

## ***Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials and Political Science: What Are the Implications of Indigenizing and Decolonizing Introductory Courses?***

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In September 2018, the Canadian Political Science Association (CPSA) sent out *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials: A Resource for Political Science Instructors* on behalf of its “Reconciliation Committee”. This document, we are told, has been created because universities have contributed to the colonization of indigenous peoples, and political science has been complicit in this process. Political scientists, therefore, should become involved in “turning things around to make things right” by “[envisioning] new political possibilities through engagement with Indigenous scholarship, perspectives and content resource [sic]”.

This paper will analyze the first part of this document – “Key Issues and Debates” – and give special attention to the recommended sources for “Pedagogies and Epistemologies”. It will investigate what these pedagogies and epistemologies are, and how they differ from those that have been historically used in the discipline of political science. There also will be an analysis of how the materials recommended reconceptualize some of the key terms in political science – the state, sovereignty, nation, government, citizenship, and law. As concepts often form the basis of introductory political science courses, understanding how these will be transformed will assist academics who are trying to understand the implications of indigenization and/or decolonization.

As will be shown below, while this transformation might “offer unique ways to see and assess our political condition”, this has nothing to do with improving the empirical knowledge or theoretical understanding of indigenous politics and governance, as has been implied.<sup>1</sup> Instead, it is an advocacy orientation intended to justify the ideology of parallelism and make a case for neotribal rentierism (there will be more on this below). This is because *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials* is being put forward by academics who are attempting to justify indigenous activism, which then legitimizes their position in the academy. And as these materials are based on advocacy and are not intended to improve scholarship, they will distort political science’s understanding of aboriginal-non-aboriginal relations and political development more generally. This will not improve indigenous-non-indigenous relations. To the contrary, it will isolate indigenous peoples further from the academic enterprise, and will prevent them from being actual participants in trying to develop the better understanding that is needed for actual reconciliation.

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<sup>1</sup> Kevin Bruyneel, “Political Science and the Study of Indigenous Politics”, May 17, 2012, [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2061662](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2061662) [accessed May 21, 2019], 3 and Joely De la Torre, “In the Trenches: A critical look at the isolation of American Indian political practices in the nonempirical social science of political science”, in Devon Abbott Mihesuah and Angela Cavender Wilson, *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 190.

## What is *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials*?

The Reconciliation Committee of the CPSA was formed in 2016 after the release of the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). A motion was put forward by the CPSA's Board of Directors that this committee be struck "to report on the implications of the Truth and Reconciliation findings for political science and political scientists in Canada". According to its president, Yasmeen Abu-Laban, the CPSA needed to respond "to the challenges and opportunities the reconciliation process will entail", as it had "an obligation to help its members, and member departments, navigate the new environment".<sup>2</sup> This led to the development of the Reconciliation Committee's "Call to Action", which, among other things, recommended that political science departments be encouraged to provide content on "settle colonization and contemporary reconciliation efforts [sic]" in lower level courses. It also planned to prepare "an annotated bibliography on reconciliation politics and other relevant literature for CPSA members interested in learning more about the subject".<sup>3</sup> *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials* is the first item that the Reconciliation Committee has distributed to political science departments.<sup>4</sup>

The development of *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials* flows from a number of assertions in the TRC's Report. The document references the TRC's recommendation to "educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into the classroom," as well as the provision of the necessary funding to facilitate this.<sup>5</sup> It also quotes the TRC's assertion that "[r]esearch is vital to reconciliation" as it facilitates "insights and practical examples of why and how educating Canadians about the diverse concepts, principles, and practices of reconciliation contributes to healing and transformative social change".<sup>6</sup> The TRC's comment that reconciliation requires that "educational practices and curriculum [need] to be more inclusive of Aboriginal knowledge and history"<sup>7</sup> is also repeated as a justification for adding indigenous content to political science courses.

Although the creation and distribution of *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials* was a response to the recommendations of the TRC,<sup>8</sup> the document is part of a long process of transformation in the study of indigenous politics at the CPSA. Beginning with the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples,<sup>9</sup> it is increasingly maintained that the study of indigenous politics should

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<sup>2</sup> Yasmeen Abu-Laban, "CPSA and Reconciliation Committee", <https://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/committee.php> [accessed May 21, 2019].

<sup>3</sup> CPSA Reconciliation Committee, "Plan of "Action", <https://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/committee.php> [accessed May 2019].

<sup>4</sup> This item was distributed to political scientists at Mount Royal University on September 26, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> TRC 2015, 238, cited Canadian Political Science Association Reconciliation Committee, *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials*, September 24, 2018, <https://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/committee.php> [accessed January 2019], 3.

<sup>6</sup> TRC 2015, 8, 242, cited in *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials*, 3.

<sup>7</sup> TRC 2015, 21, cited in *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials*, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Russell has noted that the "TRC could be the basis for a third Confederation – the first being the Treaty of Niagara in 1764 establishing peaceful relations between First Nations and the British Crown, and the second being the 1867 creation of a federal colonial state imposing its rule on Aboriginal peoples". Russell, "Monitoring Progress on the Road to Reconciliation", Paper Presented at the CPSA Roundtable on Reconciliation, Ryerson University, 2017, [https://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/documents/committees/Monitoring-the-Progress-Along-the-Road\\_Peter-H\\_-Russell.pdf](https://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/documents/committees/Monitoring-the-Progress-Along-the-Road_Peter-H_-Russell.pdf) [accessed May 21, 2019], 1.

<sup>9</sup> Taiaiake Alfred, for example, singles out the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples as the first decolonizing effort, where a "lengthy and comprehensive report... stated clearly and emphatically that what is needed to achieve

support the aspirations of indigenous organizations. This, in fact, led to the development of a separate section of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association in 2009.<sup>10</sup> Responding to the TRC's exhortations, therefore, is just the latest manifestation of this trend.

According to *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials*, "universities have participated in historical and ongoing colonial relations in Canada...and reproduced colonial narratives". This includes the discipline of political science, which "has been instrumental in promoting certain understandings of politics and political subjects" that have justified colonization. The "politics of reconciliation", therefore, will require recognizing the "unselfconscious triumphalism of settler narratives expressed in the canon" and "[u]npacking assumptions that ignored, stereotyped and demonized Indigenous peoples in the development of the Canadian state and its policies...". This will enable new political possibilities to emerge that will improve the academic character of political science and facilitate reconciliation.<sup>11</sup>

In laying out its proposals for transforming political science courses, it is not clear if *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials* is more concerned with indigenizing or decolonizing the discipline. While the two terms are often conflated, Joyce Green notes that "Indigenizing" involves encouraging universities to "remediate their sins" acquired during colonization by "making space for better teaching, better research that attends to colonialism, and to reconciliation".<sup>12</sup> Decolonization, on the other hand,

implies the elimination of settler or white privilege, a challenge to capitalism, a privileging of Indigenous epistemologies, a privileging of the integrity of the environment and Indigenous peoples' ancient relationship with the land, and a commitment to a mutual future shaped more by Indigenous cosmologies and polities than by colonial ones.<sup>13</sup>

Both of these elements are present in the proposals made by *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials*. Political scientists are supposed to "[engage] Indigenous political traditions from an internal perspective" (following Ladner, 2017); "effectively [communicate] the significance and complexity of the issues" (following Gaudry 2017); be "anti-racist and anti-oppressive" (following Battiste 2013) and "attentive to gender and other forms of oppression" (following Altamirano-Jimenez 2011, 2016 and Kuokkanen, 2015); be "critical, reflexive and constructive" (following Napoleon & Friedland 2015); and "[engage] Indigenous communities without being overly reliant on Indigenous people to do work that non-Indigenous people can and should be doing" (following Gaudry 2017 and Wildcat et al. 2017).

