomer Open Forum, the Newcomer Office can help identify focus areas that divisions can respond to.

Education First: Reducing Misinformation & Negative Stereotypes

Many staff members have discussed how in order to support Indigenous-newcomer relations, the City must first help educate on and communicate the history and stories of Indigenous peoples. As Reesor & Bauder (2019) and Mathur et al. (2011) argued, the settlement of newcomers begins with learning about the land and who it belongs to, while acknowledging Indigenous displacement and genocide. Similar to case studies in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the attitudes of refugees and Aboriginals towards each other were negative or minimal because of the separation between the two groups (Madriaga-Vignudo, 2009). As described by Community Development Officer 1 from the Newcomer Office, the City has a responsibility to reduce misinformation through effective communication strategies:

Reducing misinformation, like recycling negative stereotypes because unfortunately newcomers have been known to do that. Due to no fault of theirs because the non-newcomer population and generally established Canadians sometimes hold those beliefs, but we have a duty and a responsibility to ensure that there is awareness in education and whether or not that comes in many forms.

To implement city-wide initiatives or policies, education was argued to be the first priority before implementing an Indigenous placemaking strategy. Additionally, as the Newcomer Office's Community Development Officer 1 explains:

That piece [Indigenous place-making] is important, but I feel like the educating piece needs to come first. Newcomers need to understand what the medicine wheel means next to the City of Toronto sign, to be able to have input and contribution to how things should be designed, with history being kept at the forefront of it.

There also has been a theme of a shift in how City Planning addresses the presence of Indigenous peoples in the city through land acknowledgements at community meetings. However, beginning with land acknowledgements should also be the only process in which City Planning engages newcomers with Indigenous history. As Toronto's City Planning Chief Planner 1 and Project Manager 1 said:

All community meetings hosted by City Planning are to begin with a land acknowledgement, using the language and guidance provided by the Indigenous Affairs Office, and including a personal reflection that relates one's own experience and/or work as a built environment professional. The Chief Planner has committed to providing further opportunities for building knowledge, understanding and competency of staff to undertake this small but important action toward reconciliation. To those present at community meetings, including Immigrants, the action of a Land Acknowledgement also increases the visibility of Indigenous people and their history and presence in the city.

However, land acknowledgments during community meeting presentations may not be as effective because newcomers may not understand English as well or may not have the background information needed to understand the importance of a land acknowledgment. Additionally, educating newcomers through Indigenous learning opportunities in the built environment or through museums was also mentioned as a way to support Indigenous-newcomer relations. As described by Parks, Forestry, and Recreation's Director 1:

I think intercultural interaction is a given in a mature urban area, and so I think that we would want to be reflective and support that. I would say newcomers would have more appetite and interest in understanding what makes something special for Toronto, and if we reflect that Indigenous learning as part of it, it would just be part and parcel with what they understand to be important. So, if anything, they would be early adopters to all of that; it's not like they come in with preconceived notions that this was just their path and their community. They go in, and they see the restoration, some signage, they understand the history, and they go like "oh, this is interesting", so they don't come in with pre-piece, so in a way they can come in like a sponge and just absorb it.

Therefore, educating newcomers about Indigenous histories and cultures is important because they are willing to learn new information about Canada's history. Education strategies are a good starting place to reduce misinformation and stereotypes about Indigenous peoples and newcomers. The Toronto For All public education campaign, as discussed in the initiative scan, is a good opportunity to ensure that newcomers are educated from the proper sources that raise awareness of Indigenous people's history and diverse cultures. Overall, City divisions will have an important role to play in ensuring that Indigenous place-making can raise awareness of the Indigenous presence in the city.

