"Dialogue divides if it is not fair":
Quebec First Nations' youth call for responsive spaces of citizenship

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Abstract

The contemporary contours of citizenship and socio-spatial relationships between Indigenous peoples and settlers in Québec, Canada, are changing. Indigenous youth contribute in important ways to those changes. While some youth have become involved in formal sites of politics, others work in diverse settings weaving together a fragile network of sites and spaces that collectively challenge deeply engrained colonial relationships and division of space. The Wapikoni mobile is an Indigenous video training project that addresses the First Nations communities. Through this project, certain young people are taught to produce and direct films and some are invited to present their creations in public events. The analysis presented in this article investigated the places, practices and relationships around the mobility, speech acts and narratives of the Wapikoni mobile's participants who travelled to present their film(s) in different settings in Canada and overseas. In these locations, First Nations' youth challenge the colonial division of space and negotiate new relationships while (re)claiming their identity and engaging in citizenship formation processes. This article argues that these important processes are nevertheless entangled in broader colonial and neoliberal contexts that hinder their full transformative potential.

Keywords Indigenous/First Nations youth, Citizenship, De/Colonial Relationships, Quebec, Indigenous Video

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Résumé

Les relations socio-spatiales entre les Autochtones et les non-Autochtones au Québec, Canada, de même que les contours de la citoyenneté, changent. Les jeunes autochtones contribuent de façon importante à ces changements. Alors que certains jeunes s'impliquent au sein d'espaces politiques officiels, d'autres tissent un réseau fragile de lieux et d'espaces qui défient collectivement les relations coloniales profondément enracinées, ainsi que la division coloniale de l'espace. Le Wapikoni mobile propose des ateliers de formation audiovidéo qui s'adressent aux communautés des Premières Nations. Grâce à ce projet, des jeunes ont appris à créer des courts-métrages et certains.nes sont invités à présenter leurs créations lors d'événements publics. L'analyse présentée dans cet article porte sur les lieux, les pratiques et les relations entourant la mobilité, les actes de parole et les récits des participants et participantes du Wapikoni mobile qui ont voyagé pour présenter leur(s) film(s) dans différents contextes au Canada et à l'étranger. Dans ces lieux, les jeunes des Premières Nations remettent en question la division coloniale de l'espace et négocient de nouvelles relations tout en revendiquant leur identité et en s'engageant dans des processus de formation de la citoyenneté. Cet article soutient que ces processus importants se trouvent néanmoins face à des contextes coloniaux et néolibéraux plus larges qui contraignent leur plein potentiel de transformation.

Mots clés : Jeunes Autochtones/Premières Nations, Citoyenneté, Relations de décolonisation, Québec, Vidéo autochtone

Introduction

The Wapikoni mobile is an Indigenous Video project directed at First Nations youth living on reservations within Québec's claimed territory[i]. Each year, the Wapikoni mobile launches a selection of films and invites their young First Nations filmmakers to present their film to a primarily non-Indigenous audience. For the 2010 event, held in Montréal, the project organized a short quiz that addressed distinct aspects of Indigenous history and culture. One of the questions asked to the audience was, "When was the right to vote granted to First Nations peoples in Québec?" Despite an apparent interest in Indigenous issues, no one in the audience seemed aware of the fact that Indigenous peoples within Québec's claimed territory were granted the right to vote only in 1969; in 1960 by the Canadian federal government. While anecdotal, this moment still illustrates the amplitude of the colonial grip on Indigenous peoples. Not only is the date – 1969- a vivid reminder of the fact that Indigenous peoples within Québec, and within Canada, experience(ed) complete political exclusion from the dominant society, the lack of knowledge of this fact reinforces this pattern in a substantive way, by demonstrating that it is insignificant to settler populations. The impacts of colonization are ongoing.

This paper engages with the experiences of Indigenous youth who have participated in the Wapikoni mobile. We seek to explore the ways in which they struggle against a regime of invisibility and actively rework the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Québec, thereby forging new forms of (Indigenous) citizenship. While not

explicitly a political project, the Wapikoni mobile has had, as one of its mandates, to increase the presence of First Nations youth in the public sphere, at multiple scales.

Videos produced through the Wapikoni mobile project are broadcast in the communities where they were created, as well as in different venues in Québec, throughout Canada and overseas. Given the fraught political context for First Nations young people in Québec and Canada, participants have inevitably been drawn into and experienced new spaces of encounter and citizenship formation. Drawing on insights from critical citizenship studies and Indigenous studies, this paper brings the voices of First Nations youth to the centre of this academic discussion and seeks to explore the ways in which Indigenous youth understand and theorize their process of identity formation. While they articulate what they see as the potentials and limits for political change, their lucid analysis highlights the tensions and contradictions of their territories of citizenship.

This article begins by introducing the theoretical underpinnings that inform our analysis as well as the political context of contemporary citizenship formation for Indigenous youth in Canada. It then addresses the methodological and epistemological approaches upon which this research rests. The article goes on to explore the experiences of First Nations youth within spaces of encounter, demonstrating the importance of the Wapikoni mobile in the process of identity and citizenship formation. It continues by highlighting the spaces of shared responsibility First Nations youth create through their mobility, speech acts and public narratives. We link these, in turn, with the broader colonial and neoliberal contexts in which they are embedded, underlining the limits and contradictions of these processes.

Trajectories, Boundaries and Borders

In contemporary Canada, and in Québec, both the potential and actual political participation of Indigenous youth represents a highly politicized terrain. In order to understand how a group of Indigenous youth in Québec have experienced "participation" within such a context, this research critically deploys the analytical lens of citizenship. The study of citizenship is centrally concerned with how political communities are constructed. In critical human geography, citizenship is understood as a relational and ongoing struggle over inclusion/exclusion by individuals and groups through discourses, practices and institutions (Martin & Guimont Marceau, 2013). *Actually existing citizenship* (Desforges et al., 2005), what others have called *citizenship formation processes* (Marston & Mitchell, 2004), is lived in specific contexts and times and is never, therefore, fully institutionalized (Staeheli, 2011). Citizenship formation represents embodied relationships that are contextualized in space and time. These go through a succession of power relations inscribed into formal and informal institutions and places.