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the full decolonization of Canada is a massive transfer of land back to the Indigenous peoples". Alfred, "It's all about the land", in Peter McFarlane and Nicole Schabus (eds), *Whose Land is it Anyway? A Manual for Decolonization* (Vancouver: Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC, 2017), 13.

<sup>10</sup> Kiera Ladner notes that this was due to "the transformative effects of the late nineties and millennial scholarship", which were rooted in Frank Cassidy's call for studies of indigenous people "'be rooted in' Indigenous political traditions, aspirations and cultures". Kiera Ladner, "Taking the Field: 50 Years of Indigenous Politics in the CJPS." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 50, no. 1 (2017), 170-1, 173.

<sup>11</sup> Canadian Political Science Association Reconciliation Committee, *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials*, 4.

<sup>12</sup> Joyce Green, "Enacting Reconciliation", Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, 2016, <https://cpsa-acsp.ca/documents/conference/2016/Green.pdf> [accessed May 21, 2019], 2.

<sup>13</sup> Green, "Enacting Reconciliation", 2.

But what impact will these factors have on political science materials? How will indigenized and/or decolonized political science courses differ from those that have not been indigenized/decolonized? They will, according to *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials*, differ in two ways. First, they will challenge “Euro-Western perspectives” and include indigenous ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies. Second, courses will approach concepts in political science “from the inside”, rather than relying on the ways in which they have been historically understood in the discipline.<sup>14</sup>

### Challenging “Euro-Western Perspectives”

One of the main problems identified by the *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials* is that political science is dominated by “Euro-Western perspectives”. This is because these “Western-Eurocentric ideologies” ensure that “[n]on-Indigenous schools and universities remain primarily bastions of white settler culture and knowledge”. It is argued that “they fail all of their students by presenting racist curriculum and colonial mythologies as the Truth”.<sup>15</sup> According to Wildcat et al., courses should “value indigenous knowledges and perspectives” so as to help “[understand] the ways in which our society remains colonial in the present and realizing how these ongoing colonial conditions continue to negatively impact Indigenous peoples”. Wildcat et al. maintain that “[c]olonialism has flourished partly on undermining Indigenous knowledge” and so “[g]aining knowledge around Indigenous pasts, presents and futures is a resistance to this project”. Wildcat et al. argue for “increasing the diversity of knowledge” because this will “resist colonialisms attempts to homogenize as many people as possible [sic]”, benefitting indigenous and non-indigenous students alike.<sup>16</sup> Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang even argue that “[t]o refuse settler sovereignty is to refuse the settler’s unquestioned right to know, and to resist the agenda to expand the knowledge territory of the settler colonial nation”.<sup>17</sup>

But what is meant by “white settler...knowledge” and “colonial mythologies”, and how does the former differ from the “Indigenous knowledge” and “Aboriginal knowledge” referred to by the TRC? Although the nature of this “knowledge” is never clearly defined, I completed a detailed survey of the literature on this subject three years ago, summarizing the views of a number of indigenous scholars.<sup>18</sup> From this investigation it was determined that indigenous “ways of knowing” differ from those that are non-indigenous in that they do not require evidence.<sup>19</sup> In

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<sup>14</sup>Ladner, “Taking the Field”, 164.

<sup>15</sup> Green, “Enacting Reconciliation”, 6-7. Green cites Kuokkanen, Rauna. 2007. *Reshaping the University*. Vancouver: UBC Press and Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 1999. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Dunedin: University of Otago and London: Zed Books in making this claim.

<sup>16</sup> Wildcat et al., “An Argument for Indigenous Content Requirements: How Indigenous Content Requirements Can Help Uproot Canada’s Colonial Identity and How They’ll Help us Build a Stronger Future”, <https://ualbertaicr.wordpress.com/student-commentary-on-icrs/> [accessed May 21, 2019].

<sup>17</sup> Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Unbecoming Claims: Pedagogies of Refusal in Qualitative Research”, *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 20, no. 6 (2014), 812.

<sup>18</sup> “‘Indigenizing the University’ and Political Science: Exploring the Implications for the Discipline”, Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, University of Calgary, May 31-June 2, 2016, <https://cpsa-acsp.ca/documents/conference/2016/Widdowson.pdf> [accessed May 22, 2019].

<sup>19</sup> This view was also put forward by David Newhouse in response to a direct question at the “Indigenizing the University: What Are the Academic Implications?” Public Forum at Mount Royal University on February 10, 2017 (<https://www.mtroyal.ca/ProgramsCourses/FacultiesSchoolsCentres/Arts/EventsandConferences/IndigenizingtheUni> [accessed May 22, 2019]).

fact, spiritual beliefs and unsubstantiated opinions are perceived to be a form of “knowledge”.<sup>20</sup> But because indigenization advocates have conflated capitalist forms of exploitation with knowledge development, and perceive that indigenous worldviews are tied to ancestry, any attempt to evaluate indigenous “knowledge systems” is claimed to be “epistemological tyranny” and even a form of “genocide”.<sup>21</sup> Accusations of “cognitive imperialism” also are made when scientific knowledge displaces traditional indigenous belief systems in the educational system.<sup>22</sup>

“Colonial mythologies”, on the other hand, are discussed less obtusely in the literature. These appear to concern the “triumphalist narratives” mentioned in the *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials*. Historically, this concerns the fact that the “great men” of political philosophy saw indigenous people as “savage”, “uncivilized”, and “primitive” because of their ontologies and epistemologies.<sup>23</sup> Theorizing such a “racial and evolutionary hierarchy” led to “[t]he belief that Indigenous peoples were barely humans or ‘uncivilized savages’”, which gave settlers “a convenient ideology that justified domination as a moral act...”.<sup>24</sup>

“Eurocentrism” is also claimed to exist in the methodologies of political science. This is shown, according to Ladner, by the fact that the discipline has encouraged the study of indigenous peoples as “‘subjects’ for which the researchers take no responsibility and for whom the only beneficiaries are the researchers (publications, grants and promotions)”.<sup>25</sup> As Ladner points out,

