

Indigenous Futures: What Makes Indigenous Resurgence Possible?

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Abstract

This dissertation is about Indigenous resurgence amongst six First Nations communities in the Nicola Valley, British Columbia. The Nicola Valley is home to both the Syilx and Nl̓eʔkepmx. Drawing from the work of Indigenous theorists, I conceptualize resurgence as the regeneration of an Indigenous cultural system and the simultaneous turning away from relationships that reproduce settler-colonial power dynamics. I investigate the conditions of possibility for resurgence through a theoretically informed empirical study of 1) Indigenous organizations; 2) Indigenous self-help cultures; and 3) Settler and Indigenous thinking about the future. I undertook this study using what I call a resurgent methodology. This methodology takes resurgence as its ethical, epistemological, and analytical standpoint to doing research with Indigenous communities collaboratively. I conducted five years of ethnographic fieldwork in Indigenous organizations and 54 qualitative interviews with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous workers in Indigenous organizations. I argue that *Indigenous resurgence is made possible through the weaving together of different forms, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to create an institutional and cultural infrastructure for resurgence, principally through strategic organizational practices, self-help cultures, and a culture of vision*. This toolkit enables the rebuilding of Indigenous societies. Indigenous communities in the Nicola Valley fuse Indigenous cultures with organizational forms to create resurgence, providing an institutional infrastructure through which Indigenous communities create space and time for their cultural practices, reconnect with the Land, limit whiteness as a credential, transform Indigeneity into a credential, and reject practices that perpetuate settler-colonial power dynamics. Self-help cultures are deployed by communities to reconnect their members with traditional language, spirituality, and culture, enabling the valuable work of rebuilding their worlds. Finally, Indigenous communities in the Valley combine different temporalities, including their own culture of vision with modern time, to create historical cognition or an enhanced awareness of the past and the future that reshapes the capacity for Indigenous agency in the present. This cultural toolkit, comprised of elements from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous sources, makes resurgence possible.

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Chapter 1 Prologue

This dissertation is about Indigenous resurgence amongst both the Syilx and Nl̓eʔkepmx in the Nicola Valley, British Columbia. Though they are different cultural and linguistic groups, in the Nicola, they see themselves as one people. Rebuilding and strengthening this unique connection is central to resurgence. I investigate the conditions of possibility for resurgence by studying Indigenous organizations, Indigenous self-help cultures, and settler and Indigenous thinking about the future. Through their cultural revitalization, Indigenous communities in the Nicola Valley propose unique solutions to many of the contemporary challenges faced not only by other Indigenous communities but also by non-Indigenous communities. But before going further, it is necessary to explain my own positionality and how I relate to and came to study resurgence.

I was born in Thunder Bay, Ontario on Friday March 13th, 1987, at 8:10am via a cesarian section. My father was a miner who spent his life 50 stories underground. Though my mother didn't spend her days trapped beneath rock like my dad, it is an appropriate metaphor for the life of a miner's wife in Northern Ontario in the late-80s. She often tells the story of my arrival in this world. I was born completely covered in thick black fur. As she emerged from a drug-induced stupor she was shocked by this furry child she clutched in her arms. She was assured by the doctor I was a human and her child.

Days earlier, she had been warned by her superstitious mother about the consequences of having a baby on Friday the 13th. For a moment she thought they were real and had come to life. The hair-faded, fell-off, and I was brought back to my first home—Manitouwadge, Ontario. Located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Manitouwadge, I am told, means spirit cave in their language. My father worked at a nickel mine and then at a gold mine. My mom worked for Sears and then as a baker. Both my parents dropped out of school, my father when he was 12 and my mother when she was 15. Both were proudly working-class, supporting unionization and socialist causes.

When I was three, we moved 40 minutes West of Manitouwadge to another small town called Marathon. Throughout my life, my father claimed to be Indigenous or an Indian. He would take us for fishing trips to remote places populated with Indigenous Peoples. My father had many Indigenous friends around these lakes. They were always willing to use their status to

extend our limit of fish, in exchange for beers and fun. I remember one Ojibway woman and her white husband would get excited by my father and family's arrival because it meant their freezer would be stocked with white fish. I became quite good at fishing and knowledgeable about all the lakes and the types of fish we could catch. In the summers we would travel to Southern Ontario and again were welcomed by groups of Indigenous Peoples, but these ones claimed my father.

My dad died when I was 13 years old. If he was still alive, I'd ask him why he thought of himself as Indigenous, though I'd probably say Indian. He has family that is Indigenous, that's obvious. He even had a Métis of Ontario card. But now when I trace his ancestry, I can find no Indigenous lineage, just that the women who married his grandfather, after his mother was born, and gave birth to many of his aunts and uncles, were Algonquin. There is however a baptismal record, on a church registry which is peculiar. My great grandmother was born on the same day that an Algonquin woman, Marianne Baptiste, was married and the priest who was filling out the registry accidentally put the Algonquin woman's name as my great grandmother.

Initially, I was excited by this because I thought it proved what my father had been saying was true. The excitement waned and after some more investigation I realized that it was a mistake. Genealogical records held by my family still claim Marianne as an ancestor. There is no Indigenous ancestry on my father's side, except for those that are related to him through the second and third marriages of his grandfather. Still, even when presented with this data, some of my family members do not accept that they are not Indigenous. My nephew, in Northern Ontario, sees himself as Indian and my cousins, some professionals, still cite themselves that way. It is a belief so deeply embedded in their lives that it is hard to jettison, even when presented with facts to the contrary. It is also one that can be quite self-serving now, even if it wasn't always this way.

I did grow up embedded in this belief too, a context that has had lasting consequences for me and my life. As I grew older, my friends thought of me as 'nish'—a word used to describe Indigenous peoples in Northern Ontario, short for Anishnabek. As I passed into high school most of my friends were from two close-by reserves—Heron Bay and Mobert. These people had no problem with me being gay and the women often stood up for me when I was bullied by non-Indigenous peers. They gladly claimed me and taught me about friendship. I wonder often if being bullied was part of the reason I dropped out of school at 15. When I left my hometown, I kept that piece of my life with me and gladly shared my identity as 'nish' with others.

When I eventually started my undergraduate degree at the age of 25, the politics of academia were somewhat different than those of my high school. Many academics, far too many, claim an Indigenous identity that is not their own, and for a time I was one of them. Though, from my own experience, it is easier than you think for this sort of thing to happen and for this idea to stick to you, especially if it is embedded in your family system the way it was for me. I no-longer claim to be Indigenous, but when I first arrived in the Nicola Valley in British Columbia, there was still much confusion. Community members encouraged me to do my own research and to connect with my own culture if possible. I did, and eventually I shared this story, and subsequent revisions, with them, as new details emerged. They applauded me for having the courage to figure it out and for being honest. They asked me to tell my story and connect it to my research.

When I consider this story and what it means for my research I am presented with my own values and biases. I was raised by my father to think that Indigenous cultures and ways of life were in no way inferior to European cultures, and though it was an identity he could not truly claim, he adapted many Indigenous spiritual beliefs and practices to his life. The context of his youth and childhood stuck to him. He was good at making Indigenous friends. Though he saw many groups with suspicion and prejudice—my childhood best friend was of Mexican background, a fact he hated—he valued Indigenous Peoples and his connection to them.

My connection to Indigenous Peoples, much like my father's, was complicated. It was a complexity that stuck with me and was ultimately the reason I made my way to the Nicola Valley. After doing some research about appropriate field sites for my dissertation I was interested in the mix of people that lived there and how influential Indigenous Peoples had been in constructing institutions and building things. I was also influenced by a professor during my master's at McMaster University—Jeffrey Denis—who did similar work in Northern Ontario. Merritt, the small settler town at the heart of the Nicola Valley, stuck to me, and once it was embedded in me as a thought, I couldn't resist it. I became fascinated by it. Its similarities to my hometown, its potential for connection.

When I arrived in the Nicola Valley I was never greeted by suspicion, usually just confusion. Why Merritt? They would say. People took me on my word about my claim to being Indigenous and they welcomed me into the fold. Two of the first people I encountered would serve as conduits to the six communities and inform much of my research journey.

The first Indigenous person I met was Marilyn Lytton. She was in her 60s at the time and could speak Nl̓eʔkepmxcin. Her mother Elizabeth, a fluent speaker of Nl̓eʔkepmxcin, was turning 100 but was also close to death. I was there for her mother's passing, and eventually a beautiful friendship blossomed between us. I was invited to family functions, and she was the person who brought me to the language class with Mandy Na'Zinek Jimmie, asking her to give me a chance. Mandy is an Nl̓eʔkepmx Elder and language teacher. She worked at the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology and became a Professor of Indigenous Studies at the University of British Columbia working to revitalize her language. The class gave me so much of a push during those first few months in the field and the language filled me with a wonder and a curiosity I have seldom experienced. During our first class I was asked whether Indigenous communities should report their finances to the government. Everyone held their breath. I said of course not, and the air returned to the room.

The second Indigenous person I met was Aaron Sumxheltza. Aaron was the Chief of the Lower Nicola Indian Band and is now the President of the British Columbia NDP. He came to visit me in the dorm I lived in at the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) with Marilyn. NVIT is an Indigenous-run post-secondary institution and I lived with a variety of Indigenous and Sikh people there for almost a year and a half. Sikh people ended-up there because it was cheap. They came as foreign workers for jobs in Sikh-owned local restaurants and gas stations. Merritt was home to a substantial Sikh minority, about 10% of the community.

During our meeting I came to know Aaron as a kind, sensitive, and intelligent man—a former prosecutor for the crown who had been educated at Berkley and UBC. He was now the chief of the Lower Nicola Indian Band. He was working hard to learn his language and coached me on the proper pronunciation of Nl̓eʔkepmx during our first meeting. I still remember his instruction to lick the back of my teeth while I tried to make the 'nl' sound at the beginning of the word. A trick which serves me well to this day. We spoke for hours about what I was looking to do and connected about Canadian politics. After that meeting, he told others I could be trusted, and they began to welcome me to their events and lives.

A few weeks later, through a connection at a local Church, I was asked to go on a car ride with John Chenowith, a Dean at NVIT, and a member of the Upper Nicola Band, to meet his PhD committee at UBC Okanagan. During the long drive he shared so much knowledge with me and so many stories. One was an Okanagan story about how diversity was a good thing. In the

story Coyote had died and an assembled group of friends—Salmon, Bear, Wolf, and Shoe-fly—wrestled with how to bring him back to life. Each of them sang their songs in the hopes Coyote would return. When they arrived at Shoe-fly the other animals doubted him, demanding to know how such a small and insignificant creature could bring the mighty Coyote back to life. As Shoe-fly began to sing his song—John sings the song—Coyote was restored. He asked me what I thought of the story, and I said that you should never count out the underdog. He said that was right. He used this story in his PhD work which looked at the pathways to post-secondary education for Indigenous Peoples who had dropped out of high school.

John also spoke about the future and what he hoped and dreamed for his people in centuries to come. The future wasn't just thought for him, it was a process, one that was actively unfolding in the actions he took to help mature Indigenous students acquire credentials. In these moments the future seemed to enliven the present. Imagining a future or 'having vision' as people often said, was central to their work and their lives. A dear friend Darla Greishaber described it as the most valuable thing a person has to offer. Darla was the secretary at the Coldwater Band School and served her community for many years. Marilyn too spoke about the future, as did Aaron. And though each of them held a different vision, collectively they seemed optimistic about what the future could mean for Indigenous Peoples and were working actively to make it so.

When I arrived at UBC with John, I got to meet his thesis supervisor Jeanette Armstrong, an Nsylix author and intellectual giant, a speaker of Nsyilxcən, German, and English, who has also written about the future. Along with John that day, I also got to meet Sharon McIvor a lawyer from the Lower Nicola Indian Band (Aaron's Band) who fought a case against her own Band and the federal government that essentially led to the end of gender discrimination under the Indian Act in the provisioning of status. While many people took issue with Sharon's brisk nature, they all respected her for her vision and her accomplishments. One Elder described her as "tough as nails." People held complex views on one another, but vision was paramount.

From there I was invited-in to an extent I can't easily articulate. I was shown a generosity and kindness which mirrors so much my experience in high school with my friends from Heron Bay and Mobert. I moved with Marilyn to the Cook's Ferry reserve and then subsequently moved in with her son and his girlfriend. From the language class I met Janice Antoine and Percy

Joe. Percy is the Grand Chief of the Nicola Valley owing to his years of service to the community. Janice was the principal at the Coldwater School. She offered me a job at the school.

I started at the Coldwater School as an education assistant and eventually became a certified teacher. I met Kathy Oppenheim, Randy Gardypie, Traci Lindstrom, Darla Greishaber, so many children and parents, and so many more friends and Elders through my work at the school. Randy worked as a teacher first at the Coldwater Band School then at the Lower Nicola Band School. Kathy, a teacher, and Traci, an education assistant, at the Coldwater Band School. I started to participate more in community functions, and instead of appearing like a stranger, I was a welcomed guest and a friend. People would ask me to speak or to chair meetings and events. At a language conference I was asked to host and organize a talent show. That was a pleasure, and it was so exciting to see Elders and youth speak the language so proudly and with so much joy. It was such a spectacle that for years afterward people still remember me from that event. They remember me screaming like a bird with a 6-year-old in 'a battle of the birds'. The 6-year-old won, but we're still friends and she eventually became my student at the Coldwater School.

My identity was a source of resistance, but coming to terms with it and figuring out who I am and how I fit into this world has helped me understand myself and my research. I do not write as a Syilx or Nl̓eʔkepmx person, but I consider myself their friend, a person who will work hard to help. I know they will do the same for me. Leaders call on me for advice or ask me to prepare them for media interviews.

The trust they have in me came to light after a particular rough bout with my own issues around substance-use and mental illness. I thought for sure I would be fired and asked to leave the community. Instead, an Elder brought me into her office and shook me and said smarten-up and then cried with me and told me she loved me and that I was their problem now.

I was bound to these people. No-matter what, it seemed; even if they saw me as a problem, they saw me as their problem. For someone who always felt different from others, so alone and unstuck, this type of acceptance has been healing. It has helped me to get and stay sober and to clean up parts of my life I had been so ashamed of. It is trite to say, but they gave me hope about the future.

I write this dissertation, not just for myself, but for them, to make an archive of the beautiful things that the Syilx and Nl̓eʔkepmx have shown me and the love that I have found in

this out of the way place. Love has decolonizing potentials, something articulated eloquently by Anishinaabe writer Leanne Simpson (2013). I am reminded of this as I look at old emails from our dear friend Darla, the secretary at the Coldwater Band School who was so patient with me but died in my third year in the field. If tears were a dissertation, it would have long ago been written, a chapter or two penned the day Darla died.

I also write these words because many of the practices and the techniques Indigenous Peoples in the Valley have created are unique and generative, not just for thinking about resurgence, but for thinking about the way we as human beings live. The way they think about the future and orient conversations and teachings to the future is something I believe can serve us all. It is a lesson for people far from the field in which it was encountered. It is difficult for settler society to think beyond itself and to think of the future. Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley build the future into their thoughts. They teach their kids to imagine a future and to imagine a different future and it is through these cognitive techniques about the future that much can be learned by settler societies.

One leader asked me, why we don't teach courses on the future in the university, and it got me wondering, why don't we? He also asked why we don't teach courses on asking good questions. He asked me that day, something he said he pulled from a philosophy book "if the eye were a body, would vision be its soul?" Vision and thinking about the future seem like such practical skills and ones that might help us to shift minds and perspectives and to deal with some of the challenges of our time like climate change. How different would our actions be if we could think more clearly and coherently about the future and our impact upon it?

Chapter 2 Introduction

In April 2019, a group from the Coldwater School traveled 250 km from the Interior of British Columbia to Fort Langley in the lower mainland of BC. The Coldwater School is an Indigenous Band School on the Coldwater Reserve just outside of Merritt, BC. Fort Langley is a national historic site and recreates August 2nd, 1858, the day then Governor of Vancouver Island James Douglas read a Royal Proclamation declaring BC a colony under English rule and law. Our group included four teachers, 22 students, 17 parents, three support staff, and me. A tour guide led us around the park as we witnessed recreations of the seemingly peaceful everyday interactions between Indigenous Peoples and settlers of the Fort in the middle of the 1800s.

I asked one of the teachers, Marilyn, an Nl̓eʔkepmx woman from Cook's Ferry, about the recreation. She responded, "Fort Langley was the trading area of the First Nations Peoples from upriver, from up the Fraser, and they would come and trade with the fur traders, with companies like the Hudson's Bay Company and the American companies. I think it was the place where the government officials came." She continued, "the field trip was about the history of the Fur Trade and in this get-up or this mock-setting, there was this lady. She was a Filipino woman, and she was the tour guide. She was talking about the history of how the Natives interacted with the fur traders." The tour guide, who told us she came from the Philippines, was dressed in the historical clothes of an Indigenous woman who lived at the Fort. Indigenous women of that era often married and had families with European men. These relationships were valuable for traders, offering access to kinship networks and territory.

The tour guide remarked on her visual similarity to an Indigenous woman as an opening to describe her own background and the varied ethnicities present in the Fort both then and now. Her appearance lent an air of credibility to her performance. The teachers had a complicated reaction to the tour guide and her description of the fur trade. One teacher, Randi Gardypi, Saulteaux Cree from Yellow Quill First Nation in Saskatchewan, described the interaction and the tour this way:

I didn't understand what her get-up was, it didn't make sense to me why she was dressed the way she was dressed. When she was talking about the hides and referring to the past and to the history, she was only summarizing certain things. It was like 'Once upon a time'...this happened. It's like 'no'. People still to this day are facing the aftermath of the fur trade and to talk about it in a fantasy or as make-believe or almost a Disney

perspective was [pauses] It upset me. So, I didn't say anything then, but it got to the point where I actually couldn't go in and listen to her talk. It was really upsetting me.

Marilyn's reflections echoed this sentiment "I didn't like the idea of it being a Filipino woman in there talking about our First Nations Peoples and talking about our history. Why couldn't they find a First Nations woman or man to tell our culture?" She continued, "It was like she was telling 'us' what happened to 'us.' I guess I was taken aback. She was just telling it like she knew it, but I had deeper knowledge." Marilyn reflected that she desired a First Nations tour guide, one possessed of the same 'deeper knowledge' she had while Randi found the historical recreation's 'Disney perspective' on the fur trade upsetting.

The tour guide led us through a few more sites while some of the staff took a break to get coffee. We convened at the last stop on the tour, a recreation of what the guide referred to as 'the Big House'. We entered the space as she told us this was the place where James Douglas had read the BC Declaration back in 1858. The teachers and their students arrayed themselves around a table facing a painting about 8 feet wide and 6 feet high. The painting depicted James Douglas reading the Proclamation. In front of Douglas was a small desk and a group of 15 men. After the tour guide finished telling us about the significance of the painting and the names of all but one of the men, a 10-year-old student lifted his hand. When he was called upon, he pointed to the Indigenous figure that the woman omitted from her description and asked, "Who was that?" He continued, "What was his name?" The tour guide responded that she could not answer because "he didn't exist."

Everyone looked around in shock. The student who asked the question smiled and inquisitively said "hmm." Marilyn told me "The picture was of James Douglas and other dignitaries and then there was sort-of, superimposed painting of a First Nations Chief. From my knowledge he was not present at the time of those meetings..." She continues, "Apparently, he didn't exist. He was just sort of a historical figment meant to signify that Indigenous Peoples were present at the beginning of BC." Randi said, "when she was talking about this imagined chief, she was creating a false sense of history, a false sense of what happened." The tour guide clarified that no Indigenous Peoples were present at the reading of the Proclamation but that 'The Chief' had been inserted to represent all the Indigenous Peoples that were present at the Fort at that moment. This framed painting, with this fake chief, purporting to depict how BC began, was fabricated. The students and teachers were presented with an imagined chief meant to signify

that Indigenous people were present at the beginning of BC, when they were not. They were not consulted at all.

Randi, reflecting on the difference between her home in Saskatchewan and BC, then asked the tour guide about treaties, specifically, whether treaties were ever signed in BC. The tour guide said, “there were treaties signed.” This phrase tripped an emotional wire and prompted a third teacher, Kathy, normally a quiet, demure, and reserved woman to react. She got-up off her seat and said “umm, excuse me, actually no, there were not treaties here and if there were, they were blank when they were signed.” Then the tour guide said, “excuse me, actually there were”. A conflict erupted between them, and they went back and forth over the legitimacy of treaties signed in the middle of the 1800s in front of a painting of a fake chief.

The treaties that were signed were blank. Ostensibly so that they could be sent back to England and filled in. However, oral records dispute that the treaties were accurate and reflected what had been discussed and agreed to (Cook et al. 2022). Moreover, the treaties only covered 930 square km of Vancouver Island; the lands of the interior recognized in the Proclamation were excluded. Kathy refused to accept the tour guide’s line that the treaties were legitimate. People from outside our group began to focus attention on the dispute until the tour guide ended the interaction with Kathy by asking “Are there any other questions?” One woman endorsed Kathy’s comment and asked where she could find out more about the treaty process. Those assembled quickly dissolved and began looking through the house.

Over the course of the tour, we had been followed by a family. The father had offered that he was from Pakistan when asked “where are you from” by the tour guide, while the mother, who asked about treaties, had said she was from Connecticut. They had a young son, who appeared about 10, the same age as many of our students. The tour guide asked the young boy if he would like to read the Proclamation. She dressed him up in a recreation of Douglas’s jacket and hat and handed him an old-looking piece of paper. He read through the first few lines and then his mother interrupted and asked him “But why was this wrong?” To which he responded, “Because it wasn’t their land to take and make their own.” And she said “Exactly” to which the tour guide said “well” and shook her head dismissively. Kathy’s public display challenged the authority of the guide to narrate historical truths.

The tour provided a unique opportunity to think about truth and questions of legitimacy and the discontinuities between the histories that frame the lives of settlers and Indigenous Peoples. Randi explained her feelings about the tour this way:

It was like all of the things that you feel when you are growing up, like listening to non-indigenous peoples, they almost minimize the history or create this fantasy where they don't have to be connected to this, to the trauma and the genocide that goes along with the history...as an Indigenous woman I walked in and I was pissed to the point where I couldn't even walk in (both laugh), I had to take myself out of the tour.

Kathy, when asked about the conflict between her and the tour guide, told me "I just wanted to let the kids know that the way they were back then, the treaties, a treaty was signed, but there was nothing written on the paper to say what they agreed to...I just wanted to make sure we had the First Nation's perspective that day."

As Legal Scholar James Sakej Youngblood Henderson, a member of the Chickasaw Nation and Cheyenne Nation, deftly observes of settlers "they do not want to end their colonial fantasies and myths about their own nation or to expose the injustices that have informed the construction of state institutions and practices" (2015, 63). Everything about the tour—the fake chief and the assertion about treaties—felt staged to present a Canada that never existed, one that Kathy refused to endorse or ratify, one that aligns with a colonial fantasy of Indigenous passivity and surrender.

The kids were the subjects of the day and when we returned to the school Marilyn discussed the field trip with them and the issue of treaties. She had a stack of blank papers with a line on them and asked each of the students to sign the blank papers. I asked Marilyn about this, and she said, "Oh yeah, giving up their possessions (laughs) to show them how it feels to sign something that they don't understand and tell them later what it means." She continues, "it teaches them that you cannot trust everything that someone tells you. You have to think about it. You have to ask questions about it. Read about it." While Marilyn transformed the experience into a lesson about information literacy and injustice, in our discussions afterward the students were most proud of Kathy's intervention. She was beloved by each one of them and seeing her stand up meant something to them.

Recognition or Resurgence?

The tour guide's narrative about treaties and the Big House portraiture attributes a type of passivity to Indigenous Peoples in British Columbia while also denying and erasing their agency, presence, and history. Sociologists have turned a keen eye toward studying these types of interactions by considering both the social processes that create them as well as the cultural pathways that address and transform them. Harvard Professor and Quebecois sociologist Michèle Lamont and her co-authors in *Getting Respect* (2016) argue that incidents like this involve forms of stigmatization and discrimination. Stigmatization includes “a wide range of subjective experiences (Lamont, Silva, et al. 2016 pp. 6)” of disrespect as well as challenges to dignity, honour, relative status, or sense of self. It occurs when a discreditable attribute is assigned to a group or individual (Goffman 1963). This attribution may lead to forms of overt discrimination like social exclusion, marginalization, or loss of status, but it does not have to (Lamont, Silva, et al. 2016). All forms of discrimination involve stigma, but not all stigmas lead to discrimination.

The background for the interaction at Fort Langley is settler-colonialism (Tuck & Yang 2012; Veracini 2010; Wolfe 2006; Wolfe 1998). Settler-colonialism is the process of people who are non-Indigenous to a territory claiming Indigenous Lands and building their own institutions, organizations, and polities upon those Lands while stigmatizing, excluding, and discriminating against Indigenous Peoples. The occupation by settlers is continuous and ongoing and results in either the full elimination of Indigenous Peoples or a significant reduction of their population, power, and cultural systems (Wolfe 2006). Settler-colonialism can be overtly genocidal (Wolfe 2006), segregationist, or predicated on tolerance, multiculturalism, and recognition (Coulthard 2014). It creates social and symbolic boundaries between Indigenous Peoples and non-indigenous Peoples. Social boundaries are “objectified forms of social difference” manifest “in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities (Lamont & Molnar 2002 pp. 168)” while symbolic boundaries are “the lines that include and define some people, groups, and things while excluding others (Lamont, Pendergrass, & Pachucki 2015 pp. 15341).” The recreation of history at Fort Langley narrates events in a way that justifies the continued occupation of Indigenous Lands and existing social boundaries. It excludes Indigenous Peoples, both their presence and perspective, from everyday life and upholds symbolic boundaries between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples, paradoxically, by falsely including them in historical events from which they were excluded.

While acts of stigmatization and discrimination are enabled by the broader social and historical context of settler-colonialism, so too are the responses that individuals and groups have at their disposal to challenge them. For Lamont, these are problems of cultural membership that can be addressed through destigmatization, “the process by which low-status groups gain recognition and worth in society” (2018 pp. 420). The hope of destigmatization for Lamont (2018) is the transformation of the value of marginalized groups so they can become members of society through the ratification of new systems of meaning.

Lamont’s work builds an empirical case to compliment several theoretical interventions drawing on the Hegelian framework of recognition. These include Charles Taylor’s (1994) “The Politics of Recognition” where he argues that the affirmation of cultural differences in multicultural societies can create social solidarity and collective justice. Similarly, in *The Struggle for Recognition*, Axel Honneth (1996) contends that acts of recognition are at the root of what it means to be human and can help to solve conflict and form the basis for a modern morality. In her essay “Rethinking Recognition”, Nancy Fraser (2000) challenges the perspective of Taylor and Honneth by examining how social inequities shape the capacity to recognize and be recognized. While the events at Fort Langley may be intelligible through the framework of stigmatization and discrimination as expressions of settler-colonialism, and ultimately misrecognition, I am unconvinced that the desires of Kathy, Randy, or Marilyn in their responses that day were primarily for recognition or cultural membership.

Indigenous intellectuals have expressed skepticism at the capacity of recognition-based frameworks to reshape Indigenous-settler relations in contemporary Canada. In his masterful work *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, Dene scholar Glen Sean Coulthard (2014) argues that the politics of recognition “refer to the now expansive range of recognition-based models of liberal pluralism that seek to ‘reconcile’ Indigenous assertions of nationhood with settler-state sovereignty via accommodation of Indigenous identity (2014 pp. 3).” For Coulthard, drawing on the work of Afro-Caribbean Scholar Frantz Fanon, recognition of Indigenous Peoples, cultures, and nations always occurs within an asymmetrical relation of power, owing to settler-colonialism and, because of this, gives outsized power to settlers to determine not only the worth of Indigenous Peoples but also the shape, form, and substance of their identity claims and societal membership. Through acts of recognition, settlers have the power to decide who Indigenous Peoples are and what aspects of their peoplehood are

permissible and acknowledged. Coulthard calls on Indigenous peoples and communities to reject the one-sided politics of recognition in favour of self-recognition and community empowerment.

While Coulthard is speaking of recognition at the political and institutional level, these larger forms of recognition are also made possible by smaller-scale moments, like those exhibited by the tour guide and the school. If the events that day are not only about recognition or membership, then how can we make sense of them? The context of Kathy's response is a much larger social process, one that seeks to regenerate Indigenous cultural systems, not just to gain recognition or membership in Canadian society, but to recover what has been lost. Indigenous theorists call this process resurgence. Kathy, Randy, and Marilyn as well as organizations like the Coldwater School are agents of resurgence. This dissertation is about resurgence and how it is made possible amongst the Nl̓eʔkepmx and Syilx of the Nicola Valley as an alternative to the politics of recognition, social movements, decolonization, and reconciliation.

When Kathy spoke up that day, her interest was not in having the tour guide accept her narrative or see her as a member of Canada. In her own words, she was concerned about the kids and “wanted to make sure we had the First Nation's perspective that day.” Kathy was not solely interested in the meaning of Indigenous Peoples to external constituents, to the outside group, but principally about their meaning for community members within, for the Indigenous Peoples and especially children—recognition and affirmation directed at themselves.

I do not want to draw a categorical distinction between recognition and resurgence. What Kathy did that day encompasses an attempt at recognition and self-recognition. Recognition and resurgence are not mutually exclusive (Borrows & Tully 2018). Indeed, the resurgent rebuilding of vibrant and dynamic cultures may be the context for deeper recognition. However, through my years of teaching with Kathy, Randi, and Marilyn, it is apparent that their primary interest is in rebuilding and restoring Indigenous cultures in the Valley. They do this both by increasing the supply side of cultural knowledge for their students but also by turning away from colonial practices like the one exhibited in the Historical recreation that day to a focus on the feelings, perceptions, and power within their own communities. Their desire is not solely for recognition but for resurgence.

Debating Resurgence

The Nicola Valley is the largest Valley in the interior of BC. It is home to six First Nations bands—one Syilx band and five Nl̓eʔkepmx bands. The Nl̓eʔkepmx bands are the Lower Nicola Indian Band, The Coldwater Indian Band, Nooiatch, Shackan, and Cook's Ferry. The Syilx Band is the Upper Nicola Indian Band. Even though they are descended from two distinct linguistic groups, with different cultures and customs, these communities have a rich history of working collectively, often viewing themselves as a single people. The Valley is the site of a regeneration of Indigenous cultural systems or what Indigenous theorists term resurgence.

Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred (2009) speaks of resurgence as a journey. He writes, it is “a living commitment to meaningful change in our lives and to transforming society by recreating our existences, regenerating our cultures, and surging against the forces that keep us bound to our colonial past” (Alfred 2009 pp. 19). Mississauga Nishnaabeg Scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2011; 2017) articulates resurgence in similar terms to Alfred. Simpson (2017) begins *As We Have Always Done* by recounting the story of making maps with Elders in Northern Ontario, maps of their traditional territories and resources. Simpson uses mapping as a metaphor for the network of relations that Elders carry as cognitive schemas and feelings with affinities to place. She wonders what the map of her relations looks like or what the maps of the next generations will look like in comparison to the maps of those Elders. Simpson writes:

Years later, when I would begin thinking and writing about Indigenous resurgence as a set of practices through which the regeneration and reestablishment of Indigenous nations could be achieved, the seeds those Elders planted in me would start to grow with a strong feeling, more than thinking, that the intellectual and theoretical home of resurgence had to come from within Indigenous thought systems, intelligence systems that are continually generated in relationship to place (2017 pp. 17).

Simpson uses the Anishinaabemowin word *Biiskabiyang* to explain resurgence. *Biiskabiyang* means “the process of returning to ourselves, a reengagement with the things we have left behind, a re-emergence, an unfolding from the inside out (2017 pp. 17).” An unfolding from the inside out is a provocative metaphor. It tunes us to the Indigenous thinking at the heart of resurgence, not as something that desires recognition from an outside force but as something which is generated from within.

Ojibwe scholar Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark makes a brilliant contribution to the literature on resurgence in the introduction to the edited collection *Indigenous Resurgence in the*

Age of Reconciliation (Stark, Craft, & Aiku 2023). Stark offers guidance on the pitfalls and traps that Indigenous communities fall into when conducting the grounded work of revitalizing “their language, culture, and political practices” (Stark 2023 pp. 3). One trap that the volume identifies is framing resurgence as either *utopic* or *essentializing*. According to Stark, scholars have dismissed resurgence by saying it is focused on an unreachable future or that it locks Indigenous Peoples into an anachronistic and unchanging past. This framing of resurgence ignores the work being done by Indigenous communities.

Another key theme for Stark concerns the relationship between reconciliation and resurgence. Stark writes “in the wake of the proliferation of scholarship focusing on reconciliation (and sometimes resurgence), which often centres the voices of non-Indigenous scholars, there is an assumption that space must be shared equally between Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars” (2023 pp. 3). She offers powerfully that her vision, and that of her co-authors, is to offer space to articulate the challenges Indigenous Peoples and communities face around resurgence while “mapping the gaps and limits of both reconciliation *and* resurgence” (Stark 2023 pp 3). One important trap that my research points toward is that descriptions of resurgence often fail to consider the importance that non-Indigenous cultural forms play in resurgence. By non-Indigenous cultural forms, I mean how Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley combine their own culture with cultural repertoires like self-help and models like those used to construct organizations. On the ground, resurgence is occurring through the creation of diverse cultural toolkits.

It is through my time in the Valley with people like Randy, Kathy, and Marilyn and my work at the Coldwater Band School as a teacher and the Nicola Valley as a First Nations language student that I began to think about the process of resurgence and how it was playing out in the everyday lives of Indigenous Peoples and settlers in the Nicola Valley. Everyday acts of resurgence have been identified by Cherokee scholar Jeffrey Corntassel (2012) and they were meaning starting place for my investigation. In what follows I articulate how scholars conceptualize resurgence as a process distinct from decolonization and reconciliation. I consider five key debates about it. These include: the role of Land in resurgence, resurgence and reconciliation, resurgence and refusal, the scale of resurgence, and whiteness and resurgence. After this, I turn to the contributions of the dissertation and then in the conclusion to this chapter I consider how my empirical study of resurgence speaks to these key debates.

1) Land and Resurgence

Resurgence encompasses restoring Indigenous relationships to the Land but is differentiated from the project of repatriating Land which Indigenous theorists conceptualize as decolonization (Tuck & Yang 2012). Central to resurgence is the connection between Land, language, and Indigenous life (Simpson 2011). In Indigenous knowledge systems, words and concepts acquire their meaning in relation to place. Simpson (2011) writes about taking the concept *Biiskabiyang* home to find out what it meant in her context from Elders and Knowledge Keepers. This relates to the work of Syilx intellectual Jeannette Armstrong (2016) who offers that for the Salishan Peoples the Land contains language. For Armstrong, Salishan languages are how groups like the Syilx and Nl̓eʔkepmx have interpreted the Land. Resurgence then will be as differentiated as the Lands that give rise to its need and expression. One theme across theorizations of resurgence and allied processes like decolonization is the centrality of Land. However, decolonization and resurgence are different processes and relate to the Land in different ways.

Simpson emphasizes resurgence through place-based practices or what she terms grounded normativity. The concept of grounded normativity originates from the work of Glen Coulthard (2014) but has been elaborated by Simpson (2017). Simpson defines grounded normativity as encompassing the “ethical frameworks generated by...place-based practices and associated knowledges” (2017 pp. 22). The works of Coulthard and Simpson are useful for thinking through resurgence as the regeneration of a cultural system in context. Simpson’s intervention is helpful as she reflects on this regeneration as inseparable from place and place-based ethical practices especially those which suffuse Indigenous languages. The Land is central to resurgence. A process related to the Land and sometimes conflated with resurgence is decolonization.

In their “Decolonization is not a Metaphor” Unanga̓ scholar Eve Tuck and Asian American scholar K. Wayne Yang (2012) decry that decolonization has become a metaphor for social and human rights initiatives meant to improve settler society. However, they argue, that decolonization for Indigenous Peoples is more than just Indigenous inclusion in the settler-state as another specific ethnic group or class. Decolonization must confront the very mechanism through which settler-colonialism operates, the theft of the Land, and therefore must involve the return of Indigenous Land to make Indigenous life possible. Anything short of this renders decolonization a metaphor, another settler-colonial move to innocence. They write “when

metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the very possibility of decolonization; it recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future” (2012 pp. 3). The proposed eradication of Indigenous Peoples began with and was accomplished through the theft of Land. The regeneration and rebuilding of Indigenous cultures requires Land and relationships to place.¹ Unlike resurgence, decolonization is the explicit project of returning Land to Indigenous communities.

The return of Land is the act with the greatest potential to dismantle the genocidal structures built by settlers. If decolonization as a project was and is about the return of Indigenous Lands from the settlers who claim them, then resurgence is both dependent and independent of this project. Resurgence as a project may occur alongside the return of Land. The return of Land will certainly make resurgence possible, but resurgence itself is constituted by a rebuilding and regeneration from within and a turning away from settler-colonial relations of power. If decolonization is *the return of Land*, then resurgence is *the return to Land*. As the work of Armstrong (2016), Simpson (2011; 2017), and Coulthard (2014) make clear, Indigenous communities are deeply connected to the Land, but the work of resurgence is broader than efforts at decolonization. Resurgence does encompass a restoration of the way Indigenous Peoples relate to the Land and the vibrancy of their place-based practices, but it also must encompass ways of getting well as a people and imagining a future through *returning to the Land*.

2) Reconciliation and Resurgence

If resurgence is differentiated from the project of decolonization, it is also fundamentally a different project than reconciliation. In their book *Resurgence and Reconciliation: Indigenous-Settler Relations and Earth Teachings*, settler scholar Michael Asch, Chippewa legal scholar John Borrows, and settler scholar James Tully address the differentiated meaning of the concepts of reconciliation and resurgence. They write “reconciliation and resurgence have become ways

¹ If resurgence requires Land then what are we to make of Indigenous urban societies which have in many ways been forcibly dislocated from their territories and then forced to experience social exclusion in urban contexts? Evelyn Peters and Chris Andersen (2014) provided a partial answer to this in their edited collection on urban Indigeneity. They proffer that we should not view urban centres as disconnected from the Land. They are, after all, Indigenous territory. Moreover, Indigenous Peoples have home territories, and though they may be disconnected from them they still exist. Finally, the land question in BC has often resulted in urban territory being given to First Nations and sites being transferred to other urban Indigenous communities. The Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil Waututh through their joint land development agency are the largest land holders and developers in the Lower-Mainland (Sanchez 2020). How might the housing crisis in Canada look different if urban lands were transferred to Indigenous communities both Urban and otherwise?

of describing the field of activities, relationships, and possible futures between Indigenous and settler people” (2018 pp. 1). Reconciliation is a multivalent term with conceptualizations ranging from ongoing relationality between Indigenous Peoples and settlers to the continued colonial subordination of Indigenous Peoples by settlers (Tully and Burrows 2018).² While reconciliation may change settler actions toward Indigenous Peoples, it is a process internal to settler societies, where settlers come to terms with our actions and the actions of our ancestors. Reconciliation may enable resurgence, by transforming the actions of settlers and the relationship between settlers and Indigenous Peoples, perhaps through the return of Land to Indigenous communities, but it also may constrain and undermine resurgence.

Resurgence is as polysemous as reconciliation. Tully and Borrows write “resurgence is often used to refer to Indigenous peoples exercising powers of self-determination outside of state structures and paradigms...deployed by communities as a force for reclaiming and reconnecting with traditional territories by means of Indigenous ways of knowing and being” (2018 pp. 4). Tully and Borrows offer that some practitioners of resurgence outright reject reconciliation as assimilative and colonizing while others take a more nuanced approach. They describe two pathways, ‘separate resurgence’ and ‘resurgence and reconciliation’ and argue that the continued polarization between the two is harmful to Indigenous communities. Their provocative intervention is grounded in an analysis of cases of resurgence and reconciliation. They consider the nuanced way both projects unfold while acknowledging that sometimes the best alternative to engaging with settler societies may be refusal.

While I agree with Asch, Burrows, and Tully that reconciliation and resurgence are compatible in certain circumstances, I emphasize how they are two different projects and have two different loci. Resurgence emerges within the context of Indigenous communities while reconciliation emerges within the context of settler society. Resurgence work is the work and responsibility of Indigenous Peoples and communities. Reconciliation work is the responsibility and work of settlers and settler society. Though Indigenous Peoples may make contributions to reconciliation, just as non-Indigenous peoples may make contributions to resurgence, reconciliation is ultimately a project that emerges from settler society. I don’t want to draw a

² The concept of reconciliation has evolving as well. This is, in part, the result of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Comissions and their final report (2015) but also the recognition by settler governments of the need to create a new relationship with Indigenous Peoples.

binary between these two projects. Both are multi-layered. Well-meaning people may have ancestry in both categories and must position themselves between these two projects in complex and nuanced ways. Both have tangible impacts on the way Indigenous Peoples and settlers come to live together and build shared futures, but they have separate centres. Further, there may be serious psychological consequences for Indigenous peoples if they accept reconciliation uncritically.

For Indigenous Peoples, turning away from settler-colonial forms of recognition, like reconciliation, and toward self-recognition can have positive consequences for the psychological well-being of Indigenous communities and may even make resurgence possible (Coulthard 2007; Coulthard 2014). Glen Coulthard (2007) demonstrates how settler-colonialism operates through colonial relationships of recognition. That settler governments and societies are empowered to grant Indigenous Peoples specific rights, on their own Land, through a politics of recognition, reproduces “the very configurations of power that Indigenous Peoples’ demands for recognition have historically sought to transcend” (Coulthard 2007 pp. 439). If reconciliation seeks to position Indigenous Peoples within the settler state as another ethnic group, then it is ultimately another path toward assimilation. Could it be something more than this? The locus of reconciliation must be within settler-communities. As settlers we must engage in a politics of self-recognition and come to terms with our treatment of Indigenous Peoples and alter our behaviours and actions, by dismantling genocidal structures and returning Lands to Indigenous communities. If reconciliation accomplishes this version of self-recognition for settler society, then it may lead to forms of decolonization and perhaps even resurgence.

Reconciliation is a process of self-recognition where we as settlers come to terms with how the social relations and structures that we built and benefit from were and are genocidal, centring Whiteness while destroying the conditions of Indigenous life, most centrally through theft of Land. Therefore, reconciliation is a type of accounting or bookkeeping of the different sides of a genocide that creates a common narrative and frame about what happened, why it happened, and what it means. Its goal is to remove settler moves to innocence. If it is successful, then there is only one action we can take, decolonization. While certain forms of settler self-recognition may be helpful to Indigenous Peoples, others may reproduce uncritically settler moves to innocence (Tuck & Yang 2012). Resurgence gives Indigenous communities the capacity to decide the type of settler reconciliation they recognize or refuse, shifting the

asymmetrical balance of power with settlers. Resurgence is aimed at self-affirmation and self-recognition for Indigenous Peoples rather than settler-colonial recognition and is distinct from the project of reconciliation.

