EXPLORING ACTIVIST PERSPECTIVES ON INDIGENOUS-SETTLER SOLIDARITY IN TORONTO'S FOOD SOVEREIGNTY MOVEMENT

TALIYA SEIDMAN-WRIGHT

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN GEOGRAPHY

YORK UNIVERSITY

TORONTO, ONTARIO

September 2023

Abstract

In Canada, Indigenous and settler ally scholars have called upon settler food sovereignty movements to reimagine approaches to food system change in ways that confront settler colonialism and support Indigenous struggles for land and sovereignty (Morrison, 2011; Daigle, 2017; Kepkiewicz, 2018; Bohunicky et al., 2021). Engaging with critical Indigenous and food sovereignty scholarship, this project explores how Toronto food activists are responding to these calls. Drawing on interviews with nine settler food activists in Toronto, I explore how participants are working to build solidarity with Indigenous peoples in their work following three major themes. First, participants emphasized the importance of (un)learning by unpacking positionality, self-educating about colonial realities, and learning from Indigenous knowledges. Second, participants discussed food organizations' efforts to build relationships with Indigenous peoples through formal partnerships, increased Indigenous leadership, and creation of Indigenous-centered spaces. Third, participants highlighted systemic barriers to solidarity-building, such as dependency on funding and persistence of settler colonial structures, underlining the need for larger shifts towards anti-capitalist food systems and decolonization. Based on participants' responses, I argue that some Toronto food activists are actively working to build solidarity with Indigenous peoples by (un)learning and building relationships. However, according to a website content analysis, few organizations seem to be prioritizing Indigenous initiatives or conversations around settler colonialism in their public media, implying that participants' efforts may be in the minority among Toronto food organizations. Ultimately, I argue that settler food sovereignty movements must do more to reckon with the coloniality of food movement work, relinquish settler claims to define food systems on stolen lands, and push for structural changes towards permanent redistribution of power and land to Indigenous peoples.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I acknowledge and give thanks to the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee Confederacy, Huron-Wendat, and Mississaugas of the New Credit, who have cared for the lands known as Tkaronto where I now live, work, and play. Today, this 'meeting place' continues to be home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and non-Indigenous newcomers who have entered into existing treaty relationships. These lands continue to be governed by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt, a living treaty made to ensure the sharing and protection of these lands. Further agreements include the Toronto Purchase, or Treaty 13, the Treaty of Niagara, the Williams treaties, and other agreements between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe nations such as the White Wampum and the Eternal Council Fires Belt (Talking Treaties, 2022). Many of these agreements have been violated by settler colonial powers, such as the Toronto Purchase (see Sault, 2021) and the Williams treaties (see Nanibush, 2021).

I recognize that I am a visitor and settler on these lands. My ancestry is Norwegian, Scottish, and Polish-Ashkenazi Jewish and my ancestors on both sides came to the so-called United States through Ellis Island in the early 1900s seeking both economic opportunity and safety from persecution as Jews on my father's side. This positionality has pushed me to think more deeply about my place on the lands I call home as well as my responsibilities and obligations to work to dismantle structures of oppression as a settler ally.

I would also like to give thanks to the Songhees, Esquimalt, and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose unceded lands raised me.

In doing this work, I hope to contribute to settler action to take better care in "polishing the chain" of our treaty relationships with Indigenous peoples (Loft, 2021, p. 24), both within and beyond food activism.

To my supervisor, Sarah Rotz: thank you for all your guidance and encouragement over the past 2 years. Your work on Indigenous-settler relations continues to inspire me and has supported my learning process while doing this project. I also greatly appreciate your logistical foresight which helped me navigate and stay on track for funding applications and writing deadlines (even when these deadlines shifted). Overall, learning with you has been a privilege.

To Peter Vandergeest, my committee member: thank you for your insightful advice and support, particularly throughout the unexpectedly difficult ethics process. Your advocacy on my behalf helped motivate me to continue with my Master's when I felt like giving up.

Thank you to the nine earthworkers who participated in this project. Working alongside you – whether it was hauling wagons of soil, ladling soup, harvesting beets, or chopping 10 pounds of onions with tears streaming down my face – has been an amazing experience not only for my own learning, but also for my mental and physical health and my sense of connection to people, land, and the food I eat. Our conversations have provided me with food for thought for many years to come.

Thank you to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) for their funding that supported this research.

Thank you to the coffee shops and public libraries that provided me peaceful space to write. Thank you to my therapist for providing me with space to decompress from the stress of being a grad student and work towards better relations with myself. Thank you to the musicians whose art, both recorded and live, got me through a difficult period, particularly the work of Yebba, Kimbra, Hayley Williams, Caroline Polachek, and Beyonce who provided me with joy, comfort, inspiration, and motivation whenever I needed it.

Last but not least, thank you to my people. To Mama, Dad, and Ariel, thank you for the ways you support me with open ears, thoughtful minds, and good hearts. Your unwavering support for me is the greatest gift and has helped carry me through this degree. Thank you to my friends, both close and far, for helping me take much-needed breaks to talk, laugh, dance, eat, and sing. Thank you for reminding me that fun is essential! To my partner Julian, thank you for being my anchor through the ups and, especially, the downs. Your faith in me has helped me find faith in myself, not only to finish this project but also to imagine new futures as I step into the next chapter. Finally, I want to thank myself for completing this project and degree, which carried with it many challenges and moments of self-doubt. This experience has provided significant affirmation that I can do hard things, which contributes to my hope that we, collectively, can do the hard work of decolonizing our food systems and relationships with peoples and the earth.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

How I came to this research

The first time I heard the term "Indigenous food sovereignty" was at a student-run community kitchen event in my final year of my undergraduate degree. In October 2018, while working as a coordinator at the Regenesis Youth Food Centre at the University of Toronto, we had the privilege of hosting Chef Johl Whiteduck Ringuette from NishDish[1] in a community kitchen workshop. Chef Johl led a group of 30 students in making a Three Sisters stew, teaching us about the traditional Three Sisters cultivation system involving corn, beans, and squash. He explained the importance of the Three Sisters to Anishinaabe peoples' food sovereignty, not only for growing traditional foods in a sustainable way but also by restoring the highly nutritious Anishinaabe diets that were disrupted by colonialism.

As an undergraduate student in critical development studies, I had become interested in the international food sovereignty movement. Learning about the activism of *La Via Campesina* provided me with hope during my studies that were primarily focused on detailing the exploitation, oppression, and environmental degradation wrought by colonialism and capitalism around the world. However, I became increasingly frustrated with my program for its Othering tendencies which I saw reflected in how we talked about the food sovereignty movement: always looking outward, internationally, with little to no engagement with justice issues at home in so-called Canada.[2] I became drawn to Indigenous studies where I started taking elective courses that exposed me to concepts like settler colonialism and Indigenous resurgence, which made me think

[1] To learn more about Chef Johl Whiteduck Ringuette's story and work, see his chapter in the book *Indigenous Toronto: Stories that carry this place* (2021).

[2] I should note that in the past few years since I graduated, this UofT program has been working towards including more Indigenous-centered coursework, following calls from Indigenous community members and complaints from students such as myself and some of my peers.

more deeply about my positionality as a White settler and what it means to do food activism on stolen Indigenous lands. Looking back now on our discussions in development studies classes around food sovereignty, it seems shocking to me that we rarely turned our gaze onto settler food movements in Canada and, when we did, we rarely questioned settler claims to 'sovereignty' and remained focused on settler-centered issues such as settler farmers' land dispossession – something scholars have pointed out as a key issue in food sovereignty dialogues (Grey & Patel, 2015; Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018; Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018).

Learning from Chef Johl at the Youth Food Centre was a transformative experience for me and my thinking around food. It marked the point where my interests in Indigenous studies and food sovereignty came together in a tangible way and directed me towards thinking more deeply about settler food activists' responsibilities to Indigenous peoples, as I explore in this research. It also affirmed my belief in the power of experiential education, which guides my interest in food activism as a space for learning and relationship-building between diverse groups of Indigenous and settler peoples. Only when I left the formal classroom for a kitchen with white corn, beans, and butternut squash did I encounter the deeper learning that I craved and needed, and that I have tried to continue in doing this project.

Drawing on Indigenous and food sovereignty scholarship, this thesis explores whether and how food activists in Toronto are working to build solidarity with Indigenous peoples in their work. Based on interviews with 9 settler food activists in Toronto, I argue that many settler food activists are actively working towards solidarity with Indigenous peoples in their work by (un)learning from Indigenous knowledges, unpacking settler complicities and responsibilities, re-centering Indigenous leadership and building decolonizing relationships on Indigenous terms. Meanwhile, my findings also suggest that participants' efforts to build solidarity with Indigenous

peoples may be in the minority among Toronto food organizations more broadly and, thus, there is significant work to be done to prioritize Indigenous struggles for land and sovereignty in food movement work. Although food organizations face structural constraints that restrict their capacities to align with Indigenous struggles, I argue that settler food sovereignty movements have a responsibility to do more to examine how settler food movements can perpetuate settler colonialism, let go of settler claims to authority over food systems on stolen lands, and advocate for more systemic changes required for permanently redistributing power to Indigenous peoples.

In this chapter, I begin by providing some brief context on Indigenous food systems, colonialism, and the food sovereignty movement in Canada. Next, I outline the research questions and objectives, followed by the project's contributions and limitations. Finally, I provide an outline of the chapters that follow.

Context: Indigenous food systems, colonialism, and food sovereignty in Canada

Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island have developed complex and resilient food systems that have supported Indigenous economies, cultures, and ecosystems for thousands of years (Morrison, 2011). Indigenous food systems, while diverse and distinct, are based on a recognition of the sacredness of and interdependent relationships between "all of the land, soil, water, and air, as well as culturally important plant, fungi, and animal species" that sustain Indigenous societies (PFPP, 2011b, p. 3). As I discuss below, Indigenous food systems have been disrupted and deliberately attacked by the colonial project, yet Indigenous peoples continue to practice and restore their traditional food systems, making up the Indigenous food sovereignty movement today.

In so-called Canada, food has been an essential tool of the colonial project. On one hand, food was a defining feature of the collaboration and alliance building between Indigenous

peoples and European settlers. As Vowel (2016) discusses, early interactions between settlers and Indigenous peoples were generally based on a mutual understanding of Indigenous nations as sovereign entities who settlers sought military and commercial alliances with in order to defend themselves against their European competitors and establish trade relationships with Indigenous nations. Early European settlers also relied on these alliances for accessing foods that supported their survival, as they lacked knowledge and skills that Indigenous peoples possessed of how to grow, hunt, and fish in these lands (Morrison, 2011; PFPP, 2011b; Vowel, 2016). These robust food systems are evidenced in the way that Toronto was known by "every [Indigenous] nation that lived here" and, eventually, settlers as the "place of plenty in Wendat," due to its abundance of fish weirs that supported both Indigenous nations and settler groups (Loft, 2021, p. 21). As demonstrated by treaties like the Dish With One Spoon and the Two Row Wampums, made between various Indigenous nations and settler groups, these early treaties were based on the principles of non-interference, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence (Vowel, 2016; Talking Treaties, 2022).[3]

While early treaty-making was based more on cooperation between sovereign nations, the relationship between Indigenous peoples and settlers deteriorated as treaties were continually

[3] The Two Row Wampum is an agreement made between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch in 1613 and is considered by the Haudenosaunee to be a foundational treaty that provides the basis for all following relationships with European powers (Vowel, 2016). The treaty is grounded in the Great Law of Peace, represented by the symbol of two vessels traveling "side by side, along the river of life" following the principles of "Sgënö' (Peace), Ga'hasdehsäh (Strength through Unity), and Ga'nigoi:yoh (Good Mind and Equal Justice)" (Talking Treaties, 2022). The Dish With One Spoon is a peace agreement between the Haudenosaunee and the Anishinaabe that covers much of the Great Lakes region and stipulates that all peoples must "take only what is required" and ensure that "all living things are able to sustain their lives" (Loft, 2021, p. 24). These examples are two of many agreements made over the past 400 years, including subsequent agreements intended to follow-up on or "polish the chain" of Indigenous-settler political relationships – something settler colonial powers have largely failed to do (Loft, 2021; Talking Treaties, 2022). While I am focused primarily on the region of Ontario here, it is also important to note that many Indigenous nations across Canada have never entered treaty agreements with settler colonial powers, as evidenced by over 90 percent of so-called British Columbia being unceded lands (Vowel, 2016). For further information about treaty histories, some helpful resources include Dickason (2009), Vowel (2016) and the Talking Treaties (2022) website.

violated by the settler colonial powers of the French, the British Crown and, after 1867, the Canadian state (Vowel, 2016). Indigenous peoples' ability to resist colonial encroachment declined with the introduction of diseases, altering of environments that formed the basis of Indigenous food systems and economies, and the stealing of land by colonizers through coercive and manipulative tactics of violence, removal, "gifts and outright lies" (Lawrence, 2002, p. 40). As others have explained (e.g. Carter, 1990; Daschuk, 2013; Mosby, 2013), food was a key tool utilized in these colonial strategies to exterminate, subjugate, and assimilate Indigenous peoples. In *Clearing the Plains*, Daschuk (2013) outlines how Indigenous peoples faced deliberate assaults from state-sanctioned policies of starvation and acts of genocide including the withholding of food rations from Indigenous nations struggling with famine and disease. In the words of John A. MacDonald, "by refusing food until the Indians [we]re on the verge of starvation" the Canadian state forced Indigenous peoples into signing treaties and onto reserves – where they lacked access to their traditional hunting and harvesting grounds and to fertile land to participate in the agricultural economy – in order to clear the Prairies for European settlers (Daschuk, 2013, p. 123). Carter (1990) explains that although the settler state saw agriculture as a way of assimilating Indigenous peoples into Canadian society, the government further undermined Indigenous farmers by imposing agricultural policies that restricted access to farm inputs, equipment, and agricultural markets. In residential schools, many Indigenous children were forced to participate in horrific nutritional experiments, conducted in secret and without consent (Mosby, 2013). Looking at nutritional studies conducted in Northern Manitoba between 1942 and 1952, Mosby (2013) argues that Indigenous bodies were viewed as "experimental

materials" by scientists and researchers, who observed "the effects of nutritional interventions (and non-interventions, as it turned out)" only to bolster their careers (p. 148).[4]

Today, colonial violence continues to impact Indigenous struggles for food sovereignty. Many communities face policy restrictions that limit their abilities to engage in traditional food practices on their own lands, such as the controversial restrictions on seal hunting faced by Inuit communities (Arnaquq-Baril, 2016) and proposed firearm restrictions in Bill C-21, which many Indigenous nations have expressed concerns about due to potential infringement of traditional hunting rights and lack of consultation from the Canadian government (Needham, 2023). Development projects such as dams, mines, and pipelines also restrict access to traditional territories and often contaminate waterways and lands that form the basis of Indigenous food systems (ICFSC, 2011; Laforge et al., 2021). Additionally, the expansion of the global capitalist food system has undermined Indigenous sovereignty and food systems through promotion of chemical-intensive agriculture, genetically modified seeds, "the wholesale theft of rich agricultural lands, and patents on Indigenous intellectual property rights as they relate to plant life" (Settee & Shukla, 2020, p. 1). Many rural and urban Indigenous communities also grapple with problems including food deserts and lack of access to traditional and nutritious foods, which subsequently exacerbate health issues such as diabetes and obesity (ICFSC, 2011) and disconnection from cultural identity – a key social determinant of mental, emotional, and spiritual health (Cidro et al., 2015).

Despite ongoing colonial violence, Indigenous peoples have continued enacting their sovereignty and jurisdiction over their lands and food systems. For example, both the Nuu-Chah-

[4] While this thesis does not focus on the impacts of colonization on Indigenous food systems, it is important to recognize the essential work of scholars like Carter (1990), Daschuk (2013), and Mosby (2013) who bring these injustices to light. Undoubtedly, there is still work to be done to uncover and share these stories from Indigenous perspectives, which have often been excluded in tellings of Canadian history.

Nulth and the Heiltsuk in coastal BC have developed marine management centres led and operated by their communities following their own cultural protocols (Coté, 2016; Yellowhead Institute, 2019). The Heiltsuk's Marine Response Centre is essential to the community's efforts to protect and restore traditional seafood harvesting sites such as clam gardens, many of which were damaged in the 2016 oil spill (Simmons, 2021). Coté (2016) explains how establishing environmental and food policies grounded in Nuu-Chah-Nulth principles is fundamental to restoring their responsibilities and relationships to their ancestral homelands. In Southern Ontario, Leanne Simpson discusses the harvesting of "minomiin" (wild rice) by Nishnaabeg families who

> sneak canoes across leaf-blown, white-cottaged lawns and launch into contested waters. Some of our rice beds will have been destroyed by cottagers who desire pristine beaches. … There will be sadness and loss in our canoes and also hope because we are still here, harvesting our good seed. (Maynard & Simpson, 2022, p. 231)

In Toronto, Chef Johl Whiteduck Ringuette (2021) and his organization Ojibiikaan have started Indigenous gardens around the city to revitalize Indigenous foods including the pawpaw tree and the Three Sisters cultivation system. These examples are part of the Indigenous food sovereignty movement, which Morrison (2011) explains is simply a new name for practices that have always been a "living reality" for Indigenous peoples and that will continue into the future as we collectively work to "heal our relationships with one another and the land, plants, and animals that provide us with our food" (p. 97, 100).

Looking to the food sovereignty movement more broadly, a range of actors – both Indigenous and non-Indigenous – have shaped the movement in Canada over the past two

decades.[5] Following European settlement, Canada's agricultural model became increasingly export-led and industrialized, contributing to the displacement of small-scale farm families and large-scale corporate capture of farmlands (Weibe & Wipf, 2011). As food activists grappled with how to address the many social and environmental crises associated with the neoliberalization of the food system, food sovereignty took hold as a guiding framework for Canadian food movements (Weibe & Wipf, 2011; Desmarais & Wittman, 2014). Food sovereignty entered Canadian food politics during *La Via Campesina*'s (LVC) key debates in the 1990s through the work of the National Farmers Union (NFU), a founding member of LVC, and the Union Paysanne in Quebec (Desmarais & Wittman, 2014). The NFU and Union Paysanne interpreted food sovereignty primarily through an agrarian and state-centric lens, advocating for small-scale farmers' rights to land and policy restrictions on corporate land ownership (Kepkiewicz, 2018; Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018). Meanwhile, the Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty (WGIFS), launched in 2006, engaged with food sovereignty differently, as they sought to represent Indigenous perspectives in Canadian food sovereignty movement dialogues and support food sovereignty strategies that uphold Indigenous protocols and jurisdiction over ancestral lands (Morrison, 2008, 2011).

Following LVC's Nyéléni Forum in 2007, a growing network of Canadian organizations launched the national People's Food Policy Project (PFPP) in 2009, which engaged 3500 people across the country in discussions about what a national food policy should look like (Kneen, 2011; Desmarais & Wittman, 2014). The PFPP (2011) published the report *Resetting the Table: A People's Food Policy for Canada*, which reflected the six pillars of food sovereignty

[5] I provide further context on Toronto's food sovereignty movement in Chapter 5 in order to situate participants' reflections on food organizations' work.

developed at Nyéléni[6] and included a seventh pillar developed by the Indigenous Circle at Food Secure Canada: "food is sacred" and embedded in a web of human-environment relationships that must be respected (PFPP, 2011, p. 10; Kneen, 2011). Although the Indigenous Circle was a key actor in the PFPP process, Kepkiewicz (2018) points out that the final report (PFPP, 2011) and the Indigenous Circle's discussion paper on Indigenous food sovereignty (ICFSC, 2011) differ in an important way. While the discussion paper underlines Indigenous peoples' sovereignty and the need to move beyond the nation-state, the *Resetting the Table* report remains focused primarily on settler food systems and government policy "without attention to the ways that settler systems and policy often inhibit many of the ideas discussed by the Indigenous Circle" (Kepkiewicz, 2018, p. 18).

Looking to food and agricultural funding, some scholars have highlighted how Indigenous food revitalization efforts often receive little governmental support (Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018; Robin et al., 2023). Drawing on interviews with Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples who have engaged with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), Robin, Rotz, and Xavier (2023) outline how proposals for Indigenous-led food and agricultural projects are frequently rejected or saddled with "inappropriate, unsuitable, and unattainable project revisions and timelines" by OMAFRA review committees (p. 10). Due to the dominance of business-oriented visions of agriculture among funding organizations, many interviewees expressed concern that OMAFRA and other agri-food funders do not view community-centred initiatives including Indigenous seed banks, wild game hunting, or cooperative sugar bush production as valid agricultural activities (Robin et al., 2023). The

[6] The six pillars of food sovereignty developed at Nyéléni are: 1. Focuses on Food for People, 2. Values Food Providers, 3. Localizes Food Systems, 4. Puts Control Locally, 5. Builds Knowledge and Skills, and 6. Works with Nature (PFPP, 2011; Kepkiewicz, 2018)

persistence of such issues of exclusion, paternalism, and lack of understanding of Indigenous rights, knowledges, and experiences points to the ways that Indigenous peoples "remain structurally excluded from Ministry decision-making, visioning, strategic and land-use planning, policy, and programming" (Robin et al., 2023, p. 20).

This brief context of food sovereignty in Canada reflects some of the key tensions between settler and Indigenous visions for food system change highlighted in the literature, as discussed further in Chapter 2. For food activism in the settler colonial context, struggles for food sovereignty necessitate a deeper consideration of what it means to do food justice work on stolen Indigenous lands. Food-related challenges faced by Indigenous communities are directly connected to land dispossession (Daigle, 2017; Whyte, 2018), yet settler-led food sovereignty movements rarely challenge private land ownership regimes which can exclude Indigenous peoples from accessing land and engaging in land-based food practices (Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018). Furthermore, settler-led food movements typically demand state-led policy changes that affirm settler state jurisdiction over Indigenous lands (Wittman, 2015; Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018). Thus, scholars have called upon settler food movements to take more meaningful action to confront settler colonialism and support Indigenous struggles for land and sovereignty in their work (Daigle, 2017; Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018; Kepkiewicz, 2018; Bohunicky et al., 2021). In this project, I explore how settler food activists in Toronto are responding to such calls.

Research questions and objectives:

The overall objective of this thesis is to assess whether and how settler food activists in Toronto's food sovereignty movement are working to build solidarity with Indigenous peoples in their work. The research questions that guide this project include the following:

1. How do settler food activists understand Indigenous-settler solidarity in relation to their work?
2. In what ways are settler food activists working to build solidarity with Indigenous peoples (e.g. self-education, learning from Indigenous knowledges, building relationships with Indigenous peoples, centering Indigenous leadership and protocols in programming, involving Indigenous peoples in decision-making processes)?
3. How do settler food activists understand food system change in relation to Indigenous struggles for land and sovereignty?
4. How have conversations around settler colonialism, Indigenous resurgence, and decolonization evolved over time within Toronto's food movement?
5. What challenges or barriers do Toronto settler food activists face in their efforts to build solidarity with Indigenous peoples?
6. What do food activists envision for the future of Toronto's food sovereignty movement?

Research significance

Contribution

Food sovereignty dialogues in Canadian food movements have remained largely focused on settler claims to land, 'sovereignty', and 'rights' to define food systems, as I discuss further in the next chapter. Scholars have highlighted how such settler-centered approaches inhibit Indigenous food sovereignty efforts in settler colonial contexts like Canada, as they affirm the settler state and settler claims to stolen Indigenous lands (Grey & Patel, 2015; Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018; Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018). Additionally, while international food sovereignty scholarship draws on a range of critical perspectives, analyses of food movements in

relation to settler colonialism and Indigenous food sovereignty have largely remained an "afterthought" in the literature (Martens et al., 2016, p. 21; Bohunicky et al., 2021).

This project contributes to dialogues between international food sovereignty and Indigenous food sovereignty by teasing out the points of convergence and conflict, as reflected in both the literature and participants' responses. I also aim to contribute to conversations around Indigenous-settler solidarities (Snelgrove et al., 2014; Boudreau Morris, 2017; Davis et al., 2017; Kluttz et al., 2020), and the role of food activist spaces in these solidarity-building processes (Kepkiewicz, 2018; Bohunicky et al., 2021). Drawing on concepts like settler colonialism and Indigenous resurgence, this research also aims to contribute to the development of theorizations of food sovereignty in Canada in ways that center Indigenous resurgence and account for the role food movements play in upholding, and potentially challenging, settler colonialism.

To date, there has been limited empirical work examining whether and how non-Indigenous food activists are working to confront settler colonialism and build solidarity with Indigenous struggles in food movement work. This project aims to respond to calls from scholars for further research in this area to address this relative gap in the food movement literature (e.g. Kepkiewicz, 2018; Bohunicky et al., 2021). More specifically, this research builds upon the work of Kepkiewicz (2018) and Bohunicky et al. (2021), whose work explores Indigenous-settler relations in food movements at the national scale and through two case studies in Ontario and Australia. This project focuses on the city scale by looking at Indigenous-settler relations in Toronto's food movement, addressing a gap in the literature around Indigenous-settler relations in urban Canadian food movements. By centering Toronto food activists' perspectives, this project aims to contribute to a place-based understanding of Indigenous-settler solidarity in the city, rather than speaking primarily to academic theorizations of food sovereignty – this is to say

that I do not intend to confound participants' perspectives with academic discussions of food sovereignty, even though their perspectives may contribute to theorizations of food sovereignty in the Canadian context. At the same time, this project may contribute to broader dialogues around food movements and settler colonialism, which Kepkiewicz (2018) points out has remained peripheral in international food sovereignty scholarship.

Beyond the academy, this project will hopefully contribute to critical reflection within food activist communities around settler responsibilities to Indigenous peoples and how meaningful Indigenous-settler solidarities might be cultivated. As a participant in these communities in Toronto, this research has contributed deeply to my own (un)learning, which will continue into the future alongside the nine food activists who participated in this project. I also aim to support dialogues between food activist communities, researchers, and policymakers in hopes of provoking shifts in visions for food system change towards strategies that prioritize permanent transfers of power back to Indigenous peoples and *Indigenous* struggles for land, life, and sovereignty.

Limitations and future directions

One limitation of this project is its scope and generalizability, as discussed further in Chapter 3. Due to logistical constraints, this project only includes participants from two food organizations in Toronto. While many participants reflected on their past experiences at other organizations in the city, the results of this research may not necessarily be generalizable. Another limitation of this research is that it only includes settler voices. As I explain in Chapter 3, this project focuses on settler food activists in an effort to 'reverse the gaze' and underline settler responsibility to confront settler colonialism and support Indigenous struggles. However, this risks re-centering settler perspectives over Indigenous voices.

Due to these limitations, future research might include: larger-scale studies that engage with a larger number of organizations in Toronto's food movement; studies focusing on Indigenous-led initiatives in the city; or investigations of Indigenous food activists' perspectives on questions surrounding settler education, settler complicities and responsibilities, Indigenous-settler relationships, and decolonization at large.

Chapter outline

Following this introduction, I provide a review of the literature and situate this research within the fields of food sovereignty, critical Indigenous studies, and Indigenous-settler relations in food movements. I explain some of the similarities and tensions between the broader canon of food sovereignty and Indigenous food sovereignty literatures and outline the main concepts from Indigenous studies that inform this project including settler colonialism and Indigenous resurgence. I then explain the major themes in dialogues surrounding Indigenous-settler relations in food movements and outline conceptualizations of solidarity, which this project aims to expand upon most specifically.

Chapter 3 outlines my methodological approach as informed by Indigenous and feminist principles of relational accountability and self-reflexivity. Next, I explain the ways that the ethics review process imposed delays and requirements which significantly limited the scope and timeline of my project. I then outline the outreach and relationship-building process with two food organizations in Toronto, followed by explanations of data collection, coding and analysis, and plans for dissemination.

In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I discuss my findings following three main themes which emerged from participants' reflections: (un)learning, relationship-building, and systemic change. Chapter 4 explores participants' perspectives on settler education as a key component of

Indigenous-settler solidarities. First, I discuss participants' reflections on their efforts to engage with discomfort and unpack settler positionality, privilege, and complicity. Next, I discuss participants' efforts to learn from Indigenous knowledges, address their own biases, and reimagine relationships to land. Following Indigenous-settler solidarity scholars (e.g. Snelgrove et al., 2014; Kluttz et al., 2020; Bohunicky et al., 2021), I explain settler (un)learning as a foundational aspect of "transforming settler consciousness" (Davis et al., 2017, p. 402) and building meaningful solidarities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in food movements. Based on participants' reflections, I argue that many food activists in Toronto are beginning to respond to calls to think more deeply about the role of food movements in confronting settler colonialism and supporting Indigenous resurgence by unpacking settler responsibilities and learning from Indigenous perspectives.

In Chapter 5, I explore participants' efforts to build relationships with Indigenous peoples through their work. First, I provide some context around Toronto's food movement by drawing on media sources, my content analysis of 17 organizations' websites, and participants' reflections to outline the main themes in dialogues around food system change and decolonization among food organizations. Engaging with Indigenous (and ally) perspectives on solidarity (e.g. Tuck & Yang, 2012; Corntassel & Gaudry, 2014; Snelgrove et al., 2014; Kepkiewicz, 2018), I discuss participants' efforts to step back and re-center Indigenous peoples by partnering with Indigenous organizations, supporting greater Indigenous leadership, and creating Indigenous-centered spaces for ceremonies and programming. Following from Chapter 4, I also outline participants' reflections on the tensions and discomfort related to these collaborations due to incompatibilities between organizational expectations and Indigenous protocols. Overall, participants' responses

demonstrate that food activists in Toronto are increasingly recognizing the need to prioritize Indigenous resurgence and build relationships on Indigenous terms.

While Chapter 4 and 5 focus more on the individual and community scales of solidarity-building, Chapter 6 turns toward the structural factors that shape and constrain participants' solidarity-building efforts. First, I discuss participants' reflections on the limitations faced by food organizations including dependency on funding, budgetary constraints, and precarious employment. Drawing on scholarship exploring Indigenous-settler relations in food movements (e.g. Kepkiewicz, 2018; Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018; Bohunicky et al., 2021), I outline how participants discussed the coloniality of organizational structures and the tensions of working within settler systems while trying to decolonize, which ultimately restrict food organizations' capacities to align with Indigenous struggles. Next, I discuss how participants envisioned the future of the food sovereignty movement in Canada, including calls for economic independence for food organizations, anti-capitalist food systems, greater Indigenous leadership, and Land Back. Ultimately, I argue that settler food sovereignty movements must take greater action to reckon with the coloniality of food movement work, relinquish settler claims to authority over food systems on stolen lands, and push for more structural changes that would enable more permanent redistribution of power to Indigenous peoples.

Finally, Chapter 7 concludes this thesis with a chapter overview and discussion of the contributions and limitations of this research. I also reflect on potential directions for future research around Indigenous-settler relations in food movements in so-called Canada.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I outline my conceptual framework and situate my research within the fields of food sovereignty, critical Indigenous studies, and Indigenous-settler relations in food movements. To begin, I give a brief overview of the concept of food sovereignty and some of the key debates in the field. Next, I discuss Indigenous Food Sovereignty and its critiques of settler-led food sovereignty movements. Drawing on critical Indigenous Studies, I then outline the main concepts that inform this project including settler colonialism and Indigenous resurgence, following calls to center Indigenous perspectives in examinations of food movements in the settler-colonial contexts such as Canada. Finally, I discuss recent scholarship examining Indigenous-settler relations in Canadian food movements and outline perspectives on what Indigenous-settler solidarity entails, which this project explores in the context of food activism in Toronto.

Food sovereignty

The concept of 'food sovereignty' was introduced at the 1996 World Food Summit by transnational peasant movement *La Via Campesina* as a "counterframe" to mainstream discourses of 'food security' (Patel, 2009, p. 665). Arising in the aftermath of food crises in the 1970s and 1980s, mainstream 'food security' reflected a neoliberal approach to addressing issues in the food system through free market mechanisms and increases in global food supply (Fairbairn, 2010). *La Via* activists, among others, criticized 'food security' for failing to challenge exploitative capitalist relations in the global food system by excluding questions of who produces food, what kind of food is produced, and under what conditions is food produced, processed, and consumed (Edelman, 2014; Martínez-Torres & Rosset, 2014).