As Isin (2002, 2008; Isin & Nielsen, 2008) has demonstrated, intersubjective relationships are central to the construction of a political community. The trajectories of political beings reinforce and transform identities and situate them in relationship to different groups, while they forge their judgment and develop a responsibility in regard to that judgment. These intersubjective relationships do not occur, however, on a level field; understanding how marginalized groups experience these intersubjective relationships or even become part of them remains a central research agenda (Oldfield et al., 2009). Vanessa Watts, a young

Anishinaabe, quoted in research on Indigenous youth participation in Canada, articulates very clearly the stakes enmeshed in the struggle over "citizenship" for Indigenous peoples within a colonial context. For her, citizenship "means battling the imposed citizenship that is placed upon you. And I think that by embracing your own citizenship and your own values and cultural beliefs that you are fighting that imposed citizenship" (cited in Alfred et al., 2007, p. 13).

In keeping with these theoretical interventions, there are two aspects of the citizenship formation process that we are particularly interested in highlighting through this article. As will be developed further on, the political geographies we explore reside in the tangled trajectories of the embodied speech acts of young Indigenous video-makers, as they transit between Indigenous communities, urban spaces, and international arenas. Thus, following Secor's important contribution (2004), we link citizenship formation to the experience of geographical mobility, as a form of reappropriating and resignifying space through the use of spatial tactics to challenge hegemonic technologies of citizenship.

Secondly, we argue that engaging in speech acts is also central to the experience of citizenship formation among Indigenous youth involved in the Wapikoni mobile. According to Rancière (2000), shared speech acts represent political acts and an experience of citizenship. They create a new *regime of visibility* through which it is possible to renegotiate power relations. Politics for Rancière means going from incomprehensible "noise", to speech audible to the rest of the community. He argues that being silenced represents an alienation that deprives individuals and groups of a political existence. To participate in the political community, to be heard and seen, means that marginalized people must break down the order

that is used to exclude them. The embodied presence of young Indigenous filmmakers in public venues in which they discuss their films, their communities, and their lives, reinforces – even makes possible- this difficult movement from noise to speech.

While we assert, therefore, that the intersubjective experiences afforded by some forms of geographical mobility and speech acts are central aspects of citizenship formation, we equally understand that there are limits to the potential such experiences hold. Following Fraser's foundational work (1997), a progressive reconfiguration of citizenship comprises recognition *and* redistribution. Thus, decolonization and the expansion of Indigenous citizenship also entail challenging the contemporary material organization of society, including socio-economic structures and privileges. Neoliberal capitalism, which has fundamentally weakened collective and customary rights, particularly regarding access to land and resources, strongly undermines this possibility (Altamirano Jiménez, 2013). To complicate matters further, new modes of neoliberal governance create spaces of "participation" for Indigenous peoples that are ambiguous in nature. With the figure of the *Indio permitido* or "the authorized Indian," Hale (2004) argues Indigenous subjects can now participate in decision-making processes, as long as they do not question the underlying economic imperatives of neoliberal organization. Within the context of Canada, Altamirano Jiménez (2013), pushes this idea even further by drawing attention to an emerging "entrepreneurial" profile of Indigenous citizenship, through which "productive" Indigenous individuals and nations are invited to participate in the Canadian economy.

Before we can explore the significance of Indigenous youth participation with the Wapikoni mobile, their struggles should be contextualized within the history and geography of contemporary colonialism in Canada. It is well known, but too often forgotten, that the colonial settler state imposed a "citizen minus" status on Indigenous peoples, institutionalized through the highly dis-possessive *Indian Act* (Hawthorn, 1966; Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, 1996; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). The reserve system and residential schools serve as central manifestations of modern Canadian state building and the concomitant wholesale dispossession of Indigenous peoples (Razack, 2002; Desbiens, 2004). Colonial geographies, which centred on the control over territory and the creation of a marked urban/reserve divide, produced in turn specific "Indian sites" represented as being "out of place" (Peters & Andersen, 2013, p. 3) or "waste" lands (Coulthard, 2014, p. 174).

A citizen minus status and the colonial division of space translate into a myriad of contemporary problems and challenges for Indigenous communities, and their young people, who face high unemployment[ii] and poverty rates[iii], multiple forms of violence[iv], and health problems[v], all of which reflect systemic racism associated with a colonial order. The major suicide crisis that seized young people in various Indigenous communities in Canada during winters of 2016 and 2017 is simply the latest sorrowful manifestation of these dynamics. Indeed, many Indigenous youth grow up struggling with imposed, complex and unstable social structures. As a result, Indigenous youth -a categorization that is itself imposed-continue to feel acutely the effects of historic and contemporary colonization (Gagné & Jérôme, 2009).

Amidst such a difficult context, provincial and federal governments, Indigenous institutions and other civil organizations have repeatedly called for the increased political participation of Indigenous youth. In 2005, the Québec and Labrador First Nations' Youth Council stated in a report presented to the Québec government that there was a need to increase the presence of First Nations' youth in society. The council recommended that this presence be achieved in at least two ways: first, through increased contacts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth; and, second, by mobilizing "First Nations' youth participation in their respective communities, and at the regional, national and international levels" (CJPNQL & APNQL, 2005, p. 6, authors' translation). They proposed a plan that "highlights the capacity and the competence of First Nations' youth to act like key transformative actors in every situation they face" (*idem*). Two recent publications reinforce these ideas. MacDonald and Wilson (2016, p. 6) call attention to some of the "barriers [impeding] children from achieving their full potential", while the Montreal Youth Council (Conseil Jeunesse de Montréal, 2016, p. IV) argues that developing Indigenous youth "leadership and public participation is central to eradicate racism" (authors' translation). Such calls for "participation" may not simply be idealized posturing; given their growing numbers - 46 % of the Indigenous population in Canada is less than 24 years old (2011 Census)- Indigenous youth represent many challenges regarding inclusion, participation, and well-being, both for the State and for Indigenous institutions and communities.

