

#AmINext?

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An Analysis of Violence Targeted Towards Indigenous Girls and Women

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Research Focus

To find the correlation of the recurring violence targeted towards Indigenous girls and women with the contemporary #AmINext campaign.

Abstract

Violence has become a major factor for the experiences of Indigenous people living within Canadian culture. Throughout history, there has been numerous reports of murdered and missing Indigenous girls and women. Such recurring events are seen to be a form of gendered-cultural genocide as Indigenous women have been targeted as victims of abuse throughout generations. As the hashtag nation works as an advocate of change in our media saturated society, I found it essential to look at the relationship between violence, Indigenous girls and women with its correlation to the 2014 #AmINext campaign. Due to contingency and the impact of temporality the paper promotes social justice of Indigenous girls and women as they advocate for change through their use of digital technology and the viral #AmINext campaign—gaining solidarity both contemporarily and futuristically.

Methods

- Through discursive analysis in the fields of humanities and sociology and Buck Morss' methodology of juxtaposition, I was able to recognize the common theme between visual case studies with the help of:
 - Quantitative analysis on missing and murdered Indigenous girls and women;
 - Qualitative analysis of a digital blog post on the web page HelloGiggles where the hashtag #AmINext became viral.
- Through visual and representational methodologies I analyzed the "front" which Indigenous girls and women put forward by performing their citizenship and advocacy through the act of taking a selfie.

Results

In our media saturated society, the hashtag #AmINext puts the issue of violence brought by ethnic origin and gender in the spotlight. I found an array of news coverages which focused on the aforementioned campaign sparked by a woman named Holly Jarett after her 26-year-old cousin was murdered earlier in 2014. Observing a personal experience move from a local to global sphere brought awareness to the recurring violence ascribed to Indigenous girls and women. Research proves that Indigenous girls and women use the digital sphere as a field to portray their habitus, through the act of taking a selfie and uploading it to social media using the hashtag #AmINext as its caption. Through this, young girls become advocates of their own rights—gaining symbolic capital associated with symbolic power and symbolic struggle.

Discussion

Contemporary children's culture is uniquely experienced yet, the local is brought to global spheres through technological advancements. Due to such advances, the hashtag nation has been used by society as a social movement where individuals can become advocates of change through the hashtag #AmINext. As the violent recurring events targeted towards Indigenous women and girls is seen to be a gendered-cultural genocide—a symbolic violence, social media becomes a platform to gain solidarity and awareness. Rather than relying on classification and categorization of Indigenous girls and women as victims of abuse, it is important to take Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence and mediate it within contemporary society as globalization has a profound impact on temporality.

Take Away

Due to globalization, contemporary culture provides children with a new platform which children and young people use to express and transmit their voices from local to global spheres. As society relies on digital technology and social media platforms to convey their messages, the hashtag becomes a form of social movement. In addition, we must keep Grew's idea in mind as global webs of connection is important to contemporary experiences and future outcomes of not only ourselves but missing and murdered Indigenous girls and women. Through the act of solidarity within the digital sphere, we can transmit the #AmINext campaign to #AreWeNext—promoting social justice and equity.

Gaps and Recommendations

Rather than relying on existing scholarship of missing and murdered Indigenous girls and women, I would recommend conducting research with survivors of such abuse. I believe participatory measures would allow survivors to tell their stories as it creates the basis of advocacy. Through these methods, surplus and residual meaning become essential as there is an act of borrowing from the residual past, which actively persists in the present and future.