While food sovereignty is ever-expanding and not singularly defined, the most cited definition comes out of the 2007 Nyéléni Forum for Food Sovereignty and is often abbreviated to: "the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems" (Nyéléni International Steering Committee, 2007, p. 9). Advocates emphasize the need to: put local communities at the center of food policies; practice agroecological food production; protect local markets from corporate control; and facilitate dialogue between diverse activist groups to share knowledge and build solidarity (Martínez-Torres & Rosset, 2014; Akram-Lodhi, 2015). A political project with roots in Latin American peasant struggles, food sovereignty entails a radical rejection of the neoliberal industrial food system and calls for encompassing structural change, democratization of food system engagement, and centering peasant, Indigenous, and women's traditional food knowledges (Akram-Lodhi, 2015; Grey & Patel, 2015).

Food sovereignty is a contested concept that has multiple understandings and usages, from an analytical framework to a social movement, spanning issues including land reform, fisheries, genetically-modified organisms, Indigenous knowledges, urban gardening, and subsistence rights (Alonso-Fradejas et al., 2015). As Patel (2009) explains, while the concept has been "overdefined" to the point of obscurity, such multiplicity is "woven into the fabric of food sovereignty by necessity" (p. 663). This has led some scholars to question the concept's viability for fulfilling its ambitious goals, particularly in the context of globalized capitalism where immensely powerful corporate actors dictating the global food system may outcompete or subsume grassroots food sovereignty initiatives (e.g. Bernstein, 2014; Li, 2014). Others celebrate food sovereignty's "big tent" politics as its strength (Patel, 2009, p. 666), where food sovereignty is intentionally left open-ended for communities to claim and develop for themselves from the

grassroots as a part of a "multi-faceted counter-movement feeling its way into the future" across social, class, rural-urban, and North-South divides (McMichael, 2015, p. 200; Alonso-Fradejas et al., 2015).

In this project, I engage with food sovereignty as an adaptable framework for understanding Canadian food movements and exploring how settler food activists in Toronto understand and engage in their work. While there are other terms that are currently used in food activist circles ('food security,' 'food justice'), I have chosen to engage primarily with food sovereignty as what I understand to be the most current iteration of the multi-faceted nature of food movements' aspirations. I see the openended-ness of food sovereignty as an opportunity to understand Toronto's food movement on its own terms while also situating it in dialogue with the broader canon of food sovereignty scholarship and national and international food movements. Food sovereignty also emphasizes the need to take an intersectional approach to food activism and attend to the multiple structures of oppression (Kepkiewicz, 2018), which informs my own understanding of food system change. With its focus on 'sovereignty,' I think the concept helps to facilitate dialogue between non-Indigenous and Indigenous visions of food system change and offers potential for exploring the multiplicity of food sovereignties including *Indigenous* food sovereignties, as I discuss in the following section. Overall, the framework provides an opportunity to contribute to conversations around Indigenous-settler relations in food sovereignty movements in Canada, which have thus far been limited.

My utilization of food sovereignty has also been informed by my reflections during data analysis and key themes brought up in interviews. While many participants seemed to utilize 'food justice' and 'food sovereignty' interchangeably, almost all spoke of the need for structural change away from the capitalist food system, which seems to resonate more closely with the

latter than the former according to my understanding of the literature. If 'food justice' entails that "the benefits and risks of where, what and how food is grown and produced, transported and distributed, and accessed and eaten, are shared fairly" (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010, p. 6), then I understand food justice as a *component* of food sovereignty which draws more explicit attention to systemic questions of *how* food is produced, distributed, accessed, and consumed. Following Holt-Giménez (2011), while both concepts overlap significantly, food justice can be understood as 'progressive,' with an agenda concerned with access rights for marginalized groups, while food sovereignty can be seen as more 'radical' in its calls for systemic change away from the structures that have created and uphold such inequities.

On a methodological level, food sovereignty's emphasis on multiplicity aligns with my efforts to ground my conceptual framework in participant's perspectives[7] and center Indigenous perspectives in my analysis. Furthermore, I wonder if excessive academic parsing between food movement concepts – between which there has consistently been significant overlap (Edelman, 2014; Levkoe et al., 2020) – could potentially distract from examination of actual initiatives and activists' perspectives on their work. This project aims to focus on Toronto food activists' visions of food system change in relation to Indigenous struggles, rather than speak primarily to academic theorizations of food sovereignty. In other words, I do not mean to confound food activism in Toronto with international food sovereignty scholarship, which represents an immensely diverse field, nor international food sovereignty movements, which include a wide

[7] In contrast to participants' responses, Wilson and Levkoe's (2022) study of Canadian food movements suggests that there has been a "shift in tone within prominent food movement organizations" in Canada away from 'food sovereignty' towards mainstream narratives such as "right to food, which accepts state authority over grassroots decision making power" (p. 110). This shift was not particularly evident among participants in this project who primarily engaged with 'food sovereignty' and, at times, employed notions of 'rights' as a part of food sovereignty narratives. However, further research building upon projects such as Wilson and Levkoe's (2022) is undoubtedly important for unpacking frameworks utilized in Canadian food movement spaces at a larger scale than this project.

range of goals and strategies for food system change. Following calls throughout feminist and decolonial scholarship to decenter the authority of academic knowledge and support the legitimacy of peoples' lived experience (Brown & Strega, 2005; Kovach, 2021; Tuhiwai Smith, 2021), I aim to ground my conceptualizations in my participants' perspectives and engage with food sovereignty as a broad-based emancipatory framework primarily as it relates to Indigenous-settler relations in food movements in the settler-colonial context of Canada.

Indigenous food sovereignty

Within the expansive field of food sovereignty, examinations of food sovereignty as it relates to settler colonialism and Indigenous struggles for self-determination have remained "an afterthought" in the literature (Martens et al., 2016, p. 21), though this area of study has expanded in recent years as scholars have called for greater engagement (Morrison, 2011; Daigle, 2017; Kepkiewicz, 2018). Drawing on critical Indigenous studies, the field of Indigenous food sovereignty has emerged in dialogue with international food sovereignty scholarship, highlighting key similarities and tensions between settler and Indigenous food sovereignty movements in settler colonial contexts. Following scholars including Morrison (2011) and Kepkiewicz (2018), I see Indigenous Food Sovereignty as an essential dimension of Canadian food movements which compels us to consider more deeply what it means to engage in food sovereignty work on stolen lands.

Secwepemc scholar Dawn Morrison (2011; 2020) conceptualizes Indigenous food sovereignty as being grounded in four key principles: food as a sacred gift and responsibility; active participation in Indigenous food-related activities; self-determination of food systems; and Indigenous policy-creation at regional, national, and international levels. Despite its recent appearance in academic literature, Morrison (2011) argues that Indigenous food sovereignty is

not a new concept; rather, it has been a "living reality for thousands of years" and contributed to European settlers' food security since their arrival (p. 97). Similarly, Indigenous scholars Coté (2016), Daigle (2017), and Robin (2019) explore Indigenous food systems from Indigenous perspectives and advance a conceptualization of Indigenous food sovereignty as pluralistic and differentially situated in specific communities' political and cultural traditions. For example, Cidro et al. (2015) discuss the unique challenges that arise in re-building food sovereignty in urban Indigenous communities, where communities may be made up of diverse Indigenous backgrounds and access to cultural foods may be limited. Their findings suggest that re-building Indigenous food sovereignty in an urban context involves the re-learning of cultural knowledge and restoration of ceremonies around food as a way of engaging in reciprocity with the land, often facilitated through Indigenous-led organizations such as Friendship Centres. Looking at Indigenous food initiatives across BC and Alberta, Robin (2019) outlines four elements of Indigenous food sovereignty that emerged through interviews – history, cultural identity, connection to land and water, and relationships – and demonstrates a community process-based methodology for uncovering the contextual meanings of food sovereignty in Indigenous communities.

What international and Indigenous food sovereignty literatures share is a fundamental rejection of the neoliberal capitalist food system and affirmation of diverse expressions of sustainable food practices (Desmarais and Wittman 2014; Daigle, 2017). In line with food sovereignty's open-endedness, Morrison (2011) aims to "avoid the limitations imposed by definitions" by conceptualizing Indigenous food sovereignty as a term that "describes, rather than defines" strategies employed by Indigenous communities to sustain traditional hunting, fishing, farming, gathering, and distribution practices (p. 97). Laforge et al. (2021) explain how

many scholars draw on feminist praxis and participatory methods in their conceptualizations of food sovereignty, aiming to foster an ethic of care for people and the environment through practices such as agroecology. This resonates with Indigenous conceptualizations of food sovereignty, as Robin (2019) discusses, which take shape through caring relationships based on both "the physical connection to the land, where hands meet earth and water; and the connections between people, where hands meet hands, and hands meet hearts" (p. 92). While not all Indigenous communities explicitly use the term 'food sovereignty,' scholars have argued that many Indigenous food practices align with a food sovereignty framework due to their similar underpinnings (Morrison, 2011; Desmarais & Wittman, 2014). Thus, many Indigenous communities have been able to connect with food sovereignty and utilize it in their struggles for self-determination (Coté, 2016).

While there are clear convergences between international and Indigenous food sovereignties, scholars outline the ways that food sovereignty's central concepts map imperfectly onto Indigenous struggles in North America (Desmarais & Wittman, 2014; Coté, 2016; Daigle, 2017). Such clashes deserve greater investigation in food sovereignty scholarship, considering the relative lack of attention to what 'sovereignty' entails for food movements, particularly in Canada (Edelman, 2014; Grey & Patel, 2015). Despite many food sovereignty movements' antagonistic relationship to the state, a key strategy has been to seek policy change at the state level, upholding the nation state as the ultimate sovereign (Desmarais & Wittman, 2014; Edelman, 2014). In contrast, Indigenous food sovereignty movements invoke a "strong version of sovereignty" where food-related struggles are embedded in struggles against the settler colonial state and for self-determination at large (Grey and Patel, 2015, p. 432; Hoover & Mihesuah, 2019). Thus, some scholars have called into question what it means for settler-led

food sovereignty movements in Canada to pursue 'food sovereignty' by claiming rights to define food systems and, thus, rights over lands – lands that have been and continue to be systematically stolen from Indigenous peoples (Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018; Bohunicky et al., 2021). Following Tuck and Yang (2012), Kepkiewicz (2018) argues that settler-led and Indigenous food sovereignty movements are ultimately "incommensurable" (p. 5) due to inherent differences in their visions for food system change.

Informed by critical Indigenous studies, Indigenous food sovereignty scholars problematize food sovereignty's general focus on liberal notions of rights and sovereignty, which they argue center the nation-state and fail to recognize Indigenous peoples' cultural responsibilities and relationships (Morrison, 2011; Coté, 2016; Daigle, 2017). Given sovereignty's conceptual origins in Western ideologies of nationhood, Christianity, and colonialism (Barker, 2005), Coté (2016) calls for scholars to move away from conceptualizations that uphold "assertions of domination, control, and authority over ancestral homelands" and, instead, to "indigenize" the concept by reframing it within Indigenous people's struggles for self-determination (p. 14). Similarly, Daigle (2017) argues that Indigenous understandings of relationships with land, water, animals, and plants as non-human kin "complicate Euro-centric notions of sovereignty that are based on Lockean conceptions of land as property that can be enclosed, owned, and controlled" (p. 300). In her work outlining the struggles of the Algonquins of Barriere Lake against colonial encroachment, Shiri Pasternak (2017) calls into question the legitimacy of settler sovereignty by highlighting the ways it is simultaneously organized and challenged through perpetual struggles over jurisdiction between Indigenous peoples and the settler state. She argues that Barriere Lake unsettles the Canadian state's claims to sovereignty by consistently asserting their jurisdictional authority through their own social and political

formations, spiritual knowledge, and relationships to land (Pasternak, 2017). Such conceptualizations affirm the ways that "multiple sovereignties are lived every day according to a relational politics that is based on kinship relations and interdependent ecologies" and challenge Western discourses that center, or take for granted, the settler state's authority (Daigle, 2017, p. 300).

Scholars also discuss the incompatibilities between Indigenous philosophies and food sovereignty's usage of Western notions of 'rights.' Patel (2009) discusses how 'rights' require a guarantor to be meaningful – a responsibility that is typically assumed to fall to the state, following its claims to being the ultimate sovereign. He argues that state-centric ideas of 'rights' may be at odds with food sovereignty's goals, as it aims to create alternative "spaces of sovereignty" for governing food systems that go beyond the state (p. 668). This resonates with arguments by Indigenous scholars such as Corntassel (2012) and Coulthard (2014) who argue that rights-based discourses are state-centric, as seeking state recognition of Indigenous rights effectively works to uphold the jurisdiction of the settler state over Indigenous sovereignties. Furthermore, many scholars highlight how Indigenous political orders emphasize responsibilities and relationships rather than rights. As Pasternak (2017) explains, Indigenous governance structures are based on responsibility to relations, meaning that the "authority to have authority rests in ontologies of care" (p. 269). Similarly, Coté (2016) and Daigle (2017) argue that rights-based discourses do not account for Indigenous ontologies of respectful relations to human and non-human kin, in which Indigenous food sovereignties are embedded. In sum, Indigenous food sovereignty is about much more than the familiar bundle of rights relating to food production and consumption, where a "'right to define agricultural policy' is indistinguishable from a right to be

Indigenous" and thus a right to fully realized and recognized sovereignty (Grey & Patel, 2015, p. 439; Hoover & Mihesuah, 2019).

Considering these conceptual tensions, scholars call for greater interrogation of settler colonialism as the larger context in which Canadian food sovereignty movements operate. Settler colonialism, as Tuck and Yang (2012) explain, is distinct from other forms of colonialism, as there is no spatial separation of the metropole from the colony. Canada has never undergone a decolonization process, making settler colonialism an ongoing structure and not an event, where the "primary motive" is to access and control territory (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388; Coulthard, 2014). Kyle Whyte (2018) argues that settler societies have strengthened their own "collective continuance" – defined as "a society's overall adaptive capacity" to maintain and reproduce itself without being harmed, of which foodways are a part (p. 7) – at the expense of Indigenous peoples' collective continuance through processes of invasion, displacement, and dispossession. Such settler colonial violence has continued and "shape-shifted" into new forms (Corntassel, 2012, p. 95) involving "force, fraud, and more recently, so-called 'negotiations'" (e.g. title claims, resource development proposals, self-government agreements) (Coulthard, 2014, p. 7). These strategies, Coulthard (2014) argues, make up the "politics of recognition" (p. 3) which ultimately aim to reproduce structures of settler colonial state power over Indigenous lands and sovereignty. Scholars in settler colonial studies argue that these strategies serve to further state agendas of co-optation and assimilation and distract from the larger questions of land restitution and Indigenous resurgence (Corntassel, 2012; Coulthard, 2014). As Tuck and Yang (2012) argue, discourses of 'decolonization' and 'reconciliation' in settler colonial contexts become mere "diversions" and "half steps" without the repatriation of land – "all of the land" – to Indigenous communities, as true decolonization would entail (p. 7, 10).

Scholars conceptualize Indigenous food sovereignty efforts not only in terms of struggles against settler colonialism, but also as pathways towards Indigenous resurgence (Grey & Patel, 2015; Coté, 2016; Daigle, 2017). While they have been careful not to define "resurgence" in any rigid terms, it can be broadly understood as the rebuilding and ongoing enactment of Indigenous political and intellectual traditions, legal systems, language, ceremonial and spiritual frameworks, and forms of social organization (Simpson, 2011, p. 17-18; Coulthard, 2014). By enacting place-based cultural practices in "continuous cycles of renewal" (p. 94), Corntassel (2012) argues that Indigenous peoples can reject state-centric discourses and rhetorical agreements that divert attention away from deeper movements of decolonization. Drawing on Nishnaabeg thought, Leanne Simpson (2011) argues that resurgence "maps a way out of colonial thinking by confirming Indigenous lifeways" and "building a renaissance of mino bimaadiziwin" (p. 31-32), translated as the art of living the good life (p. 26).

Indigenous food sovereignty scholars draw on resurgence scholarship in their analyses of communities' food revitalization efforts. Coté (2016) outlines how her people, the Nuu-Chah-Nulth on west Vancouver Island, have developed a community-led marine management organization guided by their own traditional teachings including "hishuk'ish tsawalk," meaning "the unity of the physical and metaphysical" embodied in relations of respect (p. 12). Similarly, Daigle (2017) discusses Anishinaabe peoples' "everyday acts of resurgence" including the revitalization of fall harvest sharing practices, which are helping to renew and maintain Anishinaabe kinship relations with human and non-human kin (p. 309). Kyle Whyte (2018) quotes Nisqually leader Billy Frank Jr. who says "without the salmon, there is no treaty right" (p. 4), speaking to the ways that salmon conservation, treaty rights, and collective self-determination are inextricably connected in his community's struggles for resurgence. In line with resurgence

frameworks, Indigenous food sovereignty scholars highlight the intersectionality between food, land, culture, and governance that make up Indigenous nationhood, impelling a deeper understanding of 'food sovereignty' as embedded in the entirety of Indigenous lifeways.

In this project, I utilize concepts such as settler colonialism and resurgence to expand on dialogues between critical Indigenous studies and food sovereignty scholarship. Increasingly, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars are exploring how settler colonialism relates to food sovereignty movements in Canada, yet there is a need for further research in this area (Kepkiewicz, 2018; Bohunicky et al., 2021). Many have raised concerns about the ways that settler-led food sovereignty movements can work to uphold settler colonialism by aiming to increase access to stolen land for settler farmers and failing to support Indigenous struggles for sovereignty (Grey & Patel, 2015; Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018; Laforge et al., 2021). As Bohunicky et al. (2021) argue "in a settler colonial context we must ask: access and redistribution for whom, protection from what, and control by who?" (p. 142). Utilizing the concept of settler colonialism is important for analyzing the structural context in which food activism occurs in Canada and for directing my research in exploring whether and how food activists are working to dismantle settler colonialism and support Indigenous movements through their work. As Kepkiewicz (2018) points out, settler colonialism is also an important framework for theorizing colonialism in the Canadian context from critical Indigenous perspectives rather than primarily post-colonial frameworks, as done in much of the food sovereignty literature.

I also foreground Indigenous resurgence as a conceptual framing for exploring how food activists in Toronto see their work in relation to Indigenous struggles for self-determination. In their book *Settler City Limits,* Dorries et al. (2019) argue, following Eve Tuck (2009), that "totalizing" frames of settler colonialism may work to "normalize the destruction of Indigenous

lives and peoples" by pathologizing and reinforcing images of Indigenous suffering, particularly in urban spaces (p. 11). Thus, I find the concept of resurgence helpful for preventing an analytical reduction of Indigenous existence to one of resistance to the settler state, which may work to naturalize the state's jurisdictional power and uphold settler colonialism as an unchangeable structure. My engagement with resurgence scholarship comes out of my ongoing (un)learning process guided by Indigenous scholars who call for a redirection of conceptualizations of Indigenous movements from "trying to transform the colonial outside" to "a flourishment of the Indigenous inside" (Simpson, 2011, p. 17; Corntassel, 2012). I see resurgence as an important framework for settler activists, myself included, to learn about Indigenous struggles for sovereignty on Indigenous terms and consider how to better support them, including through food activism. Finally, operationalizing concepts grounded in critical Indigenous scholarship will also be important for aligning with a decolonial approach by centering Indigenous perspectives that have historically been excluded and silenced in academia (Battiste, 2000; de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018).

Indigenous-settler relations in food movements

Following from dialogues between critical Indigenous studies and food sovereignty literatures, some scholars have begun exploring Indigenous-settler relations in food movements in Canada, calling for settler food activists to take more meaningful action to support Indigenous struggles (Kepkiewicz, 2018; Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018; Bohunicky et al., 2021; Laforge et al., 2021). While research on Indigenous-settler relations in Canadian food movements is still in its nascent stages, studies thus far have outlined ways that food activists in Canada have begun – and must go further in – processes of acknowledgement and (un)learning in efforts to understand settler colonialism and its relationship to food. However, Kepkiewicz (2018) and Bohunicky et

al. (2021) also express concern for the ways that settlers have yet to take concrete action to dismantle settler colonial structures, move beyond state-centric visions of food system change, and support more permanent transfers of power to Indigenous communities.

This area of study takes direction from critical Indigenous studies and Indigenous food sovereignty, as outlined above, to consider what role settler food activists should play in supporting Indigenous struggles for self-determination. Rotz & Kepkiewicz (2018) echo Indigenous food sovereignty scholars' critiques of state-centric discourses, arguing that formation of a national food policy in Canada upholds the settler state's jurisdiction over Indigenous lands. Like others, they call for: food policies that mitigate settler and corporate land grabbing; repatriation of lands to Indigenous communities; and solidarity-building between Indigenous and settler peoples to support diverse and non-extractive food networks (Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018; Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018; Laforge et al., 2021). Following Tuck and Yang (2012), these scholars align with an action-based conceptualization of "decolonization" that "implicates and unsettles everyone" and ultimately hinges on the question of land (p. 7). Kepkiewicz and Dale (2018) argue that landownership is often unchallenged in settler-led food sovereignty movements and call for the returning of land to Indigenous nations as a crucial step towards supporting Indigenous food sovereignty struggles. They argue that returning land would facilitate more meaningful conversations between settlers and Indigenous nations about what human-land relationships and alternative property regimes might be possible, echoing a key question in the food sovereignty literature regarding what "food-sovereign" property relations might look like (Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018, p. 987; Martínez-Torres & Rosset, 2014). Thus, Kepkiewicz (2018) and colleagues argue that repatriation of land to Indigenous communities is a fundamental step towards not only *Indigenous* food sovereignty, but also food sovereignty in

Canada at large, where the former is understood to be foundational to the latter (Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018; Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018). While participants in this project shared that their efforts to support Indigenous struggles are primarily taking place at the community level, dialogues around these larger systemic issues (as discussed in Chapter 6) are important for understanding the context that shapes and constrains food activists' efforts to decolonize at the grassroots.

A key theme in this literature that my project aims to expand upon is what 'solidarity' looks like between Indigenous and non-Indigenous food activists in Toronto. Critical Indigenous scholars have discussed how 'solidarity,' like 'decolonization,' is often overused and disconnected from real action (Snelgrove et al., 2014). As Tuck and Yang (2012) argue, performative statements of solidarity can result in "settler moves to innocence" (p. 9) which relieve settler feelings of guilt and responsibility, uphold settler futurity on stolen lands, and/or fail to acknowledge settler complicity in ongoing settler colonial violence against Indigenous peoples and their lands. Instead, as Boudreau Morris (2017) argues, these problematic 'solidarities' can be replaced by decolonizing ones that center settlers as "sites of uncomfortable change" (p. 469). Similarly, Kepkiewicz (2018) argues that Indigenous-settler solidarities in food sovereignty movements should be based on a recognition that they cannot be unified under a "big tent" of food sovereignty (Patel, 2009, as cited in Kepkiewicz, 2018). As Tuck & Yang (2012) suggest, "opportunities for solidarity lie in what is incommensurable rather than what is common" (p. 28).

Scholars outline some key elements of building Indigenous-settler solidarities in Canada, which I understand in this project to be non-linear and centered on relationship-building. Boudreau Morris (2017) and Davis et al. (2017) argue that non-Indigenous peoples can begin to build meaningful solidarities with Indigenous peoples by deepening their own (un)learning

through self-reflexivity about positionalities, ongoing engagement with difference, and embracing difficult emotions or discomfort (as discussed further in Chapter 4). Self-education by settlers is seen as a key step in relationship-building processes between settler and Indigenous peoples, where it is recognized that Indigenous peoples are not responsible for educating settlers on past and ongoing injustices (Davis et al., 2017; Kluttz et al., 2020). Additionally, Morrison (2020) and Snelgrove et al. (2014) suggest that frameworks grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing such as Indigenous food sovereignty and resurgence can help in settlers' education by reframing conversations in ways that re-center Indigenous worldviews and nationhood.

In relation to calls for greater engagement with self-reflexivity on the part of settlers, settlerhood is another key concept that informs this project. Many scholars have cautioned against self-indulgent forms of self-reflexivity about one's 'settler' positionality and privilege that re-center settler feelings and emotions (Jafri, 2012; de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018; Kepkiewicz, 2018). Instead, scholars emphasize that settlerhood is more about reckoning with one's relational responsibilities to Indigenous peoples and lands. As Snelgrove et al. (2014) discuss, considering questions of settlerhood and how one is positioned on Indigenous lands – whether as an invited guest, visitor, trespasser, immigrant or refugee – is meant to foster "a responsibility-based ethic of truth-telling to identify and act upon new pathways to Indigenous resurgence" (p. 4). As Davis et al. (2017) write, interrogating one's positioning as a settler is an important first step towards "transforming settler consciousness" and building ongoing, active, and lifelong engagement in support of Indigenous resurgence and decolonization (p. 406).

What settlerhood means for different social locations has been a point of tension in the literature. Reflecting on settlerhood as it relates to People of Colour, Jafri (2012) is critical of discussions around "settler privilege," as many People of Colour are settlers but hold no or

limited privilege. She argues for a shift in focus towards "complicity" in order to re-center systems of power, which would demand a conceptualization of settlerhood "not as an object that we possess, but as a field of operations into which we become socially positioned and implicated" (Jafri, 2012, para. 8). Phung (2011) discusses how People of Colour cannot be easily equated with White settlers, as settlers in Canada benefit from and are implicated in colonization to differing degrees. For example, she outlines how settlers of Colour can perpetuate settler colonial narratives of labour and belonging by embracing notions of upward mobility and hard work, thus reinforcing "model immigrants" as "exemplary settlers" (p. 294). Similarly, Sehdev (2011) argues that while People of Colour may contest the state for the ways it oppresses their own communities (e.g. issues around citizenship or migrant labour), they also affirm the authority of the state through migration, which, she writes, reflects a "terrible irony" of leaving "one nation blighted by colonialism only to swear an oath of allegiance to its figurehead" (p. 268). Building on these dialogues, Dhamoon (2015) calls for an intersectional understanding of settlerhood that is not limited to discussions of identities, but goes deeper to explore the varying "degrees of penalty and privilege" that implicate us to confront intersecting systems of domination, including settler colonialism (p. 30).

Following these authors, in this project I understand 'settler' to refer to a broad spectrum of differently-positioned peoples in Canada with different degrees of privilege, complicity, and responsibility. As a White settler myself, I feel a sense of responsibility to respond to calls from Indigenous scholars and non-Indigenous ally scholars, as discussed above, to consider more deeply what my role as a researcher and participant in food activism entails, both in doing this research and beyond. Thus, these discussions on solidarity inform not only my theoretical approach, but also my methodology, as I discuss in the following chapter. My engagement with

the concept of settlerhood is also informed by my participants' discussions of how they understand their own positionalities in interviews (as discussed in Chapter 4), as well as my experience in food activist spaces where conversations around 'settlerhood' are increasingly commonplace among diverse groups of people. I aim to explore the ways that settlerhood informs participants' understandings of their responsibilities to Indigenous peoples in Canada and their efforts to build decolonizing relationships.

Beyond self-education and reflexivity, Snelgrove et al. (2014) argue that Indigenous-settler solidarities must be grounded in actual practices and place-based relationships and approached as incommensurable but not incompatible. They discuss solidarity as a messy process of "ongoing feedback loops" of trust and accountability to one's specific relationships, both human and non-human (Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 19). Thus, solidarity-building is understood to occur at different scales, from self-education to community engagement, which aligns with Corntassel and Gaudry's (2014) pedagogy of "insurgent education" (p. 168). They argue that insurgent education is an important part of building solidarity with Indigenous resurgence movements through practices such as experiential education and restoration of Indigenous protocols and leadership that re-center Indigenous peoples and relationships and foster accountability for taking direct action to dismantle structures of oppression (Corntassel & Gaudry, 2014). These dialogues around relationship-building echo Indigenous scholars' emphasis on relationality as the foundation of Indigenous resurgence (Corntassel, 2012; Pasternak, 2017), as discussed earlier in this chapter. As Indigenous food sovereignty scholars explain, relationships form the basis of food systems, which are also inextricably connected to the entirety of Indigenous societies (Coté, 2016; Daigle, 2017; Whyte, 2018; Settee & Shukla, 2020). In a context of ongoing settler colonial violence and climate change, Whyte (2020)

underscores the importance of repairing and establishing kin relationships between all peoples and the earth, following Indigenous understandings of consent, trust, accountability, and reciprocity. As discussed in Chapter 5, these perspectives resonate with participants' reflections on their efforts to build better relationships with Indigenous peoples through their work.

Conclusion and contribution

In this chapter, I have outlined my theoretical footing for this research as situated within the fields of food sovereignty, critical Indigenous studies, and Indigenous-settler relations in Canadian food movements. In the first section, I discussed the central themes of food sovereignty and outlined my engagement with it as an adaptable framework grounded in anti-capitalist politics and sustainable food practices that informs food movements in Canada. Despite its popularity, food sovereignty has faced criticism in the context of Canada from Indigenous food sovereignty scholars, who argue that its central concepts of rights and sovereignty are complicated by Indigenous ontologies and jurisdictions. Indigenous food sovereignty scholars ground their work in concepts from critical Indigenous studies such as settler colonialism and resurgence and call for greater engagement with Indigenous theorizations in studies of food sovereignty in Canada, as I aim to do in this research. Finally, I outlined emerging scholarship on Indigenous-settler relations in Canadian food movements, in which this project is most clearly situated, where scholars consider the implications of doing food justice work on stolen lands and call for deeper engagement by settlers in building solidarity and supporting Indigenous struggles for food sovereignty and resurgence.

Building on these dialogues, my research will respond to calls for more empirical work on Indigenous-settler relations in food movements in Canada (Daigle, 2017; Kepkiewicz, 2018; Bohunicky et al., 2021). I aim to expand specifically on the work of Lauren Kepkiewicz (2018),

who looks at Indigenous-settler relations in food sovereignty movements at the national level, and Bohunicky, Levkoe, and Rose (2021)'s analysis of how settler food activists in southwestern Ontario and southern Australia are 'confronting' settler colonialism in their work. As Kepkiewicz (2018) argues, settler food sovereignty movements have yet to respond to Indigenous critiques and calls to action, thus reinforcing colonial logics, and that their aims to address systemic inequities cannot be achieved without transforming Indigenous-settler relations by centering Indigenous resurgence in their work, working to transform settler land ownership regimes, and repatriate land to Indigenous communities. Bohunicky et al.'s (2021) findings suggest that most participants are in the early stages of considering what it means to confront settler colonialism, with very few enacting such commitments in actions. They argue that key challenges for settler activists include: fear of discomfort in embracing concepts of settlerhood and complicity; limits of relationship-building efforts grounded in narratives of 'inclusion' rather than fundamental transfers of power to Indigenous peoples; and doubts of organizational capacities to address settler colonialism without higher-level changes in legislation and funding models (Bohunicky et al., 2021).

This research expands upon these studies by exploring how Toronto food activists' understand their work with food organizations in relation to Indigenous-settler solidarities at the city scale. Scholars have called for further research surrounding Indigenous food sovereignty and Indigenous-settler relations in food movements in city contexts, which has thus far been limited (Cidro et al., 2015; Robin (Martens) & Cidro, 2020), despite cities being a key site of Indigenous mobilization and resurgence (Simpson, 2014). Thus, this project contributes to conversations on Indigenous-settler relations in food activism at the city-scale, which remains a gap in the literature. Ultimately, within and beyond academic domains, I aim to contribute to critical

reflection among activists and dialogue within the food sovereignty movement on how to better build solidarity and support Indigenous struggles for land, life, and sovereignty.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I outline my methodology for this project. To begin, I explain my methodological approach as informed by Indigenous and feminist frameworks, including the principles of relational accountability and self-reflexivity. In the following section, I discuss some of the logistical barriers that arose through the ethics review process which shaped and, in some ways, limited the scope of this project. Next, I discuss data collection and analysis, starting with the process of outreach and relationship-building, followed by interviews and content analysis of food organizations' websites. Finally, I outline my plan for knowledge dissemination and the structure of my discussion chapters that follow.

Methodological Framework

The principles that guide my methodology have arisen out of my own learning journey through Indigenous, feminist, and anti-oppressive scholarship that offer compelling critiques of conventional research. Like many other disciplines, geography has been criticized for its Eurocentric and heteropatriarchal underpinnings, including false claims to objectivity and neutrality in research and views of the researcher as a rational authoritative expert (McDowell, 1992; Rose, 1993). Scholars such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2021) have also criticized research for its role in furthering the colonial project through the transplanting of academic institutions from Europe, mapping of 'empty' lands, and circulation of "travellers' tales" of the "Other" that reinforced damaging narratives of Indigenous people and affirmed imperialist discourses of discovery and settlement (p. 8). Such colonial legacies and Eurocentric biases continue to define academia today through, for example, notions of individual intellectual property rights and the researcher/subject binary upheld in ethics reviews and peer-review processes (Gaudry, 2011; Stiegman & Castleden, 2015; Smith, 2021). Adam Gaudry (2011) argues that by working to

further our careers within these structures that primarily serve the academy, all researchers engage in extractive research to some degree. Within this context, I aim to align with Gaudry's (2011) call for researchers to be "insurgent" (p. 116) by continuing to challenge the academy's assumptions and amplifying Indigenous and other marginalized communities' perspectives.