The avenues for mobilizing youth participation remain, nonetheless, ill-defined. Taiaiake Alfred and his colleagues, who have studied political participation of Indigenous youth across

Canada, argue that "[t]here is little incentive for youth to think about, much less engage as, political actors in the standard ways government expects citizens to participate", since "there is no opportunity for an authentic voice to be reflected within the decision-making processes" (Alfred et al., 2007, p. 13). As they describe, Indigenous youth are deeply aware of the structures of injustice created by colonization and have no illusions with regard to Canadian politics at any scale. The report concludes by arguing that the power dynamics between the State and Indigenous nations as well as within Indigenous communities need to be addressed, and that youth should keep looking for tools and mechanisms that could provide a meaningful path for political action.

In Québec, some youth have become involved in formal sites of politics, including Band Councils, youth councils, and provincial and federal organizations (Jérôme, 2011). They are prominent actors in a variety of social movements at a range of scales, including internationally. For example, Indigenous youth form an important part of Québec's branch of the *Idle no more* movement, a movement that struggles for recognition and self-determination for Indigenous peoples across Canada (Kino-nda-niimi Collective, 2014). In addition, Indigenous youth are increasingly engaged in Québec's cultural scene in ways that are clearly political. In Montréal, the 2016 official celebration of Québec's national holiday showcased three Indigenous artists, including Florent Volant (Innu, Uashat mak Mani-Utenam) Samian (Anishnabe, Pikogan) and Natasha Kanapé Fontaine (Innue, Pessamit). The latter two are politicized youth who, among numerous other commitments, have participated with the Wapikoni mobile project.

Despite increasing visibility, First Nations peoples and their youth remain profoundly marginalized. One event that captured this dynamic occurred during the Québec and Labrador First Nations Youth Network 3rd annual gathering in 2013, which the first author followed live on youtube and later discussed with some of the participants. Close to 100 Indigenous young people from 9 nations had come together to discuss various issues of concern. During the gathering, Léo Bureau Blouin, the Québec government's Secretary of Youth and deputy invited them to a face-to-face meeting. He hoped to seize the opportunity to present a proposal for a "youth charter" to these First Nations representatives. In response, the First Nations representatives expressed very clearly to the deputy that it was out of the question that they only be consulted on an already made charter. Instead, they insisted that they should be part of the creation process. Furthermore, when a participant asked him to do so, Mr. Bureau Blouin was unable to name the 11 Indigenous nations –see note number 1- recognized, since 1985, by the government he represented. In light of this failure, the First Nations youth invited Mr. Bureau Blouin to visit their communities and learn to know them. They then performed various speech acts that demonstrated their political acuity.

This example suggests, once again, that the construction of a regime of visibility by and for First Nations communities remains an essential element in the expansion of Indigenous citizenship in Québec. According to some scholars, Indigenous media, like the Wapikoni mobile, represents one avenue for redefining the Indigenous practices and terms of Indigenous citizenship (Salazar, 2009). As we will explore in this paper, the political vision put forward by Wapikoni mobile participants appears to play a role in the appropriation, recreation and affirmation of identity, on the one hand, and in the creation of spaces of shared

responsibility and solidarity, on the other. However, these social and discursive dynamics can be recuperated, recolonized and contained.

Methodological and Empirical Settings

The Wapikoni mobile (wapikoni.ca) was launched in 2004 by a non-Indigenous Québécoise filmmaker in collaboration with Indigenous organizations. Guided by a team of on-site professional filmmakers, young people are invited to create short films. In turn, a portion of these budding video-makers show their productions at public events and venues throughout Québec and overseas. The Wapikoni mobile celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2014; during their first decade the organization has reached over 2400 participants, produced 500 videos and has won over 60 awards at a range of film festivals and socio-cultural events (Annual Reports Wapikoni mobile).

The Wapikoni mobile uses mobile homes converted into complete recording studios to reach remote Indigenous communities [vi]. Collectively, these mobile homes covered over 100,000 km between 2004 and 2012, often travelling on dirt roads and sometimes using trains and boats to reach communities that are not linked to the road network. Between 2004 and 2012, the project visited 21 communities/reservations from 8 nations, either once or twice a year, each time for a month-long workshop. The team of instructors is formed primarily of non-Indigenous filmmakers who teach youth each step of the video making process, from scenario writing to directing and editing. Short films are then created through a collective and hybrid process. The degree of autonomy, and even participation of Indigenous youth in

the final production process varies greatly, a fact that has opened the door to internal and external critique of the project.

A select number of participants subsequently travel to different venues to present their videos and with them, their personal and collective histories and cultures. While participants travel primarily to cities within the province of Québec, they have also travelled throughout Canada, as well as to Europe, Latin America and New Caledonia (see Guimont Marceau, 2013). Wapikoni mobile's participants are invited to public events and venues including film festivals; conferences; panels; social forums; schools, colleges and universities; as well as youth exchanges of different kinds. In addition, they frequently participate in interviews with mainstream and/or independent media. Thus, an important component of the Wapikoni mobile is promoting the presence and participation of Indigenous youth in multiple public spheres through their films and voices. Indigenous youth are accompanied on their travels, where they make contact with a variety of audiences and people, ranging from social justice activists to newcomers vis-à-vis Indigenous issues. The 2010 Annual Report states that among the 63 national events to which participants were invited during the year, there were 44 cultural events, of which 19 were "social or political events that focused on raising awareness with different publics". Out of 500 participants, 16 youth participated in these events during that same year (Wapikoni mobile, 2011, p. 65). Therefore, certain participants – not all – experienced an intensified geographical mobility and visibility through their participation in the project.