3) Refusal and Resurgence

If resurgence is a different project than either reconciliation or decolonization, then refusal for Indigenous theorists articulates one of the ways Indigenous communities undergoing resurgence, engage with, or do not engage with, these competing projects and settler-colonial institutions. Mohawk Scholar Audra Simpson offers that refusal is a “political alternative to *recognition*” and “the much sought-after and presumed ‘good’ of multicultural politics” (2014 pp. 11). She writes “refusal comes with the requirement of having one’s political sovereignty acknowledged and upheld and raises the question of legitimacy for those who are usually in the position of recognizing” (2014 pp. 11). Refusal, for Simpson, encompasses both the capacity to say no to so-called gifts bestowed by the settler state like citizenship but also to say no to “membership and belonging within the state” (2014 pp. 12). For Simpson, refusal is an alternative to the politics of recognition, but it doesn’t have to be solely at the level of the state.

Refusal also encompasses a range of interactional strategies that Indigenous Peoples and communities can deploy when engaging with both settler individuals and institutions. Kathy’s interaction with the tour guide should be read as a political refusal where she declines to allow Indigenous Peoples to be labelled and stigmatized according to a logic of erasure. Refusal may allow for a differential relationship with the state, but it can also create new forms of self-affirmation and self-recognition compatible with resurgence. By not allowing the state to determine the conditions of possibility for areas of Indigenous life, like the Land or language, refusal affords communities the capacity to embark upon resurgent activities and undertakings, the type of folding-in articulated so eloquently by Leanne Simpson (2017) and others.

Refusal as an alternative to recognition extends beyond statist politics or interactional strategies to interactions with researchers and the University as a settler-colonial project. Eve Tuck and K Wayne Yang (2014) articulate refusal as a generative stance in the research process where Indigenous communities are empowered to say no. They write “the goal of refusal is not for objects to become subjects in the academy, but contrarily, to object to the very processes of objectification/subjection, the making of possessors and possessions, the alchemy of becoming

claims” (Tuck and Yang 2014 pp. 811). They offer a guide for Indigenous communities on how to refuse and for researchers about how to read refusal. For the researchers, this means also refusing the impulse to study people and instead to study institutions and power.

Refusal encompasses the capacity to say no to forms of decolonization that do not involve the return of Land to Indigenous communities and the capacity to say no to forms of reconciliation that do not create a common narrative about the genocidal process of settler-colonization. For resurgence, refusal encompasses a turning away from the state which allows for certain domains of Indigenous life to become the domains of Indigenous communities themselves without the intervention of the state or settler publics—what is often called self-determination by Indigenous theorists (Corntassel 2012; Tully and Burrows 2018). The state has intervened in almost every aspect of Indigenous life. It intervened in language and culture, as well as the very conditions of survival, through the residential school system. It intervenes in the family through the child welfare system. It intervenes in the conditions of the Land through resource extractive projects. It intervenes in the political and governance structures through the Indian Act. Refusal is a strategy for Indigenous peoples to turn away from these interventions and to shield parts of their being so they might heal and so that resurgence can become possible.

4) Scale and Resurgence

Resurgence is a *scale-making project*. For American anthropologist Anna Tsing (2005), scale is both a unit of analysis for scholars and a way that publics come to think about the social and material world. A scale-making project is one that creates a new way of imagining the scale of events and actions. For Tsing, both globalization and climate change are scale-making projects where publics come to imagine a radically new scale of both human and non-human interaction. However, while globalization as a scale-making project creates an emergent global dimensionality, resurgence invokes a radical locality, and conjures a microscale of human and non-human affairs. Leanne Simpson articulates resurgence as an everyday process that “can be a force for dramatic change in the face of the overwhelming domination of the settler colonial state, particularly on microscales” (2017 pp. 192). As a scale-making project, resurgence summons different temporal, social, and spatial orders.

For Indigenous theorists the process of resurgence emerges from the political context of settler-colonialism. Cherokee scholar Jeff Corntassel and Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred

(2005) write “Indigenouness is an identity constructed, shaped and lived in the politicized context of contemporary colonialism” (pp. 597). For Cornthassel and Alfred resurgence begins with the body. They write “ultimately important for the struggle for freedom is the reconstitution of our sick and weakened physical bodies and community relationships accomplished through our return to the natural sources of food and the active, hard-working, physical lives lived by our ancestors” (Cornthassel and Alfred pp. 613). Similarly, for Simpson (2017), resurgence begins with living in one’s body and imagining the body as a political order uncoupled from statist politics. Resurgence creates a new scale for imagining the political struggle against settler-colonization, one that invokes the body as a political order and begins at the interstices of the body and other systems, including the political and food system.

As an Indigenous woman, Audra Simpson (2016) offers that her body threatens the sovereignty of the settler state. The bodies of Indigenous Peoples, especially the bodies of Indigenous women, have been the subject of settler-colonization and genocide (Glen 2014; Simpson 2016). Settler sexual violence against Indigenous women was and, in many respects, remains effectively decriminalized by the Canadian state. On the possibility of societal transformation, Simpson writes “we first have to survive in order to escape” (Simpson 2017 pp 118). By reconfiguring politics at a micro-scale, at the scale of the body, Simpson delivers a politics that echoes Foucault’s (1976) writing on biopower but in a life-affirming way, as a radical counter politics that stands against the state as a life-negating political structure. For the cultures of Indigenous Peoples to live so too must their bodies.

While the bodies of Indigenous Peoples are one site of Indigenous resurgence so too are the past and the future. As mentioned previously, Leanne Simpson (2017) begins *As We have Always Done* by imagining the cognitive schemas of Indigenous Elders, particularly in relationship to the Land. She wonders what her schema will look like in relation to those of her ancestors or of generations to come. She connects the political order of her body to an emergent relationship of space and time encoded in Indigenous worldviews. Simpson (2017) writes “my ancestors are not in the past” she continues “the spiritual world does not exist in some mystical realm...these forces and beings are right here beside me—inspiring, loving, and caring for me in each moment and compelling me to do the same” (pp. 192-193). She argues that this intersection of the past and “those yet unborn...continuously give birth to my Indigenous Present” (Simpson 2017 pp. 193) and articulates a “spatial construction of time” that is radically encoded in the

Indigenous cultural systems she has inherited from her ancestors. Powerfully, she exclaims “everyday embodiment is therefore a mechanism for ancient beginnings” (Simpson 2017 pp. 193). Simpson’s intervention articulates resurgence as a scale-making project that positions the survival of Indigenous bodies as central to building a new order of space and time, one where an Indigenous past and future are embedded and embodied in an Indigenous present.

5) *Whiteness and Resurgence*

There is a place for *white people* in resurgence, but there is no place for *Whiteness* in resurgence. McDermott and Ferguson (2022) define Whiteness as “a racial category” and a “social structure that privileges whites as a dominant group” (pp. 258). While I agree that Whiteness is a structure and a category, the power and operation of Whiteness is disguised by a *culture* that normalizes white supremacy and marks non-white groups as deviant. Therefore, whiteness operates as a form of hegemony, a relationship of power between whites and non-whites, that is covered up and disguised through culture through symbolic domination by the white racial group (Emirbayer and Desmond 2009). Hegemony also operates within the category of whiteness to obfuscate white supremacy through the ascription of privilege to poor white racial groups, marking them unfairly as the root of ongoing mistreatment of Indigenous Peoples while neglecting the pervasive structures which do the heavy lifting of colonization and racial inequality. Whiteness intersects with class, gender, and other identities and operates as a type of privilege or what Victor Ray (2019) calls a credential. Paradoxically, this emphasis on privilege can stigmatize poor whites, coded as rednecks or white trash, as they are often “seen as deserving of greater contempt than the poor who are not white” (McDermott and Fergusson 2022 pp. 252). Poor whites may also be viewed as the responsible agent for ongoing racial prejudice, a scapegoat for racial structures created by an elite whose economic system also disadvantages poor whites and is the root cause of racial inequality. If Whiteness operates to normalize the white racial identity and white supremacy, then resurgence acts to normalize Indigeneity and reconstitute it as a viable way of life in opposition to Whiteness.

Indigenous Studies problematizes Whiteness, offering that its alleged superiority and normalcy is constituted in opposition to the so-called primitivism and inferiority of Indigenous Peoples (Moreton-Robinson 2004 pp. 84). Whiteness becomes synonymous with the nation as the dispossession of Indigenous Lands inaugurates the sovereignty of the white settler population

(Moreton-Robinson 2008). McKay, Vinyeta, and Norgaard (2020) propose a reciprocal relationship between settler-colonialism, Land dispossession, white supremacy, and racism. Dispossessed Land became the power base for the white racial group in settler-colonial countries and this manifests in the creation of a racial formation that disadvantages not just Indigenous Peoples but Black people and other racial minorities. Evelyn Nakano Glenn (2015) contends that settler-colonialism is not just a racial project but inaugurates an intersectional structure as a race-gender project that normalizes not only Whiteness but white masculinity. Within settler-colonialism, Whiteness becomes a genocidal structure that disproportionately targets Indigenous women. Resurgence deconstructs the cultural inferiority that Whiteness levies upon Indigenous Peoples by examining how Whiteness as a structure was inaugurated through and abetted by the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous Lands and by reconfiguring Women within both Indigenous and settler-societies.

If the relationship between Whiteness and Indigeneity is one of racial domination and ascribed categorical inferiority, it is also ultimately a relationship of possession where the white racial group takes ownership not only over Indigenous Lands but of their lives and cultures. Quandamooka scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2015) argues that the settler-colonialism operates through a white-possessive logic where the nation is viewed as white property. The relationship between the white nation in settler-colonial societies and other racial groups is constituted by a logic of ownership and control. Therefore, the risk of involving white people in resurgence is that this logic of ownership and control endemic to Whiteness might alter fundamentally Indigenous cultures in a way that disadvantages Indigeneity.

Keenly aware of this possibility, Indigenous theorists like Leanne Simpson (2017) have expressed the need to decenter whiteness in resurgence work through the example she sees practiced by her Elders. She writes “I got a strong sense from [these Elders] that our intellectual systems are our responsibilities, that they are an extension of our bodies and an expression of our freedom” (Simpson 2017 pp. 17). Simpson continues “there was no room in their Nishnaabeg world for the desire to be recognized and affirmed by the colonizer...there was no room in their Nishnaabeg world to accommodate or center whiteness” (2017 pp. 17). The world of her Elders “didn’t recognize or endlessly accommodate whiteness, it didn’t accept the inevitability of capitalism,” their world “was a disruption to the hierarchy of heteropatriarchy” (Simpson 2017 pp. 17). Therefore, resurgence takes as its conceptual starting place not an opposition to

Whiteness, as this would recentre the very conditions resurgence attempts to undo, but an affirmation of Indigeneity.

Studying Resurgence

Building on these important debates and grounded in my own empirical analysis of data collected in the Nicola Valley, I define resurgence as the regeneration of a cultural system endogenous to a community or social group with a collective experience of loss and the simultaneous turning away from practices that subordinate the group to majority societies. I differentiate resurgence from decolonization and reconciliation. Resurgence is not directed at external actors through claims making as in social movements (Della Porta 2013; Tilly & Tarrow 2006; Tilly 1986). It does not seek to transform the external structures of meaning of the group for society (Alexander 2006; Alexander & Smith 2001). Nor does resurgence long for recognition or destigmatization (Lamont 2018). Social movements and societal change may be by-products of the process of resurgence or even its catalyst, but they are not its goal.

While Indigenous theorists like Coulthard, Simpson, Cornthassel, and Alfred lay the groundwork for this study, I move beyond their exhortations by developing sociological research methods for studying resurgence as a social process within a community context and describing it empirically. This study is informed by Indigenous theory principles and takes seriously the research methods and theoretical interventions of Indigenous intellectuals. These Indigenous systems of thought have much to offer sociology and their integration alongside sociological methods and theory enriches our discipline. However, this relationship flows both ways, with sociology offering much to my own thinking about the process of resurgence, its study, and its ongoing unfolding.

This dissertation is an empirical description of resurgence grounded in the experiences of the Nicola Valley and the work of the Syilx and Nl̓eʔkepmx. If resurgence is the regeneration of a cultural system endogenous to a community or social group with a collective experience of loss, then what makes it possible? This is the central question of my dissertation. Asking questions about the possibility of a social process is influenced by the work of Uruguayan social theorist Gabriel Abend (2022). Abend differentiates between possibility and probability. While probability allows us to know the certainty of an outcome, possibility allows us to get at the conditions that enable or constrain a social process or phenomenon. Abend urges us to examine

the enablers, the things that contribute to an outcome, not simply the probability of its occurrence. Drawing on my fieldwork in the Nicola Valley, the central argument of this dissertation focuses on the conditions of possibility for resurgence or the infrastructure that make Indigenous resurgence possible. I argue that *Indigenous resurgence is made possible through the weaving together of different forms, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to create an institutional and cultural infrastructure for resurgence, principally through strategic organizational practices, self-help cultures, and a culture of vision.*

I use the language of possibility rather than probability in this dissertation for two connected reasons. The first, as mentioned earlier, is that probability gets at the likelihood of an outcome whereas possibility gets at the conditions that create or generate an outcome. While there are ways to measure resurgence, through increases in language fluency and cultural knowledge that would be compatible with probabilistic ways of knowing, and I have pointed to some of these indicators in the dissertation, what I am more interested in are the enablers of this outcome or the conditions of its possibility. The second reason for using the language of possibility rather than probability is to highlight the idiosyncratic and textured quality of resurgent processes across different contexts. Resurgence will be as nuanced as the Indigenous Peoples undergoing it. Probability will only tell us if resurgence happens, possibility tells us how it happens with an emphasis on this specific contexts and conditions of its possibility which in this dissertation deal with the Nicola Valley. While I think it is a meaningful starting place to think about resurgence elsewhere, it will be the work of further scholarship to locate the enablers of it in other contexts.

I have chosen the concept *weaving* to describe the mixing of Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural forms and repertoires to make resurgence possible in the Nicola Valley. However, this is an English translation of an Nl̓eʔkepmxcin word *syəm* which means twisting to make cling. It shares its root with the Nsyilxcin word ‘yil’ found in their collective noun Syilx. Initially, I had intended to use the concept ‘hybrid’. However, hybrid itself comes with much cultural baggage in post-colonial theory (Kraidy 2002; Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin 1998). Descended originally from the practice of animal husbandry, hybridity was used by scholars like Homi Bhabha (2015) to describe the emancipatory potential that globalization has for reshaping culture. However, scholars have criticized the tendency for *hybridity* to point toward an anterior purity and to overlook the power relations in which cultural mixing occurs. These tensions

caused me to go back to my community peer reviewers and ask them for an appropriate concept. They suggested *syəm*. The idea of twisting to stick together speaks not only to the act of bringing difference together usefully, but also the need to change or twist non-Indigenous forms to cling to Indigenous culture. This concept gets at the conscious awareness that the communities have of the power relations involved in the process of cultural weaving and their need twist non-Indigenous cultures to suit their needs and turn away from these relations of power. The result of *syəm* or weaving are strong ropes used in almost every aspect of Nl̓eʔkepmx life—from food preparation, to hunting, and fishing.

The three substantive chapters of my dissertation (chapters 4-6) each explore one of the key conditions of possibility for Indigenous resurgence in the Nicola Valley that have surfaced in my analysis of my fieldwork. To set the stage for that analysis, in chapter 3 I address the question of how research methods can make Indigenous resurgence possible. Drawing on the work of Indigenous theorists and my own experiences in the field, I develop an ethical, epistemological, and analytical stance to doing research with Indigenous communities that I call a resurgent methodology. A resurgent methodology strives to make cultural regeneration possible and takes resurgence as its ethical, epistemological, and analytical standpoint. Several of my research practices were developed collaboratively and transformed how I think about resurgence. I realized research involves *the exchange of legitimate authority* between researcher and researched and that this is not unlike a treaty-making process. Together, I exchange my authority as a sociologist with the legitimacy of Indigenous communities to create a representation useful to them in their resurgence work. Another innovation is that Indigenous Peoples, particularly Elders, can serve as powerful reviewers for Indigenous research through a process I call *Indigenous peer review*. Having Elders listen to me read my research and collecting their commentary fundamentally altered my data collection and findings. This is an example of a relational strategy, but it is not the only one we developed together. Another is a process I call *collaborative live transcription*. My recording device made some Indigenous participants shy and reserved, so I turned off the recorder and instead transcribed their answers and read them back to them, making changes as we went along. This created an ease and comfort, an intelligibility and utility, that fundamentally transformed my research and allowed for the emergence of what I term *resurgent respect*. The goal of my research is to encourage the conditions of possibility for resurgence, and this happens by developing a different way of doing

research. I hope these methodological innovations might be generative for sociological research beyond the confines of the Nicola Valley or Indigenous communities.

How do Indigenous communities build organizations and develop organizational practices to rebuild and regenerate their cultural systems? Chapter 4 responds to this question by examining the strategies and organizational practices that Indigenous communities use to create space and time for cultural regeneration. This chapter responds to an “organization gap” in theories of resurgence and an “Indigenous gap” in sociologies of organization. By bringing these two literatures into conversation, I offer an empirical description of how Indigenous Peoples combine non-Indigenous organizational forms with their traditional cultures to enhance Indigenous agency by 1) making space and time for Indigenous knowledges, 2) limiting whiteness as a credential, 3) making Indigeneity into a credential, and 4) rejecting practices that perpetuate settler-colonialism. The weaving together of non-Indigenous organizational models with traditional practices and Indigenous languages enhances Indigenous agency and makes resurgence possible.

How do Indigenous communities use self-help culture to reconvert community members back to traditional spirituality, language, and culture? Chapter 5 answers this question through the story of my dear friend Darla Greishaber. Darla was the secretary at the Coldwater School. Central to her life was a commitment to self-help culture and a devotion to a self-help seminar called Choices developed by self-help icon Dr. Phil’s father Joe McGraw, Texas businesswoman Thelma Box and, later, by Dr. Phil himself. Beginning in the 1980s, Choices became popular amongst Indigenous Peoples in British Columbia particularly by those in the Nicola Valley. I tell the story of the value courses like Choices and other self-help techniques have had for Indigenous Peoples. Through interview data this chapter examines the talk about self-help in the Valley with some participants opposing it as colonial, others arguing that Indigenous cultures offer tools for self-help, and still more seeing self-help as central to reconnecting to their own spirituality, language, and culture.

How do Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples think about the future? The penultimate chapter of this dissertation replies to this question by considering the future projections of Indigenous and non-Indigenous workers in Indigenous organizations. The starting place for this chapter is a unique and recognized culture amongst the Nlë?kepmx which centers on the future and discussion of the future, what I call a culture of vision. I analyze how this culture of vision is

expressed through the future projections of my participants. Indigenous Peoples in my study project themselves much further (223 years on average) than their non-Indigenous counterparts (22.2 years on average). Indigenous future projections also tend to focus on themes of social and cultural change, where Indigenous communities are conceptualized as having agency to enact a different future. Non-Indigenous participants tend to project themselves much closer in time and reflect on their families, property, and career. When non-Indigenous participants do conceptualize social or cultural change in their future projections, it is change brought about by Indigenous communities. Through their culture of vision, Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley claim sovereignty over their temporality and break from what I call the empty time of settlers. Through this culture of vision Indigenous Peoples enact a type of historical cognition, that drawing on the work of Walter Benjamin, I call *messianic time*.

In the conclusion to the dissertation, I consider the limitations and applicability of the study. The dissertation offers much in terms of how different cultural elements, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are combined by Indigenous Peoples to create resurgence. However, to what extent can the lessons about cultural and social change specific to the experience of the Syilx and Nl̓eʔkepmx be explored in other contexts, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. While I do not claim that I have offered a recipe for social and cultural change across marginalized groups, I do offer that a resurgent methodology might be an important way of studying cultural regeneration across contexts and that scholarship might attend to the role of authority, organizations, temporality, and self-help in cultural regeneration.

Final thoughts

One of the overriding themes of this dissertation is the way that Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures are brought together to make resurgence possible. This weaving of different cultural forms is found in combining Indigenous and sociological research methods to create a resurgent methodology; combining non-Indigenous organizational models with Indigenous culture to enhance Indigenous agency; combining self-help culture with traditional language, culture, and spirituality; and finally in combining different temporalities into an emergent Indigenous present. In this spirit, I bring together both Indigenous and non-Indigenous theorists to create a theoretico-empirical analysis of Indigenous resurgence. This mirrors the work of Indigenous theorist Glen Sean Coulthard who brought together traditional Land-based practices of the Dene

with the theorizations of Franz Fanon to reconstruct Marxism and analyze the settler-colonial politics of recognition. I contribute to the relationship between resurgence and the Land, reconciliation, refusal, scale, and Whiteness.

While the Land remains central to the description I offer of resurgence, the relationship between Indigenous communities and place is mediated by organizations and self-help culture. Indigenous communities create organizations to facilitate Land-based practices. Most of the Land-based practices I participated in and observed ethnographically were organized by Indigenous organizations like the Coldwater School and the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology. Indigenous organizations make time and space for Land-based practices like gathering traditional plants and medicine. Self-help culture like the Choices seminar often leads Indigenous members to reconvert back to their traditional spirituality, language, and culture, and this allows for Indigenous Peoples to reconnect with the Land.

I affirm the analytic and political value of differentiating resurgence from reconciliation. Reconciliation is a project of self-recognition for settlers to come to terms with how our actions and the actions of our ancestors have abetted Indigenous genocide and appropriated Indigenous Lands. The hope of this self-recognition is to eliminate settler moves to innocence. Many of the people doing work within Indigenous organizations are non-Indigenous and so Indigenous organizations may contribute to this process of self-recognition for settler workers. Within Indigenous organizations, non-Indigenous workers must come to terms with the history of settler-colonialism as these spaces tend to center Indigenous narratives of settler-colonialism and decenter whiteness. This leads some white workers to view themselves as stigmatized victims in Indigenous majority spaces but leads others to develop a deeper understanding of the structure of settler-colonialism and understand their role in it. Those who can accept this narrative countering settler supremacy stay in their position while those who are unable to accept it, leave.

Refusal also emerges as a theme in my research. As I tried to position myself in relation to the field, I made a list of different organizations that I wanted to work with. While most of these organizations were open to my presence and work, one organization which initially agreed to participate subsequently refused. In this moment, refusal became a generative component of my research. It made me realize that my research depended upon developing a type of relationality with Indigenous communities and organizations where we exchange legitimate

authority that was open to revision and the possibility of refusal for Indigenous organizations and participants.

The dissertation also contributes to debates about scale in Indigenous theories of resurgence. While Simpson offers that resurgence happens at a microscale, I emphasize the role of meso-level factors. Most of the work being done in the Nicola Valley that makes resurgence possible is done in the context of organizations. By building organizations, Indigenous communities build the infrastructure for resurgence. They allow for Indigenous peoples to decolonize their diets by connecting them to the Land and providing them with traditional foods; to reclaim their language by providing training in Nsyilxcin and Nl̓eʔkepmxcin; and by funding the participation of Indigenous Peoples in self-help programs like Choices. This emergent meso-level is an important place to look for and create resurgence.

Finally, this dissertation contributes to our understanding of the relationship between resurgence and Whiteness. While Indigenous theorists like Simpson (2017) call for Indigenous communities to decenter Whiteness, I identify concrete actions that Indigenous communities take to make Whiteness peripheral to resurgence. Indigenous organizations limit the capacity of Whiteness to act as a credential. Non-Indigenous organizational cultures in North America tend to normalize the white racial identity (Ray 2020), credentialing Whiteness by giving whites a special status based solely on their racial identity and disadvantaging Indigenous Peoples. Whites are viewed as automatically competent, superior, and normal, while Indigenous peoples are viewed as incompetent, inferior, and deviant. In contrast, Indigenous organizations limit the agency of whites through organizational practices that invert these credentialing processes. Whites are not viewed automatically as incompetent, inferior, or deviant but are required to prove themselves by developing what staff members term cultural competencies. Similarly, Indigenous organizations transform Indigeneity into a credential. Indigenous organizations validate Indigenous lived experiences and knowledges of cultural practices and languages as a form of cultural capital. Within Indigenous organizations, Indigenous cultural capital functions as a sort of credential both formally and informally and this credential is something that can be acquired by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples.

This dissertation investigates the combination of Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures to create resurgence. Indigenous communities in the Nicola Valley combine different cultural elements, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to create a cultural toolkit for rebuilding their

societies and surging against the overwhelming force of settler-colonialism. In the chapters that follow, I trace this strategy of weaving across three parts of the life world. Organizations fuse Indigenous cultures with modern organizational forms to create Indigenous resurgence, providing an institutional infrastructure through which Indigenous communities create space and time for their cultural practices, reconnect with the Land, limit whiteness as a credential, and transform Indigeneity into a credential. Self-help cultures are deployed by communities to reconnect community members with traditional language, spirituality, and culture. This creates the conditions for people to do the valuable work of rebuilding their cultures. Finally, Indigenous communities combine different temporalities, including their own culture of vision with modern time, to create historical cognition or an enhanced awareness of the past and the future that reshapes the capacity for agency in the present. This cultural toolkit, comprised of elements from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous sources, makes resurgence possible.

Chapter 3 Resurgent Methodologies: How does research make resurgence possible?

Introduction

This chapter seeks to answer the question of how academic research can facilitate Indigenous resurgence. Drawing on the work of Indigenous theorists and my own experiences in the field, this chapter develops an ethical, epistemological, and analytical stance to doing research with Indigenous communities. I call this approach a resurgent methodology. Methodologies are theories of knowledge production that take an ethical stance on the research process. A resurgent methodology strives to make cultural regeneration possible and takes resurgence as its ethical, epistemological, and analytical standpoint.

A resurgent methodology is consistent with and meant to support Indigenous methodologies. Indigenous theorists offer powerful critiques of ongoing academic imperialism in Indigenous communities (Smith 1999; Geniusz 2009). As a response, Indigenous researchers have developed sophisticated principles (Kovach 2018), paradigms (Wilson 2008), and practices (Hunt 2018; Geniusz 2009) meant to transform Indigenous research. Saulteaux Plains Cree scholar Margaret Kovach (2018) refers to these principles, paradigms, and practices collectively as Indigenous methodologies. Indigenous methodologies are grounded in the place-based practices of Indigenous communities and acknowledge the legitimate authority of Indigenous communities to make choices about their own representation. A resurgent methodology is grounded in these place-based practices and the legitimate authority of the communities undergoing the process of resurgence.

Métis scholar Adam Gaudry suggests the emergence of Indigenous methodologies “is motivated by grassroots-academic collaborations that resituate Indigenous interests and values in an otherwise alienating research process (pp. 243).” He cites Indigenous methodologies as part of a “broader movement of Indigenous resurgence and decolonization” that challenges colonialism’s “ideological underpinnings, working from within Indigenous frameworks to reimagine the world by putting Indigenous ideals into practice (pp. 244).” Indigenous methodologies are part of the process of resurgence this study aims to enable and understand. Resurgence is therefore something to be studied as well as something to be enacted, an ethic as well as an analytical object. I set out to think about resurgence both as an object of investigation

and a methodology—an ethical, epistemological, and analytical stance to doing research with Indigenous Peoples and communities.

To be aligned with resurgence, the authority of the researcher must flow from the Indigenous communities they work *with* not just from the academy in which the researcher is situated. The researcher must therefore balance a complex political economy of legitimacy. Indigenous communities are now empowered in a way they historically were not. They, to a much greater extent than ever before, can decide what gets known about them, who comes to know it, and how this knowledge is shared. This is different from the historical relationship between researchers and Indigenous communities, which often placed outsized power in the hands of the researcher (Deloria 1969). Resurgent methodologies express a new ethic of respect that goes beyond how respect is normally articulated in applications to research ethics boards. *Resurgent respect* entails an exchange of legitimate authority between Indigenous communities and researchers. This begins with the researcher becoming embedded in the Indigenous cultural system they set out to represent and building relationships with the community and its members. These relationships form the basis for resurgent methodologies by enabling community reflexivity about how the community is being represented in the research.

In the past, researchers claimed authority at the expense of Indigenous communities, alienating them from the research process while reducing their members to informants or, worse, archives without agency reporting on their dying cultures (Deloria 1969; Wolfe 1999). Researchers did this to gain legitimacy within their often-parochial academic fields. A resurgent methodology combines different forms of authority to make claims intelligible to multiple fields and publics—both indigenous and non-Indigenous—and offers a new form of representation grounded in the legitimacy that flows from the authority of Indigenous communities. This process of exchange of authority constitutes respect in resurgent research and inverts the hierarchy that once placed researchers above Indigenous communities.

This is not to say that research by non-Indigenous academics, no-matter how well-meaning, is necessary for Indigenous resurgence. It is not. The point is to examine how research can interact with Indigenous resurgence to either interrupt it or contribute to the conditions of its possibility. It would be naïve to say that non-Indigenous academics can make no contribution to Indigenous resurgence. We can pool our legitimacy and authority, through alliances and research agreements, with Indigenous Peoples to change the public perception of Indigenous

resurgence. The first step in this process is creating methodological tools and resurgent methodologies that enable rather than hinder resurgence.³

By reckoning with both the extractive past of academic practice and the complex intelligence systems already existing and in operation amongst the Syilx and Nle?kepmx, I hope to demonstrate a relational, responsible, and reciprocal ethic, one that listens to the Land and to participants. This is research enmeshed within and mediated by exchanges of legitimate authority between communities and me as a researcher that is ultimately grounded in relationships. In what follows, I begin by theorizing legitimate authority and then by bringing Indigenous theorists into conversation with post-structuralism, to develop further the idea of resurgent methodologies, before turning to the context of the study. I then show how the methodology informs my data collection methods and data analysis.

Legitimate Authority

What I have offered so far shares much in common with the impulses of both participatory action research and community-based research to “give voice” to research contributors. In community-based research, researchers “form partnerships *with* community members to identify issues of local importance, develop ways of studying them, collect and interpret data, and take action on the resulting knowledge” (Smith et al. 2010 pp. 407-408). In participatory action research, “local community members become active agents in analyzing and redressing the effects of oppression and violence within [their] community” (Williams and Lykes 2003 pp. 287). These approaches challenge the authoritative voice of the researcher. Researchers have historically erased or misrepresented the experiences of subjugated people. Participatory action and community-based research challenges this erasure and misrepresentation by instead allowing these groups to speak for themselves.

While I agree with the critique underlying these movements and am sympathetic to these projects, I begin from the proposition that I have an independent analytical voice and though the research is derived from the experiences of my participants, I have combined and analyzed them to create something distinct from those experiences. I am empowered to speak about these experiences through an exchange of legitimate authority with the community members,

³ Research in many areas of the social world would benefit profoundly from deploying Indigenous methodologies and thinking about how authority and legitimacy shape representation.

Knowledge Keepers, and the Elders of the communities with whom I work. This is mediated by the relationships that I have established with the communities and community members. This exchange happens through the sharing of my research results with these groups.

One of the central insights I offer from the process of conducting this research is that research with Indigenous Peoples involves the exchange of legitimate authority. To exchange legitimate authority means to deal in what Pierre Bourdieu (1989, 2014) calls symbolic power or "the capacity to impose classifications and meanings as legitimate" (Swartz 2013). Through their exercise of symbolic power, researchers have played an outsized role in shaping the meaning of Indigenous Peoples and the sense that publics and politics have about Indigenous communities.⁴ These include, but are not limited to, notions that Indigenous Peoples are savage, that they require civilization, that they are expressions of an anachronistic and dying culture, that their cultures are inferior, etc. Indigenous Peoples and their allies in the academy will no longer allow researchers to produce these forms of knowledges uncritically. Through transformations in economies of legitimacy, Indigenous communities increasingly exercise symbolic power over their own representation.

In the ideal form of this new balance of power, the researcher, through their work, must be empowered by the community to represent the community. This can occur through formal letters of support, as it did for me, or informal arrangements. For this to be possible, Indigenous Peoples and researchers must be active agents in exchanges of knowledge, as the sender and receiver of knowledge. Both Indigenous communities and researchers must think about and reflect on what knowledges are exchanged. Research must occur through relationships and must be built on accountability between communities and researchers as well as the exchange of knowledges (Wilson 2008). This aligns with the values of both the Syilx and Nl̓eʔkepmx who view certain forms of knowledge as sacred and control the circumstances under which they are exchanged.

⁴ Wendy Wickwire's (2018) ethnography of Nl̓eʔkepmx resistance provides strong evidence of the link between academics and governments but also strong indications of the role academics can play in resisting settler-colonialism through alliances with Indigenous Peoples. Waldram and Dyck (1993) also provide evidence of the role anthropology has played in public policy affecting Indigenous communities.

Resurgent Methodologies

A resurgent methodology is responsive to communities and predicated on an ethical commitment by researchers to the process of cultural regeneration from within Indigenous thought systems. In the case of my research, a resurgent methodology is consistent with the principles and practices of Indigenous methodologies, deployed to study the process of resurgence and takes resurgence as its ethic. Resurgent methodologies are necessitated by the role conventional Western research has played in harming Indigenous communities. I consider the literature on the damage wrought by conventional research before turning to the promise and possibility of Indigenous methodologies.

Resurgence itself is a multifarious concept and as varied as the communities experiencing it. The methods deployed to study it must be as equally idiosyncratic. Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Simpson defines resurgence as “a set of practices through which the regeneration and reestablishment of Indigenous nations could be achieved” that comes “from within Indigenous thought systems, intelligence systems that are continually generated in relationship to place” (2017 pp. 16). As my thinking grew, I realized that while the concept of resurgence applied to the Nicola Valley, the concept of *nationhood*, used to define the object of resurgence, was inappropriate to their experiences.

While Indigenous Peoples in the Valley, both Syilx and Nl̓eʔkepmx, belong to what they term a nation, their relationship was one of common peoplehood across national, linguistic, and cultural boundaries. They speak different languages, practice different customs, identify as part of different nations and yet, somehow, see themselves as one people. For the People of the Nicola, the reestablishment and rearticulation of this common bond was critical to resurgence and it meant deconstructing the discourse of nationhood commonly affixed to Indigenous communities. Research on resurgence in the Nicola Valley had to consider this unique relationship. Both academics and governments had failed to view them as one and as a result had done them harm. Governments separated and segregated them artificially into different bands. Academics defined and described their cultures inaccurately.

This is an expression of a long and troubling history of researchers imposing ideas onto Indigenous communities that don't reflect their lived experiences. Ngāti Awa scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) extends anti-colonial critiques first articulated by Edward Said (1978) and Frantz Fanon (1952) to the experiences of Indigenous Peoples and communities in her

landmark *Decolonizing Methodologies*. Smith describes the power relations inherent in the research process that both necessitate new paradigms but also disguise and cover-up the realities and power imbalances to which Indigenous lives are subjected. She argues that the prevailing methodological orthodoxy of the academy rests upon and reinforces an imperialism that undermines Indigenous Peoples.

The supremacy of certain ways of knowing and producing knowledge—usually bourgeois and European—have disenfranchised subaltern knowledge systems and invalidated them through what Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (2001) calls hegemony. Hegemony exists when culture disguises a relation of power. Academic culture has covered up, disguised, and disenfranchised Indigenous Peoples by invalidating their knowledge systems, marking them as inferior and antiquated. Their supposed anachronism, in turn, justified and justifies the appropriation of their Lands, bodies, and spirits. Indigenous and post-colonial critiques of research methods, alongside Indigenous methodologies, offer insight into the consequences of flawed research, but they also offer the possibility of creating better research relationships with Indigenous communities and unlocking the promise of research for Indigenous Peoples.

In her critique of research on Indigenous communities, Kovach (2018) builds upon the work of Smith to argue that the Western gaze has led to flawed representations and perceptions of Indigenous Peoples and, in turn, created faulty politics and policies affecting Indigenous communities. Kovach offers Indigenous methodologies as an alternative and corrective to conventional Western research methods. Indigenous methodologies are responsive and responsible to the communities they represent (Kovach 2018). They involve explorations of identity, vulnerability, restitution, and an openness to awakenings.

Kovach joins a chorus of methodologists who challenge the prevailing hegemony of Western epistemologies and who create new ways to represent the lived experiences of subaltern peoples (Hunt 2018; Wilson 2008; Smith 1999; Spivak 1988). Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson emphasizes that research must shift from being done *about* Indigenous perspectives to being done *from* Indigenous paradigms (2001; 2008). For Wilson, paradigms are the beliefs that guide our actions as researchers. Research on Indigenous matters has often neglected or misrecognized the beliefs of Indigenous Peoples and has caused harm to Indigenous communities. Partly, as a response, Indigenous Peoples have created tools or paradigms to reconstitute the research process in line with their cultural systems. It is important to note that

Indigenous Peoples have always had research, long before colonial encounters began.⁵

An example of an Indigenous research paradigm comes from Cree and Métis Scholar Wendy Makoons Geniusz. In her book *Our Knowledge is not Primitive*, Geniusz (2009) echoes the important work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith in examining how Indigenous knowledges were and are colonized and levies this critique as a first step in developing what she calls *Biskaabiiyang Methodologies*. The word *Biskaabiiyang*⁶ comes from the Seven Generations Educational Institute and the work of Indigenous scholars and Elders who were part of the school's Masters of Indigenous Thought Program in 2003. According to Geniusz, *Biskaabiiyang* means returning to ourselves (2009 pp. 9). Geniusz examines "the colonization of botanical *anishinaabe-gikendaasowin* (anishinaabe knowledge) and suggests ways that this information can be decolonized, reclaimed, and made useful to programs revitalizing anishinaabe language and culture" (2009 pp. 3). Geniusz observes that many community members working toward resurgence were drawing upon colonized Indigenous knowledges, knowledges created by western 'experts' who often had very limited knowledge of Anishinaabe language and culture. Not only is the language of these texts degrading to Indigenous Peoples but it is also woefully inaccurate and may be deadly if it led peoples to consume poisonous plants. A *Biskaabiiyang* methodology begins by examining the way in which Anishinaabe language and culture are colonized and how this colonization has affected the Anishinaabe researcher themselves. The researcher returns to *Anishinaabe-inaadiziwin* (Anishinaabe psychology and way of being) to reclaim *Anishinaabe-gikendaasowin* (Anishinaabe knowledge). Here Geniusz offers both a powerful critique of colonization and a valuable way forward for Indigenous knowledge systems, one that decentres Whiteness and recentres Indigeneity.

Another example of an Indigenous research paradigm comes from Kwagiulth scholar Sarah Hunt (2018) who deploys the Potlatch custom of witnessing as a method to understand violence in Indigenous communities. The Potlatch is a feast where elites distribute gifts. It is practiced by the Coastal Salish peoples and acts as both an economic system and a governance

⁵ Indigenous Peoples had techniques for group information about the Land, geography, geology, and Indigenous societies and one way they collated and collected this information is through vivid stories. One of these stories is described in the sixth chapter of this dissertation. These are research methodologies that predate Contact.

⁶ This concept is the same one Leanne Simpson (2017) uses for resurgence, mentioned in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, and it is from Geniusz, in the context of the Institute, that Simpson first learnt of it (Simpson 2011; Ritzer & Stepnisky 2018 pp. 722). However, the definitions here diverge as they come from different cultural contexts. Simpson (2011) tells the story of bringing the concept back to her Elders to find out what it meant in her territory.

institution. The exchange of gifts constitutes relations of power as legitimate and creates solidarity that allows for the exercise of authority. During the Potlatch, witnesses are enlisted to observe and carry with them a narrative record of the event, the exchange of gifts, and the exchange of legitimate authority by participants.

Witnessing in Hunt's (2018) work sensitizes her to the power relations inherent in the research process. She draws on the writings of Gayatri Spivak (1988) to offer that the role of the researcher is to make visible and audible those whose voices are often ignored or unheard. It is not that the subaltern cannot speak, Hunt opines, but that their speech is rendered unintelligible by the institutional background in which academics are ensnared. She writes "witnessing, then, might be understood as a methodology in which we are obligated, through a set of relational responsibilities, to ensure frameworks of representation allow for the lives that we have witnessed to be made visible" (Hunt 2018 pp. 268). Hunt (2018), Kovach (2018), and Wilson (2001) offer powerful insights about researching from an Indigenous paradigm that rest upon a critique of the dominant systems of knowledge production (Smith 1999) and how they are inculcated in networks of power and oppression that undermine and disenfranchise Indigenous voices.

If the post-colonial critique of research on Indigenous Peoples emphasizes that these relationships have been extractive and deeply damaging to Indigenous communities, then the promise of Indigenous methodologies is the transformation of these relationships. Is it possible for academic culture to empower Indigenous knowledge systems without appropriating them?

The answer is yes, but with a caveat. The balance is tenuous. Non-Indigenous academics must figure out how to work with communities and build lifelong relationships. The days of the academic who dives into a community for a few weeks to write a salacious account of community life never to be heard from again are over. Research with Indigenous communities involves exchanges of legitimate authority. Community feedback must be handled with the same humility and diligence that we as academics afford peer review. The results of these Indigenous peer-reviews can be good for both non-Indigenous researchers and Indigenous communities.

Through my relationships with Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley and through their willingness to work with me, to provide critique and feedback, I have come to understand that research for them is a meaningful action and a powerful resource. They engaged in research long before colonial Contact. Gatherings are, for the Syilx and Nl̓eʔkepmx, both a research event and

a political (and social) event. Through oration, people exchange competing viewpoints and come to a collective understanding on issues as diverse as conflict, resources, criminality, and the future. Research, in the conventional academic sense, offers new ways of thinking about Indigenous communities and Indigenous lives, ways that these communities find valuable, useful, and interesting. Research can be a powerful enabler of resurgence if it is done correctly.

Methodology

The post-colonial critique and the responses and correctives offered by Indigenous intellectuals point to a renewed focus on methodology. The distinction between method and methodology is meaningful. A method is a system and process through which knowledge is produced. A methodology is a theory about knowledge production that considers the axiological commitments or the value orientation of a method. The ethical commitment of my research framework is to further the process of resurgence. The ontological and epistemological stance is derived from post-structuralist and Indigenous critiques of knowledge production.