These critical literatures have shaped how I see research and my role and responsibilities as a researcher. Guided by feminist scholarship, I understand knowledges to be situated, multiple, and partial and believe that academic research should serve emancipatory ends and ultimately benefit participants (Rose, 1997; Moosa-Mitha, 2005). Following from my theoretical framework and Indigenous methodologies (Wilson, 2008; Kovach, 2021), I see relationships and responsibilities as the foundation of doing research in a good way, as I will discuss further below. I also see critical reflexivity as an important process for taking ownership of my interpretations, arguments, and mistakes (McDowell, 1992; Rose, 1997), as well as my responsibilities as a White settler to challenge structures of oppression including settler colonialism (Kepkiewicz, 2018). Overall, I align with Brown and Strega's (2005) call for more "research from the margins" that centers subjugated knowledges, affirms what people have to say about their own lives as legitimate, and considers how, for whom, and for what purpose knowledge is created (p. 7).

While I am committed to these principles, I recognize that they are aspirational and by no means fulfilled in this project alone. Doing research that is impactful in these ways within the limits of a Master's degree is undoubtedly partial, particularly as I am a novice scholar who still has much to learn. I take seriously de Leeuw and Hunt's (2018) call on geographers to consider how far 'decolonizing' practices can truly go "in a field which is largely enacted by White scholars living off the spoils of colonialism" (p. 7). As a White settler researcher, I recognize my

privilege that arises from such spoils and my complicity in colonial structures, including that of the academy. I also recognize that, in its current form of a thesis, this project most immediately benefits me as a pathway to obtaining a credential that will support my own professional development. Meanwhile, I take guidance from scholars who maintain that non-Indigenous allies have a responsibility to participate in efforts to decolonize research by creating space for different ways of knowing and supporting greater Indigenous leadership in the academy (Louis, 2007; Kovach, 2021; Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021). As Barker and Pickerill (2020) discuss, while geographers continue to exist within a colonizing context, we can focus on how we might "nourish, create, and mobilize decolonizing processes" (p. 643). My hope is that this research contributes to these goals by building on dialogues within both academic and food movement spaces around settler responsibility and Indigenous-settler solidarities.

Relational Accountability

Relational accountability is a key concept that informs this research, following Indigenous methodologies. While this project is not "Indigenous research" and I do not mean to appropriate Indigenous perspectives as a non-Indigenous person, I center Indigenous research paradigms in an effort to consider how settler peoples can build solidarity with Indigenous peoples in respectful ways. Kovach (2021) invites non-Indigenous researchers to engage with Indigenous methodologies, not to appropriate and simply "add Indigenous and stir" (p. 266), but as a way of unsettling White privilege in the academy, upholding Indigenous ways of knowing as valid, and working towards good relationships. Reflecting on the process of writing about the importance of relationships in research, Shawn Wilson (2008) shares:

> "It feels strange to me to be writing these ideas down. … I feel that any Indigenous person will read this and say to themselves, 'Well, duh, isn't that stating the obvious.' It

> seems so obvious and simple to me, but I wonder if it is the same for non-Indigenous people?" (p. 79)

Wilson (2008) brings up an important point that relationship-building has not historically been foundational to research done by settler researchers, where extractive research has been the norm. Thus, in an academy rooted in Western positivist notions of research, I think settler researchers have an obligation to engage with and (un)learn from Indigenous ways of knowing and, in doing so, consider how our research might contribute to better relations with not only research participants, but also ourselves, our communities, and the earth.

My approach is guided by the concept of "relational accountability," which "implies that all parts of the research process are related, from inspiration to expiration, and that the researcher is not just responsible for nurturing and maintaining this relationship but is also accountable to 'all your relations'" (Louis, 2007, p. 133; Wilson, 2008). This involves building relationships throughout and beyond the research, engaging in acts of reciprocity, and being accountable to the communities one is involved with (Kovach, 2021). Thus, as Wilson (2008) argues, the "methodology is simply the building of more relations" in responsible and respectful ways (p. 79). With all of this said, I recognize that relational accountability is a methodological ideal that cannot be fulfilled in one project, particularly not within the limits of a Master's degree. Rather, this is a lifelong commitment that I hope to have embodied throughout this research and will continue to work towards in the future.

Self-reflexivity

Another key component of fostering relational accountability is to engage in self-reflexivity (Kovach, 2021). Feminist scholars have highlighted the importance of critical reflection on one's positionality within larger power relations that shape research and knowledge

production (McDowell, 1992; Moss, 2000). At the same time, some scholars have warned about the limitations of self-reflexivity when it becomes self-indulgent or fails to connect to a larger agenda of social justice (Kohl & McCutcheon, 2015; de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018). Following Rose (1997), I do not claim to be able to account for the entirety of my self and context; rather, I see self-reflexivity as an incomplete yet generative process for understanding my relationships and responsibilities to the communities associated with this research and beyond.

For this project, self-reflexivity informed the whole process, from my initial interest in these topics, to my theoretical and methodological frameworks, to my engagement with participants in interviews. On a personal level, reflections on my positionality have occurred since my undergraduate studies and continued through graduate seminars and conversations with classmates, family, and friends throughout this research. Additionally, during volunteer sessions, preliminary outreach, and during interviews, discussions of positionality occurred regularly between me and other settler food activists. The informality of many of these conversations fostered what Kohl & McCutcheon (2014) call "kitchen table reflexivity" (p. 3), which created an open space for us to engage with discomfort and unpack our positionality in relation to structures of power – something that I saw as crucial to building relationships with participants (and family and friends) and creating space for more critical conversations in the future. Following Kepkiewicz (2018), engaging in self-reflexivity as a White settler researcher in so-called Canada helps me think through my responsibilities to hold myself and other settlers accountable for challenging settler colonialism and supporting Indigenous movements.

Engaging in self-reflexivity also brings up another principle that guides this research, which is to reverse the gaze by focusing on food activists more generally, and thus predominantly "settler" peoples of diverse backgrounds. This choice is informed by the

methodologies of Kepkiewicz (2018) and Bohunicky et al. (2021), whose work this project aims to build upon at the city scale, as well as anthropologist Laura Nader's call to "study up" and return the gaze to the "culture of power rather than the culture of the powerless" (as cited in Tallbear, 2014, p. 4). While this statement reflects an oversimplified binary, it resonates with my view that settlers (including myself) have a responsibility to address structures of oppression which they benefit from and are complicit in. Kepkiewicz (2018) argues that reversing the gaze in the context of food activism is not as straightforward as studying "up," but rather occurs "within or across" diverse food activist communities, where individuals are differently situated along varied axes of power (p. 35) – a point that becomes particularly important in an urban context. Rather than placing further labour on Indigenous food activists to educate settlers, I aim to focus on settler food activists to explore how peoples with diverse positionalities understand their role in supporting Indigenous sovereignty. Meanwhile, there is a risk in centering settler voices and taking space from Indigenous voices (de Leeuw & Hunt, 2018). Thus, my analysis centers critical Indigenous perspectives on food sovereignty (e.g. Morrison, 2011; Daigle, 2017) and settler colonialism and resurgence (e.g. Simpson, 2011; Corntassel, 2012).

Ethics Review Process

The ethics review process imposed several delays[8] and requirements on this research that ended up limiting my sample and overall scope, which I outline here for the sake of transparency and critical reflection. Following my submission in May 2022, I received the first round of

[8] Administrative delays greatly impacted my research design. I submitted my ethics review application on May 10, 2022. Prior to this, my cohort was informed by a representative from York University's Office of Research Ethics that the review process would take no more than 20 business days and, thus, I submitted my application with plans to start fieldwork in mid- or late-June, depending on revisions. I heard back with a first round of revisions on July 13, 2022 – 47 business days after I submitted. When I inquired with my program about this issue, I was informed that this delay was due to administrative issues within the Faculty of Graduate Studies that delayed submission of my entire cohort's applications to the ethics office. After submitting my first revisions, I did not hear back from the ethics office until August 25, 2022, at the end of the formal fieldwork period determined by my program.

revisions from the ethics office. Although my project did not aim to engage with a particular Indigenous community, the committee viewed my research as "Indigenous research" and requested that I submit a "Checklist for Researchers: Research Involving Indigenous People" to be reviewed by the Indigenous Research Ethics Board. While many of the questions on the form did not apply in my case, I submitted the form on the advice of my committee and reiterated what had been stated in my initial application: that this project aimed to reverse the gaze and focus on food activists more generally – who may or may not identify as Indigenous, and would likely predominantly be settlers – drawing on concepts from critical Indigenous studies in its analysis. While I awaited approval, I carried on with my volunteering at two organizations.

At the end of the summer fieldwork period, I received a second round of revision requests. One major request was made: that I recruit participants at organizations where I was not volunteering to avoid "potential conflict of interest" and "undue influence." This contradicted well-established research methods commonly employed by social science researchers such as purposive and snowball sampling (Denscombe, 2014). As my committee pointed out and as I have witnessed throughout my studies, many Master's students volunteer at NGOs to build relationships and eventually recruit participants for their research. This also conflicted with my own ethical commitment to centering relationship-building in my methodology.

In light of these revision requests, I faced a conundrum of how best to move forward in order to complete my degree in the time I had left and whether I would be able to conduct research following the methodological principles outlined in the previous section. My committee and I decided to simplify my methodology by removing participant observation[9] and agreed to

[9] By this point, the opportunity for participant observation had mostly passed, as volunteering slowed with the close of the summer season when food organizations are most active. My committee and I decided I should focus on interviews for data collection to ensure that I, a Master's student in what should be a 2-year program, would be able to complete my thesis work and graduate.

the committee's request for me to seek permission from organizations prior to contacting staff members to request interviews.[10] The ethics office provided me with conditional approval on these terms, giving me 3 months to obtain and submit written permission from the organizations.

This limited my research in a few ways. The added requirement of obtaining organizational permission delayed my fieldwork even further, as I now had an additional step of outreach to conduct prior to interview requests.[11] Furthermore, this new requirement led to confusion and potential distrust within the relationships I had been building with activists all summer. Some staff communicated to me that they were confused about why this requirement was necessary, as I had previously explained that my research did not aim to focus on any one organization, but rather sought to explore activists' perspectives on Toronto's food movement more broadly.[12] I also worried that this revision may have led some activists to question my integrity as a researcher, as it contradicted standard ethical protocols that we had already discussed (i.e. contacting individuals directly and obtaining their consent with the informed consent form).

Finally, this requirement limited my sample significantly, as I could no longer engage in the standard practice of snowball sampling outside of the organizations I had received permission from. While one could argue that I could have reached out to other organizations where I did not currently volunteer and request permission to contact team members, in practice

[10] Through conversations with peers and faculty, it became clear that the request to obtain organizational permission prior to contacting individuals was not one made of other students in the same position as me, both past and present.

[11] As food organizations have a lot on their plate, communications outside of their current work can often be slow. Therefore, the ethics committee should have communicated this request to me in the first set of revisions, as I had stated from the outset my intentions to participate as a volunteer at these organizations and snowball sample from there. As expected, it took several weeks of emails and follow-ups before directors got back to me with their written permission in October. Interviews began in November – 4 months later than initially planned.

[12] It is worth noting that these organizations have years of experience engaging with students and researchers and, thus, are very familiar with standard ethical research practice. The organizational permission revision was seen as unnecessary according to organizations' own ethics procedures for researchers, as the project was not proposed as a case study of the organization and all identifiable information would be removed in the final writing.

this would be unrealistic. My project was now on an extremely condensed timeline after ethics delays of approximately 4 months and, as I had learned through my own experience and in my preliminary outreach, food organizations are typically overwhelmed with work and, thus, unlikely to reply without a relationship already in place. This revision effectively limited my sample to the two organizations I was already connected with, which has led this research to be less representative of the city's food movement as a whole than I originally hoped for.[13]

As a novice researcher, the ethics process was difficult to navigate. It seemed that the ethics committee misunderstood my project in two major ways. The first misunderstanding was that this was 'Indigenous research.' As discussed earlier in this chapter, my research design was based on an ethical commitment to reverse the gaze and hold settlers, including myself, accountable to our responsibilities to think through ways to take action to support Indigenous struggles for sovereignty. Secondly, the ethics committee seemed to misunderstand well-established practices of community-based research, which often entails building relationships by working with organizations in related fields and recruiting participants through those relationships.

I include this discussion in an effort to be transparent about my research design and the ways it was shaped by the ethics review process. In my budding academic career, I have gathered that many students and faculty face issues with the ethics review process and that inconsistencies and contradictions like those discussed above can make doing 'ethical' research in practice quite difficult. Stiegman and Castleden (2015) discuss how the ethics process often entails exhaustive and repetitive revisions of minute details, requiring researchers to direct significant energy into ethics revisions that should ideally be directed towards community engagement and relationship-

[13] While I was only able to interview people from two organizations, many participants did share reflections on other food activist work in Toronto that they were involved in, making the scope of this research slightly larger.

building. Thus, they argue that, at times, conducting community-based participatory research "in a good way" seems to occur "despite, not because of, the TCPS2" (Stiegman & Castleden, 2015, p. 2). For those of us who are novices trying our best to learn how to do research in a good way, these issues with the ethics review process deserve greater attention in order to support more community-centered and emancipatory research in the future.

Outreach and Relationship-building

In the preliminary phase of developing this project, I reached out to some scholars and activists involved in food activist work in Toronto who I had seen speak at webinars, whose work I had read, or who had been recommended to me by my committee members. I wanted to speak directly with members of Toronto's food activist community about my preliminary research questions and hear their perspectives on what they saw as the most important directions for further research. As this project is guided by participatory and relational principles, I see these early conversations as important attempts to incorporate activists' insights into my research design and create a project that would benefit Toronto food activist communities.

In these preliminary conversations, activists offered advice that informed my research design. They confirmed some of the key findings discussed in the literature on Indigenous-settler solidarity in Canadian food movements: that collaboration and solidarity-building between settlers and Indigenous peoples in Toronto's food movement are in early stages and there remains much work to be done, including research exploring the challenges and opportunities for strengthening these efforts. They also highlighted the importance of building relationships with food activist communities prior to requesting interviews and that interviewees should be compensated – a point underlined as particularly important in a field where budgets are typically strained and workers often underpaid and overworked. Finally, they urged me to reach out

primarily to settler activists in an effort to prevent further labour being placed on Indigenous people to educate settlers on their responsibilities in addressing settler colonialism and supporting Indigenous struggles for land and sovereignty in food movement spaces.

In June 2022, I began volunteering at two food organizations in Toronto where I participated in a range of activities such as harvesting vegetables, helping run farm stands, doing food preparation in community kitchens, and serving community meals. Volunteering and contributing to the work of the organizations was a key factor in building relationships with community members. This relationship-building was foregrounded for the sake of not only meeting potential participants, but also for my own personal interest in getting more involved in food activist work in the city. It was important to me to foreground relational accountability, as discussed above, by participating as a volunteer and building respectful relationships within these communities, prior to asking for contributions to my project. Following feminist scholars, I reject conventional methodological arguments that the researcher can and should strive to be 'objective' by keeping research subjects "at a distance" (McDowell, 1992, p. 405). I understand myself to be personally invested in the research as an activist and see my contribution to the work of food activists as an important act in aligning with decolonizing methodologies and preventing my research from being extractive (Smith, 2021; Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021).

Data Collection and Analysis

Interviews

My choice to focus on food organizations in Toronto was primarily logistical. While there are certainly activists involved in food systems change work who are not associated with food organizations, I chose them as a starting point for establishing initial contact with people involved in food justice work as well as the focal point for conducting content analysis. I

understand the category of "food activist" in non-rigid terms and thus my criteria for recruiting interviewees was intended to be open-ended, such as staff and volunteers associated with food centres and community gardens, urban farmers, food policymakers, or academics connected to food activist communities. Following Charles Levkoe (2014), I understand food movements as "networks of networks" made up of collaboration across sectors and scales with common goals of achieving more equitable and sustainable food systems (p. 398). However, as discussed, sampling for interviews ended up being limited to the two organizations where I had received organizational permission due to ethics revisions. Thus, rather than being representative of the whole of Toronto's food movement 'network,' this research provides partial insights that hopefully inspire further research.

Using a purposive snowball sampling method, I emailed food activists I had met while volunteering to request interviews, including the list of interview questions and informed consent form for them to look over. Initially, I reached out to people who I had worked with most frequently, who I had the strongest relationships with, and who I felt understood the nature of my project after conversations we had while digging for beets or chopping onions. While the project aims to reverse the gaze by focusing primarily on settler food activists, it was also important that I reach out to Indigenous team members in hopes of including their perspectives. However, the two Indigenous staff members who had initially agreed to participate did not end up replying to my follow-up emails. This was completely understandable, as other participants explained, due to the intense workload of these individuals who were leading Indigenous-centered initiatives at the organizations. While it would have been ideal to include Indigenous voices in this project, I had to conclude data collection by mid-December and move on to analysis and writing due to the condensed timeline I now faced following ethics review delays.

Most people I reached out to were interested in participating and echoed the project's importance to their work. However, a few people declined on the grounds that they did not feel comfortable nor possess the knowledge to speak on these topics. I respected this choice and did not push back on this. I bring them up here, however, as I think these moments are important reflections of conflicting understandings of settler responsibility to confront settler colonialism and build solidarity with Indigenous peoples within food movement spaces. On the other hand, I understand that some people may have declined in order to avoid taking the 'mic' from Indigenous activists to talk about these issues. For the most part though, people responded in agreement with calls for non-Indigenous peoples to take responsibility to think through Indigenous-settler solidarity in food movement work. Finally, my role as a volunteer likely influenced who was more responsive to interview requests based on the level of rapport that had been built. Naturally, some relationships became stronger than others and this likely played a part in how well people understood my project, how comfortable they were speaking with me, and, eventually, how openly they shared with me in interviews.

I conducted interviews with 9 participants in total; 7 were staff members and 2 were volunteers. All participants identified as non-Indigenous. While discussions of identity often came up organically in interviews, I tried to let participants take the lead in expressing their perspectives on the fraught concept of 'settlerhood' as it relates to their identity, as will be discussed further in Chapter 4. That being said, based on my understanding of settlerhood as a spectrum of non-Indigeneity, as outlined in the previous chapter, my sample included 2 White settlers and 7 settlers of Colour. The demographic makeup of my sample was based on who I was able to build relationships with and, thus, not intentional. Based on my experience in food activist spaces, my sample is reflective of the diversity within Toronto's food movement.

Interviews were conducted between November and December 2022 both in-person and on zoom. In order to be as accommodating as possible and build good relationships, I deferred to the participant's choice of time and, if in-person, location, whether at their workplace or a coffee shop near their residence. Activists are a demographic that tend to be underpaid and overworked, particularly in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Because of this and my commitment to providing fair compensation for people's time,[14] each participant was given a $25 honorarium in the form of a gift card to a business of their choosing, funded by York University's Academic Excellence Fund. I also engaged in some pre-interview conversations, paid for participants' coffee when interviews were conducted at a cafe, and, in one case, assisted a participant in writing and editing a statement for their own community garden project. Following repeated calls throughout anti-oppressive scholarship to engage in non-extractive research (Brown & Strega, 2005; Gaudry, 2011; Kovach, 2021), I saw these acts as important for centering relationship-building in my research by communicating openly, demonstrating my thanks, and engaging in acts of reciprocity.

Interviews were between 30-60 minutes[15] and participants were asked a set of semi-structured questions,[16] focusing on how activists understand their work in relation to decolonization and reconciliation, and what challenges and opportunities exist in strengthening Indigenous-settler solidarity within Toronto's food movement. Interviews were recorded on Zoom (online) or my Zoom H6 audio recorder (in-person). I aimed to conduct interviews in a way that was conversational, co-creative, and reflexive, where it was "more of a collaboration

[14] This also aligns with conversations happening within Toronto's food movement about fair compensation – e.g. FoodShare recently announced that they will offer compensation to job interviewees (Westoll, 2022).
[15] As I was flexible with the length of interviews in order to accommodate participants' schedules, some interviews were longer than others and, thus, went deeper content-wise.
[16] See Appendix 1 for a list of interview questions.

than an interrogation" (McDowell, 2010, p. 8). Kovach (2021) argues that "when we ask others to share stories, it is necessary to share our own" (p. 159). In an effort to participate in reciprocal knowledge-sharing, I began each interview by self-locating and outlining my motivations for this research and occasionally shared personal reflections as interviews went on. Inspired by Kovach's (2021) "story as method" (p. 165), it was important to me that interviews were flexible and somewhat unstructured in order to allow interviewees the space to discuss what they thought was important. One limitation of a non-rigid structure was that, at times, interviews went in tangential directions and I had to try to refocus without imposing too much of a structure on participants. However, overall I think this openness helped to maintain a safe space for generative conversations around sometimes difficult topics. Some participants reached out afterwards to thank me for facilitating a conversation that gave them space to engage in reflexive learning outside of the busyness of work. Following Thambinathan and Kinsella (2021), interviews were conducted in a way that aimed "to share power with participants, and to create spaces which are safe for mutual exchange and honest dialog" (p. 3) around our common interest in social and environmental justice that underpins both food activist work and this research.

Interviews were transcribed and then coded thematically in NVivo. I chose to utilize NVivo due to its coding capabilities, which enabled me to first code the interviews in detail and then analyze and organize codes as larger themes emerged. After coding in detail, there were 54 nodes which I then grouped into the larger themes that are discussed in this thesis. For example, I found that participants' discussions of "settlerhood" were often connected to "engaging with discomfort," which were initially coded separately and then grouped under the larger theme of "(un)learning." For any codes that fell outside of the major themes, I went through them carefully to make sure there were no other important points I had missed. Transcriptions, audio

files, and the NVivo project were stored on my computer in an encrypted folder and backed up on an encrypted external hard drive.

Content analysis

Although interviews were my primary data source, I also conducted content analysis of Toronto food organizations' websites to gain a better understanding of how organizations are (or are not) taking up questions of decolonization or solidarity with Indigenous peoples. Due to time constraints, this component of the research was limited to a simple frequency count across organizations' websites and is by no means comprehensive. The goal was to get an impression of the "priorities portrayed through the text" in organizations' public digital media (Denscombe, 2014, p. 284). First, I consolidated a list of active food organizations in Toronto by cross-referencing between three main websites: Toronto Food Policy Council's (n.d.) *Food by Ward* resource; Community Food Centres Canada's (2022) list of partners; and Google Maps searches for keywords such as "food organization," "urban farm," and "food centre." My criteria for what I considered a 'food organization' was based on organizations that had a multi-pronged approach to food programming, in line with a food sovereignty approach to food activism. In other words, I included organizations that were not limited to only emergency food services (e.g. a food bank), but also provided services like community kitchens, educational programs, or community gardens.

I ended up with a sample of 17 organizations for content analysis. For each organizations' website, I tracked the frequency across each webpage of anything related to Indigenous perspectives, leadership, or initiatives across each website. I first scanned each page manually and then conducted Command-F searches on each page for terms including "Indigenous," "first nation," "Mississauga," "Huron Wendat," "Anishinaabe,"

"Haudenosaunee," "decolonization," and "reconciliation." Using Microsoft Excel,[17] I kept track of the frequency for each website and also wrote notes about the level of engagement with Indigenous perspectives (e.g. a website with only a land acknowledgement, or one with both a land acknowledgement and a page dedicated to an Indigenous community garden).

Knowledge sharing

Prior to the ethics review delays, I intended to allocate time after finishing a draft of my thesis to seek participant feedback prior to defending. Following Kovach (2021), I originally planned on compiling documents for each participant highlighting sections where I draw on their interview in order to give participants the opportunity to provide feedback and correct any misinterpretations. I was inspired by decolonizing methodologies that call for participants' consent to be given not only at the start of the research process, but continually at each stage of the research process (Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021). However, due to time constraints following ethics review delays of 4 months, I had to reassess how best to complete my workload in the given timeframe and simplify my methodology by removing this component. That being said, should I seek to publish any parts of this research after graduating, I will send participants drafts and ask for feedback and consent prior to finalizing any piece of writing for publication.

For knowledge dissemination, I am inspired by Adam Gaudry's (2011) piece on "insurgent research." Gaudry (2011) is critical of the tendency for researchers' responsibilities to be oriented primarily towards the academy and calls for research to be action-oriented where alternative forms of dissemination outside of academia are prioritized. Of course, as a graduate

[17] Although NVivo could have been used for this process, I did not have a deep understanding of the software nor access to training that covered website content analysis. I also had some technical issues with the software on my MacBook which NVivo customer service was not able to resolve. Thus, I thought it safer to stick to a manual option, as my content analysis was very simple and only intended to provide some brief context for my primary data source which was interviews.

student seeking a Master's degree, my responsibilities are partially to conform to the academy's expectations. However, like relationship-building, I will strive to prioritize participants as a key audience for knowledge dissemination and aim to communicate my findings to participants in contextually relevant ways. After successfully defending my thesis, I plan to provide briefing documents to participants outlining my research findings and ask if there are additional forms of dissemination that might be helpful to their work.

Structure of Discussion Chapters

In the following chapters, I will discuss my findings through three main themes: (un)learning, relationship-building, and systemic change. I have made these divisions by chapter for the purpose of clarity in writing and to align as closely as possible with how participants discussed Indigenous-settler solidarity-building. Following participants' reflections on Indigenous-settler solidarity-building, these themes loosely follow a scalar progression from micro to macro, yet I do not understand these processes to fall so neatly into these boundaries in reality. Rather, I see these processes as informing one another across scales in non-linear ways. For instance, (un)learning may occur primarily at the individual level which may lead to larger shifts in collective consciousness and possibly policy action, but could also be cultivated by more systemic shifts such as sweeping changes in primary education curriculums that reshape the grounds of settler education. While many participants expressed that one area (i.e. relationship-building in food activist communities) remained their primary focus, they also underlined that solidarity-building cannot occur in isolation and ultimately requires action and collaboration across scales.

CHAPTER 4: (UN)LEARNING TOWARDS SOLIDARITY

Introduction

In recent years, scholars and activists have called on settler-led food sovereignty movements in Canada to take action to confront settler colonialism and support Indigenous struggles for sovereignty (Morrison, 2011; Daigle, 2017; Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018). Scholars have pointed to settler education as a crucial component of building Indigenous-settler solidarities and call for non-Indigenous people to make greater efforts to unpack settler complicity, privilege, and responsibilities to Indigenous communities (Davis et al., 2017; Boudreau Morris, 2017). As Kepkiewicz (2018) and Bohunicky et al. (2021) point out, there is a need for further empirical work examining whether and how settler food activists are responding to these calls and engaging in the (un)learning necessary for developing meaningful Indigenous-settler solidarities and decolonizing food movement work.

Following Davis et al. (2017), this chapter aims to explore the extent to which settler food activists are "both engaging with and centering Indigenous knowledge and narratives (learning) while simultaneously deconstructing settler identities (unlearning)" to challenge settler colonialism and support Indigenous resurgence (p. 409). My discussions with participants focused primarily on the process rather than the sources of their learning, which is undoubtedly a direction for further research. However, to provide some brief context, participants discussed their (un)learning as being facilitated primarily by engaging with Indigenous perspectives through both written sources and in-person interaction with Indigenous community members in their work (discussed further in the following chapter). I understand these sources of learning to include (but not be limited to): literature, academic research, and other written work by Indigenous authors; Indigenous-led and centered media such as TV shows or podcasts;

educational events either connected to or outside food movement work; personal reflection on positionality; involvement in political activism; and personal and professional relationships with Indigenous peoples. Finally, I would also add that learning about treaty agreements and Indigenous legal traditions are a crucial element of settler education, yet remain a significant area of ignorance for many settlers – myself included. While treaties were a notable silence among participants' responses in this project,[18] many scholars have identified settler ignorance around treaty relations as a key problem for Indigenous-settler relations that must be partially addressed by settler learning around the ways treaties have been repeatedly violated by the settler state and our obligations to specific Indigenous nations and agreements that govern the places we live (PFPP, 2011; Sehdev, 2011; Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018; Robin et al., 2023).

In this chapter, I explore how nine food activists in Toronto's food movement are engaging in (un)learning[19] processes as a part of their efforts to build solidarity with Indigenous peoples. First, I outline participants' reflections on the importance of settler education and the need for settlers to take responsibility for their own learning, as discomforting as it may be. Second, I explain how participants' discussed the process of unpacking their own settler positionalities and experiences of oppression and displacement, which they underscored as a key site for building deeper understandings of complicities and privilege and fostering mutual understanding as a basis for Indigenous-settler solidarities. Finally, I discuss participants'

[18] I briefly touch on treaty relations in Chapter 6. However, as this was not a focus of participants' reflections, this project does not address this topic in a significant way. Thus, whether and how settlers in Canada are engaging with treaty might be a site for further research.

[19] In line with many participants' perspectives, I do not understand (un)learning to be a linear or individualized process. Rather, I understand (un)learning, relationship-building, and systemic changes (as discussed in the following chapters) to be iterative and generative of one another across scales and time. These divisions by chapter have been made solely for clarity in writing.

reflections on the value of learning from Indigenous knowledges for unlearning settler biases and reimagining relationships to land.

Based on participants' responses, I argue that many Toronto food activists are making significant efforts to self-educate, understand their responsibilities as settlers, and learn from Indigenous perspectives. Following scholarship on Indigenous-settler solidarities (Corntassel & Gaudry, 2014; Davis et al., 2017; Kluttz et al., 2020), I understand these (un)learning processes to be crucial to supporting relationship-building and solidarity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. At the same time, it is crucial that this learning translates into tangible actions by settlers to dismantle colonial structures – actions that, as illustrated in the following chapters, have started to emerge within food movement spaces but are limited due to systemic barriers. While it is evident that there is room for settler education to go deeper, this research suggests that food activists in Toronto are beginning to respond to calls to actions from activists and scholars to think more deeply about the role that food activism might play in challenging colonialism and supporting Indigenous struggles for resurgence.

Settlers' responsibility to self-educate and engage with discomfort

Settler education was a key theme repeatedly emphasized by participants as important to Indigenous-settler solidarity-building. Participants highlighted the need for settler food activists to learn about Indigenous cultures, food systems, and historical and contemporary issues faced by Indigenous communities, particularly in a context where mainstream education has largely excluded such topics from formal curriculums. Most participants also emphasized settlers' responsibility to take initiative in furthering their own education. As Participant 7 discussed, settlers should not place labour on Indigenous peoples to educate them, as this could take attention away from Indigenous communities' focus on their own healing:

> They don't have time... Even myself, dealing with anti-Black racism, I can't be teaching racist people about racism – No. You gotta figure that out for yourself. You wouldn't ask somebody in a relationship of ritual physical abuse and violence to sit down in anger management with their abuser to help their abuser through whatever they need to be helped through to stop abusing them, you know?

Here, Participant 7 highlighted a problem pointed out by many scholars that Indigenous people – and other marginalized groups – are often burdened with educating non-Indigenous (particularly White) people about topics such as racism and colonialism (Kepkiewicz, 2018; Kluttz et al., 2020; Bohunicky et al., 2021). In doing this, Kluttz et al. (2020) explain, there is a danger of re-centering Whiteness when we ask "our Indigenous colleagues, leaders, organizers and activists for direction at every turn, monopolizing their time and energy" (p. 63). I would add that this also de-centers settlers from their involvement in colonialism in what Tuck and Yang (2012) call a 'move to innocence,' where settlers evade responsibility for their own (un)learning. Meanwhile, as Davis et al. (2017) argue, there is a tension in trying to balance "on the one hand, learning from Indigenous peoples, knowledge and pedagogies, and on the other, settlers taking responsibility for their own education" (p. 407). Thus, there is a need to take care in respectfully incorporating Indigenous perspectives without placing the burden on Indigenous peoples.

Many participants emphasized (un)learning as a first step for settlers to take in building solidarity with Indigenous peoples. Participant 7 highlighted the importance of taking responsibility for individual learning and healing in order to approach relationships with Indigenous peoples in a respectful and informed way:

> Even though there does need to be a collective conversation, … the Indigenous community needs time for its healing and the colonizers need time for their own learning

> and decolonizing because it's their system. They created it. They are the ones that got to take it apart and really understand it.