The main goals of the Wapikoni mobile are to "encourage the affirmation of the identity of participants through public speech acts, skills development and appropriation of communication tools" and to "promote their empowerment and insertion" in society (wapikoni.ca). The Wapikoni mobile is not the only organization in Québec that promotes the cultural expression of Indigenous youth, but after more than 10 years of rolling on Québec's back roads, it stands as a significant symbol of their contemporary voices. The multiplicity of places articulated through the project –from remote communities, to urban spaces, to international settings, not to mention virtual and media scapes – challenges in substantive ways the colonial division of space. Given the visibility of the Wapikoni mobile, the organization serves as an important site through which contemporary indigeneity is negotiated, through what Radcliffe calls "always-in-production-and-spacing dynamic of power and difference signalled by Indigenousness" (Radcliffe, 2015, p. 6). For this reason, understanding the experience of participating in this project offers the opportunity to critically evaluate the possibilities and limits of citizenship formation for Indigenous youth in contemporary Québec.

The analysis presented in this article is part of a larger project that investigated the places, practices and relationships around the mobility, speech acts and narratives of the Wapikoni mobile participants who travelled to present their film(s) in different settings in Canada and overseas. In order to address these subjects, Stéphane, the first author, followed both the project and numerous participants between 2007 and 2014. The research engaged in particular with the post-production diffusion part of the project, addressing participants who had the opportunity to present their films in different venues. Stéphane deployed multiple

research strategies which included conducting a dozen in-depth interviews, additional interviews with other "key informants," and sustained participant observation. Through all these strategies, ongoing dialogue and interaction with the young video-makers were established. The participants Stéphane worked with in this investigative journey, all of whom lived on reservations, were women and men aged between 18 and 35 years, from a range of different nations and Indigenous communities within Québec's borders. All had presented their film(s) at public showings on one or more occasions in a city or town in Québec, in Canada, or overseas. Some of the participants were parents, others were students, some had put their studies aside, a few were employed in their communities, but all carried a profound colonial burden that makes their voices and choices inherently political.

This research sought to interrogate a set of emerging spaces of encounter. On the one hand, it is located outside of specific Indigenous communities. On the other hand, the locations we studied are also located outside of traditional spaces of negotiation between First Nations people and colonial interests, such as formal legal and political spaces of confrontation and negotiation (courts; governmental halls; protest movements). This research is also novel because it developed in relation to individuals from different communities who were simultaneously building networked relationships. It is deeply imbricated, therefore, with the changing geographies of Indigenous youth's lives and seeks to capture cultural and political change within spaces of encounter in civil society.

Accordingly, "the field" was quite fluid. The places where Stéphane met with participants were varied and often improvised. These locations included her apartment that served at

times as a temporary home; a variety of social gathering places; media and festival locations to which she accompanied some of the participants for conferences and interviews; the airport or the bus station, where she would drop them off or pick them up; and venues for Wapikoni mobile's various screenings and presentations. These in-between spaces are entangled with activism, friendship and research, as well as with Indigenous and white/settler geographies.

Research in these spaces requires a keenly developed ethical stance (Kovach, 2009) given Stéphane's Québécoise white/settler woman position. Echoing Paulette Regan's (2011) unsettling work, she had to go through a self-reflexive process of decolonization, including a difficult acknowledgement of her own position of power as a settler and a researcher (Holmes, Hunt & Piedalue, 2014). While she has based her methodological approach on the emerging, and powerful, decolonizing methodologies (Smith L. T., 1999, 2012), she was critical about her own limits in the use of Indigenous methodologies (Wilson, 2008), and about the possibility of re-inscribing colonial processes by using decolonization only "as a metaphor" (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Her own life story was drawn into, and put in contrast with, the life stories of the Wapikoni mobile participants. The research emerged out of specific spaces of our living-together, but also of our differences.

Shawn Wilson (2008), who outlines an emerging Indigenous research paradigm, argues that investigation is in large part based on dialogues developed with peoples, ideas and places. The first author centred her research on lengthy and recurrent conversations and relationships with some Wapikoni mobile participants. Following Kim Anderson's (2008, p. 11) reminder that "one began learning by first listening," longterm engaged listening served as a key

method. Through responsive relationships, Indigenous youth offered individually and collectively a comprehension of their realities, as well as providing insights to strengthen the course of the research. A core group of participants also participated in a workshop in which they collectively discussed the preliminary analysis of the research project. As a result, this research is thoroughly dialogic and reflexive.

This article arises from hybrid living spaces as well as from the relationships Stéphane developed with some of these young people individually, and it aims to reflect these spaces. While we are the ones who have in the end organized the ideas and words in this paper, the Indigenous youth are actively present. Their presence is most evident in the extensive use of quotes from our discussions - even if some remain anonymous, according to participants' wishes [vii] . This article is structured, furthermore, around certain metaphors used by participants to explain their understanding of colonial relationships, encounters and dialogue with white/settler people and places, and the political possibilities and limitations of their participation. In this way, the article tries to make their subjective experiences, worldviews and knowledges central to the analysis.

"A keyhole to observe the neighbour"

Réal Jr. Leblanc, an Innu from Uashat mak Mani-Utenam and a successful Wapikoni mobile filmmaker, describes the project as a keyhole in the door of the "wall" that exists between Indigenous and settler populations; he says that this keyhole allows each neighbour to look upon the other's territory. Interestingly, this metaphor resonated through numerous

interviews. In what follows, we explore various dimensions of this wall and door metaphor, highlighting the barriers and exclusions experienced by participants, as well as their experiences of trying to look through (or speak through) the keyhole. Certain participants argue that the experience of challenging the wall had a transformative impact on their identities and political subjectivities. As we move through the narratives of the Wapikoni mobile participants, we highlight as well the very diverse settings in which they worked, weaving together a fragile network of sites and spaces that collectively and simultaneously challenge deeply engrained colonial relationships.