Epistemologies are theories about knowledge, how we come to know, and how researchers ratify our knowledge as valid and differentiate it from other forms of knowledge. If epistemologies ratify knowledge, then ontologies are what we ratify, what is said to exist, and therefore to be knowable.⁷

Two approaches that dominate the social sciences, but that are often pitted against one another as conceptual opposites, are objectivism and constructionism. According to Kovach (2018) objectivism is an epistemology that asserts a reality independent of consciousness, whereas constructionism maintains that there is no objective reality and instead knowledge arises from our conscious engagement with the world around us. For Kovach, Indigenous epistemologies are an alternative to these two positions. Instead of viewing objective reality and consciousness as separate, Indigenous communities view them as part of a single whole. In a position Kovach calls holism, the spiritual and physical realms are seen as dual and continuous. Writing from an Indigenous perspective, Rieger et al. (2020) note that “knowledge is known to be rooted in a both/and perspective rather than an either/or perspective, and as such, each

⁷ These are highly idiosyncratic descriptions of method, methodology, and epistemology. They are strongly influenced by the work of Gilles Deleuze (2008) in his *The Logic of Sense*. For more about the work of Gilles Deleuze and his approach to method, methodology, epistemology and ontology see Williams (2013) and Somers-Hall (2013).

worldview is respected as a legitimate source of understanding” (pp. 3). Holism may not be a universal position held by all indigenous societies but is widely recognized across many Indigenous worldviews including amongst both the Syilx and Nl̓eʔkepmx⁸.

In post-structuralism, holism and the unity of reality and consciousness too prevail. Post-structuralism is a literary, sociological, and philosophical movement that argues that meaning systems, both objective structures and subjective consciousness, are not stable, fixed, or separable (McCormick 2007). In *Différence et répétition* (1968) French philosopher Gilles Deleuze asserts that philosophical understandings of existence that separate reality from consciousness are inaccurate. For Deleuze, the basis of reality is the universal process of differentiation, the process of becoming different. Differentiation takes place within a single whole of univocal being. Our minds, to simplify this complex reality, impose identities and concepts onto it, mistaking sameness for difference. Our understanding of reality is a pixelation or a trace. It simplifies something too complex for us to contain by foisting ideas upon it. Deleuze's transcendental empiricism collapses epistemology and ontology, treating knowledge and the world as intertwined parts of a whole, with *the event* as the ontological and epistemological subunit of reality. Consciousness for Deleuze is a trace, a differential of the event but also a component of it. This differential becomes the basis for our engagement with the world. The Deleuzian post-structural approach attempts to equalize consciousness and objective reality by viewing them as interacting components of a singular open system, while also emphasizing the instability and flux of concepts and identities.

While Deleuzian post-structuralism and the Indigenous worldviews outlined by Kovach share a commitment to holism, major differences exist. One salient difference is their concern for ethics. Indigenous methodologists like Kovach go much further than post-structuralists in emphasizing the ethical commitments of research necessitated by the disproportionate role academics have played in the process of colonization. Importantly, Indigenous ethical principles are based in the normative commitments Indigenous communities have developed over millennia through place-based practices.

⁸ To my knowledge, holism and its relation to Syilx and Nl̓eʔkepmx have not been formally documented in any texts, but holism is a word some Elders use to describe their language and its use accords with the descriptions of Verne Ray (1939) and James Teit (1989; 1900).

In the case of Indigenous communities, for research to be resurgent, it must be useful, intelligible, reciprocal, respectful, and relational. In my work, resurgence is what Charles Taylor (1989) calls a ‘good’. A good is a central ideal against which other ideals can be judged to determine their superiority, inferiority, proximity, or distance. Therefore, when we think about each of the principles of this methodology—utility, intelligibility, reciprocity, respect, relationality—and how they play out in the research process, we account for them by asking, to what extent do they further the process of resurgence, or to what extent do they further the regeneration of the Nłeʔkepmx and Syilx cultural system(s)? Drawing on the work of Indigenous scholars such as Kovach, Wilson, Hunt, and Smith, here are the principles that make my research possible:

- Research must be useful. Utility implies that the research is something Indigenous communities would like to know about and that can offer something to them. Elders told me directly when something was useful and when it was not. This system of thoughtful feedback and critique between myself and community members became a sort of Indigenous or Elder peer-review and one of the most powerful research practices I deployed. When I coded knowledge, I seldom coded it alone, but in conversation with a whole community of local thinkers.
- Research must be intelligible. To be intelligible, research findings must not be obfuscated from participating communities and must be made accessible to them. This means sharing results and findings as they emerge through processes like Elder or Indigenous peer-review sessions, but it also means communicating research concisely and in language that people can understand. While a committee of Elders oversaw my research and provided feedback on my proposal, I will also return to share my dissertation results with the community through public events.
- Research must be reciprocal. Reciprocity implies that the research process does not simply take from Indigenous communities but offers something in return. This can be done by the researcher through acts of service like my four years teaching at the Coldwater School.
- Research must be respectful. Respect is seeing people the way they want to be seen. It is a form of mutual recognition that dwells in the complexity of everyday life. Resurgent respect is engaging in the exchange of legitimate authority between

community and researcher while acknowledging the symbolic power the researcher possesses to shape the meaning of Indigenous Peoples and communities. This involves giving people control over their representations by sharing interview transcripts, by having research products reviewed by community members prior to publication, and co-publication with community members. All interview transcripts were shared with participants both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. They were invited to provide feedback and clarification though none ever did.

- Finally, research must be relational. Relationality is a way of thinking about research and the world more generally as a process that unfolds through relationships. Relationality is central to what Kovach (2018) calls Indigenous epistemologies. In centering relationships, I realize the research process is the result not just of my own thinking, but a complex of connections through which I move and articulate shared thoughts.

Can the Land speak?

An Indigenous epistemology is a relational way of knowing that is derived from Indigenous cultural systems or what Kovach calls tribal knowledges. Kovach writes “relationships are how we do Indigenous epistemology” (2018 pp. 388). I encountered Indigenous epistemologies often during my fieldwork and always through relations. I realized early on that the Land or what Nl̓eʔkepmx call *tmíxʷ* and the Syilx call *tm̓x̣ʷúlaʔxʷ* was a participant in my research.

In the Nicola Valley, one Elder told me that her spirit helper, her *snéʔm*, were the trees. She would go and talk to them and listen to them as they spoke to her. A *snéʔm* appears to someone to provide insight and guidance and help along their journey. I came to appreciate this Elder’s description as lucid realism, which held great wisdom. What do the trees say? They tell the story of the Land, the rivers, and the snow. The orotund pitch of the wind as it whips through branches narrates the weather and the seasons. The trees are storytellers. Listening to them changes the way the Elder thinks, acts, and speaks. As she said to me when I asked her what the trees say, “the trees teach me a language of peace.”

To be able to comprehend a story like the one the Elder told me about the trees, I had to interrogate my own biases and become conversant in what Kovach (2018) calls Indigenous theory principles. These are the sophisticated thought systems Indigenous Peoples deploy to

make sense of the worlds around them. The *sné?m* was a way of interacting with the world for this Elder. It was a way of listening to parts of existence that are often rendered background in Western epistemologies. Without an understanding of these thought systems, it would be impossible for me to understand my participants.

Syilx scholar Jeanette Armstrong provides a powerful interpretation of Interior Salishan thought systems through her concept *Land Speaking* (1998). For Armstrong, the source of Salishan languages is the Land. In her essay of the same name, Armstrong writes

When I close my eyes my thoughts travel, N'Silxchn recreates the sounds, the smells, the colors, the taste and texture precisely. N'Silxchn emulates the Land and the sky in its unique flow around me. I feel its vast outer edges touching the sky and the horizon in all that I experience as life. I feel it speaking the oldness of the earth, speaking to us (1998 pp. 149).

While beautifully written, what Armstrong is getting at is more than just poetic imagery. For her, the Interior Salishan languages are the Land. They contain within them the knowledge and the ethical principles of the Land—its past, present, and future.

As it is spoken today, the Okanagan language carries meaning about a time that is no more. Its words speak of a world different in experience from this one. Its words whisper more than the retelling of the world. Through my language I understand I am being spoken to. I am not the one speaking. The words are coming from many tongues and mouths of Okanagan people and the Land around them. I am a listener to the language's stories and when my words form, I am merely retelling the same stories in different patterns (1998 pp. 150).

These stories ultimately derive from the Land. The word for Land in Nl̓eʔkepmxcin is *tmíxʷ* and in Nsyilxcən is *tm'xʷúlaʔxʷ*. Land speaking is more than just an ethical practice that ties the language to the *tmíxʷ* or *tm'xʷúlaʔxʷ* and to the lives of Indigenous Peoples, it is a complete philosophical system, one derived from the Land but also in conversation with it, as the Land is not fixed, but changes. Armstrong writes

Whenever I speak...I move through the vastness into a new linking of time to the moment I speak. To speak is to create more than words, more than sounds retelling the world; it is to realize the potential for transformation of the world...speaking is a sacred act in that words contain spirit, a power waiting to become activated and become physical...what we speak determines our interactions (1998 pp. 152).

While my participants speak, so too does the *tmíxʷ*. I had to find a way of hearing it and understanding it in the words that they said.

One example of Indigenous epistemologies as *Land Speaking* comes from my first Nl̓eʔkepmxcin language class. Several of the Nl̓eʔkepmx stories transcribed and translated into English by ethnographer James Teit center around Coyote and in one of these, Coyote defecates and then speaks to his excrement. In the story “Coyote’s Dog”, Teit writes “The Coyote thereupon defecated. He turned around and asked his excrements the name of the man who was advancing towards them” (1889 pp. 30). In these stories, excrement is often imbued with sacred and life-giving powers and characters say prayers to their excrement and ask for advice or help.

During my first language class, I asked the language teacher Mandy “why does Coyote talk to his poop?” Both of Mandy’s parents were fluent speakers of Nl̓eʔkepmxcin. In the 1970s, a trained teacher, Mandy began to work for the Nicola Valley Indian Association. This put her into touch with linguists who were working to record and understand Nl̓eʔkepmxcin. Mandy’s work with them immersed her in the language, completing a masters in linguistics from UBC before becoming a language teacher at the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT). The cultural knowledge she possesses is central to the process of resurgence through the language training and language preservation work she conducts. She is currently a Professor at UBC in the *Nl̓eʔkepmxcin* language fluency degree program. With a fearsome intellect, she is one of the most eminent thinkers I have ever encountered.

After I asked about the poop, Mandy chuckled and responded, “Why would you ask that?” I responded, “I’ve been reading the Teit book and Coyote poops and then speaks to his poop.” She paused for nearly a minute, the room falling silent around us, and said “I wish you’d use the word excrement, that’s a better word for it, because it gets at the process of excretion.” Then she says “In our culture, excrement isn’t seen as bad or dirty. Excretion is a bodily process and excrement is part of us, part of who we are. It doesn’t stop being part of us because it leaves us. Matter joins with us and leaves us continuously.” She pulls her hands toward herself and pushes them away as she speaks. She continues “People pray when they eat because the food will become part of them, or when they cut their hair because it was part of them, so why not when they excrete?” With this, I realized a dichotomy in my thinking. I had separated excrement from the body, labelling it as waste and viewing the two things as separate when they were continuous, and I had separated my own body and being from the Land.

Mohawk and Anishinaabe Scholar Vanessa Watts (2013) notes that for many Indigenous Peoples, place has agency and thought. She writes “Our truth, not only Anishnaabe and

Haudenosaunee people but in a majority of Indigenous societies, conceives that we (humans) are made from the Land; our flesh is literally an extension of soil” (Watts 2013 pp. 27). By erasing these ways of knowing, conventional Western academic knowledges silence important aspects of Indigenous epistemological systems and worldviews.

To borrow the language of Gayatri Spivak (1987), the Land was *subaltern* in my world view. It was not just oppressed but near incomprehensible to me. I was caught between two competing epistemologies—atomism and holism. Through Mandy’s words, she activates a different way of thinking about herself, her body, her life. It is one that reverberates with cultural meanings that come from a time before. It is a cultural meaning that sees excretion as a process, with much larger margins than offered to it in Western thinking, and it encompass matter joining with us and leaving us.

To imbue excrement with sacred qualities was only an augmentation of what it was, it is the Land, and we are too. Excrement through its fusion with us is transformed into something with new properties and through this process transforms us. Excrement is an extension of our body, and both are part of the *tmíx^w*. I marveled at the change in my perceptual framework. *Land Speaking* began to make sense to me in a new way. The Land speaks who we are, through the foods we eat and through how we think about our bodies, and ultimately, for Mandy and Armstrong and others like them, through language. Land speaking was both a way of thinking about the ethical entanglements of language, Land, and life but also of sourcing them in the *tmíx^w* or *tm’x^wúla?x^w*. I thought about Mandy in this moment, formulating English words to help me make sense of something that seemed so bizarre to me at first. The Land is the agent. Our bodies, our excretions, are the Land speaking, and prayer a response. “We are the Land, and the Land is us” (Kimberly Declaration 2002).

I began to understand more aspects of the world as relational principles connected to and derived from the *tmíx^w* or *tm’x^wúla?x^w*. My thinking had been extended. It is not that the Land cannot speak but that its speech is rendered unintelligible by our academic entanglements which often proffer a scientific realism that reduces Indigenous knowledges to folkways or fables.

Renowned Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan (1964) offers that all mediums or technologies are extensions or amputations of existing human faculties. Epistemologies, as theories of knowledge, function similarly. They are a technology. They extend or amputate us, our senses, faculties, perceptions, and even our worldviews, to consider a new range of

possibilities or to bind that range into a conceptual system or model that simplifies the reality they attempt to grasp. It was through moments like my exchange with Mandy that I was sensitized to Indigenous epistemologies and the powerful technology they are. Land speaking was a technology; it extended my senses, faculties, perceptions, and worldview.

Context

Now that I've described my methodology, I want to take some time to create a sociological vignette of 'the field' or the context of this study before turning to a description of my method and data analysis. While the field is often used by ethnographers as a metaphor for exotic locales, for my participants it was their home, their *tmíxʷ* or *tm'xʷúlaʔxʷ*. The context for this study is the Nicola Valley. Home to two Indigenous cultures, the Valley is in the interior of British Columbia and is comprised of six Indigenous communities. The two cultural groups are the Nl̓eʔkepmx and the Syilx. They are both part of the interior Salish linguistic group. The Nicola Valley itself is located between the Okanagan Valley and the Thompson River Valley. The Thompson River Valley, just south of where the Thompson River meets the Fraser River is the center of the Nl̓eʔkepmx world. The Okanagan Lake is the center of the Syilx world.

Merritt is at the middle of the Nicola Valley and has a population of 7,139 people according to the 2016 Census. Sixteen percent of the population of Merritt is First Nations and 6% Metis. Six First Nations ring Merritt. Merritt is also home to other racial and ethnic groups. Approximately 10% of the population is part of the Sikh diaspora with small populations of Asian and black descent. The largest Indigenous community in the Valley is Lower Nicola, which is also the closest of the six to Merritt. It is an Nl̓eʔkepmx band and has a membership of 1,419. The next largest community is Upper Nicola, a Syilx band located East of Merritt. The membership of Upper Nicola is 980. Coldwater is the third largest with a membership of 867. It is situated south of Merritt. Three Nl̓eʔkepmx bands are situated at the Northern edge of the Valley—Nooaitch (235 members), Shackan (136), and Cook's Ferry (347 members). During my fieldwork, I spent time in each community, attending events, and becoming known to each band and its membership.

I moved to the Nicola Valley in March of 2017. I lived in the Nicola Valley until August 2021 and returned for December 2021, January 2022, and April to July of 2022. For 2017 and 2018, I lived at NVIT student residence located in Merritt. At the end of 2018, I moved to the

Antko Reserve, part of the Cook's Ferry Indian Band just outside of Merritt. I moved into an apartment in Merritt in March of 2020 and then from August of 2021 split my time between Toronto and the Antko reserve until August 2022. Most of my fieldwork was conducted at the Coldwater School and NVIT.

NVIT is an Indigenous-led post-secondary institute. It was established in 1981 as part of the Nicola Valley Indian Administration to facilitate the delivery of the forestry technology program originally offered out of the British Columbia Institute of Technology. It was founded in 1983 and in 1985 it became a private post-secondary institute. In 1995 it became a public organization recognized by the provincial government. The Board is made up almost entirely of Indigenous Peoples as is the Elder advisory council. The academic administrative staff is mostly Indigenous except for the president and one of four vice-presidents who are both non-Indigenous. In 2021 the Institute had 644 enrolled full-time students and 685 part-time students. 76% of the students are Indigenous. It offers university-level and college-level programming. Its two most popular programs are a Bachelor of Social Work program offered jointly with Thompson Rivers University and a General Arts Degree. The programming for the school is offered in 31 different locations, including many remote reserve communities across the province.

In September 2017, I became a student in an Nl̓eʔkepmxcin language class at NVIT taught by Mandy. I participated in five language classes from 2017 until 2020, only pausing when the COVID-19 pandemic began. This involved 230 hours of training in Nl̓eʔkepmxcin. The classes ranged in size between 15 and 24 people and took place weekly. During class, students learned vocabulary, sentence structure, and discussed issues relevant to the local communities. Students also participated each week in a potluck organized by the class. Language classes exposed me to Indigenous knowledge systems and Indigenous language reclamation. They also provided a baseline in Nl̓eʔkepmxcin that facilitated my participation in community life.

Through the language class, I participated in four language celebrations and two language conferences. These were large gatherings held to provide opportunities for community members to speak Nl̓eʔkepmxcin and Nsyilxcən. At one language gathering in October of 2018 and one language conference in March of 2019, I served as the host, organizing performances of individuals working to reclaim their language. Through these events, I introduced myself to the

community and became a more visible presence in their lives. I eventually came to work at the Coldwater School.

The Coldwater Band School is situated in a modern building on the Coldwater Reserve. It has an Aboriginal Head Start Program as well as kindergarten to grade seven classes. Aboriginal Head Start provides support to families of children between the ages of three and four as well as classroom instruction for children who have turned four. It is overseen by an early childhood educator and was created through an extensive consultation process with the community. It provides classes for families on hygiene, cooking, and cultural activities like beading, basket weaving, and traditional customs and practices as well as exposure to Nl̓eʔkepmxcin and traditional stories. There is a teacher for primary grades from kindergarten to grade three and an upper year teacher who is responsible for grades four through seven. There is an additional teacher who does special education programming as well as specific instruction in other courses like math and physical education. This was the role I performed. There is a principal, an administrative assistant and one or two educational assistants. The school's enrollment fluctuates between 20 and 35 students. The kindergarten to grade seven classes run through a provincial curriculum but make significant time for instruction in Nl̓eʔkepmxcin. The upper year teacher is fluent in Nl̓eʔkepmxcin and the primary teacher is actively learning Nl̓eʔkepmxcin.

The school is constructed around the Nl̓eʔkepmx life course. The Aboriginal Head Start, with the youngest children, is situated at the east of the building. As you move toward the west of the building each subsequent class is an older grade until you arrive at the western edge of the building. At its west is a classroom dedicated to Elders and as you arrive outside there is a *sʔistkn* or pithouse that is used by Elders visiting the school and which symbolizes the cultural knowledge and wisdom that comes with age. The school is meant to provide a culturally immersive and safe learning space for children.

From March 2018 until June 2022, I worked at the Coldwater Band School. From August of 2021 until July of 2022, I worked remotely for the school returning for a few months at a time to help with curriculum, budgeting, and instruction. In 2018, I started as a teaching assistant in the Aboriginal Head Start and eventually became a special education teacher. I applied for grants and funding for the school. Until very recently, in the Indigenous school system in BC, financial support was not fixed but fluctuated yearly based on enrollment. Schools were dependent upon grants for funding, which differentiated them from the public system. This changed in 2019 with

the creation of the tripartite education agreement between Indigenous Bands in BC, the federal government, and the provincial government. Now the funding is higher for band schools than public schools on a per-student basis (BCTEA 2018).

My time spent at the Coldwater School brought me into contact with several cultural events throughout the Valley. It also facilitated my travel to conferences on language reclamation held in the Lower Mainland in 2018 and Kamloops in 2019. Kamloops is a city located an hour North of Merritt and is home to another Interior Salish group known as the Secwépemc. Working at the Coldwater School also facilitated my contact with Elders and political leaders, and with the administrative and governance staff of the Coldwater Indian Band. Through my work at the school, I was able to attend several political gatherings. In March and July of 2018, I attended two political gatherings about the future of cooperation between the bands in the Valley. These meetings provided detailed insights into the history of cooperation between the Syilx and Nl̓eʔkepmx in the Valley. Though they spoke two different languages, they saw themselves as one people.

The Coldwater Band School and NVIT were my primary ethnographic sites. In August of 2018, a local Chief suggested that I form a committee of Indigenous intellectuals and Elders from the Valley to oversee my research. I approached the community members he had suggested, and each agreed to be part of what we termed The Indigenous Oversight and Advisory Committee. The committee's function was to read through my proposal and provide critical feedback about the research before it was approved by my Dissertation Committee at York University.

I presented the proposal at a community gathering at the Nicola Valley in September of 2018. All the members of the Indigenous Oversight and Advisory Committee were present as well as 31 additional community members. The proposal feedback from the community was helpful and provided guidance about recruiting participants and conducting research. They asked me to conduct research both with Indigenous Peoples and on non-Indigenous Peoples in the Valley. They also asked me to be vulnerable and to explore my own identity and how this related to my research. This is the source of the prologue statement at the beginning of my dissertation. Following the community presentation, I received letters of support from NVIT, the Coldwater Band School, and the Nicola Tribal Association. My proposal was accepted by my dissertation

committee in October of 2018, and I received ethics approval from the York University Research Ethics Board in February of 2019.

Method

My main research methods were ethnographic observations and interviewing. Ethnography⁹ involves observing and documenting the behaviors, interactions, and cultural practices of a group or community, providing rich and detailed insights into their social dynamics and cultural norms. Interviewing entails asking participants structured or unstructured questions about their experiences, beliefs, or attitudes and gathering firsthand information and insight. My ethnographic observations and interviewing were facilitated by relationality, intelligibility, and respectfulness.

From the outset, these two methods depended upon building relationships with members of the Nte?kepmx and Syilx communities in the Nicola Valley, developing field sites where ethnographic observation could take place, and recruiting participants for interviews. As a professor in my department advised me, before I set out for the field, "figure out where the action is and follow the actors." Erving Goffman, a Canadian sociologist, explains that "when a person goes to where the action is, they often go to a place where there is an increase, not in the chances taken, but in the chances that they will be obliged to take chances" (1982, pp. 269). Gaining access to field sites and participants involves taking chances.

I carried out two phases of ethnographic observations and interviews. The first phase involved general observations at NVIT and the Coldwater Band School and other field sites in the Valley. During this first phase, I conducted 22 semi-structured interviews with people from the Coldwater Band and employees at the Coldwater Band School. I inductively coded my field notes, texts offered to me by participants, and my interview data from this first phase and came up with a series of themes that I used to refine my observations, fieldnotes, and generate a second set of interview questions which I deployed in phase 2. In phase 2, I began to interview participants focusing on the themes of self-help, culture, and the future and began to focus my observations on these themes and within the context of Indigenous organizations. With this

⁹ For anthropologists, ethnography is not simply a method but is considered a methodology in the sense of something that includes a theory of knowledge and assumptions about relationships between knower and known. I salute this practice and see it as compatible with my understanding of resurgent methodologies. I articulate it as method here while simultaneously acknowledging its complex and polysemous meaning.

overview in mind, I will describe how the methodological insights outlined above inform ethnographic observations, sampling, interviews, and refusal across both phases of my research study.

Ethnographic Observations

Ethnographic observation entails witnessing and documenting patterns of conduct, customs, and communication amongst participants. Ethnographic observation can be conceptualized as a practice of *looping*. Kim Fortun (2012) describes ethnographic looping as iteratively introducing ethnographic observation into the research design to consider and generate types of encounters and spaces. “The goal” of ethnographic looping, she writes, “is to create a space of creativity, where something surprising, something new emerges” (Fortun 2012 pp. 454). The interactions, processes, and events were facilitated and mediated by Indigenous people with whom I developed friendships and working relationships during my time in the Valley. These were people with whom I also shared by observations and insights. My interactions with them looped back into the research process connecting me to more encounters and spaces. As discussed in the prologue statement, my friendship with Marilyn was critical to this process.

Marilyn Lytton, mentioned in the vignette at the beginning of the introduction, is a member of the Cook’s Ferry Indian Band and the daughter of two fluent speakers of Nl̓eʔkepmxcin. A Survivor of St. George’s Residential School in Lytton, Marilyn was well-connected through friendship and kinship to all the reserves in the Nicola Valley and many beyond. She works at the Coldwater School as an elementary school teacher and regularly attends Nl̓eʔkepmxcin language classes at NVIT. When I moved into the student residence at NVIT, Marilyn was my roommate and soon became my friend. She helped to connect me with Mandy Na’Zinek Jimmie, the language instructor at NVIT. Our friendships looped me into various spaces and encounters like language classes, community events, my work at the school, and many more friendships.

To keep track of these spaces and encounters, I adapted various techniques of documentation. I arrived in the Valley in March of 2017, and began to keep a daily journal on my phone through the application Journey. I created 428 entries with this application. Most of the entries were lists of what I had done that day, who I had interacted with, where I was, and what happened. In February of 2019, I began using the application Evernote both on my phone

and my computer to create field notes. I created 201 field notes with this application. These were more systematized than my journal entries and included prompts about things to consider each day. I would create field notes both during activities and afterward, both within view and out of sight of my participants. I also carried a small notepad where I would write down short words and phrases during interactions. I would then expand upon these in my Evernote entries. I also used small leatherbound notebooks for keeping notes during language classes and in other settings where using my phone would be inappropriate or disruptive.

During my observations I was interested in generating a holistic image of community life. This meant writing about details that were seemingly banal. I would document meetings with Elders and other staff-members, particularly discussions that had to do with culture, language, and Land. During language classes I would document the use of language, stories, new vocabulary, and interactions between students. During my teaching duties, I would document interactions with coworkers, community members, students, and interactions with staff from other Indigenous organizations. I would also observe the interactions of teachers with their students, coworkers, and workers from other Indigenous organizations.

Staff meetings and committee meetings were an important observational site. I observed staff meetings at the Coldwater Band School where I served as an additional teacher. I also observed meetings of the oversight and advisory committee for the Coldwater Band School. At NVIT, I observed bargaining committee meetings during the bargaining of the staff and teaching unions. I also attended a variety of community events (Elder treat day, hockey games, fishing trips, seasonal celebrations, annual general meetings for Indigenous institutions, powwows, graduations, etc.) and private events (gatherings, workshops, self-help seminars, birthday parties, graduation parties, etc.). Relationships and relationality were the key to knowledge gathering. I realized that by sharing my insights with participants, I gained a degree of reflexivity. For example, after working at the school for a time I became very interested in how Indigenous Peoples created organizations. I shared this interest with Elders and friends and then Mandy invited me to be the note-taker for the NVIT union bargaining committee. Exchanging interests allowed for the community to curate my experience and collaboratively constitute the reality around me, both enlarging my perspective but also creating new spaces and encounters which informed the research process.

Once I completed the first phase of my observations and interviewing, I took all the documents I gathered, my field notes and diary entries, and interview data and entered them into a qualitative data analysis software called MaxQDA. I coded the data and came up with themes: violence, self-help, culture, the future, and self-government. I began by creating subcodes and then inductively categorizing the codes into larger themes. For example, when I was told about violent acts that were perpetrated against participants, I would include a fieldnote about this and code it as domestic violence or settler violence. I then collected all these fieldnotes into the theme violence. I also did this for historical records, reports, newspaper articles, and books that were shared with me by participants. My first set of coding encompassed these different materials alongside interviews and field notes. I then looped these broad themes back into my ethnographic observations and began to pay special attention when these topics were raised at community gatherings, in interactions, or in discourse. I also shared these with my research participants. Data gathering was the result of an iterative process that facilitated my interest in particular spaces and encounters related to these themes. Looping was facilitated by relationships but also by respect.

Sampling

I conducted interviews in two phases. For the first phase of interviewing, I used a convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling is a “form of nonprobability or nonrandom sampling where members of the target population meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate” (Etikan, Musa, Alkassim 20015 pp. 2). During this phase of my research, accessibility was my main practical concern and participants either worked at the Coldwater School or were friends or relatives of employees at the school. The sample for Phase 1, from my experience and judgement, differed significantly from the demographics that would be found through random selection in Indigenous organizations in the Nicola Valley (see Table 2.1) For example, I believe that Indigenous Peoples are overrepresented in the sample, males are underrepresented, and the sample tends to skew older with the average age of Indigenous participants being 59.55 years and non-Indigenous peoples being 67 years. However, this first sample matches closely the demography of the Coldwater School itself. The staff was overwhelmingly female and

Indigenous. In 2020, for example, of 10 employees only two were non-Indigenous and only one was male.

The second phase of the research was done using purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling or judgment sampling “is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses” (Etikan, Musa, Alkassim 2015 pp. 2). The inclusion criteria for participants were that they must work, have worked in, or attended an Indigenous organization in the Nicola Valley. Snowball sampling uses a researcher’s social network to create an initial sample and then grows outward by asking for referrals (Parker, Scott, and Geddes 2020). Drawing on the initial inclusion criteria, I asked a small number of participants from my network to take part in the study. At the end of the interview, I asked participants to provide a referral to other potential participants. I then approached these participants and asked if they would like to take part. The second phase of research occurred during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Snowball sampling became more difficult when the snowball failed to roll. Eventually, public health measures loosened, people returned to in-person work, and sampling became easier.

The second sample includes individuals whose demographic characteristics more closely approximate what I encountered as typical for an Indigenous organization in the Nicola Valley. While I don’t have survey data for the entire population of Indigenous organizations, these assumptions are based on my judgement of the demography of NVIT. The average age for Indigenous Peoples in my second sample is 48.13 years while for non-Indigenous Peoples it is 43.13 years (see Table 2.1). The sample skews female.¹⁰ This reflects the demographic reality of Indigenous organizations in the Nicola Valley which are overwhelmingly female. Overall, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in the sample are highly educated with Indigenous Peoples having lower overall educational attainment than their non-Indigenous peers in Indigenous organizations. The two groups, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are also well-connected. On average, my data show that 4.43 of the seven closest friends of non-Indigenous Peoples are Indigenous while 5.44 of the closest friends of Indigenous Peoples are Indigenous. This reflects another reality of working in Indigenous organizations. Finally, Indigenous Peoples sampled represented a mix of people who have lived on and off-reserve. Interestingly, a few of

¹⁰ Masculinity is an important component of resurgence and women are often those actively involved in resurgence work. Why this is so is a follow up question mentioned in the conclusion to this dissertation.

the non-Indigenous participants in the study lived or live on-reserve. For non-Indigenous workers the average amount of their lives spent on-reserve is 3.3 years while for Indigenous workers it is 30.73 years.

Throughout the sampling phase of the study, I employed the ethical principles of relationality, reciprocity, and respect. Most of my participants for the first phase were from relationships I had cultivated through my work at the school. For the second phase, many of the participants were from relationships but others depended upon referrals and relational capital I had built up through my presence in the Valley. Participants were offered a small stipend of \$20 for their time. However, most people declined the stipend. I also approached people respectfully. This meant clearly articulating what the study was about and how it would be conducted but also informing them that their participation or non-participation would not influence our friendship or relationship. While these actions encompass respect within the traditional sense of research ethics, I also exceeded this by providing transcripts of interviews to all participants for their review to allow for a form of resurgent respect. I outlined how the results of the study would be stored, shared, and the potential but limited benefits for the community. Most people were happy

	Phase 1		Phase 2	
Sample	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Interviewees	20	2	20	15
Average Age	59.55 years	67 years	48.13 years	43.13 years
Gender	17 Female, 3 Male	2 Female	16 Female, 3 Male, 1 Non-Binary	12 Female, 3 Male
Time lived off-reserve	Not Collected	Not Collected	16.5 years	36.6 years
Time lived on-reserve	Not Collected	Not Collected	30.73 years	3.3 years
Of your seven closest friends, how many are Indigenous?	Not Collected	Not Collected	5.44 friends +/- 1.81 friends	4.43 friends +/- 2.16 friends
Highest Education Level Completed	Not Collected	Not Collected	Professional or graduate: 5 Undergraduate: 4 College Diploma: 6 High School Diploma: 5	Professional or graduate: 9 Undergraduate: 4 College Diploma: 0 High School Diploma: 2

Table 2.1 – The demographic breakdown of interview sampling.

to participate in the study. However, a few people declined. Some were friends or close associates that I knew well. I did not take their nonparticipation personally. Instead, I viewed it as positive sign that the hegemony researchers once wielded over Indigenous communities might be in decline.

Interviews

As with ethnographic observation, I conducted two phases of interviewing. During the first phase, I interviewed 22 people, two non-Indigenous and 20 Indigenous. I asked questions about their involvement in Indigenous organizations, primarily the Coldwater School and questions about the future. Fourteen of these interviews were conducted at the Coldwater School, four were conducted in participants' homes, two were conducted in my home, one in a restaurant, and two in participants' vehicles. These interviews lasted for 87 minutes on average and provided rich historical and biographical detail. All these interviews were recorded. During the second phase, I interviewed 35 people, 20 Indigenous and 15 non-Indigenous. There was overlap between the two phases with 12 participants from the first phase participating in the second phase. During the second phase, I asked questions specific to the themes of self-help, the future, culture, and self-government. Twenty of these interviews were conducted on Zoom (due in part to the pandemic), one in a restaurant, four in my home, six at NVIT, and four at the Coldwater School. The recorded interviews lasted 48 minutes on average.

Interviewing was mediated by relationships, respect, and reciprocity. Through my work at the Coldwater School, I had built good relationships with my co-workers and community members. This made it much easier for me to ask and for them to consent to an interview during the first phase of my research. These relationships increased rapport and allowed for intimate and detailed exchanges. For the second phase of interviewing, I cast a wider net, and interviewed both people who were known to me, but also people who were referred to me by other participants through snowball sampling. This meant less rapport. However, by this time, I felt better known by members of the community and better connected. This allowed for me to navigate the interview process more easily.

During the first phase of interviews, I pitched the interview as a calibration, which it was, and would ask participants to reflect not only on the questions but also what they thought of the questions. Calibration, a standard technique in the hard sciences used to test and certify scientific

instruments, finds its application in the social sciences less clearly defined. However, Wilson et al. (2015) explore its potential relevance to social scientific investigations, highlighting its adaptable logic. Calibration introduced a degree of reflexivity into the interview that helped me to locate the research within the thoughts and feelings of participants. It transformed participants from passive agents delivering content to active agents who were very much involved in the process of creating the research as a shared cultural object.

This is what Terrence McDonnell (2014) calls a productive method—a method used to observe people as they participate in creating a shared object of meaning. For McDonnell, observing the creation of a cultural object allows for differential moments of automatic and deliberative cognition. Deliberative cognition is thinking about a situation in a way that involves planning and purpose while automatic cognition is the absence of thought, where a situation seemingly just happens without much conscious awareness or attention (McDonnell 2014). I noticed this in other parts of the research as well. For example, by placing the biographical survey questions first, answers to the interview questions tended to be shorter. If I placed the biographical survey questions after the interview, participants would begin to deconstruct the survey questions and deliberate on them.

I took this insight from the first phase and used it in my second phase. During both phases I asked participants about the future. However, during the second phase, I had participants engage in a mindfulness activity prior to imagining the future. I had them clear their mind and close their eyes and engage in deep breathing. I then asked them to imagine a future, pausing for a second. I asked them to imagine what it smelled like, what it looked like, what it felt like. This tended to produce more deliberative responses and the responses to this question inform chapter five of this dissertation.

While all the first phase interviews were recorded, during the second phase of interviewing, I encountered a woman who did not want to be recorded. She was a friend and a fellow participant in the language classes at NVIT. This was the fourth interview I conducted in the second phase of research. I was unsure how to proceed. She suggested I write down her answers and then read them back to her. We began and produced an incredibly vibrant transcript. During the process, she was able to reflect on her answers and correct the record. It produced a heightened level of intimacy, ease, and comfort and more deliberative responses.

I looped this experience into the research process and gave every subsequent participant of the second phase the option to either be recorded or engage in what I called ‘collaborative live transcription’ where I would transcribe answers and read them back to participants and have them make changes and corrections in real-time, collaboratively, and deliberately producing the interview as a cultural object. Of the 35 participants in the second phase, 15 chose to engage in the collaborative live transcription process while 20 chose to be recorded. Of the 15 who chose collaborative live transcription 5 were Indigenous and 10 were non-Indigenous.

Interviews provided rich insights that extended much of the thinking I had developed from ethnographic observations. Like ethnographic observations they were mediated by relationships. Different techniques and framing of the interview could make it what McDonnell calls a productive method, where participants actively produce the interview and research as an object of shared meaning. These in turn could be looped into the research, generating new insights, new encounters, and new ways of thinking about research.

Refusal

As much as participants looped me into spaces and encounters, they also sometimes refused. Refusal is a negative source of meaning, removing certain objects and topics from my awareness. Refusal to participate in research is not a method, in the sense that interviewing and observation are, but was nonetheless a source of insight. Reflecting on refusal enhanced my understanding of the dynamics of settler-colonial power dynamics in knowledge production. The ability to refuse an interview request but also the capacity to refuse to talk about certain matters is central to research with Indigenous Peoples. Audra Simpson (2007) writes, in ethnography, refusal is an important component of Indigenous sovereignty where sovereignty is conceived of as a type of authority grounded in community membership.

Unangan Scholar Eve Tuck and Asian American Scholar K. Wayne Yang (2014) argue that refusal is a way for researchers to confront settler-colonialism but also a generative way of understanding resistance to settler-colonial processes. They write “refusal can comprise a resistance to making someone or something the subject of research; it is a form of objectless analysis, an analytic practice with nothing and no one to code (pp 812).” They continue “refusal is a generative stance, not just a ‘no’, but a starting place for other qualitative analyses and interpretations of data... It must precede, exceed, and intercede upon settler colonial knowledge

production (Tuck and Yang 2014 pp. 812).” There were certain matters that as a researcher I came to understand and appreciate were off limits, certain types of knowledges that I didn’t have the skill to write about or could not write about because I did not want to build my career upon pain or recreate a settler-colonial dynamic to further the interests of knowledge production. Going further or deeper into certain topics may be useful from a research perspective but doing so would be harmful to the community and to the process of resurgence.

One example of refusal comes from a proposed site for my research. I had planned to include workers at the Nicola Tribal Association as part of my initial sample of interviews and conduct fieldwork there over the summer of 2019. When I arrived on my first day for scheduled interviews, I was told I would not be allowed to proceed with limited explanation. I did not push this matter. Instead, I simply walked away while leaving lines of communication open. Through conversations with Elders and members of my Indigenous Oversight and Advisory Committee, I became sensitized to the political issues involved in this refusal and I was conditioned to the limits of my data gathering techniques. This refusal was not a ‘no’ but a way of redirecting my attention and focus elsewhere, of looping me into different spaces and encounters.

This does not mean that topics subject to refusal cannot be researched or even researched by me but that they may require more time, consciousness, and awareness than I had in my nearly-five years in the field. Refusals pivot on relationships and what Margaret Kovach (2018) calls relational capital. While I had amassed relational capital through my service and collaboration with the communities in the Valley, in this situation, my relationships would not suffice, and I had to accept the refusal and walk away. Refusal is a productive way that my participants intervened in the research process, but it is not the only way. In what follows I describe my data analysis process which unfolded through relationships.

Data Analysis

The preceding sections have conveyed the ethical, epistemological, and ontological stance of the research and attempted to show how these informed data gathering. Now, I want to show how the research methodology informed data analysis. Qualitative data analysis is a process of engaging with the collected data to systematically uncover patterns, themes, and insights. The data analysis for the dissertation consisted of a qualitative analytic approach that includes forms of narrative analysis, thematic analysis, as well as making contrasts, and comparisons between

participants. It also involved an iterative process that I call Indigenous peer review, where I would share data, findings, or read through portions of the dissertation with Indigenous community members and speak with them about my analysis. This happened at various stages of the analysis, from when the data was first collected to when it was coded, and finally when it was integrated into written work. In what follows, I will review my qualitative data analysis, singling out narrative analysis, and Indigenous peer review and showing how my methodology informed these analytic strategies.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Analyzing qualitative data begins before the first interview is conducted or the first interaction observed. Before I arrived in the field, I read extensively ethnographies and literature about the Nl̓eʔkepmx and Syilx. Additionally, I read literatures on research with Indigenous Peoples and settler-colonialism. Once I arrived, I began to collect secondary sources about the Nl̓eʔkepmx and Syilx. Some of these came from participants like Marilyn and Mandy, others from the local newspaper or the local historical society. Participants brought me more. I began to link these documents together by looking for thematic connections and added the interview data and fieldnotes I was collecting. All of this was stored in MaxQDA—a qualitative data analysis software. I coded my fieldnotes, the interviews, and the secondary data. Coding is the process of categorizing and labelling pieces of data to identify patterns, themes, and concepts.

During the first round, codes emerged organically from the data and were not imposed on the data. After the first round of data collection, I used the codes that I had developed to create the questions for the second set of interviews. Self-help, for example, became a theme from the first set of interviews and fieldnotes and then became a question in the second set of interviews. I then extracted the responses to the questions and interpreted them alongside theoretical ideas in an inductive or grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 2006). Grounded theory focuses on building theory from data rather than attempting to test theories empirically. I looked for comparisons between participants and grouped participants according to their responses. For example, some participants favoured self-help; while some were critical of self-help, others noted that self-help was something that existed in Indigenous cultures long before the arrival of settlers. Examining multiple perspectives and multiple truths is consistent with my

methodological interest in both Indigenous methodologies and post-structuralism. I then looked for theoretical ideas that could help explain these findings.

Sometimes I began by writing a chapter, like the chapter on Indigenous organizations, from the perspective of my ethnographic experiences and theoretical knowledges. These were acquired through exploring literatures related to sociological studies of organization. After the draft chapter was written I searched through interview transcripts and fieldnotes to find talk and observations that would help to flesh out or expand on details I had written about. I found the data changed the categories that I had written about and altered my interpretation. This iterative process of looping between writing and the data was invaluable. This work was also done in collaboration with my dissertation committee members and their contributions to data analysis cannot be underestimated. They often pushed me to add more data to my writing or to maximize ethnographic evidence. The process of going back to the data often altered my interpretation. It is easy to imagine data analysis as a solitary endeavor of reading texts alone. In my experience it is not. It is a highly social activity that is grounded in relationships, across fields and contexts. In this sense, there were multiple entry points and no predetermined formula for analyzing data. Instead, the data was treated holistically, in a way consistent with post-structuralism and Indigenous methodologies.

