

Beyond the Politics of Recognition:
Settler Colonial Development
&
Urban Aboriginal Self-Determination in Toronto

Aedan Alderson

Supervisor: Professor Stefan Kipfer

November, 26, 2014

A Major Paper submitted to the Faculty of Environmental Studies in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master in Environmental Studies.
York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Aedan Alderson
MES Candidate

Professor Stefan Kipfer
Major Paper Supervisor

Foreword:

This paper responds to my experiences studying Urban Planning at the Faculty of Environmental Studies, where I found that class discussions rarely engaged with the primacy of Aboriginal self-determination over land use in Toronto. While common interpretations of the city as ceded territory and private land relegate colonial sovereignty over land to a completed process from the past, my coursework and research for this paper has uncovered multiple narratives of Toronto as a contested settler colonial project on Indigenous land.

My research in the MES program has focused on trying to find where decolonization struggles, urban social movements, and necropolitical theory fit into urban planning. In my course work, I have focused on the role of urban planning in social transformation, and the idea that sovereignty is executed as a form of necropolitics in the city. Building on these ideas, this paper has looked at the historical context of Aboriginal struggles with settler-colonialism in order to explore learning components 1.1, 1.2, 2.4, 3.1, and 4.2 from my program of study. I do this in an effort to resist the historical erasure of Aboriginal narratives in Toronto, and to attempt to argue that there are implications for both land use and social life in the city if we take Indigenous sovereignty seriously. Through participating in this research, I have made space for reflecting on the differing settler-Aboriginal relationships that are found in the city, as well as Aboriginal narratives of Toronto's history, critical theory, and activist interviews. As such, I hope that this document can be used as a tool for those seeking to problematize the impacts of colonial capitalist power structures and colonial accounts of Toronto's urban environment.

Abstract:

This major paper explores the role that settler colonization has had in the ongoing struggles of local Aboriginal communities in Toronto. In order to explore arguments for Aboriginal rights in the city, the main research questions that this paper addresses are: What does urban Aboriginal self-determination look like? What can a closer examination of Toronto's Indigenous and colonial history tell us about the context of present day urban Aboriginal struggles in the city? How can Torontonians move beyond the politics of relying on settler recognition of Aboriginal rights and towards a multilateral form of development on Indigenous land? By framing this paper around the argument that Indigenous sovereignty precedes - and therefore could not flow from - the politics of recognition between the Canadian and Indigenous nations, this project attempts to transgress boundaries that some might consider settled in Toronto.

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Introduction:

Introduction:

This paper explores the role that settler colonization has had, in the ongoing struggles of local Aboriginal communities in Toronto and in the development of Canadian property rights over Toronto's land. In order to argue for the primacy of Aboriginal rights in the city, the main research questions that this paper addresses are: What does urban Aboriginal self-determination look like? What can a closer examination of Toronto's Indigenous and colonial history tell us about the context of present day urban Aboriginal struggles in the city? How can Torontonians move beyond the politics of relying on settler recognition of Aboriginal rights and towards a multilateral form of development on Indigenous land?

By framing this paper around the argument that Indigenous sovereignty precedes - and therefore could not flow from - the politics of recognition between Canadian and Indigenous states, this project attempts to transgress boundaries that some might consider settled in Toronto. In doing so, my research adopts a stance similar to the theoretical critique of colonial recognition provided in Coulthard's (2006), "Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Recognition in Colonial Contexts", to call into question how the Canadian state has operated to develop urban settler life in Toronto, and what a decolonial form of urban planning/land use research might look like here in the city.

This research has been instrumental in helping me to understand some of the issues that come up when trying to become educated about urban Aboriginal struggles in the city, as an outsider researcher attempting to pursue a line of inquiry that was not requested by any particular Aboriginal community itself. My research at times felt

problematic to take part in, because of the expectation that it would somehow represent an externally valid picture of the experiences of urban Aboriginal people in a city that has over 70,000 Aboriginal people. If each of these people – regardless of their relationship to a cohesive community – are to be seen as important sources of historical accounts of the impacts of settler colonialism on local Aboriginal peoples, this paper represents an attempt to begin a much larger process in urban research in Toronto rather than complete it.

