

Workshop Introduction

Indigenizing Environmental Identities

Organized by:
Sustainability Network

Dr. Damien Lee
Kat Ryan

February 24-25, 2018
Toronto, Ontario

Facilitator introductions...

Workshop outline

This one and a half day workshop is designed to initiate a process whereby ENGO leaders engage in a process of indigenizing the civil society sector.

By 'indigenizing', we mean making space for inherent Indigenous leaders to use their knowledge to fulfill their responsibilities to peoples and place.

Workshop framework

The session organized around the 11 ideas:

- The role positionality/identity plays in cross-cultural relationships;
- Supporting political decolonization in First Nations by working with inherent leaders;
- Understanding Indigenous-ENGO relations through a settler-colonial lens;
- Emerging environmental identities from the group and the underlying values of each identity;
- Storytelling: how have these identities and positionalities worked for/against ENGO-Indigenous partnerships?;

Workshop framework

- Beyond intellectualizing, Indigenous perspective of spending time outside as connecting with the land;
- Exploring Indigenous perspectives of environmental identity;
- Lessons from Indigenous Creation Stories (responsibility vs right, what is meant by living in a good way);
- The roles Indigenous Peoples have in guiding Canadian environmentalism (e.g.- educators, policy advisors, environmental assessment processes, etc.);
- Developing list of practices, skills, resources for working with inherent Indigenous leaders;
- Spending time in the out of doors nourishes the soul and helps us to build our knowledge together.

Our guiding principles

1. Make space for inherent Indigenous leaders;
2. Bridge-building and sustainability:
 - a. How can ENGOs work better with inherent leaders in environmental work?
 - b. How can ENGOs make sure their work doesn't uphold colonialism?
3. Gender conscious;
4. Non-extractive;
5. Embrace fluidity.

Workshop goals and expected outcomes

By the end of this workshop, you can expect a clearer sense of:

1. What “Indigenization” means according to Indigenous peoples;
2. The differences between inherent vs. imposed governance structures in FNs;
3. How to partner with Indigenous nations without upholding colonialism.

Review of Agenda...

Participant introductions...



Self Identity Activity

Indigenizing Environmental Identities
February 24-25, 2018, Toronto

Dr. Damien Lee
Kat Ryan



Context

- We all have our motivations for engaging in environmental work.
- People derive an identity from the source motivation (or where their inspiration/passion to be involved comes from), and in relation to others.
- These identities can drive the direction and perspective that a person takes in their work, and perhaps influence their perspectives of others with differing identities/motivations and may in-part inform their approach in engaging in cross-cultural dialogue and relationship.



Context

Example:

A person identifying as a nature lover would describe or define their identity in a certain way; others, in turn, would reflect that identity back to them. Identity is formed and fortified in this relational way.



Self-Identity Activity

Breaking into small groups, discuss the following:

1. How do you identify, personally?
2. Describe your organization's identity.

...we'll reconvene to discuss.

Thank you.