Narrative Analysis

We tell and exchange stories to make sense of our lives and our worlds. In narrative analysis, sociologists, and scholars from allied disciplines, examine how stories operate in the social world. While some sociologists think of narratives as representational forms, others view them as “an *ontological condition of social life*” (Somers & Gibson 1993 pp. 2). In the former, stories are part of the social world while in the latter the social world is itself storied. For Indigenous Peoples, storytelling and narrative are a central part of their cultural systems (Rieger et al. 2020). Prior to colonization, Indigenous Peoples possessed oral cultures, and stories fulfilled a spiritual, scientific, and historical function. Stories documented millennia of cultural and geographic transformations. Following Contact, Europeans could not appreciate the meaning of Indigenous stories and often disregarded them as myths or fables (Teit 1898) when they contain deep historical truths. While this aspect of Indigenous cultures has endured, in the present moment, stories now also realize an anti-colonial function.

In her essay “There Is a River in Me: Theory from Life” Tanana Athabascan scholar Dian Million (2014) argues that stories contain an affective legacy that allows Indigenous Peoples to share and connect through the traumatic conditions of colonization to maintain sanity. For Million, stories become empowered as a focus for potential movements as they reposition Indigenous lives and extricate Indigenous Peoples from colonial theories by offering theoretical interpretations of their own existence. Similarly, in her essay “Land Speaking” Syilx author Jeannette Armstrong (2016) argues that stories are a source of power, time, and memory and that they can change the future. Armstrong deliberates on the tension of telling Indigenous stories in English, the colonizer’s tongue, but expresses that this strain is productive of new representational strategies for Indigenous Peoples. Both Million and Armstrong articulate the decolonial potentials of storytelling.

In her work, Stolo writer Lee Maracle (2001) asserts that Indigenous knowledge systems have been disempowered because of their focus on storytelling. In Western forms of knowledge production, theories are decoupled from storytelling even though, as Maracle argues, theories themselves are stories. By excluding certain voices, undermining Indigenous conceptions of knowledge, Western knowledge systems become empowered to make decisions about Indigenous Peoples’ worth, about who they are and what they do. The articulation between storytelling in Indigenous knowledge systems and researchers interested in narrativity provides a useful and compatible methodological tool for analyzing the conditions of resurgence within Indigenous communities. However, it is not without irony that sociologists take up storytelling as a methodological focus after centuries of deriding Indigenous stories as fables.

In my work I use narratives as an analytical tool in several specific ways. In writing field notes, I often reflected on the stories that people told me. I also attempt to tell the stories of the events as they happened around me. For example, the introductory chapter begins with the story of a trip to Fort Langley. I wrote down this story and then asked my participants to tell me the story of what happened. Comparing the story that I had written to the stories of my participants helped me to get at different positionalities and standpoints.

Settler scholars Amber Gaszo and Kathy Bischooping (2016) make explicit the connection between standpoint and narrative. They write “a person’s consciousness and interpretations develop according to the experience of being socially located in particular categories, performances, and intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, citizenship, ability, and so

forth” (Gaszo & Bischooping 2016, Ch 4). My perspective on the Fort Langley tour as a white man and non-Indigenous ally will be different from the perspective of the three Indigenous women I interviewed. We tell different stories about what happened because we are positioned differently through our biographies in relation to what happened. We have different standpoints.

Standpoint also plays a role in how I understand myself in relation to the field and my participants. Indigenous theorists and scholars working in Indigenous research often include prologue statements in their work. These are autobiographical statements at the beginning of a text that situates the researcher in relation to their work. Shawn Wilson (2008) tells the story of how he came to be an Indigenous researcher and how this connects to his experience as an Indigenous Person. Settler scholar Jeffrey Denis (2020) begins his book with a preface explaining his own connection to Indigenous Peoples and the research he conducted in the Rainy River region of Ontario. I have attempted to do the same by telling my story and my complex relationship to Indigeneity in the Prologue chapter of this dissertation. Telling my story in this way was requested by Indigenous intellectuals who reviewed my research proposal.

Finally, I also use narrative analysis to think about agency. People indicate a lot about who (or what) they think has agency through the way they tell stories (Gaszo & Bischooping 2016). For example, in the chapter on how people think about the future both Indigenous and non-Indigenous respondents, in their future projections, would speak about Indigenous Peoples having agency to change the future conditions of both settler and Indigenous societies. Focusing on who the agents are in the stories we tell helps us to understand how people are thinking about themselves and their relationship to social and cultural change.

Indigenous Peer Review

One activity which expresses the principles of this research—intelligibility, reciprocity, respect, relationality, and utility—comes from discussing ideas with Elders and community members during the data gathering and writing processes. Living in community meant that as I conducted interviews and engaged in participant observation, I could discuss observations, findings, and ideas with community-members. I call this process, especially reading drafts, community-based peer review. My coding was not done alone but through relationships with the community around me. Some chapter ideas never made it out of this peer review, and rightfully so, as I was told they did not accurately represent the community or did not serve their needs.

I remember meeting with Marilyn and Mandy after I had enthusiastically written 20 pages of material on methods in relation to the concept of stigma. The piece outlined how researchers and research are stigmatized in Indigenous communities owing to the role academics have played in settler-colonization. Looking back at it now, it feels so foolish. I made them dinner and then we sat around a big glass dinner table with dessert, coffee, and tea as I read the chapter to them aloud. They both agreed it was a good start but that it didn't represent their community accurately. For them, it was too disconnected from Indigenous experiences to be useful, and they didn't see themselves in it. They provided useful feedback and offered places to look for knowledge. I went back to the drawing board. After dinner, Mandy and I went for a walk and watched an episode of *Unsolved Mysteries* on *Netflix*.

As many times as I was told to think about something differently, I was also told I had captured something unique or meaningful. When the community peer-review process affirmed my findings it gave my work an emotional salience that pushed my thinking further. This type of emotional intensity and ability to accept critique is only possible through relationships that have developed over the course of years.

One example of getting it right comes from the chapter about Darla and self-help culture. Specifically, Chapter 6 theorizes how Indigenous communities in the Nicola Valley have used self-help culture to reconvert members back to traditional language, spirituality, and culture through the example of my friend Darla. Reconversion back to tradition was necessary because of the damage to Indigenous cultural systems caused by colonization and residential schools. Marilyn, after reading it, was deeply moved by the passages about Darla. Mandy offered that she saw her lived experience reflected in the work even though I wasn't specifically speaking about her. She did however say that if I wanted to use her name in my dissertation, I would have to use proper Nlë?kepmxcin script providing critiques of my word choice and spelling in the language, feedback I humbly accepted.

My analysis offered a different insight about self-help culture which Mandy and Marilyn found resonated with their own lives, but which they also found useful. Self-help culture was omnipresent in the Valley, but they didn't appreciate the extent to which it had reconnected them to their culture. From this, we started to think about how self-help practices might be useful for language learners as part of their coursework. This is important to Marilyn and Mandy as they both work to regenerate Nlë?kepmxcin. Engaging in these types of peer review sessions offered

so much to my work from small corrections of details to valuable new sources of knowledge and expertise.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to describe an epistemological, ethical, and analytical research stance that I call a resurgent methodology. A resurgent methodology is an approach to conducting research with Indigenous Peoples. It is a type of Indigenous methodology deployed to understand resurgence. I have tried to lay out why this type of stance is necessary and show how it relates to symbolic power and the legitimate authority of Indigenous Peoples over their own representation. I tie the need for this type of approach to my own revelation in thinking when I realized that my existing ontological and epistemological standpoint had rendered the Land subaltern and unintelligible to me. Through becoming embedded in a web of relations, developing friendships, I came to understand that the Land speaks. While I do not claim to hear it as well as the many participants who lent me their time and attention, this revelation transformed how I thought about my research, the field, and my participants.

I have taken these methodological insights and tried to show how they effected my data gathering and data analysis. Of note is the importance of refusal and Indigenous peer review. Refusal entails participants saying no! I was told no a lot. I had to become comfortable with figuring out what no meant. Refusal became a source of negative meaning that helped me to realize how the Indigenous communities I worked with wanted to be represented. Indigenous peer review involved me sharing research results with community members. While sometimes this was embarrassing, other times it was so helpful, both to me and my friends in the Valley. I do not claim to always get things right, but when I am wrong, I am glad I have a community of people to tell me so. What I have come to understand is that representation and research are collective activities, and that the strength of research is in the different standpoints that it considers.

Chapter 4 Resurgent Organizations: How do Indigenous organizations make resurgence possible?

Introduction

In a now infamous moment, asked to be the speaker at a conference of white feminists, Audre Lorde admonished the assembled crowd for not including racialized and queer voices, articulating the impossibility of using theoretical and epistemological tools forged under the hegemony of whiteness and masculinity to transform systems of inequality and oppression that buttress modernity. In her address, she opines “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.” Lorde’s provocation is pressing for societies living under the thrall of settler-colonialism. Settler-colonialism is the process of people who are non-Indigenous to a territory claiming Indigenous Lands and constructing their own institutions, organizations, and politics upon those territories. Lorde’s admonition has become a catechism for the struggles of racialized and colonized peoples, a call to reassemble the cultural systems of marginalized groups and use them to dismantle those of the oppressors. However, viewed through the world of Indigenous resurgence today, Lorde’s rebuke is incomplete.

In their essay “Not Only the Master’s Tools” Lewis Gordon and Jane Anna Gordon (2006) tease out the implications and contradictions of Lorde’s invocation. Working in African American studies, they declare “dismantling the master’s house is a misguided project” (p. ix) and that “even if it were true that his house cannot be dismantled by his tools, slaves have historically done something more provocative with such tools than attempt to dismantle the Big House” (pp ix). They “used those tools, developed additional ones, and built houses of their own on more or less generous soil” (pp ix). They insist that by creating enough competing houses, the hegemony of the master and perhaps the hegemony of mastery itself will weaken. However, they neglect to mention that, in both instances, the houses, are built upon generous soils dispossessed from Indigenous Peoples. Settler-colonialism is accomplished at the exclusion of Indigenous Peoples who, despite predictions to the contrary, continue to occupy those territories but must live split lives, interacting with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and authorities.

This chapter responds to two dissertation research questions: 1. How do Indigenous communities build organizations and develop organizational practices to rebuild and regenerate

their cultural systems? 2. What makes Indigenous resurgence possible? In the context of Indigenous resurgence in the Nicola Valley, I argue that Indigenous communities have used the implements of colonization, including non-Indigenous organizational models, to challenge the hegemony and mastery of colonization itself. Settler-colonial governments and settlers sought to displace and dismantle Indigenous practices, languages, and cultures, often through bureaucratic and organizational means like residential schools, the public school system, and child welfare agencies. In opposition, Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley have preserved, reproduced, and regenerated their cultural practices by creating organizations that are sometimes modelled on those of the master, like the corporation, post-secondary institute, child protection agency, and public school system. It is through these organizations that Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley have reproduced some of their most important cultural practices and their languages.

I argue that Indigenous organizational cultures increase the agency of Indigenous communities to engage in resurgence by 1) allocating space and time to Indigenous languages and culture, 2) limiting the importance of whiteness as a credential, 3) making Indigeneity into a credential, and 4) rejecting practices that perpetuate settler-colonialism. Resurgence is conceptualized as a refusal by Indigenous communities to participate in practices that perpetuate settler-colonialism and instead focus their efforts on activities that regenerate their cultural, spiritual, and political existence from the inside out (Elliott 2018). The weaving of organizational models with traditional practices and Indigenous languages enhances Indigenous agency and makes resurgence possible.

This chapter begins with a dialogue between the sociology of organizations, theories of settler-colonialism, and Indigenous theories of resurgence. The sociology of organizations has neglected organizations built by and for Indigenous communities, while the scholarship on resurgence has neglected the role of organizations in regenerating Indigenous people's cultural, spiritual, and political existence. This chapter begins to fill the gap. I provide a brief account of the history of some key organizations in the Nicola Valley before outlining Indigenous organizational practices in the Valley that are enabling resurgence and Indigenous agency.¹¹ I point to some indicators of the success of resurgence for Indigenous communities. In the

¹¹ I speak about Indigenous organizations in the Nicola Valley. Whether these conditions apply to other communities, outside of the Nicola Valley and beyond BC, is an open question. I would proffer that the way Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley have built organizations is unique.

conclusion, I consider the importance of organizational models for research on resurgence and Indigenous communities.

Resurgence and the Sociology of Organizations

Settler-colonialism and Indigenous resurgence remain outside the conceptual ambit of the sociology of organizations. Despite this, the sociology of organizations provides valuable tools to think through the conditions of Indigenous Peoples' lives, resurgence, and settler-colonialism. By bringing these distinct voices into conversation, we can begin to address the issues faced by Indigenous Peoples within organizational settings while also uncovering the unique strategies Indigenous communities deploy to revive their own cultural systems through organizational practices. Organizations can perpetuate or challenge settler-colonial power dynamics, affecting Indigenous communities' access to resources, decision-making processes, and cultural autonomy.

Integrating settler-colonial theory and Indigenous resurgence into organizational theory challenges assumptions about neutrality and color-blindness that characterize some of the work in the sociology of organizations. By considering resurgence from the perspective of organizational practices, we glean new insight into a locus of both suppression and resistance for Indigenous communities.

The sociology of organizations is a well-established domain of knowledge that explores questions related to the formation and operation of organizations and their role and expression in processes like inequality and modernity. In his review of organizational sociology, W. Richard Scott traces the emergence of the study of organizations and offers that definitions of organizations are as varied as the theoretical models used to study them. The earliest incarnation of organizational sociology arrives with Weber (1924) who emphasized the modern, rational, legal, and administrative qualities of organizations (Scott 2004). This Weberian interest in modern organizations as rational, legal, and administrative was complimented by an interest in organizations as goal-oriented and adaptive systems (Blau and Scott 1962), dominated by myths and ceremonies (Meyer and Rowan 1977) and part of larger social ecosystems (Dimaggio and Powell 1984). Pulling from these theoretical camps we can define an organization as an open and interacting system, dependent upon its environment for resources, able to adapt and change, and often in competition with other organizations. It is a collection of people who pool their agency, alongside other non-human entities, to achieve some outcome or set of outcomes. Most

organizations are hierarchical and structured around power differentials which mark certain classes as able to give orders and others as liable to take them (Smith 2005). Moreover, texts and discourses are key mechanisms through which organizations function, through which order giving and taking happens (Smith 2001). Organizations produce records and these records are residues of power.

In their important and classic contribution to the sociology of organizations “The Iron Cage Revisited” Paul J. Dimaggio and Walter W. Powell ask why in the contemporary era is there “such a startling homogeneity of organizational forms and practices” (1984 pp. 146)? According to Dimaggio and Powell this isomorphism—the similar structuration of organizations—is driven by political coercion, imitative responses to uncertainty, and normative constraints created by professionalization. Two glaring omissions from the theory of organizational change outlined by Dimaggio and Powell are the effect of persistent structures of inequality like race and settler-colonialism on organizational isomorphism and the effect of organizations themselves on perpetuating race and settler-colonialism.

Jeffrey Denis (2020) contends that settler-colonialism operates by bringing about persistent patterns of inequality between settlers and Indigenous Peoples while also abrogating Indigenous authority over Lands they formerly controlled. Settler-colonialism marks Indigenous Peoples as inferior and non-Indigenous people as superior, conditioning the allocation of resources through group competition and collective schemas. Settler-colonial theory emphasizes the elimination, segregation, and assimilation of Indigenous Peoples with the goal of access to Land and the removal of Indigenous authority over those Lands (Veracini 2010; Wolfe 2006). Michael Elliott writes settler-colonialism “is an active structure of domination” that is “fundamentally oriented towards the elimination of Indigenous societies rather than merely their subjugation” (Elliott 2018 pp. 1). Yet, Denis contends that attempts to assimilate Indigenous Peoples are half-hearted. While Indigenous Peoples are forced through institutions like the residential schools to assimilate, they are simultaneously marked as different, never able to live fully as settlers no-matter how much they strive to fit in. Denis writes “this contradictory logic positions settlers as superior, entitled, and normal (2020 pp. 14).” Applying a settler-colonial perspective to organizations, organizations that are created by settlers may engage in practices that further the interests of settlers, delegitimizing Indigenous authority, intensifying the dispossession of Indigenous Lands, and normalizing settler beliefs and practices, while marking

Indigenous beliefs and practices as deviant. In this way, organizations may contribute to settler-colonialism.

While consideration of settler-colonialism remains a weakness of the sociology of organizations, scholars have begun to interrogate the role of organizations in the persistence of race and processes of racialization. Victor Ray (2019) engages in a critique and synthesis of organizational theories like those of DiMaggio and Powell (1984) with structural theories of race pioneered by sociologists like Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2015). Structural theories of race articulate race as a social process of symbolically marking certain groups as inferior and others as superior based on phenotype or culture (Bonilla-Silva 2015; Desmond and Emirbayer 2009). These symbolic differences between groups shape and are shaped by differential resource allocation and resist change through legislation. Racial structures result from and are the result of collective racial schemas or ways of thinking about race. While structural theories of race emphasize ideology (Bonilla-Silva 2015) and the state as a racial structure (Omi and Winant 2014), Ray offers, they neglect the capacity of organizations to affect racialization or race to affect organizations.

By bringing race into organizational theory, Ray (2019) argues that organizations should be conceived as inherently racialized. According to Ray, racialized organizations enhance or diminish the agency of racial groups by determining who merits professional credentials, determining how time as a resource is allocated, apportioning wages, and determining the ability of racialized people to act within prescribed roles within organizations. Racialized organizations also legitimate the unequal distribution of resources like credentials, time, and wages by making these appear as the result of merit, status, and educational difference rather than the outcome of race or racialized practices. Within organizations, Whiteness is treated as a credential, and status and merit are conferred upon whites at the expense of racialized groups. These practices, the credentialing of whiteness and the allocation of time and wages, are often independent of policies and legislation meant to improve the conditions of racialized people within organizational contexts.

Ray's (2020) work builds on a significant literature on institutional racism. Institutional racism encompasses various forms of power including the power to classify racial groups as abnormal, to withhold basic rights from racialized individuals, to deny access to full membership and participation in society, and to economically disadvantage groups based on race (Desmond &

Emirbayer 2009). Experimental studies into hiring practices show that white workers with the same skills, education, and experience as non-white workers are more likely to receive a callback for an interview (Quillian, Pager, Hexel, and Midtbøen 2017). Similarly, theoretical work by Feagin (2000, 2013) and Small and Pager (2020) move beyond examinations of racial attitudes or preferences to consider the institutionalization of race within organizations. These studies move beyond individual approaches to racial prejudice to consider how racism operates through covert or systemic means within institutional and organizational contexts. Ray's approach builds on the institutional racism literature to examine how organizations themselves are racial structures.

Ray's work expands theories of organizations through the consideration of structural theories of race, demonstrating how organizations themselves are racial structures. Still, settler-colonialism remains a conceptual blind spot for organizational theory. While theories of organization sometimes emphasize the exclusion of racialized groups, settler-colonialism is more than just exclusionary, it is ultimately eliminationist. When Indigenous peoples cannot be eliminated, only then they are excluded. From a settler-colonial perspective, organizations condition and legitimate inequality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. They do so through similar means to those enumerated by Ray—through the distribution of resources like credentials, time, wages, and roles. Additionally, settler organizations delegitimize Indigenous communities through their recognition of state authority over the authority of Indigenous Peoples and the recognition of non-Indigenous organizations by state actors. Ray's theory also fails to address how organizations that are explicitly built and controlled by marginalized communities can affect processes like racialization.

Throughout the 20th century and into the present, organizations have been founded by Indigenous communities with various goals. These include the revitalization and reclamation of Indigenous cultures, knowledge, and governance by Indigenous Peoples themselves. Some of these goals differ significantly from those found in non-Indigenous organizations, while others bare remarkable similarity to those found outside Indigenous communities. The former includes improving the quality of life and learning of Indigenous Peoples or reproducing Indigenous cultures and values. The latter include managing capital or driving development. However, even with these differentiated mandates and conditions, Indigenous organizations are themselves subject to similar social forces identified by Powell and Dimaggio (1983). Indigenous

organizations must hire professionals from similar candidate pools to non-Indigenous organizations, contend with uncertainty just like non-Indigenous organizations, and are subject to political and regulatory milieus often to a much greater extent than non-Indigenous organizations. Despite these forces, Indigenous communities build, maintain, and adapt organizations with mandates differentiated from those of non-Indigenous organizations without becoming isomorphic with their non-Indigenous competitors and counterparts.

Though organization building is widespread in Indigenous communities the use of organizational models by Indigenous Peoples remains outside of the literature on resurgence. While Leanne Simpson (2017) begins her book *As We Have Always Done* with a provocative story about the reproduction of ecological knowledge through map-making with Elders, she neglects the organizational context in which this activity takes place. In “the 1980s and 1990s,” she writes, “traditional Ecological Knowledge was in its heyday in the eyes of white policy makers, academics, and even Aboriginal organizations (Simpson 2017 pp. 13).” She laments that these projects were about demonstrating to policymakers the damage that development inflicts on Indigenous Lands “as if dispossession occurs by accident or out of not knowing, rather than being the strategic structure that it is (Simpson 2017 pp. 12).” She then reflects that the Elders saw promise in the project: “what they saw was a process that could be used as a tool to generate cohesion, pride, and rebuilding within our own communities (Simpson 2017 pp. 12).” However, for those maps to be possible and for the process to generate cohesion, pride, and rebuilding, an organizational context was necessary. In this case it was a collaboration between Lakehead University and Indigenous bands.

Simpson’s neglect of organizations in the specific example of resurgence she discusses may stem from an ambivalence toward institutional approaches amongst some Indigenous scholars and activists. In their article “Being Indigenous: Resurgence against Contemporary Colonialism,” Alfred and Corntassel (2005) articulate this antagonism.

To a large extent, institutional approaches to making meaningful change in the lives of Indigenous people have not led to what we understand as decolonization and regeneration; rather they have further embedded Indigenous people in the colonial institutions they set out to challenge (pp. 612).

It is unclear whether Alfred and Corntassel are speaking about Indigenous organizations. More likely they are speaking about institutional practices with a wider purchase in settler-colonialism

like the Indian Act or, perhaps, they are speaking from the perspective of organizations which may be used or even created by Indigenous Peoples but are deeply colonial. However, stemming from this suspicion of “the master’s tools” the role of organizations in resurgence has remained unexamined.

Alfred and Corntassel suggest that there are no neat models of resurgence. Instead, they provide a series of what they call mantras: “Land is Life”, “Language is Power”, “Freedom is the other Side of Fear”, “Decolonize your Diet”, and “Change Happens one Warrior at a Time.” In the Nicola Valley, organizations have been central to each of the processes of resurgence described by these mantras. Here we can see a contradiction in the literature. Simpson offers a process of resurgence, map making, that happened through an organizational context that brought her into contact with Elders; it changed her and allowed for her to experience what Corntassel and Alfred call a “mentoring and learning–teaching relationships” which fostered “real and meaningful human development and community solidarity (2005 pp. 613).” However, typically, these sorts of activities occur within an organizational context, and it is organizations that often enable resurgence.

This is not to disparage Corntassel and Alfred or their perspective. It is true that settler-controlled institutions and organizations have done great harm to Indigenous communities and that many Indigenous communities may have organizations which themselves do great harm to their people. But my work points to a gap in the literature and emphasizes that organizations, when controlled by Indigenous Peoples, can meaningfully contribute to resurgence. I propose that organizations should be taken seriously and examined as key sites enabling Indigenous resurgence and allowing Indigenous Peoples to (re)connect to the Land, reclaim language, confront fear, decolonize their diets, and create change.

Historical Development of Organizations in the Nicola Valley

I want to provide a brief account of the Nl̓eʔkepmx and Syilx culture before turning to the history of some organizations in their community. Prior to Contact with Europeans, Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley lived in small villages of between 80 to 300 people (Teit 1900). Both cultures lacked a chief-role, and most decisions were made at the community-level during gatherings (Boas 1898). While Salish communities along the coast had intense social hierarchies, Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley had very little social inequality and had complex rituals

for maintaining social equality (Ray 1939). Indigenous communities in the Valley were also highly mobile. They would settle in the winter into pit houses, large subterranean dwellings, and then move around in the summer to gather, fish, and then hunt in the fall. The arrival of settlers transformed the community through the fur trade, the influx of disease, and the subsequent colonization of their Lands.

British Columbia joined confederation in 1871. Provincial and federal governments began the work of creating Indigenous reserves or changing the boundaries of the ones already created (Tennant 1990). There were tensions between these two levels of government with the Federal government favoring larger reserves they could use to settle ongoing land disputes and the provincial government favoring small reserves to open more land for development and settlement. Four of the bands in the Nicola Valley were created by the Joint Indian Reserve Commission. The Lower Nicola Indian Band and the Coldwater Indian Band were established in 1878 by the Reserve Commission with small lands set aside for them in the Valley. Cook's Ferry was created in 1879 with territories around where the Nicola River joins the Thompson. In 1889 Upper Nicola was created. While Indigenous Peoples had always lived in the Nicola Valley, the bands did not exist as a formal organization. With the actions of the commissioners the bands were recognized by the federal government and became the organizational centre for Indigenous life. Nooaitch and Shackan left Lower Nicola in 1952 and became their own bands.

In 1907 an organization called the Interior Tribes of British Columbia was founded by Nl̓eʔkepmx Chief John Tetlinitsa, Secwépemc Chief Petit Louis, and Sylix Chief John Chilahitsa. The organization was created to lobby various levels of government to conclude fair and just treaties with the Interior Tribes. In 1909 James Teit, a local ethnographer and informant of Franz Boas, was elected as the organization's secretary. An ardent socialist, Teit saw a direct link between the inequality experienced by the working classes and the disempowerment of Indigenous Peoples (Wickwire 2019). Fluent in all the interior Indigenous languages, Teit could be trusted to translate the words and desires of the Chiefs who did not speak English and feared signing their names to documents (Wickwire 2019). He helped the group to write a Memorial to the new Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier, outlining the colonial history of the interior tribes and asking that Laurier's government enter negotiations with the Chiefs. Teit is the only non-Indigenous signatory to the declaration. The Chiefs and Teit enlisted a powerful lawyer from Toronto, J.M. Clarke, to make a legal claim against the state and Laurier met with the chiefs. In

subsequent months, the federal government pressured BC to negotiate with Indigenous Peoples. The future seemed hopeful.

In 1911, Laurier's Liberals lost the election to Borden's Conservatives. With the political loss came an end to the hopes of the Chiefs for a fair settlement. Borden enlisted Duncan Campbell Scott to deal with the land question and appointed him as the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs (Wickwire 2019). While the Chiefs met with Borden, he ignored their request and their claim that Indigenous Peoples held any title or rights to the Land. He demanded that they accept new boundaries for their reserves. Scott labelled the political organizing of the Chiefs the result of Teit and amended the Indian Act to stop troublesome whites like Teit from "agitating" Indians (Wickwire 2019). He also abrogated Indigenous rights to hire outside legal counsel, a legislative change that would have far-reaching impacts beyond the Nicola Valley. Teit would accompany the Chiefs on several trips to Ottawa to translate their demands to the government. He died in Merritt in 1922 with the land question in BC unanswered. The Laurier Declaration was a transformational document. Geographer Cole Harris, in a footnote of his book *Making Native Space*, writes that the declaration is "one of the most remarkable documents to come out of British Columbia before the First World War" (2011 pp. 378). The declaration didn't sway the government, but it did empower generations of Indigenous Peoples to contest encroachments on their Land and to think earnestly about the future.

What is significant about this era of Indigenous history in BC is the level of political organizing and the unique alliances formed between settlers like Teit and chiefs like Tetlinita, Louis, and Chilahitsa. At a time before Indigenous political subjectivity was acknowledged by most settlers (Morton-Robinson 2006), the organizations created by Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley—such as the Interior Tribes of BC—were overtly political. These organizations were modelled on European organizational forms and centered in the Nicola Valley. While the movement started in this era of political organizing, it would continue into the present. However, it would be complimented by another desire—the regeneration of Indigenous cultural systems.

Following the Laurier Declaration in 1910 political activities switched registers owing to the imposition of new regulations under the Indian Act that limited gathering, organizing, and hiring legal counsel. The Laurier Declaration was a memorial prepared by First Nations leaders and recorded by James Teit in the Interior of BC that addressed then Prime Minister Wilfried Laurier, raising issues of land dispossession, and asking for his government to consider the

claims of Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration provided a detailed history of the arrival of Indigenous Peoples in the land Canada now sought to occupy. Many organizations were developed at the provincial and federal levels including the Indian Homemakers Association in 1930. However, Indigenous organizational activity in the Valley slowed. This owes in part to the growing influence of residential schools over Indigenous societies, the opening of bingo halls and beer parlors on reserve, and the growing dissatisfaction of Indigenous Peoples with politics. These dynamics are outlined in Jeannette Armstrong's (1985) novel *Slash*. Though fictionalized, it is a historically accurate depiction of what was happening in Indigenous communities in the Interior leading up to the 1960s (Fee 1990).

Organizing would intensify with the establishment of the Nicola Valley Friendship Centre in 1968. Founded by a group of off-reserve Indigenous Peoples, the Friendship Centre was mandated to provide representation and services to the off-reserve Indigenous Population living in the Nicola Valley. The formation of the Friendship Centre represented the first in a series of organizations which would radically reshape the organizational ecology of the Nicola Valley creating new environments in which cultural regeneration was possible. Table 4.1 provides an overview and timeline for the types of Indigenous-led organizations developed in the Nicola Valley.

The 1960s would prove pivotal for Indigenous organizing following the announcement of the White Paper Policy. Officially named "Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy, 1969," the White Paper was a policy proposal by the federal government that suggested dissolving the Department of Indian Affairs, repealing treaties, and transferring Federal responsibilities for Indigenous Peoples to the Provinces. The reaction by Indigenous Peoples was widespread with many communities organizing demonstrations (Wilkes 2006). In November of 1969 the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs was established following the tabling of the White Paper. All the Nicola Bands participated in its founding. The White Paper proposal was never ratified, but its announcement served to catalyze a new era of Indigenous organizing and in the decades to follow Indigenous Peoples founded a variety of organizations like the Coldwater Band School and the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology.

Organization	Founding Date	Vision Statement	Context of Emergence
Lower Nicola Indian band	First mentioned in INAAC Records in 1879;	“We, the people of the Lower Nicola Indian Band, commit ourselves to being a peaceful prosperous and secure community made up of healthy individuals rooted in the Nlaka’pamux culture, respecting ourselves, each other, the environment and all of Creation.”	While people gathered in the Lower Nicola Valley prior to the arrival of settlers, it is only with the Joint Indian Reserve Commission that the Lands of the Lower Nicola Indians were recognized as a reserve by the federal government. Many of the Lands were recognized as jointly claimed by other groups from the Valley. Reserves allotted in 1878 by BC Reserve Commission
Cook’s Ferry	First mentioned in INAAC Records in 1879	“We are a recognized and diverse community, strong and thriving, connected to our Nlaka’pamux language, culture and Land, with sustained economic prosperity for future generations”	Reserves allotted in 1878 by the BC Reserve Commission.
Upper Nicola Indian Band	First mentioned in INAAC Records in 1881	“Upper Nicola is a proud, inclusive Syilx community working together to promote sux’xtəm, teach our captik’l and committed to building foundations through EnoWkinWixw.”	Reserves allotted by BC reserve Commission on November 12 1889
Coldwater Indian Band	First mentioned in INAAC Records in 1886	“To enhance and sustain our quality of life through wellness and culture, and to utilize and preserve all our resources for now and future generations.”	Reserves allotted by BC Reserve Commission on September 11th 1878
Shackan Indian Band	Part of Lower Nicola Indian Band until 1955	“Our vision is to provide our members with a healthy community that follows traditional Scw’emx values. Our values translate into helping the younger generation realize their potential, promoting everyone’s involvement in Community life, and being generous to those in need.”	Separated from the Lower Nicola Indian Band.
Nooaitch	Part of Lower Nicola Indian Band until 1955	“The Nooaitch Band council is committed to ensuring their administration provides efficient, cost effective, quality service to membership and businesses. Nooaitch Band will ensure the administration is fair, accountable and transparent.”	Separated from the Lower Nicola Indian Band.
Interior Tribes of British Columbia	1907		“The Nlaka’pamux, Secwépemc, and Syilx chiefs founded the Interior Tribes of British Columbia (ITBC)...to consolidate their challenge to multiple settler intrusions on their territories” (Wickwire 2019 pp. 192). In 1909 James Teit was elected secretary of the Interior Tribes of BC.

Table 4.1 – A list of Indigenous organizations in the Nicola Valley

The Laurier Declaration /The 1910 Memorial	1910		A declaration made by the Chiefs of the Interior Tribes of British Columbia to Prime Minister Laurier that criticized colonial disempowerment and asked for new relationships with the Canadian Government.
Conayt Friendship Society	1968	“We work to holistically improve the quality of life and cultural distinctiveness, and to strengthen friendship and cooperation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members in our community.”	Started as the Nicola Valley Friendship Centre in 1968 to service the off-reserve urban Indigenous Population in Merritt. It was recognized as a charitable society in 1976 by the BC government and provides housing and social services. The centre also facilitates friendship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Merritonians.
Scw'exmx Tribal Council	1971	“Working in unity to improve the quality of life of our People, while promoting our languages and culture and protecting our ancestral and inherent rights.”	Founded in 1971 as the Nicola Valley Indian Administration; 1988 became the Nicola Valley Tribal Association; renamed in 1996 to the Nicola Tribal Association; renamed in 2019 to the Scw'exmx Tribal Association. Has represented various bands from both the Fraser Canyon and the Nicola Valley. Currently represents four of the Nicola Bands: Upper Nicola, Coldwater, Shackan and Nooaitch. In 1988 Lower Nicola formally pulled out of the organization.
The Nicola Valley Institute of Technology	1981	"Empowering learners by strengthening voice and identity through education."	Founded in 1981 under the Nicola Valley Indian Administration in 1985 became a Private Post-Secondary Institute; Became a Public Post-Secondary Institute in 1995
Coldwater Band School	1984	“To enhance the quality of life and learning for children and families by drawing from N'le?kepmx Values and Culture.”	Founded by Janice Antoine and Gordon Antoine and a group of Elders in response to the low graduation and educational success rates of students from Coldwater in Public Schools.
N'kwala School	1990	“Parents, Community Members and Staff working together to achieve the highest quality of education for our students to be life long learners.”	Founded because of the need for education within the community.
Scw'exmx Child and Family Services	1996; Incorporated in 2000	“Work collectively to exercise nle?kepmx and syilx inherent rights as we empower children, young people and families.”	Emerg ed from the introduction of legislation by the BC Government “Child, Family, and Community Services Act” (1996) that allowed for Indigenous communities to manage the affairs of their families and children in accordance with Indigenous Laws. It was formed by Upper Nicola, Lower Nicola, Coldwater, Nooaitch, and Shackan.
Scw'exmx Community Health Services Society	1998		Health was handled by all the bands collectively through the Nicola Valley Indian Administration, when it became the Nicola Valley Tribal Association, Shackan, Coldwater, and Nooaitch decided to continue collaborating.

Stuwix Resource Management	2004	“Rooted in our Land, Stuwix Resources balances successful First Nations business with sustainable forest resources management practices to create and promote healthy ecosystems and healthy independent communities.”	Founded to handle the cut blocks assigned by the provincial government to First Nations communities in the interior.
Lower Nicola Band School	2006	“For all LNIB children, youth and adults to have skills and knowledge to be personally successful, economically productive, actively engaged citizens, who will become the motivated innovators, community builders, creative talent, skilled workers, entrepreneurs and leaders of tomorrow.	Founded to address the desires of the community for local education.
The Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly	2009	“To provide effective and efficient management of the HVC agreements, and to develop and manage Nlaka'pamux Legacy Trust nation-fund programs that provide positive opportunities to enhance the economic and social wellbeing of our communities and members.”	Founded as a result of the Highland Valley Copper revenue sharing agreement between the BC Government and Cook's Ferry, Shackan, Nooaitch, Coldwater, Ashcroft, Boston Bar, Siska, and Nicomen. The Agreement created a trust fund from tax revenue that is managed by the Bands. CNA uses this money to engage in cultural revitalization work and to provide pathways to employment for community members. Lower Nicola concluded their own agreement.
Nicola Valley Indigenous Court	2017		Using a restorative justice approach and traditional ways, a BC Court Judge collaborates with a group of Elders to make sentencing decisions about Indigenous offenders.
Nicola Watershed Governance Partnership	2018	“Recognizing the importance and interconnection of water to the health of human communities, ecosystems and the economy, the Province and the Nicola Chiefs will work in partnership, and through engagement with stakeholders, to sustainably grow water resources in the Nicola Watershed using collaboration, innovation, and creativity for the benefit of future generations.”	An agreement between the BC Government and Upper Nicola, Lower Nicola, Coldwater, Shackan, and Nooaitch. Provides funding for research and policy development.
Merritt Indigenous Justice Centre	2020		Established by the BC government in partnership with Nicola Indigenous Bands to help Indigenous Peoples navigate the criminal justice system.

Resurgent Organizational Practices

The development of organizations as a way of re-establishing Indigenous cultural systems is an important but neglected area of research. While political protests and social movements by Indigenous communities have been of interest to scholars, organization building in the Nicola Valley is different. So far, sociologists have failed to capture resurgent processes analytically even though they are widespread. Instead, resurgence is often conflated with social movements. The process of resurgence is not about making claims against the state or to a particular individual as described by social movements theorists (Della Porto 2013; Tilly & Tarrow 2006; Tilly 1986). Nor is it directed at destigmatization (Lamont 2018) or at creating cultural change for a broader society by transforming systems of meaning (Alexander 2006; Alexander & Smith 2001) as in theories of cultural change. Social movements and societal change may be by-products of the process of resurgence or even its catalyst, but they are not its goal. The goal of resurgence is both the turning away from practices that perpetuate settler-colonialism and turning toward practices that regenerate cultural systems. In the Nicola Valley, Indigenous communities have built organizations as a way of undertaking resurgence.

On September 19th, 2019, I attended the unveiling of a wood carving of Gordon F. Antoine at the entrance to the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT). In 1981, the Nicola Valley Indian Administration (NVIA) began to offer forestry courses. These eventually grew until NVIT was founded as a post-secondary institute in 1983. The carving features Gordon on one side and a pick-up truck on the other. In between is a bench. Gordon was the chief of the Coldwater Indian Band from 1976 to 2005. He was amongst the founders of many of the organizations in the Valley including the NVIA, NVIT, the Coldwater Band School, and Scw'exmx Child and Family Services.

Several people spoke at the unveiling. His daughter Laura told a story about her father using his blue pick-up truck as collateral to secure financing to pay employees in the early days of NVIT. Grand Chief of the Nicola Valley Percy Joe and Coldwater Chief Lee Spahan both spoke about the importance of collaboration between the Indigenous communities of the Nicola Valley. Gordon's widow, Janice Antoine got up to the microphone and paused, tearful and overcome with emotion. She spoke about how much she loved Gordy, how much he loved the school, all the students, and how, when he proposed NVIT, he saw it growing into a center for Indigenous intellectual life and cultural reclamation. Janice hoped the bench would be a good

place for students to do something Gordon loved to do—think. What had started out as a strategy to generate employment for Indigenous peoples grew into a provincially funded organization with the goal of “Empowering learners by strengthening voice and identity through education.” The organization has become central to the process of resurgence helping Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola to reclaim their cultural practices and to speak their languages.

Gordon is remembered for his vision. One participant, Darla, the administrative assistant at the Coldwater School describes Gordon this way: “Gordon really believed in education. He really felt people needed to be educated.” Another participant Marilyn O, an early childhood educator at the Coldwater School, describes Gordon’s vision in relation to Nl̓eʔkepmxcin. “The language is a big thing. That's what Gordon’s vision was. And it's going to happen. It's going to happen!” Gordon was a fluent speaker of Nl̓eʔkepmxcin. Janice told me of the many times that Gordon would be asked to address a gathering of white politicians. He would get up and begin to speak in Nl̓eʔkepmxcin and then, in perfect English, ask if anyone understood him and explain what he had said often dazzling the crowd with an insightful thought or story. Gordon was a living example of the depths of Indigenous knowledge systems. His performance at political functions exposed both white ignorance and Indigenous brilliance.

Gordon’s vision for the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology as a center for Indigenous intellectual life was to create fluent speakers of the language he spoke. I took five courses in Nl̓eʔkepmxcin at the school with between 15 and 24 students. These courses were attended by a variety of people, Elders who had lost their language to residential schools, teachers and staff at band schools who wanted to ensure the next generation had access to the language that was stolen from them. Marilyn O, who attended these classes, said this about language learners “Some of them don't have Elders, you know? So how are they going to learn it? They have to, somehow, be with people who can speak. And then they grasp it real fast.” However, finding financial support for the courses was difficult. Students had to fundraise for tuition and honorariums for fluent Elders by selling t-shirts.

This is no longer the case and financial support for the language has grown at NVIT and in British Columbia. In 2022, NVIT partnered with the University of British Columbia (UBC) to offer an Indigenous Fluency Degree Program. The program is the result of the collaboration of two people who worked with Gordon and understood his vision, Dr. Verna Billy-Minnabarriet and Mandy Na’Zinek Jimmie. The program provides training in the language and offers students

an immersive environment to learn alongside native speakers. Many Elders without any formal education now teach university-level courses in the program. Its goal is to create fluent speakers of the language.

The first cohort began studies in 2021 with eight students and a second cohort of thirteen started in 2022. A third cohort is set to start in 2023. The potential of 21 students becoming fluent speakers represents an almost unimaginable good to the community. In my time in the Valley, I only met three community members who had achieved fluency in the last decade, and this was because they had families who spoke the language that they could learn from. The program represents the opportunity for 21 students whose families may not speak the language, who don't have fluent Elders, to become fluent. Gordon died of cancer in 2005, but his legacy lives on through organizations like NVIT and the Coldwater School and through the reclamation of languages. The actions of NVIT were not directed outward as political demonstrations but rather were inwardly focused on a process of cultural regeneration that is directly measurable through increases in language fluency and the number of fluent speakers.