Celebration & Recognition Through Arts & Culture to Foster Indigenous-Newcomer Relations

Throughout conversations, anecdotes of Indigenous and immigrant artists collaborating and producing art together was a common theme of celebration. Increasingly, in planning discourse and other literature about social change, the transformational role of stories and storytelling is explored, especially through community arts, undertaken with a community engagement approach, offering unique opportunities to create dialogue between groups (Brock, 2009). Storytelling and art could play an important role in fostering more discussions between Indigenous and newcomer groups. These activities often happen in public spaces for both groups. Public art is a form of place-making that has been utilized by economic development and culture to ensure there are Indigenous components. As described by Economic Development and Culture's Director 1:

Right now, we are working on something called the year of public art. It happens in 2021, and we are trying to figure out how we use it to advance reconciliation and how you signal that because we are at the front end of it. But we have a strategy framework for public art. In our language, we have included our commitments to advancing Indigenous reconciliation through place-making and public art and making it a foreground in everything that we do. We are trying to thread it through everything that we can in a very visible way.

In addition, a great example of how the celebration of arts and culture strengthens Indigenous-newcomer relations is described by the Newcomer Office's Community Development Officer 1:

Where things have progressed like nicely but not anything of our doing has been that, in the arts, we already see relationships forming between the two communities, and it is pretty obvious because the arts bring people together with different backgrounds. Last year, we attended an event hosted by the neighbourhoods arts network, part of the Toronto Arts Council Foundation, and it was an awards ceremony that was funded by RBC for newcomer artists, and at this event we met an Indigenous artist and a South Asian dancer who met through the program that they went through and decided to collaborate and create a unified Indigenous and newcomer dance.

Therefore, public art and celebrations of the arts and culture improve the potential of the City to support different ethnocultural groups to share their cultures and histories with each other. For example, as mentioned in the initiative scan, Newcomer Day celebrations would be an important initiative that focuses on how the City manages diversity while supporting cultures to be maintained and celebrated (Burayidi and Wiles, 2015). Ensuring that City staff support Indigenous and newcomer artists' ability to participate is important. Additionally, as Economic Development and Culture's Director 1 explained:

The number of Indigenous artists who have been commissioned through the StreetArt initiative is great. An Indigenous artist is getting a big project for place-making to understand Indigenous presence, for example. All the councillors have been really helpful and want to collaborate.

Overall, public art and celebrations of arts and culture will be important to strengthening Indigenous-newcomer relations. Storytelling is an important way for Indigenous communities to tell their stories, and the same is true for many diverse newcomer communities in Toronto.

The Importance of Implementing City-Wide Indigenous Place-making Efforts

Learning about Indigenous history and culture should come first, and then spaces and learning opportunities should be created for Indigenous-newcomer groups to come together to help shape the city that they want to live in. Examples include plans, wayfinding projects, ravine systems, the waterfront, secondary plans, and projects such as the *TOCore*, George Street Revitalization Plan, and the Indian Residential Legacy Project in Nathan Phillips Square. As a way for this learning and education to occur, a city-wide Indigenous place-making effort would be an appropriate response to change and would represent identities and histories through the built environment and programming. As Matunga (2013) discusses, settler architecture and spaces dominate our cities, including colonial architecture, places of worship, parks, lots, and street patterns. However, the history of Indigenous peoples and other ethnocultural groups have not always been present throughout the city. For example, as the Indigenous Affairs Office's Consultant 1 describes:

All throughout the city, it is changing now, but only in the last few years, there is no acknowledgement of people who have lived here previously, and there is no recognition. As you get off the plane at Pearson, you have no idea you are on the territory of the Mississauga's New Credit, and there's no way for people visiting the

city to know the history of the peoples here because we've been erased. So, everyone is doing a little bit of place-making in their portfolio because there are all these councillors trying to rename streets and places within their districts. So, supporting this is a big part of all of our jobs, which ties back to Indigenous learning.

Additionally, before Indigenous place-making can take place in Toronto, providing education and learning opportunities for newcomers is an important first step to moving forward. As described by the Newcomer Office's Community Development Officer 1:

Where things have progressed like nicely but not anything of our doing has been that in the arts we already see relationships forming between the two communities, and it's pretty obvious because the arts bring people together with different backgrounds.