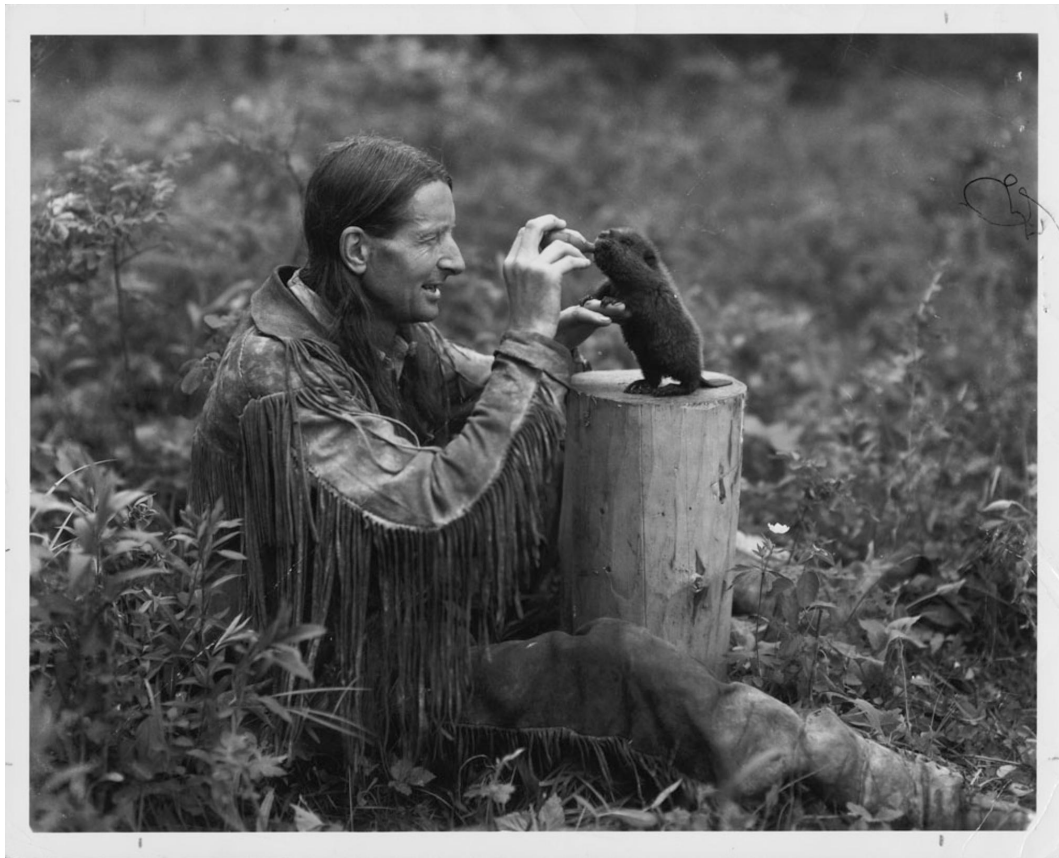


Positionality

Indigenizing Environmental Identities
February 24-25, 2018, Toronto

Dr. Damien Lee
Kat Ryan





Grey Owl



Grey Owl

Archibald Belaney
(1888 – 1938)



Purpose of activity

- Developing an understanding of "positionality" creates the conditions for more accountable relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples;
- Positionality deepens and nuances our understanding of self-identity;
 - It accounts for the structures in which we found ourselves;
- Thus: this activity will broaden self-identity language in a way that better accounts for the "baggage" each of us carry into cross-cultural partnerships.



Definition

Positionality refers to:

- Identifying and naming one's social location;
- An intersectional approach to naming where one finds herself in society;
- In this sense, positionality is more than simply naming identity - *it contextualizes it*.



Why positionality?

Identifying the location from which one's voice emanates is an Indigenous way of ensuring that those engaging in relationships are accountable for their own positionality.

Settler colonialism: No one in Canada is outside of this system that distributes power unevenly (e.g. whiteness awards unearned benefits).

Thus, naming positionality allows one to put his/her "baggage" on the table so others can decide for themselves how best to partner, if at all.

This can build trust in context of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships.



Example

Jail:

- If you were asked to share your opinion on what can be done to improve conditions in prisons, your experience matters.
 - Have you been to jail?
 - Is your opinion purely academic?
- Thus, your positionality displays your authority to speak to an issue while also allowing others to decide for themselves how to navigate the working relationship.



Positionality activity

Getting back into small groups, please discuss and name:

- What you are;
 - Example: Damien is a cis-gendered white man who was adopted into a First Nation community.
- What baggage your positionality might carry in our national context;
 - Example: Despite being adopted and claimed by a First Nation, Damien's whiteness still provides him with unearned benefits not available to, say, his father (due to racism)
- How you account for said baggage;
 - Example: One of Damien's responsibilities in his family/community is to dismantle whiteness to the extent that it negatively impacts Anishinaabeg.



Thank you



Working with Inherent Leadership

Indigenizing Environmental Identities
February 24-25, 2018, Toronto

Dr. Damien Lee
Kat Ryan



Opening questions:

For those organizations in the room who currently hold partnerships with First Nations:

1. Who did you approach for partnership development?
2. If applicable, who gave you permission to work within Indigenous territory?
3. Were you aware of any tensions amongst Indigenous leaders?
 - a. What were they about?
 - b. How did you decide who's authority to respect?



Session overview

Objectives:

1. To understand tensions within First Nations governance structures;
2. To foster understanding about the Non-Profit Industrial Complex and its connections to upholding colonialism through ENGO-FN partnerships;
3. To understand how ENGO-First Nation partnerships can shift these imbalances, for good or bad.

Learning activity: *The Balloon Approach to Indigenization*



Key terms

- Indian band;
- *Indian Act*;
- Inherent leadership;
- Settler colonialism;
- Non-Profit Industrial Complex.



Settler Colonialism

Colonization:

“A process of conquest whereby one nation establishes a colony on another nation’s territory with the intent of taking power, land, and resources. ... Colonialism is not only about material accumulation but requires the production of ideologies that justify the theft and violent practices at its root.”