Participant 7 pointed to the need for settlers to deconstruct what Davis et al. (2017) call "settler consciousness," made up of "the narratives, practices and collective Canadian identity that are based solidly in a foundation of national historical myths … [which] pervade all institutions and all spheres of society" (p. 401). Participant 7 saw this as a necessary step for settlers to embark upon prior to building relationships with Indigenous peoples, as a way of taking responsibility ourselves for understanding and dismantling settler colonialism. Drawing on the protocols developed by the Indigenous Circle of the PFPP (2010), Kepkiewicz (2018) urges settler food activists to approach relationships with Indigenous peoples with an understanding of settler colonialism as an ongoing structure and the ways it has impacted Indigenous peoples' food sovereignty. By developing a shared understanding that "everyone is to blame, and everyone is responsible" for reconciling past injustices (p. 107), Morrison (2011) suggests that more meaningful cooperation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples can occur.

Among participants, there was a general consensus that settler food activists have a responsibility to take initiative in furthering their own education. As many of their responses reflect, this is not to say that settler education occurs only at an individual level; rather, (un)learning was articulated by participants as both an internal journey and a collective process that occurs within and through the building of community relationships. Additionally, while many viewed education as a first step, some underlined that learning is a non-linear process and, in the words of Participant 1, "there's no wiping our hands of it. It's ongoing and it's forever."

A key theme in participants' reflections on (un)learning was the idea of engaging in uncomfortable conversations about settler colonialism, reconciliation, and settler positionalities.

When asked what steps they or their organizations are taking to build solidarity with Indigenous peoples, some participants discussed efforts to engage in difficult conversations with colleagues about these topics. As Participant 1 explained, within their organization, "it's been a lot of reckoning within ourselves" to think through food activists' role in reconciliation. They explained how team meetings have centered on not just "say[ing] the words," but making space to more deeply consider what it means to grow food on stolen land. "I think it's been humbling to say the least," they reflected, "because some conversations have gotten super uncomfy."

The discomfort felt in engaging with these topics was expressed by participants as an important emotion for settlers to sit with. Participant 8 shared that they harbour a "fear of making mistakes and fear of doing the wrong thing or saying the wrong thing," making the process "of engaging with these [topics] stressful." However, they also acknowledged their responsibility to engage in these conversations as a settler: "I'm not the one who has gone through trauma so I shouldn't be complaining that it's stressful." Participant 8's feelings of uneasiness are reflective of a common challenge faced by settlers in learning about settler colonial violence and its ongoing impacts on Indigenous communities, which I have also experienced and witnessed myself. After all, "directly and indirectly benefiting from the erasure and assimilation of Indigenous peoples is a difficult reality for settlers to accept" and "the misery of guilt makes one hurry toward any reprieve" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 9). Participant 1 discussed how settlers' own egos and fear can often prevent more transformative conversations, as it is difficult

> to hold words that feel scary to us. 'Settler' isn't a great word, but it's also a truthful word. … The ways that people get defensive and fired up really quickly – that's the biggest challenge. … I really see the ways that there are hard blocks and the hard blocks are so much more people's own fear than it is anything being said.

These responses highlight the importance of learning to navigate discomfort in our education as settlers (and in building relationships with Indigenous peoples, as discussed in the following chapter) – a key point highlighted throughout the literature on Indigenous-settler solidarity (e.g. Corntassel & Gaudry, 2014; Boudreau Morris, 2017; Davis et al., 2017; Bohunicky et al., 2021). Corntassel and Gaudry (2014) argue that a "pedagogy of discomfort" can be a productive approach to "educating those who have become far too comfortable and complacent about living on stolen Indigenous homelands" (p. 168-169). They argue that discomforting acts of "truth-telling" promote greater awareness of colonial realities, settler complicities and accountability to Indigenous peoples, "motivating some to make amends and to be responsive to Indigenous struggles for decolonization" (Corntassel & Gaudry, 2014, p. 169). Many participants reflected on their own education as being facilitated by such discomforting learning moments. Additionally, some participants also expressed that their decision to participate in this project was connected to their motivation to engage more deeply with difficult topics in order to support solidarity-building within food activist communities. Thus, I argue that discomfort is a useful tool for settlers to explore "highly contextualized, contingent, and specific knowledge of similarities and differences with others over time … to create an environment of decolonizing solidarity" (Boudreau Morris, 2017, p. 457).

Unpacking settler positionalities: Displacement, solidarity, and complicity

Many participants underlined the discomforting process of unpacking their positionality as a starting point for (un)learning. In interviews, these discussions typically began with participants' reflecting on whether and how they understand themselves as settlers. While many grappled with the complexity of their positionalities, as discussed further below, Participants 1,

3, 4, 5, 8, and 9 all underlined their positions as settlers and saw this learning as important for fostering solidarity with Indigenous peoples in their work.

Participant 2, on the other hand, did not understand their positionality to be a focus in their work or self-perception: "I wouldn't say I'm constantly thinking about that, or that it's centered in my work, or in the way that I think about myself. But certainly, I think it is true. It's just, um, it's such a different problem." This response reflects a dominant view held by settlers where colonialism is not understood as connected to settlers' lives, but rather seen as an "Indigenous issue" (Kepkiewicz, 2018, p. 81). Likewise, Robin et al. (2023) argue that similar perceptions of Indigenous food sovereignty erode the responsibility of settler peoples, governments, and institutions to support such efforts. Participant 2's response also demonstrates an understanding of their work in regenerative farming as separate from Indigenous struggles for sovereignty – a notion that many scholars have identified as a problem within settler-led food sovereignty movements, which frequently overlook the ways that food movements uphold settler colonialism and fail to center Indigenous sovereignty as foundational to food sovereignty more broadly (Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018; Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018; Bohunicky et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Participant 2 explained that their organization has been making increasing efforts to support Indigenous leadership and have conversations about settlerhood and colonialism in which Participant 2 participates, which suggests that their learning journey is continuing to progress.

Overall, my impression was that most participants[20] were thinking deeply about their positionalities and responsibilities to Indigenous peoples, while a couple participants were in

[20] It is worth reiterating that this project likely over-represents settlers who are engaging in deeper (un)learning, given that they were made aware of the nature of the research prior to agreeing to participate. Importantly, a few White settler activists declined or canceled interviews out of feeling "uncomfortable" speaking on these topics.

earlier stages of this (un)learning process. By noting potential 'stages' in participants' learning, I do not mean to suggest that (un)learning is a linear process nor that there are 'levels' in one's learning that can be assessed (and, if so, not by me). Following solidarity scholars, I see settler education as a cyclical, lifelong, and always incomplete process (Davis et al., 2017; Hiller, 2017; Kluttz et al., 2020). However, here, I mean to point to the ways that our learning journeys progress as we learn more, sometimes through moments of 'awakening' or 'opening up' to new ways of thinking that lay the foundation for deeper reflection to occur. Ultimately though, I recognize that our learning is always iterative and incomplete with "cycles of awareness and unawareness, unsettlement and re-settlement, recognition and misrecognition, knowing and unknowing" (Hiller, 2017, p. 429). With this in mind, I now turn to participants' reflections on (un)learning in relation to unpacking settler positionality.

Consistent with dialogues in scholarship exploring settlerhood (e.g. Phung, 2011; Jafri, 2012), many participants discussed settlerhood as a spectrum, with some leaning towards other terms as their primary identifier. Participant 1 emphasized that "there are degrees of settlers" with varied lineages and ways of coming to this land. Many participants identified themselves with additional terms such as "immigrant," "newcomer," or "refugee," and some expressed that these terms more accurately represented their identity than "settler." As Participant 7 explained,

> For myself, ["settler"] is not something I identify as. … A lot of people who don't come from the history of European colonization here still consider themselves settlers to recognize and respect the history here because it's not their land, right? … Now, myself in the same context, where I did not... I don't come from... Well, ironically, my people are part of European colonization here and that history of settlerism, settling here. But we are stolen people brought to work on stolen land.

In this response, Participant 7's moments of pause and hesitation reflect the difficulty of articulating what it means to be a descendant of enslaved African people living on Indigenous lands. Their response also speaks to the intersectionality between systems of oppression, in this case between colonization of Indigenous lands across Turtle Island and the enslavement of African peoples to work on those lands. As someone who has experienced historical trauma and racism, Participant 7's discussion of their positionality reflects a key point made in settlerhood scholarship that settlers in Canada are by no means a uniform group and, for people of Colour, settler privileges may be limited or nonexistent (Phung, 2011; Jafri, 2012). However, as Participant 7 recognized, in coming to Canada, people of Colour have nonetheless entered colonial relationships with Indigenous peoples.

Other participants discussed the complexity of unpacking their settlerhood as people who carry experiences of displacement. As a refugee from an African country, Participant 9 reflected:

> Relationship to land for me and my people is complex because for a very long time, we were nomadic. I can't think of the word in English, but there's a term [in my people's language] which is like, 'a people who have always been scattered.' So, the whole concept of being from or 'owning' a specific land is a foreign concept [to my people]. Especially because a lot of us, in modern times, are scattered across the planet. … We had a civil war which resulted in a lot of people being displaced. So, I think I would consider myself a settler of sorts here on Turtle Island, but my political relationship to that idea of settler colonialism feels different.

Participant 9 highlighted how their political relationship to settler colonialism differs from other (White) settlers, as their settlement in Canada has been driven by historical displacement related to forces such as colonialism in their own country. Participant 1 echoed this point, explaining

how their mother came to Canada from an African country due to "colonialism and all these other things that made it so people felt like they had to come to the West for a 'good life.'"

These responses demonstrate an awareness of the intersections between colonialism and other systems of oppression. As Dhamoon (2018) explains, settler colonialism is "a series of structures and processes" as well as one component of many within a larger "matrix of domination" (p. 33). "Because oppressions are interconnected," Dhamoon (2018) continues, "collective action has to confront multiple dimensions of the matrix of domination simultaneously" (p. 33). Some participants discussed how unpacking the intersections between their own experiences of oppression and those experienced by Indigenous peoples has helped them build shared understanding across differences. As a 'stolen person on stolen land,' Participant 7 explained,

> there's a shared history of that oppression in the land. … It's weird for me sometimes, because I'm like, actually, I deserve land. Because my people have died and were worked to death. But I understand that it wasn't our land when we were being worked to death on it, but it wasn't the land of the people that worked us to death either. So, we understand what was robbed from both peoples.

Here, Participant 7 grapples with feeling deserving of land due to the violence that their enslaved ancestors faced, while also recognizing the dispossession and cultural genocide experienced by Indigenous peoples. This resonates with Leanne Simpson's (2022) discussion of Indigenous and Black peoples' identity in North America and their shared "yearning" for "a sense of homespace" due to historical trauma (p. 87). However, she explains, there is

> also a distinctiveness. My Indigenous ancestors were not part of the transatlantic slave trade … that violently severed black people from their homespace. My Indigenous

> ancestors are part of a different genocide, a severing of self from land, body, mind, spirit, culture, and language that took place and continues to take place *in* our homespace. Still, I am writing this from my homespace, the homespace of my ancestors. I'm not sure my ancestors would recognize it as home because of the successive world-endings that have taken place over the last four centuries; but, nonetheless, there are fragments. There are glimpses. (Maynard & Simpson, 2022, p. 87, emphasis in original)

For Participant 7, acknowledging the intersections and differences between their own and their Indigenous colleagues' histories offers a basis for building mutual understanding. As they concluded, "I try to develop a solidarity around the shared trauma through land when I do my work with Indigenous people." Similarly, Participant 9 explained that although many people in their own community – specifically referring to those who have experienced forced displacement – often lack knowledge about Indigenous peoples in Canada, they see this

> as a very low barrier [to solidarity-building], just because a lot of the time, once you learn the history, it's pretty easy to be like, 'okay, well I'm actually very familiar with this history.' It's not as much work to then get people to be on board with reconciliation. … Like, 'oh, that sounds so familiar. That's what happened to my people in my country.'

Like Participant 7, Participant 9 emphasized that their community can empathize with Indigenous peoples, given similar experiences in their home countries. Importantly, they pointed out how this understanding may be easier to develop for peoples who have directly experienced oppression than for White settlers who have not or have minimally experienced oppression.

Meanwhile, Participant 3 saw the process of unpacking the "deep, close relationships" to land that both non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples have or have had somewhere in their ancestry as helpful for building mutual understanding. They stressed that recognizing this is "not

to remove the situation and diminish anything that's happened" specifically to Indigenous communities through colonization, but to recognize that all people, including White settlers, have experienced disconnection from relationships to land at some point in their ancestry through intersecting forces of colonialism and capitalism. Although they highlighted this as a point for building solidarity, Participant 3 also emphasized that our focus cannot stop there and that settlers who hold greater privilege have a responsibility to focus on supporting communities that are disproportionately affected by colonial capitalist violence. Drawing a parallel between Indigenous communities' struggles and the Black Lives Matter movement, they emphasized that "this is the house that's really on fire right now, so we really have to deal with this one."

Participant 3's response resonates with Land (2015) who sees productive potential in "reconstructing" non-Indigenous (particularly White) peoples' interests in supporting Indigenous struggles by moving away from paternalistic acts of 'allyship' towards building a personal investment in dismantling colonialism. Thus, Land (2015) argues, being a reliable ally is to "try to convince ourselves and others that the system – which does its most violent work on Indigenous people – is also not in our (enlightened) self-interest" (p. 215). As a White settler myself, I would add that this kind of 'self-interest' should not simply be about beginning to see ourselves as affected by oppressive systems, especially as there is a danger here of co-opting and overgeneralizing diverse experiences of oppression. Rather, following from Land (2015), it entails cultivating an ethic of care[21] that encourages relationships across differences, bound by a fundamental refusal to accept a system rooted in environmental and societal destruction.

[21] The idea of an 'ethic of care' is a key concept within feminist and Indigenous studies – fields that have been and continue to be essential to my own (un)learning. Whyte and Cuomo (2017) provide an overview of Indigenous and feminist discourses around care ethics, which may be a helpful source for anyone looking to learn more about building more sustainable relationships to land and all beings.

While participants noted the value in finding common ground between their experiences, some also underscored that non-Indigenous peoples' own experiences of displacement and oppression must not be equated with Indigenous peoples' experiences of invasion, cultural genocide, and dispossession of land. Participant 1 reflected on these differences:

> Even though I didn't grow up on the land my family is from, I don't feel lost. I can speak the language, my name literally is that, I feel such a deep connection. … My mom gave me a book of how [our] people came to be. And that is knowledge not all people get. That is knowledge that many Indigenous people on this land do not get. … There are lost lineages. There is loss of knowledge and connection to all these things.

Even as Participant 1 identified their own displacement as someone who did not grow up on their ancestral lands, they also recognized their privilege in possessing ancestral knowledge in contrast to the loss of knowledges experienced by many Indigenous communities. Similarly, pointing to Toronto's diversity, Participant 7 discussed how many people have left the place in which

> they are the 'Indigenous' person of that land and they live[d] a lifestyle [which was] in line with the land. So, they come here [and] the people of this land don't have that for themselves. They [immigrants, refugees, diasporic peoples] understand how devastating that is to not have that, because they *do* have that for their home.

At the same time, Participant 9 discussed the challenges they have witnessed among older generations within immigrant and refugee communities in considering their responsibilities to Indigenous peoples in Canada, given their own trauma:

> A lot of our parents come here and their focus is like: get a job, get a house, stay stable, and a lot of them don't even want to be politically active because they hold a lot of trauma when it comes to political activism. … It's like: 'I - just - want - to - *settle*.' And

> therein lies the issue. It's like, okay, and whose land are you settling on? Who are you displacing in order to settle? … I think that there is a certain privilege that comes with being able to come here and basically get a starting package.

While recognizing the trauma experienced by many immigrant communities, Participant 9 echoed Phung (2011) who takes issue with the propensity of settlers to reinforce 'self-indigenizing' narratives of belonging and right to land. While differentiating between privileges held by White settlers and settlers of Colour, Phung (2011) argues that a parallel can be seen between 19th century colonial narratives of "hard work and enterprise" employed to justify European colonization of Indigenous lands and contemporary narratives of immigrant communities overcoming hardship that may be employed to assert claims to national belonging and land (p. 293). Nonetheless, as Participant 9 recognized, settlers of Colour who experience marginalization also hold settler privileges including the "right to earn a living from the land, to build a home (physical and metaphorical) anywhere in this country, and to be a citizen" (Sehdev, 2011, p. 267; Phung, 2011).

Participant 9's response also emphasizes the importance of understanding the ways that settlers are complicit in settler colonialism. Likewise, Participant 3 expressed that their position as an immigrant-settler is connected to immigration processes facilitated by the settler state, which, through their participation, they are complicit in upholding: "I've come in as a settler [and] the reason I've been able to come here is because of colonization, specifically of this land." As Participant 1 reflected, "to deny that the fact that we are on this land is adding to that [colonialism] … and is because of that just doesn't sit right for me." While it was clear that some participants were thinking deeply about complicity, only about half directly addressed this.

The responses above resonate with a key point highlighted by scholars that self-reflection on positionality should go beyond simply understanding one's ancestry or 'checking' one's privilege toward building an understanding of one's role in perpetuating colonial structures. As Jafri (2012) argues, a framework of "complicity" might help us focus less on the individual and more on "strategies and relations that reproduce social and institutional hierarchies," in which we become implicated and accountable (para. 12). Sehdev (2011) compellingly argues that accounting for settlers' complicity would entail a more active engagement with treaty agreements on Indigenous terms, such as the Two Row Wampum, as a basis for "making and keeping good relations" (p. 273). Sehdev (2011) highlights how settlers of Colour have been "written out of, perhaps forgotten in," treaty relationships, often under "vacant, conciliatory language" of "multicultural inclusion" (p. 272-273). However, Sehdev (2011) asserts, settling on this land – for both White settlers and settlers of Colour – "is made possible by treaty, and it is therefore incumbent on us to reconsider our strategies for social justice with treaty in mind" (p. 265). While only Participant 4 directly discussed treaty in recognizing Treaty 13, Sehdev's (2011) call for better treaty relations resonates with food activists' burgeoning efforts to think more deeply about their responsibilities as settlers and, as discussed in the next chapter, building good relations with Indigenous peoples through their work.

Overall, participants' reflections on their positionality reveal the value of engaging in discomforting reflection and dialogue for fostering greater mutual understanding and nurturing the grounds for Indigenous-settler solidarities. Although there was minor disagreement among participants on who should be considered a "settler," there was a clear consensus that non-Indigenous food activists have an obligation to self-educate about their complicities and responsibilities as settlers. While discussions of settlerhood do little to dismantle colonialism if

we remain solely focused on the "question of 'who' at the expense of the 'how'" (Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 22; Jafri, 2012), participants' responses demonstrate that unpacking one's positionality can support (un)learning in transformative ways. As Snelgrove et al. (2014) discuss,

> If someone is just simply saying 'I'm a Canadian, and I don't know my history', how useful is that to deepening solidarity? Maybe that forgetfulness... is also sort of convenient. You haven't done the hard work to uncover your role, or your family's role in, whether it's direct colonial actions or just settling here. (p. 20)

As participants expressed, unpacking positionality can help settlers situate themselves in relation to structures of oppression and, thus, feel better prepared to take action to dismantle them. Based on participants' reflections, it is evident that many settler food activists are engaging meaningfully in the process of unpacking their positionalities alongside, and as a first step towards, building relationships with Indigenous peoples.

Mis/re-education: Addressing biases and learning from Indigenous knowledges

Beyond self-reflection on positionality, many participants highlighted how their (un)learning was shaped by their informal and formal education. As Participant 6 discussed, their experience immigrating to Canada from Latin America and shifting from a desk job into community garden work was a major (un)learning process for confronting their own biases. Their country, they explained, is "very hierarchical" with a social class system that perpetuates prejudicial narratives of different social groups. Coming to Canada and working in community gardens "level[ed] out [their] playing field" and helped them deconstruct "stigmas and stereotypes" that they had internalized. Likewise, Participant 5 discussed how entering university led them to question and unlearn certain notions from their upbringing in an overwhelmingly White settler community. Such notions, they explained, were "passed down since [their]

ancestors landed here" and reinforced strict norms about the "right" way to do things. Through exposure to Indigenous perspectives in post-secondary education, they began to see the connections between their White settler family's values and systemic settler colonial violence: "you see the reflection of thinking, like... If you think of residential schools, it's like, 'we have to get these folks to do things the right way!' You know what I mean?" In this way, Participant 5 highlighted how their experience in university helped them understand the connection between their inherited biases and the mentality behind settler colonial systems.

While some participants shared transformative moments of learning through their work and formal education systems, some also pointed to problems of miseducation more broadly as a barrier to settlers' learning. Participant 5 and Participant 7 both pointed to the miseducation that many people have experienced through conventional education systems. As Participant 7 explained, when they were in high school they were wrongfully educated that "all the Indigenous people in America [were] killed off" through colonization. Participant 5 also emphasized that "not all folks have the privilege of formal education" beyond high school and, thus, biases inherited from their early education, families, and peers often remain "unexplored and accepted as reality." When ignorance is left "unchallenged," Participant 5 concluded, "you see why people struggle so much with acknowledging their involvement in colonialism." Similarly, Participant 9 discussed their miseducation going through the Canadian citizenship application process. While recognizing that the curriculum may have changed since their experience, they explained:

> When you come here, there is this education you are given by the Canadian government and it's a very specific type of education. … It's nothing they ever said directly, but it was heavily implied that [Indigenous people] are these people that maybe once existed, but maybe don't [anymore] ... They're shrouded in mystery and even mysticism. And

actually entering spaces where Indigenous people are, having conversations with them, and realizing: oh, I have been severely miseducated.

These responses underline the role of both formal and informal education settings in shaping settlers' understanding of Canadian history and Indigenous peoples and the need to address educational gaps.[22] As Davis et al. (2017) discuss, educational institutions are spaces where "settler consciousness" has been cultivated and colonial narratives perpetuated (p. 401). Therefore, as Corntassel and Gaudry (2014) argue, centering Indigenous perspectives and deconstructing settler colonial narratives in both formal and informal educational spaces is crucial for supporting "insurgent education" where settler accountability and Indigenous resurgence can flourish (p. 168).

Throughout these discussions of education, many participants underlined the importance of engaging with Indigenous knowledges. While I refer broadly to 'Indigenous knowledges' in what follows, I want to underline the plurality of the many Indigenous cultures across Turtle Island, who each have distinct languages, traditions, governance systems, and ways of knowing (ICFSC, 2010). Recognizing this, I utilize this broader term to refer to the convergences between many Indigenous worldviews regarding humans' relationships to lands and other beings, as discussed by many Indigenous scholars. As Battiste and Henderson (2000) explain, while there is no uniform definition for Indigenous knowledge,[23] "the closest one can get to describing unity in Indigenous knowledge is that knowledge is the expression of the vibrant relationships between

[22] Following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action, curriculum changes in Canada are underway. In Ontario, an Indigenous Education curriculum is currently being developed for grades 1 to 3, set to be complete by September 2023 (Patton, 2021). Additionally, the Toronto District School Board recently voted to switch the Grade 11 English course to a mandatory Indigenous-focused English course (Wong, 2023).

[23] Battiste and Henderson (2000) also underline that the tendency to seek universal definitions is Eurocentric and a practice that does not fit into many Indigenous worldviews. "Using their artificial tools of classification," they write, "the colonizers attempt to Europeanize all knowledge and heritage, even when they are extending beyond their knowledge into the unknown" (p. 36).

people, their ecosystems, and other living beings and spirits that share their land" (p. 42; McGregor, 2004; Morrison, 2011). Indigenous understandings of the interdependencies between all life contrast to Western philosophy, which views the world through Cartesian dualisms that separate (among other things) humans from nature, the latter of which is to be 'managed' and 'controlled' (Morrison, 2011; Smith, 2021). Participants' reflections demonstrated a recognition of the problems with these hegemonic Western values that have defined colonial capitalist systems as well as a desire to learn from Indigenous ways of knowing to develop more sustainable relations between people and the earth. These reflections, discussed in more detail below, resonate with Whyte (2020) who argues that addressing the climate crisis requires that all societies work to establish kin relations that are based on principles of consent, trust, accountability, and reciprocity – principles that are foundational to Anishinaabe and other Indigenous philosophical traditions. Overall, participants' reflections demonstrate their efforts to learn from Indigenous perspectives and think through how settlers can support the building of such kinship relations.

Turning to food activism, participants emphasized the value of their experiences in food movement spaces for being exposed to and learning from Indigenous ways of knowing. This echoes Snelgrove et al. (2014) who see Indigenous resurgence frameworks as helpful for settlers' (un)learning by re-centering Indigenous self-determination and nationhood in conversations around decolonization and solidarity. For food movements, Morrison (2011) argues that Indigenous knowledges are invaluable to developing better food systems, as Indigenous peoples have sustained the land and their food systems for millenia in dynamic and adaptable ways and such knowledges offer alternatives to the colonial-capitalist values that currently dominate the global food system. Thus, the Indigenous Circle of Food Secure Canada (2010) has called for

people to "look to Indigenous people for guidance" in "changing destructive relationships with Mother Earth to healthy relationships for everyone and future generations" (p. 1) – a call that resonates with participants' reflections on their (un)learning as settler food activists.

For Participant 1, learning from Indigenous perspectives prompted them to question capitalist ways of viewing land:

> A younger self of mine could go through these conversations without ever thinking 'you're on stolen land.' But now, I think even the idea of 'I want to get some land and start a farm' actually feels gross. What is buying land on stolen land? Why is that the dream?

For "people who work with the land," Participant 1 continued, there is often a strong desire to purchase and own property to support their livelihoods, which they saw as understandable given that "we're in the structure" of capitalism. Similarly, in my interview with Participant 7, we agreed that settlers must move beyond Western ideas of land as something to be privately possessed. Participant 7 shared their desire to "just be a steward of it [land] rather than an owner of it" and saw this as a view that many people "traditionally" understand. Participant 7 continued: "I think this narrow-minded 'ownership' is coming from a very small population in terms of the world. I think most people understand that: to have respect and an appreciation for land." Echoing calls from scholars (Coté, 2016; Daigle, 2017; Kepkiewicz, 2018), Participant 1 called for settler food activists to consider the implications of private landownership and ask themselves and their colleagues: "what does this actually mean while we're on stolen land … when Indigenous people have been displaced for generations?"

Participant 1 also explained that a key part of their (un)learning was recognizing the origins of the agroecological practices that inform their work in the activism and traditional

knowledges of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) communities. Speaking about regenerative agriculture, Participant 1 reflected:

> I was like: oh, this is Indigenous knowledge and something that has been run by Black and Brown people. [Urban agriculture] was literally born in the 70s in New York by Black women. It's always been rooted in resistance. … [My home country] is one of the leaders in regenerative organic farming and I had no clue. … Practices and knowledge that are framed today as 'permaculture' are actually just Indigenous knowledge, you know? … This is old ancient knowledge that up until this time wasn't seen as valuable.

Participant 1's response reflects an understanding of the value of BIPOC knowledges which have often been overlooked or dismissed, specifically in relation to regenerative agriculture. This echoes a key practice of the food sovereignty movement more broadly, which La Via Campesina activists call "diálogo de saberes," or a dialogue between traditional, Indigenous, and subaltern knowledges that have historically been excluded from "the dominant monoculture of ideas" (Martínez-Torres & Rosset, 2014, p. 994). Participant 1's reflection on learning about permaculture also resonates with Morrison (2011) who argues that "permaculture provides an opportunity for cross-cultural learning, activism, and healing of colonial relationships" by bridging Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures and agricultural techniques (p. 106). As Participant 1 concluded, "this is old work and I'm just joining in the big dance. … I just want to be able to learn and remember more."

While many participants discussed the importance of learning from Indigenous knowledges, Participant 2 expressed that this was not a focus in their work:

> I remember being inspired by the Three Sisters method of growing. But to be honest, I haven't done too much research beyond that or all that in depth into their agricultural

> methods. I just have a vague understanding of how they managed the land. And I usually just … follow more contemporary sources, often White men.

This response reflects Participant 1's point that mainstream agricultural knowledges have been dominated by White cis men. Participant 2's minimal engagement with Indigenous knowledge differs from most participants in this project. However, this does not imply that their viewpoint is uncommon among food activists in general or at other organizations. Meanwhile, Participant 2 expressed their belief that we must "radically change our relationship with the land" to address our ecological problems, which resonates with Indigenous and other participants' perspectives.

For many participants, learning from Indigenous knowledges entailed deeper consideration of their relationship to land. As Participant 3 said, echoing Indigenous perspectives, a key element of their work is considering how to be "in 'right' relationship to the land." Participant 5 framed this process as learning to farm following "a practice of reciprocity, which itself is an Indigenous value [where] there is a mutual respect between all living things." Reciprocity, they expressed, has become their "personal guidepost as [they] move through relationships to both land and people." As mentioned above, reciprocity is a central concept in Indigenous worldviews surrounding human-land relationships. As Whyte (2018) discusses, reciprocity is foundational not only to human relationships, – which settler states and capitalist actors have repeatedly violated in relation to Indigenous peoples (Whyte, 2020) – but also to relationships with other beings and the earth. For example, for the Nuu-cha-nulth and Kwakwaka'wakw in so-called British Columbia, there is a reciprocal relationship between humans and salmon, where the "salmon's sacrifice is considered a gift" and, in exchange, humans take care to maintain salmon habitats (Whyte, 2018, p. 13). This resonates with

participants' reflections on being guided by Indigenous knowledges in efforts to shift their farming approaches to be more reciprocal in caring for plants and the land.

Participants 1 and 6 both shared stories about how Indigenous perspectives had helped them reimagine their relationships with plants and seeds. As Participant 1 reflected, learning from Indigenous perspectives through their work has "totally changed the way that [they] grow food" by building "intimacy with the land." They reflected on building a deeper understanding of their responsibility to plants as living beings, expressing that they can no longer "just see these plants as resources" because "we're working with living beings [and] we are being taken care of by these beings." Similarly, Participant 6 reflected on the transformative (un)learning they have experienced working in community gardens and being guided by Indigenous perspectives: "when I go in there, I feel like my body disintegrates. I become a collection of microorganisms that interacts with the soil, with the insects, with everything, with the earth and the sky." They continued to explain how this spiritual experience aligns with Indigenous cultures in both their home country and Canada, urging other settlers to reflect more profoundly on the interconnection between humans and other living beings in order to foster healthier relationships with the earth.

On one hand, Participant 6's response can be seen as a recognition of the general theme within many Indigenous worldviews about the interconnectivity between all life, as discussed earlier. However, this response also risks pan-Indigenizing, as there seems to be a conflation of Indigenous cultures in Peru with those in Canada. I also think this response brings up another point of caution for settlers in thinking about how to engage with Indigenous perspectives without being extractive. As many scholars have discussed, Western research has often discounted Indigenous knowledges or treated them as knowledge to be "discovered, extracted, appropriated and distributed" on Western terms (Smith, 2012, p. 67; Battiste & Henderson,

2000). These colonial legacies are important for settlers to be aware of in order to prevent our learning from doing the same by extracting and homogenizing traditional knowledges. By noting these risks, I do not mean to imply that Participant 6 is necessarily overlooking these issues, but that the general nature of their response reflects common tendencies among settlers more broadly that must be countered.

These participants also highlighted their process of reconciling their own experiences of displacement as connected to thinking through their responsibilities to the earth and to Indigenous peoples. Participant 6 reflected on their work in community gardens as a key learning experience for reconciling their sense of displacement after immigrating to Canada: "before I felt displaced in Canada, but now I understand that the soil here is the same as the soil in [my home country]." By this, they explained, they meant that they understood their responsibility to care for the land as bound not only to their homeland, but also to the land that they now call home. Participant 1 reflected on their experience reading Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass*[24] which "changed [their] whole heart" and helped them think through their responsibilities to the land:

> There was a chapter on the plantain plant and the idea that this plant came from Europe and wasn't Indigenous, but became naturalized to here. Kimmerer spoke about people who come here and feel like it's a stepping stone between their home and where they

[24] I recognize that there have been critiques of books like *Braiding Sweetgrass* for over-generalizing and "flattening out" Indigenous worldviews (Piuma & Conklin Akbari, 2021, 14:52). As Métis scholar Zoe Todd (2021) tweeted, *Braiding Sweetgrass* falls into "a canon of 'Indigenous eco' scholarship written largely for white audiences that erases the decolonial/decolonization struggles and scholarship of folks in the Global South, … erases Black Studies, and doesn't attend to capital/empire." Building on this, Piuma and Conklin Akbari (2021) point out that Braiding Sweetgrass is a "gentle" book of personal narrative that provides an entry point into Indigenous scholarship, but warn readers not to lose sight of the unsettling and uncomfortable parts – such as the ways we are complicit in settler colonialism – which are "easy to not pay attention to if you don't want to" (15:18). While books like Kimmerer's (2013) may help us reflect more deeply on our relationships and responsibilities to others and the earth, there is more work to be done to consider how settlers can (un)learn in ways that attend to the specificity of the places we live (e.g. whose lands we live on; what nations we are accountable to; what treaty agreements we are subject to).

