

Governance | Individual communication

IC - (20941) - REPRESENTATION OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITY IN THE PUBLIC REALM: A TOPONYMIC STUDY IN TORONTO

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Background and objectives

Place naming affects identity and shapes cultural aspects of public places. Also, commemorations and anniversary of historical events, as representatives of public collective memory, have been influenced by renaming. In June 2020, Toronto City Council received 14000 petitions signed by citizens who asked for renaming monuments and civic assets whose names were associated with people who had authority in delaying the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. This paper presents results from "Recognition Review" and seeks to understand who or what is represented in the public realm in Toronto; uncover how systemic racism may be embedded in monuments and the naming of civic properties; and inform strategies to create public spaces that are more welcoming, inclusive, and reflective of Toronto's rich diversity, culture and heritage.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

The data includes monuments (statues or monoliths) located in a public space such as street, park and monument names. We will compile a list that showcases the prevailing trends in the civic landscape. A toponymic and thematic analysis is conducted by classifying the data into several categories based on culture, religion, ethnicity, language, race, historical periods, and political influence. The selected samples are representative of City's Community Council boundaries.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

The main result led to an understanding of how civic commemorations shape conceptions or misconceptions of public history in Toronto. Also, the research indicated how historical dynamics have led to the underrepresentation of certain communities in the public realm.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

This project will yield indirect economic benefits to the City of Toronto by contributing to social cohesion. Its purpose is to help correct historic wrongs in defining the nature of civic identity in Toronto. Its long-term positive effects are improvement of diversity and equality through creating municipal policy.

Palavras-chave : Toponymic studies, collective identity , Thematic analysis , public places, Social justice , Toronto, inclusive city