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Why Calgary Isn't Métis Territory Jigging towards an Ethic of Reciprocal Visiting

Chapter Outline

This chapter asks a number of questions that are tied to acknowledgements by institutions in Calgary that recognize the city as part of the territory of the Métis Nation. Specifically, the chapter explores if Calgary should be acknowledged as Métis territory and what it means to be Métis in Treaty 7 territory. The authors argue that Calgary is not Métis territory and Métis people need to have an ethic of reciprocal visiting. Their argument is informed by inter-Indigenous relationships rooted in tradition, respect, and openness.

The chapter begins by discussing the complexities of defining who the Métis are and argues that being Métis is more than being of mixed blood ancestry. They suggest that the Métis have a particular language, history, set of economic engagements, relationships with other Indigenous peoples and collective sense of politics. The chapter then turns attention to both historical and political arguments for the division of Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) and Métis space. Included in this discussion are Métis and Blackfoot perspectives on territoriality.

A theoretical approach is then used that is rooted in what the authors call Métis kinship practices. They demonstrate that these practices inform what they call an ethic of reciprocal visiting for Métis people. By this, they mean a set of culturally informed principles that inform how individuals can move through multiple worlds in a respectful way.

The chapter ends with a discussion of how the ethic they identify can inform how one acts in other Indigenous people's territories and then challenges readers to consider how they can live within other peoples' territories.

Learning Objectives

- To understand why Calgary is not viewed by the authors as Métis territory
- To understand the complexities of defining Métis people
- To recognize the uniqueness of Métis culture
- To understand how the Blackfoot and Métis perceive territory
- To understand how an ethic of Métis reciprocal visiting can inform how one acts in other Indigenous peoples' territories

Study Questions

1. What is the traditional territory of the Blackfoot?
2. Was the present location of Calgary an important one for the Blackfoot?
3. Did the Métis historically have a connection to the present site of the city of Calgary?
4. Why have territory recognitions become a common practice?
5. Who are the Métis?
6. What is meant by reciprocal visiting?
7. What characterizes Métis kinship practices?
8. Do you agree or disagree with the authors' interpretation of Calgary not being a part of Métis territory? Why or why not?
9. How does the ethic explained by the authors suggest one should act in Indigenous peoples' territories?
10. Are there differences in expectations for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples when living in others' Indigenous territories? Why or why not?

Additional Resources

Readings

- Adams, Christopher, Gregg Dahl and Ian Peach. 2013. *Métis in Canada: History, Identity, Law and Politics*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press.
- Andersen, Chris. 2014. *"Métis": Race, Recognition and the Struggle for Indigenous Peoplehood*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Ens, Gerhard and Joe Sawchuk. 2016. *From New Peoples to New Nations: Aspects of Metis History and Identity from the Eighteenth to the Twenty-First Centuries*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Hogue, Michael. 2015. *Metis and the Medicine Line: Creating a Border and Dividing a People*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- St-Onge, Nicole, Carolyn Podruchny and Brenda Macdougall eds. 2012. *Contours of a People: Metis Family, Mobility, and History*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Websites

Métis Nation of Alberta <http://albertametis.com/>

This website provides an overview of the Métis Nation Alberta including discussion of governance, services, and Métis rights.

Rupert's Land Institute <https://www.rupert'sland.org/>

This website provides information on the Rupert's Land Institute that has a mandate to provide education, training and research to and for Métis people.

Glenbow Museum <https://www.glenbow.org/blackfoot/>

This site provides an overview of the Nütsitapi history, culture and language.