[i]t is important for all researchers to be mindful of the fact that Indigenous research needs to be meaningful and respectful. Work in this field should not simply be driven by thought experiments or interesting intellectual questions as Indigenous research involves human beings who have been the subject of too many studies that have supported their dispossession, erasure, oppression and subjugation”.<sup>26</sup>

It is this sentiment that leads Tuck and Yang to argue that the continuous use of indigenous people as objects of study requires resistance to this “inquiry as invasion”.<sup>27</sup> It is argued that any study should be “deeply ethical, meaningful, or useful for the individual or community being researched”.<sup>28</sup> Inquiry as invasion, on the other hand,

is a result of the imperative to produce settler colonial knowledge and to produce it for the academy. This invasion imperative is often disguised in universalist terms of producing “objective knowledge” for “the public.” It is a thin disguise, as most research

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<sup>20</sup> Widdowson, “Indigenizing the University”, 13. This view is also present in one of the main sources recommended in *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials* – Marie Battiste’s *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit* (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing Inc., 2013). According to Battiste, “Indigenous Methodologies” include a “spiritual level” that can be “accessed by ceremony”. She notes that “[t]he spiritual aspect of life is as important to the search for knowledge as is the physical, and accessing the spiritual realm in each of the nations is shown to include personal and collective engagements at the level of intuition, meditation, prayer, ceremony, dreams, and vision quests, and other forms of introspection that reach another realm”. Battiste, p. 76.

<sup>21</sup> Widdowson, “Indigenizing the University”, 7, 9.

<sup>22</sup> Battiste, *Decolonizing Education*, 158-166.

<sup>23</sup> Ladner, “Taking the Field”, 164.

<sup>24</sup> Isabel Altamirano-Jiménez, “Settler-Colonialism, Human Rights, and Indigenous Women.” *Prairie Forum* 36 (2011), 108.

<sup>25</sup> Ladner, “Taking the Field”, 175.

<sup>26</sup> Ladner, “Taking the Field”, 176.

<sup>27</sup> Tuck and Yang, “Unbecoming Claims”, 811.

<sup>28</sup> Tuck and Yang, “Unbecoming Claims”, 812.



rhetoric waxes the poetics of empire: to discover, to chart new terrain, to seek new frontiers, to explore, and so on. The academy's unrelenting need to produce "original research" is what makes the inquiry an invading structure, not an event. Social science hunts for new objects of study, and its favored reaping grounds are Native, urban, poor, and Othered communities.<sup>29</sup>

To avoid this, Tuck and Yang suggest that researchers "resist the urge to study people (and their 'social problems') and to study instead institutions and power".<sup>30</sup>

As well as opposing research that is believed to result in "dispossession, erasure, oppression and subjugation", incorporating indigenous ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies will enable, the argument goes, new approaches and ways of seeing things.<sup>31</sup> It will facilitate the process for "ignored Indigenous political traditions" to be examined. This will involve the study of "traditional Indigenous political systems" and "traditional Indigenous political thought" and investigations of "why so many Indigenous nations created themselves as polities without power".<sup>32</sup> All forms of "indigenous political thought", we are told, will shed light on "the existence of a separate rights tradition" for indigenous peoples and involve a recognition of the "red roots" of the enlightenment.<sup>33</sup> This, according to Ladner, will enable political scientists to "...deal with real political issues of value to Indigenous communities and/or government actors"<sup>34</sup> by "engaging Indigenous scholars in (re)defining Indigenous political science and the priorities of the field".<sup>35</sup>

But how will political science be "(re)defined" and what will the different priorities be? Essentially, what most of these proposals are suggesting is that many of the scientific aspirations of the discipline be replaced by advocacy. This problem, again, has been discussed extensively in a previous paper that I wrote for the CPSA.<sup>36</sup> In this paper, I examined the views of Andrew Rehfeld, who maintained that advocacy – i.e. "research that promotes social and political change"<sup>37</sup> - should not be incorporated into political science because

science as a distinct and worthwhile enterprise is and ought to be primarily concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, not the promotion of change or preservation. There may be a close relationship between advocacy and normative research: advocates might rely on normative research to guide how they change the world, to issue calls to action, and promote activity to change entrenched and unjustified political structures; normative

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<sup>29</sup> Tuck and Yang, "Unbecoming Claims", 813.

<sup>30</sup> Tuck and Yang, "Unbecoming Claims", 815.

<sup>31</sup> Bruyneel, "Political Science and the Study of Indigenous Politics", 3.

<sup>32</sup> Ladner, "Taking the Field", 166. To make this claim, Ladner cites herself: Kiera L. Ladner, "When Buffalo Speaks: Creating an Alternative Understanding of Traditional Blackfoot Governance." Doctoral dissertation, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, 2001.

<sup>33</sup> Ladner, "Taking the Field", 171.

<sup>34</sup> Ladner, "Taking the Field", 173.

<sup>35</sup> Ladner, "Taking the Field", 176.

<sup>36</sup> Frances Widdowson, "'Decolonizing Political Theory': Exploring the Implications of Advocacy for Political Science", Paper Presented for the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, University of Victoria, June 4-6, 2013,

<file:///C:/Users/fwiddowson/Documents/cpsa%202019/decolonizing%20political%20theory.pdf> [accessed May 22, 2019].

<sup>37</sup> For his discussion of advocacy, as well as the other areas of political theory, see Andrew Rehfeld, "Offensive Political Theory", *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 18, no. 2 (June 2010), 475-478.

theorists may also be motivated by a real desire to promote, say, justice and social change, but their work is dedicated to knowledge of what to do, not the actual doing.<sup>38</sup>

Incorporation of advocacy into political science, in fact, seriously compromises the discipline because it perceives attempts to be objective and develop a universal understanding of concepts as being oppressive to the indigenous population.<sup>39</sup> This bizarre stance is due to the epistemological relativist orientation of indigenization advocates,<sup>40</sup> and the fact that this enables them to argue that research should be undertaken only to “support” the views of indigenous organizations. Accepting this position, of course, undermines the whole notion of research. It makes the study of contentious areas, such as corruption in indigenous communities, domestic violence against indigenous women, and the potential relationship between Foetal Alcohol Syndrome and indigenous criminality, impossible.

The main target of advocacy in *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials*, however, is looking at various concepts “from the inside”. Privileging “indigenous perspectives” in political science will change how we study the state and government. It will also challenge the study of indigenous politics as an ethno-linguistic cleavage, and assert that indigenous groups should be seen as entities engaged in a struggle for national self-determination. This will require using concepts differently than has been the case historically in the discipline of political science.