This paper argues for the urgency of taking part in a deeper discussion regarding the cities development, one that highlights Aboriginal histories in studies about Toronto using both primary and secondary sources. It is my firm belief that the historical context of colonization, ongoing forms of settler accumulation, Aboriginal dispossession and marginalization are important issues for those interested in understanding the social interactions that shape both the physical and social landscapes of Toronto.

Methodology:

By exploring theoretical contributions made by urban scholars around the issue of settler colonialism, combined with presenting Aboriginal histories both past and present, my experience researching this paper allowed me to build on my coursework in the MES Planning program by deepening my understanding of my role as an urban planner and a settler living on Indigenous land.

As my research relies on contributions from the Aboriginal community and being able to live on Indigenous land, yet does not represent an official communication from any Aboriginal nation, this paper looks to individual accounts of urban Aboriginal

activisms as a source of primary data with insights into how self-determination might be realized in Toronto. Fundamentally, I believe that qualitative research is key when attempting to raise theoretical discussions using published literature, because it invites respondents to provide contemporary examples that can help situate the readers analysis.

Methodologically, I chose to adopt Kovach's (2009) approach to Indigenous knowledge production that argues that knowledge is primarily produced through sharing stories (pg. 53). For me the importance of recognizing stories and casual discussion as source of contemporary history is linked with my own experience working as a social movements researcher. Using the snowball method, I gathered stories from semi-structured (open-ended) interviews with urban Aboriginal activists in order to elucidate themes from their personal insights into struggles for Aboriginal self-determination. For the sake of convenience, in some cases I audio recorded my discussions with respondents, while in others I spoke with respondents via email.

As a research method, utilizing semi-structured interviews to gather primary data limited my paper in breadth due to the small number of respondents that agreed to be interviewed. The process of gathering qualitative data this way also made my data subject to respondent reactivity. Respondent reactivity refers to the process whereby people who provide research data may actively limit and manage how they present themselves in this research (Babbie and Benaquisto, 2013, p. 305). It is important to note that the personal reflections offered by respondents in this primary research are also not an authoritative account of any particular Indigenous nation's views. Instead, through highlighting personal and diverse accounts of contemporary urban Aboriginal issues in Toronto, my

primary research has shown the importance of gathering data in a non-essentialist way in the city's Aboriginal community.

As another method for my research, I utilized participant observation in order to broaden my understanding of how urban Aboriginal struggles were being framed in the community by attending a few social movements events and Thursday night socials at the Native Canadian Centre in downtown Toronto. Although my participation has been greatly limited due to recently becoming a single father, expanding my experience in Aboriginal social movements and cultural events as both a participant and a researcher allowed me to take an active role in discussions with the community (Babbie and Benaquisto, 2013, p. 302).

When I took part in events, I tried to bear in mind that people react differently to being studied (Babbie and Benaquisto, 2013, p. 305). I approached this issue by ensuring that I did not position myself as an expert, a leader or an organizer in urban Aboriginal struggles. I found this step to be crucial because it helped to mitigate power-relationships as a researcher, positioning the urban Aboriginal community as local experts, and myself as a student (*ibid*, p. 309). In order to negotiate consent in the transitional spaces in which I participated and observed, I identified myself as a social movements based researcher to the urban Aboriginal community members I met. However, many of the people that I encountered did not identify as activists, which in turn challenged the way I originally framed my research.

During my research, I attended a round dance for Idle No More in support of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (APTN, January 20 2014, n.p.), as well as an anti-Monsanto march - where I met some Aboriginal activists fighting against food injustice -

(CBC News, May 24, 2014, n.p.), and a documentary/art-making/panel discussion put on by No More Silence that was focused on honouring missing and murdered Indigenous women (No More Silence, February 6, 2014). Additionally, I visited the Animikii Music Group's Hip-Hop Wednesdays at Velvet Underground – that is unfortunately now discontinued - where I was able to speak with a number of Aboriginal political hip-hop artists about colonization . Following each event, I took notes in my research journal. This provided me with useful information for my analysis of Aboriginal activist struggles in the city. My notes proved to be crucial by both helping me to contextualize my relationship to urban Aboriginal struggles and by allowing me to formulate the context of my analysis for the paper (De Laine 2000, p. 148).

