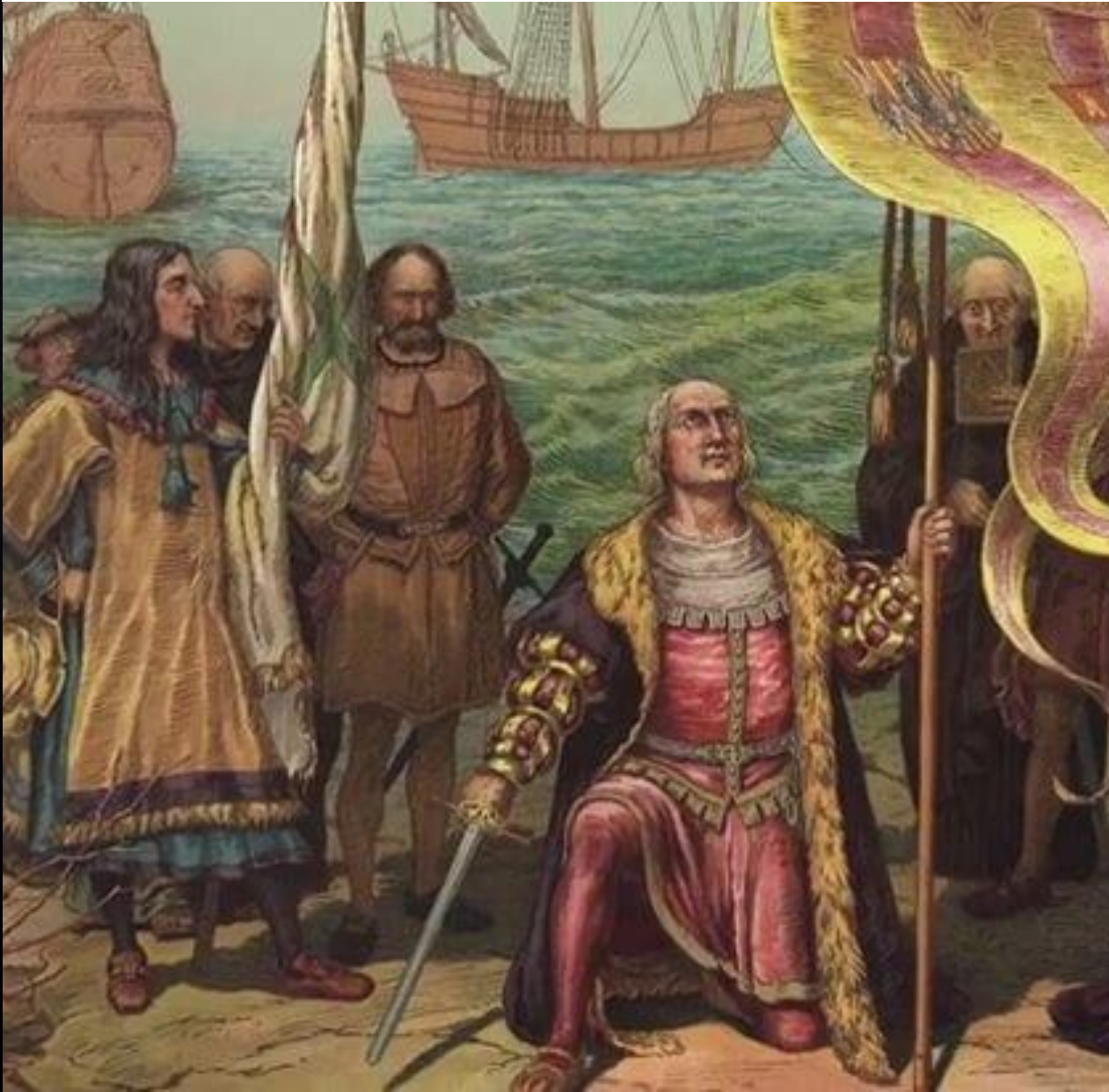




Colonization: Terra Nullius & The Doctrine of Discovery

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Below BC, 2020**

What is the “Doctrine of Discovery”



The Doctrine of Discovery was used by **European monarchies**, beginning in the **mid-fifteenth century**, as a means of **legitimizing the colonization of lands outside of Europe**.

It was issued in **1493**, the year after Christopher Columbus arrived on the shores of what is now known as North America.

It provides a framework for **Christian explorers to lay claim to lands uninhabited by Christians**, in the name of their sovereigns.

Terra nullius



Central to the Doctrine was that Indigenous peoples were not human because they were not Christian, and therefore their lands were “empty”.