> need to be. That part really hit me. I was like: yeah, for people that this isn't 'home' to, is there still that reverence? … When I think of land I have to think of here. My mind can't go to [my home country]. Even though I love the land there, that's not where I was raised. That's not my lived reality. That is a love I have because of the people I love and the stories I've been told. But if I think of a place and where I will be, it's here.

Participant 1 expressed their gratitude that Kimmerer spoke about this topic, which was one of the "first coherent, open" discussions about big questions that they had personally been struggling to work through – questions including: "how do settlers that have not been here for generations, who immigrated over, make peace as well? And how do we start to grow relations? And how do we be here in wellness?"

Overall, these responses attest to the transformative potential of (un)learning from Indigenous knowledges for transforming settler consciousness. In the chapter discussed by Participant 1, Kimmerer (2013) reflects on observations made by Indigenous elders that settlers have historically lived without putting "both feet on the shore" (p. 207), and asks settlers to follow the plantain plants' "homeward path" by learning to live with both feet on the ground "as if our lives and the lives of all our relatives depend on it. Because they do" (p. 215). Following from participants' reflections, I argue that learning from Indigenous knowledges and (re)building a relationship to land as settlers can support the building of "place-based solidarities" (Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 27) that are grounded in respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples and an ethic of care for the lands on which we have settled.

Conclusion: (Un)learning towards solidarity

In this chapter, I have outlined the ways that nine food activists in Toronto's food movement have been engaging in (un)learning processes as a part of their efforts to build

solidarity with Indigenous peoples. Most participants emphasized the importance of settlers taking initiative to educate themselves without placing the burden on Indigenous communities and to embrace the discomfort of the learning process. Participants also highlighted the value of unpacking settler positionalities for building mutual understanding of privilege, complicities, and the intersectionality between colonialism and other systems of oppression. While there was slight disagreement on who was considered a 'settler' and whether this was important to think about, participants generally agreed that non-Indigenous food activists have an obligation to self-educate about their responsibilities to Indigenous communities. Finally, participants discussed the role of formal and informal education in their (un)learning as settlers and the value of engaging with Indigenous knowledges in these spaces. Participants' responses demonstrated the transformative potential of learning from Indigenous knowledges for settlers to begin to build more respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples and the land. Participants' reflections also point to the value of food activist spaces in providing a unique context for learning from Indigenous food sovereignty efforts, which Morrison (2011) argues provide space for "learning by doing, of acquiring knowledge through trial and error (feedback learning) and of engaging in social learning with Elders and traditional harvesters" (p. 104).

Based on these interviews, I argue that many food activists in Toronto are actively striving to self-educate, learn from Indigenous perspectives, and understand their responsibilities to Indigenous peoples. It is evident that there is room for settler education to go deeper, particularly as this project likely over-represents settlers who are more actively engaging given their interest in participating. However, overall, this research suggests that food activists in Toronto are beginning to respond to calls to actions from activists and scholars to think more

deeply about the role that food activists and food movements at large can play in confronting colonialism and supporting Indigenous resurgence.

Settler education is a crucial step towards transforming settler consciousness and building solidarity with Indigenous peoples. As Boudreau Morris (2017) argues, (un)learning towards solidarity is "emotionally fraught" but the very practice of working through differences and discomfort is what "nurtures decolonizing solidarity relationships" (p. 468). While settlers' (un)learning must not overshadow more tangible action to support Indigenous struggles, I contend that maintaining pedagogical space for settler education is important for settlers to work through discomforting topics and emotions. Additionally, I see conversations between settlers – like the ones I shared with food activists in this project – as important for mitigating the re-centering of settlers in Indigenous-settler relationships and the placing of further labour on Indigenous peoples to help settlers through their own education.

Ultimately, (un)learning towards solidarity "means learning to be uncomfortable, but not to be immobilized" and must result in tangible actions (Kluttz et al., 2020, p. 63; Kepkiewicz, 2018). As Tuck and Yang (2012) point out, there is a risk of allowing settlers' "conscientization to stand in for the more uncomfortable task of relinquishing stolen land" and dismantling colonialism, on which decolonization ultimately relies (p. 19). While participants emphasized the need to take action to dismantle colonial structures, they also pointed to structural barriers that prevent more fundamental change, as discussed in the following chapters. Thus, for many participants, turning their learning into action centered on building relationships with Indigenous peoples in their own food activist communities, to which I now turn.

CHAPTER 5: RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Introduction

Throughout Indigenous scholarship, relationality is a central theme in discussions around food systems and resurgence more broadly (Simpson, 2011; Morrison, 2011; Whyte, 2018; Robin, 2019). These scholars and non-Indigenous allies (e.g. Snelgrove et al., 2014; Kepkiewicz, 2018; Kluttz et al., 2020) have called upon settlers to rethink and challenge the exploitative practices that have defined Western societies' relations with peoples and the earth and learn from Indigenous knowledge systems to transform these relationships. Following from the previous chapter, Davis et al. (2017) suggest that "transforming settler consciousness" towards solidarity with Indigenous peoples entails not only settler education, but also the building of "just and decolonized relationships with Indigenous peoples, the land, and all beings" (p. 402). For food movements, scholars have called for further research exploring how meaningful relationships might be built between settler and Indigenous food activists in order to support Indigenous food sovereignties and resurgent struggles (Daigle, 2017; Kepkiewicz, 2018; Laforge et al., 2021; Bohunicky et al., 2021). Additionally, Kepkiewicz (2018) suggests, there is opportunity for more empirical research exploring the ways that food activism can provide space for building and transforming these relationships.

In this chapter, I aim to respond to these calls by exploring how food activists in Toronto are building relationships with Indigenous peoples through their work. Before going into participants' discussions of relationship-building, it is important that I situate these responses in the context of Toronto's food movement.[25] First, I draw on media sources, my content analysis

[25] I have purposefully put this context section in this chapter rather than the previous chapter in an effort to follow how participants discussed the themes of (un)learning and relationship-building. Most participants highlighted

of 17 organizations' websites, and participants' discussions of their organizations' work, to outline the main themes in conversations around food system change in Toronto and how organizations are engaging with topics such as decolonization, reconciliation, and solidarity with Indigenous struggles. Second, I explain how participants' discussions of relationships connected to and carried on from their reflections on (un)learning, both of which participants considered to be foundational components of Indigenous-settler solidarity. Third, I discuss how participants are working to build relationships and support Indigenous resurgence through partnering with Indigenous organizations, supporting greater Indigenous leadership, and creating Indigenous-centered spaces for Indigenous-led ceremonies and programming. Echoing calls from Indigenous-settler solidarity scholarship (e.g. Corntassel & Gaudry, 2014; Davis et al., 2017; Kepkiewicz, 2018), participants highlighted the importance of stepping back as settlers and re-centering Indigenous peoples in these collaborations to foster greater accountability to Indigenous peoples and lands. Finally, I outline some of the challenges identified by participants in these relationship-building processes including the messiness and discomfort of collaborating across cultures, incompatibilities between organizational expectations and Indigenous protocols, and working within settler colonial structures that restrict the building of good relations.

Following from my conversations with participants, I argue that Toronto food activists are beginning to build relationships and solidarity with Indigenous peoples through their work. Meanwhile, my content analysis of 17 food organizations' websites suggests that, overall, Toronto food organizations have yet to – and perhaps do not feel able to, as discussed further in the following chapter – center Indigenous struggles for land and sovereignty in their visions for

(un)learning as a more personal, internal process, while they saw relationship-building as more directly connected to their work at their organizations. Thus, as organizations are the site of these relationship-building processes, some context about Toronto food organizations is helpful to include here.

and work towards food system change. However, participants' responses reveal that a shift in focus towards Indigenous-settler relationships is undoubtedly underway within Toronto's food movement. Based on participants' reflections and calls in the literature (e.g. Daigle, 2017; Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018; Laforge et al., 2021), I argue that settler food activists have a responsibility to center Indigenous peoples' resurgent struggles in food sovereignty movements more broadly in order to challenge settler colonialism and build decolonizing relations between peoples and the earth. Following Tuck and Yang (2012), such coalitions must be based on a recognition of the incommensurability between Indigenous and settler food movements and the need to leave behind "settler futurity" in order to move towards the "elsewhere" that is decolonization (p. 36).

Context: Food organizations in Toronto

In Toronto, conversations around food system change have increasingly aligned with the food sovereignty framework through calls for communities' to have greater autonomy and access to healthy, culturally appropriate, and sustainably-produced foods. Organizations including FoodShare, The Stop Community Food Centre, and Sundance Harvest have incorporated food sovereignty as a guiding framework for their programming, with a strong emphasis on equity and justice for BIPOC peoples and calls for systemic changes to the global food system (Robinson, 2021; Rio, 2022). In response to these calls, the Toronto City Council recently approved Canada's first Black Food Sovereignty Plan to support Black food markets, nutrition programs, and access to growing space (City of Toronto, 2021). As Black, Indigenous, and racialized peoples are more likely to face food insecurity than White folks, food activists have been calling for more targeted programs like this in the future (Francis, 2021). Likewise, activists have called upon the city to update its 20-year-old Food Charter (Duhatschek, 2022), which was implemented in 2001 and makes no commitments in support of racial justice or Indigenous

sovereignty (City of Toronto, 2001). Last year, FoodShare launched a petition calling on the City to develop a new Food Charter following the leadership of Indigenous, Black, and racialized peoples who are most affected by food insecurity (Duhatschek, 2022).

Alongside these efforts, conversations around decolonization and reconciliation have also been developing in Toronto. Last year, Toronto City Council approved a 10-year reconciliation plan to improve relationships with Indigenous communities and confront past and current injustices faced by Indigenous people in Toronto (Rider, 2022). It is worth noting, however, that the "actions for justice" relating to food and land are the last two items on the list: "18. Improve access to traditional foods and medicines" and "19. Return land and stewardship rights" (City of Toronto, 2022). Meanwhile, Indigenous food sovereignty activists seem to be carving out more space in the city themselves. This past summer, the Dashmawaan Bemadzinjin initiative ("they feed the people" in Ojibwe) held a weekly market at Fort York featuring Indigenous vendors selling artisanal goods and foods such as bison burgers and three sisters spring rolls (Westoll, 2022). Laurie Hermiston of the Dashmawaan Bemadzinjin project expressed that the market offered an opportunity for folks to learn and grow as "treaty people" by supporting and building greater awareness of the issues surrounding Indigenous food sovereignty (Westoll, 2022, para. 2).

At the same time, others have called for more support at the policy level for Indigenous initiatives in the city. In dialogue with the Yellowhead Institute's report on *Indigenous Food Sovereignty in Ontario* (Robin et al., 2023), Kaitlin Rizzari (2023), of the Tkaronto Plant Life initiative, points out that most BIPOC initiatives in Toronto have operated without funding support from agricultural governing bodies that tend to favour agro-centric models of farming. For example, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) does not

include any "policy that protects, facilitates and encourages food growing, animal raising, and skill building for Indigenous and BIPOC farmers within cities" (Rizzari, 2023, para. 7). Rizzari (2023) argues that this effectively excludes many urban and Indigenous initiatives that involve non agro-centric practices related to food such as rooftop farms, ecosystem restoration, pollution regulation, hunting, and foraging. Therefore, Rizzari (2023) suggests, food-related policies must be developed with Indigenous communities and BIPOC urban farmers and opened up to recognize city initiatives as key to the future of food production.

In interviews, participants' explanations of their organizations' work reflected a general focus on equity and inclusion. Many identified their own organization and others in Toronto as non-Indigenous-led, but pushing for more BIPOC leadership. Participants 2, 5, 8, and 9 discussed how their organizations have recently implemented hiring policies for BIPOC peoples and initiatives directed at BIPOC youth. Participant 8 also explained that there have been increases in funding "explicitly" in support of Black farmers and food vendors, following the City's recent Black Food Sovereignty Plan, which enables their organization to support the "food needs of those in [the neighbourhood]." Like Participant 8, Participant 3 emphasized the importance of initiatives like this to the community where their organization "c[ame] in at a pretty vital time in a neighbourhood" made up of racialized and low-income residents who were in need of greater access to healthy and culturally relevant foods. Additionally, some participants highlighted their organizations' roles in facilitating cultural events for community members, many of whom belong to racialized and marginalized groups in the city. As Participant 4 explained, the chefs running the community meal program "get feedback from community members" and "make special meals for all sorts of cultural and religious holidays like Diwali, Lunar New Year, and Rosh Hashanah." Participant 9 expressed that their organization has a

responsibility to ensure that, "in the pursuit of profit, we don't lose our mandate which is to be a community farm [and] to serve this local community that we're in."

Turning to organizations' engagements with Indigenous peoples and discussions around solidarity, my content analysis of 17 food organizations[26] in Toronto offers some context.[27] Out of these organizations, 16 are settler-led and 1 Indigenous-led. Scanning each webpage on each website, I found that 6 out of the 17 organizations made no mention of topics related to Indigenous perspectives, Indigenous-led initiatives, land acknowledgements, decolonization, or reconciliation. Additionally, 7 out of 17 only engaged minimally with these topics (between 1-4 mentions across all webpages). Only 4 of the 17 organizations had 5 or more mentions of these topics and 3 organizations highlighted Indigenous-centered initiatives and/or partnerships, such as an Indigenous garden program or a magazine featuring Black and Indigenous food knowledges. Only 5 out of the 17 organizations included land acknowledgements, many of which were identical to those from other food organizations (and other institutions like the City of Toronto and the University of Toronto) and limited to stock statements such as "we acknowledge that our organization operates on the traditional territories of the Huron-Wendat, Anishinaabe Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and now the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nations" and "we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this territory."

[26] I acknowledge that my focus on "food" organizations is perhaps inherently colonial, as it implies a separation of food from other facets of life which is contrary to many Indigenous cultures' view of food as inextricable from the whole of Indigenous cultures (Morrison, 2011; Settee & Shukla, 2020). Through this research, I have become aware of some Indigenous organizations who may not have an explicit "food" focus, but are nonetheless engaged in resurgent food struggles alongside other types of programming. I am intentionally not naming them here, as such information could be identifying of participants who work in partnership with some of these organizations. However, I want to uphold that Indigenous activists and organizations are undoubtedly an active part of Toronto's food movement.

[27] As outlined in Chapter 3, this content analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel to track the frequency for anything related to Indigenous perspectives, leadership, or initiatives across each webpage of each organization's website. First, I scanned each page manually and then conducted Command+F searches for key terms such as "Indigenous," "decolonization," "reconciliation," etc.

Importantly, only 2 out of these 5 organizations' land acknowledgements included statements of responsibilities and commitments to taking action to support Indigenous struggles. One organization also pointed to the intersectionality between Indigenous and Black struggles and stated their commitment to advancing both. Notably, among these food organizations' websites, – a field where land is an inherent focus of the work – none included discussions around Indigenous jurisdiction, land restitution, or what it means to operate on stolen Indigenous lands.

This content analysis of 17 organizations' websites is by no means exhaustive, but provides some insight specifically into Toronto food organizations' efforts to build solidarity with Indigenous peoples. Looking only at organizations' websites would suggest that organizations in Toronto's food movement are doing little to take action to dismantle settler colonialism and prioritize Indigenous struggles for sovereignty. However, based on interviews and my own experiences in food activist spaces, this outcome does not align with my experience. The relatively minimal engagement of organizations with Indigenous perspectives and decolonization in their public media was surprising to me, as I had regularly witnessed and been a part of discussions around decolonization and Indigenous food systems in organizational settings. Additionally, I had encountered some Indigenous-led initiatives in-person which I later found were not always featured on organizations' websites. While website content is certainly not as important as the actual work these organizations do on the ground, I would argue that their public media plays a significant role in shaping the broader conversation around decolonization and reconciliation, which as of now is not presented as a priority for most food organizations. Although participants' responses imply that these conversations are indeed happening in food activist circles, as I discuss below, this content analysis suggests that Toronto settler food

organizations more broadly have yet to respond to calls to support Indigenous struggles and challenge settler colonialism.

In interviews, participants discussed varying degrees of engagement at organizations with topics such as decolonization and reconciliation. Participant 8 noted that their organization has facilitated training related to reconciliation and that staff members "get involved in things" and "have little conversations as we run into issues" when working with Indigenous partners. However, they expressed that their organization has yet to have a "cohesive conversation" around what role they should play in supporting Indigenous struggles. Participants 1, 2, 4, and 9 also reiterated that informal conversations amongst the team around decolonization and reconciliation are frequent. However, Participants 2, 3, and 9 expressed that "more intentional conversations" need to be had, followed by concrete actions to support solidarity. Participant 3 highlighted the challenges of incorporating more Indigenous-centered programming due to "external influences" such as funding requirements and "how organizations operate in a colonized context" (as will be discussed below and in the following chapter). Because of these limitations, many participants explained that their efforts were focused primarily on learning and building relationships with Indigenous colleagues at their organizations. As Participants 1 and 9 concurred, this means building good relations and supporting Indigenous partners in "taking up as much space as possible" in organizational programming and leadership. In the following section, I outline in more detail how participants are building relationships and solidarity with Indigenous peoples through their work.

From (un)learning to relationship-building in food activist circles

Many participants underlined relationships as central to their visions of food system change, echoing both food sovereignty and critical Indigenous literatures (Morrison, 2011;

Corntassel, 2012; Martínez-Torres & Rosset, 2014). Participant 1 reflected on how being back "in togetherness again" after COVID-19 lockdowns had allowed for more community members beyond core staff to take the lead in various initiatives. At their organization, they emphasized, they "don't try to be the ones with the microphone all the time" and are trying to implement food sovereignty in multi-faceted and community-centered ways including "community engagement, food, sharing knowledge – not just this siloed thing where it's like 'we grow food and we give you food.'" Building on this, Participant 3 emphasized that, even with the "layers of issues" with food and agriculture today, "the food part" is the simple part of their work. "The relationship part is really the difficult part" and must be a "core focus" in food activist work moving forward in order to support solidarity-building "in a tangible way." By "interfacing with different cultures, ways of thinking, and ways of living," Participant 3 concluded, food activist communities can play a role in "correcting and balancing relationships so that they're not oppressive."

In these discussions, many participants expressed how their approaches to community relationships had been shaped by their exposure to Indigenous perspectives, which they found resonated with their concerns about climate change and social justice. While Indigenous cultures are diverse and unique in their cultural traditions and knowledge systems, many scholars (e.g. Battiste & Henderson, 2000; McGregor, 2004; Morrison, 2011) underline relationships between people, lands, and non-human kin as the unifying factor between Indigenous cultures. Such relationships or "ecologies" between humans and ecosystems, Whyte (2018) argues, are the foundation for not only food systems but also societies' overall capability to maintain and reproduce themselves, which has been continually disrupted by settler colonial domination (p. 15). In the context of ongoing destruction of these human-environment relationships by settler colonial capitalist forces, most participants underscored the necessity of learning from

Indigenous perspectives to support both Indigenous struggles for sovereignty and the climate movement at large.

As discussed in the previous chapter, participants highlighted (un)learning as an important step towards approaching relationships with Indigenous peoples in respectful ways. Participants 1, 3, 5, 6, and 9 also emphasized that actively engaging in relationship-building with Indigenous peoples in their work was essential to deepening their (un)learning and maintaining a focus on building solidarity with Indigenous struggles. Meanwhile, Participants 1 and 9 asserted that focusing primarily on education can be limiting and distract from engaging in more meaningful action and relationship-building. Participant 9 expressed frustration with what they see as an over-emphasis on educational events in food activist spaces:

> You should see the way my inbox fills up at the end of the season. Everybody and their mom is running some kind of conference where we're going to have a symposium and 'conversation' about blah blah blah. [laughs] Education is important, but we are going to talk ourselves to death.

Participant 1 also reflected that while "we can read all the stuff online," we also need to "interact with the Indigenous communities that are close to us to … actually embody Truth and Reconciliation." Similarly, Participant 3 expressed that (un)learning should prompt settlers to consider how we can "take the values [and] wisdom from this conversation around Truth and Reconciliation and start applying it to all our relationships."

These responses resonate with calls for settlers' (un)learning to be accompanied by real action and relationship-building with Indigenous peoples (Kepkiewicz, 2018; Kluttz et al., 2020; Bohunicky et al., 2021). Participants' frustrations with what they perceive as an over-emphasis

on education echo Tuck and Yang (2012), who warn that there is a risk in settlers feeling that, through their critical education, they are enacting change – a "move to innocence" that may relieve settlers from taking real action (p. 10). Participants' responses also indicate a recognition of their (un)learning not simply as a step *towards*, but also as *connected to* the building of relationships with Indigenous colleagues, which play a role "in sparking, provoking, and sustaining processes of decolonizing settler consciousness" (Hiller, 2017, p. 428). This reflects Corntassel and Gaudry's (2014) pedagogy of "insurgent education," which involves place-based learning, centering of Indigenous protocols, and restoring Indigenous leadership "with non-Indigenous people in supporting roles" (p. 184). As demonstrated in participants' responses above and in what follows, it seems that food activists in Toronto are beginning to respond to calls from activists and scholars to take their learning and reflection on the "breadth and depth of settler colonialism and … mobilize in ways that support Indigenous visions for health, wellbeing and resurgence" (Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018, p. 254).

Relationship-building and resurgence at food organizations

In interviews, participants discussed various ways their organizations have been working to build better relationships with Indigenous community members. Overall, these responses reflected an understanding of the need to support Indigenous resurgence through their work by making space for Indigenous peoples to regenerate their cultural, political, and spiritual traditions and relationships and responsibilities to homelands – efforts that, Simpson (2011) writes, have been ongoing for over 400 years in resistance to settler colonial violence by "re-investing in our own [Indigenous] ways of being" (p. 17; Corntassel, 2012). As Indigenous food sovereignty scholars (e.g. Coté, 2016; Daigle, 2017; Whyte, 2018) explain, the revitalization of Indigenous food systems – e.g. enacting traditional systems of land management or ceremonial practices

around plants and food – is inextricably connected to these broader resurgent struggles for self-determination and sovereignty. Additionally, as Corntassel (2012) argues, resurgence is essential to Indigenous peoples' self-determination, as it offers an alternative framework to settler colonial institutions and processes that "prioritize the legitimization of settler occupation of Indigenous homelands" (p. 94). Below, I outline how participants discussed their efforts to build relationships with Indigenous peoples and support resurgence through partnerships with Indigenous organizations, increased Indigenous programming and leadership, and the creation of Indigenous-centered spaces.

Many participants highlighted formal partnerships between their organizations and Indigenous organizations in the city as important to relationship-building. As Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9 discussed, these partnerships involve: sharing their lease and land space; providing access to kitchens, event spaces, and greenhouses; and supporting and participating in Indigenous-centered/led programming. Participants 1 and 3 discussed their organizations' partnership with an Indigenous organization who leads various events around Indigenous food and culture. For example, Anishinaabe elders have begun facilitating seasonal ceremonies at the organization in which community members follow Indigenous ceremonial practices, learn from teachings in the medicine garden, and share traditional foods. Participant 1 also discussed a maple syrup day led by their Indigenous partners which was "completely Indigenous knowledge" and a "pivotal" learning moment for many community members about the Indigenous origins of a food that has been culturally co-opted as "Canadian."

Participant 7 discussed their role working as an assistant coordinator in an Indigenous men's garden program based at an Indigenous partner organization which runs through two programming streams: "There's one day where we cook a meal to provide culturally relevant

food to the Indigenous community," which includes "traditional medicines and foods" grown in the garden. The following day, they teach participants garden and greenhouse-growing skills. They explained the importance of this program to participants who "are transitioning out of incarceration or coming from homelessness off the streets of Toronto or elsewhere in Canada. Some of the guys are dealing with addictions programs, mental illness, etc." The garden is meant to provide a "therapeutic" space for participants' healing, facilitated by bringing in "traditional teachers to impart traditional teachings" and "working with horticulture as therapy." Although they are not Indigenous, Participant 7 highlighted how their skillset in horticultural education and therapy enables them to support Indigenous leaders and co-develop the project in culturally relevant ways. Collaborations like this push back against the paternalism that has often defined food bank work and the settler state's treatment of Indigenous peoples (Wakefield et al., 2013; Smith, 2021), as Participant 7 works in a supporting role to create a program with their Indigenous colleagues and program participants on their own terms.

Partnerships like those discussed above can be key sites for settler-led food organizations to learn about and challenge settler colonialism (Bohunicky et al., 2021). However, Bohunicky et al.'s (2021) findings also suggest that such collaborations often rely on narratives of "inclusion" of Indigenous perspectives through siloed events or workshops rather than facilitating more permanent transfers of power (p. 155). While most participants highlighted partnerships with Indigenous organizations as a key point for building relationships and solidarity, Participant 1 suggested that "the conversations are changing" towards more Indigenous leadership at organizations that go "beyond a partnership." As they reflected,

> If we're thinking about Land Back and the fact that we're growing on stolen land, to not actively let Indigenous folks take the lead on this land and do what they need to do – I just don't think the idea of us being for food justice is necessarily in integrity.

Others discussed hiring practices as an area for supporting more Indigenous leadership. Participants 2 and 8 both discussed how their organization has had Indigenous staff on the team for the past few years, which Participant 2 saw as helpful in supporting more conversations around Truth and Reconciliation among community members. Meanwhile, Participant 8 explained how their organization has recently "received input from Indigenous landworkers and partners that it's important for the organization to hire more Indigenous staff," suggesting that there is room for improvement in Indigenous representation at Toronto food organizations.

Among participants, there was a general consensus that organizations are increasingly recognizing the need for greater Indigenous leadership. However, Participant 4's response contrasted with this, as they did not express any intentions at their organization to increase Indigenous leadership. When asked about whether their organization is working towards supporting more Indigenous-centered programming, Participant 4 shared:

> One of the things we want to do is have an Indigenous expert come in. They don't have to be an elder, they don't even need to be Indigenous, but they need to be able to share important knowledge that [our community] might not have access to.

Here, Participant 4 raised an interesting point that there may be opportunity for settler food activists to support greater dialogue at their organizations around reconciliation without relying on Indigenous people to facilitate. This brings up an important question for settler food activists to consider in their efforts to support and/or collaborate with Indigenous activists: In what

situations should settlers take initiative in facilitating Indigenous-focused programming for peer-to-peer education or bring in Indigenous leaders to facilitate and share their knowledge directly?

On the other hand, Participant 4's response also demonstrates the narrative of "inclusion" that Bohunicky et al (2021) caution against, as it risks the extraction and co-optation of Indigenous perspectives while de-centering Indigenous voices, where more fundamental issues surrounding decision-making power are left unaddressed (e.g. Indigenous representation in leadership roles). Participant 6 discussed witnessing this in their work in various community garden initiatives around the city. For example, at one community garden, "they planted tobacco in honour of Truth and Reconciliation." However, when Participant 6 suggested to the directors that they should support more Indigenous leadership or, "at least, have the gardens be co-led by an Indigenous person, the conversation stopped there." Participant 6's response suggests that some resistance exists among settler food activists around yielding leadership to Indigenous peoples – something most participants in this project saw as necessary to supporting settler-Indigenous relationships and increasing Indigenous decision-making power in Toronto's food movement.

Another way of supporting relationship-building raised by participants was the creation of physical space for Indigenous community members and traditional practices at their organizations. Participants 1 and 3 explained how a ceremonial structure had recently been built at their organization, led by their Indigenous partners and supported by staff and volunteers. Participant 1 expressed that having the "physical space of Indigenous presence on the land" was important to moving beyond "theory and land acknowledgements" towards enacting solidarity in place. Similarly, Participant 3 saw the physical presence of Indigenous ceremonial space as a form of "re-indigenization," where "the physicality, the spirituality, the mental, the emotional"

are brought "onto the land in an Indigenous way." These participants also highlighted the increasing importance of this area as a learning and teaching space for their organization's programming, which increasingly incorporates Indigenous perspectives.

Participant 7 also highlighted the importance of such spaces for Indigenous community members to have safe spaces for their own healing. When asked about their work as a coordinator at the Indigenous men's garden, Participant 7 explained that the "multifaceted" nature of their work boils down to the ultimate mission of creating a "safe space" for Indigenous community members' healing:

> The garden is there for the men as a respite from things and also to build for themselves. So, it's not that it's a closed space, but it's a designated space. It's not always like, 'hey, come on in, check it out,' even though people are always welcome to come in.

Participant 5 echoed Participant 7 by underlining the importance of designated and "sacred" spaces for communities who have "been marginalized or had violence inflicted" upon them, drawing a connection to their experience as a queer person. "When I go to the 'gay-bourhood,' I'm more at home than I could possibly ever be," Participant 5 reflected, as it is a safe space for queer people who face discrimination in other spaces to be the "freest they've ever been." I would also add that these spaces are especially important for marginalized groups in cities, where access to spaces that may be essential for enacting land-based cultural practices may be limited. Thus, while cities are and have always been important centres for Indigenous culture and resurgence (Simpson, 2014), they also present unique challenges that make Indigenous-centered spaces such as garden programs or Friendship Centres particularly important for cultivating resurgence (Cidro et al., 2015). Overall, these responses point to the responsibility held by settler food activists to not only collaborate with Indigenous community members, but also respect

boundaries around and actively support the existence of Indigenous-only/centered spaces as a key part of building solidarity.

At the same time, Participants 5 and 7 also argued that boundaries around such spaces need to remain open enough for settlers and Indigenous peoples to interact and build mutual understanding. For marginalized peoples, Participant 7 reflected, "talking amongst ourselves and healing our own traumas of colonization is great, but it doesn't really speak to decolonization systematically, which is in the hands of those who hold the power," making a "conversation" across differences essential to building better relations. Participant 5 noted the challenge of supporting such interactions in a socially stratified city like Toronto where "people don't engage with each other" and live in "segregated" neighbourhoods following class and racial lines. Participant 7 highlighted this as an issue that had impacted the Indigenous men's garden program, which is located in a "very affluent neighbourhood" and was regarded by many residents as "unwelcome." There was "a lot of negativity," they explained, as the garden is "not what they [the residents] want to see in their neighbourhood" – a sentiment Participant 7 attributed to a general lack of understanding of "where the Indigenous community is at" and the trauma they have experienced.

Because of these challenges, Participants 5 and 7 concurred that interaction between settler and Indigenous peoples, particularly in such "sacred" spaces, can facilitate more embodied (un)learning for settlers. Participant 7 explained that this past year at the garden program,

> We have tried to bring in the larger community so that people see what the garden is and then have more respect for and understanding of it. And I think those interactions are the

> steps towards decolonization. … A lot of solidarity-building for the community starts with bringing people in and understanding what 'community' is about.

Here, Participant 7 highlights that interaction between settlers and Indigenous peoples is essential not only for supporting Indigenous resurgence, but also for non-Indigenous peoples to reckon with their own biases and learn how to build "community" across lines of difference in respectful ways. Likewise, Participant 5 reflected on their experiences attending Indigenous events through university courses and their work, where being in "somebody else's sacred space" was a transformative (un)learning experience. Now working with "folks from everywhere farming together," Participant 5 underlined how engaging across differences in these ways has helped them build deeper relationships and a sense of community that they had been "searching for [their] whole life." These responses resonate with solidarity literatures that highlight the importance of "entering Indigenous spaces, and participating in ceremonies, teachings and on-land activities" to furthering settlers' learning, decentering, and solidarity-building with Indigenous peoples (Davis et al., 2017, p. 407; Kluttz et el., 2020). Furthermore, Morrison (2011) argues that cross-cultural relationships are a key component of Indigenous food sovereignty, which she sees as beneficial to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in imagining more sustainable food systems.