To provide a theoretical and historical context for my analysis, I relied on secondary sources from Indigenous studies, urban studies, urban planning theory, Indigenous history, and settler colonial theory to examine how the politics of nation-to-nation recognition impact Aboriginal self-determination in the midst of settler colonial land use.

The structure of the current work:

The first chapter opens with an exploration of relevant concepts and theoretical discussions regarding the different types of colonialism that have existed in Toronto. In it, I draw upon various forms of theory to show how the politics of recognition are linked to urban colonial oppression, the role of urban planning on Indigenous land and urban Aboriginal activisms.

Chapter two adds some historical context in order to raise a discourse around the continuity of Aboriginal struggles in Toronto, as well as to highlight the forms of settler non-recognition that have taken place during the development of this region subsequent to the arrival of Europeans. Briefly outlining some of the diverse representations of pre-contact and post-contact life, the second chapter argues that the struggle for urban Aboriginal self-determination can be seen as an adaptive and living continuation of the history of Indigenous relationships to land in this region.

Chapter three focuses on discussions I had with contemporary Aboriginal activists; highlighting struggles that relate back to the problematic paternalisms of colonial recognition, urban Aboriginal life in Toronto and cultural revitalization in the city. By treating each interview as a separate sub-section, the third chapter highlights how ideas about Aboriginal self-determination and decolonization can link and vary from person-to-person based on their relationships and social circumstances within Toronto.

Finally, I conclude this paper by returning to the question of Aboriginal self-determination in the city, reasserting issues that were raised in my primary research in order to argue for the urgency of pursuing lines of inquiry that examine the historical, social, and political consequences of settler colonialism as a form of development.

Chapter One

Introduction:

**A theoretical context for going beyond the politics of
recognition**

Colonization: Colonialism, mercantile colonialism, settler colonialism:

Throughout her dissertation, titled *Toronto Has No History*, Victoria Freeman (2010) extensively examines post-contact history while drawing on Germaine Warkentin's argument that Toronto experiences a state of historical amnesia with regard to its settler-colonial city past (pg. 7). The historical narrative that Freeman provides shows that the way that settlers contextualize our presence on Indigenous land has significance when discussing how we interact in the city. Lawrence (2002, p. 21-47) and Regan (2010, p. 53-83) have noted that the stability of the nation state requires a politically favourable re-imagining of Canada in order to help us forget the destruction that colonization has wrought on Indigenous nations.

Exploring the meaning of settler-colonialism in Toronto, this section of the paper introduces the different types of colonialism that have impacted the Toronto area. This, I feel is important because it helps to show the various ways in which colonization has been – and continues to be - an ongoing project; reproducing itself in new ways that have led to the contemporary urban settler-colonial environment.

According to Todorov (1984), colonial genocide in the Americas had destroyed one quarter of the Earth's population within 150 years (p. 133). In Toronto, when the French first came into contact with the Mississaugas during European expansion, they brought with them a form of colonialism known as *mercantile colonialism* that aimed to bring natural resources, wealth, and slaves from Indigenous lands back to Europe (Hira, 2012, p. 129). Additionally, the people who inhabited the land prior to the arrival of Europeans were seen as obstructions or potential converts to the Christian world, which led missionaries to travel to this area of North America. Despite the fact that in Toronto

historians believe that trade had been ongoing for centuries prior to the arrival of the French (Freeman, 2010, p.9), the resource extraction that fed the economic development of capitalism in Europe through colonial-mercantilism was, as, Leanne Simpson argues, one of the main logics of colonialism:

“My land is seen as a resource. My relatives in the plant and animal worlds are seen as resources. [...] My body is a resource and my children are a resource because they are the potential to grow, maintain, and uphold the extraction-assimilation system. The act of extraction removes all of the relationships that give whatever is being extracted meaning.” (Klein, 2013, n.p.)