This notion was called “Terra nullius”

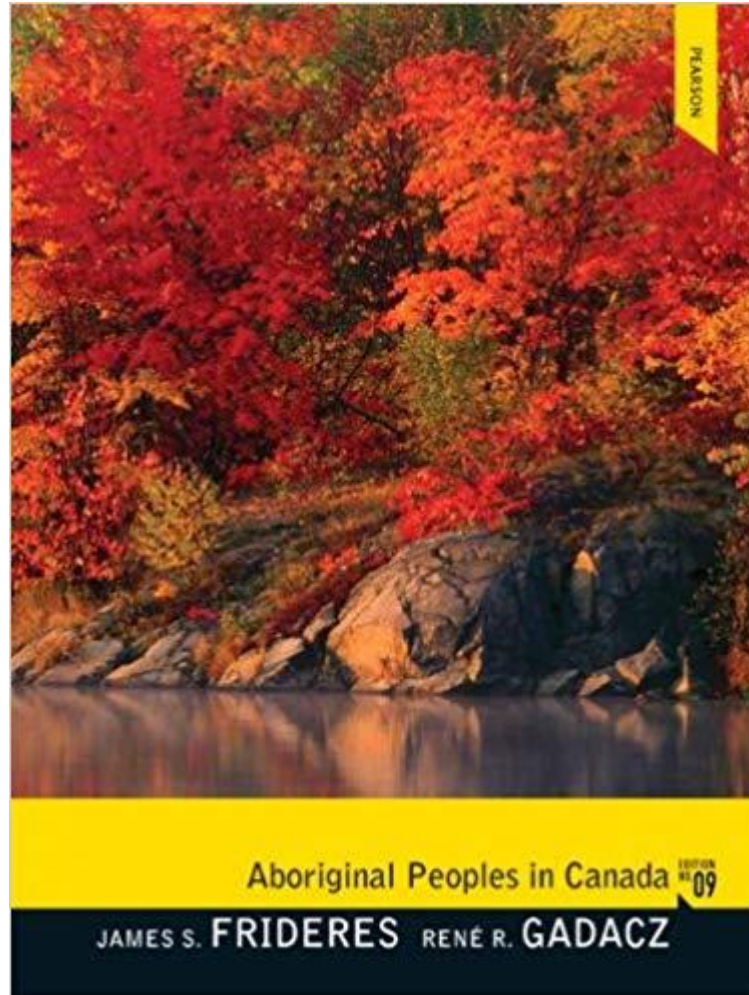
When Columbus arrived, it is estimated that North America had a population of 100 million indigenous people (about $\frac{1}{5}$ th of the world population at that time). Because they were non-Christian, their land was declared Terra nullius.



The Legacy of Colonization

Adapted from Frideres & Gadacz, 2012

"Aboriginal Peoples in Canada"



Comprehensive introduction to Native Studies

View points from the majority and the minority

Traces the history of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal rights in Canada across time

The Legacy of Colonialism



- In the model, Canadians are the colonizing people, and Indigenous persons are the colonized
- The Indigenous position in modern Canada is a direct result of the colonization process
- *"European colonizers destroyed the native peoples' political, economic, kinship and, in most cases, religious systems"*

The Process of Colonialism



- Key concepts:
 - Viewed Indigenous people as **inferior**
 - Process was to first “**Civilize**” then “**Christianize**”
 - In the 19th and 20th centuries there was a symbiotic relationship between **Church and State**
 - Legislation written that **outlawed integral components** of Indigenous culture, including dances, ceremonies and the potlatch

What is the “Potlatch”



- From the Chinook work “patshatl”
- Integral to **governing structure, culture and spiritual traditions** by redistributing wealth, conferring status and rank upon individuals, establish claim names, powers and rights to hunting and fishing territories
- Federal government **banned the potlatch from 1884 to 1951** as part of a policy of assimilation. The ceremony was deemed anti-Christian, reckless and wasteful



The Process of Colonialism



- External political controls were applied to Indigenous peoples:
 - **No rights to vote in provincial elections** until after World War II (but could be conscripted)
 - **Right to vote at the Federal level** not given until 1960
- Indigenous economic dependency
 - **Depending on larger society** as reserves treated as geographical and social hinterlands for exploitation
 - Development of Indigenous-owned industries was pre-empted
 - Indigenous occupational activities remained at a primary level

The Process of Colonialism: Economics



- During the process of colonization, a two-level system develops in which the colonizers own, direct and profit from industries that depend on exploitation of colonized peoples
- Very few Indigenous leaders are in the economic development
- The Federal government effectively discouraged the economic development of reserves