In what follows, I provide a detailed evidentiary account of how organizations are contributing to resurgence in the Nicola Valley. Drawing on the work of Ray (2019) and Cornthassel and Alfred (2005), I show how organizational practices are contributing to resurgence. Unlike settler-colonial organizations which diminish the agency of Indigenous peoples, Indigenous organizations in the Nicola Valley enhance Indigenous agency. They enhance the agency of Indigenous Peoples by 1) allocating space and time to Indigenous languages and cultural practices; 2) limiting the importance of whiteness as a credential; 3) making Indigeneity into a credential; and 4) rejecting practices that perpetuate settler-colonialism. Through these interconnected practices, Indigenous organizations make resurgence in the Nicola Valley possible by increasing language usage and reproducing traditional practices while enabling a critique of settler-colonialism and limiting the power of whiteness to determine their value and worth. Though this is an account of Indigenous organizations in the Nicola Valley, it should not be taken to suggest that all Indigenous organizations contribute to resurgence.

1) Allocating Space and Time to Indigenous Languages and Cultural Practices

Indigenous organizations make space and time for Indigenous languages and cultural practices. Non-Indigenous organizations are focused on the normalization of whiteness, non-Indigenous languages, and cultural practices (Ray 2019). By increasing the supply side of Indigenous languages and cultural practices, Indigenous organizational cultures facilitate resurgence and the reproduction of Indigenous languages and traditional practices like hide tanning, harvesting, and gathering medicines, but also Indigenous ways of thinking about the world. These are formal practices that are monitored and implemented by staff and community.

An Indigenous teacher at the Coldwater Band School, Kathy describes the work done by the school to make time for students to encounter language and culture. She says there is “a lot of language and culture. All the students participate in different kinds of culture.” She continues, “We brought different community members in, and they did hide tanning. We would go see people at the hall and watch them do their spēn and tule.” Tanning is the traditional practice of preparing hides to make clothing. Recently, under Kathy’s leadership, the school created a hide tanning lodge where students spend time with Elders preparing hides and then learn to make traditional clothing from them. Spēn is hemp which can be made into a strong rope for fishing and hunting. Tule is a type of river reed that is used to make mattresses and the roof for pit houses. Kathy continues “We’re always taking trips up to the Aljum Ranch and the kids spent time up there at least once or twice a year. We went up to Petit Creek, way up past Meadows, and we went up to Pennask to collect tea, the Indian tea, picking berries and gathering plants.” As Corn tassell and Alfred write about one of their mantras of resurgence “our people must regain the self-sufficient capacity to provide our own food, clothing, shelter, and medicines (2005 pp. 613).” Travelling as an organized group to places where students can gather plants and pick berries is an important part of how Indigenous cultural knowledge, languages, and practices are reproduced and transferred to the next generation and it allows for Indigenous Peoples to decolonize their diet and develop self-sufficient capacities.

Another Indigenous teacher at the Coldwater Band School who is Cree described making places in the school for language. One of the initiatives at the school was to put words in Nl̓eʔkepmxcin on the walls. Some of these words described what they were attached to, while others described complex Indigenous knowledge systems like those associated with the family.

[The language] has blossomed everywhere. It is blossoming everywhere. I can see it. You walk in and you can see the Nl̓eʔkepmxcin word for wall, you can see the word for ceiling, window. You see it everywhere, it's all over and when I first came back, I was pasting up [placing on a wall the word] family, you know? And I thought to when my dad was talking about the importance of family and all of the different roles of family and how each of those are, you could do two or three units on family and understanding family like the way we understand the relationship between a father and a daughter, a father and a son, younger sister, younger brother, aunty, uncle, it's endless. Then I knew yeah, I'm in the right place, as I was pasting those up and I knew.

Indigenous organizations create spaces where the language is spoken, learned, and valued. By making time to teach Indigenous students how to speak the language, Indigenous organizations contribute to resurgence, reproducing and valuing something that had been viewed as an anachronism by settler society. This matches Cornthassel and Alfred's description of the importance of language to resurgence. They write "our people must recover ways of knowing and relating from outside the mental and ideational framework of colonialism by regenerating themselves in a conceptual universe formed through Indigenous languages (2005 pp. 613)." By papering the school with language, Randi helps to create that conceptual universe. She continues "I think it's so important that [students] learn the language, that they know the language, to play and to pray in the language and to converse in the language... To be able to have the language and identify with part of who they are, it's engrained, it's part of their DNA." This is seen by Randi as contributing to the wellbeing of the students. Here the school makes space and time for the language.

Indigenous organizational cultures do not simply reproduce language or traditional cultural practices but also instruct students in what Leanne Simpson (2017) calls Indigenous thought systems. Indigenous thought systems are tribal knowledges particular to an Indigenous community. A non-Indigenous community member who worked as a public health nurse in Coldwater describes this sort of learning in the early days of the school.

Students learned experiential a lot by going on the Land and learning the culture at the same time as the ABCs. So, they were learning about the forests and the water and the earth and the planting, basically survival, what traditionally native people did on the Land and what they knew, and what they knew was way beyond ABC. They had their language which they communicated with each other and were spiritual. They had an understanding of systems, and I don't think the [public] schools teach that sort of thing, systems, how

everything is related and how everything was affected, how everything belonged, everything had a function and a reason right down to the smallest bug.

Here, the worker observes how Land-based practices – in this case facilitated by an Indigenous organization – provide students the opportunity to learn a hidden curriculum that enables them to understand Indigenous ways of thinking. This supports the work of Alfred and Corntassel on resurgence who write that for resurgence to happen “our people must reconnect with the terrain and geography of their Indigenous heritage if they are to comprehend the teachings and values of the ancestors (2005 pp. 613).” I observed during field trips out to places like Pennask and Petit Creek that once Elders got on the Land with students, they came to life, telling rich and detailed stories about the interconnection of different places, peoples, species of plants and animals. While students in band schools receive instruction in the same subjects as the public school system, Indigenous cultural practices happen as a kind of addition to the curriculum. In this sense, communities use the master’s tools alongside traditional practices to give community members the capacity to “walk between worlds,” a phrase that was often used by community members to describe developing competencies and code-switching between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews.

By allocating space and time to Indigenous languages and cultural practices, Indigenous organizations like band schools, post-secondary institutes, and child and family agencies, facilitate the exposure of Indigenous Peoples to traditional ways of knowing and being. This enables resurgence by regenerating and reproducing Indigenous cultural systems and ensuring that they are passed down to future generations. These practices also enable workers in Indigenous organizations, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to gain an awareness and understanding of how to think about the local geography as well as use the language and engage in traditional practices.

2) Limiting Whiteness as a Credential

Jeffrey Denis argues that settler-colonialism positions “settlers as superior, entitled, and normal (2020 pp. 14).” Non-Indigenous organizational cultures in North America tend to normalize the white racial identity (Ray 2020), credentialing whiteness by giving whites a special status based solely on their racial identity and disadvantaging Indigenous Peoples. Whites are viewed as automatically competent, superior, and normal, while Indigenous peoples are viewed as

incompetent, inferior, and deviant. In contrast, Indigenous organizations limit the agency of whites through organizational practices that invert these credentialing processes. Whites are not viewed automatically as incompetent, inferior, or deviant but are required to prove themselves by developing what staff members term cultural competencies. These are a range of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills that afford workers the ability to interact with people of diverse Indigenous backgrounds without taking offence or perceiving themselves as under attack. These informal practices limit the normalization of whiteness and limit the social status conferred upon the white racial identity. This does not occur through formal training but informally through conversations, in staff meetings, and during social events. This informal organizational practice limits the capacity for whiteness to act as a credential and increases Indigenous agency to name, locate, and remedy the negative effects of settler-colonialism in their lives.

The Coldwater School had three non-Indigenous staff members, including myself, and six Indigenous staff members. Two non-Indigenous staff members were professionally certified teachers. A non-Indigenous female teacher at the Coldwater School explained her experience: “In the last year, particularly, many Indigenous issues were brought up in meetings and trying to understand the Indigenous culture, how white people treated the Indigenous People very badly as a historical fact.” The ongoing conversations about Indigenous issues created tensions for this teacher. Instead of accepting the critique and becoming wise to it, the teacher focused on her own complicity and feelings of otherness.

At times I almost felt as if I was being attacked, that I was the elephant in the room, and nobody seemed to realize that I took this personally as if I was the one putting down Indigenous peoples. I mentioned that to the principal once and I made the comment, ‘as I am going down the hallway I almost feel as if there are arrows coming down the hallway into my back’ and she was pretty shocked. But, I realize that there are problems and I really tried to understand and respect that but at the same time I felt as if I was being somewhat attacked, maybe not personally, but because of the history of how white people treated Indigenous Peoples and I found it quite hard, because I took it quite personally, and I hate to use the word, but being integrated or being assimilated into this society.

In Indigenous organizational cultures whiteness is not treated as normal or natural but as deeply problematic. Through conversations and in meetings, the teacher experiences the critique of whiteness offered by Indigenous workers as an attack and perceives herself to be ostracized

because of her whiteness. This limits her agency and her capacity to incorporate into the organizational culture at the school.

At the Coldwater School, Indigenous peoples constitute a majority, but this isn't always the case. An Indigenous teacher at the Coldwater Band School offers her experience working with white teachers in another band school where she was the only certified teacher who was Indigenous.

I was having dinners with staff and listening to them talk about me being the only Native in a room full of white teachers who have lived privileged lives, who never have had to experience any of the issues that First Nations kids, parents, grandparents, great grandparents have faced. They sit there and they collect a pay cheque from the First Nation, and they are complaining about low math levels, low reading levels, how this kid stinks, how this kid never washes, how this parent and that parent are related. The list goes on and on and on. I had to leave because I am like, 'Why are you here?'

The Indigenous teacher is exasperated by the inability of her white colleagues to understand the experience of Indigenous Peoples and to problematize their own status. Since whites constitute a majority in this setting, there is very little she can do, so she just leaves and laments to me that there is no oversight or governance for "how they are treating the staff, how they are treating the community." However, at the Coldwater School there is a sort of governance that happens informally through conversations and in meetings that disrupts these sorts of stereotypes. People who are unable to relinquish these stereotypes are unable to integrate themselves into the organization and though they are not asked to leave, they usually leave on their own.

Within Indigenous organizations, white workers are differentiated based on their ability to accept the critique, problematize whiteness, and understand the complicity of the white racial identity in settler-colonialism. Many white teachers, like the one quoted above, eventually leave the band school to go work in the public school system. However, there are white workers who integrate successfully into Indigenous organizations. They come to occupy a position that Goffman (1963) terms 'the wise'. The wise are people who have embarked on a moral career of understanding stigmatized groups like Indigenous Peoples. They are "sympathetic others who are ready to adopt" the standpoint of the stigmatized, "and to share with them the feeling that they are human and 'essentially' normal" (Goffman 1963 pp. 19-20). Adapting a moral career as the wise allows white workers in Indigenous organizations to develop what was often termed

‘cultural competencies’ by Indigenous staff members. These encompass a variety of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral skills that empower workers to engage with individuals from a variety of Indigenous backgrounds without feeling offended or threatened.

One example of the wise comes from a non-Indigenous worker at NVIT. The staff at NVIT is approximately 25% non-Indigenous while the professoriate is 50% non-Indigenous with the balance Indigenous. The non-Indigenous worker shares a substantive critique of settler-colonialism including “the criminalization of Indigenous Peoples, their overrepresentation in the justice system, children in care, the sixties scoop, and the continued extraction of resources.” She then goes on to acknowledge “I still grew up very privileged and I still continue to benefit from my privilege, so it’s given me perspective in a lot of ways.” This allows her to recognize that “a lot of people that are around here, whether they are students or staff, it is quite obvious to see their trauma, it is quite obvious to see that they’ve had some pretty horrific things happen to them.” She continues “Sometimes you don’t even have to have a conversation, you can just tell, you can just read it.” Here by accepting complicity in settler-colonialism the white worker can move from a stigmatized white racial identity to the category of the wise and become integrated into the Indigenous organization. She develops cultural competencies and can recognize and even sympathize with the traumatic experiences of the Indigenous Peoples who surround her, instead of seeing their trauma or narratives as an attack on herself or her identity.

By limiting whiteness as a credential and its capacity to normalize the white racial identity through informal practices, Indigenous organizational cultures enhance Indigenous agency and the capacity of Indigenous peoples to offer a substantive critique of settler-colonialism. This happens in organizations modelled on Western organizational forms, like the school and post-secondary institute, but happens in a way that gives Indigenous Peoples control and decision-making authority as well as the power to informally recognize and ratify certain ways of interacting. The ratification of this critique within Indigenous organizational cultures enhances the organization’s capacity to respond to and modify the negative effects of settler-colonialism and to turn away from practices that further settler-colonialism. By developing cultural competencies non-Indigenous workers can become enablers of cultural regeneration. Indigenous organizations can then turn toward resurgent practices which regenerate Indigenous cultural, spiritual, and political existence.

3) *Making Indigeneity into a Credential*

Indigenous organizations validate Indigenous lived experiences and knowledges of cultural practices and languages as a form of cultural capital. Michèle Lamont and Annette Lareau (1988) define cultural capital as a high-status signal used to delineate membership. Cultural capital is an embodied disposition and a capacity to draw upon cultural repertoires to perform certain types of action. However, Prudence Carter (2004) has critiqued sociology for failing to demonstrate empirically the difference between dominant and non-dominant forms of cultural capital. Within Indigenous organizational cultures, Indigenous knowledge and lived experience are viewed as a high-status signal, a symbol of membership, and a proxy for occupational suitability. It is a non-dominant form of cultural capital. Within Indigenous organizations, Indigenous cultural capital functions as a sort of credential both formally and informally. Credentialing is a process that relies upon formal educational qualifications or certifications to determine who is fit to undertake certain types of occupations (Collins 2019). Within Indigenous organizations, Indigenous cultural capital, particularly knowledge of Indigenous languages and traditional practices, often acquired informally, has become a credential. In this sense, Indigenous organizations reward those who possess Indigenous cultural capital with access to certain types of occupations and a special status within Indigenous organizations.

Indigenous organizations center Indigenous cultural capital, its legitimation and reproduction. Workers in Indigenous organizations see Indigenous cultural capital as important to their mandates and as having positive impact on organizational culture. Randi, an Indigenous teacher at the Coldwater Band School, explains “We got some amazing champions at the school who understand the language and know the language and know how to build resources for the language.” Here she views speakers of Nl̓eʔkepmxcin as *champions*. She reflects on the positive impact of the language on students “I get chills thinking about our students sitting in the lunchroom and you know, talking in the language. It’s there. We have all of the components there.” Indigenous cultural capital functions here informally as a credential.

Similarly, an early childhood educator at the school, who was removed from her family during the sixties scoop, reflects on the importance of the language. “Even with myself right now I’m learning with my kids and it’s a lot of fun. Even with little [names student] there with the prayer. I find the younger they are, they catch on to it so fast. They’re like little sponges with the

language and learning more about the culture like harvesting.” The student she names was a four-year-old boy who was able to recite fully and independently the prayer said at the school in Nl̓eʔkepmxcin.

Indigeneity as a credential extends beyond knowledge to encompass certain types of behaviors or qualities. Chief of the Lower Nicola Indian Band Aaron Sumexheltza describes the qualities of Nl̓eʔkepmx leaders this way.

I think a lot of what constituted a leader was based on their qualities. I think one of them was their oration and their ability to communicate. So, I believe the qualities are humility, integrity. I think the ability to sway the people, because ultimately, it's the people who decide. It's not for a chief or a leader to come in and say this is what we are going to do, they may have councils and discussions and one leader may advocate or be an advocate for doing something and another for doing something else, but I think through dialogue and discussion I think that's how they would come to a decision.

Indigenous cultural capital encompasses the ability to orate and communicate, to have integrity and humility. In the example provided by Chief Sumexheltza it encompasses a way of engaging with people by not telling others what to do, but instead advocating for a position and letting people decide for themselves what they should do. This was a common exhortation amongst Indigenous Peoples. During an interview, one Elder explained that leaders were the least powerful and it was the job of the communities to take power away from leaders if they thought they had power over others.

This dynamic plays out in schools. In their work on education amongst the Nl̓eʔkepmx, Robert Sterling and Yvonne Hebert (1984) offer that Interior Salishan languages lack a causative construction. Causatives are commands used to tell someone to do something. Instead, in the Interior Salishan languages “a verbal contract must be made explicit between speaker and hearer before a speaker can form expectations of an addressee with respect to directives issued (Sterling and Hebert 1984 pp. 294).” They offer that owing to this linguistic difference, children in the Nicola Valley become accustomed to self-determination. This creates difficulty for non-Indigenous teachers who work with Indigenous students and carry with them the expectation of obedience. They write “a non-Indian teacher is unlikely to share or to have experienced childrearing practices traditional to the Nicola Valley (Sterling and Hebert 1984 pp. 299).” While this will be evident amongst Indigenous language speakers, this resistance to being ordered around would also form a deep cultural narrative present even in the behaviors of members who

do not speak the language. Alfred and Cornthassel write “our people must reconstitute the mentoring and learning–teaching relationships that foster real and meaningful human development and community solidarity (2015 pp. 613).” By reproducing these non-authoritarian interaction rituals in schools, Indigenous communities preserve these teaching relationships, and contribute to resurgence.

Despite its recognition as an asset, in the Nicola Valley, Indigenous cultural capital does not have to be coupled to an Indigenous identity. Indigenous organizational cultures show a preference for workers who can acquire this comportment or who possess it because of community membership. Non-Indigenous workers are encouraged to engage with and develop Indigenous cultural capital as a credential. A white teacher at the Coldwater Band School reflects “the principal kept harping, ‘you have to be more Indigenous’ and I was saying to her ‘It is difficult for me to see the Indigenous perspective because I am not Indigenous’.” Here, the teacher is being encouraged by the principal to be more Indigenous and to acquire Indigenous cultural capital for her work but is finding it hard to gain this perspective. Later in the interview she complains that it was difficult to get the students to listen to her but eventually she found a way. This demonstrates the occupational consequences of not possessing Indigenous cultural capital. Workers are encouraged to develop Indigenous cultural capital and those lacking it may have difficulty incorporating themselves into Indigenous organizational cultures.

Another consequence of not possessing Indigenous cultural capital is that white co-workers can come off to their Indigenous colleagues as particularly domineering or bossy. This makes it difficult for non-Indigenous people to work with their Indigenous colleagues. An Indigenous teacher Kathy describes a white colleague this way: “One person who was trying to be really dominating and really trying to get her way. It was her way or the highway. I didn’t want that.” Asked what she did in response, she says “just leaving her, walking away, because she wanted her way. So, I went the other way and yeah, I just didn’t want to give in (laughs).” While a lot of the credentialism surrounding Indigeneity is informal and operates in situations like working with colleagues or teaching students, there is increasing recognition of Indigenous cultural capital through formal certifications.

With growing recognition of Indigenous languages, fluent speakers have been given formal credentials for their Indigenous cultural capital in BC. For example, fluent speakers of Indigenous languages in BC can become fully licensed teachers without any formal education.

Two fluent speakers who worked at the Lower Nicola Indian Band School, for example, one as a lunchroom supervisor and another as a bus driver, became certified teachers because of this program and now work full-time as language teachers. Moreover, in the new language fluency degree program offered jointly by UBC and NVIT, many of the teachers have no formal education whatsoever but are considered by the university as professors qualified to teach university level courses. In both examples we see how practices in Indigenous organizations are weaved with non-Indigenous organizational practices like formal credentialing.

Indigeneity as a credential can have negative effects. Non-Indigenous public schools seek fluent speakers to educate non-Indigenous children in Indigenous languages, increasing the demand for Indigenous cultural capital. This is a sort of isomorphism, where public schools imitate the practices of Indigenous organizations like recognizing Indigenous cultural capital. This demand-side pressure has led to many of the services that used to be free to Indigenous organizations to become monetized, undermining the capacity of Indigenous organizations to provide care and instruction in Indigenous languages and to Indigenous children. Before, Indigenous Elders were not compensated for their time and knowledge with money, often volunteering their time to help the community. This made up for the funding gaps that existed between Indigenous and non-Indigenous school at a time when Indigenous schools received less funding than public schools but this practice has come to be viewed as extractive.

By recognizing Indigeneity and Indigenous cultural capital as a credential, both formally and informally, Indigenous organizations support efforts at resurgence. By increasing the supply of cultural capital in Indigenous organizations, Indigeneity as a credential supports the creation of cultural resources for language learners, as well as the instruction of Indigenous students in Indigenous languages and in ways that are aligned with traditional Indigenous practices. This increases Indigenous agency. While fluent Elders used to work as bus drivers and lunchroom supervisors, they are now given higher status roles in Indigenous organizations as their cultural capital and indigeneity is formally ratified as a credential. At the lower Nicola Indian Band Schools, two fluent Elders became fully certified teachers, one used to work as a bus-driver and the other as a lunch-room supervisor. This recognition is important to the regeneration of Indigenous languages and cultural practices as it creates a market for skills and qualities that used to be stigmatized in non-Indigenous organizational cultures.

4) Rejecting practices that perpetuate settler-colonialism

Racialized organizations “often decouple formal commitments to equity, access, and inclusion from policies and practices that reinforce, or at least do not challenge, existing racial hierarchies” (Ray 2019 pp. 43). Ray continues “this decoupling allows organizations to maintain legitimacy and appear neutral or even progressive while doing little to intervene in pervasive patterns of racial inequality” (Ray 2019 pp. 43). Indigenous organizations, by contrast, turn away from policies and practices that perpetuate settler-colonialism, with the goal of undoing pervasive patterns of inequality between Indigenous Peoples and settlers. This is both a formal and informal organizational practice. This aids resurgence but it also gives workers a sense of purpose with many reflecting on a desire to not have future generations experience the hardship or difficulty that they experienced. It also manifests in a desire by workers to create positive change in their communities.

Workers in Indigenous organizations focus on transforming the circumstances of future generations of Indigenous Peoples by turning away from common practices that perpetuate settler-colonialism in settler-colonial organizations like residential schools. During a policy and planning meeting of the staff at the Coldwater Band School in June of 2021, shortly after the announcement of human remains on the grounds of the Kamloops Indian Residential School, the staff went around and discussed the effect residential schools had on their lives. For the staff that attended residential school, the responses were focused on trauma and how the schools created a sense of ongoing fears. One teacher reflected on how she lives constantly wary of bad outcomes. When non-Indigenous staff members, including myself, were asked about this, we reflected on the harms done to our friends and family. This discussion then became the basis for the staff’s planning work. How could staff turn away from the harms done at the residential schools? In residential schools, children were forbidden to speak Indigenous languages, so staff theorized how more language could be integrated throughout the day, for example at breakfast time.

Rejecting settler-colonialism happens explicitly through policy and planning but also routinely and informally through how staff view their work. In reflecting on her job at the Coldwater Band School, Marilyn O develops insight about her work by critiquing residential schools “The kids get to go home every day and at the residential school they never got to go home.” She reflects on these differences in relation to the language and expression.

Even speaking for myself with the language. It's fun learning to speak it. And I wished I got to learn when I was younger. But it just didn't happen, so I feel there's a lot of difference between the band schools and the residential schools. I find the residential schools, they took everything from us. Everything! Our language, our culture. You had to dress a certain way. Your hair had to be a certain way and now I feel our kids are, they're more free. They get to dress the way they want. They're learning to speak their language and there's nobody who gets to say anything about it.

Here, Marilyn ties the function of the school to freedom and the ability of the kids to speak their language without intervention. For Corntassel and Alfred this work is essential to resurgence. They write “our people must transcend the controlling power of the many and varied fears that colonial powers use to dominate and manipulate us into complacency and cooperation with its authorities” (2005 pp. 613). Through the Coldwater Band School Marilyn becomes an agent helping kids to discover that “freedom is the other side of fear.”

Kathy, a teacher at the school, reflects on her experiences at residential school in comparison to the Coldwater School.

I sure didn't want my kids to go through what I went through because I had a hard time being, having that identity because of not really connecting with my family. Being sent away [to residential school] and so many kids coming home at once that I was sent away again to other family members. That disconnected me from my community and my family. Being a part of the school here, the community connection was really strong. The people got involved with the school by helping teach us the language and the culture.

Here, Kathy shares her own experience coming home from residential school and not having any family or community connection. This contrasts with her experience at the band school, where families and community are given agency within the school. When she started working there, she noticed resilient community connections and community members who were actively involved, teaching staff and students to speak the language and use the culture. Here residential schools and critiques of past experiences become a referent that is used normatively to treat the students differently than how Marilyn and Kathy experienced childhood with the goal of providing freedom, language, culture, and connection.

This ongoing process of turning away from practices that perpetuate settler-colonialism extends beyond the quotidian and policy and planning to include the way community discussions and debates are structured. Sara, a former student at the school and member of the Coldwater

Indian Band reflected on her participation in a local hearing the Band Council held about the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion. This is a pipeline that was meant to run from the oil sands in Alberta to the Port in Burnaby directly through the Coldwater Reserve, following the path of a similar Pipeline built in the 1950s. The Coldwater Band opposed it and held meetings with their band members to keep them updated.

People got sharp and critical of Chief and Council. But I think, even meetings like that, having a place like that where they can, where as many people who want to can talk, that's resistance. At least people are talking about it and staying informed. There may be mostly criticism and complaining about things, but at least they're getting their voice in, because sometimes people feel as if they don't have a place for that or they miss a band meeting but I think having an opportunity for people to get together.

This aligns with the practices discussed in the previous section about using oration and discussion for decision-making instead of order-giving or hierarchical relations. By turning toward traditional practices, organizations turn away from practices that perpetuate settler-colonialism.

Chief Sumexheltza reflects on the contradiction of participating in colonial organizations like the band system.

I asked myself before I ran for Chief and Council, people would argue, you are just falling into the colonial system, so I asked myself the question, how do I make a positive change in my community? You can do it in many ways not just by being an elected leader under the Indian Act. But I felt that's what I have right now, so I decided, even though it is an imposed colonial system, there's still opportunities to, through education and awareness and working with others, that we can hopefully break free of the colonial system and hopefully come back to some form of Nl̓eʔkepmx governance, of Sc'wex'mx governance, or some combination of the two. I think that ... some of the better leaders are the leaders that understand the colonial history of our country and why we are where we are and figuring out where we want to go when we move forward.

Here, Chief Sumexheltza is concerned with the paradox of participation in a colonial system but still sees his role of Chief as meaningful and as having the potential to create positive change. He notes that the better leaders are those who understand colonial history and are still able to implement traditional governance practices within the colonial system. Here there is a moving away from practices that perpetuate settler-colonialism, integrating traditional forms of

leadership, and this intersects with traditional organizational practices like engaging with governments and participating in a settler-colonial system. This is an example of how the master's tools are weaved with Indigenous cultural practices to regenerate Indigenous cultural systems.

Organization building is often viewed as a response to the negative effects of settler-colonialism. Participants reflected on the origins of band schools in the difficulty students experienced in the public school system. Janice E, a non-Indigenous woman who married into Coldwater and now has Indigenous status (through the Indian Act), reflected on her memory of the school's formation. She worked for many years as a public health nurse in the community.

The former Grand Chief of the Coldwater Band, when the Elders said this is what we need, we need education, we need to educate the children ourselves because they are not being successful and they're dropping out and they're quitting and they need help. He said, 'fine, we'll just open our own schools', got some books and got a teacher and they sat in this local hall, this community hall and they started to learn.

Janice describes the formation of the school as originating in the desire of Elders, in direct opposition to the low success rates of students in the public schools, turning away from the public school system. Similarly, Darla, a staff member at the Coldwater School, reflects on her desire for the students to have a good experience that can help them even if they have a difficult home life.

If we ask these kids 20 years from now what they felt, I'm hoping they felt they had a real good experience too, you know, because I've worked here a long time and it's been a real good experience. It doesn't matter, I've seen kids come through here, sometimes their home life isn't the best, but we try to give them that education and feed them, give them knowledge. Teach them stuff that they can go home and hopefully that resonates for them in the long term.

Similarly, Randi reflects on the effects of hiring policies on the school's ability to create a positive organizational culture. "So, in this school lately my experience has been incredible because it's been a fully Indigenous staff, which is probably why we are all on the same wavelength, because we all want the same thing for our kids." Indigenous organizational cultures implement policies and carry out practices that strive to transform elements of settler-colonialism

and regenerate Indigenous cultural systems by consciously turning away from practices that reproduce settler-colonialism.

Rejecting settler-colonial practices involves cultivating an awareness of the contradictions between participation in a colonial system and participation in practices meant to challenge settler-colonialism. By viewing their practices as opposed to settler-colonialism, workers can engage in making change both in small ways, by, for example, making children feel included, free, and part of a community, but also in larger ways that reproduce Indigenous cultural practices and languages. This enables resurgence by regenerating Indigenous cultural systems but also by offering better decision-making practices that are responsive to and aligned with traditional customs.

Not only the master's tools

Indigenous organizations like the Coldwater Band School and the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology are modelled on western organizational forms. However, in the Nicola Valley, community members have incorporated organizational practices to weave these forms with elements of their traditional culture by limiting the status of the white racial identity, by recognizing and ratifying Indigenous knowledges, and by turning away from practices that perpetuate settler-colonialism. While these findings are based mostly on observations and interviews conducted within these two organizations, one can reasonably assume they are present in other Indigenous organizations in the Nicola Valley as well.

Returning to Audre Lorde's aphorism at the beginning of this paper, the weaving together of Indigenous cultures and languages with modern organizational models challenges the hegemony of the master and perhaps mastery itself. It allows for Indigenous communities in the Nicola to refuse practices that contribute to settler-colonialism and move toward practices that contribute to the reclamation and rebuilding of their cultural systems as well as their linguistic, spiritual, and political existence. I hope to have demonstrated that Indigenous organizations can be key sites of cultural reclamation and resurgence that Simpson (2017), Alfred and Cornthassel (2005), and other Indigenous scholars powerfully articulate.

As a non-Indigenous teacher in an Indigenous school and as a non-Indigenous student in an Indigenous language class at the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, I saw these practices firsthand. The impetus for me joining the language class was to develop Indigenous cultural

capital. In the class, I also encountered many situations where my whiteness became an impediment or was called out by Elders. During a game, for example, I inadvertently grabbed the prize of an Elder, to which he responded, “your seme is coming out,” with seme being the word for white. I was also called upon to incorporate traditional Indigenous concepts and ideas into my teaching and this formed an interesting part of my work.

By engaging in organizational practices that challenge settler-colonialism and the hegemony of whiteness, Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley have been able to revalue and reproduce Indigenous cultural capital, make space for Indigenous languages and traditional practices, create practices and policies that challenge whiteness and settler-colonization, and turn indigeneity into a credential. The master’s tools alone cannot dismantle the master’s house, but when weaved with cultural elements drawn from and deeply rooted in the experiences of subaltern peoples and communities, perhaps they can do something even more important. This is precisely the work being done in the Nicola Valley.

Conclusion

Through this chapter, I have sought to show how modern organizational forms, when adapted and controlled by Indigenous peoples, can contribute to resurgence. There is an organization gap in theories of resurgence and a resurgence gap in the sociology of organizations that I have begun to fill in. By bringing these two literatures into conversation with literature on settler-colonialism, I have attempted to show how they can provide a nuanced account of organizations as key sites of resurgence. I highlighted historical details from the ethnographic record on Nl̓eʔkepmx culture before considering the effects of settler-colonialism on organization-building in the Nicola. I then focused on organizational practices that contribute to resurgence in the Nicola Valley and enhance the agency of Indigenous people by 1) allocating space and time to Indigenous languages and cultural practices; 2) limiting the importance of whiteness as a credential; 3) making Indigeneity into a credential; and 4) rejecting practices that perpetuate settler-colonialism. Each of these practices contributes to the mantras of resurgence outlined by Alfred and Corntassel (2005): “Land is Life”, “Language is Power”, “Freedom is the other Side of Fear”, “Decolonize your Diet”, and “Change Happens one Warrior at a Time.” I hope to have demonstrated how resurgence and organizations can be compatible and constructive strategies for Indigenous communities and perhaps to inspire more research on this topic.

Chapter 5 Darla's Story: How does self-help culture make resurgence possible?

Introduction

I arrived at the Coldwater School at 9am on a crisp Remembrance Day, driven by my friend and co-worker Traci. Traci is a non-status Indigenous woman who married into Coldwater. Together, we worked frantically to finalize the pamphlet for Darla's *plec*. The *plec* is a ceremony undertaken by family, friends, and communities to mourn the loss of a member. The pamphlet is a record of the *plec*. It is an artifact given to participants describing the life of the deceased. We collected writings and photographs from Darla's family and friends, editing and preparing a draft before guests arrived. Traci told me it was an honour to be asked to make the pamphlet. It had been less than two weeks since Traci and I sat beside Darla's desk on Halloween, laughing together with Darla at lunch.

Darla was our co-worker at the Coldwater School. She was the first person in the community to friend me on Facebook and recommended me for the job at the school. Warm, radiant, compassionate, and never shy with the word love, Darla possessed tremendous knowledge and a fierce intellect. When I started work, I remember showing Darla Google Maps. We looked at the Coldwater Village together and she proceeded to describe the occupants of each house on the reserve. She could name their family affiliations, personal challenges, loved ones lost to tragedy, their strengths, and her hopes for them. This encyclopedic knowledge of *nc'letk^{wu}* (Coldwater) allowed her to honour the story of each family, offering to them kindness and empathy. It made her the perfect school secretary.

Darla also possessed traditional cultural knowledge. One day, she taught me the meaning of the Nlɛʔkepmxcin word *knéyt*. A *knéyt* is a helping agent. It is someone or something that appears to help through a moment of transformation or change. *Knéyt* is the term used for midwives who help women to deliver a child. It is also the name of a local Indigenous organization, the Conayt Friendship Centre, that provides housing and cultural support for off-reserve Indigenous Peoples. Darla worked at Conayt for a decade before coming to the Coldwater School. Fitting, as she was the *knéyt* for many, including myself. She helped me to deal with the strain of my new surroundings when I first started at the school. Despite a life of

tragedy, Darla found a way forward, offering traditional teachings or insights drawn from her experience with self-help culture.

In this chapter, I tell the story of Darla and her *plec* but also the story of self-help and its interaction with Indigenous resurgence in the Nicola Valley. A self-help course called Choices was influential in Darla's life. While I describe it in more detail below, briefly, Choices is a seminar that focuses on personal development and transformation. Dr. Phil McGraw was involved in its development, but it was the brainchild of Texas businesswoman Thelma Box. It is an expression of self-help culture, which I define as a range of discourses and practices, derived from psychology and often coupled with other approaches, that are self-guided and directed at self-improvement and self-transformation (McGee 2005; Rimke 2000). Darla believed in self-help and the good that it could do for Indigenous Peoples within and beyond the Nicola Valley.

As my research progressed, I realized that self-help was enabling a type of conversion. Drawing on the work of Harvard Psychologist William James (1902), I define conversion as a transformation of emotional excitement where ideas, beliefs, and rituals are moved from the centre of one's world to the periphery and replaced with new ideas, beliefs, and rituals. Indigenous communities in the Nicola Valley use self-help culture to reconvert community members back to traditional language, culture, and spirituality. This, in turn, enables resurgence by enhancing the reproduction of Indigenous cultural practices. As described previously, resurgence is the process of regenerating a cultural system from the inside out while turning away from practices that perpetuate settler-colonial dynamics. Drawing on the teachings of Darla, self-help culture is the *knéyt* or helping agent of Indigenous resurgence in the Nicola Valley.

This chapter addresses the following two dissertation research questions: What makes resurgence possible? And How do Indigenous organizations make resurgence possible? I make two contributions in this chapter. First, I challenge the more critical sociological perspectives on self-help culture which argue that self-help discourses merely take collective social and political problems and offload them on to the individual, displacing the possibility of collective social, cultural, and political change in-favor of self-transformation (Rimke 2020; Philip 2009; Hazleden 2003; Miller & Rose 1994). Through my research, I found that self-help culture, mediated by Indigenous organizations, creates the conditions for meaningful change within Indigenous communities. Second, I challenge perspectives on resurgence and organizations. As

discussed previously, Indigenous theorists articulate resurgence as occurring through a process of self-transformation without consideration for the role of Indigenous organizations. However, Indigenous organizations like band governments and schools fund and facilitate self-help culture in the Valley. Organizations pay for their members and employees to attend seminars.

I begin by examining the literature on self-help culture and Indigenous Peoples. While Indigenous Peoples have become the creators of self-help, and Indigenous cultural systems have become the source of self-help concepts, there is very little scholarly work on Indigenous Peoples and self-help culture. I then show how Darla's death was handled by the community to situate Darla's life within the context of Coldwater before turning to the conditions that necessitated self-help culture, both in Darla's life and in the community. For many, self-help and reconversion back to traditional language, culture, and spirituality were necessary because of the forced conversions of Canada's "Indian" residential school system. Finally, I look at the expression of self-help culture in the talk of my participants. Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley have diverse ways of thinking about self-help culture as intersecting with and opposed to Indigenous traditions. By examining the uses of self-help culture amongst the Syilx and Nl̓eʔkepmx, I demonstrate how self-help culture is a *knéyt* that enables resurgence.

Indigenous Peoples and Self-help Cultures

Self-help is seemingly opposed to the sociological imagination—a way of thinking about outcomes not as the result of individual choices but collective social forces (Kemple & Mawani 2009; Mills 1959). Self-help cultures are a range of discourses and practices that emphasize self-improvement through self-mastery, choice, and self-discipline with the goal of transforming individual outcomes or personal problems (McGee 2005). Sociologists have a lot to say about self-help (Riley 2019 et al; Salmenniemi 2019; McGee 2012) with much of the scholarship influenced by the work of Michel Foucault (Philip 2009; Hazleden 2003; Rimke 2002; Miller & Rose 1994). Critics of self-help culture argue it is a technology of control compatible with contemporary economic and political discourses. Scholars assert self-help privatizes risk (Philip 2009; Rimke 2000), blames individuals for collective problems (Philip 2009), and stigmatizes emotions conducive to political change (Hazleden 2003). A minority of scholars examine the emancipatory potentials of self-help (McGee 2012; Salmenniemi 2019). For their part, Indigenous Peoples have become the authors of self-help texts (see Luger & Collins 2022) and

Indigenous communities have used self-help to gain political legitimacy (Fonneland & Kraft 2015). Beyond these examples, there is little scholarship about Indigenous Peoples and self-help culture.

Comparing Indigenous to European societies, French Sociologist Emile Durkheim (1912) opined that Western societies did not become secular in the modern era but founded a new religion, one he called the cult of the individual. The rational and autonomous self became the sacred object of this modern theology. In his genealogy of the self, Canadian Philosopher Charles Taylor (1989) identifies the origins of the self in material and discursive transformations. In the 1500s, novels depicted selves acting against the interests of their families and communities, cultivating a sense of individual agency amongst readers. In the 1600s, Europeans began to perceive themselves as separate and autonomous as the structure of the home changed, going from a single room to separate bedrooms. Taylor envisions the appearance of the self in Western philosophy as tied to these transformations as well as in the way that people thought about work, nature, art, and religion. These combined with Judeo-Christian discourses of morality to amplify sources of the self. Taylor's work is restricted to the West, but Indigenous communities too have concepts of the self.

If the cult of the individual is the religion of moderns, then self-help has become its sacred text. Canadian Sociologist Heidi Marie Rimke describes self-help as “voluntary and individualistic...based upon notions such as choice, autonomy, and freedom.” She continues, “self-help relies upon the principle of individuality and entails self-modification and ‘improvement’” (2002 pp. 62). Critically, Rimke argues that proponents of self-help “assume the social world to be the sum aggregation of atomized, autonomous and self-governing individual persons” and in-turn “advocate control and self-mastery” (2002 pp. 62). She theorizes self-help as a technology of governmentality (Foucault 2007, Foucault 2008) or the control of populations and their conduct through choice and freedom rather than discipline and surveillance.

Foucauldian approaches, and what might be termed a hermeneutic of suspicion, dominate academic discourse on self-help (Philip 2009; Hazleden 2003; Miller & Rose 1994). For example, Philip (2009) argues that self-help disavows the socio-political context of depression and promotes liberal virtues of active citizenship. Similarly, Hazleden (2003) argues that self-help cultures emphasize a form of emotional control compatible with dominating citizens' conduct and ensuring they remain focused on individual rather than collective concerns. While

sociology has a well-established hermeneutic of suspicion toward self-help, the role it plays in Indigenous communities, beyond its therapeutic effects, is unconsidered.

Indigenous Peoples have remained outside of this more suspicious literature on self-help. However, in health and social work literatures, self-help is a pathway for community development. In her work on healing trauma, Ahousaht scholar Marlene R. Atleo (1997), advocates for self-guided and self-directed approaches to personal healing and transformation that involve self-help culture. There is also literature on the use of self-help for health promotion amongst Indigenous Peoples. Scholars advocate for self-help to manage diabetes (Roy & Fectau 2005), as an approach to arthritis self-care (McGowan & Green 1995), to prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (Steenbeek 2004), and to deal with the trauma of residential schools (Marsh, Coholic, Cote-Meek, and Najavits 2015). Advocates for self-help prescribe it but do not interrogate its operation, function, or effectiveness within Indigenous communities.

Alongside these policy recommendations, Indigenous Peoples have become producers of self-help cultures. The Sami, an Indigenous group from Norway, have created a shamanistic movement and marketed self-help practices to generate tourism, brand locations as distinctively Sami, contribute to nation-building, and generate political legitimacy (Fonneland & Kraft 2015). Similarly, Indigenous Peoples have become the purveyors of self-help culture. Pima community organizer Thosh Collins and his partner Lokota-Ojibwe author Chelsey Luger published a wellness guide *The Seven Circles: Indigenous Teachings for Living Well* (2022). The book looks to help Indigenous peoples get well through traditional culture. This self-help text is targeted at both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples and provides recommendations for how settlers can engage Indigenous cultures without appropriating them.

In these instances, Indigenous Peoples control how their cultural systems are disseminated and integrated into self-help culture. However, self-help cultures globally have often appropriated Indigenous customs and beliefs to varying extents (Pecotic 2001). Australian scholar of religions David Pecotic examines the way that Indigenous belief systems interact with new-age religions and self-help cultures. He identifies a tension between Indigenous belief systems which tend to be highly localized and self-help cultures which tend toward globalization.