### **Studying Concepts “From the Inside” in Political Science**

The first change to content in political science courses that is recommended is to move away from a focus on the “Westphalian state”.<sup>41</sup> We are told that indigenization/decolonization of political science must “destabilize the Westphalian state...” and “see beyond the state...”.<sup>42</sup> This is because a concentration on the state has meant that historically indigenous politics were marginalized in the discipline. As indigenous societies were identified as stateless in political science,<sup>43</sup> not much attention was paid to their political dynamics.

Because of political science’s focus on the state, it is argued that “the concept of sovereignty as asserted and practiced by indigenous nations has been too often and to no small extent frustrated, suppressed and/or transformed politically by the imposition of a primarily European-conceptualized notion of sovereignty”.<sup>44</sup> In the past, the discipline of political science asserted that sovereignty was inextricably connected with states; and because indigenous societies lacked states they were seen as lacking sovereignty. Menno Boldt and J. Anthony Long, for example, argue that the concept of sovereignty in political science was incompatible with indigenous traditions, and they question indigenous organizations’ reliance on the term to make demands for self-government. According to Boldt and Long, sovereignty in political science is linked to “authoritative, hierarchical governance, statehood and territoriality”, while indigenous

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<sup>38</sup> Rehfeld, “Offensive Political Theory”, 476-7.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, Kuokkanen, *Reshaping the University*, 12 and Duncan Ivison, Paul Patton and Will Sanders, “Introduction”, in Ivison, Patton and Sanders (eds), *Political Theory and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>40</sup> Rauna Kuokkanen, for example, refers to the presence of “multiple truths”. Kuokkanen, *Reshaping the University*, 5.

<sup>41</sup> Ladner, “Taking the Field”, 165, 175.

<sup>42</sup> Ladner, “Taking the Field”, 174-175.

<sup>43</sup> Dickerson and Flanagan, 1986: 12–13, quoted in Ladner, “Taking the Field”, 166.

<sup>44</sup> Bruyneel, “Political Science and the Study of Indigenous Politics”, 12.

governance is consensual and egalitarian. They note that “while an unresolved debate exists amongst scholars as to whether sovereignty is an essential characteristic of the state, all theorists of sovereignty implicitly, if not explicitly, assume that statehood is an essential and indispensable requirement for sovereignty to exist...”.<sup>45</sup> And while indigenous politics today focuses on ties to the land and asserting control over territory,<sup>46</sup> this is a relatively recent political strategy as indigenous peoples did not have well defined boundaries before colonization. The traditional basis of indigenous tribes was “spiritual association” and “community”, which was not linked to “a fixed territory or geographically defined citizenship”.<sup>47</sup>

Indigenized/decolonized political science courses, however, are supposed to teach that indigenous societies possess sovereignty.<sup>48</sup> This requires delinking the concept of sovereignty from the state, and challenging political science’s “emphasis on sovereignty as an exclusive characteristic of a state”. For indigenous political communities, the state is not “the ideal location and norm for securing their sovereignty” as it is “[p]ragmatically...hard to imagine one thousand indigenous states in North America”. Instead, indigenous organizations assert that their sovereignty is “inherent”. This means that it “is not granted by the settler-state, but rather reflects the self-governing power that indigenous communities expressed prior to the founding of the U.S. and Canadian states and continue to assert, to different degrees, since the imposition of settler-colonialism”.<sup>49</sup> A number of years ago, James Youngblood-Henderson even noted that sovereignty is “a matter of the heart”, indicating, as Boldt and Long pointed out then, that indigenous conceptions of sovereignty “are still embryonic and inchoate”.<sup>50</sup> At the same time, the existence of the sovereignty of the Canadian state is now seen merely as a “claim”, not a reality.<sup>51</sup> The existence of Canadian sovereignty is a political reality; implying that its existence is in doubt is possible only because sovereignty is being defined “from the inside”. Relativizing the concept in this way is a response to the political demands of indigenous organizations.

In addition to the state, the concept of governance also must be conceptualized differently in an indigenized/decolonized political science. Historically in political science it was maintained that indigenous peoples “lacked government”. This was because government was perceived as being an “enduring, specialized structure”,<sup>52</sup> which was lacking in indigenous societies. No specialized structure existed because activities were performed by all members of the tribe; tribal chiefs exercised leadership, but they did not make binding decisions, as no state existed to enforce them. Decisions were made by consensus, and personal autonomy and sharing were the norm.<sup>53</sup> The persistence of this view, according to Ladner, was due to the fact that indigenous politics was not “studied and understood on its own terms...”<sup>54</sup> and this has prevented understanding

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<sup>45</sup> Menno Boldt and J. Anthony Long, “Tribal Traditions and European-Western Political Ideologies: The Dilemma of Canada’s Native Indians”, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 17, No. 3 (Sept. 1984), 545.

<sup>46</sup> This view is now being institutionalized in the various “territorial acknowledgements” that are held at universities. Widdowson, “Indigenizing the University”, 3-4.

<sup>47</sup> Boldt and Long, “Tribal Traditions and European-Western Political Ideologies”, 546.

<sup>48</sup> Green, “Enacting Reconciliation”, 2.

<sup>49</sup> Bruyneel, “Political Science and the Study of Indigenous Politics”, 12.

<sup>50</sup> Boldt and Long, “Tribal Traditions and European-Western Political Ideologies”, 539.

<sup>51</sup> Ladner, “Taking the Field”, 171.

<sup>52</sup> Dickerson and Flanagan, 1986: 12–13, cited in Ladner, “Taking the Field”, 166.

<sup>53</sup> Boldt and Long, “Tribal Traditions...”, 538.

<sup>54</sup> Ladner, “Taking the Field”, 169.



political concepts in a manner that is “distinct from normal usage in the Western-eurocentric paradigm...”. As Ladner explains, the “Western-eurocentric lens” has “excluded extremely complex, non-hierarchical systems of governance from the purview of political science”.<sup>55</sup> How these “systems of governance” are “extremely complex” is not discussed; Ladner only cites two of her own articles to support this assertion.<sup>56</sup>

This reconceptualization of governance has led to a revised understanding of what is meant by “law” when it is applied to indigenous societies. Historically in political science, it has been asserted that indigenous societies did not have what was historically called “law”, as “the organizing and regulating force for group order and endeavour in traditional Indian society was custom and tradition”. These “[c]ustoms were derived from the Creator”, according to Boldt and Long, and represented a “sacred blueprint for survival of the tribe”. The belief that these instructions were dictated by a supernatural entity “alleviated the need for personal authority, a hierarchical power structure and a separate ruling entity to maintain order”. It was “[r]ule by custom”, not law, and this did not require a “separate agency of enforcement” since a “face-to-face society can maintain order with few but broad general rules known to everyone”.<sup>57</sup>

Indigenized/decolonized political science necessitates a different conception of law. This involves distinguishing “state law” from law that is not associated with the state, maintaining that the former “is not the only source of relevant or effective legal order in Indigenous people’s lives”.<sup>58</sup> It is argued that this was not recognized historically in academic disciplines because there was a “comprehensive denial, disregard, and impairment of Indigenous legal traditions through the concerted efforts and willful blindness of colonialism...”.<sup>59</sup> Indigenous law in these discussions concerns dispute resolution, and how the principles pertaining to this are “recorded in many different kinds of stories, in songs, dances and art, in kinship relationships, in place names, and in the structures and aims of the institutions of each society”.<sup>60</sup> This must be accepted in academic disciplines, it is argued, because “Indigenous laws deserve the same respect and demand the same rigorous analysis if they are going to be understood in their full sophistication and complexity”.<sup>61</sup> Again, it is not clear how these customary dispute resolution processes are “sophisticated” or “complex”.