Overall, participants described significant efforts at their organizations to make space for Indigenous peoples to take the lead in decision-making and programming. As most participants expressed, settlers have a responsibility to, in the words of Participant 1, pass the "mic" to Indigenous leaders and center Indigenous protocols and knowledges as much as possible – efforts that are evidently underway among some settler food activist communities in Toronto. These views resonate with Kepkiewicz (2018) who, drawing on interviews with food activists

across Canada, argues that settlers have a responsibility to cede power to Indigenous peoples by "scrapping settler agendas, listening, stepping back, and supporting Indigenous leadership" (p. 199). As many scholars argue, Indigenous leadership is an integral part of supporting Indigenous resurgence, which is necessarily discomforting for settlers who may need to give up power that had been previously taken for granted (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Corntassel & Gaudry, 2014; Kepkiewicz, 2018; Bohunicky et al., 2021). By building "place-based" relationships, Snelgrove et al. (2014) argue, non-Indigenous peoples can become more personally accountable in their responsibilities to the Indigenous nations and territories where they live – taking solidarity from "performative" and "temporally driven" acts around highly publicized movements (e.g. Idle No More) to being more spatially grounded and localized (p. 24). Thus, following these scholars, I argue that in order to decolonize settler-led food movements and build solidarity with Indigenous struggles, settler food activists must take action to center Indigenous resurgence in their work. By de-centering settler voices and making space for Indigenous peoples to come to the forefront of organizational programming and decision-making processes, Indigenous-settler solidarities might be cultivated in deeper ways.

Challenges of relationship-building at food organizations

While it is evident that participants and their organizations are taking active strides to build meaningful relationships with Indigenous peoples, some participants highlighted the challenges of this process. Both Participant 3 and Participant 8 discussed tensions within the relationship-building process due to cultural differences and operating within an NGO structure. As Participant 3 explained, when they collaborate with Indigenous colleagues, clashes are likely to occur as "it's two very different cultures interfacing," where "Indigenous people understand

relationships" and settlers generally have much to learn in that regard.[28] As Participant 3 reflected,

> There's a lot to unpack and it's not a fast or easy process. There are going to be communication breakdowns where you have to actively work in that relationship to be able to then overcome those misunderstandings, barriers, hurts, grief, and all of the things that go into that.

Participant 8 reiterated this, explaining that "for everything that we put on social media, there's a lot of backend [and] stepping forward and stepping back," where team members are learning as they go about how to build good relationships with Indigenous colleagues. These responses echo Snelgrove et al. (2014) who outline relationship-building between settlers and Indigenous peoples as a messy process of "ongoing feedback loops" where trust and accountability to one's relations can be built (p. 19).

Following from participants' discussions of discomfort in (un)learning processes, Participants 3 and 8 also expressed that discomfort was a challenge they had to work through when building relationships. As Participant 3 reflected, there is "tension and discomfort around interacting with Indigenous people, because you don't want to make a mistake or overstep, or be 'that person'." Because of this, Participant 8 admitted that:

[28] This statement could be interpreted as over-generalizing of Indigenous cultures, which I do not think was Participant 3's intention. Rather, my understanding is that Participant 3 was speaking to the emphasis on relationality shared between many Indigenous cultures, as many scholars have discussed (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; McGregor, 2004; Morrison, 2011). In contrast, relationality was not something Participant 3 saw as central to dominant Western society and, thus, not a part of many settlers' cultural conditioning.

> If I wasn't involved in this work, I think most of my engaging in reconciliation would be from more of a distance. But I think … I would be more innocent before, but now I'm more guilty [laughs] because I've ventured in and made more mistakes.

Here, Participant 8 highlights how engaging directly with Indigenous peoples – while "stressful," given the inevitability of making mistakes – has fostered a more personal sense of responsibility for supporting reconciliation through their work. It is worth noting that Participant 8's statement of being more "innocent" in their prior ignorance was said in jest, as they later reiterated that settlers' have a responsibility to work through these difficult emotions. As many scholars argue (Davis et al., 2017; Kluttz et al., 2020; Bohunicky et al., 2021), learning to navigate discomfort is intrinsic to solidarity-building and settlers must ensure that such difficult emotions do not discourage them from taking action to support and build relationships with Indigenous peoples. Ultimately, Participant 3 concluded, addressing these challenges requires settlers to "come in with humility" and "a mutual understanding" of the messiness and discomfort of the relationship-building process, which, Participant 1 asserted, must be an ongoing, lifelong commitment.

Along with interpersonal challenges, Participant 3 highlighted the tensions in the relationship-building process while working within an NGO structure. First, they underlined the busyness of their own position as a barrier to developing deeper relationships with their Indigenous partners, whom they wish they could support more:

> Because I have many other priorities and deliverables at work, I don't have the opportunity to consistently support or develop a relationship with them. And if I don't do my work, we don't necessarily get funding. … It would be ideal for me to be able to

> prioritize that relationship more and learn from them in a more direct way, as opposed to just being there on the periphery.

Participant 3 expressed that this was "not ideal" for building deeper relationships, as they remain limited to "an acquaintance sort of thing" that only progresses on an event-by-event basis. Participant 3's response indicates that although collaboration with Indigenous partners is emerging among Toronto food organizations, this is not (yet) central to their programming overall – an issue that, Participant 3 and my content analysis suggests, other Toronto organizations are struggling to address, possibly due to funding obligations and structural constraints, as I discuss in the next chapter.

Secondly, in their collaboration with Indigenous partners, Participant 3 described tensions between Indigenous protocols and organizational practices. They explained their experience "learning as [they] went" while supporting a recent Indigenous-led initiative:

> I led the coordination [and was] trying to make sure that we were doing it per protocol when interacting with elders. … The context is: you're an organization, you're technically on Indigenous land, and you're paying Indigenous people – or offering them honorarium gifts – to come and facilitate their teachings on this land, which technically they should have access to anyway. It's an uncomfortable dynamic to sit in. And there is a learning process that goes along with that of what the expectations are on the Indigenous people's side and what the expectations are organizationally.

Here, Participant 3 highlights how organizations' standard practices may not always be compatible with Indigenous approaches, which can be more complex than "just inviting a facilitator and getting the finance department to write them a cheque." Among food

organizations, Participant 3 continued, there is now "documentation being built up" regarding how to appropriately engage with Indigenous peoples, including "what is a protocol, how to approach an Indigenous person, when to offer tobacco, how money and resources are exchanged from the organization to the Indigenous person," etc. This echoes calls from Indigenous scholars including Corntassel and Gaudry (2014), who argue that the centering of Indigenous protocols and practices in relationship-building processes is crucial for holding settlers accountable to Indigenous peoples. For food organizations, Kepkiewicz (2018) explains, this may entail a shift away from conventional agendas and practices in order to more closely observe Indigenous cultural protocols in their work.

Finally, Participant 3 emphasized settler colonialism and capitalism more broadly as a barrier to relationship-building between settlers and Indigenous peoples. As they reflected,

> Relationships should be a central focus of how we move forward. But that is difficult in practice because of the systems that we work in [which] have actively tried to destroy those relationships, not only among and within Indigenous communities, but also between settlers and Indigenous communities. … The complexity is that we live in a system that does not exist in 'right' relationship to most things.

Here, Participant 3 highlights how building relationships in ways that fully align with Indigenous cultures is challenging and, perhaps, impossible when food organizations continue to operate within and through settler colonial structures. This connects to dialogues around solidarity-building as necessitating an "ethic of incommensurability," which Tuck and Yang (2012) explain as the recognition that various social justice projects may not always be able to "speak to one another" or "be aligned or allied" (p. 28) and, ultimately, "decolonization will require a change in the order of the world" (p. 31). Following Tuck and Yang (2012), Kepkiewicz (2018) argues

that settler and Indigenous food sovereignty movements are incommensurable due to settler food activists' claims to "food sovereign futures" and failure to center Indigenous food sovereignty struggles (p. 6). Recognizing these incommensurabilities, Snelgrove et al. (2014) argue, opens up the possibilities for finding "potential lines of affinity" between decolonization and other struggles, which can only be sustained by place-based relationships that are accountable to Indigenous peoples and "resist repeating colonial and other relations of domination" (p. 23). As participants' reflections demonstrate, some settler food activists in Toronto are making an effort to approach Indigenous-settler solidarities as "incommensurable, but not incompatible" (Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 3) by working through the clashes between Indigenous approaches and organizational practices as well as finding common ground in working to build better relations between peoples and the earth.

Conclusion: Relationships and responsibilities

This chapter has outlined the ways that Toronto food activists are building relationships with Indigenous peoples in their work. Based on my interviews with 9 settler food activists, I argue that relationships with Indigenous peoples are increasingly being recognized within Toronto's food movement as essential for fostering greater accountability to and support for Indigenous struggles for self-determination. By partnering with Indigenous organizations, pushing for greater Indigenous leadership, and maintaining Indigenous-centered spaces for ceremonies and traditional food practices, most participants are actively working to center Indigenous resurgence and build relationships on Indigenous terms.

While it is evident that work towards transforming Indigenous-settler relations is underway among Toronto food organizations, my findings also suggest that there is still significant work to be done. Participants' efforts to build relationships with Indigenous peoples

may be in the minority among food organizations in the city more generally, as my content analysis suggests that very few organizations seem to be prioritizing Indigenous partnerships or initiatives or speaking out about settler responsibilities to challenge and dismantle settler colonialism. Concurrently, some participants also highlighted the ways that current collaboration with Indigenous peoples tends to occur more peripherally on an event-by-event basis, rather than being central to organizational programming. Participants' responses reveal that there are growing intentions to increase Indigenous leadership at organizations, but that overall this has yet to occur, possibly due to resistance among some settler food activists to cede power to Indigenous peoples. Although participants called for greater efforts to center Indigenous resurgence at food organizations, they also highlighted the challenges organizations face in doing so while working within colonial institutional structures, as discussed further in the next chapter.

Following Indigenous scholars, good relationships are founded upon continual enactment of one's responsibilities to all living beings and the earth (Simpson, 2011; Corntassel, 2012; Kimmerer, 2013). As Indigenous food sovereignty scholars Coté (2016) and Daigle (2017) discuss, Indigenous communities have been acting upon these responsibilities by revitalizing the relationships that make up their food systems and societies more broadly. Such resurgent efforts are essential to Indigenous peoples' struggles for "sustainable self-determination," which are not premised on state-centric discourses of recognition but rather are based upon how Indigenous societies act upon their responsibilities to lands, community, and future generations (Corntassel, 2012, p. 92; Coulthard, 2014). Importantly, Snelgrove et al. (2014) explain, settlers also have responsibilities to their relations, including the original caretakers of the land and the land itself. "Settler colonialism," they conclude, "will not be undone by analysis alone, but through lived and contentious engagement with the literal and stolen ground on which people stand and come

together upon" (Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 27). As Kyle Whyte (2018) writes, "to be in a relationship is to have responsibilities toward the others in the relationship" (p. 12). In the quest to transform food systems, it is high time that settler food sovereignty movements act upon their responsibilities to Indigenous peoples by building meaningful relationships, challenging settler colonialism, and supporting Indigenous struggles for self-determination.

CHAPTER 6: FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN TORONTO: WORKING WITHIN AND CHALLENGING SETTLER COLONIAL STRUCTURES

Introduction

Indigenous scholars and their allies have called upon settler-led food sovereignty movements in Canada to take greater action to confront settler colonialism, center Indigenous struggles, and redistribute power to Indigenous peoples (Morrison, 2011; Daigle, 2017; Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018; Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018). Until recently, discussions of how settler colonialism shapes and is reproduced through food movement practices have been largely absent from food movement literature. Recent scholarship has begun addressing this gap, yet scholars highlight the need for further research exploring whether and how settler food activists are responding to these calls and working to transform settler colonial structures, both within and beyond food movements (Kepkiewicz, 2018; Bohunicky et al., 2021).

This chapter explores how 9 Toronto food activists understand their solidarity-building efforts in relation to the larger structures that shape their work. First, I discuss participants' reflections on the ways that food organizations' capacities are limited by dependency on funding, budgetary constraints, and precarious employment. Second, I outline how participants discussed organizational structures as colonial and highlighted the tensions of working within settler colonial systems while trying to decolonize and build solidarity with Indigenous peoples. Finally, I discuss participants' visions for the future of the food sovereignty movement in Canada including economic independence for food organizations, anti-capitalist food systems, greater Indigenous leadership, and Land Back.[29]

[29] "Land Back" refers to the social movement led by Indigenous activists across Turtle Island advocating for land restitution to Indigenous nations (Yellowhead Institute, 2019).

Following from the previous two chapters, this chapter turns more to the systemic scale rather than the individual or community scales, which were participants' primary focus in their reflections on their work and solidarity-building efforts. As discussed earlier in this thesis, I do not see these scales to be as neatly divided as they have been here, which is simply for clarity in writing. Rather, I understand the three major themes of (un)learning, relationship-building, and systemic change as iterative and generative of one another in the quest for transforming Indigenous-settler and human-environment relationships.

Drawing on participants' reflections, I argue that some food activists in Toronto are actively working to build solidarity with Indigenous peoples while navigating the tensions of operating within organizational limits and settler colonial systems. However, participants' responses demonstrate that food organizations' abilities to fully align with Indigenous struggles are restricted as they operate within and through settler-designed and imposed systems such as conventional funding models. While it is evident that some settler food activists are thinking deeply about how their work both reinforces and is shaped by settler colonial structures, more systemic changes are ultimately required to reshape the context in which settler food sovereignty movements operate so that they can more fully align with Indigenous struggles for land and sovereignty. Such changes may be seen as largely beyond the scope of food organizations whose focus is primarily at the community level. However, following participants and scholars (Morrison, 2011; Kepkiewicz, 2018; Bohunicky et al., 2021), settler food activists have a responsibility to support these structural shifts by continuing their (un)learning and building relationships with Indigenous peoples, as discussed in the previous chapters, while also advocating for policy action and governance systems that prioritize Indigenous resurgence, redistribution of power, and returning of land to Indigenous peoples.

Food organizations' limits: Dependency on funding, strained budgets, and precarious employment

Participants emphasized that food organizations must take more action to challenge settler colonialism and support Indigenous struggles, yet many expressed doubts about organizations' capacities to do so. As some participants explained, many food organizations act primarily as providers of short-term solutions and lack capacity to facilitate more structural change, although advocacy work around systemic issues is common among many organizations. As Participant 4 expressed,

> I think that [the organization] is good at what it does and we need these stopgap measures. Like, we need our community members to be able to gather and be able to eat. But – or and – the bigger system needs to change. Our food system is completely untenable. We do what we do, but we know it's not enough.

Similarly, Participant 7 expressed that while there is value in the "several solid programs" at their organization that provide members with prepared meals, foods to take home, garden space, and community support, the work is ultimately a "band-aid solution."

These responses speak to a common challenge faced by food organizations, where they typically fall into the role of emergency service providers and lack capacity to address the systemic causes of hunger and inequality. Following Peck and Tickell (2002), Wakefield et al. (2013) explain how non-profit food organizations have become an essential component of the "shadow state," filling in the gaps caused by neoliberal roll-backs on social services and, thus, supporting further retrenchment of the state. Simultaneously, these organizations are relegated to a "semi-autonomous" position, as they face externally-imposed funding obligations, but operate without "mechanisms for ensuring democratic governance" (Wakefield et al., 2013, p. 430).

Some organizations in Toronto are beginning to address these issues such as The Stop Community Food Centre, who have recently shifted towards 'community-centric fundraising' (CCF) by: minimizing public recognition for donors; surveying service users about top public policy concerns and sharing them with policy-makers and donors; and creating a community fund for allocating grants – without restrictions – to initiatives chosen by service users (Rio, 2022, para. 4-6). Maria Rio (2022) from The Stop calls for other food organizations to take greater action to "reckon with the origins of wealth in a capitalist system and our role in maintaining or enabling the non-profit industrial complex" that is "harmful and founded on White saviourism" (para. 5, 10). As many participants noted, working within current funding models limits food organizations' capacities to build relationships and solidarity with Indigenous peoples – efforts that may require more time and resources than organizations currently have to critically reflect, evaluate, and potentially redesign programming and practices to better align with Indigenous struggles. Below, I outline the key limitations identified by participants including dependency on funding, strained budgets, and precarious employment.

Participants highlighted their organizations' dependency on funding as a barrier to gaining more control over programming and directing it towards solidarity-building efforts. As Participant 3 explained, "non-profits rely on funding and grants to operate," meaning "you're constantly in the pocket of somebody else." The application process often entails "writing down what the grantor wants," which can result in a "disconnect unless there are specific grants" for things that organizations want to do or are needed for their communities. Similarly, Participant 9 highlighted the risks of getting caught up in the funding cycle, which can result in money being spent on frivolous things like "tents or stickers" for fundraising events or other kinds of

"hoopla," rather than being directed primarily at programming for their community. They continued:

> It is easy to fall into the non-profit model where a lot of it is like: turning everything into an event that can then be put into an end of year report so we can get funding next year. … Once you enter the grant circuit, it takes up so much of your time. There are so many requirements that a lot of your focus ends up shifting to securing more grant money.

These responses reflect a common challenge faced by non-profit organizations in navigating the funding landscape, where priorities and focus can shift towards securing grant funding rather than fulfilling the organization's core mission (Wakefield et al., 2013).

Moving through this grant circuit, food organizations also face budgetary constraints which impact organizational programming and labour practices. As Participant 8 shared, some community members had called for their organization "to create core funding for building solidarity within [the organization's] budget." However, they explained, their budget is "very limited. Even for other core programming, we are very stretched thin and financially stressed." Likewise, Participant 4 expressed that their organization is "bound by [their] small funds." They explained:

> We're in a funny place because we're mid-sized. So, it's not like there are only 5 of us and we can all be passionate about the same thing, get above board, and just do it. But we are also not [a large organization] who has so much money and can do whatever they want. … And we are also bound on the other side where we have this very official structure.

Here, Participant 4 highlighted how their organization is not only limited in funds, but that the process of acquiring such funds involves institutional challenges that can restrict certain

initiatives from moving forward. Therefore, they concluded, "the institution being an institution" makes it difficult to "talk about different structures of governance" that might be more decolonizing.

Some participants also highlighted labour issues within food movement work, which they saw as a constraint on organizations' capacities to enact the principles they advocate for. As Participant 8 reflected, "before moving to Toronto," they saw "organic growing and food justice" as oppositional because of the labour:

> I was like, 'it's impossible. You can't have both.' But moving to Toronto, I see that a lot of organizations are pushing for both conversations: ethical labour and ethical growing. … Among organic farms, 'internship' is a dirty word now, which is great.

While highlighting this progress, Participant 8 expressed that they still have "questions" about how this could realistically come to fruition in a context where food organizations are "still based on donation" and capitalist relations persist. As they concluded, "I still have in my head that, economically, it can't work to pay people the full value for farming and not have someone working six days a week, which is what farmers do." This response speaks to the ways that staff at food organizations are typically overburdened[30] in the context of strained budgets and capitalist relations and, thus, are limited in their capacities to engage more meaningfully in solidarity-building efforts.

Participant 9 also expressed concerns about whether securing more ethical employment is possible in a donor-centric model. They reflected on their work in urban farming at various non-profits and private companies, where workers are typically

[30] In some interviews for this project, I witnessed instances of the high demands faced by food organization staff. For example, one interview was interrupted 5 times within 35 minutes by colleagues, volunteers, and clients seeking the participant's assistance – a period that was technically the participant's lunch break.

> on short-term contracts because of the way granting works. A lot of places here rely on funding from Canada Summer Jobs in order to hire employees and it's forever feeding into this short-term precarious labour that young earth-workers are constantly being pushed into.

Participant 9 explained that the effects of this issue were felt by their organization "this past year," as they found themselves "losing valuable staff because the funding ended" which "stalled the amazing work" their organization had done to support greater inclusion of BIPOC "youth in earth-work." Because of these labour issues, Participant 9 shared that conversations among Toronto food activists often revolve around questions including: "How do we co-operatize? How do we get sustainable long-term employment?"

Overall, the responses above shed light on the challenges faced by food organizations in addressing settler colonialism and supporting Indigenous struggles while working in a donor-driven model. Funding institutions – often provincial or federal governments (Wakefield et al., 2013) – may have priorities that conflict with Indigenous partners' goals and funding requirements that might obstruct the redistribution of power required for achieving Indigenous food sovereignty (Bohunicky et al., 2021). For example, Rotz and Kepkiewicz (2018) outline how the majority of government funding related to food provisioning in Canada has been aimed at expanding trade and commercialization, as demonstrated by the Growing Forward 2 program which favoured large-scale export-oriented farming enterprises. Funding programs like this tend to fill "settler coffers" by supporting established commercial farmers, uphold narrowly-defined approaches to food provisioning, and fail to support "place-based, watershed-scale, or sector-wide efforts to enhance socio-ecological diversity" (p. 253-254). Similarly, as Robin et al. (2023) discuss, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)'s priorities for

agri-food programming often conflict with those of Indigenous communities. For example, Indigenous food producers face limitations due to Indigenous food practices not fitting the mold of conventional agriculture upheld by OMAFRA, as well as hunting restrictions and safety regulations on wild foods such as deer meat and fish (Robin et al., 2023). One Indigenous interviewee also expressed that OMAFRA tends to view "big ag" as "the only way to go," but for their community, initiatives connecting food to local employment, wellness, and reconnection to land were a higher priority. As they concluded, "we don't need to get into the farming game; we need to feed our nation" (Robin et al., 2023, p. 15). Following these scholars and participants' reflections, there is undoubtedly a need for a shift in government funding priorities away from large-scale commercial farming towards Indigenous-led programs that would support Indigenous food sovereignty with "consistent, secure, and untied" funding resources (Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018, p. 253).

Participants' discussions above demonstrate the ways that funding, budget, and employment issues limit organizations' capacities to align with Indigenous struggles. With such high turnover and underpaid work being the norm within food movement spaces, it may be difficult for deeper relationships to develop between settler and Indigenous food activists – an essential aspect of solidarity-building, as discussed in the previous chapter. Participants' reflections align with Bohunicky et al.'s (2021) interview findings, where representatives from settler-led food organizations expressed a lack of capacity to engage in additional work to confront settler colonialism and support Indigenous struggles, as such work tends to sit "perpetually on the side of their desk, crowded out by daily operations and larger projects" (p. 149). Although food activists in Toronto are undeniably making progress in their efforts to foster solidarity with Indigenous peoples, these existing organizational limitations restrict solidarity-

building and prevent more transformative change from occurring. Ultimately, participants' reflections reveal the coloniality of food organizations' structures and the larger system within which they operate, as I discuss further below.

Settler colonialism and food organizations: Colonial practices and systemic barriers

Along with the challenges discussed above, participants emphasized settler colonialism as a barrier to organizations' solidarity-building efforts. Participants discussed settler colonialism as manifesting at various scales, both within the organizational context and as the larger system within which organizations work. At the organizational level, some participants highlighted how food organizations can reify colonial relations through standard practices, funding models, problematic forms of leadership, and incomplete efforts to address racism within the food movement. While Participant 8 expressed that they generally see their "work as decolonization," they also "see that there are moments where we are colonizing, too." They continued:

> As farmers, when we are farming, we are taking land and we're taking from it. And then in our work with Indigenous partners, a lot of our structures and requirements can be an imposition of colonialism – whether it's financial requirements or policies and procedures of the workplace.

This response resonates with Participant 3's reflections in the previous chapter on the difficulties of building relationships while navigating tensions between Indigenous protocols and standard organizational practices – tensions that reflect the contradictions of trying to decolonize within the parameters of colonial systems. Participant 3 also underscored the funding model as "a colonizer system designed to control the flow of resources in a specific way that is not always beneficial to the people who live within a certain community." Unless there is further funding for Indigenous-led initiatives, Participant 8 reflected, "some gaps" will continue to exist in their

organizations' solidarity-building efforts, as they "are still held back by a lot of rules and budget limitations to fully give sovereignty to Indigenous partners in our space."

Participants 6 and 9 also emphasized leadership as a key factor in perpetuating colonialism in food movement spaces. Most of the community garden programs Participant 6 had worked in were "located in upper class affluent neighbourhoods run by White people," where there was a "revolving door" of volunteers and staff due to undemocratic leadership. Although they were "desperate to dig [their] fingers in the dirt," Participant 6 said that working under such controlling and individualistic leadership was "taking a toll on [their] health" and impeding the building of good relationships within garden communities. Similarly, Participant 9 reflected on leadership issues they have encountered working at both non-profits and private companies in Toronto as a farmer of Colour:

> Eventually, I had to make a rule for myself: I am never working under a White person's farm ever again. Even the most 'progressive' non-profits or social enterprises – sometimes those ones are even worse in terms of perpetuating anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism, and instituting colonial structures over activities that have been labeled as 'decolonial.'

Carrying on from discussions around (un)learning, Participant 9 attributed this issue largely to White settler leaders' unchallenged "biases that colour their actions and sometimes, despite their best intentions, end up perpetuating more harm." Participant 9 explained that while many People of Colour have had "experiences growing up" that "forced them to deconstruct certain ideologies," it seemed to be "much harder for people who come from affluent White backgrounds to even acknowledge that that's something they have to do."

Additionally, Participant 9 highlighted that even when White settler leaders develop a heightened awareness and attempt to support anti-racism and decolonization, their actions tend to be partial and often fail to continue past a certain point. For example, in recent years – particularly following the Black Lives Matter protests in 2020 – there was a "big push to bring in Black and Indigenous representation" at organizations by trying to "hire as many Black and Brown people as possible." However, Participant 9 explained that these efforts were largely performative and done "without doing any of the critical work to actually engage with these communities," and failed to address racism within organizations in tangible ways. As Participant 9 reflected,

> I've literally heard [White settler staff] be like, 'oh well, they are just not applying. What can we do? That's not our fault.' And it's like, no. There's a reason that Black and Indigenous people aren't applying to work for you. We talk! We know who's safe. We know who's exploitative.

Participant 9's response illustrates a widespread feeling among BIPOC food activists in Toronto that White folks have significantly more work to do to unpack the ways that our actions can perpetuate colonialism and racism in food movement work.

Meanwhile, others pointed to efforts within food movement communities to decenter White settlers and re-center Black and Indigenous perspectives. Participant 5 expressed that the "spaces [they] have encountered in urban agriculture decenter Whiteness" in ways that go beyond "false" narratives of "diversity and inclusion," through programs that prioritize low income and BIPOC peoples ranging from agricultural education to entrepreneurship. Additionally, Participant 1 outlined the shift in conversations at the annual conference hosted by the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) towards questions around Indigenous-

settler solidarity. They outlined how conference organizers were increasingly recognizing that "we can't have panels now of all White dude farmers. We don't need to, because there's so many other people involved who have knowledge. … We need Indigenous speakers and we need to face colonialism." Participant 1 also emphasized the need for these efforts to re-center Indigenous perspectives to occur "outside of organizations" among "farmers in general" in order to foster a culture of questioning: "how are we working with the land? Are we adding to colonialism or are we doing anything to actually choose a different path?" Although these conversations are progressing at organizations and conferences like the EFAO's, participants emphasized that more work must be done to take conversations around challenging colonialism within and beyond food movements towards more concrete action.

Looking beyond the organizational scale, participants also highlighted settler colonialism as a larger system that shapes food movement work. Because of its encompassing nature, some participants expressed uncertainty about how to 'decolonize' amidst persisting colonial structures at large. As Participant 3 expressed,

> How do you untangle all of the giant infrastructure that colonization has led to, which now we rely on as a society? There is no easy way to untangle this mess and it's a pretty big one. Like, how do you change this idea of land ownership when we have all these laws and structures around it that are constantly upholding it?

Recognizing the magnitude of the task of dismantling the intersecting institutions and systems that make up settler colonialism, Participant 3 expressed uncertainty about how such systems might be transformed. Participant 4 also felt uncertain about whether reconciliation or decolonization "can honestly ever happen … because settler colonialism is so extremely violent." Instead, they said,

> ‘Indigenization’ or ‘re-Indigenization’ makes a lot more sense because nobody is going back. … These institutions are colonial structures. You can’t decolonize a colonial structure because that’s what it is as an institution. But you can influence it, or you can Indigenize it in some way.

Like Participant 4, Participants 3, 6, and 8 also shared that conversations around Indigenous-settler solidarity are increasingly engaging with the concept of re-Indigenization in food movement spaces. However, I would argue that Participant 4’s response also reveals a lack of clarity around what the ultimate goal of “Indigenizing” is for food organizations. This response could be read as an acceptance of larger systems as things that cannot be changed. Thus, it seems that there may be a risk of re-Indigenization leaning more towards “mere inclusion” of Indigenous perspectives rather than fundamentally challenging colonial structures (Bohunicky et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Participant 4’s response can also be seen as reflective of a more general pessimism that many people feel about all-encompassing systems seeming impossible to dismantle – something that other participants expressed as well. Still, I would argue that settlers have a responsibility to push back against accepting colonial systems as unchallengeable, as this could do further damage in naturalizing the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous peoples and exploitation of their lands. As most participants recognized, colonial-capitalist violence is ultimately undesirable for the earth and all peoples, including settlers, and thus, we have reason to do the difficult work of imagining where the “elsewhere” of decolonization might be (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 36).

Based on participants’ reflections, it is evident that many settler food activists are thinking deeply about how their work both reinforces and is shaped by settler colonial structures. Many participants echoed scholars who have problematized settler food movements for

reproducing colonial relations through upholding settler claims to define and control food systems on Indigenous lands and failing to redistribute power to Indigenous peoples (Kepkiewicz, 2018; Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018; Bohunicky et al., 2021). Meanwhile, it also seems that there is room for deeper reflection among settler food activists on "how settler colonialism can be addressed through settler-imposed and settler-controlled systems and what they are willing to sacrifice in order to dismantle them" (Bohunicky et al., 2021, p. 156). Participants' frustrations with the limitations of working within settler structures point to the contradictions of trying to decolonize without the root cause of settler colonialism being addressed. Following Kepkiewicz (2018), who draws on Tuck and Yang (2018), these clashes reflect the 'incommensurability' between settler and Indigenous food sovereignty movements, where settler movements tend to be structured around supporting settlers' claims to define and control food systems, thus inhibiting Indigenous struggles for land and sovereignty. Participants' reflections demonstrate that settler claims to defining food systems are maintained in settler-designed and imposed systems like funding models, which legitimize certain initiatives over others and uphold the settler state's authority by imposing requirements and restrictions on how funds are used. Following Indigenous-settler solidarity scholars (Kepkiewicz and Dale, 2018; Rotz and Kepkiewicz, 2018; Bohunicky et al., 2021), I argue that settler food activists have a responsibility to take more action to dismantle settler colonial structures within and beyond food movements, let go of claims to Indigenous lands, and mobilize to support the returning of land and governing power to Indigenous peoples, as discussed further below.

Visions for the future of food sovereignty: Anti-capitalism and decolonization

Looking to the future, participants outlined their hopes for the food movement in Toronto and Canada more broadly. Participants 1, 3, 4, 7, and 9 echoed food sovereignty scholars (e.g.

Patel, 2009; Martínez-Torres & Rosset, 2014), calling for structural change away from capitalism and greater recognition of communities' "rights" to determine and control their food systems. Participant 1 underlined the importance of food sovereignty in a society where "people have been denied choice for so long" and, as Participant 4 said, are "at the whims" of companies like Loblaws, particularly in cities. Participant 7 highlighted how conversations have shifted from "food security to food sovereignty," moving away from paternalistic efforts to "help" and "feed" people in the short-term towards recognizing the "larger system behind this: capitalism." As Participant 7 expressed, "people's sovereignty and their right to feed themselves is essentially their right to life," which is why food movements are about "more than just a precariousness of potential hunger." Thus, they asserted, "people's right to live" is threatened "if they don't have sovereignty over feeding themselves." Likewise, Participant 1 emphasized the importance of food sovereignty as a guiding framework for the future that

> upholds that we can take care of ourselves … on micro levels, in community, where people are actually talking to each other where they live. I don't think food sovereignty can be a blanket situation. I see many communities coming together, but being able to advocate for themselves and being able to feed themselves in the way they want to.

Within this larger food sovereignty movement, participants shared their hopes for the future which included four main calls: greater economic independence for food organizations; building anti-capitalist food systems; centering Indigenous perspectives and leadership in food movement work; and advocating for the returning of land to Indigenous communities.

While participants saw systemic change away from capitalism as essential to food sovereignty movements and Indigenous-settler solidarities, some also underlined the difficulty of this task and that, in the meantime, food organizations must develop more economic

independence. As Participants 2, 7, and 9 expressed, greater economic independence would enable organizations to continue providing their programming as well as develop more Indigenous-centred initiatives. Participant 2 expressed that they "do not think [their organization] can do much on its own," given their reliance on grants and donations "often from the very corporate actors that we criticize." Thus, as Participants 7 and 9 also expressed, Participant 2 hopes for their organization to become more "financially independent by raising its own funds from sales of vegetables." Meanwhile, Participants 2 and 7 highlighted the tensions of pushing for social enterprise, where food access remains contingent upon consumers' ability to pay and providing "living wages while also subsidizing food costs" is challenging. Because of the constraints organizations' face while working within colonial-capitalist structures, Participant 7 pointed out that having "the non-profit sector as the spearhead" of strengthening the "economic side of food sovereignty" cannot be "viable" in the long term without more structural change. However, Participant 7 asserted, pushing for more "balance" between business and ethics is important in the meantime for organizations to gain more control over and be more purposeful with their programming to better support solidarity-building with Indigenous peoples.