One example of appropriation of Indigenous beliefs in contemporary self-help movements is found in the radical faeries. The faeries are a queer movement that involves gatherings of mostly white gay men in rural spaces with the explicit motive of self-empowerment

and self-transformation. Together, faeries challenge social, cultural, and gender norms while engaging in outdoor living. The gatherings involve rituals appropriated from Native American culture (Timmons 1990). Non-Indigenous Queer Scholar Scott Morgensen writes “radical faerie culture thus traverses the material and cultural legacies of colonization by investing in rural spaces as sources for liberating sexuality among the racialized subjects of a settler society” (2009 pp. 76). Morgensen describes the faeries as playing Indian and writes “Indian impersonation grants oppositional voice to subjects of settler society while reconciling them to inheriting culture and land won by conquest” (2009 pp. 78). While Morgensen is critical of elements of the radical faeries, he describes them as engaged in a “creative mediation of the racial, national, and colonial conditions of sexuality” (2009 pp. 91), which both reproduce settler-colonialism but also challenge the heteronormative, cis-gendered, and racist binaries upon which it rests.

While a great deal of the scholarship on self-help is critical, arguing that it stifles change, there is interesting work that examines the potential for self-help to lead to collective action, social and cultural transformation. Self-help groups like Alcoholics Anonymous have proliferated in the 20th and 21st century and facilitated the organization of “deviant” populations into groups, with important, if unseen, effects on these populations and their meanings within society (Katz 1981). Finnish scholar Suvi Salmenniemi (2019) takes issue with the sweeping statement that the therapeutic field and self-help culture are depoliticizing. She suggests that there is something more complicated occurring and argues that collective mobilizations are themselves therapeutic and that therapeutic practices are a form of lifestyle politics. Similarly, American scholar Micky McGee (2012) argues that self-help movements like ‘make-over’ culture, popularized by the likes of Oprah Winfrey and Dr. Phil, can have political effects mainstreaming “life-style possibilities that are neither conformist nor normative” (pp. 686). For Indigenous resurgence in the Nicola Valley, self-help culture has been a helping agent with transformational effects, reconnecting Indigenous Peoples to their cultures, languages, and spiritualities.

The interactions between self-help culture and Indigenous Peoples are complex and contradictory. Most of the scholarship in sociology on self-help tends to depict self-help as increasing forms of governmentality and facilitating choices conducive to liberal forms of control. This literature neglects Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples are represented in literatures that make prescriptive policy recommendations. Scholars too have examined the

engagement of non-Indigenous Peoples and self-help cultures with Indigenous cultures amongst groups like the radical faeries. Moreover, scholars have examined how self-help culture can be used by Indigenous Peoples to change the thinking of non-Indigenous Peoples about territory and political legitimacy. Indigenous Peoples have become the producers and purveyors of self-help culture as well. This chapter examines how self-help culture can facilitate resurgence, cultural regeneration from the inside out, an evident gap in the literature.

The Death of a Friend

Darla's illness came upon us suddenly. One day, a month before she died, Darla came to work late, the first time in her 21-year career at the school. She rarely drove the 200 meters from her home to the school, so I was surprised to see her car parked out front. She had yellow skin and sad eyes as she raced to unlock the door for the children and staff assembled outside. She seemed slow and confused. A few days later she was hospitalized in Kamloops.

During her stay in the hospital Darla phoned old friends and begged them to come and get her. She asked them to drive her back to Coldwater. We exchanged text messages and Facebook posts. One day, I woke up to her having hearted and commented on my display picture. I sent her a message and asked her how she was. She responded, 'I good'. This was a sign she wasn't. At the Coldwater school, we worried about our friend. COVID-19 prevented us from visiting her in the hospital and we weren't quite aware at the time how sick she was. We also worried about her being there.

Many of my research participants spoke about how the Royal Inland Hospital was an unsafe place for Indigenous peoples. They reflected on their perception that it was filled with racism and most tried to avoid it, in favour of Kelowna General Hospital. Now with an active COVID-19 outbreak at Royal Inland, we weren't sure that Darla would be treated with dignity. Meanwhile, despite this anxiety, we had to put on a brave face for the students and keep the school going for them. Darla would want that, even if our hearts were breaking. Our boss, Janice, received a call the day before Darla died telling us she would pass soon. We contacted her sister and told her family the news and that they should come quick. A day later, Marilyn Lytton, my friend and co-worker at the school, phoned to tell me the sad news and that the school would be closed. I cried by myself because my dear friend had passed. Throughout the day, Elders, coworkers, and friends phoned to check on me and to exchange stories about our friend Darla.

I enlisted my boyfriend and together we made three shepherd's pies. They would go to her daughters and her grandkids. Following a *New York Times* recipe was something I could do to be helpful. I also wanted a drink, but Darla wouldn't want that. Every time I sobered up and scraped together a few days or weeks, Darla expressed love and pride, telling me I was going to get it this time. I couldn't drink my pain away; Darla wouldn't let me. She died sober from drugs and alcohol and cultivated a form of sobriety that stands as an example to her friends, family, and community. An Elder told me that when we cry for someone it is because they were our teachers and that they're not done teaching us. Darla was teaching me something that day.

Shepherd's pies were my way of being a *knéyt* for Darla's family. We brought the casseroles to her house and my boyfriend lingered in the living room making awkward small talk with Darla's daughter and the crowd of Darla's friends. I visited Darla's two granddaughters in their room down the hall. They had been my students, near and dear to me like their grandmother. They took turns giving me a hug and we exchanged stories about Darla and about her beautiful way of dealing with people. They asked me if I would put some wood on the fire and watch it for a few hours. The fire is lit the day the person dies and is kept burning until the *plec* is held. At the end, any tissues used to wipe away tears, any material for the *plec*, and the *wapeet* (prized possessions) of the deceased are burnt. The fire is thought to connect this world to the next and burning the items is the attendees' way of sending them along with Darla to the next part of her journey. My boyfriend and I taped baking instructions to the heavy Pyrex dishes, placed them in the fridge, and walked outside to the fire.

A group of community members and people from other reserves were standing around the fire, drinking orange juice and vodka. Darla's young grandson was playing in the woods and ran to me frantically, nearly knocking me over as he wrapped his arms around my legs to give me a hug. He gleefully said my name, his front teeth missing and told me "Grandma is gone" and I said "yeah, I really miss her." I started to cry and he said, "I miss her too." My boyfriend and I sat down on *nlq'áptn* (tree stubs or the word for chair) and talked to him and the others for a while. We put logs on the fire and told stories about Darla. A friend sang a song and said a prayer. We left and drove back to Merritt. I felt better and I was glad I hadn't drunk booze that night. It helped to experience my sadness but also to share in the love of my friends and Darla's family to reflect on the important lessons she had taught us. My emotions would have been

blunted in the storm of vodka. Darla's lessons would have been blunted too. She was my teacher, and she wasn't done teaching me.

When Traci and I finally arrived at the fire for Darla's *plec*, her family, friends, and community members had already started to assemble. We handed out the pamphlets. A young woman walked up to me with a beautiful handmade ribbon—it was red, white, black and yellow weaved together. It was for those who had been asked to be pall bearers, an honour that filled me with discomfort and fear. I had no familiarity with this, but I had to do it for my friend. I pinned it to my jacket, on top of my heart and walked over to help the group of men who were building the ramp to bring Darla's casket inside. The mortician had arrived and we all worked together to bring Darla up to the deck and inside, removing doors and railings until we got her through the threshold of her house. The group of men that were asked to be pall bearers were all in some respect troubled, people Darla had given special attention to in difficult times. I was honoured to be included in the list of young men Darla had helped.

We left to the fire outside just as the *sax^wné?m* (the Indian doctor)¹² arrived and sat with the family. The *sax^wné?m* leads spiritual ceremonies. This woman was from Lower Nicola and a friend. She would lead us in an oratory in Nl̓eʔkepmxcin. A speaker was set up with a cord running out the window so the guests outside gathered around the fire could hear her. I was standing with a group of friends and an Elder pointed to her heart long enough to catch my attention. She patted her arm, signaling that I had put the ribbon in the wrong place. I blushed and mouthed “thank you.” I unclipped it and put it on my shoulder. We heard the voice of the *sax^wné?m* rattling and echoing through the speaker like a ghost. I could understand about half of what she said. She started with the Lord's prayer in Nl̓eʔkepmxcin. Her mother had translated it along with Christian liturgy, 60 years earlier. She spoke for about an hour. Her speech contained warnings about what the family should and should not do in the coming months and what others should do in relation to them, telling us they were *zoʔ^wzoʔ^wt* (strong). I stood by the fire and a friend beside me, a parent from the school, kept poking my belly and trying to make me laugh during the speech of the *sax^wné?m*. I noticed others engaging in the same type of play. The *sax^wné?m* warned us that for four seasons Darla's family would be protected and powerful and that others should be cautious in crossing them. Owing to Darla's death they were living in

¹² This is the phrase that is used by community members.

sacred time. She asked for the *xe?lk'úpi?* (the sacred leader) to give us strength as we prepare for Darla's final journey.

Following her speech, mourners were welcomed inside to view Darla and to give her family a hug. I had been to Darla's home before, but it had been transformed. Sheets were erected to separate the living room from the kitchen. Plastic tables from the band sat with crockpots and trays of food. Kathy, Traci, and I lined up together. When we finally got inside the living room and stood over Darla's body, tears erupted from our eyes as we began to wail. Our friend was gone. Kathy grabbed Traci and I like a mother and held us close as the three of us sobbed. She gripped the hair on the back of our head and put her face next to ours. I could feel the tears on her cheek. I had never seen Kathy cry like this. We each said a few words to Darla and then walked over to greet her family and to give them each a hug.

We went outside. A giant table had been set up so the 80 people assembled could have lunch together. Dinner began after a plate of food had been given to the fire. We vied for heat on that cold day and started telling stories, each person commanding the attention of the whole group as they spoke. One of Darla's grandkids asked me if I remembered what happened on my first day of school. I blushed, members of Chief and Council and all of Darla's friends and family were assembled. The whole community was about to hear an embarrassing story about me. I said "yes". She said, "Do you remember what happened in the hall?" And I said "yes." She said, "What happened?" Laughter erupted from her, and her cheeks brimmed with joy. I told her "It was my first day and I didn't know this, but the students liked to walk up slowly and silently behind staff and scare them. I was walking down the hall and had been teaching all day and finally had a moment by myself. I thought I was alone, so I farted and then I heard roaring laughter behind me. I turned around and there was Darla's granddaughter," she was blushing, and she said, 'oh hey'." She and everyone around the fire started to laugh. The dynamic had shifted from one of intense sadness to one of humour and joy. Our laughter was mixing with the smoke from the fire to send Darla off in a good way. I saw the look in the Chief's eyes as he smiled. Darla's grandkids surrounded me and gave me a hug.

Many avoided the viewing. The site of a dead body brought difficult emotions to the surface. To them it was a symbol of damage, a remnant of all those lost to tragedy and the many, like Darla, who passed too soon. Another of Darla's friends from the school, Marilyn O, was no stranger to tragic circumstance. She avoided the viewing but joined us afterwards. She would

spend her lunches with Darla and their friendship had brought them so much hope amidst personal tragedy. Eventually, everyone left until it was just Traci, Marilyn O, and I remaining.

Darla's family brought out a bag of clothes and sheets and personal items and asked if we would burn them for the family. I knew this was an honour. The three of us stood around telling stories and burning the effects of our friend, thinking of all the ways we could support Darla's grandkids and daughters in the coming weeks. A family member came out to let us know it would be alright to leave. We made sure the fire was well stocked and then walked down to the school along the same path that our friend took each day to work. We cried and we laughed.

Darla wouldn't want us to be sad. We talked about what she would have thought of today. We agreed she would have been happy that we were all together and that no one was fighting. We gave each other one last hug and parted ways. Our friend was gone. Together we had done right by her, finding a way to help her family on a difficult day. Some of the sadness this event brought had been replaced with a feeling of hope, hope for her family and hope for the strength and lessons Darla had given each of us. Our friend was gone, but in her place stood a whole forest of feelings whose roots connected the people she loved. We loved Darla and we knew she loved us too.

The Need for Self-Help Cultures

Darla weaved together a life of tragedy and joy to create valuable lessons. She credited this to the work she had done in a self-help seminar called Choices. Choices was started by self-help icon Doctor Phil McGraw's father Joe and Texas businesswoman Thelma Box. The program began in 1983 and Dr. Phil became involved in the program in 1985. Dr. Phil's involvement ended after he became a television star in the mid-1990s, but people continue to associate him with Choices.

Choices is a six-day seminar, held over two weekends, that involves completing several psychosocial inventories, listening to speakers, and identifying one's core beliefs.

Choices can be conceptualized as a large-group awareness training seminar (LGAT). An LGAT is a meeting that incorporates self-help, popular psychology, and motivational techniques to create self-transformation (Fisher et al. 1989). Though Choices relies upon volunteers, the program is a for-profit enterprise. The cost of choices is \$2500. It is held at a hotel and participants are required to share accommodations with others which brings the total cost to \$3500. Scholarships are available for those who cannot pay to participate. The group is usually around 70 people,

though some people leave during the first weekend and others don't return for the second weekend.

The program is currently run by Thelma Box who worked with Joe McGraw. Dr. Phil inherited the program from his father. After Joe and Phil McGraw left, they were replaced by Joe and Mary Davis. Joe and Mary were participants in the seminar who returned many times as volunteers and provided testimonials. Before joining Thelma, Joe was a certified accountant and former CFO. All the people who run Choices are white and from Texas. The meetings are held in Vancouver, Calgary, and Dallas. All participants I met had attended the program in Vancouver.

The program focuses on identifying how choice, a hallmark of self-help culture (Rimke 2000), intersects with personal narratives. Participants are encouraged to change their life by making different, sometimes small, choices. The issue of choice is examined through lectures, participant dialogue, exercises, and testimonials from past participants who return as unpaid volunteers. Lectures are delivered by Thelma, Joe, Mary, or other volunteers. Participants are not allowed to drink alcohol, do drugs, or watch television during the seminar. Participants are invited to be rigorously honest with each and tell each other what they really think. Participants take inventories and complete questionnaires and share their results with each other and volunteers. Through these exercises, participants identify core beliefs. By the end of the first weekend, participants are asked to allow these core beliefs to guide their choices. They go away for a period of six weeks and attempt to put the choices program into action before reconvening to discuss their programs and their successes or challenges.

During this second weekend, participants in the seminar identify a song that speaks to them or have one chosen for them by the seminar organizers, participants, or volunteers. One participant in Choices had the song "I hope you dance" by Lee Anne Womack selected for her. The song describes making a choice between sitting out or choosing to dance. The participant shared the song with me and what it meant to her. Reflecting upon it, the song inspired her to take risks. She described our friendship as one such risk. Many of the trainers for Choices in Vancouver are First Nations people, some from the Nicola Valley, and they combine Indigenous traditions with self-help culture, creating forms of complexity that express Indigenous culture and spirituality within what were once pre-packaged and ostensibly Western forms of self-help. They also provide testimonials about how Choices helped them to overcome their own trauma

and the experience of residential school. Darla was a volunteer and trainer for Choices, providing these types of testimonials and speaking about the difficulty she faced in her life.

At the end of the second weekend, participants take part in a graduation ceremony. In a dark room they stand with an unlit candle. Past participants in the program, those who sponsor new members or return as volunteers, are silently led into the dark room by trainers. Once the room is filled, organizers go around and light the candles of participants, until all the candles are lit, and the graduates realize those who support them, past participants and volunteers, are standing around them. By its end, it is hoped the program will demonstrate to people how to identify their personal stories as well as who they really are. By understanding their own story and who they really are, it is hoped that participants can make different choices that align with their core beliefs about themselves.

Darla's involvement in self-help culture is not unique. Many Indigenous Peoples in the Valley have used self-help programs to understand the role of colonization in weaving trauma and death into their lives. It is doubtful colonization would have been discussed in any of the self-help seminars if it wasn't for Indigenous Peoples participating and linking the self-help discourse to their own experience and historical consciousness. A certificate program offered by the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology through the College of the Caribou began in the early 1980s and did precisely this. It was called Native Human Services. It brought many into contact with psychological discourses, the history of colonization, and self-help as a tool for transforming life chances. Before that, there was a program called The Pursuit of Excellence, another large group awareness seminar that focused on identifying problematic behaviours and controlling them. Through programs like Choices, The Pursuit of Excellence, and the Native Human Services certificate, people in the Valley developed a set of tools from self-help cultures to gain awareness of how colonization had shaped their circumstances. From this awareness, some began to place Indigenous conceptions of spirituality at the centre of their worlds.

Before Darla started working at the school, she lived on the Lower Nicola Indian Reserve with her husband. Darla described him as bipolar. He was a survivor of residential schools and the third generation in his family to attend. Darla awoke one morning to find him hanging from a tree in their backyard. She quickly hurried her daughters out the door and off to a neighbour's house so they wouldn't see what remained of their dad. She phoned the Chief of the Coldwater Indian Band, her band, Gordon Antoine. She told me years later that she was so thankful for

Gordon that day. She described a man who showed up to her house in humble attire, in an old blue pick-up truck. According to Darla, Gordon was someone with great vision for the community. He could see how people fit together.

A few weeks after the death of her husband, Darla was forced off the Lower Nicola reserve. Without her husband, and with her daughters registered at Coldwater, she had no claim to the Land or their home. This happens quickly and often in moments of tragedy. When a life ends, bands often want non-members gone so they can reclaim houses for their own. Housing is a scarce resource on reserve. Gordon helped to find Darla and her young family a home. She took a job at the Coldwater School run by Janice Antoine. Gordon was Janice's husband. Janice became Darla's best friend. When difficult emotions surfaced for Darla, owing to her personal story, Darla wouldn't react in pain or anger but pause, remind herself who she was, her core belief about herself, and then speak from her heart explaining how an action affected her, and the feelings that it produced for her.

This, I learnt, came from her work in Choices and the book *Non-Violent Communication: A Language of Life* by Marshall B. Rosenberg (2015). Darla would speak often about Choices and what it had meant to her, and she kept a copy of Rosenberg's book at her desk in the school. The latter was touted by Deepak Chopra and Marianne Williamson and served many in the community.¹³ Non-violent communication pivots on using language in a way that doesn't activate someone's past traumas. Much of my knowledge about non-violent communication comes from learning I did in a workshop on non-violent communication following Darla's death.

In addition to non-violent communication, Darla deployed several self-help tools. For example, Darla asserted control over emotions by citing *contract words*. Contract words are part of the vernacular of Choices. They are a short phrase people repeat to themselves when they arrive at difficulty. A contract word is a reminder to honour one's true self by making a choice to align with one's values and it is a hallmark of the Choices program. For Darla, this was a reminder she was a kind, loving, and compassionate person with much to give to the world. Contract words come from Choices. Darla's involvement in Choices and another set of programs called Givers and Super Choices provided her much and she enjoyed sharing insights about

¹³ Marianne Williamson is a self-help icon and religious leader who ran for the Democratic nomination for US president in 2020. Deepak Chopra is a new age thinker who has popularized alternative forms of medicine based in Eastern philosophies.

herself and others from the workshops she attended. Darla was proud to tell us all she had completed all the seminars and became a trainer for Choices. Through this work, Darla helped others to overcome their personal tragedies, making space for Indigenous ways of knowing to become central in their lives. Darla and others at the school combined their years of experience around self-help with deep insights about Coldwater, and Indigenous knowledge, to create a loving space for each other and their children. As of writing, every staff member has at some point participated in the Choices program.

Despite their omnipresence, self-help cultures can cultivate ambivalence in Indigenous Peoples. They are prescriptive ideologies that can come into conflict with traditional knowledge. Indigenous Peoples have sacred rituals like the *plec* that have helped them to cope with the difficulties of life since times immemorial. During the 20th century many of these rituals lost sway and became peripheral and even illegal. Residential schools mobilized to remove traditional belief systems from Indigenous children. Rather than being an outpost of colonization, I saw how self-help often provided a bridge back to Indigenous spirituality by identifying how colonization had produced a system of beliefs about the self that created difficulty in the present.

Forced Conversion and Residential Schools

Corntassel and Alfred (2005) in their article “Being Indigenous: Resurgences against Contemporary Colonialism” asserts that regeneration and decolonization are rooted in a movement toward self-empowerment. Colonization, they argue, is rooted in eradication through “the erasure of histories and cultural identities” (pp. 599).” Much of this erasure was done in the Nicola Valley by missionaries and Christianity. Centuries before the arrival of self-help in the Valley, missionaries had come to places like Coldwater to convert the Nicola People to Christianity.

Conversions were deeply pragmatic. Governments sought to proletarianize Indigenous communities by installing Christian values that would help them to lead agrarian lives, preparing them for Canadian citizenship and erasing their presence from the Land so it could be occupied by settlers and linked to circuits of capital accumulation. This involved painstaking calculations about how best to disassemble traditional connections.

The Nl̓eʔkepmx and Sylix of the Nicola were given different Christian denominations and different residential schools. Coldwater (Nl̓eʔkepmx) and Upper Nicola (Sylix) became the

domains of Catholics with Catholic Churches built on their reserves and their children taken to the Kamloops Indian Residential School. Spence's Bridge, Lower Nicola, Shackan, and Nooaitch (all Nl̓eʔkepmx) became the domains of Anglicans, with Anglican Churches and their children taken to St. George's Indian Residential School in Lytton. These divisions didn't fall along linguistic, cultural, or even geographic lines. Instead, they were likely calculated to sever the connections which had grown between these bands by fueling conflict through religious difference.

The Nl̓eʔkepmx and Sylix, as well as other Interior Salish groups, were seen as particularly amenable to Christianity because of their belief in a deity called the *xeʔlkʷúpiʔ*—or sacred leader (Wickwire 2018). According to William James, the process of conversion involves a transformation in emotional excitement (1902) casting off old ideas and objects so new ones can become central. These newly central ideas and objects achieve a transformation in our feelings toward the world that creates new possibilities for the future through new plans, actions, and forms of talk. There are two different types of conversion identified by James (1902). The first is the volitional type and is based on will and the capacity of the individual to make a choice to turn themselves over to religious faith. It usually happens gradually. The second type is described as self-surrender. Here the individual gives themselves over to a religious faith—they come to believe. It happens suddenly. Both confront the person and the community with a new self. A new understanding passes from the unconscious to the conscious mind, unlocking new feelings toward the world.

James says very little about forced conversions. Forced conversion shares much in common with the degradation ceremony (Garfinkel 1956). In degradation ceremonies moral indignation is used to ritually pollute the self. The various humiliations suffered by Indigenous children in residential schools degrade the self—the donning of new clothes and the doffing and destruction of the old ones; the shaving of heads and the restyling of hair; being forced to eat spoiled food; punishment for speaking an Indigenous language; care, attention and abuse from religious leaders. These were all forms of ritual destruction of the self. Conversion was deployed to make Indigenous Peoples into moderns. As colonization descended into Indigenous lives, making claims on their spirits, people like Darla resisted.

Forced conversion is a coordinated plan that attempts to foreclose opportunities by casting ideas to the periphery. It is an attempt to install a different relationship to time and the

Land and to control the rhythm, rate, and pace of Indigenous life. In Canada, it was undertaken with the specific intent of destroying Indigenous life ways and preparing Indigenous Peoples to become citizens of Canada (Njeizen 2017). When Christianity arrived in any meaningful sense in the Valley, at the end of the 19th century, the ideas and rituals which were meant to be placed on the centre stage were God, obedience, prayer, and asceticism (Foucault 2007). These were compatible with creating a citizenry who would serve Crown and country as subjects with the capacity to participate in a capitalist economy. The *tmix^w* (the Land) and the way people related to it, their songs, and their languages were to be placed at the periphery of their lives.

In British Columbia, this forced religious conversion was backed by instruments of state coercion that came with the solidification of the Canadian state at the end of the 19th century. The state sought to transform Indigenous adults through interdictions on spirituality and inscription of values through the toil of farming. They provisioned laws banning the *plec* and other ceremonies at the same time they provided farm equipment meant to transform Indigenous relationships to the Land.

Rather than achieving the conversion desired by Christian authorities and the Canadian state, by the beginning of the 20th century these actions hollowed out the central place in Indigenous life where spirituality used to dwell. As the ethnographic record shows, in its place, many Indigenous Peoples were left with a deep and abiding sadness (Teit 1900; Wickwire 1998). This grief combined with economic transformations and disease to alter Indigenous communities demographically. The arrival of settlers and diseases like smallpox and tuberculosis transformed the boundaries of life and death for the Nicola People and the settlers that came to occupy their *tmix^w*—exhorting settlers to life and condemning the Indigenous to death.

This transformation is illustrated in the writings of James Teit. He observed the negative effects disease and death had on Nl̓eʔkepmx. He notes “the belief that they are doomed to extinction seems to have a depressing effect on some of the Indians. At almost any gathering where chiefs or leading men speak, this sad, haunting belief is sure to be referred to” (1900 P. 182). As a result, drinking rates soared and public drunkenness amongst the Nl̓eʔkepmx became such a concern for settlers that new policies outlawing the sale of alcohol to Indigenous people were enacted (Wickwire 2019; Teit 1900). Despite its formal illegality, Indian Agents continued to use alcohol to achieve conversion to Christianity and an agricultural way of life, using gifts of alcohol to install political leaders sympathetic to the cause of modernization. Public drunkenness

became closely associated with European lifestyles, as Teit writes “those Indians who indulge in whiskey almost always do so to excess, and they are generally those members of the tribe who most closely copy the whites in other particulars” (1900 P. 181). Proximity to European culture, rather than achieving conversion to industry and Christianity, created a propensity for drinking and death that transformed the Nl̓eʔkepmx and Syilx worlds and their shared world in the Nicola.

Despite the actions of the churches and the government, Indigenous ways of living did not disappear. Language continued in the home and underground and Indigenous cultural practices remained viable ways of living one’s life. As participants in my dissertation research shared, Knowledge Keepers were hidden in the forest when police or religious officials would come to take them to residential school. These acts of resistance ensured that language and stories would be passed on to future generations. However, residential schools, Christianity, and the government had achieved at least half of its desired conversion. For most people living in the Valley, Indigenous ways of living had been removed from the centre of their lives as a source of emotional excitement and meaning and consigned to the margins. However, Christian notions had not achieved replacement, leaving many in a void space where alcohol and drugs had become central actors.

One Elder estimated that by the 1980s, 90% of households in Coldwater were what she termed alcoholic. Now, she places that figure at about 50%. Addiction and alcoholism are the future work of the colonizer. They are an element of a European vision of a future where Indigenous Peoples no longer exist. The reduction in alcoholism over the past 40 years is a dramatic achievement. Alcohol and drugs were coupled with the trauma of the residential schools. Many of my participants were left with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from their time in residential school. Symptoms of PTSD include hyper-vigilance, anxiety and insomnia (Robertson 2010). Alcoholism and drug addiction are symptoms too—remnants of damage. One participant so strongly hated the Church that the colour purple, worn on the robes of Anglican priests during the Easter season, would bring to the surface fear, disgust, and nausea. Others drank.

What was required was a way to take Indigenous spirituality, language and culture from the periphery of peoples’ lives to effect a form of reconversion, so that it could occupy once more its central place. Some of this was achieved by keeping language alive, but without some

sort of spiritual awakening in the hearts and minds of Indigenous folks this sort of cultural transformation would not succeed.

The Arrival of Self-Help

No one can precisely describe to me when or how self-help culture entered the Valley, though they have some idea. Some cited participation in Native Human Services while others credited Choices. Another program, mentioned above, The Pursuit of Excellence, which was also influential in the Valley in the 1970s, seems to be one of the earliest self-help programs undertaken by members of the Indigenous community. It was another large group awareness training seminar like Choices.

I asked Janice Antoine when she first went to Choices. She responded “Way back in the day. I would have to look through photos or notes. As far as I know I was the first in the valley to go. I went and over time convinced Gordie about Choices.” Janice later corrected the record, telling me she went in the mid-1980s. Gordie is her beloved former husband Gordon Antoine, the man who helped Darla after her husband’s suicide. Gordon died of cancer in 2004. He was the Chief of Coldwater from the 1970s until his death and was made a Grand Chief of the Nicola Valley—the highest distinction a political leader can receive. When Janice told Gordon about *Choices*, he “opened up the Band programs money to make it available in Coldwater.” Many people from the community attended throughout the 1990s up until the present, with one of my participants attending in 2019.

Janice was the principal of the Coldwater Band School and through the school she was “able to sponsor staff through the whole program.” She continues, “I budgeted and approved expenditures for anyone willing to go.” All the staff members I worked with had gone. Similarly, “the Band sponsored Band members until finances drained.” Janice told me it was “one of many external personal growth programs since the school first got going.” Many more people outside of Coldwater saw how successful it had been and convinced their Bands to pay, until it was so common that people used vernacular from the program to interpret personal and collective narratives and deal with the problems residential school and intergenerational trauma had created in their own lives.

Participants would remind others when they were making a choice and that a different choice was possible. They would remind each other about their contract words, and they would

use the color system to describe the personalities of others and provide insights about how to deal with them. The color system is a system that ascribes certain personality types to people based on the results of psychometric inventories with colors acting as a symbol of the various personality types. People who were green were deeply analytical, intuitive, and visionary. Blues were empathetic, compassionate, and cooperative—the rarest of the types. Oranges were energetic, spontaneous, and charming. Golds were punctual, organized, and precise. Golds were seen as particularly fastidious and obsessive, and most settlers were believed to be at least in part gold. When a gold co-worker would start to fuss about something and take control of it, Darla would laugh and say, ‘fly at it!!’ Knowing that this was the only way to make them comfortable.

Choices and self-help culture more broadly had become a powerful local theory to understand the past traumas created by colonization and to deal with them by examining the effect they had on their choices and personality types in the present. It is what William James terms a volitional conversion and it occurs not to a religion necessarily but to a new firmness and resolve for dealing with issues (1901). James writes of non-religious conversions “ [in] all these instances we have precisely the same psychological form of event, — a firmness, stability, and equilibrium succeeding a period of storm and stress and inconsistency. In these non-religious cases the new man may also be born either gradually or suddenly” (1901 pp. 139). For most people who went to Choices, the program created a new awareness that led to a gradual spiritual, cultural, and, for some, linguistic awakening. Janice told me “I believed then and now that opportunities, one person, one family at a time, will make a difference.” She continued, “and I love that Gordie trusted me. It eventually became a norm in the Valley.”

One participant, an Indigenous woman in her 40s whose father was part of the sixties scoop and who attended Choices as part of her work at an Indigenous institution, described it this way:

I went to Choices. It’s a self-help program. It is a training program to see what you can work on in your life and the choices you make. It’s not a cult. It’s working on yourself to feel better and to be a better person to the people around you. Because if you aren’t at your full potential, you can’t help anyone else.

The cornerstone of the program is focusing on the way you make choices, but because of its shared vernacular and the number of people who attended it, and the degree to which it changed their lives, it is viewed by some as a ‘cult’.

The contention that a journey to self-empowerment is enabled by organizations contradicts some scholarship on Indigenous resurgence and regeneration. Alfred and Corntassel (2005) note that “the larger process of regeneration, as with the outwardly focused process of decolonization, also begins with the self” (P. 611). They concur with the central argument of this chapter: that resurgence is tied to self-transformation and empowerment and that this leads to a return to traditional knowledge and ways of being. They write that regeneration and decolonization are “a self-conscious kind of traditionalism that is the central process in the ‘reconstruction of traditional communities’ based on the original teachings and orienting values of Indigenous Peoples” (Alfred and Corntassel 2005 P. 611). However, they remain skeptical of the capacity of institutions to transform Indigenous concepts of the self, writing “our discussion thus far, we hope, illustrated the fact that decolonization and regeneration are not at root collective and institutional processes” (Alfred and Corntassel 2005 P. 611). However, as the Nicola Valley case demonstrates, Indigenous organizations have been central to the process of Indigenous resurgence. Organizations, rather than being solely a colonial bulwark, make Indigenous resurgence possible by enabling a reconversion and transformation of values.

Talk of Self-Help Amongst Indigenous Peoples

I have portrayed self-help culture as transformative in Darla’s life and in the lives of many Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley. Much of the talk of self-help by Indigenous Peoples in the Valley has a positive valence. However, some Indigenous Peoples are deeply critical of self-help. Despite this, many, even those most critical, are involved in self-help cultures, having worked as councillors, teachers, and within Indigenous organizations in the Nicola Valley. Moreover, they have done so with a particularly distressed and distressing population—survivors of residential schools or their children and grandchildren. Self-help has become a tool that they have used, either in their personal or professional lives, to create change, sometimes changes amenable to the type of conversions back to Indigenous spirituality, language and culture described above.

In what follows I draw on interviews with 20 Indigenous People, 12 of whom participated in the Choices seminar, in which I asked about their involvement in self-help culture, what self-help meant to them, and how it entered their lives. This first interview question was used to ascertain the cultural meaning of self-help, to locate it within genres and styles of

talk, while the second part was an attempt to get at a life course perspective—in the hopes participants would situate self-help within their own histories. Of the 20 participants, only two expressed dislike of self-help culture. They were particularly critical of its focus on the individual, a tension between community-oriented healing practices and the cult of the individual (Durkheim 1912; Taylor 1989) in Western societies. Three others, expressed individualism and ‘self-mending’ or *cawecút* as an inherently Nl̓eʔkepmx value, creating continuity between contemporary self-help culture, their ancestors, and traditional belief systems. Here we see a concept of the ‘self’ that is endogenous to the Nl̓eʔkepmx and that has its own sources. The complementarity of the discourses signifies that the distinction between Western forms of self-help culture and Indigenous forms of spirituality, language, and culture, are forming a new and emergent discourse.

My analysis is particularly indebted to the life course approach (Elder, Johnson & Crosnoe 2003). Much of contemporary research on life course is influenced by the work of Florian Znaniecki and William I. Thomas (1918). Znaniecki and Thomas were interested in how Polish peasants who had immigrated to America understood their migration and how this related to their future projects and goals. Polish immigrants often came to America because of dissatisfaction with the countryside in Poland. However, in America they did not become American. Instead, they took on a hybrid identity—neither Polish nor American but Polish-American. The ambivalence of some Indigenous Peoples toward self-help reflects a similar type of hybridity with several participants either speaking exclusively about Indigenous forms of spirituality or linking these to non-Indigenous forms of popular self-help culture, to create hybrid talk where traditional ways are linked with more Western ideas.

In a similar vein of research to Znaniecki and Thomas, in *Seeing the Light* (2014) Thomas Degloma examines how individuals emplot themselves around transformative events through what he calls awakening stories, narratives of events that give form to a transformation in self-understanding and self-awareness. The logics that he found in awakening stories are informative of the types of structures that Indigenous participants expressed in their understanding of self-help. DeGloma writes: “[awakening] stories involve a narrated substitution of one worldview...for another” (2014, pp. 3). Most of the detail participants shared was about how self-help, either Indigenous spirituality directly or contemporary self-help cultures as intermediaries, had created new awareness and new understanding of their lives and their pasts

and had led to repair or mending but none underwent a profound shift. Instead, most stories were of a gradual awakening facilitated by self-help culture. Even the two participants who provided a critical take on self-help culture, did significant labor to repair the concept of self-help and make it compatible with what are more widely seen as Indigenous customs. The 18 other participants spoke about self-help with a positive valence, but in a wide range of terms.

In their responses, some participants exclusively drew upon what sociologists traditionally consider to be self-help. Paul Lichterman (1988) argues that self-help cultures are what Lindlof (1992) calls an interpretive community. They construct the boundaries of a popular genre through shared interpretive conventions and then use these in the context of their everyday lives. Lichterman calls the interpretations used to intuit meaning from popular psychology a type of ‘thin culture’ as “they can be adopted loosely, tentatively, and sometimes interchangeably without enduring conviction” (1992 pp. 428). Several Indigenous respondents share in this interpretive community and its thin culture drawing on widely circulating notions of self-help to make sense of the issues faced by Indigenous communities. One respondent described the meaning of self-help:

Get off your butt and do something about it. Get on and get over it. For me it means doing research. It means acknowledging whatever the issue or concern that is getting in the way of happiness and doing something about it whether it's doing your own self-learning by reading books, watching videos, talking with other people, or seeking professional help, counsellors, therapists, treatment centres, taking action. So self-help is taking action to see somebody. The other part of it is looking at choices, so looking at culture or spiritually. It is whatever it is you need to do to be happy.

Here the respondent is very much invoking the circulating forms of talk of self-help as personal accountability for changing one's own circumstances. Both Rimke (2000) and Miller and Rose (1994) describe this form of accountability as relying on forms of self-governance through which expert authorities encourage people to take up the self as an active project. However, in Indigenous uses of self-help, the expert other often becomes Indigenous spirituality itself. In the quote above, we see this form of accountability active in the speaker's remarks about seeing “somebody”. While the speaker does ratify culture or spirituality, these are done sparingly and as tools to be happy. Another participant shares this thin view of self-help culture.

Self-help means to me taking care of me first. You have to be selfish. If you can't look after yourself, you can't look after anyone else. So self-help is getting enough sleep and I know all the right answers, but I don't do them, eating, resting, doing what makes you happy, watching soap operas. I was so into self-help for a bit, Deepak Chopra, all those dudes and dudettes. I was into those cards for a while. Now that I think about it, it's funny. Doing enough to look after yourself to be happy.

Here self-help is conceptualized as being selfish and taking care of yourself. She associates self-help culture with Deepak Chopra who in his work advocates for the emergence of a new awareness and new consciousness and became extremely influential when his book *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind* (1993) was featured on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. Self-care and happiness are important components of thin self-help culture. The cards the respondent is speaking about are called *Native Spirit Oracle Cards* and they are often used during self-help gatherings as ice breakers. They were used by an Indigenous Elder during a self-help training seminar on non-violent communication where we were both participants. This points to the burgeoning weaving together of self-help culture and Indigenous spirituality within Indigenous communities.

These cards are the work of Denise Linn, an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation who is a self-help guru and speaker, popular on YouTube. As their description on Amazon reads, the cards “were birthed at the base of a sacred mountain, and they carry the mystical energy that surrounded their birthing. Each card opens a gateway so that you can powerfully and immediately discern your own unique, secret messages from the Universe.” A card is chosen at random from the deck, and the user is asked to reflect on the meaning of the card. If the activity is done in a group, others are also invited to reflect on the meaning of the card for the user. These cards form a piece of the codex of self-help cultural modalities and yet their origin is from an Indigenous person and her cultural context. Moreover, though they reference a particular tribal culture, distinct from either the Sylix or Nte?kepmx, they resonate with people in the Valley. The popularity of the cards for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples points to the colonization of Indigenous cultural systems within broader self-help cultures but also the unsteady way these potentially colonizing systems descend into the lives of Indigenous Peoples.

Another element of the thin culture of self-help is the notion of self-responsibility. One respondent reflects on it this way:

Self-help means being responsible for our own lives and not relying on others to give us a house or give us handouts for food but being responsible like our ancestors were. They looked after everything on their own. They looked after everything on their own, food, medicine. With residential schools they took everything away and made us dependent on the government. So self-help is just using that Creator given right to be responsible for ourselves.

Here the ethic of self-responsibility is tied to the experience of this woman's ancestors and is a creator given right to do things independently. What is interesting here is that instead of self-responsibility being something that was mandated by the government and introduced through residential schools, it is something the speaker articulates as taken away from them by governments and schools. So, while self-help can be a way of claiming authority over Indigenous Peoples and redirecting them toward a therapist or the like, here it is explicitly about taking back control.

Another popular theory in the Valley is what is known as the epigenetic theory of trauma popularized by self-help guru Dr. Joy Degruy in her book *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome* (2005) and popularized by Oprah Winfrey. In the theory, Degruy advocates for an understanding of trauma as an inheritable trait passed down through generations. According to Degruy, stressful situations like slavery produce epigenetic shifts which change the underlying genes that we inherit from our parents. As a heritable trait, the idea of blood memory taken from Degruy's post-traumatic slave syndrome helps participants to make sense of their reactions to situations without having gone through directly traumatizing events like residential schools. One participant reflects "For myself, my self-help was learning that I am the way that I am, it's not all because of me, but because of what my blood line has gone through and that's just passed down to each of us and so my kids are learning about intergenerational trauma." Here she is making a direct link between her own behaviours and the traumatic experience of her bloodline. This form of talk has become popular owing to the influence of genetic-based invocations of the self which have been popularized in media discourses like self-help. However, they are meaningful to participants because they help individuals to make sense of their behaviours without resort to more sociological understandings which are distant from the public consciousness presently.

While some Indigenous Peoples drew on thin conceptions of self-help culture, others were more circumspect about its invocation, choosing instead to draw on traditional understandings from their own communities. One participant declares "I believe self-help is, it is

a matter of people using it, of trying to look after themselves and break the cycle. I believe it is an important tool and as Indigenous Peoples we should practice our cultures and tradition. Smudging, praying, sweat if I can ever get to one, talking to Elders, these are big parts of self-help.” Here the participant is advocating explicitly for the use of traditional practices as a form of self-help. This is shared by another participant who declares:

Self-help means balance. I have to be balanced, otherwise I don't function well, and I do self-help. I do ceremony. So, I'm a Sundancer. I'm a faster. I rely on ceremony. Very heavy, heavy ceremony. I sweat. I do fast like intermittent fasting on Solstice. So those ceremonies are what surrounds me there. What keeps me sane. They are what help me, helps me make good decisions I hope, and it helps. I always want to make sure that my humility is intact because I don't ever want to think that people would say to me. “Your parents didn't raise you right.” I don't want to disgrace my parents. So that's what self-help is for me. I was raised with ceremony. I spent a lot of time with my great grandmother and my grandpa. My father's grandmother, I spent a lot of time with her, and she taught me a lot of this, but I still, I teach my children and my grandchildren.

Here self-help is about balance, and it comes from involvement in ceremony but also living up to the expectations of the community. Another interviewee, this one a fluent speaker of *Nleʔkepmxcin*, explains that self-help is *cəwecút*. She says:

It's *cəwecút*. Mending yourself, not fixing. We all went through the bumpy road, no matter what, you walked here fast and you keep walking and camp out or you keep trying to walk a clear path and the only way to keep on your journey, spiritually, traditionally, most likely, we set up balance, I said balance. So spirituality is very important man 'cause that's part of it. You choose your spiritual path. Every professional (waves hand dismissively), please don't, please don't bother. Wasted time, wasted personal time, not helping you 'cause they usually involve, you want the help, go to a friend. You know you have to help yourself because not everyone is going to have that opportunity that somebody is going to come and reach out. It's acknowledging the fact that you need help.

Here she criticizes professionals and encourages understanding life as a bumpy road along which we keep trying to walk a clear path. Instead of consulting a professional, she advocates for using friends to gain help, asserting that professionals lead to conflict and that one shouldn't even bother. Her style of speech owes to English being her second language. She only learned it as an adult. She ultimately articulates, like Corntassel and Alfred (2005), that helping oneself is an individual project. Other participants too shared a more traditional indigenous view of self-help.