In addition to questioning political science’s focus on the state and the denial of the existence of traditional indigenous governance, the *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials* is interested in changing how political scientists think about indigenous politics. We are told that political science tends to “focus on...Western-eurocentric understandings...”<sup>62</sup> and there is an “inability...to account for or understand the political identity and politics of indigenous

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<sup>55</sup> Ladner, “Taking the Field”, 168.

<sup>56</sup> These include Kiera Ladner, “When Buffalo Speaks: Creating an Alternative Understanding of Traditional Blackfoot Governance.” Doctoral dissertation, 2001, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario and Kiera L. Ladner, “Governing within an Ecological Context: Creating an AlterNative Understanding of Blackfoot Governance”, *Studies in Political Economy*, 70 (2003), 125–52.

<sup>57</sup> Boldt and Long, “Tribal Traditions...”, 544.

<sup>58</sup> Hadley Friedland and Val Napoleon, “Gathering the threads: developing a methodology for researching and rebuilding Indigenous legal traditions”, *Lakehead Law Journal* vol. 1, no. 1 (2015) 17.

<sup>59</sup> Friedland and Napoleon, “Gathering the threads”, 17-18.

<sup>60</sup> Friedland and Napoleon, “Gathering the threads”, 21.

<sup>61</sup> Friedland and Napoleon, “Gathering the threads”, 22.

<sup>62</sup> Ladner, “Taking the Field”, 172.

people”.<sup>63</sup> According to Ladner, this leads indigenous self-government often to be seen as a “claim against the state” or one kind of “ethno-linguistic cleavage”. This is opposed because of the assertions about “indigenous sovereignty” being “inherent”. Any argument about indigenous governance powers being devolved from the Canadian state is perceived as evidence of colonial domination.<sup>64</sup>

Examining the indigenous “ethno-linguistic cleavage” within the Canadian system, it is argued, does “not account for the distinctive history and, in particular, nation-based identities and claims for sovereignty that define much of indigenous politics”.<sup>65</sup> Indigenous politics must be seen as a demand for sovereignty,<sup>66</sup> as indigenous peoples are a “founding nation” of modern states.<sup>67</sup> This leads Green to argue in favour of “[considering] the historical, political and legal location of Aboriginal nations as providing the locus of the claims against the colonial settler state”.<sup>68</sup> Other political scientists warn against the “whitening” effects of policies that “seek to dissipate and thus undermine the status of indigenous people as citizens of their tribes and nations”.<sup>69</sup> This, of course, necessitates a different definition of citizenship, as it has been conceptualized historically as “[legal] membership in the state”.<sup>70</sup>

Attempts to reframe indigenous politics in terms of a “nationalist” conflict is contentious, and historically this has been challenged by a number of political scientists. Tom Flanagan, for example, argues that nationhood is a concept that is inextricably connected to the state. He criticizes the unquestioned assumption that indigenous people are nations, and sees it as “a debatable point which needs to be argued”.<sup>71</sup> Flanagan points out that leaders like George Manuel noted that the terms “tribe” and “nation” were used interchangeably, and Boldt and Long assert that “both ‘bands’ and ‘nations’ qualify as tribal societies”.<sup>72</sup> According to Boldt and Long, “tribe” is used by indigenous people to refer to “autonomous and self-sufficient social groupings”, while “nation” is oriented more to a “level of political jurisdiction”.

The dominance of the word “nation”, Flanagan points out, only came about with the Dene Declaration in 1975, which used the term in a political sense by asserting that indigenous groups are “forced to submit” to the Canadian state. According to Flanagan, “[t]his matter is far from being a trivial word-game”, because a political scientist must try to obtain knowledge about the political world,<sup>73</sup> and understanding how a people comes to see itself is an essential part of this process. Flanagan notes that “[t]he nation-state is the paradigmatic form of political organization

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<sup>63</sup> Bruyneel, “Political Science and the Study of Indigenous Politics”, 2.

<sup>64</sup> Ladner, “Taking the Field”, 167.

<sup>65</sup> Bruyneel, “Political Science and the Study of Indigenous Politics”, 25.

<sup>66</sup> Bruyneel, “Political Science and the Study of Indigenous Politics”, 9. Bruyneel refers to works by Taiaiake Alfred, Dave Turner, and Glen Coulthard to support this claim.

<sup>67</sup> This was the approach of Samuel LaSelva, which is commended by Kiera Ladner. Ladner, “Taking the Field”, 171.

<sup>68</sup> Joyce A. Green, “The Difference Debate: Reducing Rights to Cultural Flavours.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* vol. 33, no. 1 (2000), 144 cited in Ladner, “Taking the Field”, 172.

<sup>69</sup> Bruyneel. “Political Science and the Study of Indigenous Politics”, 26.

<sup>70</sup> Mark O. Dickerson, Thomas Flanagan and Brenda O’Neill, *An Introduction to Government and Politics: A Conceptual Approach*, Ninth Edition (Toronto: Nelson Education, 2014), 34.

<sup>71</sup> Thomas Flanagan, “The Sovereignty and Nationhood of Canadian Indians: A Comment on Boldt and Long”, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 18, no.2 (June 1985), 368.

<sup>72</sup> Boldt and Long, “Tribal Traditions...”, 538.

