DECOLONIZING AND INDIGENIZING YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Katie Johnston-Goodstar, MSW, PhD
Assistant Professor of Youth Studies
University of Minnesota School of Social Work
BASIC TERMINOLOGY

• **Decolonization**
  - An *undoing* of colonialism
  - A material, physical, emotional, spiritual, political, intellectual process
  - Decolonization is NOT a metaphor (Tuck & Yang, 2009)
    - Distinct from social justice as a progressive, liberal vision

• **Indigenization**
  - “Involves an intense awareness of Indigenous perspectives and interests, and an acknowledgment that such world views are not continuous with or subordinate to the world views of ‘settler society’”. (Smith, 1999)

  - “The transformation of the existing academy by including Indigenous knowledges, voices, critiques, scholars, students and materials as well as the establishment of physical and epistemic spaces that facilitate the ethical stewardship of a plurality of Indigenous knowledges and practices so thoroughly as to constitute an essential element of the university.” (University of Regina)
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOUR WORK?

• The De-colonial Scholar: research, teaching and service is fundamentally changed

• DECOLONIZE KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS
  • The assumed superiority of Western epistemology, systems of knowledge, values and practices are entrenched our ALL of what we do (Grey & Fook, 2004; Tejada et al, 2003; Smith, 1999)

• DECOLONIZE PEDAGOGIES
  • “Are we unintentionally perpetuating colonialism and hegemony” in the classroom (Razack, 2009)
  • Is elitism and exclusion inherent in the language of our text and articles? (Haug, 2004)

• DECOLONIZE SUBSTANTIVE KNOWLEDGE
  • Youth Development as example…. 
DECOLONIZING YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
Theory of Recapitulation:
THE WHITE MANS BURDEN 2.0

▪ “If adults of other races are like white children, then they must be treated as such-subdued, disciplined, and managed...”
  ▪ Gould, 1977, p. 117

▪ The youth-as-primitive analogy constructed adolescents in the same terms that subject peoples were defined: irrational, conforming, lazy, emotional beings who were totally other from Euroamerican adult men. This colonialist legacy positions youth as naturally separated by the gulf of reason and civilization from adults....
  ▪ Lesko, 1995
CRITICAL DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVES

▪ REJECTS the Youth-As-Primitive argument

▪ REJECTS the colonial impulse to measure what is WRONG with Native youth (damage-centered research submerged social and political contexts, Tuck, 2009)

▪ EMBRACES the multiplicity of youth philosophy and alternative ideologies of the “life course”
  ▪ “The presumption that the development process is reasonably similar across ethnicity, culture, country” is FALSE (Ware & Walsh-Tapiata, 2010)

▪ DEVELOPMENTAL END GOALS????
INDIGENIZING YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

- INTERRUPT the DOMINANT
- UNCOVER INDIGENOUS PHILOSOPHY
- HOLISTIC & CONTEMPORARY
- IDENTIFY BARRIERS
- ENGAGE WITH (not on, not for....)
QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

JOHN1906@UMN.EDU