Bourgeault (1983) noted that Indigenous societies who provided the surplus that was extracted in trade with the French were ultimately transformed by European mercantilism. These transformations were achieved through unequal trade and racialized class relations that were unlike any egalitarian and subsistence based social systems in the past (p. 48). According to Bonita Lawrence (2002), the impact of mercantilist colonialism in Eastern Canada was devastating, with the trade related conflicts between Indigenous and colonial nations in the early 17th century claiming countless numbers of lives (Lawrence, 2002, p. 26).

Settler colonialism differs from mercantile colonialism insofar as its central goal is to live on and control the use of Indigenous land. This type of colonialism arrived in Toronto with the British in 1760 (Freeman, 2010, p. 16). Tuck and Yang (2012) note that settler colonialism seeks to claim ownership of Indigenous land through implementing colonial law and attempting to undermine Indigenous sovereignty (p. 6).

In Toronto, the settler population has grown exponentially and continues to assert

a claim to judicial and cultural hegemony over the region in the centuries that have followed the arrival of the British. While settler sovereignty over land in Toronto is implemented via capitalism, it is far from complete. When examining settler-colonial environments like Canada, Coulthard argues that through establishing a settler-colonial form of capitalism, primary accumulation remains an ongoing process as it works to stay “territorial acquisitive in perpetuity” on Indigenous land (2014, p. 152).

Since the way that territory has been acquired in Toronto was through the treaty process, the fact that there were many Indigenous nations in the Toronto region when Europeans arrived, yet there was only one nation who ceded the land (the Mississaugas of the New Credit Nation) has become a source of controversy for some members of the Aboriginal community (Dragonfly Consulting, 2012, n.p., Davyn Calfchild).

By buying land that wasn't strictly owned only by one nation, the position that the treaty system put the Mississauga's of the New Credit Nation in makes the issue of Aboriginal rights to the land in Toronto more pressing. Bilateral agreements, like the treaties made between Canada and The Mississaugas, are agreements/collaborations between two nations (Ravenhill, 2011, n.p.). In Toronto, multi-lateral treaty agreements (between 3 or more states) (Scott, 2007, n.p.) may have been more appropriate, but bi-lateral agreements also allowed colonial powers to utilize recognition to stir competition between Indigenous nations. How Aboriginal community members recognize each others rights and how Canada recognizes the rights of Aboriginal nations to land has been an issue that has been taken up by my respondents and by theorists like Bonita Lawrence (2002).

By adopting processes that required Indigenous nations to seek approval from the

crown, the British state worked to reify its own right to delegitimize Indigenous sovereignty over the land claimed by settlers. In settler colonial cities, various forms of non-recognition and misrecognition function to produce Aboriginal displacement from land and dispossession from resources. Obonsawin and Mallett (2012) note that sharp racial divisions in cities have been used as geographical divisions that manage areas by separating land into native sectors and European sectors (77). Moreover, in Edmonds' (2010) case study of settler colonialism in Victoria, British Columbia, she found that urban settler culture utilizes the misrecognition and stigmatization of Aboriginal peoples as vagrants, prostitutes, and other criminal classes as a method of alienation. Edmonds goes further to argue that the criminalization and alienation of Indigenous peoples has helped to support settler-urbanization through normalizing the removal of Indigenous peoples from the land and their replacement by settler populations (6).

Understanding the politics of recognition:

Coulthard's critique of the idea that equal recognition can empower Aboriginal self-determination and self-governance responds to Taylor's (1994), *The Politics of Recognition*, which was supposed to be a critique of liberal politics of multicultural "equality" in Canada. In it, Taylor (1994) asserts that contemporary politics turn on the need and the demand for recognition (p. 1). Taylor conceptualizes the politics of recognition processes as both a need - which he links to nationalist movements - and a demand, which he links to subaltern groups attempting to resist misrecognition (p. 1). As Mansvelt Beck (2000) notes, Taylor argues that fighting for recognition in the liberal state is actually other-dependent (Taylor. 48) as the liberal state attempts to equalize

difference with ideas of equal dignity (Taylor 41); this transformed the politics of the *ancien régime* that saw dignity, authenticity, and pride as inherited qualities that came with social-status.