Here one woman talks about self-help both in more Western forms but also in forms gleaned from traditional practices: “Self-help means taking care of myself, asking what I needed today, meditation, smudging, what foods I need. It’s when I talk about my residential school trauma, sitting beside the water, eating with an Elder. Even sitting by the water is a prayer.” Here self-help is talking about trauma but it is also the simple act of sitting by the water and there is great insight and beauty in the idea that “even sitting by the water is a prayer.”

The critical view of self-help is extended by two other participants who rather than articulating a thin conception of self-help culture take a more critical stance and argue that it creates friction with Indigenous ways of knowing.

When I think self-help as an important tool for Indigenous Peoples the term 'self' comes up for me and 'self' feels very individualistic and when I think about being an individualist it feels Western because as Indigenous Peoples we need help from the communal. If I think about where this question is coming from and all the history that Indigenous Peoples, I think help should be there, I'm not necessarily sure about self. Maybe communal help is a better word. I was talking about this with my father and we were talking about the difference between Indigenous education and western education and he said something that he really noticed, especially with two daughters, we would go into the Western school system and we would learn cognitively, everything was cognitive, but then we'd come home and we'd have all of these emotions and we didn't know what to do. I think about Indigenous People always focusing on cognition and not fully understanding their emotions or not fully understanding their spirit. How it really impacts them as people and gets them thinking they need that self-help. Now if it was an Indigenous atmosphere, I do wonder if they have that support from their community or if they would have had that support from their community if they would need self-help.

Here she critiques self-help for being about the ‘self’ which she doesn’t think squares with Indigenous values. She tells a story of her father observing her and her sister in school and how Western education helps with cognitive dimensions of growth but offers very little emotionally. This, she argues, can come meaningfully from an Indigenous atmosphere and she advocates for communal help as an alternative to self-help. She does repair work to make the concept a better fit with Indigenous world views, invoking Leroy Little Bear:

...he was discussing how we all have an energy, so these plants have an energy, these rocks have an energy, these animals have an energy, the Land has an energy...I am related to all of them...I think that we are not a self, we are part of one another, we are part of the whole.

Another participant also expresses a critical view:

So, I think self-help is a colonized concept, a colonial project. You know it's funny. When I went back home, and I was counselling people, I went into my dad's side of the family in the village and we're talking. They asked me what I do and I told them counselling. They thought that was the little silliest work. "What? That's a job." So self-help is very colonized. Very, very colonized. In Indigenous conceptions you go to a medicine man, somebody else, who teaches you all of that. So, the self is very individualized.

Here he reflects on his own work as a counsellor and how his family thought his job was silly because they would go to a *səxʷnéʔm* for help. Like the previous respondent he also engages in repair: "I think there's a lot of growth when maturity comes in, and when you've experienced life and Indigenous ways, you grow into a relationship, you grow into a parent. You grow into these things, right? Right? You make do with what you have. I don't really like that word coming from a therapist." Here self-help is better when it doesn't come from a therapist but, instead, from one's own community.

Contrasting these viewpoints are two participants who meaningfully express how self-help entered their lives in a transformative way. Both encountered self-help through education, the first one through her training as an Early Childhood Educator and the second through the Native Human Services Certificate Program. According to one participant:

Both my parents went to residential school. We always were surviving. My biological father died from cirrhosis, so he was an alcoholic. My mom was left to raise five children on her own in a time when there was no welfare services. I realized I really need to go to school for something that's going to help me to understand who I am and how I interact with people. The amount of my own personal growth and learning within that, that setting of going to college and learning about ECE. It gave me the chance to learn about what is healthy development, what areas did I miss in my life? ...Building those healthy attachments to other people and knowing how to have a good relationship. I only knew what I learned in my house about having an abusive husband or abusive father. Self-help is important. As I got a little bit older it became more of the cultural aspects because I was able to peel away some of that trauma and deal with the loss of my father and the loss of childhood. Getting counselling, getting therapy, doing some intensive work for myself between the ages of 22 and 26. Then I was able to start to learn who I was as an individual. Self-help is extremely important and to start to include some of those cultural aspects, learning how to do ceremonies, learning the importance of smudging, cleansing

with water, and the healing aspects of water, getting on the Land and understanding that healing connection, will end up just being in the mountains where it's absolutely peaceful.

Here the participant articulates a difficult childhood, followed by exposure to self-help concepts through school and how it eventually delivered her to cultural aspects of self-care. Participation in self-help culture brought her closer to Indigenous practices and traditions. It gave her tools to deal with trauma and loss and allowed for the kind of cultural reclamations articulated in this chapter. Another participant shares a similar trajectory:

Self-help is making yourself. When you're aware that you need some psychological or emotional help, then you go out, get professional help, or read literature about how you can improve yourself, fix yourself. Self-help started when I was in my 20s, I guess. And then I took this course called Native Human Services. It was from Kamloops, specifically for Native Peoples, and it was geared towards going into social work and I was kind of pushed into it and I really didn't want to be a social worker because I knew I would get burnt out, so I took the program, and it really opened my eyes. That was self-help. Beginning of helping yourself and coming out of your shadow, finding power in your worth. Over the years, I just I've read books like Doctor Wayne Dyer. Then the spiritual stuff comes in, going to the hills, going out to nature, being alone to get your thoughts together. I don't know what the word (laughs) would be a place where somebody get their prayers and my mom said that the waterfalls, the creeks in the water were positive, powerful. So, if you need help, talk to the water.

Here the spiritual elements of Indigenous culture follow from the work done through self-help training in Native Human Services and reading books like those by self-help author Wayne Dwyer. Both the last two examples provide ideal instances of how self-help culture can help achieve a reconversion, or act as a patch, building a bridge to Indigenous forms of spirituality and culture, and both participants are actively working to relearn their languages and become fluent speakers.

Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley do not all share the same conceptions of self-help culture. While some participants articulate a thin conception of self-help culture drawn from popular books or cards, others provide a view of self-help as grounded in traditional customs and practices. Others provide a more critical stance, articulating the incompatibility of self-help with Indigenous forms of spirituality. Still others demonstrate an inherent compatibility between western modalities of self-help and traditional practices. Participants who attended Choices tend to be more open to self-help culture more generally than those that haven't. Finally, in two

explicit examples, the transformational arc of self-help as enabling a reconnection with Indigenous spirituality, language, and culture is provided.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have attempted to show how self-help culture intersects with Indigenous resurgence in the Nicola Valley and how Indigenous organizations have enabled self-help cultures. The Coldwater School and Coldwater Indian Band provided self-help training seminars and paid for members to attend Choices and several other personal growth programs. They decided to do this because of the benefits that these programs had on community members, aligning themselves with Indigenous resurgence by bringing Indigenous spirituality, culture, and language into the centre of their lives. This is theoretically important as it complicates Alfred and Cornthassel's (2005) claim that change begins solely with the individual. Instead, individual change is often enabled by Indigenous organizations that can facilitate self-development and self-transformation essential for the return to Indigenous culture, language, and spirituality.

Another central aspect of the argument presented in this chapter is the way that Indigenous communities amalgamate Indigenous spirituality and language with self-help cultures to create new forms. This challenges some Indigenous theorist's claims about refusal or turning away from dominant features of settler-colonial culture. In the Nicola Valley, community members turn toward elements of the dominant culture as a strategy to turn away from settler-colonialism, using self-help culture to connect with traditional language, spirituality, and culture. This trajectory was central to Darla's life, and it is through her example that I first came to understand the important role that self-help culture and programs like Choices hold in the lives of Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley.

Chapter 6 Indigenous Futures: How do Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples think about the future?

x^wuý he péntstem xe? nq^wincútk

"The language will be returned to us" (x^wuý is one word for the future).

This is part of a translation by Marilyn Lytton of Article 13 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Marilyn, a teacher at the Coldwater School, translated the Article for the School's Winter Celebration. It was read by her students during a *móq^wix* (gathering, the origin of the suffix *mx* as in Nl̓eʔkepmx). The Article reads in part "Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons" (UN 2007). The translation specifies a type of future where Nl̓eʔkepmxcin is again spoken by the *seytknmx* (the people or those with two legs who gather). The phrase is spoken in a prophetic voice, not as a dream or prediction, but as something that will happen.

In Nl̓eʔkepmxcin a speaker must identify their relationship to the event they speak of. The particle *xe?* describes knowledge whose source is sacred. Prophecies have been central to Indigenous temporalities since long before settler occupation. However, their salience has increased in the settler-colonial era. Settler scholar Mark Rifkin writes that for Indigenous Peoples, prophecies "galvanize and gain new meaning and momentum through collective expressions and experiences" and "further license, stimulate, and texture possibilities for living a future not determined by settler histories" (2017 pp. 132). Prophecies are one element of Indigenous temporalities. Temporalities are the process of marking the passage of time that orients us toward change and continuity. Marilyn's translation breaks with settler predictions that Indigenous cultures are anachronistic and consigned to the past. By framing Nl̓eʔkepmxcin as being 'returned', actions like Marilyn's orient her community toward change.

The translation of Article 13 by Marilyn is an act of resurgence. As previously mentioned, resurgence is the regeneration of a cultural system. In the case of Indigenous communities, it is a

turning inward but also a turning away from practices that perpetuate settler-colonial dynamics. When asked about the motivation for her translation, Marilyn spoke about her mother.

I translated Article 13 for my students so they can hear the sounds of Nl̓eʔkepmx words. It matters to me because I remember what the words sounded like coming out of the mouth of my beloved mom. There are many Nl̓eʔkepmx children who do not have the opportunity to hear fluent Nl̓eʔkepmxcin speakers.

Marilyn's mother, Elizabeth, was the most fluent speaker of Nl̓eʔkepmxcin in the world upon her death at the age of 99 in 2018. To Marilyn, transmission of the language to future generations is a way she can honour the life of her mom. For Marilyn, connecting the sounds of her mother to the children she cares for at the school interrupts the idea that Indigenous Peoples and their cultures will succumb to the death envisioned by Western governments and predicted in the ethnographic record.

At the turn of the 20th century, settler temporalities were oriented toward a future without Indigenous Peoples. Settlers predicted the destruction of all Indigenous languages and the appropriation of all Indigenous Lands. Sherene Razack (2015) argues that for settlers, Indigenous Peoples are imagined as always already dying. This imaginary denies Indigenous communities a future and consigns them to the past as a remnant, one that is seen to be on the verge of collapse, and which will inevitably and eventually succumb to the civilizational vitality of Western modernity. Settlers mark the passage of time through the disappearing of Indigenous Peoples. As Jean M. O'Brien writes "non-Indians narrated their own present against what they constructed as the backdrop of a past symbolized by Indian peoples and their cultures" (2010, pp. xxi). Displacing and disappearing Indigenous Peoples orients settlers to modernity, situating their own cultures, organizations, and institutions as enduring and significant as opposed to those cultures, organizations, and institutions of Indigenous Peoples that they replace and construct as fleeting, anachronistic, and trivial.

To talk about the future, as Marilyn does with her prophetic statement, is part of what I call a culture of vision. A culture of vision refers to the unique way the Nl̓eʔkepmx and Sylix think about time and the future. As described in detail below, the Nl̓eʔkepmx and Sylix have a different relationship to time than their settler counterparts, constituted by different understanding of seasons and cycles, and expressed through a different relationship to the past,

present, and future. The future is an object of intense emotional salience for them, and discussion of the future is an important part of their culture and has been for a very long time, far more important than in Western cultures.

Sociologists increasingly recognize different conceptions of time as culturally and socially constructed (Adam 2004). Scholars have begun to address temporality as both a source of resistance and meaning for Indigenous cultures. Mark Rifkin (2017) argues that conversations about Indigenous sovereignty should extend beyond the Land to include issues of time and temporal sovereignty. Temporal sovereignty is the unique orientation of Indigenous Peoples to time expressed through their narratives and experiences as well as their relationship to change and continuity. In geography, Metis scholar Sakihitowin Awâsis (2020) offers that the relationship between the Land, Indigenous culture, and language is generative of different orders and relations of time. Building upon this interest in temporality, I argue the Nicola People have a unique relationship to time and organize time differently than Western conceptions of time—what Rifkin (2017) calls settler time. I call this unique temporal organization a culture of vision.

This chapter addresses two dissertation research questions: How do Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples think about the future? And what makes Indigenous resurgence possible? I argue that the Nl̓eʔkepmx and Sylix culture of vision, their communities' orientation to time and the future, enables resurgence. I demonstrate how this culture of vision interacts with contemporary events to create what Walter Benjamin calls *messianic time*. Messianic time, described below, refers to a time of enhanced agency created by a broader awareness of the past, present, and future. During my research, unmarked graves were publicly revealed to be located on the grounds of the nearby Kamloops Indian Residential School. While many people had told me about these graves prior to the announcement, ground-penetrating radar provided overwhelming evidence, escalating this local dilemma to a national issue. The culture of vision interacted with the reporting on the unmarked graves to create messianic time or enhanced historical awareness of the event both for Indigenous community members and settlers. This makes resurgence possible by making action for Indigenous communities in the Valley more meaningful and deliberate through an awareness of the historical circumstances surrounding their communities and their necropolitical relationship to settlers.

In this chapter, I am interested in the interaction of these two domains—the culture of vision and contemporary events like the discovery in Kamloops and how this interaction creates

messianic time expressed through what I call future talk. Future talk is a term I use to describe discourse about the future. One form of future talk is future projection—an imaginative account of the future that forms an important part of how individuals and collectives make plans and undertake meaningful social action (Emirbayer & Mische 1998). Drawing on 35 interviews and surveys with Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples about the future, this chapter explores the future projections of both groups and identifies some of the key differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous future projections.

My hypothesis was that Indigenous Peoples would be oriented toward change and non-Indigenous Peoples would be oriented toward continuity. However, something happened during my research; after I had completed 17 interviews, the unmarked graves of the 215 children were unearthed. The ‘discovery’ of the unmarked graves transformed the future projections of the non-Indigenous participants; suddenly they too were oriented toward change, but ‘change’ in these accounts was rooted in the agency of Indigenous communities.

In what follows I explore several interrelated dynamics and theoretical concepts that I use to interpret the future talk of my participants. First, I begin by describing the announcement of the remains at the Kamloops Indian Residential school. Then, I operationalize the concepts of messianic time created by Walter Benjamin and settler time created by Mark Rifkin. I consider the culture of vision amongst the Nl̓eʔkepmx. Long before the arrival of settlers, the Nl̓eʔkepmx had unique rituals and concepts for marking the passage of time and thinking about both change and continuity. These have not receded in the contemporary era. I then consider the relationship between settler-colonialism, temporality, and social and cultural change before turning to the talk of my participants. I analyze the future talk of my participants using the concepts of messianic and settler time to get at the ideas of social and cultural change. I am interested in the way they think about the future but also the way they think about change. Most participants, both settler and Indigenous, expressed that Indigenous Peoples and communities have the agency to alter the future.

The ‘Discovery’

The Kamloops Indian Residential School is located on the Tk’emlups te Secwepemc reserve about 120 km North of Coldwater. In 2021, the Tk’emlups te Secwepemc First Nations, used ground-penetrating radar and located 215 radar signatures believed to be human remains on the

Lands of the residential school. There was an outpouring of grief and sympathy from both settlers and Indigenous Peoples locally and across the country. Many Indigenous Peoples from the Valley attended the school, including most people from Coldwater and Upper Nicola born before 1962. Many participants told me about the gruesome acts committed at the school before the announcement and the likelihood that there were bodies buried there.

The announcement of the so-called ‘discovery’ of the unmarked graves led to an outpouring of grief in Indigenous organizations in the Nicola Valley. On the morning of the discovery, staff at the Coldwater School were participating in a non-violent communication workshop led by an Elder. Hearing of the announcement, staff paused to reflect on the event’s meaning. They spent several hours discussing, crying, and mourning the loss of the children. One teacher who attended the school led us in a prayer for the children.

The discovery had an emotional impact on settlers too. Polling research firm Maru Public Opinion surveyed non-Indigenous Canadians following the announcement and a majority said the discovery had a profound emotional impact upon them (Sandri 2021). However, 34% of respondents agreed with the statement “all of this happened so long ago, we should just acknowledge it, apologize, do nothing else and move on.” Despite the resistance to change by some, the discovery intensified work began earlier by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and altered the emotional salience of Indigenous histories that construct Residential Schools as a collective trauma for Indigenous Peoples and increase notions of culpability for settlers.

As Residential schools begin to be ratified as a trauma, they alter the way Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples think and feel about the future by transforming their orientation to change and continuity, to the past, present, and future. For many, the unmarked graves in Kamloops came to signify a desire for change. This desire interacts with the Nicola’s culture of vision to create messianic time, and messianic time makes resurgence possible by facilitating historical consciousness and emotional salience for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples, enhancing the agency of Indigenous communities in the Valley.

Messianic Time

The term messianic time was coined by Walter Benjamin in his “On the concept of history” (1973). The essay was written in 1940 on the eve of his suicide. Benjamin was a German Jew trapped inside of a genocidal continent. Hannah Arendt who had successfully crossed weeks

before Benjamin along the same route, received “On the concept of history” in the mail shortly after hearing of his death. She worked with Benjamin’s friend and fellow Frankfurt School critical theorist, Theodor Adorno, to publish it posthumously.

In the essay, Benjamin (1973) challenges a particular version of historical materialism—that history is determined by collective social forces beyond human agency. He contends each generation is imbued with “a *weak* messianic power” and when social groups articulate history, not as it was but as a “means to take control of a memory, as it flashes in a moment of danger,” they become the subject of historical cognition. He writes “history is the object of a construction whose place is formed not in homogenous and empty time, but in that which is fulfilled by the here-and-now.” On the eve of his own suicide and the great catastrophe for European Jewry, Benjamin writes an essay filled with hope about the possibility of social transformation. Though critical of the historical materialist scheme—which he argues depends upon a religious devotion to a mechanism of history widely recognized as a fallacy—he thinks the project itself, its retelling of history and its prophecy for a future, holds great promise because it transforms the valuation of the past and therefore our relationship to the present.

Messianism originates in Judaism, but Benjamin appropriates the concept to think beyond Jewish prophecy and about the possibility of revolution. For Benjamin the messiah is not a person or a place but a time. Messianic time is a time imbued with historical consciousness that enhances agency by creating a new and different structure of meaning. It brings about the interaction of different times—past, present, and future—in the realm of the now. The historical consciousness created by messianic time has a differentiating effect. It breaks with linear clock time and makes actions, like Marilyn’s translation and her participation in language reclamation, salient. As Rifkin (2017) discusses, Indigenous peoples have a long history of messianism. Later I will discuss the history of messiahs amongst the Nl̓eʔkepmx. I use this concept because it accurately reflects the reality of Indigenous life in the Nicola Valley.

People living in messianic time are oriented toward change. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples may be affected by messianic time, shifting their orientation for marking the passage of time from one of continuity to one of change. In the case of the Nicola Valley, for Indigenous Peoples and those who work closely with them in Indigenous led organizations, change is organized around the trauma of residential schools. The ‘discoveries’ at the Kamloops Indian Residential School introduced a new rhythm into life and suddenly the most quotidian or

rationalized activities, like workshops and teaching at the school, were shot through with sacred moments, altering people's orientation to change, and shifting the meaning of their actions and emotions.

When teachers would instruct a child on how to ask for breakfast in Nl̓eʔkepmxcin, they realized they were doing so within the context of an ongoing genocide. This altered fundamentally the pace of life, speeding up the importance of recovering languages. Benjamin juxtaposes messianic time with empty homogenous time—a time without historical consciousness. I will argue, empty homogenous time is the time of settlers and is marked by radical adherence to clock time and control over material circumstances to achieve the repetition and reproduction of everyday life. This is consistent with the description of settler time offered by Rifkin (2017). Empty homogenous time is time without meaning. People living in empty homogenous time are oriented toward continuity. While the Nicola People have always had a culture of vision, they have only now begun to live in messianic time.

A Culture of Vision

The culture of vision has historical precursors and is found in the contemporary culture of the Nicola Peoples. In his ethnography of the Nl̓eʔkepmx, James Teit (1900) provides several Contact narratives, oral records of first encounters between the Indigenous Peoples of the interior and Simon Fraser in 1808. Fraser was the noted explorer and eponym of the Fraser River and the first European with whom the Nl̓eʔkepmx had contact. According to Teit, before the arrival of Fraser, there were prophets amongst the Nl̓eʔkepmx who could predict the future (1900 p. 365) and one predicted the coming of white people. These prophets traveled throughout the interior to share their Visions and in each place were greeted by ceremony and celebration.

One of these is still remembered and discussed by the Nl̓eʔkepmx and Syilx. He is named Kwalos. He lived before Fraser's arrival. According to Teit's account, which came from an Elder who knew of Kwalos, "before the first white people came to the country, [Kwalos] had a series of dreams or visions which impressed him very much" (quoted in Wickwire 1994 p. 6). In his dream, Kwalos spoke of "how his spirit left his body and passed rapidly to the shores of a great lake in the far east where the clouds always hung low along the edge of the water" (quoted in Wickwire 1994 p. 6). He continues, "there were many strange people who spoke a language very different in sound from Indian languages...and had many beautiful and wonderful things the

Indians knew nothing of’ (quoted in Wickwire 1994 p. 6). Recounting Kwalos’s vision, Teit goes on to describe the whites as having windows, doors, stoves, fields of grain and vegetables, flower gardens, creatures resembling goats, sheep, and cattle. These were unseen to the Nl̓eʔkepmx prior to Contact and yet Kwalos was aware of them. While sharing his vision, Kwalos would dance and sing in the hopes that whites would come peacefully and share their knowledge in friendship.

There are three related words the Nl̓eʔkepmx use when speaking about the future that might help us to make sense of Kwalos’s vision. The first is *xʷuʔ* a specifier which places an event in the future as in Marilyn’s prophecy. The second is *wəwikm* which means to see what is not there. And a third is *ʔikʷlxʷ* which means a dream. These words don’t mean vision just as a power for seeing events independent of experience. Instead, vision may be the capacity to take what is known, encountered through life or through dreams, and project it into the future—to create a world, often one which has certain qualities of the present but is transformed in other major ways. To speak of it as a dream is to give it emotional salience, which comes from connection with the ‘*xeʔ*’, marking its source as sacred.

Vision may be an attempt to create change—to disturb the ideas of today so that the future might be different. Vision may be future work—speech or action about the future oriented toward change. Perhaps, what explorers like Fraser and ethnographers like Teit assumed to be a mystical capacity was simply what sociologists now term future projection. A culture of vision and future work include the ability to take what is known and speak of it meaningfully in the future as it is encountered through dream and vision. It is this culture of vision which has become one of the most enduring capacities for the Nl̓eʔkepmx and Syilx. As Marilyn Litton said, “The language will be returned to us.”

Settlers often see Indigenous *sptékʷl* (stories) as myths and neglect their capacity as vehicles of deep analysis and insight (Watts 2013; Simpson 2017). For example, one *sptékʷl* amongst the Nl̓eʔkepmx tells of the arrival of *snkʷép* or Coyote—a central character in many of their narratives. In the story, Coyote melted the ice palace of the Sun People and caused the Fraser River to flow in reverse bringing *he sqyéytn* (salmon) to the *seytknmx* (the people who gather) (Ignace & Ignace 2017). On the surface, from a Eurocentric perspective, this could easily be discounted as a fanciful account of a primitive group completely disconnected from reality. If one looks deeper, however, it is a story of geological transformation over millennia. The

recession of the continental glaciers at the end of the ice age would have caused the Fraser to flow in reverse, allowing it to reach the ocean, bringing salmon species upstream. These events coincide with the arrival of larger mammals like the coyote to the interior.

More meaningfully, as an oral culture, Indigenous Peoples used stories to encode histories that spanned timescales on the order of millennia but remained outside of the dominant European episteme (Foucault 1966). These narratives were wholly unassimilable to Europeans as containing possible worlds, let alone scientific realities. Todorov (1982) argues that the inability of Indigenous Peoples to imagine European strategic thinking and conquest outside of their spiritual systems led them to be outmaneuvered by the Spanish in the Americas. While research on settler-colonialism has advanced since Todorov, the same process he describes may actually be true in reverse. Non-Indigenous Peoples could not understand or appreciate the cultural texts of a society where economy, religion, and culture were embedded in a single sphere. This was a failure of the European social imaginary and an inability to conceive of Indigenous narratives as being historically accurate, a failure repeated in the interpretation of the vision of Kwalos.

What functions does vision serve today? Being able to meaningfully interpret the world and project out from the realities of our present to a perception of tomorrow and beyond is a central way that Indigenous Peoples create resurgence in opposition to settler-colonization. Indigenous worlds do not dwell in the now alone but engage in imaginaries which extend far into the future and the past. When these imaginaries begin to inform action through historical consciousness oriented toward change, the results are messianic.

Temporality, Settler-colonialism, Social, and Cultural Change

If “territoriality is settler-colonialism’s specific, irreducible element” (Wolfe 2006 pp. 388), then what do we make of time? Mark Rifkin (2017) argues that the politics of recognition extend to temporality. Articulated most clearly by Glen Coulthard (2014), the politics of recognition refers to “the now expansive range of recognition-based models of liberal pluralism that seek to ‘reconcile’ Indigenous assertions of nationhood with settler state sovereignty via the accommodation of Indigenous identity claims in some form of renewed legal and political relationship” (2014 pp. 3). Indigenous’ struggles with time are often inscribed through the politics of recognition as a desire to be seen as modern, inhabiting a temporality coeval with settlers, or “staging a version of pastness that disavows the complexities of Native life” (Rifkin

2017 pp. 6). However, as Coulthard (2014) observes, because recognition always occurs within an asymmetrical relation of power, the state, and its settler-majority body politic, articulate the shape and form of what they recognize, and this recognition extend to time.

Rifkin is interested in the stakes “of treating participation or experience as necessarily indicating entry into a singular temporal formation that itself marks the sole possibility for moving toward the future” (2017 pp 15). In problematizing recognition of Indigenous Peoples as modern, Rifkin is not attempting to “police the boundaries of indigeneity or Indigenous temporal understanding” (2017 pp 16), but to open the possibilities of an Indigenous temporal sovereignty not controlled by or beholden to settler frameworks, unlocking the potential of Indigenous historicism and futurity.

Assertions of Indigenous Peoples as either modern or not, inhabiting the present or re-enacting the past, are both shaped by settler desires and judgements about the temporality of Indigenous Peoples and cultures relative to settler time. Such recognition inscribes a binary choice. If Indigenous Peoples are seen to inhabit the present, then they are articulated as surrendering their cultural beliefs and inherent rights. If they inhabit the past, then they have surrendered their claim to modernity and cultural relevancy and the potential to work toward a future of their choosing, independent of settler time.

These issues are highlighted in the Supreme Court of Canada case *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* (1997). The case involved the question of whether Gitksan and Wet’suwet’en People held unrestricted title to Land in Northern British Columbia. In two decisions in lower courts, Indigenous Peoples were seen to have lost their claim to title because of the anachronism of their cultural systems. In a third decision on the case at the Supreme Court of Canada, Chief Justice Lamer recognized Aboriginal Title to Lands occupied by Indigenous Peoples at the time the Crown asserted sovereignty. However, if Indigenous Peoples chose to develop the Land in a way that did not align with their traditional use of the land, then they must “surrender those lands and convert them into non-title lands to do so” (Delgamuukw 1997). Here Indigenous peoples are caught in a double bind: surrender their traditional practices and lose their Land or keep their Land and surrender their claim to the here and now asserted by settlers. Settler recognition of Indigenous rights constructs Indigenous temporality as a binary choice between modernity and tradition, present and past. Moreover, the start time for Indigenous title is the advent of settler sovereignty, demarcating settler time as the only timescale in which Indigenous Peoples’

assertions can be judged. Anishinaabe legal scholar John Borrows (1999) describes this declaration as a fiction conjured by settler societies to vindicate their claim to authority.

Indigenous temporality and demarcations of the passage of time become beholden and subordinated to settler time. I have chosen to define temporality as the process of marking the passage of time that orients us toward change and continuity. I have offered that Indigenous temporalities are marked by a different orientation than settlers with differential markers for the passage of time. In the case of Marilyn's prophecy, the passage of time is marked by an orientation toward change which encompasses the return of Nle?kepmxcin. For Kwalos, temporality is marked by an orientation toward change with the coming of the white man, a world altering event for Indigenous communities. Moreover, the scale of their temporal orientation, the events they use to mark the passage of time, often dwell at the level of the millennia as evidenced in the history encoded in the story of Coyote and the Sun People.

Settler time, expressed in *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* (1997), is oriented toward the continuity of an already modern way of life and the indoctrination of other cultures into modernity, as if settlers were the midwife of contemporary life. If Indigenous Peoples express modernity, then they are consigned to live in a settler present, surrendering their title and claim to cultural distinctiveness. Indigenous temporalities are oriented toward change, not explicitly to enter modernity or be viewed as modern, but to articulate their own vision and capacity to determine which times they exist in. Settler practices of recognition, like the decision in *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* (1997), alienate Indigenous communities from their inherent capacity to determine which temporal formations they choose to live in, restricting them to a binary choice between modernity and tradition. In opposition to this binary choice, Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley have chosen to live amidst their own temporal formation which refuses to settle for the options afforded to them by the state.

A growing sociological interest in time has occurred alongside a much broader recognition that time itself is not uniform but is socially and culturally constructed (Adam 2004) with a wide variety of expressions across cultural groups. An early enunciation of this interest comes from Emile Durkheim (1912) who observed that time is not a universal category but was the result of collective rituals that orient us by marking our passage through time. Building on this, Marcel Mauss added that different rhythms of events produce different repertoires of symbols and meanings of time.

Gonzalo Iparraguirre (2016) observes that the Mocoví—a group Indigenous to Latin America—develop and maintain different cultural rhythms than those found in hegemonic western temporalities. For example, in western time, production is organized around rationalization, accumulation, and the exchange of labor time for wages. For the Mocoví, production is accentuated by a disinterest in accumulation, lack of punctuality, and disdain for the regulation of time. Metis scholar Sakihitowin Awâsis (2020) in their work on Anishinaabe time, observes that Anishinaabemowin (the language of the Anishnabe) expresses a different order of time than Western temporalities, one deeply connected to the Land. They argue that Indigenous Peoples express and embrace multiple temporalities, but that colonialism assumes the superiority of Western over Indigenous time.

The prioritization of Western time invests settler nations and people with the authority to define the start and end of things and to prioritize certain time frames over others. We can think here of the memorialization of events like sovereignty, on Canada Day, or the periodization of history taught in grade and high school. For Pierre Bourdieu (2014), the ability to regulate time through holidays, festivals, and the organization of calendars is an expression of the symbolic power of the state—its capacity to decide the boundaries of legitimacy and illegitimacy. Time differs between groups and the capacity to decide whose time matters enough to be institutionalized is an act of power, one that delegitimizes Indigenous temporalities.

For the Nicola People, the organization of time is very different from a Western conception of linear time or clock time. Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley have historically embraced multiple temporalities. Colonialism assumes the superiority of Western over Indigenous time but for Indigenous Peoples living in the Valley they can be coeval. Historically, time was seen as a cycle, the rupture and reparation of the *tmíx*^w. There were three distinct calendars amongst the Nt̓eʔkepmx (Teit 1900) and these still exist amongst Indigenous Peoples in the Valley. The first Calendar is lunar. The year begins in November with the rutting of the deer and follows the 13 lunar cycles, only 11 of which are counted with numbers. Each moon has a different time oriented to a different relationship to animals, plants, and practices like hunting, fishing, gathering, rituals, and celebration. The reason they only count 11 of the moon's cycles is because they also adhere to the solstice and equinox; the extra cycles are used to bring the lunar calendar into accord with their second calendar, the solar calendar. To this, they add a third calendar which is marked by five distinct seasons based on changes in weather and their spatial

location relative to the season—the coming of the snow, the leaving of the snow, the melting of the snow in the mountains, the arrival of the wind, and Indian summer. During the coming of the snow, they seclude themselves in their *sʔistkn* (winter home) and discuss what they thought the future would be like (Teit 1900). The season after is about preparing to leave the winter home. Then subsequently, they leave the winter home as the snow melts in the mountains. As the snow melts, they move around to different fishing and hunting places and gathering locations, erecting tents. Another name for the Nicola branch of the Nl̓eʔkepmx is Scw'exmx, which means the people of the creek or more poetically, the people who gather where the snow melts. These cycles have not disappeared from the Nicola. Those involved in hunting, picking, and gathering, mark their years with five seasons, not four. People continue to celebrate the solstice and the equinox. Both the summer and winter solstice are Holidays at the Coldwater Band School. Moreover, a group of UBC education students, I worked with, wrote their master's major research project on how to transmit these Calendars and this temporal infrastructure to future generations.

A central aspect of the argument of this dissertation has been about the importance of change to Indigenous resurgence. I want to connect resurgence to temporality, an orientation to change and continuity. While Jeff Corntassel proposes that Indigenous resurgence “means having the courage and imagination to envision life beyond the state (2012 pp. 89)”, I envision it as a complex social process whereby Indigenous communities and Indigenous people claim autonomy over various aspects of their lives not only from settler states and cultures but often with and through settler states and cultures. These processes are complex, and the state, settler time, the politics of recognition, and even reconciliation, can all complicate but also become actants in Indigenous resurgence.

As Leanne Betasamosake Simpson articulates “resurgence creates profoundly different ways of thinking, organizing, and being because the Indigenous processes that give birth to our collective resurgence are fundamentally nonhierarchical, non-exploitative, non-extractivist, and non-authoritarian (2016 pp 22-23).” However, one central aspect of all definitions of resurgence is the centrality of both change and continuity. Resurgence is oriented toward changing the circumstances of Indigenous cultural systems amidst settler occupation, authority, and domination, while continuing Indigenous lifeways as distinct from those of settler culture. These lifeways are a continuity of a vastly different order from the state or settler occupation.

Sociology would seem especially well-poised to offer insight into the process of change as the discipline's creation and flourishing is tied directly to the transformation and organization of societies often captured under the metonym of modernity.

Within sociology, broadly speaking, a distinction is drawn between social and cultural change (Alexander and Smith 2007). Social change is a transformation in the configuration and relation of roles in society or a change in society's underlying structure, particularly in the organization of its economy. By contrast, I understand cultural change as transformation in the meaning of those roles, relationships, and structures. Both social and cultural change can influence each other. While sociology and sociologists have focused on social change, cultural change has been brought to the fore with many in the field of cultural sociology advocating for cultural autonomy—the capacity for culture to act independently of social structure—and the role of culture in creating social change.

Advocates for cultural autonomy argue for “a sharp analytical uncoupling of culture from social structure” (Alexander & Smith 2007 pp. 135). Cultural sociologists approach change from the perspective of culture itself, arguing that it is the key to how societies confront contemporary issues like inequality as well as civic and national crises (Alexander 2018; Lamont, Small & Harding 2010). In their analysis, cultural sociologists shift culture from being a variable dependent upon social structure to one independent of social structure and perhaps even creating, organizing, and transforming social structure.

Both cultural and social change are meaningful to the discussion of Indigenous temporalities, futurity, and resurgence. The revitalization of Indigenous languages can bring about both social and cultural change. Indigenous languages are systems of meaning and therefore have the potential to alter the meaning of roles, relationships, and structures. For example, there is no distinction drawn between genders within Nl̓eʔkepmxcin. However, with the installation of the Indian Act, this meaning was forbidden, and chiefs had to be male. With the revitalization of Indigenous languages and the cultural knowledge surrounding them, the organization of traditional gender roles is returning, as insurgent and subjugated knowledges resurface.

Indigenous languages can also bring about social change, changing the configuration and relation of roles, as well as society's underlying structure. Access to who could speak and who could not, for a long time, was a stigma—a mark and a burden. Today it circulates like a gift—

cultural capital which consecrates social actors as central agents making and remaking Indigenous institutions and cultures. Within Indigenous organizations this cultural capital becomes a credential. Marilyn's capacity to speak a language which was to be eliminated, gifted to her by her mother, and to use it to create a prophecy to honour her mother's vision, is future work and it happens within the context of the Coldwater Band School, an Indigenous organization.

While both cultural and social change for Indigenous communities can be directed either inward, toward their own members, or outward, toward the broader communities, the transformations that I am interested in here are those changes happening inside of the community, the process of resurgence, and how they are expressed through future talk and messianic time. I am interested in how Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples mark time and orient themselves toward change and continuity as expressed in their future talk.

How do Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples think about the future?

Future projections are narratives about the future. I gathered participants' future projects through qualitative interviews with them. I conducted interviews with 35 participants, 20 of whom were Indigenous and 15 of whom were non-Indigenous. All were workers in Indigenous organizations. I asked participants to engage in a mindfulness exercise and then project themselves into the future and provide a description of their projection. I also asked them to quantify how far into the future they were projecting themselves. The mindfulness activity was done to provoke deliberative rather than automatic cognition.¹⁴ The mindfulness activity involved participants closing their eyes and taking deep breaths. While their eyes were closed, they were asked to imagine the future.

In what follows I compare the future projections of my participants and focus on the differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. I operationalize several concepts in my analysis. These include messianic time, empty homogenous time or settler time, reach, breadth, clarity, and sociality. Messianic time, according to Benjamin, is a time of heightened historical awareness that transforms people's relationship to the present by changing

¹⁴ As mentioned previously deliberative and automatic cognition refer to elements of the *dual-process model*. Outlined most convincingly by Stephen Vaisey (2009) and Gordon Brent (2022). Brent (2022) argues that deliberative cognition requires sustained attention, aligning with scholarship on practices, while automatic cognition is autonomic, aligning with scholarship on habits and habituation.

their understanding of the past and the future. They come to see their actions in the present as being salient through this revaluation of the past and future, becoming oriented to change. I contrast this with what Benjamin calls empty homogenous time or what Rifkin calls settler time. This is cognition not focused on change but continuity, on reproducing the present. In the future projections of my participants, empty homogenous time and messianic time are expressed through depictions of agency or the degree to which the future will be different from the past. Indigenous Peoples are conceived as having agency and therefore being capable of social and cultural change while settlers and settler cultures express empty homogenous time or a focus on continuity.

Also important to my analysis are concepts taken from the work of settler scholar Anne Mische (2014). Mische is interested in the conceptual differences between future projections. Her examination uses several concepts to differentiate between people's futures. These include reach, breadth, clarity, and sociality. Reach is the ability to extend oneself into the future, how far one can project themselves forward in time. Breadth refers to the range of possibilities considered in each time frame. Some actors may consider only one future possible while others may consider many possible futures. In a broad narrative, actors will assert and examine futures as contingent on actions in the present. They may also reflect on the influence of the past on the future, how it is remembered for example. Clarity refers to the detail with which the future is imagined. Future projections can be detailed and elaborate or vague and impressionistic. Finally, sociality is the degree to which a future projection is *peopled*. This is the way future projections are imagined through our own actions intertwined with the actions of others. Therefore, a social future will imagine many different people and groups as interacting and having agency. To Mische's concepts I would add my own concept—depth. Depth is the degree to which a future projection draws together different time periods—past, present, future. Depth would be indicative of messianic time articulated by Benjamin.

To summarize my findings, the future projections of Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous peoples varied significantly. Indigenous participants were more likely to express messianic time, seeing themselves and their group as having agency, while non-Indigenous participants tended to express empty homogenous time, a desire for continuity. When non-Indigenous participants did theorize change, their narratives often rooted this change in the agency of Indigenous groups.

In terms of reach, quantitatively, Indigenous Peoples extended themselves much further into the future than non-Indigenous Peoples. Eleven of the non-Indigenous participants quantified their future projection with a number of years while 12 of the Indigenous participants did so. On average Indigenous Peoples projected themselves 223 years into the future while non-Indigenous Peoples projected themselves 22.2 years into the future. This means that Indigenous participants were telling a story that was 223 years in the future while non-Indigenous peoples were telling a story that was 22.2 years in the future. Indigenous future narratives were broader, clearer, and more social than non-Indigenous narratives. Indigenous future narratives also expressed greater breadth pulling different time periods together to conjure a future. I believe that these differences are the result of the culture of vision amongst Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley. Both Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Peoples tended to narrate future change, but this was mostly the result of the agency of Indigenous communities, indicating messianic time, a time of heightened historical awareness and agency.

Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants spoke about the future of their families. One example comes from an Nl̓eʔkepmx woman in her 70s who worked as a professor at a British Columbia university for many years and has been involved in NVIT and language revitalization.

I see my great grandchildren as being equal, as participating, as having a good life. Not having to deal with the racism. Not having to deal with defending being Indigenous. Um, speaking their language fluently. I hope that I leave behind a family that has integrity, that has humility, that has strong leadership skills, strong advocacy skills and living on our Land.

She projects herself 50 years into the future and tells a story of a future where Indigenous struggles against settler-colonialism have been successful. She speaks of Indigenous Peoples and the flourishing of their own culture and a transformation in their relationship with non-Indigenous Peoples and cultures invoking a future where settlers are no-longer hostile to Indigenous Peoples. She ascribes political agency to people today, like herself, who are doing the work of resurgence. Her great grandchildren are the beneficiaries of Indigenous organizing and political work happening now and as a result can participate fully in their culture and develop skills and abilities valued by their community. This is a hopeful vision.

It is contrasted with a non-Indigenous respondent who works as an administrative employee at NVIT.

It's hard for me to think of the world 300 years from now. I hope it's still intact and I hope that it hasn't been demolished by the people of today. You know, I think you can't think about the future unless it applies to you without it becoming a dream or a vision. My hopes are that [my husband] and I stay together and that our kids grow up healthy and happy and that I'm still alive to see it.

Here she explains the difficulty of projecting herself into the future and after expressing hope for 31 words, shifts registers to speak about her family. This style of talk is vague, impressionistic, and indicative of empty homogenous time—where the ideas discussed exist closer to them in time and space, they have less depth, and relate to the production and reproduction of their everyday life. This participant's parents were university educated and though she grew up economically privileged she also had a complex family dynamic which made her relationships with her caregivers stressful and caused a separation between her and her parents. The tendency to switch registers or to only speak about one's immediate family was common amongst non-Indigenous participants. While the first respondent, an Indigenous person, spoke about change she is actively participating in, its effect on her family, and the transformation of settler systems necessary to bring about this change, this non-Indigenous respondent's hope is for continuity and reproduction of the same. This is indicative of a divide between the messianic time of Indigenous Peoples and the empty homogenous time of settlers.