In a city-wide Indigenous place-making framework, planning studies will be important tasks for planners to undo what Walker (2017) describes as structural violence. Further, planners should recognize and support Indigenous sovereignty and culture as well as produce equitable outcomes in the city for both Indigenous and newcomers. As described by Director 1 at Parks, Forestry and Recreation:

I think getting some outcomes, and we really have to look at that through a city-lens, even the connection to the Rouge National Park is really important because the Rouge is such a huge resource, and everything but it is in the federal piece, there's a whole bunch of things out there. But what are going to be impactful, what are going to be place-making opportunities that matter and that count, I think that's the harder question. I don't think having a policy that says, "thou shall engage with Indigenous communities". Well, that's great, everybody goes in and sends them letters, and they get a million letters, you know.

Additionally, as Tomiak (2017) discusses, settler states continue to pursue the transformation of Indigenous land into settler property and to govern Indigenous place-making and self-determination in cities. The leadership of Indigenous, community partners, the Indigenous Affairs Office, and the Aboriginal Affairs Committee have helped ensure that the City provides spaces and opportunities for the Indigenous community to determine Indigenous place-making initiatives. Therefore, it is important for municipalities and their staff to ensure that diverse ethnic and immigrant groups are also represented in the planning process of planning policy or initiative formulation. As this is a big step and requires time to build meaningful relationships, the City of Toronto is starting to co-develop an Indigenous Heritage Engagement project. As described by Chief Planner 1 and Project Manager 1 at City Planning:

The Planning Division is working in partnership with Museums and Heritage Services Unit (MHS) in the Economic Development and Culture Division, and with the Indigenous Affairs Office, to co-develop an Indigenous Heritage Engagement Project with Toronto's historic and contemporary Indigenous communities. While the

⁸ **Aboriginal Affairs Committee of Toronto:** The Aboriginal Affairs Committee of Toronto is an advisory body to the Mayor and City Council. The Committee's duties include using their knowledge and expertise to provide advice to the City Council through the standing committees of Council and to act as a liaison with external bodies on barriers to participation in public life and to the achievement of the social, cultural and economic well-being of the city's residents (City of Toronto, n.d.).

objectives of this project are still being defined with Indigenous communities, the project will contribute to understanding the properties and areas within the City of Toronto that Indigenous peoples consider to have cultural heritage value or interest and to understanding Indigenous peoples' perspectives related to ethnographic and archaeological artefacts of Indigenous significance, which may be co-presented in the Museum of Toronto and MHS's existing museums.

City Planning and other divisions' initiatives are already taking place with a great focus on Indigenous people and history such as the *TOCore*, Indian Residential School Survivor Legacy Project in Nathan Phillips Square, and the George Street Revitalization Project, all of which are setting a precedent for more initiatives to continue because they provide opportunities to raise awareness of Indigenous presence, culture, and history. Non-Indigenous people, including newcomers in Toronto who are exposed to Indigenous place-making, will be able to learn, appreciate, and acknowledge Indigenous peoples. This process can ultimately lead to strengthening Indigenous-newcomer relations. There is still more work that needs to be done in order to establish a city-wide Indigenous place-making framework for all City Divisions, however, with current precedents, work responding to the Calls to Action and *Statement of Commitment* will help shift the culture and mindset of City staff and newcomers who learn through these projects.

Overall, the semi-structured interviews with City staff provided deeper context about how the City is currently engaging with the TRC Calls to Action and Indigenous-newcomer relations. Key themes from the interviews were categorized into TRC Calls to Action and reconciliation. The interviews helped further explore where the City is in terms of Indigenous-newcomer relations and identify that it is at the starting point. The interviewees also identified barriers and challenges, such as City administration and project management. The themes that fall under the TRC Calls to Action and reconciliation include the importance of Indigenous-led leadership and relationship building between City staff and Indigenous communities. Training and cultural competency training for City staff was another key theme for the TRC Calls to Action and reconciliation. The interviewees also mention that a lot of work still needs to be done and that the City needs to go beyond "over-consultation" with Indigenous communities. For Indigenous-newcomer relations topics, the demographic change represents challenges in the future of the City in terms of providing education and reducing misinformation.