In a general sense, participants link the exclusion they live to the misunderstanding of their cultures and realities. They express their sadness and concern about being "unknown" to the dominant society in multiple ways. One participant recounted that his grandfather asked him to show the images he took of Unamen Shipu, his remote community, to the "government", so that "they would be aware, they would know us". This elder's request underlines a pervasive sense of exclusion and invisibility, as well as the confidence that images and speech acts can challenge this exclusion. Many participants believe the speech acts they commit through the Wapikoni mobile help increase awareness among settlers about their issues, lives, and opinions, and "unlock," as one of them puts it, new kinds of social relationships.

Yet, getting to a place of encounter is not easy and requires a great deal of courage on the part of the Wapikoni mobile participants. While some are now impressive orators, many expressed being nervous and fearful in front of a non-Indigenous public and in places generally associated with the white/settler society, saying it would be different in front of

Indigenous peoples, or in front of immigrants. In one particular instance, Stéphane accompanied an Indigenous filmmaker by silently holding her hand on stage in Montreal as she worked through her fear in public. Now, a few years later, this filmmaker speaks out loud and clear in front of crowded rooms and in the media. Each time an Indigenous youth begins to speak, she or he confronts centuries of silencing practices, slowly changing the visibility regime.

Even if arduous, speech acts represent a unique experience of expression and appearance. The trajectories of Wapikoni mobile participants put them in relation to different peoples, with different stories, cultures, opinions, with whom they engage in conversations and relationships of different types. A participant testified to the importance of direct contact even when it is made with paternalist hints:

> *It really moved me that this old lady came to me after the screening, shook my hand and said: 'I am proud of you. You are strong, you survived.' We don't realize that. To hear it from another person made me think about it. I found she was right.*

Another one confirmed, "that people come after the screening to tell me that my film is good is much more valuable than applause*."* Indeed, after a screening, people usually come up to the directors to acknowledge their work and ask more questions. A Wapikoni mobile's employee confirms: "What seems most significant to me is that after each presentation people come up to meet the participants. They are moved. When they come to them, they want to show their respect, as if they wanted to be forgiven. They shake their hand and call them

'Sir'." Moments like these, which remain quite rare in contemporary society, exemplify a momentary unsettling of power relations.

Speaking in public can transform relationships. Another participant expressed a long-standing experience of exclusion that was both social and discursive. She recalled being the only Indigenous student in her high school class, using, like Réal Jr. Leblanc, a wall metaphor: "There was a wall between me and the others." She went on to explain that during history courses, the teacher talked about the encounter between French colonizers and First Nations, but never acknowledged her, or her community, located 90 km away. The other students also acted as if she were invisible. One day, 10 years later, in a Wapikoni mobile film screening, some of her former classmates saw the videos she had made, and came to her saying that they had been ignorant before. Now, she concludes happily, "they are good friends," thereby describing a local/intimate moment of reconciliation.

Another event demonstrates a distinct postcolonial moment. A participant narrates an experience of encounter that took place in a festival in Paris. Through the Wapikoni mobile, he, along with five other Indigenous youth, had been invited to attend a four week-long workshop on video technologies. As part of the workshop, they were asked to participate in speaking events in a variety of locations in France. This particular participant talked about the shyness he felt, saying "he was hiding" the first night even though he was standing on a stage. He went on to say, "then people asked an interesting question, they asked good questions, the right way. I was shy but I wanted to share. I started to be interested. When they ask good questions, they light you up! That's what I liked over there: they are interested."

A colleague of his, who was also part of this trip, described quite perceptively a mirror effect that he observed in the Paris audience: "I found it interesting to see in their eyes that they were connecting with us. There was a reflection inside them. We were talking about our culture and they were comparing it with theirs. They were doing an ellipse with their questions." This participant went on to explain that people in the audience were comparing the situation of First Nations youth with that of young people of North African origin living in the Paris suburbs (*banlieues*), thereby bringing into critical conversation two distinct but related colonial configurations.

Accordingly, if their participation in these spaces allows settler audiences to know more about First Nations culture, it also discloses white/settler realities to Indigenous youth: "It is talking with the others that you understand them better and that they understand you*",* says one of them. Another one goes on: "When I go outside, I understand better the other's vision. It is very different to know his/her vision to interact with another person, because if he/she doesn't understand you it is worthless speaking with this person". Indeed, Indigenous youth still struggle with and confront misunderstanding, false representations, anger, and fear; some participants recall being insulted or hurt by comments from different individuals they met while travelling, even when these people had good intentions. While open confrontation is uncommon, anger and despair were evident in certain answers to attendees' questions, which were tainted at times with prejudice and ignorance.

Many of the young video makers stated, however, that these sites of encounter and dialogue have played an important role in their identity formation. A majority testified that their travels reinforced a deep pride in their identity as Indigenous peoples. One participant said he understood more clearly "the importance of preserving our local culture" after a trip overseas, and that he had a sharper idea of "what it is to be Indigenous" after he answered the questions from non-Indigenous peoples and presented himself and his community. Some claim their identity is stronger now, even if one expressed apprehension about going back home, saying he was afraid of how he would perceive his community after having experienced other ways of living. Others report that they are bringing back what they have learned to their communities: "To hear about the experience of people overseas made me realize that we don't do enough to preserve our language. When I came back, I talked about it in my community". This self-affirmation of identity can resize the effects of being othered, not only by questioning hegemonic discourses and practices, but also by building alliances with other marginalized groups. As other Indigenous video-makers around the world, Wapikoni mobile's participants are creating dialogues centred on the "hybridity of entangled socio-spatial relations that shape mutually formulated identities" (Smith L. C., 2010, p. 254).

Évelyne Papatie, Anishnabe from Kitcisakik, former participant and President of the Wapikoni mobile, thinks that young Indigenous participation in a diversity of events enhances their self-esteem, and allows them to break through their limits and create relationships (Wapikoni mobile, 2009). Through their participation in the Wapikoni mobile project, many of the participants talk about developing friendships with Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals involved, as well as with people they met during their travels. The

very presence of young Indigenous directors fosters the development of relationships, whether momentarily or over the long run, through different kinds of embodied and virtual networks. These relationships also transgress the colonial division of space that kept First Nations communities separated from each other.