What I call depth is also suggestive of messianic time. It is the capacity of Indigenous participants to draw together different temporal periods—past, present, and future—to create contingent narratives. It is a signal of the historical consciousness that Benjamin asserts as indicative of messianic time. Contingency is the ability to create a flexible future that is dependent upon elements of the present and the past (Mische 2014). Depth and contingency were often encountered together. One Sylix man in his 50s, who worked as an instructor and administrator at NVIT and before that was a schoolteacher and principal projected himself 150 years into the future. He first told me about the future in the context of the Canada 150 celebration and we had a detailed talk about the future. For him it was necessary to look beyond the present moment to what the future would be like and how things would change for social and cultural change to become possible.

This respondent provides a very detailed account of the future and spoke for 400 words – much longer than other participants, though not entirely unique for Indigenous Peoples. His style of talk about the future is also very clear and *peopled*. The respondent is speaking about the fate of British Columbia and how Indigenous Peoples and settlers will impact its future. He is connecting explicitly the events which are occurring in the present, and have occurred in the past (depth), to the future. He speaks about young people and the effect our generation may have on the future.

The fiscal window or like long-term planning in white communities or white institutions can often be five years. You know. Like that's the vision that they have. Well, in 150 years, when I first told you about that, I started to envision in my mind about the white reserves, and I think that a country like Canada maybe even just British Columbia, with such a rich resource sector, you've got land owners that are old white people that own a lot of the ranch lands that were given all of that, that's going to be rectified. I think they're going to rectify through, at the start, common or dual responsibility to the Land, and ultimately responsibility for like the forest industry will be with First Nations. Mining, waterways, things like that, it's all going to revert once, you know, in 150 years we've got a tsunami coming of young people like you, Dean, that are going to change the world and it's coming and you're kind of at the front end of the curl as a young man. But it's coming and I told the government, I pity you because they're coming. They're young, they're intelligent, and sometimes they get pissed off, but they're coming for you, right? And they kind of chuckle. I say, yeah, but it's coming. It's true. So you better start thinking about that. So, ultimately, using British Columbia, Indigenous people will have a rightful place and the courts can't say no because they have to act in a fair and just manner, and ultimately I think that Indigenous people in this province will be the ones who will really provide a fair and balanced community to the rest of the province and Canada because we don't really see the need for opulence when people aren't living properly or, you know what I mean, poverty. Kind of reminds me of a story. I think in Austria there were some Chiefs visiting the Austrian Empire. And they complained to the King, how could they live in such opulence when your people starve? What the hell were the Chiefs doing over there? And they're obviously treated like dignitaries, and they make comments like that. And now Vienna today is the largest owner of social housing on Earth, right? Was there an influence, how we, I don't know if that's research that's happening? But that's something that I kind of dream about when I retire. I'm going that way to see what's the influence the other way. But I think in 150 years, I think it will come full circle. That's what I think because to get access to the rich riches you need Indigenous people.

The respondent begins by differentiating his vision from those of white communities and organizations which he asserts are interested in the fiscal window, a reach of only five years. This difference in reach is indicative of differentiating a culture of vision from the empty homogenous

time of settlers. He speaks about white reserves, which earlier in the interview he asserted to be the white urbanized working poor who he believes will essentially be consigned to low social mobility and will be unable to own property—becoming like Indigenous Peoples. He then references old white people who own a lot of ranch land. This is a reference to Stan Kroenke, an American, Republican billionaire and supporter of Donald Trump. Kroenke owns or controls most of the land in the Nicola Valley and his cattle company—Douglas Lake Cattle Company—is the largest in the world and controls more land in the Nicola Valley than all the reserve land of all the Indigenous Peoples in all British Columbia combined.

The participant then speaks about the hope that he has for the impact of First Nations upon disadvantaged whites by advocating not only for themselves but for better outcomes for all. He speaks about the effect of youth on the future—contingency. He concludes by telling a story of Indigenous Peoples from Canada who travelled to Vienna and criticized the Viennese King for living in excess while his subjects lived in poverty. This future projection is notable for its sociality, encompassing many different groups; its depth, there are at least four time periods being drawn together; its contingency, his ability to move from social group to social group and timescale to timescale, connecting different fates together based on the historical agency of Indigenous Peoples, and its clarity. In his future projection, Indigenous Peoples collectively are imbued with agency, an indication of messianic time. He asserts that this agency will not only be felt in the future but has been felt in the past and he is curious about how this effect might be researched or ‘looked into’—a revaluation of the history and contribution of Indigenous Peoples. As I’ve indicated, during the interviews, the discovery of the unmarked graves of 215 Indigenous children occurred. This was followed by an intense outpouring of solidarity across Canada. As the discovery gained widespread attention through news media and local acknowledgement—municipal, federal, and provincial flags were flown at half-mast—participants began to reflect on it in their future projections, demonstrating how the past, present, and future were interacting to create messianic time both for Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants surrounding the discovery. One participant, a non-Indigenous woman in her 40s who holds an administrative role at NVIT said:

5-10 years. I was imagining NVIT and my role at NVIT and the overall climate, not the environmental climate, how is it feeling. The volume has turned down in terms of calls for exploring the residential schools. They have been explored, the volume has been

turned down, but there is a different kind of awareness that exists for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Here she is imagining her own role and her own life and how this relates to the larger issues faced by Indigenous Peoples. This is an expression of how messianic time interacts with empty homogenous time, of the effect social and cultural change will have on her but also on Canadian society. She speaks about how 'the volume has turned down'. We can imagine how distressing these discoveries are for Indigenous Peoples but also for settlers, who in many ways live their lives as a direct result of the damage inflicted upon Indigenous communities but don't necessarily think of themselves this way. The discovery may provoke an awareness of this reality. Agency is present here, but it is the social and cultural change that Indigenous peoples have created through the publicity affixed to the unmarked graves. The attachment of agency to Indigenous Peoples is an expression of messianic time. The participant expresses a belief that the intensity or volume of these changes will decrease. However, she is connecting this intensity to difference and how it might change settler publics by creating awareness of the issues faced by Indigenous Peoples.

The Land and the water and the future of the Land and water emerge as an important theme for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. A significant portion of the quantified average reach for non-Indigenous participants was from the future projection of a white instructor at NVIT who projected himself 100 years in the future. He was in his late 30s and had worked at NVIT for his entire adult life. Before this, his father was an instructor there for his son's entire childhood. His work and upbringing brought him into sustained contact with a great number of Indigenous Elders and people and he was knowledgeable of many concepts in Nle?kepmxcin and had an impressive repertoire of Indigenous ecological knowledge. He projected himself 100 was the only non-Indigenous participant to project himself beyond his own life course. He spoke of the importance of cultural mixing and revitalization for global society and the hazards of climate change.

One hundred years. I don't know. That's a really hard question. I think that cultures globally will be far more mixed than they are today. Which is maybe obvious. Just because of our ability to blend and to move, to move physically and to blend culturally. So I think there will be an element of that. I think there is also going to be, I hope there is more of a resurgence in a lot of cultures in terms of reclaiming identity. It's also gonna be

hot. The climate is going to be hot. We are going to be really suffering or technologically improve a whole bunch.

Here, the participant expresses the difficulty of projecting himself 100 years in the future but is able to hold this register for over 100 words of dialogue, an impressive feat. His future encompasses the entire planet, demonstrating sociality, and he speaks of a contingent future anchored in the likelihood of climate change and cultural mixing. His ability to project beyond his life course like Indigenous Peoples may indicate that contact between Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants not only reduces prejudice (Allport 1954) but causes a change in the temporal infrastructures of non-Indigenous peoples. There is an important caveat, however; it is not simply contact but contact in an Indigenous-controlled space that has a majority Indigenous Population. If this one participant is removed from the sample, non-Indigenous future projections extend only 14.4 years in the future. Moreover, this may indicate that Indigenous temporalities—the marking of the passage of time oriented to change and continuity—may be a sort of credential that non-Indigenous Peoples can earn.

A non-Indigenous participant, who was an instructor at NVIT and has been instrumental in working with the Nicola Bands to create a fire suppression policy for the Nicola, also shares a similar level of contact with the previous respondent. She had an interesting reflection on the current Land and water situation and how it relates to the future.

At least 20 years. It looks like First Nations have the ability to govern themselves and some of what's right has been restored to the earth around us. It looks like people recognizing cultural practices as a good thing and involving themselves in tourism that's run by First Nations and understanding and listening to the stories and becoming informed by that. Possibly, more exciting news about salmon returning and things shifting to a better way of being. Of course, I am a naturalist. I hope that I left behind at least a little encouragement and inspiration and more than I ever took. I have seen what residential school has done to such an amazing group of people that had so many strengths that we have tried to stomp on. It makes you work harder to help people recognize what's happened.

She is married to an Indigenous man who also works to prevent forest fires. Here, she speaks specifically about the issue of governance and how this relates to Land and water restoration—contingency. It is interesting that she speaks of meaningful contact that might occur between Indigenous Peoples through tourism and storytelling. Here she is describing possible careers for

Indigenous Peoples which would allow for them to maintain a connection to their culture. She reflects on residential schools, not surprising given the discovery, though it does not define her future projection, but instead adds intensity to her work. Like the previous white respondent, her high level of contact with Indigenous Peoples, being married to an Indigenous man and working in Indigenous-run organization, may be expressed in the different style of talk about the future, a sort of earned credential. Here, agency is attributed to Indigenous peoples to create social and cultural change but unlike previous respondents the effects are not applied to all of society but remain limited to Indigenous Peoples.

Another Indigenous participant, born Nl̓eʔkepmx but living on the Syilx Upper Nicola Reserve, who is a speaker of both languages and worked as a principal at one of the local Indigenous-run band schools and who attended residential school, also reflects on the Land and water in positive way. She says, “I am going to imagine 500 years into the future and we are going to have clean air and water again and we are going to be happy with the basics of life and not be extravagant and want everything. We are going to be accepting of others and their ways.” The reach of this participant is notable, and she projects herself furthest into the future of any person in the sample. Here the desire to return to a simpler, less extravagant way of life is indicative of what I encountered with most Indigenous Peoples. They tend to look for ways to simplify their impact on the Land and water.

The valences of the future projections are also salient. Both Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Peoples overall tended to have a positive valence. Indigenous participants did express the importance of environmental protection like their non-Indigenous counterparts. Here an Nl̓eʔkepmx woman in her 40s who works as a language coordinator for Citwx Nl̓eʔkepmx Assembly—an organization that uses an endowment from mining activities on Nl̓eʔkepmx Land to support local cultural and Land initiatives—reflects on the importance of water, but expresses hope:.

The water thing comes up for me a lot. You know, like we have water to drink and it's good. But the fish, they don't have the water they need. The salmon numbers are reducing and that's a very sad thing for me. It bothers me, but I try not to think about it too much because I think if people collectively can be more mindful of the decisions that they make and how that impacts the world, the environment, it's pretty important. The government has these measures in place and they want to reduce carbon emissions but what else? I have confidence that future is going to be good. I don't foresee it being perfect, of course,

because perfect is not really a thing, but I think it will be good. The work that I started to do now is to do with the language, so hopefully that'll be something that I can leave behind. I bring it into people's lives.

She also expresses anxiety and uncertainty about the future but agency for her comes from her work with the language. She does not connect this work to her feelings about the environment, instead expressing agency as rooted in the government but also expressing that their agency, their ability to control carbon dioxide emissions, will not be sufficient to protect the water and the fish. Her expectations are realistic.

Only two Indigenous Peoples had a negative view of the future. The first Indigenous participant is Secwépemc, another interior Salish group whose territory borders the Nicola. She works in a service role at NVIT and said “I can't see the future. I don't know what it's going to be like. I think it's going to get worse as we go on. Probably not good. I feel like they will try to take everything away from us like land and money. They are trying to push us out, that's what I think.” What is interesting here is that this future projection is perhaps the most practical if we are considering the past actions of the government as a referent for the present and future. Similarly, an Nl̓eʔkepmx woman in her 60s who works in a service role at NVIT said “I think if we are going that far, even 100 years, there will be no water. It will be the end of all living if people do not bring themselves to be aware of their environment.” Based on current projections for the climate system, this seems like an accurate depiction of the future, and yet it was a rarity amongst both samples. Both participants express agency. In the first, agency is held by settlers or they who will continue to take everything away from Indigenous Peoples. In the last statement we can imagine that contingent agency is implied by the “if” statement at the end. However, what is shocking, is that despite the historical mistreatment of Indigenous Peoples, these two statements aside, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples tended to have much hope for the future.

Another valence expressed by Indigenous Peoples is one of sadness. The future tended to be an emotional topic for many Indigenous Peoples. One woman in her late 20s, who now works at Scwexmx Child and Family Services but earlier worked as an administrative employee at NVIT, reflected on the importance of knowledge for the future. Earlier in the interview, she told me that she was very sad about not being able to speak an Indigenous language. This connects to Marilyn's work around the language and the importance of the language to Indigenous Peoples,

how incredibly salient the idea of the language returning is. Overcome with emotion, she began to cry during our interview, as she spoke about her son.

I hope better. Especially being a mother now I really hope the future is better. I hope that my son doesn't go through anything that I did and I do think our young people are so much further advanced than we are. They seem to, I hope that they guide the way and I think that they will. Sorry, I'm just really emotional. (starts crying, gets up and we hug each other). I will leave behind knowledge, not necessarily knowledge that I had and I am thinking about my son (sobbing). I want him to be able to know what I don't know. And hopefully others do too and it's more of a positive future for our people. This is so emotional.

Here, she expresses hope but at the same time sadness. The emotional salience of the future for Indigenous Peoples is indicative of messianic time. While many Indigenous Peoples expressed emotions during interviews, six of the 20 Indigenous participants cried, and no non-Indigenous Peoples did. This ability to connect emotionally to the future is perhaps part of what makes the culture of vision so important for Indigenous Peoples; it is felt and not just thought.

These negative and sad views are contrasted with the more positive statements of other Indigenous participants. A woman in her 40s who works as an instructor and administrator at NVIT and has worked for Scwexmx Child and Family as a social worker, spoke about how Indigenous belief systems will produce change for future generations.

Kids participate in ceremonies all over this territory, and you know, I think of the future, they're going to be so much more grounded than I have ever been. I'm hoping that they know who they are as an Indigenous person. They know our ways of being and doing and seeing and our belief system and that they can continue to carry on the legacy that we are creating as Indigenous peoples and being proud of who we are and where we come from. That's what I hope the future will look like. I guess Indigenous knowledge will be stronger within society and that it's respected and that it's honoured and upheld, when our environmental beliefs and how we would take care of a system is taken and implemented and used, that mainstreaming of Indigenous values and culture. Because they're not well. As an Indigenous person I know that there needs to be a reframing of how we do things today because what worked for my ancestors and my relatives 100 years ago is not going to work for today's society. So how do we take that belief system and reframe it to work in today's society? That's what I hope the future looks like is that blend of Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing, and Western ways of knowing, being and doing and connecting the two, and reframing them both to work, to what's going to work best for today.

Here she begins by speaking about how children are participating in ceremonies and how this is making them more grounded. Ceremonies are an important part of how a culture of vision is created and maintained and are a keyway that the past and future are made meaningful. It makes ideas salient and participants sacred and is an important way that messianic time emerges. The respondent speaks specifically about how Indigenous knowledge systems can create positive societal change, not only for Indigenous peoples but beyond them, for non-Indigenous Peoples and the environment. Here agency is affixed to Indigenous cultural systems. She asks an important question about knowledge translation (contingency), how can we mobilize Indigenous knowledges and blend them with non-Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing? This is precisely what Indigenous communities in the Nicola Valley are doing by building Indigenous organizations. Her vision is connected to three time periods indicating depth.

The culture of vision of the Nl̓eʔkepmx and Syilx is expressed in the future projections of my participants. The future projections of Indigenous Peoples have a greater reach than non-Indigenous People. They also tend to have more depth, bringing the past, present and future to bear. Indigenous future projections feature more sociality, contingency, and clarity. They apply to more groups and their relations, are flexible instead of fixed, and tend to be spoken of for longer than non-Indigenous futures. The Land and water emerged as a strong theme across respondents. Most often, agency, the ability to create social and cultural changes, was affixed to Indigenous Peoples, communities, and their knowledge systems by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous respondents. Finally, the few non-Indigenous responses that mirror Indigenous responses in terms of reach, sociality, and clarity may be explained by prolonged contact with Indigenous Peoples and communities in Indigenous majority and controlled organizations.

Conclusion

The culture of vision is the temporality of the Nl̓eʔkepmx and Syilx. Temporalities are the process of marking the passage of time that orients us toward change and continuity. The temporality of the Nl̓eʔkepmx and Syilx encompasses both change and continuity—both the restoration of cultural systems damaged by contact and conflict with settler cultures and the continuation of those cultural systems and knowledges far older and more ancient than the settler state or its ongoing occupation. Settler cultures have their own temporalities, settler time or empty homogenous time. These are oriented toward continuity. Indigenous temporalities are

subject to the politics of recognition, and yet Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley refuse to have their *time* made for them by the settler-state. They live in both their own time and settler time. They create prophecies. They imagine a future dramatically different from the present. They work to create that future.

In this chapter, I have attempted to examine the friction between these two different temporalities in the past, present, and future. In the past, Indigenous Peoples created powerful visions about what the coming of the *seme* or whites would mean for their cultures. Kwalos hoped that the whites would come in peace and friendship. Most didn't. Settler-colonialism meant a decline in the culture of vision and now in the present, Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley must live split lives, inhabiting both temporal frameworks, both settler time and their own culture of vision. However, despite the co-existence of these two temporal formations in the lives of community members, the culture of vision has not been displaced, it has persisted and is evident in both their cultural practices and their future projections.

Living in these two different times creates different structures of meaning and a different understanding of the future for Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous participants produced future projections that tended to consider the past, present, and future more than non-Indigenous participants did. They tended to describe futures which were peopled with many different groups while settler futures tended to be peopled mostly with themselves and their families. Indigenous futures tended to be clearer and reach further in time. These are all expressions of the culture of vision and settler time. Indigenous future projections also expressed messianic time, a heightened cognition of past and future enabling agency in the present. The future projections of Indigenous Peoples tended to be oriented toward change while settlers tended to be oriented toward continuity. The exception was when non-Indigenous participants were describing change in the future, they often gave Indigenous Peoples and communities the agency to create that change. The culture of vision is not new, it has long existed, but in our moment, it is creating new possibilities for cultural and social change which did not exist in the past. James Teit recounted three prophets amongst the Nl̓eʔkepmx and Syilx. The last one was a Syilx woman from the United States. Teit writes:

The last one was also a woman, of the Okanagon tribe, I believe, from that part of the tribal territory lying in the United States. She appeared about 1891, and averred that by dreams and visions she was destined to be the savior of the Indians. She also claimed that

she was invulnerable, and could not be shot. She preached against the whites, and wanted the Indians to follow her to battle against them. She met with so much opposition from the chiefs of the different bands, and other leading Indians who favoured the whites, that she turned back on reaching Nicola Valley, deeming it inadvisable to go farther, abandoned her project, and went home. Had she come twenty years earlier, it is difficult to say what might have been the result, as even now she has more than one admirer among the upper divisions of the tribe (Teit 1900, p 366).

Her arrival in the Nicola Valley would have coincided with the establishment of the reserve system and the beginning of the residential schools. It would have also coincided with a wave of deaths brought about by smallpox, yellow mountain fever, and tuberculosis. At the time, the Nl̓eʔkepmx and Syilx of the Nicola Valley were possessed of a culture of vision but were not yet living in messianic time. The events of the past 100 years were too close, the wounds too fresh, the hurt too grave, and many of the chiefs, installed by Indian agents, were enjoying the new rhythm, rate, and pace of life introduced to them by settlers. As always, some Indigenous Peoples adapted to and even enjoyed the new settler temporality, whereas others resisted and preferred to live in Indigenous temporalities. Both temporalities contain opportunity structures for living a life of meaning. Only now, Indigenous temporalities are creating the possibility of change that is wholly and dramatically different from those of settler temporalities.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

In this dissertation I have presented the cultural toolkit that makes Indigenous resurgence possible within the Nicola Valley. The metaphor of a toolkit is a way of conceptualizing culture initially proposed by settler scholar Anne Swidler (1986). Rather than culture unconsciously directing action like a switchman, Swidler offers that culture is a set of repertoires that actors draw upon pragmatically to solve certain types of problems. Rather than merely centering Indigenous cultures—as is often opined by theorists of resurgence—in the Nicola Valley, the process is more textured and complex, its agents less zealous in their quest to transcend settler-colonialism and resurrect their cultural systems. The communities of the Nicola Valley pragmatically draw upon a diverse range of cultural models, repertoires, and objects from varied sources, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, often fusing them in unexpected, unique, and generative ways. The conclusion to this dissertation is an opportunity to reflect upon this toolkit in its entirety and consider its strengths, limitations, and the possible futures it enables. It is also an opportunity to reflect upon the research process and consider the possibilities and limitations of the methodological tools and analytic insights it has generated.

The central research question the dissertation responds to is what makes resurgence possible. Through my work, I have uncovered a somewhat different answer to this question than those offered in past interventions by Indigenous theorists. While these theorists center Indigenous cultures and languages in their description of resurgence, I found that the realities of community life are more complex than this and often entail combining cultural repertoires from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous sources. Indigenous communities do center Indigenous cultures and languages, but they often do so by employing non-Indigenous models, cultures, and temporalities in combination with their sophisticated knowledge systems. This extends existing theorizations of Indigenous resurgence to consider a more diverse range of cultural influences.

Nowhere in my research is this weaving more evident than in the unique organizational cultures Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley have spent over a century creating. From the founding of the Interior Tribes of British Columbia in 1907, Indigenous communities in the Nicola Valley have used organizations to make social and cultural change. Spurred by socialist ethnographer James Teit, the Chiefs of the Interior Tribes worked together to create a lobbying

organization to telegraph the circumstances of their existence to successive Provincial and Federal Governments and to hire counsel to pursue a legal remedy when a political one failed to materialize. So successful was this endeavour that the Indian Act was amended to stop this sort of organizing and to keep the Chiefs from hiring counsel. This early innovation marked a watershed for the Nicola as communities began to see the value in consolidating themselves and their efforts in modern organizational forms.

Today, the number of Indigenous organizations in the Valley has grown. These serve diverse purposes in the lives of the communities, but they are united in core practices. They provide an institutional infrastructure through which Indigenous communities create space and time for their cultures and language, reconnect with the Land, limit whiteness as a credential, transform Indigeneity into a credential, and reject practices that perpetuate settler-colonial power dynamics. Collectively, these practices enhance agency for Indigenous communities, enabling the regeneration of Indigenous culture and language. Organizations allow members and communities to pool their agency and resources to achieve a common goal and create the conditions for self-sustaining cultures to overcome settler-colonial subordination. Many of the staples of theories of Indigenous resurgence—like reconnecting with the Land, rebuilding language, overcoming fear, repairing Indigenous bodies, and self-transformation—are accomplished through and because of Indigenous organizations.

Indigenous organizations in the Nicola Valley have been central to processes of self-transformation by bringing community members into contact with self-help cultures. Self-help cultures encompass a range of discourses and practices, derived from psychology and are often coupled with other approaches, like mindfulness, that are self-guided and directed at self-improvement and self-transformation. Indigenous Peoples in the Nicola Valley draw upon a diverse range of self-help objects, of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous origins, to reconnect their members to Indigenous spirituality, language, and culture. In this way, self-help cultures function as a toolkit to enable a reconversion back to Indigenous cultural systems, enabling community members to become active agents in remaking their worlds and their systems of thought. By weaving these two different cultural systems, self-help and Indigenous thought systems, communities create an innovative and unique template for individual change. The results are transformative both for the individual and the community.

Self-help cultures enable Indigenous Peoples to reconnect with their own cultures. One element that I have highlighted in my work is the culture of vision. From the outset, this research has been fuelled by the culture of vision which refers to the unique and recognized temporality of the Nl̓eʔkepmx and Syilx. Temporality is conceptualized as a way of marking the passage of time through an orientation to change and continuity. The culture of vision is shaped by Land-based practices and many Indigenous people in the Nicola Valley continue to mark the passage of time through these practices.

The culture of vision also encompasses a different way of thinking about the future. Indigenous futures are notable in their reach, with Indigenous Peoples projecting themselves much further in time than their settler counterparts and constructing futures which are diversely peopled and focused on change. In their future projections, both settlers and Indigenous Peoples, often ascribe agency to Indigenous communities to create social and cultural change. This is contrasted with settler temporalities, which tend to remain fixated on the preservation and continuation of the present, on the continuity of settler time frames. Contemporary events, like the uncovering of graves on the Kamloops Indian Residential School grounds, are increasing the knowledge of past injustices for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples and fuelling a form of historical cognition. Together this creates what, drawing upon Walter Benjamin, I term messianic time—a cognitive and cultural infrastructure for thinking about change. More than any other research insight, it was the culture of vision that enabled me to begin to interpret the innovative approach of Indigenous Peoples to social and cultural transformation.

While the primary research insights gleaned from this study are focused on the themes of organizations, self-help cultures, and futures; the research itself was enabled by a host of new research tools and strategies. Principally, this involved developing a methodology that takes resurgence as its analytical, ethical, and epistemological starting point. I call this approach a resurgent methodology. As a methodology, it is built around creating research that is useful, intelligible, reciprocal, respectful, and relational. These tools were assembled from the debris of my mistakes and misfires more than anything else.

My research became useful by at first not being useful. As I sat down to review research findings with participants, they would let me know when something missed the mark either in terms of utility or representation. This process calibrated the research and looped me into research contexts and themes that were useful to the community. These exchanges happened

through a process I call community or Elder peer review, where the insights of Knowledge Keepers were deployed at various stages in the research process to create or correct work, making sure it was not only useful but also intelligible. It was important that research participants could see themselves in my work, a form of respect that was built through relationships that go beyond the usual research-researched dichotomy to involve a form of co-creation that looks sometimes in practice more like kinship than scholarship. Perhaps it is ultimately a weaving of the two. The network of ideas I created along with my participants have a genealogy and lineage, one that I have tried to sketch out and that is derived from reciprocal exchanges of authority. Together, I pool my authority as a sociologist with the authority of the Indigenous communities I work with to create insights about the process of resurgence within the context of the Nicola Valley.

Together, these analytical, epistemological, and ethical commitments created research that is far more than conventional sociological research methods might have made possible alone. While I have framed much of my contribution in terms of a re-evaluation of Indigenous resurgence from an Indigenous theoretical perspective, these tools and insights have importance for sociological research too. This type of resurgent methodology, which involves the co-creation of research findings through deep collaborations and exchanges of legitimate authority, can be usefully deployed to study social and cultural change in communities beyond Indigenous Peoples.

Indeed, surging against forces that attempt to erase and destroy a culture and reviving that culture, are processes present among several marginalized and stigmatized social and cultural groups that experience widespread hostility and threats to their very existence and survival. While some of the most innovative approaches in cultural sociology deal with this very issue, they often do so from the lens of the relationship between the subordinated and superior, figuring out ways that the White, heterosexual, or cis-gendered majorities can come to tolerate the difference they once sought to erase and destroy. Resurgence as a model for social and cultural change presents a very different picture. It focuses on rebuilding power in place, often through an explicit uncoupling from relationships that mark Indigeneity as inferior, as a pre-requisite to deeper engagement with the majority society. By placing so much focus on recognition or destigmatization, cultural sociology has left the vibrant rebuilding within marginalized groups as

a secondary consideration. Therefore, a key insight emerging out of my dissertation is to prioritize research that explores the internal strategies used to rebuild marginalized groups.

As a member of the Queer community, deeply affected by the HIV/AIDS crisis, I see this sort of rebuilding and uncoupling in my own world. While I do not claim to have created a theory for social and cultural change, I believe the three empirical domains I have located as part of the toolkit in the Nicola Valley may resonate with other cases. Self-help cultures have been central to discourses of self-transformation that empower Queer people to rebuild their communities. It is no surprise then that these self-help cultures are often enabled by Queer organizations. Here in Toronto, Queer organizations often provide institutional space for 12-Step groups or organize self-help interventions themselves. The Meth and Sex program initiated by the AIDS Committee of Toronto is but one example of this powerful work. These organizations themselves, no-doubt, have unique cultures that limit heterosexuality as a credential, transform queerness into a credential, and create space and time for Queer culture. I would imagine that these organizations have been central to social and cultural change within the Queer community in similar ways to how they have enabled Indigenous resurgence. While the Queer community here in Toronto does not have a culture of vision, it does have its own temporality. What are often referred to as queer temporalities, call for a re-evaluation of the way that reproductive futurity, marriage, and compulsory monogamy cultivate, condition, and confine joy, responsibility, and the future (Goltz 2022). While the outcome might be different, I would like to offer that social and cultural change in Indigenous communities shares something in common with related processes amongst Queer People, Black communities, and other marginalized and stigmatized cultural groups. This should not be seen as a recipe of social and cultural change but as a call for researchers to attend to the role that authority, organizations, language, temporality, and self-help play in cultural rebuilding and regeneration. Deploying a resurgent methodology, as outlined in this dissertation, might offer a way to study these processes of change amongst a diversity of marginalized social groups.

In the Black community many of these domains may also be present—organizations, self-help-culture, and a different temporality. In his powerful introduction to the new edition of George Manuel's *The Fourth World*, titled "The Fourth World Resurgent" Glen Coulthard (2018) argues powerfully for the cross fertilization between the third and fourth world and radical Black organizations in the United States and Canada. Organizations have played a large role in the

movement for black rights and recognition in the US and Coulthard demonstrates how these have shaped Indigenous organizations in BC. Beyond organizations, self-help culture has also been popularized amongst African Americans and the research similarly situates self-help as a technology of control. However, Black churches in America have also been an important component of rebuilding and these may serve a similar function to the one created by self-help cultures in the Nicola Valley (Littlefield 2005). Black temporalities have also begun to be explored by scholars (Goffe 2022) and may be an important window into examining social and cultural change. Indeed, many of the lessons about researching with Indigenous communities may be applicable to working with Black and other marginalized communities.

If the toolkit for resurgence in the Nicola Valley contains insights, lessons, and strategies for other marginalized communities then it is equally important to reflect upon its applicability to other Indigenous communities. To what extent can the findings from this dissertation be applied to other Indigenous communities? I have described resurgence as a highly idiosyncratic process, as unique and differentiated as the places give rise to its need and expression. Therefore, I have limited faith it would unfold across contexts according to the way it has unfolded in the Nicola Valley.

That said, I do think that Indigenous resurgence will often involve similar strategies of cultural weaving to those found amongst the Nicola communities. However, the idiosyncrasies of Indigenous histories, languages, and cultural traditions operate like a filter and may therefore bring certain cultural repertoires to the fore while pushing others into the background. Self-help cultures might not contribute to Indigenous resurgence in other contexts, but perhaps other communities do have toolkits for reconverting community members back to traditional language, culture, and spirituality. Not every Indigenous community will create an Indigenous post-secondary institution like NVIT, but they may create their own types of organizations that fulfill the role of creating space and time for their unique form of regeneration. The culture of vision is the temporality of the Nl̓eʔkepmx and Syilx and though the cycles that demarcate their passage of time and orient them to continuity and change might be different, I would not be surprised if resurrecting Indigenous temporalities is central to social and cultural change across contexts. These of course are empirical questions, ones that merit further research that I hope to have the opportunity to address in my career.

Two major limitations of the study speak also to the possibility for further research. The first is that I did not get to investigate the role that gender plays in the process of resurgence. The study has focused on several powerful women—Kathy, Randy, Marilyn, Mandy, Janice, and Darla—and in the context of the Nicola Valley it is women who are leading the process of resurgence. Why is resurgence gendered and to what extent is there a gap between the resurgent experiences of men and women? This question intersects with literature on settler-colonialism and heteropatriarchy, which demonstrates that white-possessive nations tend to be founded on the model of white, heterosexual masculinity. Leanne Simpson (2017) and others (Hunt & Holmes 2015; Belcourt 2016) have called for a queering of resurgence and this, alongside questions of gender and sexuality, would seem to be an important entry point for further research.

Another important limitation, closely related to the question of gender, is the overcoming of physical, emotional, and sexual violence for the work of resurgence. One place my research took me was the Transition Home. The Transition Home, located on the Coldwater Reserve, is a sort of kneyt or helping agent for women and queer people escaping domestic abuse. Darla worked there for many decades and her own life intersected deeply with this issue. The Home runs various workshops and training sessions and though men are not traditionally invited to attend, Darla made sure I was allowed and saw the extraordinary work they were doing to educate community members about the ongoing violence distorting and deforming Indigenous lifeways. This includes ongoing settler sexual violence which is deeply genocidal. For Indigenous cultures to survive, Indigenous bodies must survive. Though, I did gather data on this, I did not yet have the relational capital to treat this issue with the care, attention, and respect it deserves. Still, undoing this legacy is central to the work of Indigenous resurgence in the Nicola Valley. Many of my research participants attended and took part in the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and far too many families in the Valley have been affected by this sort of violence, unable to call upon instruments of state power like the police to have the cases of their missing and murdered loved ones investigated. How has the process of confronting violence against Indigenous Peoples shaped the possibilities for resurgence?

In reflecting on the toolkit of resurgence Indigenous Peoples and communities have built in the Nicola Valley there are a few policy recommendations which might be useful. The first

would be linking self-help culture explicitly to resurgent activities like language learning. One powerful example of this is the Sammi program called Reclaiming my Language which has been adapted by the First Peoples Cultural Council in BC to transform silent speakers, people who understand but don't speak an Indigenous language, into fluent speakers. The program links cognitive behavioural therapy with Elder mentorship to understand the boundaries and bridges to language fluency. During my time at the Coldwater School, I had the opportunity to apply for and oversee this program and it led to people beginning to take the language more seriously and use it in their everyday lives. It might also be useful to include units on Indigenous conceptions of self-help culture in language learning classes.

A second policy recommendation would be to further strengthen Indigenous organizations in ways that don't lead to settler control and Indigenous subordination. Through my work at the Coldwater School, it became obvious that Indigenous organizations were subordinated to non-Indigenous oversight bodies for grants and funding, often having to fulfill neoliberal forms of benchmarking to be eligible for revenue sources sorely needed by communities or by allowing non-Indigenous 'experts' to interrogate the skills and abilities of Indigenous workers. In one painfully humiliating ritual, a white expert from the First Nations Education Steering Committee oversaw the lesson of an Indigenous teacher, painfully critiquing her performance from the position of white supremacy, while discounting the deep and affective¹⁵ strategies the teacher uses to make her students feel welcome. These sorts of benchmarking activities divert valuable resources away from Indigenous resurgence and toward bureaucratic surveillance and control, often leaving Indigenous Peoples dispirited and in the cases of the Indigenous teacher, degraded. One alternative to this is sharing surplus value directly with Indigenous communities. The Citwx Nl̓eʔkepmx Assembly for example receives 1% of the tax revenue from the Highland Valley Copper mine and is allowed to do with it what they please. The organization set up a trust fund, overseen by Indigenous Knowledge Keepers. They created Citwx Nl̓eʔkepmx Assembly to support cultural regeneration. Similar funding strategies would enable other Indigenous organizations to do their valuable work grounded in the authority of the community itself instead of being overseen by the petty sovereigns of the settler state who too often view Indigenous Nations and Peoples as white property.

¹⁵ Here I mean affective as in feeling. Specifically, I mean the strategies that Indigenous teachers deploy to make students feel a part of the classroom.

In conclusion, I want to express how unique and generative the process of resurgence is in the Nicola Valley. Through the weaving of different cultural elements, Indigenous communities in the Nicola have created an institutional infrastructure that makes resurgence possible. While the specifics of the case may not be generally applicable, many of the strategies are useful both for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples, none more so than the culture of vision. By imaging a peopled and intricate future beyond their life course, Indigenous Peoples are creating a vibrant future, one where the language will be returned to them. This ability is not innate, it is socially and culturally constructed, and it is one that settlers can learn and that may help us to disconnect them from our narcissistic and destructive culture of the now and re-orient ourselves to a shared vision of the future. How different would the future be if we could think beyond ourselves and with greater clarity? The transformational work of the Nicola Valley is a living example of what this sort of vision makes possible.

Appendix 1 – First Interview Guide

Indigenous Futures - Interview Guide

Prior to the first question I provide a background of what I have discovered about the history of the institution in which the person is involved.

1. I am interested in what this history doesn't capture. Can you tell me about your experience in (choose one, depending on when the person arrived) the creation of this institution **or** the development of this institution?

Prior to the second question I provide a key hypothesis of my research, that institutions are a neglected form of resistance against colonization. I differentiate these from protest and political lobbying (specify examples) but offer that they are important emphasizing that I am interested in the individual and everyday perspective of resistance.

2. Do you perceive what you do as a form of resistance?

Follow-up: Did you perceive it this way, as resistance, while you were building the institution?

The third question focuses on the individual's story and the individual's understanding of resistance.

3. What does resistance mean to you? How has it played out in your life and in your work?

The next questions are about the institution's ideals and values. These will involve the mission and value statements of each institution.

4. What are the ideals of the institution? Where do the ideals of the institution not match the reality?

Follow-up: Where are the places where you've moved away from the core values of the institution?

5. What has worked better than you first imagined?

6. What in an ideal world would make this institution work better?

7. What are the challenges you face in your everyday?

Follow-up: What would make these better?

Introduce the future aspect of my work and ask them to consider possible futures, both ideal and probable.

8. In an ideal future what would the land look like?

Follow-up: How likely is this? What is most-likely?

9. In an ideal future what would governance look like?

Follow-up: How likely is this? What is most-likely?

10. In an ideal future what would resistance look like?

Follow-up: How likely is this? What is most-likely?

11. What do you think the future will be like for Indigenous Peoples?

12. If you were to start your work all over again today what would you do differently

Appendix 2 – Second Interview Guide

Interview Questions

1. What does the word culture mean to you?
2. When does culture enter your life?
3. What does Canada want from Indigenous People?
4. When does Canada enter your life?
5. What will the future be like and what will you leave behind?

Background Information

Age: _____

Band Membership (if applicable): _____

Highest Credential Earned (ex. Bachelor's Degree, Dogwood): _____

Did you attend public school, band school, residential school, or homeschool?: _____

If so, which one and where?: _____

Did you grow up on reserve?: _____

Do you currently live on reserve? _____

How many years have you lived on reserve and how many off?: ON_____/OFF_____

What was your highest earning parent's occupation when you were 15? _____

Scaled Questions

1. How often do you speak Nlakapamuxcin/Nsylixcin?

● ● ● ● ●

Daily Every few days Weekly Monthly Rarely

2. What degree of Nlakapamuxcin/Nsylixcin do you possess?

● ● ● ● ●

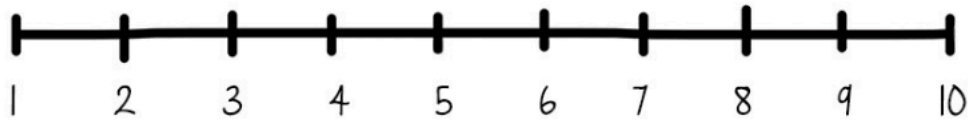
Fluent Conversational Understand but
do not speak Know some
phrases Know some
words

Feeling Thermometers

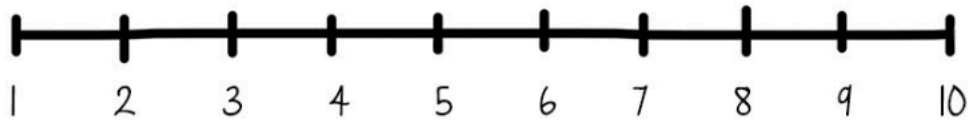
Please state how strongly you feel about the following sentences.

1 = strongly disagree and 10 = strongly agree

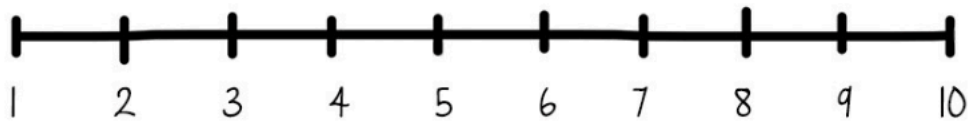
3. Indigenous people protest too much.



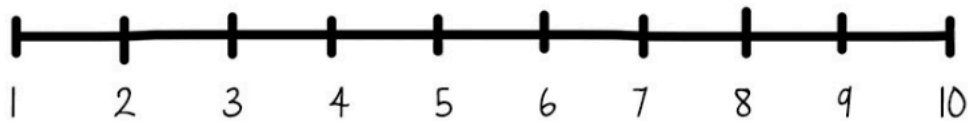
4. The government has treated Indigenous Peoples poorly.



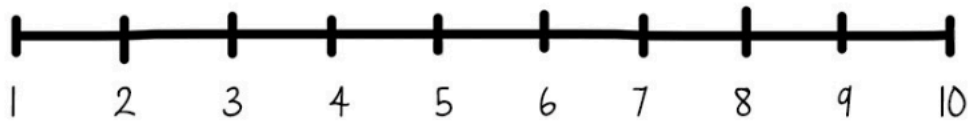
5. The future will be better than the past.



6. I am hopeful for my children.



7. Indigenous institutions are run effectively.



Appendix 3 – Glossary of Terms

Nleʔkepmxcin Term	Definition
nleʔkepmx	The name of the Interior Salishan People who gather at a place close to Lytton. This includes two divisions. One which is located along the Fraser River and then another that resides in the Nicola Valley. The Nicola Valley division is referred to as the Scw'exmx.
nleʔkepmxcin	The language of the Nleʔkepmx. Literally 'cin' means mouth.
scw'exmx	The People who gather where the snow melts.
tmíx ^w	Often translated as Land or territory.
snéʔm	Spirit helper.
sʔistkn	A pithouse. The subterranean dwelling popular amongst Indigenous Peoples prior to Contact.
syəm	To twist to bind together (weave).
x ^w uý he pénststem xeʔ nq ^w incútk	The language will be returned to us.
płec	The funerary custom of the Nleʔkepmx.
knéyt	A helping agent.
nlq ^w áptn	The word for tree stub or chair.
səx ^w néʔm	Often translated as the 'Indian Doctor' or the person who leads spiritual ceremonies.
zoʔ ^w zoʔ ^w t	Strong.
xeʔlk ^w úpiʔ	The sacred leader or the deity of the Nleʔkepmx.

Nsyilxcən Term	Definition
syilx	The name of the Interior Salishan People whose territory spans the boundary between the United States and Canada. In Canada, one group lives around the Okanagan Lake while another lives in the Nicola Valley.
nsyilxcən	The language of the Syilx. Literally 'cən' translates as mouth.
tm ^w x ^w úlaʔx ^w	Often translated as Land or territory

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