The City of Toronto and the TRC Calls to Action: Challenges and Barriers

As Toronto's urban Indigenous and newcomer population is rapidly increasing, the City of Toronto is facing a new demographic reality. This paper lays at the intersection of this demographic change, reconciliation, and the potential of city planning. The purpose of this paper has been to explore how City staff are engaging (or not engaging) with the City's commitment to the TRC Calls to Action regarding Indigenous-newcomer relations in their practice.

The paper reveals that the City has been responsive to the TRC Calls to Action and the City's *Statement of Commitment* and is working towards advancing reconciliation through policy and initiatives. However, several barriers and challenges need to be addressed by the City in order to work towards strengthening Indigenous-newcomer relations, both through policies and through implementable actions and initiatives. A common trend identified through the data collection process concerns how engaging and working on projects with Indigenous and newcomer groups will require genuine commitment through meaningful community engagement. This was indicated as a challenge for staff because City projects often have deadlines, measures, and outcomes that need to be

achieved. Another research finding concerns the differences between broader city-wide policy versus geography-specific planning policy documents in terms of how they focus on Indigenous communities, in particular, Indigenous place-making and reconciliation.

Divisional strategies also indicated that divisions are currently working in silos with Indigenous communities and newcomer communities in Toronto, with no explicit Indigenous-immigrant relations focus until now. An important trend also indicates the prioritization of issues facing divisions when working with Indigenous and newcomer communities. Multiple issues are important and should take a higher priority. For example, the importance of Indigenous place-making and meaningful community engagement should take priority over Indigenous-newcomer relations. While several interviewees expressed interest in and concern for Indigenous-immigrant relations, they also pointed out that the City must first address city-wide issues facing the Indigenous and newcomer communities individually in order to provide them with essential services and addressing their needs (e.g. affordable housing, addressing barriers to education and training, inclusive local economies, quality of life). Before strengthening Indigenous-newcomer relations, the City must ensure that these communities are able to first have the support systems needed in place to participate in municipal planning. However, at the same time, municipal planning has an important role to play in future policy direction and action in regard to Indigenous-newcomer relations. The Open Forum on Indigenous-newcomer relations that took place in February 2020 and the current level of inter-divisional collaboration shows an interest in further exploring this in the near future.

Opportunities for Indigenous-Newcomer Relations in the City of Toronto

Strengthening Indigenous-newcomer relations can be further explored through more conversations facilitated by the City with Indigenous community leaders and immigrant-refugee sector organizations to figure out what the key priorities are in this regard. In terms of planning policy directions, there are opportunities for exploring how secondary plans and planning studies can further integrate Indigenous-newcomer relations through promoting Indigenous heritage and history in immigrant-majority neighbourhoods, for instance. Additionally, strengthening community engagement in different ways is an opportunity the city can capitalize on, working alongside the Newcomer Office and the Indigenous Affairs Office. As discussed previously, it will be important for the City of Toronto and the divisions examined in this paper to first ensure that both communities are supported in their respective needs. Meaningful collaboration and engagement with Indigenous and newcomer communities in Toronto will be integral in defining what relationship building will look like for both communities.

Building meaningful relationships and trust in the ongoing process of reconciliation between Indigenous and newcomer groups is important in order to reduce negative stereotypes and increase knowledge and interaction. Therefore, Sandercock (2000) concludes that the work of planners in 'managing difference' is the work of negotiating fears and anxieties, mediating memories and hopes, and facilitating change and transformation between different cultural groups in our cities. In light of this, City planners in Toronto will have opportunities to integrate storytelling and the celebration of arts and culture in planning processes with Indigenous and newcomer communities, which is something this research has shown it is already beginning to happen. Then, ultimately, for planners to meaningfully engage in the process of reconciliation and build Indigenous-newcomer relations, they must continue to work in managing the differences in Toronto.

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