<sup>73</sup> See also Rehfeld, “Offensive Political Theory”, 472 for a discussion of this point.

in the modern world”, and determining if indigenous people are nations is “of cardinal importance both to them and to Canada”.<sup>74</sup> Calling indigenous groups nations, according to Flanagan, fails to recognize the fact that they are much smaller in size and have not gone through the transition to the “mass society” that is essential for this form of political organization.<sup>75</sup> And although Boldt and Long assert that the indigenous concept of nationhood “is consistent with post-colonial ethnic self-determination movements...”,<sup>76</sup> this fails to recognize the fundamental distinction between anti-colonial nationalism in Africa and Asia and the claims of indigenous groups. As Alan Cairns has pointed out, the misapplication of arguments connected to the decolonization struggles of the third world has led to misunderstandings about indigenous peoples’ aspirations for self-government.<sup>77</sup> According to Cairns, the circumstances of third world colonies were very different from those in what has been called the “fourth world”. He notes that the third world analogy is imperfect because the goal of independence, fought for by colonies in the third world, is unavailable to indigenous peoples. The colonizers of Canada will not “go home”, and thus “escape from the majority can only be partial”.<sup>78</sup>

These discussions about developing a universal conception of the term “nation” are seen as “word-games” by Boldt and Long. The purpose of these “games”, according to Boldt and Long, is to justify the assimilation of indigenous people and the implementation of “cultural genocide”.<sup>79</sup> Boldt and Long maintain that indigenous peoples “themselves must be allowed to determine what configuration of bands and tribes their nations would assume”, and they criticize Flanagan’s claim that indigenous groups are pre-national due to the fact that they are based upon blood and marriage (the common definition of “tribe”). Indigenous people, according to Boldt and Long, often adopted non-relatives into their society and this indicates that they have some similarities to the mass societies that have formed the basis of European nations.

Boldt and Long claim that indigenous peoples’ use of a different definition of sovereignty “does not represent a cynical manipulation of political concepts”. It is, in their view, only a “misguided reinterpretation of traditional aboriginality”.<sup>80</sup> This assertion doesn’t recognize the extent to which the redefinition of sovereignty is an essential aspect of indigenous political demands. And while one can see why indigenous organizations have an interest in doing this, protecting the academic character of political science requires opposing the insertion of epistemological relativism into the development of the discipline’s concepts. As will be shown below, the changing of word meanings, to suit the agenda of advocates, destroys the universal concepts that are essential to clear communication.

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<sup>74</sup> Flanagan, “The Sovereignty and Nationhood of Canadian Indians”, 369.

<sup>75</sup> Flanagan notes that a “nation is understood to be a specific form of social order” because it “creates a new identity for individuals cut loose from the traditional moorings of family, clan, tribe, caste, or village. Self-government is so important to the nation precisely because the other dimensions of identity have become attenuated. The nation can be understood as the people of a mass society who willingly constitute a state or would like to do so if the opportunity arose”. Flanagan, “The Sovereignty and Nationhood of Canadian Indians”, 373.

<sup>76</sup> Menno Boldt and J. Anthony Long, “A Reply to Flanagan’s Comments: ‘The Sovereignty and Nationhood of Canadian Indians: A Comment on Boldt and Long’”, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (March 1986), 151.

<sup>77</sup> Alan C. Cairns, *First Nations and the Canadian State: In Search of Coexistence* (Kingston: Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, 2005), 8-11.

<sup>78</sup> Alan C. Cairns, “Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Aboriginal Nationalism, Canadian Federalism, and Canadian Democracy”, *Saskatchewan Law Review*, 70 (2007), 105.

<sup>79</sup> Boldt and Long, “A Reply to Flanagan’s Comments”, 153.

<sup>80</sup> Boldt and Long, “Tribal Traditions...”, 548.

## What are the Implications of Indigenized/Decolonized Concepts for Political Science?

In his examination of the role that political theory plays in political science, Andrew Rehfeld discusses the importance of “research about political concepts” in the discipline. Conceptual analysis is an important area of political science, according to Rehfeld, because it “seeks to discover observer-independent facts about the political world”.<sup>81</sup> It is also important that these concepts be defined consistently, so as to facilitate effective communication. As one introductory political science textbook explains, “it is vital that we establish a common language as students of political studies so that we can avoid unnecessary misunderstandings and make our dialogue more effective and efficient”.<sup>82</sup> Concepts help us to think about the social world, which is too complex to analyze without them. “Bad concepts make for bad analysis” because they prevent us from communicating meaningfully and improving our understanding of the totality of politics and government in the world today.<sup>83</sup>

Indigenization advocates, however, resist attempts to develop universal definitions so that their advocacy can be unrestrained. This can be seen in Kiera Ladner’s response to the arguments of Tom Flanagan. Ladner opposes Flanagan’s attempts to develop a universal concept of “nation” because she maintains that they “provide settler states with justification for the appropriation of Indigenous lands and the assertion of [colonial] sovereignty”.<sup>84</sup> Political scientists, after all, in Ladner’s view, should “engage in research which not only acknowledges but also confronts issues of colonialism, oppression, racism and erasure”.<sup>85</sup> This misunderstands the meaning of research as objective inquiry, and sees it only as a vehicle for advocacy. Instead of the nature of the development of the Canadian state being perceived as an open question to be investigated in political science, it is argued that a “historical context” be provided that shows “the projects of exploitation, violence and ongoing colonial attitudes that allows Canada to emerge”. This is why the “voices of Indigenous activists and communities” must be incorporated into universities in general, and political science specifically.<sup>86</sup> As Adam Gaudry explains, “[a] lot of people have this idea that Canada doesn’t oppress Indigenous people anymore and things are generally fine. They don’t see Canada as based on Indigenous dispossession and expropriation. They don’t see the connection between this dispossession and how wealth is generated in Canada”.<sup>87</sup> It is up to political scientists, therefore, to “teach” this perspective as historical truth.

Reconceptualization of various terms feeds into this advocacy by enabling indigenizers and decolonizers to more effectively support their political agenda – a position that has been referred to as “parallelism” in political science. The term parallelism was first coined by Alan Cairns, who described it as “Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities travelling side by side,

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<sup>81</sup> Rehfeld, “Offensive Political Theory”, 475.

<sup>82</sup> George A. MacLean and Duncan R. Wood, *Politics: An Introduction* (Toronto: Oxford University Press), 25.

<sup>83</sup> J. Tyler Dickovick and Jonathan Eastwood, *Comparative Politics: Integrating Theories, Methods and Cases*, Second Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 9-10.

<sup>84</sup> Ladner, “Taking the Field”, 170, 172.

<sup>85</sup> Ladner, “Taking the Field”, 175.

<sup>86</sup> Wildcat et al., “An Argument for Indigenous Content Requirements: How Indigenous Content Requirements Can Help Uproot Canada’s Colonial Identity and How They’ll Help us Build a Stronger Future”, <https://ualbertaicr.wordpress.com/student-commentary-on-icrs/> [accessed May 21, 2019].

<sup>87</sup> Adam Gaudry, “An Interview with Dr. Adam Gaudry”, <https://ualbertaicr.wordpress.com/interviews-with-adam-gaudry-and-leanne-simpson/> [accessed May 21, 2019].

coexisting but not getting in each other's way".<sup>88</sup> Parallelism, which was prominently featured in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples' *Final Report*,<sup>89</sup> is opposed to integrationist approaches in that it assumes that indigenous cultures and the wider Canadian society should exist separately from one another, continuously reproducing distinctive economies, political systems and "knowledges". Such a conception is opposed to the idea that cultural osmosis will eventually lead to indigenous and non-indigenous peoples becoming part of a larger integrated whole.