Most of the Wapikoni mobile participants affirm that their experiences of mobility and speech acts have transformative outcomes on their practices, relationships, and spatiality, even if these experiences might be ambiguous or even contradictory. Many of them think that, in the long run, committing speech acts will enable substantive dialogue between Indigenous peoples and the dominant society. Yet, some disagree: "I doubt that speaking up overseas will change something here." Still, many express their desire to challenge a form of social organization that keeps them apart. For them, the Wapikoni mobile represents an important path.

"The process of speaking with others"

Catherine Boivin is an Atikamekw woman from Wemotaci who articulated very clearly this political dimension of their participation in the Wapikoni mobile:

> *The first time I spoke in front of a public it was difficult. But later, I took the time to think about what I was supposed to say and I knew what to say. I realized that I had things to say. I realized that I have the right to say things, to speak up, and to denounce. It's when I talk with people that I realize, that I see certain things. That develops in the process of speaking with others.*

Later she adds, "to participate in the Wapikoni mobile is another way to help the Band Council. It is a more artistic way of doing speech acts." In other words, not only has she

developed a capability to speak publicly, but she identifies her speech and actions as a direct

extension of contemporary forms of Indigenous governance in Canada.

Her words echo the process theorized by Isin (2002, 2008; Isin & Nielsen 2008) presented

earlier in this article, which describes the complex and entangled trajectories through which

we build our political beings, "speaking with others". Her political subjectivity and her

participation in the political community are transformed in relation with people she has met

in physical and virtual places. Wapikoni mobile participants engage in political discussions,

not only through their speech acts, but also through the relationships they create around these

speech acts. Other testimonies confirm this inherently relational process:

> *My participation brought me out of shade and helped me put my ideas into*
> *action.*
>
> *I have grown up since my participation. I have discovered some things. I see things*
> *differently. Before I was withdrawn. It reinforced my [Indigenous] identity. Before I*
> *met these people, I wasn't really aware of what was happening in my community.*
>
> *They made me understand that it is a good thing that I speak my language and*
> *that I have things to say.*
>
> *I built my opinion comparing with people overseas. I shared that with my*
> *community when I came back.*
>
> *I started to have other opinions, to see that there are people that have other*
> *opinions.*

In the sites where their speech acts are heard, seen, and taken in consideration, Wapikoni

mobile's First Nations youth demonstrate their agency and autonomy as they reterritorialize

their citizenship in public spaces, outside of the reservations. Most of them had travelled or

lived outside their communities before they participated with the Wapikoni mobile, but the

collective mobility this experience represents is nevertheless groundbreaking; it brings the participants to locations dedicated to public speech and appearance, and brings back the experiences of these public spaces to their home communities, thereby unsettling an imposed settler/urban and Indigenous/reservation divide. Their trajectories are not individual, furthermore, these Indigenous youth are seen as "ambassadors" of their communities, which gives a collective dimension to this presence. Speech acts, both direct and mediated, are linked to the collective demands of Indigenous peoples. As one participant argues, "People from around the world listen to us. Maybe the Canadian Government will too." The desire for a transformation in colonial relationships in Canada underpins their words. The examples studied by this research reveal new sites of presencing and audibility that emerge in the midst of entangled trajectories.

"Dialogue divides if it is not fair"

Still, certain Wapikoni mobile participants are aware of the limits of the dialogues and citizenship processes in which they are involved. Kevin Papatie, Anishnabe from Kitcisakik and successful filmmaker who has served as President and is the actual Vice-President of the Wapikoni mobile, expresses the following:

> *We are constructing poles of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. We want to build bridges but not at all costs. We need to stay alert. Governments are going to try to use those bridges.*

His use of the word "government" is a general reference to every level of government and all state institutions with which Indigenous peoples negotiate. He adds this striking sentence used in the title of this article: "*Dialogue divides if it is not fair.*"

Kevin Papatie incisively argues that dialogue deepens inequalities if it is not held between equal partners. Dialogue can reproduce unequal relationships as much as create emancipatory processes. His analysis echoes the research of Indigenous scholars, who consider that recent changes in Indigenous and settler relations are ambiguous and contradictory (Alfred, 2005; Hokowhitu, 2010; Simpson, 2011; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Coulthard, 2014). Coulthard (2014, p. 155) argues, for example, that the Canadian State uses the current process of reconciliation as proof of its allegedly "just relationship with Indigenous communities, even though this recognition continues to be structured with colonial power interests in mind". Simpson (2011) argues, in turn, that reconciliation has become "institutionalized," imposing therein and again, an asymmetrical relationship in favour of the State in its negotiations with Indigenous peoples. This institutionalization comforts colonial practices by constructing "symbolic acts of redress", while "further entrenching in law and practise the real base of its control" (Alfred, 2008, p. xiii).

Accordingly, this research reveals various levels of contradiction between the mandate of increasing Indigenous youth participation and the political and economic landscape within which this participation has unfolded. The relationship between the Wapikoni mobile and the federal state is complex. For example, at the 2010 World's Fair in Shanghai, the project was showcased at the entrance of Canada's Hall, where four Wapikoni mobile films were shown in continuous projection over a period of four months. Less than a year later, the federal government abruptly cut half of its financial support for the project, leaving the Wapikoni mobile with the heartbreaking obligation to cancel workshops in Indigenous communities at

the last minute. The organization subsequently scrambled for resources, turning to the private sector for support. This is a clear example of the dynamics that Kevin Papatie, cited above, warns about. The government uses "bridges" such as Wapikoni mobile's films as part of a demonstration of contemporary Canadian culture, only to undercut those same bridges shortly after. It also strikingly reveals the gap between the recognition of culture and redistribution of resources, as well as neoliberal processes.