Drawing on the example of Quebec separatists relying on recognition from Anglophone Canadians, Taylor (1994) writes that the struggle to demand for recognition has become so crucial in shaping identity politics that misrecognition has graduated to a form of serious harm (p. 64).

Taylor's (1994) paper barely touches on the context of Canada being a settler-colonial society, despite selectively drawing on Fanonian ideas of the struggle of subjugated groups trying to shake off internalized misrecognition/inferiority complexes under colonial regimes (p. 65). Instead of elucidating a Fanonian position that the colonizer uses recognition to subjugate colonized people, Taylor uses Fanon to argue that it is necessary for these groups to undergo a revision of these representations in Canada in order to find freedom (p. 66).

Taylor does, however, acknowledge that the process of seeking to address misrepresentation in society could be seen as highly problematic because it often relies on the dominant group providing legitimacy, representing condescension rather than true recognition based on mutual respect and equality (p. 70). Further, Taylor claims that positive judgments made by "Eurocentered intellectuals" concerning the worth of non-European cultures that they have not studied in depth pre-suppose that they are transformed by the study of the other in such a way that fuses difference into a joint horizon of standards (p. 70). Calling for a rejection of multicultural ideas of equalization, Taylor argues that the politics of recognition require attention to cultural differences that

displace “our horizons” in a resulting fusion of recognition which holds that people are unable to fully determine other cultures’ worth (p. 73).

For new settlers in Canada who arrive in cities, relationships between newcomers and the Canadian state play into a unilateral discourse around who has control over Indigenous land and the social interactions in cities like Toronto. The colonial politics of recognition resist or support their sense of belonging, and the capacity to become recognized as local rather than foreign populations. In this way, the colonial politics of recognition move to make newcomers establish themselves in relation to the dominant groups in settler society that seek to naturalize their claim to Indigenous land.

In *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*, Veracini (2011) argues that settler colonial projects are ultimately regimes of representation that attempt to compound settler-Indigenization and Europeanization (populations deemed sovereign) in order to displace and devalue exogenous (populations deemed “foreign” to settler citizens) and Indigenous others (populations displaced to make room for settler-society) (p. 22). Building on the concept that settler projects function by ontologically separating populations, Veracini argues that assimilatory structures within settler society deem “othered” populations as “either improvable or not improvable” depending on where they fit in with the settler collective’s goals (p. 29). This can be seen in urban spaces like Toronto where interactions with the land base are legitimized through the population’s relationship to wealth extracted from private and public municipally owned properties in the city.

Veracini (2011) argues that there are extensive means through which representation can be used to transfer sovereignty over land from Indigenous groups to

settler occupiers without utilizing militaristic physical genocide. The first mode of transfer that is discussed is *ethnic transfer*, which forcibly displaces Indigenous groups into new geographies where they are no longer able to claim Indigeneity (p. 35). Second, through *conceptual transfer*: settler dominated spaces mark Indigenous groups as exogenous or foreign in their own territories (p. 36). Third, through *civilization transfer*: Indigenous nations are represented as being settlers who actually came from another geography (p. 36). The fourth mode is *perception transfer*, whereby Indigenous presence is downplayed by settlers and is claimed to have disappeared (p. 37). Veracini goes on to explore a plethora of other modes of transfer including accounting (using statistics to promote a view of Indigenous disappearance) (p. 44), incarceration (p. 45), the use of narrative (p. 42) and the removal of Indigenous names (p. 47); all of which play into the ideas that are explored around the use of recognition by settler states.

Veracini (2011) argues that settler sovereignty fundamentally works through a process of settlers asserting their entitlement to re-inventing their own political status within settler-collectives by means of occupation and the self-constitution of who belongs and who is marked as Indigenous and “exogenous” other (p. 61). This, he argues, is brought forth through local political movements attempting to become independent of distant colonial rulers and self-determination movements within settler society. Veracini goes on to point out that these movements work to distinguish themselves from being responsible for the actions of settlers who lived under previous forms of colonization while re-settling on Indigenous land with supposedly new forms of governance (p. 63).