This ideology of parallelism depends upon the revising of concepts "from the inside". Redefining the term sovereignty, for example, enables Joyce Green to challenge the TRC's claim that reconciliation requires "Aboriginal peoples' right to self determination within, and in partnership with, a viable Canadian sovereignty".<sup>90</sup> As Green points out, "not all are willing to accept that Canada is the necessary framework for the exercise of Indigenous sovereignties – indeed, it may be the other way around. Canada needs to be legitimated by Indigenous reconciliation, political protocols, treaties, Indigenization of state institutions, and right relationships enacted into the future".<sup>91</sup>

Reconceptualization is possible because indigenizers and decolonizers insist on subjective, as opposed to objective, definitions. In all of the concepts that have been mentioned above – state, nation, governance, law, and citizenship, it is argued that indigenizing/decolonizing involves accepting and/or "privileging" indigenous perspectives in the redefinition of these terms. But arguments that indigenous politics should be "studied and understood on its own terms" downplay the fact that the targeted concepts are actually being used differently from their normal usage. We end up not comparing like with like, even though conceptualization in the discipline requires that we work towards agreement on the terms used.

"Studying indigenous politics from the inside", therefore, actually means misapplying the concept of "sovereignty", "government" and "nation" in the case of indigenous groups. When Green talks about "the exercise of indigenous sovereignties", for example, we assume that this involves having the highest authority in a particular sphere of jurisdiction. But indigenous communities cannot have the final authority because they have no military, autonomous police force or institutions accepted by a geographically defined citizenry. In other words, they lack a *state*, and the sovereignty that is associated with it.

As a result of this misapplication of concepts, there is a lack of understanding of the differences in development between indigenous societies and modern nation-states. States, and the nations that are associated with them, are more developed than tribal political entities that are organized on the basis of kinship. Kinship-based societies rely on the principle of reciprocity, whereas states are organized, as Max Weber's famous definition points out, to assert a monopoly over the legitimate use of force over a permanent population within a defined territory. By using the term "sovereignty" to describe indigenous groups, it is not understood that indigenous politics

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<sup>88</sup> Alan C. Cairns, *Citizens Plus: Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian State* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 70-3, 117, 132. For a more recent examination of the ideology of parallelism see Jeffrey Simpson, "Progress for aboriginal peoples still haunted by the past", *Inside Policy*, April 2015, <http://www.macdonaldlaurier.ca/jeffrey-simpson-in-inside-policy-progress-for-aboriginal-peoples-stillhaunted-by-the-past/> [accessed June 2015].

<sup>89</sup> This is the subject of my forthcoming book *Separate but Unequal: How Parallelist Ideology Conceals Indigenous Dependency* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2019).

<sup>90</sup> TRC 2015, 238, cited in Green, "Enacting Reconciliation", 13.

<sup>91</sup> Green, "Enacting Reconciliation", 13.

involves tribalism, not nationalism. Historically, this was expressed in terms of blood vengeance, while tribal interactions in the modern context involve the widespread acceptance of nepotism.

This kinship character of tribal societies is often interpreted romantically in the political science literature. Boldt and Long, for example, assert that “egalitarianism” in indigenous societies was “derived from the Creator’s founding prescription” as a “creation myth held that, from the beginning, all members of the tribe shared and participated *equally* in all privileges and responsibilities [emphasis in original]”.<sup>92</sup> Such assertions fail to recognize how “equality” in indigenous societies is linked to low levels of productivity. Little surplus was produced, and so conflicts within the tribe were rare and sharing was a necessity for survival. In the modern context, however, the principle of reciprocity is unworkable because of the large transfers that are provided externally from a much larger and productive economy. Acknowledging this difference in productivity is avoided by claiming that “it is a mistake to view traditional Indian nations as though they were at some primitive stage of development undergoing a transition to statehood”.<sup>93</sup> It is never explained why this is a “mistake”.

These developmental differences must be obscured to make a case for neotribal rentierism. As has been explained in more detail elsewhere,<sup>94</sup> “neotribal rentierism” is the type of political economy that exists in dependent indigenous communities. It is a circulation, as opposed to a productive, economy, and consists of processes that have emerged to integrate dependent indigenous peoples into late capitalism. These processes involve legal demands for transfers from the government and other rent-suppliers, which then disproportionately benefit neotribal elites. In addition, lawyers and consultants working for indigenous organizations siphon off a large percentage of these transfers in endless negotiations. These neotribal rentierist processes are evident in all aspects of indigenous politics, especially the legal disputes pertaining to increasing political autonomy, extracting rents from resource development, and obtaining compensation for wrongs committed in the past.

The redefinition of concepts is essential for neotribal rentierist processes because it gives intellectual justification for parallelism, and the additional transfers that this will require. Asserting that indigenous people have “inherent sovereignty”, for example, buttresses the argument that indigenous marginalization is the result of a loss of autonomy. As a result, increasing indigenous political and economic control is perceived as the solution for addressing indigenous marginalization. As the use of the words “cultural genocide” shows, it is taken for granted that indigenous people must obtain transfers of land, resources and political authority in order to live authentic lives in the modern context.

As political science has become more advocacy oriented and supportive of neotribal rentierism, the assertion that indigenous peoples were “nations” with the “intrinsic and inalienable collective right to self-determination” are becoming more prominent. The point first made by Boldt and Long - that “[p]rior to colonization, Indian tribes operated as independent stateless nations, in their own right; not a derived, delegated or transferred right, but one that came into existence

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<sup>92</sup> Boldt and Long, “Tribal Traditions...”, 542

<sup>93</sup> Boldt and Long, “Tribal Traditions...”, 546.

<sup>94</sup> Frances Widdowson, “The Political Economy of Neotribal Rentierism”, Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, May 31-June 2, 2015, <https://cpsa-acsp.ca/documents/conference/2016/Widdowson-Frances.pdf> [accessed May 21, 2019].



with the group itself”<sup>95</sup> – is now stressed more forcefully. Boldt and Long at least noted that the “condition of economic dependence” was a problem for indigenous “sovereignty” declarations, and they used the words “cultural nationalist movement” to avoid encouraging unrealistic parallel aspirations.<sup>96</sup>

Demands for the indigenization/decolonization of political science have completely erased all previous debates about the meaning of concepts. Instead, blatant political arguments about the need to restore indigenous lands and increase control over resources have come to the forefront.<sup>97</sup> This can be seen in Ladner’s work when she maintains that “[i]f reconciliation is going to be meaningful and transformative and not merely a warm fuzzy hug or an apology, then we need to better understand how it is that Canada is going to transform institutionally and constitutionally to address the fact that it exists on someone else’s land”.<sup>98</sup> The purpose of political science must be to “destabilize settler-colonialism” and put into place “an anti-violence, anti-colonial, post-Westphalian system...”.<sup>99</sup> Joyce Green, as well, criticizes reconciliation efforts that do not recognize “the truth of that little land-theft matter”. She approvingly quotes Woolford et al.’s assertion that “[r]estitution for colonial genocide would thus entail returning stolen territories”.<sup>100</sup> She also provides a quotation from Taiaiake Alfred that there should be “massive restitution, including land, financial transfers, and other forms of assistance to compensate for past and continuing injustices”.<sup>101</sup> According to Green, “unless and until the colonial state returns at least some of the land, negotiates shared jurisdiction over resources and tax room and makes other amends, there will be no reconciliation”.<sup>102</sup> This is advocacy for a particular political outcome, not a scholarly examination of how we can increase empirical knowledge and theoretical understanding in political science, and improve how this is taught in introductory courses.