The following story illustrates in even greater detail the ways in which multiple and opposing political projects meet in ambiguous spaces. In 2012, Réal Jr. Leblanc, cited above, won the Public's Award for *Blocus 138 – The Innu Resistance* at the Wapikoni mobile's annual selection of short films. His film documents the barricades erected in 2012 on highway 138, the only road that provides access to the vast Côte-Nord region of Québec. A group of Innu –mostly women- from the community Uashat mak Mani-Utenam were fighting to stop the state enterprise Hydro-Québec from constructing a hydroelectric complex on the Romaine River, which includes a series of four dams as well as the construction of numerous electric transmission towers on their ancestral territory. *Blocus 138* is a deeply moving documentary that shows forcefully and poetically the anger and despair of Innus fighting to preserve access to their lands and their way of life; the documentary is an extension of Innu resistance to state and private development and territorial exploitation.

Astral Media (now Bell Media) financed the Public's Award, which included a complementary video camera. Presenting the award on October 29th, the program vice-president of Canal D, a French language Arts and Entertainment television channel owned

by Astral Media, stated in French: "this camera represents our best investment of the year." Réal Jr. Leblanc responded by saying, "this camera is my new weapon." He added, "It is a small step for the White man but a big step for the Red man". He confessed being moved by the solidarity shown to him and to the Innu people's struggle.

The exact nature of the "investment" the vice-president thought he was making remains unclear, but, according to its website Astral Media is(was) "one of the largest media companies in Canada" and clearly participates in the dominant public sphere. Meanwhile, despite organized Indigenous resistance, including the work of Réal Jr. Leblanc, the damming of the Romaine River on ancestral Indigenous lands continues. Réal's work lies at the fraught intersection between the increased visibility of Indigenous issues in mainstream media, on the one hand, and Indigenous Video as an extension of organized political resistance to large-scale development projects, on the other. This story also illustrates the post-budget-cuts context in which the government placed the Wapikoni mobile, subjecting it to uncertainties and dependency of private funding and obliging young video-makers to interact with commercial media in the promotion of their work.

This anecdote demonstrates, finally, that the regime of visibility vis-à-vis Indigenous presence in Québec is shifting through an increased valorization of their Indigenous identity. This identity is now recognized, but it cannot, in itself, modify entrenched power configurations. Wapikoni mobile participants are enclosed in multiple structures, including those internal to the project. Even if their participation develops outside the traditional

political spaces of the reserves and of the State, it is nevertheless structured by the complexities of these spaces.

The awareness of these contradictions and ambiguities prevents a simplistic association between a relational vision of citizenship and political emancipation (Desforges et al., 2005). Personal and collective processes of citizenship formation cannot fully undo the structural contexts in which people and communities are anchored. Colonialism's structures need more than encounters or recognition to be challenged; economic and political inequality and domination must also be addressed along with continued struggles for territorial rights. Wapikoni mobile participants are at the core of tensions existing between democratizing movements and the colonial and neoliberal recuperation of their voices, as imagined in the figure of the *Indio permitido* (Hale, 2004) or by the critics of reconciliation politics (Alfred, 2005; Simpson, 2011; Coulthard, 2014).

As Kevin Papatie expresses: "people listen, but the concrete changes that should go along with this dialogue are slow to come. My non-Indigenous friends are 100% behind us but they are not ready to make compromises because they don't want to let go of part of their privileges." Proposals in favour of inclusion forget that Indigenous peoples are not asking to be included in the settler society, but to be part of the redefinition and reterritorialization of the very structures of that society. Inclusion, defined from dominant structures, does not reduce inequalities and does not challenge relations of domination.

Negotiating "pacts between equal persons"

The truly innovative and lasting outcome of the Wapikoni mobile project might be to allow Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to *be in place together* (Larsen & Johnson, 2012). The spaces put forward by the Wapikoni mobile appear to play a role in the appropriation of identity strategies, on the one hand, and of sharing of responsibility and solidarity on the other. One participant expresses: "each time I speak and answer people's questions, I participate in the awakening of consciousness on both sides". This article has highlighted various examples of local sites in which power relations are unsettled, even if momentarily, through direct relationships, while responsibility is taken on both sides.

In these places, Indigenous persons stand to bring recognition of their identities and visibility for their communities and nations; they transform power relationships embedded in a regime of visibility. Indigenous participants and non-Indigenous counsellors and audiences develop a comprehension of each other's posture and aspirations, a comprehension that the colonial division of space never facilitated. A participant expresses this, saying: "The government looks away when we show discontentment, but in front of a public with people asking questions, we feel they are listening, they are curious." The self-affirmation of identities resizes a relationship of "otherness."

It is significant that many participants point to the relationships they have formed as being the most important outcome of their experience, rather than specific skills or knowledge. As a mentor also noted, "Wapikoni mobile's first meaning is based on human relations and

sharing it allows." Certainly, the Indigenous youth who participate in Wapikoni mobile are challenging the frontiers between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Québec.

The following example offers insight into these spaces of relational transformation. Samian, one of the first participants of the Wapikoni mobile, is today a recognized artist in Québec. The Anishnabe singer-songwriter, actor and photographer from Pikogan says that the project "discovered" him and even, "saved his life." It was after the recording of his first videos in the studios of Wapikoni mobile that the young rapper was spotted by Loco Locass, a popular Québécois hip hop band. Since then, an interesting collaboration has emerged between Samian and Loco Locass, the latter having encouraged Samian to relearn his mother tongue, which he now does with his grandmother. The song *La Paix des Braves* (Peace of the Braves), which takes the name of an important treaty signed between the Grand Council of the Crees of Eeyouch Istchee and the government of Québec in 2002, is emblematic of this collaboration.