Edward Said paraphrased in Martin Canon and Lina Sunseri, *Racism, Colonialism, and Indigeneity in Canada: A Reader*, 2nd ed. Don Mills: Oxford University Press,



Settler Colonialism

In addition, Settler Colonialism is further defined by:

1. Invasion is a structure, not an event;
2. Colonialists come to stay;
3. Transcending colonialism.



Settler Colonialism

- Canada is a settler colonial state for the reasons discussed above.
- Importantly, settler colonialism has not ended, but continues to unfold through structure;
 - Gerald Stanley trial in the death of Colten Boushie;
 - Raymond Cormier trial in death of Tina Fontaine.



Objective 1: Tensions within Indigenous governance structures



Objective 1: Tensions within Indigenous governance structures

Some points to consider:

1. Indigenous nations have their own political orders;
 - a. Clan systems;
 - b. Hereditary systems, etc.
2. These systems were targeted for elimination;
 - a. Settler colonialism destroys to replace;
 - b. E.g.: Residential schools;
3. The *Indian Act* is in place to facilitate the elimination of Indigenous nations;
 - a. Individuals
 - b. But as peoples, too.



Objective 1: Tensions within Indigenous governance structures

Under the *Indian Act*, Indigenous nations had to become “Indians” formed into “Indian bands”:

- To access rights and resources;
- In doing so, Canada required Indian bands to adopt a “Chief and Council” system that is more a Eurocentric municipal-style system than anything inherent;
- Result: Marginalization of inherent leaders and inherent political orders.

Objective 1: Tensions within Indigenous governance structures

Example: Idle No More



Objective 1: Tensions within Indigenous governance structures

Example: Idle No More



Objective 1: Tensions within Indigenous governance structures

Example: Idle No More





Objective 1: Tensions within Indigenous governance structures

Resulting tension:

- Through this form of “recognition” (i.e. recognizing municipal-style governments rather than inherent), tensions arise;
- Chief and Councils have the legal authority to govern under the *Indian Act*, but they are not inherent systems;
- Inherent leaders continue to provide leadership the best they can, but are often unrecognized, poorly resourced, etc.;
- The question is: Who is a legitimate leader, and where does their authority come from?
 - What does reconciliation look like here?



Objective 2: ENGO-FN partnerships in Settler Colonial context



Objective 2: ENGO-FN partnerships in Settler Colonial context

Given the points just discussed, it is worth asking:

1. Do ENGO-First Nation partnerships marginalized inherent leaders?
2. If not, why?
3. If so, what can be done to diversify?



Objective 2: ENGO-FN partnerships in Settler Colonial context

Before we can answer these questions, we need the “30,000-foot view”:

- Similar to Indian bands, ENGOs gain their authority from federal or provincial legislation;
- Some have discussed this as the “Shadow state” or the “Non-Profit Industrial Complex”.



Objective 2: ENGO-FN partnerships in Settler Colonial context

The Non-Profit Industrial Complex has been defined as:

“...a set of symbiotic relationships that link political and financial technologies of the state and owning class control with surveillance over public political ideology, including and especially emergent and progressive leftist social movements.” (Dylan Rodriguez 2007, 21-2)



Objective 2: ENGO-FN partnerships in Settler Colonial context

The NPIC has been critiqued for:

- Managing dissent;
- Redirecting energy into career-based models of organizing;
- Allowing corporations to mask their exploitive/colonial work;
- Encouraging social movements to model themselves after capitalist structures rather than challenging them;
- Etc. (Andrea Smith 2007, 3)



Objective 2: ENGO-FN partnerships in Settler Colonial context

NPIC

- Gain authority from federal or provincial legislation;
- Seeks legitimacy to live another day;
- Are not governments;
- Often relies on funds generated through exploiting lands that were stolen from Indigenous nations;
- Ultimately: Can be complicit in reinforcing the structures that marginalized inherent leaders.

Indian bands

- Gain authority from Canada;
- Is seen to have legitimacy (Indigenous peoples as “true” Canadians);
- Are “governments” through the *Indian Act*;
- Seek to tap into the wealth of their lands;
- Ultimately: Often marginalized inherent leaders under name of “recognition” (*Indian Act*)



Objective 3:

The role partnerships can play in shifting balance

Thus, ENGO-First Nations partnerships:

- Take place in a context in which Indigenous nations are being regulated for Canada's needs (e.g. access to territory; consent for exploitation);
- ENGOs thus have power in terms of who they partner with;
 - Can uphold said regulation;
 - Can support re-empowerment of inherent leaders;



Objective 3:

The role partnerships can play in shifting balance

This is what Indigenization looks like:

- Making space for the resurgence of inherent Indigenous political and legal orders, along with inherent leaders;
- Indigenization is not about:
 - Tokenizing Indigenous peoples/knowledges;
 - Doing the resurgence work *for* Indigenous peoples;
- Rather, for ENGOs, its about finding ways to disengage from those systems that marginalized inherent leaders, and support them.