### **Indigenization/Decolonization as a Form of Neotribal Rentierism**

In addition to recognizing how advocacy in the discipline is fueling neotribal rentierism by creating the academic justification for parallelism, it is important to point out that indigenization itself is a form of rent-seeking. As was seen by one of the TRC’s most significant “calls to action”, the recommendation that indigenous knowledge and teaching methods be integrated was followed by the demand for “the funding necessary to accomplish this”.<sup>103</sup> The indigenization/decolonization of political science, therefore, can be seen as a mechanism to increase the resources diverted to those spearheading this initiative.

There are two ways in which indigenization is able to do this – by putting up “barriers to entry” and “tying” indigenization to socially desired goals. These are the same mechanisms that have been extensively discussed by Mwangi S. Kimenyi with respect to academic “specialty

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<sup>95</sup> Boldt and Long, 551.

<sup>96</sup> Boldt and Long, 538.

<sup>97</sup> See, for example, Taiaiake Alfred, “It’s all about the land”, 13 and Glen Coulthard, “Dachinta Bush University: Land-based education and Indigenous resurgence”, in Peter McFarlane and Nicole Schabus (eds), *Whose Land is it Anyway? A Manual for Decolonization* (Vancouver: Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC, 2017), 58.

<sup>98</sup> Ladner, “Taking the Field”, 176.

<sup>99</sup> Ladner, “Taking the Field”, 176.

<sup>100</sup> Woolford et al. 2014, 9 cited in Green, “Enacting Reconciliation”, 3.

<sup>101</sup> Taiaiake Alfred, cited in Coulthard 2014:122, cited in Green, “Enacting Reconciliation”, 10.

<sup>102</sup> Green, “Enacting Reconciliation”, 10.

<sup>103</sup> TRC 2015, 238, cited in *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials*, 3.

programs”, such as ethnic and gender studies.<sup>104</sup> These programs, through racial essentialism and ideology tests, are able to restrict applicants to a particular race or gender. This is reinforced through a process of tying, where programs offer services in addition to developing academic content. By providing these services, they claim that they can reduce conflict on university campuses by improving race relations, helping minorities, and changing sexist attitudes.<sup>105</sup> This makes administrators more disposed to increase resources to these programs.

With respect to the *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials*, the construction of barriers to entry is seen in the criticisms of the “great men” who have dominated political philosophy, and how “indigenous scholars” must be increased within the CPSA. This is what Adam Gaudry and Danielle Lorenz refer to as “inclusion Indigenization”.<sup>106</sup> In this type of indigenization, a person’s identity is stressed, which gives indigenous scholars privileged access to job opportunities in political science. Parallelist arguments also are an aspect of what Gaudry and Lorenz refer to as “reconciliation Indigenization”. This form of indigenization maintains that indigenous people should be hired instead of non-indigenous people in various contexts because they have a “worldview” and “epistemological tradition” that enables them to develop an understanding not accessible to others.<sup>107</sup> *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials*, by conflating advocacy and academic matters, also puts up another barrier to entry by supporting an ideology test that would exclude those who see a developmental difference between indigenous kinship groups and modern nation-states. This is reinforced through the mechanism of tying, which is seen throughout the Reconciliation Committee’s document. By declaring that incorporating *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials* is necessary for reconciliation, as well as increasing empirical knowledge and theoretical understanding, the demand for this content, and the scholars that provide it, is increased.

It is no accident that a significant number of the sources recommended by the *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials* have been authored by the members of the Reconciliation Committee. This enables these academics to use their positions on this body to advance their own careers. By having a group of people continuously referencing one another, the denial of development required by the ideology of parallelism can be given an aura of legitimacy. This completes the rent-seeking circuit.

From looking at *Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials*, therefore, one can see how political science is being used to fuel neotribal rentierism in two ways. First of all, the “worldviews” and “indigenous epistemes” of indigenous scholars like Joyce Green, Kiera Ladner, and Rauna Kuokkanen are used to obscure the meanings of concepts such as the state, sovereignty, nation, government and law so as to make a case for parallelism and increased transfers to indigenous

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<sup>104</sup> Mwangi S. Kimenyi “Rent-Seeking in the Academy: The Political Economy of Specialty Programs”, *Academic Questions*, vol. 5, no. 2 (Spring 1992), 41.

<sup>105</sup> Kimenyi, “Rent-Seeking in the Academy”, 45.

<sup>106</sup> Adam Gaudry and Danielle Lorenz, “Indigenization as inclusion, reconciliation, and decolonization: navigating the different visions for indigenizing the Canadian academy”, *AlterNative*, vol. 14, no.3 (2018), 219-221.

<sup>107</sup> This is referred to by Gaudry and Lorenz as “reconciliation Indigenization”. The work in political science that best represents this kind of indigenization is *Rauna Kuokkanen’s Reshaping the University: Responsibility, Indigenous Epistemes, and the Logic of the Gift*. This work, according to Gaudry and Lorenz “sought to transform the intellectual relationship between the Indigenous and Enlightenment traditions of the academy, envisioning a structural shift to the academy brought about by ‘the gift’ of Indigenous worldviews”. Gaudry and Lorenz, p. 221. The requirement to obtain this “gift”, however, means that a barrier to entry is put up for those who do not possess “indigenous epistemes”.

groups. Second, these members of the CPSA Reconciliation Committee are using their positions to recommend their own work. This means that engaging in reconciliation will result in further diversion of disciplinary resources to parallelism's advocates. While this will increase the stature of a few indigenous academics, it will do nothing to improve the scholarly content of the discipline or improve how it is taught.

*Indigenous Content Syllabus Materials* has been developed and distributed on the basis of political, as opposed to academic, grounds. The main reason given to political scientists is that incorporating these sources within introductory courses will help to address historical injustices and improve relations between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. But recognizing that indigenous people have been treated terribly in Canadian history does not require different meanings to be assigned to concepts or declaring that unsubstantiated beliefs and opinions are "knowledge". These proposals, in fact, will isolate indigenous people further in universities and deprive them of the tools that are needed to improve understanding and make progress in addressing the destructive consequences of settler colonialism.