The Process of Colonialism: Social Services



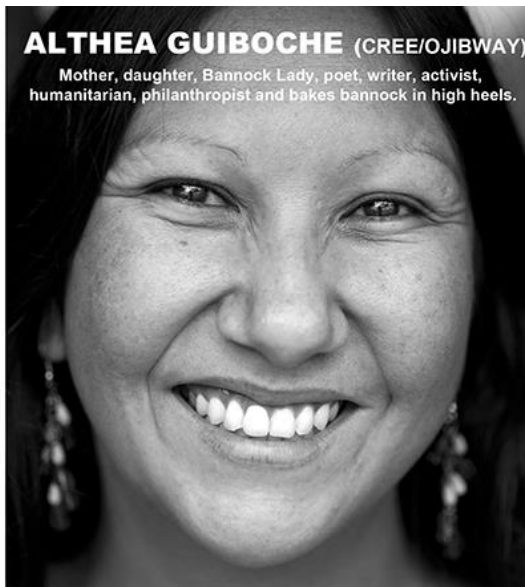
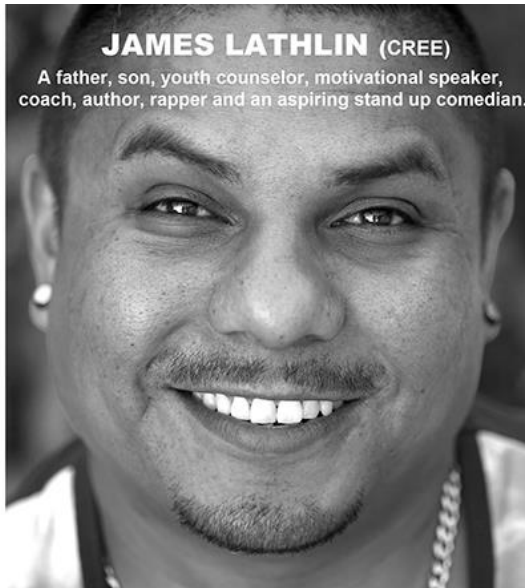
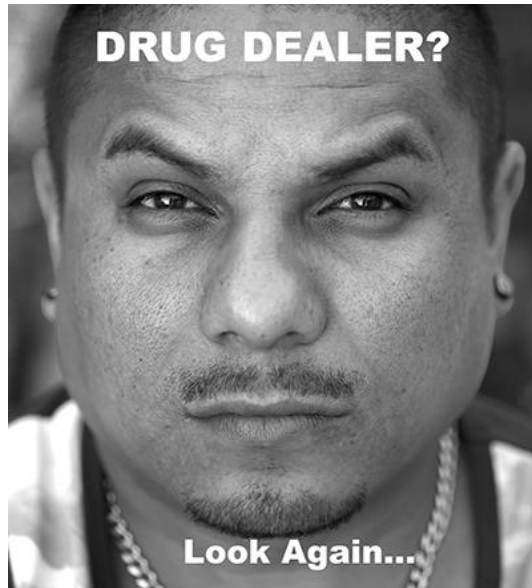
- Provision of social services (health and education) are of a lower quality
- Lower life expectancy than the general population
- Higher levels of support from social assistance programs, i.e. welfare dependency
- Unhealthy lifestyles imposed by poverty, for example drug and alcohol abuse

The Process of Colonialism: Racism



- Racism is the belief in the genetic or cultural superiority of the colonizers and the inferiority of the colonized people
- Indicators such as skin pigmentation and body structure are established to become the basis for determining superiority and inferiority
- *"interaction then goes on only among members of the same group"*. In Canada, Native peoples have the highest rate of marriage within their own ethnic group (almost 94%)

The Process of Colonialism: Culture of Poverty



- *"Historical colonialism has shaped the organization of our society and propelled Indigenous people to the margins of our society"*
- *"Once an individual is placed within the traditional culture of poverty, it is almost impossible for him or her to get out."*
- Aboriginal participation in the economy is almost redundant. After the buffalo and fur trade they were largely unable to participate
- Lack of opportunities to acquire new technologies or skills.

The Process of Colonialism: Results



- Indigenous people on reserve operate a **subsistence economy** parallel to the modern economy – i.e. **two economies in our society**
- One is dynamic where change promotes further change, the other clings to the old ways and doesn't use new technology
- When goals of a higher status are denied to people, other forms of adaptation are created, such as **withdrawal and rebellion**
- People develop a **different perspective** on life and on how to deal with everyday occurrences

The Process of Colonialism: Recalling History



- The history of colonization has generally been told from the perspective of non-Indigenous people
- Europeans have always assumed superiority over Indigenous people
- *"Historical hostility and conflict between Indigenous people and political and law enforcement bodies creates suspicion, disrespect and mistrust on both sides"*