Discussion

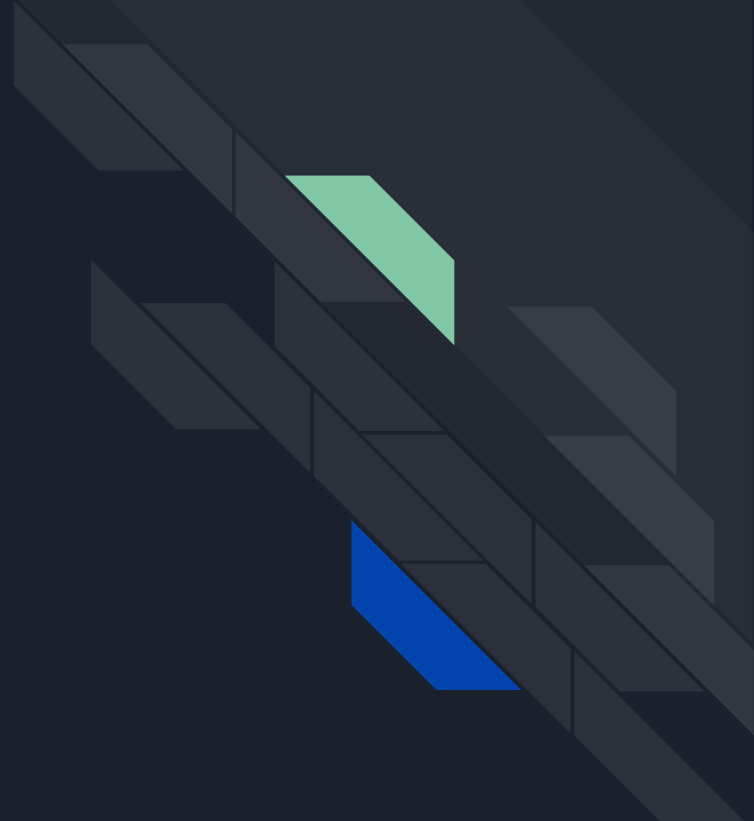
What does Indigenization mean in our current context?

How can partnership-development be used in service of decolonization?

What does an ethical partnership mean given this discussion?

...Learning activity next.

Learning Activity:
*The Balloon Approach
to Indigenization*





Post-Learning Activity Discussion

The Balloon Approach to Indigenization helps us understand:

- There are different roles in decolonization
 - Indigenous peoples: Resurgence (Warm Air)
 - Non-Indigenous people: Dismantling colonial structures (Cold Air)
- How might this approach be applied to ENGO-FN partnerships?
- Other insights?



Thank you

Building Relations

Indigenizing Environmental Identities
February 24-25, 2018, Toronto

Dr. Damien Lee
Kat Ryan



Collaborative Activity Session

Questions:

How can ENGOs build genuine relationships with inherent leaders?

- How to navigate relationship building when Chiefs and Councils are assumed (by many) to be the only true leaders?
- How does your org. work with women, elders, and two-spirit people?

Group Discussion

Strategizing ways to build such relationships:

- Time is needed,
- Showing up is needed,
- Creating space for inherent leaders
 - Example: *hiring* inherent leaders;
- Recognizing said leaders are often based in their community (various definitions of “community”).

Thank you





Deconstructing Real Life Experiences

Indigenizing Environmental Identities
February 24-25, 2018, Toronto

Dr. Damien Lee, Kat Ryan



Purpose of session

- To discuss real life situations or experiences you or your organization have had while working with Indigenous leaders, specifically:
- challenges or successes of those experiences
- This forum allows for discussion and insight into why some situations may have been challenging or problematic, and how to for future improve partnerships;

Group activity: *Deconstructing Real Life Experiences*

Outline:

1. Context (e.g., Conservation offsetting program, Invasive species control program; etc.)
2. Players (e.g., ENGO? Biologist? Program manager? Chief and Council? Elder?)
3. Issue/Conflict (e.g., Project broke down because...; No movement by Council?; Funder's timelines/Granting cycles? Other circumstances?)
4. Reflecting - Why? (e.g.: How could positionally, identity, or colonialism have played a role here?)
5. Group Discussion:
 - Why did a think breakdown/conflict occur?
 - How to avoid the same types of issues in the future?
 - Alternatively, what went well?



Sustainability Network

Web: sustainabilitynetwork.ca

Kat Ryan

Email: katmarieryan@gmail.com

Dr. Damien Lee

Twitter: [@DamienLee](https://twitter.com/DamienLee)

Email: damien.lee@usask.ca