Turning to more transformative visions for the future, some participants called for greater efforts to transition towards anti-capitalist food systems. Participant 9 underlined the need to "build a food system that is local, independent, and sustainable," and highlighted how shifts in this direction are currently underway in Toronto. Participant 9 discussed initiatives such as "incubator farms popping up" around the city, which they hope will increasingly incorporate "stronger education about cooperative farming and other forms of entrepreneurship that are not directly tied to capitalist profit-making." Participant 6 echoed calls for greater education around food sovereignty, emphasizing the need for "gardens or greenhouses in every school" for food-

based education. Participant 7 also called for more "cooperative food-buying" for communities, particularly low-income and racialized ones, to "collectively increase their buying power." Participant 7 saw this "movement in the direction of strengthening people's economic status" towards being "self-determining" as being at "the heart of the sovereignty part" of the food movement.

Throughout these discussions, most participants echoed food sovereignty principles by employing notions of 'sovereignty,' 'self-determination,' and all peoples' 'right' to gain greater control over food systems that have been defined by capitalist exploitation and corporate capture (Patel, 2009; Martínez-Torres & Rosset, 2014; Kepkiewicz, 2018). While these concepts have been a major theme in rallying cries for the movement, some scholars point to a lack of attention in food sovereignty discourse to what exactly 'sovereignty' means[31] (Edelman, 2014; Grey & Patel, 2015). This was evident in participants' responses, which generally did not include critical reflection on the implications of utilizing these notions as settlers on stolen lands. Indigenous and non-Indigenous ally scholars (e.g. Grey and Patel, 2015; Daigle, 2017; Kepkiewicz, 2018) have problematized settler claims to sovereignty and self-determination over food systems and lands that have been and continue to be disrupted, exploited, and stolen from Indigenous peoples. Participants' calls to strengthen settlers' 'sovereignty' and 'self-determination' surrounding food systems could be interpreted as reinforcing settler claims to "being stewards or 'keepers' of Indigenous lands" in their efforts to build sustainable food systems, which Kepkiewicz and Dale (2018) argue are "problematic in a context where settlers have violently appropriated land from

[31] This is not to say that food sovereignty scholars and activists utilize these terms uncritically. The international food sovereignty movement is extremely diverse with a wide range of strategies and visions for food system change, some of which encourage critical discussion on these concepts – e.g. the "diálogo de saberes" process as discussed by Martínez-Torres and Rosset (2014). However, here, I mean to highlight how ideas can easily be taken up by activists who see their aspirations reflected in such ideas, which may then be simplified or utilized without critical reflection. This is something I see as especially important for settler food activists in Canada to pay attention to, where discussions of food sovereignty, particularly as it relates to settler colonialism, are only starting to emerge.

Indigenous peoples" and degraded their human-land relationships (p. 984). Based on participants' responses, I argue that settler food activists have significant work to do to unpack and challenge settler claims to sovereignty, rights, and self-determination that remain pervasive within settler food movements. Looking to the future, settler food activists must think more deeply about who can legitimately claim 'sovereignty' in so-called Canada and who should be at the forefront of determining food system futures.

While there is room for more critical reflection on settler claims to notions like 'sovereignty,' many participants also called for *Indigenous* struggles for sovereignty and self-determination to be foregrounded in food movements going forward, as discussed further below. This may reflect their own (un)learning from Indigenous ways of knowing, which Kepkiewicz (2018), following Coté (2016) and Morrison (2011), argues can provide direction for settler food activists to shift away from state-centric notions of control and domination that reproduce colonial relationships, and move towards approaches grounded in accountability to place-based relationships. It is also worth noting that participants' emphasis on communities needing "sovereignty" over their food systems reflects the focus on anti-racism and equity within Toronto's food movement in support of many different groups who face marginalization under capitalism. Thus, there is opportunity for greater dialogue between settlers and Indigenous peoples regarding what 'sovereignty' and 'self-determination' entails for various groups in so-called Canada and how settlers, in all their diversity, can be more accountable to Indigenous peoples in transforming our food systems.

Overall, participants agreed that Indigenous struggles for land and sovereignty should be foregrounded in food movements going forward. Following from the previous chapter, most participants underlined the importance of continuing relationship-building efforts that are

developing at some food organizations in the city and the need for more organizations to do the same. Many participants also emphasized the need for broader conversations in food sovereignty movements to engage more closely with Indigenous perspectives and consider how food sovereignty relates to decolonization. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Participant 1 underlined that in order for their work to be aligned with food justice, settler food activists must make more space for "Indigenous folks to take the lead on this land and do what they need to do" in food movement spaces. Likewise, Participant 3 reflected:

> The reality is that Indigenous people have been growing food on this land for thousands of years. There's no way that we can *not* have them involved in conversations around food. And as we are talking about food justice and food sovereignty, it's going to have to include Indigenous perspectives for us to progress – as organizations, as individuals, and as societies.

Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8 also drew connections between their concerns about the climate crisis to the importance of prioritizing Indigenous leadership and ways of knowing. As Participant 3 expressed, "we are not getting out of this climate change thing" without learning from and with Indigenous peoples. Similarly, Participant 2 underlined that in order to "avoid ecological destruction … we have to solve our ecological problems" by working "in tandem with Indigenous peoples to form more sustainable relationships with the land."

Along with Indigenous leadership, many participants expressed hopes for the returning of land to Indigenous peoples and saw this as a keystone of the food movement's future. Participants 1 and 9 both emphasized that settler food activists and settlers more broadly have a responsibility to prioritize Land Back in order to build solidarity with Indigenous peoples. As Participant 9 asserted, "there is no decolonization if there isn't Land Back" and that "we are

simply soothing ourselves by saying that we are 'decolonizing' or 'reconciling' if we are not doing work that is furthering the Land Back movement." To support Land Back, Participants 1, 3, 4, and 7 pointed to the need for greater efforts to challenge and transform colonial approaches to land. As Participant 7 reflected,

> we have to ask questions like: 'Why does the 'Queen' own most of the land in Canada?' 'What is the purpose of that?' And then to people who look like the Queen, say: 'Hey, why do you own all of that land?'

Like Participant 7, Participant 4 hoped "to see some policies changing around the way land is used." Such changes, Participant 9 emphasized, must involve not only the returning of land to Indigenous nations, but also increasing advocacy for Indigenous leaders to "be at the forefront of decision-making" regarding how land is used. These responses resonate with arguments from scholars who underline the repatriation of land as key to Indigenous food sovereignty and resurgence and a precondition for food sovereignty in so-called Canada at large (Morrison, 2011; Coté, 2016; Kepkiewicz, 2018; Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018).

Meanwhile, not all participants understood Land Back in its literal sense as essential. Echoing other participants' calls for alternative approaches to land ownership, Participant 5 outlined how their organization is advocating for the formation of land trusts in Toronto to be used "permanently for farming." They explained that advocating for land trusts "probably opens up the perspective of like, whose land is it? But at the same time, going forward, we have to be realistic" and recognize that "ultimately, the earth and the climate" are the most pressing issues to address. Participant 5's response here seems to draw a separation between the climate movement and Indigenous struggles for Land Back, which contrasts with other participants' responses above that draw connections between these struggles. Reflecting on their role as a

White settler farmer, Participant 5 also explained that while they regularly "think about how to be more respectful to the land" following Indigenous ways of knowing, they also feel that they need access to land for farming in order "to survive." Regarding Land Back, they continued,

> we have to acknowledge that Land Back isn't the actual land. It's like, reconciliation, decolonization. It is not undoing what was done. It is acknowledging what was done, communicating, being open, coming together, having the conversations, and shifting the systems.

Participant 5's response reflects a common feeling among settlers that Land Back is more of an abstract concept that does not require action on the part of (particularly White) settlers to return stolen land to Indigenous communities. Additionally, Participant 5 pointed to the need to change larger systems of oppression, yet did not seem to see the returning of land as essential to this transformation. The abstraction of Land Back in this response is problematic as it distances the idea from its material goal. Following Tuck and Yang (2012), this makes Land Back, and decolonization more broadly, into a "metaphor" – a process that they argue "invades decolonization [and] kills the very possibility of decolonization," as it recenters Whiteness and settler innocence and decenters the demand to return land to Indigenous peoples (p. 3). As discussed in Chapter 4, these differences of understanding of big concepts like decolonization and Land Back point to the importance of further settler education for building mutual understanding and laying a foundation for Indigenous-settler solidarity and systemic transformation more broadly.

While Participant 5's response reveals some disjuncture in settler understandings of concepts like Land Back and decolonization, most participants emphasized that the act of

returning land to Indigenous peoples should be a central point of mobilization for food movements moving forward. As Participant 9 expressed,

> I see a lot of people try to take 'land back' and make it abstract. And like, no! Actual land back. I hope for that to become an acceptable thing for the average person who lives on Turtle Island [where] it's not shocking. It's not this lofty political goal. It's just something that we could see happen in our everyday reality.

Although Land Back was highlighted by many participants as a hope for the future, more specific visions for how to support the cause as food organizations seem to be largely undefined beyond advocacy. Participant 6 said that their organization is "advocating for 'give back the land'" and has "the right intentions," but "as a small organization, how much can they do?" Meanwhile, some of the smaller actions highlighted by participants could be interpreted as efforts to support Land Back within the limits of the organizational context, where land may be leased, owned by parent organizations, and/or tied to donors. Participant 9 underscored that Land Back efforts can take many forms and outlined how they try "to further Land Back by seed-bombing native species and participating in the removal of invasive species." Additionally, the creation of designated spaces for Indigenous community members, such as ceremonial structures and medicine gardens, could be seen as efforts to return land to Indigenous community members for them to use and manage themselves.

Land Back is evidently a theme in conversations within food organizations, yet some participants underscored that, ultimately, its success depends on more systemic transformation. However, most participants expressed a lack of faith in settler governments and overall pessimism about change occurring from the top down that might support sustainability, social justice, and decolonization. As demonstrated in this research, participants remain primarily

focused on (un)learning and relationship-building at the individual and community scales, perhaps as policy change is largely out of the domain of their work. However, this relative silence on specific visions for more structural change points to a need for greater dialogue between food movement actors across scales surrounding how settlers can best support the systemic changes necessary for decolonization, from policy shifts to transformation in governance systems more broadly.

Some scholars have offered some policy recommendations that would support Indigenous struggles for land and sovereignty and Indigenous-settler solidarities in food movements. While recognizing that a national food policy does not offer long-term solutions for decolonizing food systems as it reinforces settler state jurisdiction over Indigenous lands, Rotz and Kepkiewicz (2018) argue that food policy has potential as a short-term strategy for mitigating settler colonial violence. They call for policies that support the repatriation of land to Indigenous peoples, transformation of private property structures, strengthening of Indigenous food systems, and the building of non-extractive relationships throughout food system networks (Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018). In the Yellowhead Institute's report on OMAFRA and Indigenous food sovereignty in Ontario, Robin et al. (2023) problematize OMAFRA for prioritizing business-oriented projects that perpetuate land capture and contamination, hindering Indigenous peoples' abilities to engage in their own food practices, and for excluding Indigenous food projects from accessing adequate funding. Thus, they call for the creation of funding streams at OMAFRA dedicated to Indigenous food and agriculture that recognize Indigenous nations' rights to design and lead their own programming (Robin et al., 2023). In line with participants' reflections on funding issues, these scholars underscore the importance of shifting government funding priorities surrounding food provisioning towards consistent funding to Indigenous projects without restrictions imposed by

settler governments or organizations on how funds are used (Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018; Robin et al., 2023). This funding could come from a variety of sources including OMAFRA, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Agri-Food Canada, and public health funds and provide technical and institutional support to programs such as community kitchens, smokehouses, feasting halls, and gardens (Morrison, 2008; as cited in Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018, p. 253).

Based on my interviews, it seems that most participants regarded the realm of government as a lost cause for change and preferred to focus their efforts at the community level. This resonates with a trend in food movements discussed by Wilson and Levkoe (2022), who highlight how some food movements have been criticized for employing "individualizing and, at times, seemingly depoliticized approaches" by focusing primarily on the creation of alternatives at the grassroots (p. 105; Bohunicky et al., 2021). This focus on alternatives distances food movements from more confrontational approaches that target intersecting political economic structures, such as capitalism and settler colonialism (Wilson & Levkoe, 2022). While our investment in settler governments must not be too settled and should remain a short-term strategy towards more permanent transfers of power to Indigenous peoples, I would argue that there is a need for greater collaboration and confrontation across scales between food movement actors in order to design policies that support place-based efforts to decolonize food systems. As Wilson and Levkoe (2022) write, food movements would benefit by engaging more deeply with structural issues while also "maintaining a sense of possibility and experimentation that make participation in social change efforts relevant and tangible" (p. 116).

Following these calls for more politicized action in food movements, I would argue that this entails not only pushing settler governments to change policies to better support Indigenous food sovereignty and Land Back, but also challenging the very structures of settler colonial

governance that many settlers take as a given. Notably, while most participants in this project broadly recognized the need to dismantle settler colonialism, there was little discussion of what decolonizing governance systems might look like beyond the settler state.[32] Additionally, as discussed in the previous chapter, my content analysis reveals a lack of engagement by Toronto settler food organizations with more critical conversations around how food movement actors can advocate for systemic change away from settler colonialism and shifts in governance systems that support Indigenous struggles for land and sovereignty.

Many scholars have outlined how settlers can support such systemic transformation, which may provide some guidance for settler food sovereignty movements. Alongside the repatriation of Indigenous lands, Rotz and Kepkiewicz (2018) call for greater settler engagement with "Indigenous legal systems as laws that apply not only to Indigenous nations but also to settler communities" (p. 252). As discussed in Chapter 4, Sehdev (2011) argues that settlers have a responsibility to account for the ways that we are complicit in the violation of treaties and must engage more actively with treaty agreements on Indigenous terms in order to build better relations – a process that requires settlers to grapple with "the complexity of Indigenous jurisdictions that "might translate differently across the country, particularly in relation to both unceded and treaty lands" (Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018, p. 995). Following the Indigenous Circle of Food Secure Canada (2011), "permanent solutions must lie within the domain of inherent sovereignty to our [Indigenous] lands and ways of life" (p. 9) through actions including land repatriation and re-commitment to the "original nation-to-nation agreements as expressed in wampum belts, treaties, and other instruments which expressed our willingness to share the

[32] This relative silence in interviews around settlers and Indigenous governance systems point to a need for further research exploring whether and how settlers understand and are engaging with treaties and Indigenous laws and protocols, both in food movement spaces and beyond.

grand resources of the land" (PFPP, 2011, p. 11). Therefore, as settlers continue to (un)learn from Indigenous ways of knowing and build relationships with Indigenous peoples, we also have a responsibility to support the resurgence of Indigenous legal traditions and jurisdiction over their ancestral lands (Morrison, 2011; Daigle, 2017; Kepkiewicz and Dale, 2018).

Conclusion: Systemic transformation towards decolonization

This chapter has explored participants' reflections on their efforts to build solidarity with Indigenous peoples while navigating settler colonial structures that shape the landscape of food activism. While it is evident that some food activists are making progress in their solidarity-building efforts, food organizations' capacities to align with Indigenous struggles are ultimately restricted due to bureaucratic limitations such as funding requirements and budgetary constraints. Following participants' reflections and scholars (e.g. Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018; Robin et al., 2023), I argue that funding priorities – for both government and organizations' own funding programs – must shift towards supporting Indigenous food sovereignty initiatives in ways that affirm Indigenous communities' rights to design programs on their own terms and determine how funds are used. For activists at food organizations, these shifts in funding priorities would support solidarity-building efforts by moving decolonizing work from "the side of their desk" towards the center (Bohunicky et al., 2021, p. 149).

Participants also highlighted the ways that organizations can reinforce settler colonialism by imposing settler demands onto Indigenous community members. Although many participants are actively unpacking the implications of working within and through settler colonial structures, I argue that there is room for deeper critical reflection among settler food activists on how such systems might be dismantled and transformed. Furthermore, in their reflections for the future, many participants reiterated settler claims to sovereignty and self-determination that scholars

have problematized for remaining pervasive yet largely unexamined within settler-led food movements (Grey & Patel, 2015; Kepkiewicz, 2018). Thus, settler food activists must do more to reckon with the coloniality of food movement work, let go of settler claims to authority over food systems on stolen lands, and push for more structural change that would enable more permanent redistribution of power to Indigenous peoples.

Finally, most participants' echoed calls from scholars to foreground Indigenous leadership and Land Back in Canadian food sovereignty movements moving forward. Participants highlighted some ways that organizations are supporting Land Back and centering Indigenous leadership at the community level, yet there was a relative silence on what more systemic transformation might look like. Therefore, I argue that further dialogue and collaboration between food movement actors across scales is necessary to support policy formation and the transformation of governance systems towards decolonization. This would require settler food movements to support more permanent transfers of power to Indigenous peoples and the restoration of Indigenous legal traditions as systems that apply not only to Indigenous peoples, but also to settler communities (Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018; Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018). By aligning with Indigenous struggles in these ways, we might begin to enter relationships of solidarity based on fostering "the shared authority to speak the law together, to find ways to become properly entangled" (Pasternak, 2017, p. 269).

As we work to transform settler consciousness and build decolonizing relationships, settler food activists also have a responsibility to confront and advocate for the dismantling of settler colonial structures. As Participant 3 reflected, "we live in a system that does not exist in 'right' relationship to most things," and the persistence of such a system ultimately restricts our abilities to build good relations between all peoples and the earth. While Indigenous

communities focus on their own healing and resurgence of "the Indigenous inside," I would argue that settlers have a responsibility to actively work to "transform the colonial outside" (Simpson, 2011, p. 17). Following from the previous chapter, this transformation will necessitate the building of an "ethic of incommensurability," which recognizes that "decolonization will require a change in the order of the world" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 31) that will "not end in neat resolution for all of those involved, particularly not settlers" (Kepkiewicz, 2018, p. 5). Such a change in order also demands that settlers do not lose sight of the fact that "at its core, decolonization is about land" (Boudreau Morris, 2017, p. 469; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Thus, in order to build solidarity in meaningful ways, settler food sovereignty movements must let go of settler claims to Indigenous lands, – and 'rights' to define food systems on those lands – and advocate more explicitly for the returning of land and power to Indigenous peoples. As Indigenous and non-Indigenous ally scholars (Morrison, 2011; Coté, 2016; Kepkiewicz, 2018; Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018), these conditions are essential to achieving not only Indigenous food sovereignty, but also food sovereignty in so-called Canada more broadly.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Thesis summary

This thesis has explored how nine settler food activists in Toronto are responding to calls from Indigenous activists and scholars for settler food sovereignty movements to align with Indigenous struggles for land and sovereignty (e.g. Morrison, 2011; ICFSC, 2010; Coté, 2016; Daigle, 2017). Drawing on academic scholarship, public media, interviews, and a content analysis of 17 organizations' websites, this project has explored how these efforts are taking shape in the context of food organizations in the city. This project has aimed to address a relative gap in food sovereignty scholarship surrounding Indigenous-settler relations in Canadian food movements. It responds to calls for further research examining whether and how settler food activists are working to confront settler colonialism and support Indigenous struggles for their food systems, land, and sovereignty (Kepkiewicz, 2018; Bohunicky et al., 2021). Below, I provide a summary of each chapter and reflect on their contributions.

In Chapter 2, I situated this research within the fields of food sovereignty, critical Indigenous studies, and Indigenous-settler relations in food movements. First, I explained how food sovereignty literatures have generally remained focused on settler land dispossession and settler claims to defining food systems, without tending to key questions identified by scholars surrounding what 'sovereignty' means and what the role of the state should be (Patel, 2009; Edelman, 2014), particularly with regards to Indigenous struggles in Canada (Grey & Patel, 2015; Kepkiewicz, 2018). Next, I outlined the important insights provided by Indigenous food sovereignty and Indigenous-settler relations scholars regarding food movements in Canada. For example, scholars have problematized settler movements for hindering Indigenous food sovereignty efforts by upholding the settler state's authority and settler claims to Indigenous

lands (Grey & Patel, 2015; Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018; Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018). Meanwhile, Indigenous approaches to food sovereignty complicate dominant rights-based and state-centric food sovereignty frameworks, as they connect to larger struggles for self-determination and emphasize Indigenous peoples' responsibilities to their relationships with lands, waters, and non-human kin (Coté, 2016; Daigle, 2017; Whyte, 2018). Thus, scholars have called upon settler movements to take greater action to: unpack and challenge settler colonial systems within and beyond food movement work; challenge dominant land ownership regimes; advocate for policy shifts in support of Indigenous food revitalization initiatives; and redistribute governing power and land to Indigenous communities (Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018; Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018; Bohunicky et al., 2021). Finally, Chapter 2 outlined some key elements in dialogues around Indigenous-settler solidarities that this project aims to expand upon most specifically, including calls for greater settler education, self-reflexivity, and relationship-building with Indigenous peoples (Jafri, 2012; Dhamoon, 2015; Snelgrove et al., 2014; Corntassel and Gaudry, 2014; Boudreau Morris, 2017).

By unpacking these tensions and highlighting Indigenous scholars' contributions to the food sovereignty canon, I have aimed to contribute to theorizations of food sovereignty in Canada that engage with Indigenous perspectives and struggles for resurgence. This is essential not only for ensuring that Indigenous voices are prioritized in Canadian food movement scholarship going forward, but also for supporting larger shifts in settler consciousness around our responsibilities to dismantle settler colonialism and support Indigenous struggles for self-determination. Put simply, Kepkiewicz (2018) argues, Indigenous resurgence must be understood as a "precondition to building food sovereignty in settler colonial contexts" (p. 60). In engaging with Indigenous scholarship, I have also aimed to contribute to discussions of settler

colonialism as it relates to food movements, which Bohunicky et al. (2021) point out has largely been overlooked in past food sovereignty work that remains focused on capitalism as the primary structure of oppression. Rather, engaging with settler colonialism as a distinct yet intersecting force with other systems including capitalism and white supremacy is important to challenging not only capitalist relations, but also racist and colonial relations within the global food system (Kepkiewicz, 2018). Additionally, I see Indigenous frameworks as essential for guiding our thinking around food system change in ways that center our responsibilities to our relationships with – rather than 'rights' to or 'ownership' of – lands, waters, and non-human life on which we and our food systems rely.

In Chapter 3, I outlined my methodology as guided by principles from feminist and Indigenous studies including relational accountability and self-reflexivity. Following Indigenous methodologies (e.g. Wilson, 2008; Kovach, 2021), I aimed to center relationship-building throughout the research process by engaging in acts of reciprocity such as honorariums and contributing my time as a volunteer at two food organizations. Self-reflexivity was also integral to my research process, informing my initial interest in this topic and my desire to support my own and fellow settlers' (un)learning in doing this research. This also entailed reflection on the limits of my perspective as a White settler graduate student working within the constraints of Western academic systems. By focusing on settler food activists, this research has aimed to "reverse the gaze" in an effort to prevent further labour being placed upon Indigenous peoples to educate settlers and highlight settler responsibility to address systems of oppression that we participate in and benefit from. This chapter also outlined the logistical challenges caused by the ethics review process in hopes of contributing to further discussion around how ethics review might be improved to better support community-based research. Finally, I explained my process

for outreach, interviews, website content analysis, transcription and interview data analysis, and plans for knowledge dissemination. In being transparent about my research process, I have aimed to contribute to dialogues around doing research in ways that challenge colonial practices and amplify Indigenous and other marginalized voices in academia, even while navigating the tensions of working within conventional academic structures.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 explored my findings following three major themes: (un)learning, relationship-building, and systemic change. In Chapter 4, I discussed participants' perspectives on settler education as a key component of building solidarity with Indigenous peoples. Participants echoed calls in the literature (e.g. Morrison, 2011; Kepkiewicz, 2018) for settlers to take responsibility for their own education and build mutual understandings of colonial realities in order to lay a foundation for decolonizing relationships to flourish. Participants' responses resonated with Corntassel and Gaudry's (2014) call for fostering a "pedagogy of discomfort" as a productive tool for cultivating settler awareness of colonialism, positionality, complicities, and responsibilities to Indigenous peoples. Next, I outlined participants' reflections on unpacking their own settler positionalities and how this discomforting process helped them draw connections between diverse experiences of oppression and build mutual understanding with Indigenous colleagues. In dialogue with scholarship on settlerhood (e.g. Sehdev, 2011; Phung, 2011; Jafri, 2012), I discussed how participants saw positionality as a site for unpacking their own privilege and complicity in colonial structures, and their obligations to work towards dismantling them. Finally, I outlined participants' efforts to learn from Indigenous knowledges and principles, such as relationality and reciprocity, in order to challenge biases and reimagine their relationships to land. Based on participants' reflections, I argued that many food activists in Toronto are actively engaging in (un)learning processes in response to calls from scholars and

activists to consider more deeply the role of food activism in challenging settler colonialism and supporting Indigenous resurgent struggles.

In Chapter 5, I looked at participants' efforts to build relationships with Indigenous peoples through their work. Drawing upon media sources, my content analysis of 17 organizations' websites, and participants' reflections, I provided some context for Toronto's food movement and how conversations surrounding decolonization and food system change are taking shape. In dialogue with Indigenous and ally perspectives on solidarity (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Snelgrove et al., 2014; Corntassel & Gaudry, 2014; Kepkiewicz, 2018), I explored participants' reflections on their organizations' relationship-building efforts including partnerships with Indigenous organizations, increased Indigenous leadership, and creation of Indigenous-centered spaces. Building on discussions of navigating discomfort in Chapter 4, participants underlined the messiness and tensions in relationship-building processes due to incompatibilities between organizational expectations and Indigenous protocols. Based on participants' reflections, I argued that settler food activists are beginning to take action to build relationships with Indigenous partners by stepping back, creating space, and "passing the mic" to Indigenous peoples in their programming. However, my content analysis revealed that very few organizations seem to be prioritizing Indigenous partnerships, initiatives, or conversations around confronting settler colonialism in their public media. Thus, I argued that participants' efforts to build relationships with Indigenous peoples may ultimately be in the minority among Toronto food organizations more broadly and, therefore, greater action must be taken to build meaningful relations of solidarity.

While Chapter 4 and 5 were focused primarily on solidarity-building at individual and community scales, Chapter 6 explored the structural factors that shape and constrain participants'

solidarity-building efforts. Participants highlighted the ways that food organizations are limited in their capacities to align with Indigenous struggles due to dependency on donor-centric funding models, budgetary constraints, and precarious employment. Drawing on scholarship exploring Indigenous-settler relations in food movements (e.g. Kepkiewicz, 2018; Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018; Bohunicky et al., 2021), I outlined participants' reflections on the coloniality of organizational structures and practices and the contradictions of trying to decolonize while working within settler-designed systems. Following Tuck and Yang (2012) and Kepkiewicz (2018), I argued that these clashes identified by participants point to the 'incommensurability' between settler and Indigenous food sovereignty movements, where settler food movement work is generally structured in ways that uphold settler control over food systems, and thus cannot fully align with Indigenous struggles for land and sovereignty.

Finally, Chapter 6 concluded with a discussion of participants' visions for the future of food sovereignty in Canada, which included calls for economic independence for food organizations, anti-capitalist food systems, increased Indigenous leadership, and Land Back. As some participants' expressed settler claims to 'rights' and 'sovereignty' in their visions for the future (common within food sovereignty discourse), I argued that settler food activists in Toronto have significant work to do to challenge such notions that effectively re-center settlers and decenter Indigenous sovereignties and settler responsibilities to Indigenous peoples in conversations around food system change. Meanwhile, most participants underscored the need to prioritize Indigenous leadership and Land Back in food movements going forward. However, in interviews, there was a notable silence around forms of policy change and governance systems that might be more decolonizing. Thus, following calls from scholars (e.g. Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018; Robin et al., 2023), I argued that settler food activists have a responsibility to advocate for

policy changes – e.g. repatriation of lands and increased government funding for Indigenous food initiatives – that would support Indigenous food systems and struggles for sovereignty at large. Additionally, greater settler engagement with treaties and Indigenous governance systems as laws that apply to both Indigenous peoples and settlers would enable more decolonizing relationships between settler and Indigenous peoples to flourish. Overall, I argued that settler food sovereignty movements must do more to reckon with the coloniality of food movement work, let go of settler claims to authority over food systems on stolen lands, and push for systemic changes that would facilitate more permanent redistribution of power to Indigenous peoples.

These three empirical chapters shed light on how conversations around Indigenous-settler relations and decolonization are taking shape in Toronto's food sovereignty movement, highlighting both the progress and the challenges of Indigenous-settler solidarity-building. My findings demonstrate that shifts in support of Indigenous-settler solidarities are underway within food movement spaces in Toronto, yet there is still significant work to be done to support Indigenous struggles and confront settler colonialism, both within and beyond food movement structures. While food organizations face structural barriers like dependency on donor-driven funding models and budgetary constraints, there are clear areas where greater action can be taken, as evidenced by participants' explanations of what is already underway at some organizations. For example, more Toronto food organizations could take action to: facilitate greater settler education surrounding colonialism, settler complicities, and responsibilities to Indigenous peoples; center Indigenous leaders and follow Indigenous protocols in carrying out programming; and give space to Indigenous partners to manage and utilize as they see fit.

At the same time, participants' responses suggest that systemic factors restricting organizations' capacities to form relations of solidarity must be addressed, and that this may require action beyond food organizations at the policy level. Rotz, Xavier, and Robin (2023) offer some recommendations for the future of Indigenous relations in food policy spaces including: improving consultation processes by engaging in early and ongoing dialogue with Indigenous communities; increased support for Indigenous-led food projects on their own terms rather than those of the government; greater investment by governments in settler education to address anti-Indigenous racism within the agri-food sector; and establishing a roadmap for agri-food actors to work with Indigenous communities in ways that "support communities in enacting their own visions" and shift towards models of "nation-to-nation governance, such as co-visioning and management and shared decision-making at upper institutional levels" (p. 107).

These findings also point towards larger questions for food sovereignty movements in settler colonial contexts, particularly surrounding land. While the Land Back movement came up in some interviews, there was little discussion surrounding what that might look like in practice, suggesting that Land Back must be a key focal point for further dialogue within and beyond Canadian food movements moving forward.[33] As Amy Seesequasis from the Treaty Land Sharing Network discusses, Land Back can mean many things which, at times, may involve physically returning land to an Indigenous community. However, she emphasizes that Land Back is more about fully recognizing land as Indigenous land, ensuring land access for Indigenous peoples to enact their traditional practices, and involving Indigenous peoples in decision-making processes surrounding land (RAIR Collective, 2022, 35:05). As this research suggests, larger

[33] This was also reflective of my own ignorance surrounding Land Back, which is something this research has pushed me to think about more deeply. Reflecting on past conversations about Land Back with friends and family, it seems that many people feel uncomfortable and/or too uninformed to speak about this topic openly – something that must change for settlers to act in more accountable ways as Treaty people.

systemic shifts will be essential to support these Land Back processes and the developing of deeper solidarities between settler and Indigenous peoples. However, following from my discussions with participants around (un)learning, I think a key first step for settlers to take towards Land Back is to deconstruct dominant views of land. As Kepkiewicz and Dale (2018) discuss, settlers have responsibility to challenge private property relations which are regularly invoked "by settler governments to facilitate and 'legally' justify the occupation of Indigenous lands," reproducing land as a "site of capital accumulation" and marginalizing alternative types of land relations (e.g. communal land trusts, incubator farms, etc.) (p. 986). Ultimately, Amy Seesequasis reflects, Land Back will require us to correct our treaty relationships with one another by learning to share land

> because one treaty partner is hanging onto it and they are making all the decisions. When we look at climate change and everything that's happening… treaties were to look seven generations ahead. And right now, it's looking pretty bleak for seven generations ahead. And that's what Land Back means. … Let's work together and make a future that's bright and a future that's based on what those treaties were. (RAIR Collective, 2022, 40:36)

Overall, this research contributes to dialogues around food sovereignty and Indigenous-settler relations in so-called Canada. It also contributes to understandings of food movements as potential spaces for transformation of Indigenous-settler relations, which Kepkiewicz (2018) points out has been underexplored in literature examining Indigenous-settler solidarities (e.g. Land, 2015; Davis et al., 2017; Boudreau Morris, 2017), but is now emerging (e.g. Bohunicky et al., 2021). While I have aimed to speak primarily to food activist communities at the grassroots, where participants and I are involved, this research may also contribute to greater dialogue between food movement actors, researchers, and policy makers surrounding what changes might

support widespread decolonization of our food systems and relationships with Indigenous peoples. My hope is that this project serves as an intervention in support of fostering more critical conversations among settler food activists – and settlers in general – surrounding our complicities and responsibilities to Indigenous peoples in our quest to build more sustainable food systems.