Written in both Anishnabe and French by Samian and two Loco Locass members, the song describes the beginnings of Indigenous and settlers' relationships and stresses the importance of creating renewed and fairer relationships. The chorus starts:

> *We decided to mix*
> *Because the alliance was re-established in New France*
> *Between Indigenous and French peoples! [...]*
> *The force comes from unity*
> *It is by mingling the sound that the pact is sealed[viii].*

After the drastic budget cuts in 2011, Samian hosted a benefit show for the Wapikoni mobile during which he sang *La Paix des Braves* with Loco Locass. Several Wapikoni mobile participants in attendance said that the song had moved them. One stated: "It is possible to make this peace. I am happy to meet white peoples through the Wapikoni mobile". Still, another one thinks that:

> *I am not sure that it is possible to make the Peace of the Braves. I agree, but not quite. The Québécois have so much to learn. How do you want to build something with someone who does not even know you? How do you want to make a pact with someone who does not know you and whom you do not know? I would ask them to know us and to call us by our own names. Instead of calling us "Indian", they should begin by learning what is an Innu, an Atikamekw. We'll make a pact when they get to know us. We made our effort, it's up to them to do theirs. That is how it is supposed to be, a pact between equal persons.*

This quote brings us full circle to the stories mobilized earlier in this article, which demonstrate the pervasive ignorance among settlers of Indigenous realities. As argued by the participant above, the "pact between equal persons" presupposes the presence of recognized political subjects and is sealed through intersubjective relationships that build multi-voices dialogues. Wapikoni mobile participants invite white settlers to understand the experience of the Other, allowing the creation of shared responsibility and solidarity.

Through their narratives and *presencing* in various settings, Wapikoni mobile's participants challenge the processes of exclusion. Their engagement with the process of citizenship formation – the contours of which we have tried to draw in this article – is made of speech acts that create dialogical relationships of negotiation. Studying these trajectories and speech acts reveals the topologies of these new geographies, drawn by groundbreaking relationships

that might allow new forms of intersubjectivity. Through speech acts, mobility, and new relationships, many participants embrace horizontal territories of citizenship.

Concluding thoughts: "Intelligence and visibility are our weapons"

Wapikoni mobile's participants collaborate in the production of self-representations of Indigenous peoples and indigeneity, which forms part of the Indigenous struggle for self-determination. Through the diverse sites in which they work, weaving together a fragile network of places and spaces, they collectively challenge deeply engrained colonial relationships. As illustrated by the various moments recalled in this article, these in-place relationships take part in the (re)affirmation of indigeneity, which implies a change in settler identity and claims to space.

Even if a majority of the Wapikoni mobile's participants claim they are not involved in politics, they are, voluntarily or not, committing political acts by shattering the silence and invisibility within which Indigenous peoples were confined. Réal Jr. Leblanc, cited previously, states,

> *The Wapikoni mobile is like an Indigenous weapon, like an arrow. We don't use bows and arrows anymore, we use speech acts and images to show our reality. Intelligence and visibility are our weapons.*

Through their narratives and spatial trajectories, they name and situate themselves where they were either absent or invisible. They take part in a dialogue in which they position themselves and their communities as recognized speakers and as political beings. In so doing, they self-define the meanings of indigeneity and they reshape the colonial division of space and their

relationships to the State and the settler society; they struggle for the right to create spaces of citizenship.

Being in place together in these spaces of citizenship, something that the colonial division of space did not allow, unsettles socio-spatial marginalization. New embodied and entangled socio-spatial relationships might redefine practices and identities that structure the relationships between Indigenous and white/settler peoples. Innovative and active dialogues are negotiated through ongoing encounters between the dominant colonial society and Indigenous youth, even if these dialogues are confrontational, ambivalent or incomplete; this messiness is part of citizenship formation.

As stated in the quotation from Kevin Papatie which forms part of the title of this article, spaces of dialogue and citizenship also articulate relationships of power shaped by the ongoing colonial context of Québec and Canada. This was conveyed in many ways by First Nations youth. Despite increasing Indigenous mobility, and a very recent but noticeable openness to Indigenous realities within Québec's media and civil society, there are still very few public spaces for "Indians" and "Indian sites." The changes in the regime of visibility we have discussed in this article, though powerful, are not sufficient for challenging the unequal distribution of land, resources and power. An "effective indigenization" of the Canadian State, institutions, cultures and populations is needed to address the actual colonial distribution of power (Green, 2004, p. 16). Moreover, as various scholars point out, until the question of land and territories is fully addressed in Canada, the colonial division of space and its marginalizing impacts will continue (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Salée & Lévesque, 2016).

Thus, the emergent geographies of citizenship and indigeneity remain ambiguous and they do not represent a solution to exclusion; they underline the ambivalence between different political projects, representative of the contemporary socio-political spaces.

Yet, to negate Indigenous youth's agency would shut the colonial trap once more. Our hope is that the words and stories mobilized in this article demonstrate how much we can learn from these people, who struggle continuously against marginalization, and how powerful their analysis of these struggles are. They communicated with us their experiences of the tensions and contradictions inherent in the new spaces they are exploring, actively or with reticence. They demonstrated their willingness to stand up for tangible and relational citizenship processes that foster innovative ways of participating in the entangled and ambivalent political communities we all share and constantly reinvent.

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[i] A legal distinction is made in Canada between First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples, the three groups being recognized has Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples in the 1982's Constitution. First Nations in Québec include Abénaquis, Anicinabes/Algonquins, Atikamekw, Eeyouch/Cree, Kanien'kehá:ka/Mohawks, Huron/Wendats, Innus, Malécites, Mi'kmaq and Naskapis.

[ii] Following the 2011 census, the unemployment rate for the working-age Aboriginal population is more than twice the rate for other Canadians of the same age (13% versus 6%) (Statistics Canada).

[iii] 60% of Indigenous children living on reservations are struggling with poverty (MacDonald and Wilson 2016).

[iv] Especially for young women, Canadian government is presently –and finally- realising a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls.

[v] See National Aboriginal Health Organization www.naho.ca

[vi] Until 2014, the Wapikoni mobile visited only reservations. It now has an urban workshop in Montréal but this research did not encompass this new urban dimension.

[vii] Most quotations have been translated from French – at times a second language - into English.

[viii] On a décidé de se métisser / Parce qu'on a retissé l'alliance en Nouvelle-France / Entre Autochtones et Francophones ! / Mamawitiwin mi lima eiji mackawisiak / Eawiakowiak etitentakosiak !