Limitations and future directions

Looking to the future, the limitations of this project reveal opportunities for further work exploring Indigenous-settler relations. One limitation of this project is its smaller scope, as participants were sampled from only two organizations in Toronto. Thus, further research might look at Toronto food organizations' efforts to build solidarity with Indigenous peoples at a larger scale, perhaps through city-wide surveys or interviews across a greater number of organizations. This project is also limited in that it centers settler voices, including my own. My perspective as a white settler novice academic is undoubtedly limited and, thus, future work exploring Indigenous-settler relations in Toronto's food movement that center Indigenous perspectives would be invaluable. As all participants involved in this project were settlers, it would be important for future work to engage with Indigenous food activists in the city to better understand more specifically what Toronto-based Indigenous activists see as necessary for building place-based solidarities between settler and Indigenous food activists.

In doing this project, further questions have also come up that may point to new directions for future research. Following from Chapter 4, my discussions with participants around settler education mainly focused on process rather than the specific content from which participants were (un)learning. Thus, I see opportunity for further exploration of questions related to education including: What kind of learning sources should settlers engage with to

facilitate transformation of settler consciousness on a larger scale? How are discussions around changes to school curriculums taking shape in Canada to support inclusion of Indigenous perspectives? Beyond primary educational contexts that cater to youth, what types of curriculum should be developed for settler adults' (un)learning and in what spaces might this education occur (e.g. workplaces, colleges and universities)? Following Indigenous-settler solidarity scholars who argue that decolonizing solidarities must be grounded in place-based relationships (Snelgrove et al., 2014; Davis et al., 2017), it seems that settler education must also attend to the specificity of the places and peoples whose lands we live on. In contrast, the breadth of this project may be another limitation, as it considers what Indigenous-settler solidarity looks like in food movement spaces on general terms, rather than, for example, focusing specifically on Anishinaabe or Mississauga perspectives on food systems and Indigenous-settler relationships. Future work might explore processes of settler education and relationship-building towards solidarity in accordance with specific Indigenous nations' knowledges and protocols.

Other questions have come up regarding how to build better relations in the context of a city. As discussed in Chapter 4, many participants reflected on the importance of reimagining their relationships to land, moving away from Western approaches that view land as something to be controlled and owned and aligning more with Indigenous approaches that underline the need to care for lands, waters, and ecosystems in reciprocal ways. Many of the Toronto food activists I have spoken with have expressed how lucky they feel to have direct access to plants and 'natural' spaces through food-related work and how this access has supported their own (un)learning. I wonder how settlers who are not actively working 'with' the land in their daily life might build connections to land in Toronto and, consequently, access the more transformative (un)learning that these experiences can provide. Relatedly, such feelings of

disconnection within the city context may be a barrier to the developing of place-based relationships between Indigenous and settler peoples which is essential for solidarities to flourish, as discussed in Chapter 5. In an urban context where people may be isolated and in a world where relationships are increasingly virtualized in digital spaces, how might people actively cultivate and foster a sense of accountability to place-based relationships with one another?

Looking more to the structural level, I am curious about what conversations are (or are not) underway among policymakers surrounding food policy and decolonization. While I touched on this briefly in Chapter 6, policy and governance were largely outside of the scope of this project. However, considering calls for policy shifts and greater attention to Indigenous governance systems (PFPP, 2011; Rotz & Kepkiewicz, 2018; Kepkiewicz & Dale, 2018; Rotz et al., 2023), I wonder: In what ways are food movements advocating for more decolonizing forms of food policy? How are conversations surrounding Indigenous food systems and Land Back taking place in food policy spaces at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels? As I write this thesis on lands subject to the Dish With One Spoon wampum, I understand settlers as having obligations to understand and act upon our treaty responsibilities to share the land and its gifts peacefully between peoples and in sustainable ways (Talking Treaties, 2022) – responsibilities that settlers have historically overlooked and/or deliberately violated. In the words of Ange Loft (2021): “Everyone has the right to eat and sustain their lives, but there are some rules” (p. 22). As conversations around treaties progress, future work might explore whether and how settlers understand these rules and are taking action to honour their treaty responsibilities to the specific Indigenous nations on whose lands we live.

Concluding thoughts: Building decolonizing solidarities

How do we build good relations? This question has been at the core of this project and, I think, must be the compass that guides the future of food sovereignty movements in so-called Canada. As we work to transform our food systems and the "current death-making order of things" at large (Maynard & Simpson, 2022, p. 26), I take guidance from Indigenous scholars who underscore relationships as the centre point on which all life turns (e.g. Battiste and Henderson, 2000; Morrison, 2011; Corntassel, 2012). Kyle Whyte (2020) suggests that humanity has crossed not only an ecological tipping point, but also a "relational tipping point" due to the failure of settler colonial-capitalist powers to care for the "relational qualities" – including trust, accountability, and reciprocity – that form the foundation of good relations between peoples and the earth (p. 3). These kin relations, Whyte (2020) argues, must be established and, in many cases, repaired for coordinated collective action to be possible in the face of the increasingly urgent socio-environmental crises we face today.

For food movements, repair and renewal of good relations between settlers and Indigenous peoples requires the building of decolonizing solidarities, which, after doing this research, I see as grounded in a few key principles. First, following Davis et al. (2017), settlers have an obligation to support the transformation of "settler consciousness" by engaging in (un)learning processes to confront our biases, privilege, complicities, and responsibilities to dismantle the settler colonial status quo (p. 402). Working towards such transformation also necessitates an active engagement with discomfort, both in (un)learning and relationship-building processes (Corntassel & Gaudry, 2014; Boudreau Morris, 2017). Second, decolonizing solidarities are what Jeff Corntassel calls "spatial solidarities" and are thus grounded in the cultivation of personal, place-based relationships between Indigenous and settler peoples

(Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 24; Kluttz et al., 2020). Such relationships must entail the centering of Indigenous leadership, protocols, and ways of knowing with settlers in "supporting roles" (Corntassel & Gaudry, 2014, p. 184). Finally, following Tuck and Yang (2012) and Kepkiewicz (2018), Indigenous-settler solidarities require an "ethic of incommensurability," where it is understood that decolonial and other social justice struggles may not always be fully aligned. Thus, building 'good' relations will not necessarily "end in neat resolution for all those involved, particularly not settlers" (Kepkiewicz, 2018, p. 5). Rather, enacting an ethic of incommensurability will ultimately demand a "change in the order of the world" and the returning of land – "all of the land" – to Indigenous peoples (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 31, 10).

Ultimately, solidarity-building efforts must be continual and unending. In the world of food activism and non-profit work, Participant 1 expressed, there is a tendency to seek a "stamp" of completion at the end of a project, akin to a final project report submitted to a donor. However, they continued,

> I'm hoping that everyone begins to understand that the grey is where we have to live in our own relationships, in our own lives. … There isn't going to be this stamp of: 'You did the thing!' There is no wiping our hands of it. It's ongoing and it's forever. … And I'm so happy that there's no stamp of 'okay, you've reached the end,' because that's not life, right? Like, if we've ever reached the end, then that means we've actually just settled.

My hope is that this project contributes to the unsettling of food sovereignty in Canada and serves as a reminder to settler food activists of our responsibilities to reimagine our approaches to food system change. Only through ongoing acts of accountability to our relations can we

confront settler colonialism and meaningfully support Indigenous struggles for food systems, lands, and sovereignty.

REFERENCES

Akram-Lodhi, A. H. (2015). Accelerating towards food sovereignty. Third World Quarterly, 36(3), 563-583. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1002989

Alonso-Fradejas, A., Borras, S. M., Holmes, T., Holt-Giménez, E., & Robbins, M. J. (2015). Food sovereignty: Convergence and contradictions, conditions and challenges. Third World Quarterly, 36(3), 431–448. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1023567

Arnaquq-Baril, A. (Producer/Director). (2016). Angry Inuk [Motion picture]. Canada: EyeSteelFilm & the National Film Board of Canada.

Barker, J. (2005). For whom sovereignty matters. In J. Barker (Ed.), Sovereignty matters: Locations of contestation and possibility in indigenous struggles for self-determination (pp. 1–31). University of Nebraska Press. https://nycstandswithstandingrock.files.wordpress.com/2016/10/barker-2005.pdf

Barker, A. J. & Pickerill, J. (2020). Doings with the land and sea: Decolonising geographies, Indigeneity, and enacting place-agency. *Progress in Human Geography*, *44*(4), 640–662. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132519839863

Battiste, M. (2000). *Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

Battiste, M. & Henderson, J. Y. (Sa'ke'j). (2000). *Protecting Indigenous knowledge and heritage: A global challenge*. UBC Press. https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/york/detail.action?docID=5498039.

Bernstein, H. (2014). Food sovereignty via the 'peasant way': A sceptical view. *Journal of Peasant Studies, 41*(6), 1031-1063. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2013.852082

Bohunicky, M., Levkoe, C., & Rose, N. (2021). Working for justice in food systems on stolen land? Interrogating food movements confronting settler colonialism. *Canadian Food Studies, 8*(2). https://doi.org/10.15353/cfs-rcea.v8i2.452

Boudreau Morris, K. (2017). Decolonizing solidarity: Cultivating relationships of discomfort. *Settler Colonial Studies, 7*(4), 456–473. https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2016.1241210

Brown, L. & Strega, S. (2005). Introduction: Transgressive possibilities. In L. Brown & S. Strega (Eds.), *Research as resistance: Critical, Indigenous and anti-oppressive approaches* (pp. 1–18). Canadian Scholars' Press. https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=145914&site=ehost-live

Carter, S. (1990). *Lost harvests Prairie Indian reserve farmers and government policy*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

Cidro, J., Adekunle, B., Peters, E., & Martens, T. (2015). Beyond food security: Understanding access to cultural food for urban Indigenous people in Winnipeg as Indigenous food sovereignty. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research, 24*(1), 24–43. https://cjur.uwinnipeg.ca/index.php/cjur/article/view/9/7

City of Toronto. (2001). Toronto's Food Charter. *City of Toronto.* https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2018/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-118057.pdf

City of Toronto. (2021). City Council approves first Black Food Sovereignty Plan. *City of Toronto.* https://www.toronto.ca/news/city-council-approves-first-black-food-sovereignty-plan/

City of Toronto. (2022). Actions to advance truth and justice for Indigenous people in the city of Toronto: Reconciliation action plan 2022-2032. *City of Toronto.* http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2022.EX31.1

Community Food Centres Canada. (2022). Share: Good Food organization partners. *Community Food Centres Canada.* https://cfccanada.ca/en/What-We-Do/Good-Food-Organizations

Corntassel, J. (2012). Re-envisioning resurgence: Indigenous pathways to decolonization and sustainable self-determination. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society, 1*(1), 86–101.

Corntassel, J. & Gaudry, A. (2014). Insurgent education and Indigenous-centered research: Opening new pathways to community resurgence. In B. L. Hall, C. Etmanski, & T. Dawson (Eds.), *Learning and Teaching Community-Based Research* (pp. 167–185). University of Toronto Press.

Coulthard, G. S. (2014). *Red skin, white masks: Rejecting the colonial politics of recognition*. University of Minnesota Press.

Coté, C. (2016). "Indigenizing" food sovereignty. Revitalizing Indigenous food practices and ecological knowledges in Canada and the United States. *Humanities*, *5*(57), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.3390/h5030057

Daigle, M. (2017/2019). Tracing the terrain of Indigenous food sovereignties. *The Journal of Peasant Studies, 46*(2), 297–315. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2017.1324423

Daschuk, J. (2013). *Clearing the Plains : disease, politics of starvation, and the loss of Aboriginal life*. University of Regina Press.

Davis, L., Hiller, C., James, C., Lloyd, K., Nasca, T., & Taylor, S. (2017). Complicated pathways: Settler Canadians learning to re/frame themselves and their relationships with

Indigenous peoples. *Settler Colonial Studies, 7*(4), 398–414. https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2016.1243086

de Leeuw, S. & Hunt, S. (2018). Unsettling decolonizing geographies. *Geography Compass*, *12*(7), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12376

Denscombe, M. (2014). *Good research guide: For small-scale social research projects* (5th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education: Open University Press.

Desmarais, A. A. & Wittman, H. (2014). Farmers, foodies and first nations: Getting to food sovereignty in Canada. *The Journal of Peasant Studies, 41*(6), 1153-1173. http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03066150.2013.876623

Dhamoon, R. (2015). A feminist approach to decolonizing anti-racism: Rethinking transnationalism, intersectionality, and settler colonialism. *Feral Feminisms*, *4*, 18. https://feralfeminisms.com/rita-dhamoon/

Dickason, O. (2009). *Canada's First Nations: A history of founding peoples from earliest times* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Dorries, H., Hugill, D., Tomiak, J., McCreary, T., & Henry, R. (Eds.). (2019). *Settler city limits: Indigenous resurgence and colonial violence in the urban Prairie West*. University of Manitoba Press. https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=2258981&site=ehost-live

Duhatschek, P. (2022, February 22). Toronto's Food Charter is over 20 years old. Some say it's time for an update. *CBC News.* https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/toronto-food-charter-petition-1.6352867

Edelman, M. (2014). Food sovereignty: Forgotten genealogies and future regulatory challenges. *The Journal of Peasant Studies, 41*(6), 959–978. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2013.876998

Fairbairn, M. (2010). Framing resistance: International food regimes and the roots of food sovereignty. In A. Desmarais, H. Wittman, & N. Wiebe (Eds.), *Food sovereignty: Reconnecting food, nature, and community* (pp. 15-32). Fernwood Publishing.

Francis, A. (2021, October 1). Toronto adopts plan to create Black food sovereignty, first of its kind in North America. *Toronto Star*. https://www.thestar.com/news/city_hall/2021/10/01/toronto-adopts-plan-to-create-black-food-sovereignty-first-of-its-kind-in-north-america.html

Gaudry, A. J. P. (2011). Insurgent research. *Wicazo Sa Review*, *26*(1), 113–136. https://doi.org/10.5749/wicazosareview.26.1.0113

Gottlieb, R. & Joshi, A. (2010). *Food justice*. MIT Press.

Grey, S. & Patel, R. (2015). Food sovereignty as decolonization: Some contributions from Indigenous movements to food system and development politics. *Agriculture and Human Values, 32*(3), 431–444. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-014-9548-9

Hiller, C. (2017). Tracing the spirals of unsettlement: Euro-Canadian narratives of coming to grips with Indigenous sovereignty, title, and rights. *Settler Colonial Studies, 7*(4), 415–440. https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2016.1241209

Holt-Giménez, E. (2011). Food security, food justice, or food sovereignty? Crises, food movements, and regime change. In A. H. Alkon & J. Agyeman (Eds.), *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability* (pp. 309–330). The MIT Press. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/8922.001.0001

Hoover, E. & Mihesuah, D. A. (2019). Introduction. In E. Hoover & D. A. Mihesuah (Eds.), *Indigenous food sovereignty in the United States: Restoring cultural knowledge, protecting environments, and regaining health* (pp. 3–25). University of Oklahoma Press.

Indigenous Circle of Food Secure Canada (ICFSC). (2010). *First principles protocol for building cross-cultural relationships.* Food Secure Canada. https://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/First_Principles_July_2010.pdf

Indigenous Circle of Food Secure Canada (ICFSC). (2011). *Indigenous food sovereignty: Discussion paper 1.* Food Secure Canada. https://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/DP1_Indigenous_Food_Sovereignty.pdf

Jafri, B. (2012, March 21). Privilege vs. complicity: People of Colour and settler colonialism. *Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences.* https://www.federationhss.ca/en/blog/privilege-vs-complicity-people-colour-and-settler-colonialism

Kepkiewicz, L. (2018). *Unsettling food sovereignty in Canada: Settler roles and responsibilities; tensions and (im)possibilities* (Publication No. 10750931) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. https://hdl.handle.net/1807/101616

Kepkiewicz, L. & Dale, B. (2018). Keeping 'our' land: Property, agriculture and tensions between Indigenous and settler visions of food sovereignty in Canada. *The Journal of Peasant Studies, 46*(5), 983-1002. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2018.1439929

Kluttz, J., Walker, J., & Walter, P. (2020). Unsettling allyship, unlearning and learning towards decolonising solidarity. *Studies in the Education of Adults, 52*(1), 49–66. https://doi.org/10.1080/02660830.2019.1654591

Kneen, C. (2011). Food Secure Canada: Where agriculture, environment, health, food, and justice intersect. In H. Wittman, A. A. Desmarais & N. Wiebe (Eds.), *Food sovereignty in Canada: Creating just and sustainable food systems* (pp. 80–96). Fernwood Publishing.

Kohl, E. & McCutcheon, P. (2015). Kitchen table reflexivity: Negotiating positionality through everyday talk. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *22*(6), 747–763. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2014.958063

Kovach, M. (2021). *Indigenous methodologies: Characteristics, conversations, and contexts* (2nd ed.). University of Toronto Press.

Laforge, J. M. L., Dale, B., Levkoe, C. Z., & Ahmed, F. (2021). The future of agroecology in Canada: Embracing the politics of food sovereignty. *Journal of Rural Studies, 81*, 194–202. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2020.10.025

Land, C. (2015). *Decolonizing solidarity: Dilemmas and directions for supporters of Indigenous struggles*. Zed Books. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/york/detail.action?docID=2084600

Lawrence, B. (2002). Rewriting histories of the land: Colonization and Indigenous resistance in eastern Canada. In S. H. Razack (Ed.), *Race, space, and the law: Unmapping a white settler society*. Between the Lines.

Levkoe, C. Z. (2014). The food movement in Canada: A social movement network perspective. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, *41*(3), 385–403. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2014.910766

Li, T. M. (2015). Can there be food sovereignty here? *Journal of Peasant Studies, 42*(1), 205-211. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2014.938058

Loft, A. (2021). Remember like we do. In D. Bolduc, M. Gordon-Corbiere, R. Tabobondung, & B. Wright-McLeod (Eds.), *Indigenous Toronto: Stories that carry this place* (pp. 17–28). Coach House Books. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/york/detail.action?docID=6210057

Louis, R. P. (2007). Can you hear us now? Voices from the margin: using Indigenous methodologies in geographic research. *Geographical Research, 45*(2), 130–139. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-5871.2007.00443.x

Martens, T., Env, M., Cidro, J., Hart, M. A., & McLachlan, S. (2016). Understanding Indigenous food sovereignty through an Indigenous research paradigm. *Journal of Indigenous Social Development, 5*(1), 18–37. https://umanitoba.ca/faculties/social_work/media/V5i1-02martens_cidro_hart_mclachlan.pdf

Martínez-Torres, M. E. & Rosset, P. M. (2014). Diálogo de saberes in La Vía Campesina: Food sovereignty and agroecology. *Journal of Peasant Studies, 41*(6), 979-997. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2013.872632

Maynard, R. & Simpson, L. B. (2022). *Rehearsals for living*. Knopf Canada. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/york/detail.action?docID=6814938

McDowell, L. (1992). Doing gender: Feminism, feminists and research methods in human geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *17*(4), 399–416. https://doi.org/10.2307/622707

McDowell, L. (2010). Interviewing: Fear and liking in the field. In D. DeLyser, S. Herbert, S. Aitken, M. Crang, & L. McDowell (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative*

Geography (pp. 156–171). SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9780857021090.n11

McGregor, D. (2004). Coming full circle: Indigenous knowledge, environment, and our future. *American Indian Quarterly*, *28*(3/4), 385–410.

McMichael, P. (2015). A comment on Henry Bernstein's way with peasants, and food sovereignty. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *42*(1), 193-204. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2014.936853

Moosa-Mitha, M. (2005). Chapter 2: Situating anti-oppressive theories within critical and difference-centered perspectives. In L. Brown & S. Strega (Eds.), *Research as resistance: Critical, Indigenous and anti-oppressive approaches* (pp. 37–72). Canadian Scholars' Press. https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=145914&site=ehost-live

Morrison, D. (2008). *Final activity report. B.C. Food Systems Network: Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty.* https://www.indigenousfoodsystems.org/sites/default/files/resources/WGIFS_Final_Report_March_08.pdf

Morrison, D. (2011). Indigenous food sovereignty: A model for social learning. In H. Wittman, A. A. Desmarais & N. Wiebe (Eds.), *Food sovereignty in Canada: Creating just and sustainable food systems* (pp. 97-113). Fernwood Publishing.

Morrison, D. (2020). Reflections and realities: Expressions of food sovereignty in the fourth world. In P. Settee & S. Shukla (Eds.), *Indigenous food systems: Concepts, cases, and*

conversations (pp. 17–38). Canadian Scholars. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/york/detail.action?docID=6282046

Mosby, I. (2013). Administering colonial science: Nutrition research and human biomedical experimentation in aboriginal communities and residential schools, 1942–1952. *Social History*, *46*(91), 145–172. https://doi.org/10.1353/his.2013.0015

Moss, P. (2000) *Placing Autobiography in Geography.* Syracuse University Press.

Nanibush, W. (2021). Williams treaties. In D. Bolduc, M. Gordon-Corbiere, R. Tabobondung, & B. Wright-McLeod (Eds.), *Indigenous Toronto: Stories that carry this place* (pp. 29–36). Coach House Books. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/york/detail.action?docID=6210057

Needham, F. (2023, May 9). Parties on all sides of gun debate unhappy with revamped Bill C-21 legislation. *APTN News.* https://www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/parties-on-all-sides-of-gun-debate-unhappy-with-revamped-bill-c-21-legislation/

Nyéléni International Steering Committee. (2007). Nyéléni Declaration. *Nyéléni International Movement for Food Sovereignty*. https://nyeleni.org/DOWNLOADS/Nyelni_EN.pdf

Pasternak, S. (2017). *Grounded authority: The Algonquins of Barriere Lake against the state*. University of Minnesota Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt1pv88w3

Patel, R. (2009). What does food sovereignty look like? *The Journal of Peasant Studies, 36*(3), 663–706. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150903143079

Patton, J. (2021, September 29). Ontario announces mandate to include Indigenous learning for Grades 1 to 3. *Global News.* https://globalnews.ca/news/8230311/ontario-indigenous-learning-education-curriculum/

People's Food Policy Project (PFPP). (2011). *Resetting the table: A people's food policy for Canada.* Food Secure Canada. https://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/FSC-resetting2012-8half11-lowres-EN.pdf

Phung, M. (2011). Are People of Colour settlers too? In A. Mathur, J. Dewar, & M. DeGagné (Eds.), *Cultivating Canada: Reconciliation through the lens of cultural diversity* (pp. 289–298). Aboriginal Healing Foundation. https://www.ahf.ca/downloads/cultivating-canada-pdf.pdf

Piuma, C. & Conklin Akbari, S. (2021, April 5). Braiding sweetgrass (No. 43) [Audio podcast]. *The Spouter-Inn; or, A Conversation with Great Books*. Megaphonic. https://www.megaphonic.fm/spouter/43

RAIR Collective. (2022, May 24). Learning from the Treaty Land Sharing Network (TLSN) with Amy Seesequasis and Dr. Emily Eaton (No. 6) [Audio podcast]. *RAIR Digital Dialogues*. Spotify. https://open.spotify.com/episode/2cjiotuYRjnw7W9M241aMp?si=f62c1861fb6348da

Rider, D. (2022, April 7). Toronto council approves 'reconciliation action plan'; extends pilots for Yonge Street bike lanes and backyard hens. *The Toronto Star.* https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2022/04/07/toronto-council-approves-reconciliation-action-plan-extends-pilots-for-yonge-street-bike-lanes-and-backyard-hens.html

Ringuette, J. W. (2021). The NishDish Journey. In D. Bolduc, M. Gordon-Corbiere, R. Tabobondung, & B. Wright-McLeod (Eds.), *Indigenous Toronto: Stories that carry this place* (pp. 262–272). Coach House Books. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/york/detail.action?docID=6210057

Rio, M. (2022, July 8). Opinion | 'Philanthropy is broken': How The Stop Community Food Centre is moving away from donor-centric fundraising to prioritize community. *The Toronto Star*. https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2022/07/08/philanthropy-is-broken-how-the-stop-community-food-centre-is-moving-away-from-donor-centric-fundraising-to-prioritize-community.html

Rizarri, K. (2023, April 11). *Tkaronto is a place for sustenance*. Yellowhead Institute. https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2023/04/11/tkaronto-is-a-place-for-sustenance/

Robinson, M. (2021, March 19). Toronto farmer fostering food justice community. *CityNews Toronto*. https://toronto.citynews.ca/2021/03/19/toronto-farmer-growing-food-justice-community/

Robin, T. (2019). Our hands at work: Indigenous food sovereignty in Western Canada. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development, 9*(B), Article B. https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2019.09B.007

Robin (Martens), T. & Cidro, J. (2020). Rebuilding cultural identity and Indigenous food sovereignty with Indigenous youth through traditional food access and skills in the city. In P. Settee & S. Shukla (Eds.), *Indigenous food systems: Concepts, cases, and conversations* (pp. 135–151). Canadian Scholars. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/york/detail.action?docID=6282046

Robin, T., Rotz, S., & Xavier, A. (2023). *Indigenous food sovereignty in Ontario: A study of exclusion at the Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs*. Yellowhead Institute. https://yellowheadinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/OMAFRA-YI-Report-April-2023.pdf

Rose, G. (1993). *Feminism and geography: The limits of geographical knowledge.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Rose, G. (1997). Situating knowledges: Positionality, reflexivities and other tactics. *Progress in Human Geography, 21*(3), 305–320. https://doi.org/10.1191/030913297673302122

Rotz, S. & Kepkiewicz, L. W. (2018). Settler colonialism and the (im)possibilities of a national food policy. *Canadian Food Studies, 5*(3), 248–258. https://doi.org/10.15353/cfs-rcea.v5i3.275

Rotz, S., Xavier, A., & Robin, T. (2023). "It wasn't built for us": The possibility of Indigenous food sovereignty in settler colonial food bureaucracies. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development, 12*(3), 3. https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2023.123.009

Sault, M. (2021). A story about the Toronto Purchase. In D. Bolduc, M. Gordon-Corbiere, R. Tabobondung, & B. Wright-McLeod (Eds.), *Indigenous Toronto: Stories that carry this place* (pp. 37–44). Coach House Books. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/york/detail.action?docID=6210057

Sehdev, R. K. (2011). People of Colour in Treaty. In A. Mathur, J. Dewar, & M. DeGagné (Eds.), *Cultivating Canada: Reconciliation through the lens of cultural diversity* (pp. 265–274). Aboriginal Healing Foundation. https://www.ahf.ca/downloads/cultivating-canada-pdf.pdf

Settee, P., & Shukla, S. (2020). Introduction. In P. Settee & S. Shukla (Eds.), *Indigenous food systems: Concepts, cases, and conversations* (pp. 1–13). Canadian Scholars. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/york/detail.action?docID=6282046

Simmons, M. (2021, March 16). Heiltsuk Nation, federal agencies sign agreement to establish Indigenous marine response team. *The Narwhal*. https://thenarwhal.ca/heiltsuk-marine-emergency-response-team-established/

Simpson, L. B. (2011). *Dancing on our turtle's back.* Arbeiter Ring Publishing.

Simpson, L. B. (2014). Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society, 3*(3), 1–25.

Smith, L. T. (2021). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples* (3rd ed.). Zed Books. https://www-bloomsburycollections-com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/book/decolonizing-methodologies-research-and-indigenous-peoples/

Snelgrove, C., Dhamoon, R. K., & Corntassel, J. (2014). Unsettling settler colonialism: The discourse and politics of settlers, and solidarity with Indigenous nations. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society, 3*(2), 32. http://resolver.scholarsportal.info/resolve/19298692/v03i0002/nfp_usctdasaswin.xml

Stiegman, M. L. & Castleden, H. (2015). Leashes and lies: Navigating the colonial tensions of institutional ethics of research involving Indigenous peoples in Canada. *International Indigenous Policy Journal, 6*(3), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.18584/iipj.2015.6.3.2

Talking Treaties. (2022). A Treaty Guide for Torontonians. *Talking Treaties Collective*. https://talkingtreaties.ca/treaties-for-torontonians

TallBear, K. (2014). Standing with and speaking as faith: A feminist-Indigenous approach to inquiry. *Journal of Research Practice, 10*(2), 1–8. http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/405/371

Thambinathan, V. & Kinsella, E. A. (2021). Decolonizing methodologies in qualitative research: Creating spaces for transformative praxis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 20*, 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211014766

Todd, Z. (2021, June 23). Metis scholar Zoe Todd: [Blog]. *Fatehbaz.* Tumblr. https://fatehbaz.tumblr.com/post/654827883896979456/metis-scholar-zoe-todd-social-media-thread-from

Toronto Food Policy Council. (n.d.). Initiatives: Food by Ward. *Toronto Food Policy Council.* https://tfpc.to/initiatives/food-by-ward

Tuck, E. (2009). Suspending damage: A letter to communities. *Harvard Educational Review*, *79*(3), 409–428. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.79.3.n0016675661t3n15

Tuck, E. & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, *1*(1), 40. https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630/15554

Tuhiwai Smith, L. (2021). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples* (3rd ed.). Zed Books. https://www-bloomsburycollections-com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/book/decolonizing-methodologies-research-and-indigenous-peoples/

Vowel, C. (2016). *Indigenous writes: A guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit issues in Canada*. Portage & Main Press. https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/york/detail.action?docID=4832580

Wakefield, S., Fleming, J., Klassen, C., & Skinner, A. (2013). Sweet charity, revisited: Organizational responses to food insecurity in Hamilton and Toronto, Canada. *Critical Social Policy*, *33*(3), 427–450. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018312458487

Weibe, N. & Wipf, K. (2011). Nurturing food sovereignty in Canada. In H. Wittman, A. A. Desmarais & N. Wiebe (Eds.), *Food sovereignty in Canada: Creating just and sustainable food systems* (pp. 1–19). Fernwood Publishing.

Westoll, N. (2022, March 8). Should job-seekers be compensated? A Toronto organization will now pay for interview time. *City News Toronto*. https://toronto.citynews.ca/2022/03/08/foodshare-toronto-paid-interviews-jobs/

Whyte, K. & Cuomo, C. (2017). Ethics of caring in environmental ethics: Indigenous and feminist philosophies . In S. M. Gardiner & A. Thompson (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Ethics* (pp. 234–247). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199941339.013.22

Whyte, Kyle. (2018). Food sovereignty, justice, and Indigenous peoples: An essay on settler colonialism and collective continuance. In A. Barnhill, M. Budolfson, & T. Doggett (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Food Ethics*. Oxford University Press. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2925285

Whyte, K. (2020). Too late for indigenous climate justice: Ecological and relational tipping points. *WIREs Climate Change*, *11*(1), e603. https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.603

Wilson, S. (2008). *Research as ceremony: Indigenous research methods.* Fernwood Publishing.

Wilson, A., & Levkoe, C. Z. (2022). Introspecting food movements in Canada: Unpacking tensions towards justice and sustainability. *Canadian Food Studies, 9*(2), 101-124. https://doi.org/10.15353/cfs-rcea.v9i2.524

Wolfe, P. (2006). Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native. *Journal of Genocide Research*, *8*(4), 387–409. https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240

Wong, J. (2023, February 11). As more high schools add Indigenous-focused compulsory courses, some warn against a siloed approach. *CBC News*. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edu-indigenous-compulsory-learning-1.6738509

Yellowhead Institute. (2019). *Land Back: A Yellowhead Institute Red Paper.* https://redpaper.yellowheadinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/red-paper-report-final.pdf

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Questions

- Tell me about the work that [participant's organization] does.
    - What is your role at [participant's organization] and what are your day to day responsibilities and activities?
- How would you say [participant's organization] conceptualizes food justice/food sovereignty?
    - In your experience, how have conversations around food justice/food sovereignty evolved within Toronto food activist circles?
- How do you understand your relationship to land? How does this influence your work?
- How do you see your work in relation to reconciliation and decolonization in Canada?
- How has your organization, or others you have worked with in the past, taken up questions of settler colonialism, decolonization, or reconciliation?
- In your experience, how are conversations surrounding Indigenous-settler solidarity taking shape in Toronto food activist circles more generally?
- What challenges have you or your organization faced in efforts to strengthen solidarity between non-Indigenous and Indigenous people through food activism?
- What do you hope to see in the future for food activist work in Canada?