The re-dressing of settler colonial society as an “anti-colonial force” can be seen across North American history with major events such as the American Revolution in the

United States re-asserting settler authority over colonially controlled territories (Olson, n.d., 6) and even in contemporary social movements like Occupy Toronto that attempted to address the desire to re-appropriate “public” lands owned by the Crown. In 2011, while I worked as an activist researcher with Occupy Toronto, I believed that I was taking part in a radically democratic, participatory form of alternative development in the city. However, despite involving some of the local Aboriginal community, the space became a primarily white middle-class student-run environment (Hoar, 2011) that attempted to re-settle and assert a radical collective sovereignty over Indigenous land (Tuck and Yang, 2012, p. 23).

The danger of assuming that settler self-determination and anti-colonial movements are aligned with Indigenous sovereignty over Indigenous land is highlighted in Tuck and Yang’s (2012) article, *Decolonization is Not a Metaphor*. The authors argue that settlers use the term decolonization in order to try to create situations where the revolutionary re-appropriation of colonial wealth and resettlement can take place (p. 7) while also allowing for settler moves to innocence:

“Settler moves to innocence are those strategies or positionings that attempt to relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up land or power or privilege, without having to change much at all. In fact, settler scholars may gain professional kudos or a boost in their reputations for being so sensitive or self-aware. Yet settler moves to innocence are hollow, they only serve the settler” (p. 10).

These processes fundamentally function on an unequal politics of recognition whereby settler groups are able to leverage social capital by appearing to be empowering

Indigenous groups through acknowledgement all the while refusing to support any “radical” ideas such as suggestions for alternative social structures or bi-lateral or multi-lateral interactions between Indigenous and settler nations that would enable Indigenous sovereignty over local development.

Throughout *Decolonization is Not a Metaphor*, Tuck and Yang (2012) explore various examples of how settlers seek to be recognized for adopting the term decolonization in order to try to make “moves to innocence” that allow them to push for settler nativism, settler adoption fantasies, and colonial equivocation. *Settler nativism* refers to a settlers attempt to deflect responsibility for embracing settler privilege while claiming an Indigenous identity on stolen land (p. 13). *Settler adoption fantasies* concern the adoption of Indigenous practices by settlers and the belief that they can become “innocent [...] heroic, and Indigenized” through proximity to Indigenous culture (p. 14). Finally, through *colonial equivocation*, or the idea that colonial oppression can be viewed as a universal experience, decolonization takes on a non-Indigenous character and the primacy of the ongoing colonization of Indigenous land is replaced with various settler experiences of oppression (p. 17).

While authors like Sharma and Wright (2008, 123) have joined this latter discussion by pointing out that not all peoples on Indigenous land are here by choice as settlers (especially those who have descended from slavery-era diasporas), equivocating colonial experiences between various groups that have endured different colonial experiences runs the risk of obscuring the distinct relationship that Indigenous nations have to the experience of having their land invaded and occupied by settlers. Because of this, it is my belief that in attempting to end colonial oppression, the first step is to

acknowledge the primacy of the struggles of Aboriginal peoples who resist politics of settler-unilateralism on occupied Indigenous land.

While the discussions of the place for anti-colonial allyship - especially between settlers of colour and Indigenous nations – are extensive, it is important to note that settler moves to innocence, as defined by Tuck and Yang, are processes through which decolonization movements become metaphorical processes. These metaphorical processes are based on *not* taking direct-action to demand repatriation of sovereignty to Indigenous nations who would then have self-determination over traditional lands. In a similar spirit, Andrea Smith (2013) argues in her article, *The Problem with Privilege*, that action-oriented activisms against violence often become sidetracked by the process of creating social capital through processes of recognition that focus on acknowledging privilege (in order to relieve feelings of guilt) and acknowledging lived oppressions (in order to be socially rewarded by more privileged allies) (n.p.).

While Tuck and Yang (2012) argue that decolonization of the mind is not enough (p. 19), many of the activists whom I spoke with and/or interviewed while conducting my research asserted that the displacement of all settlers was less important to them than was putting an end to oppressive settler mentalities about Aboriginal peoples, Aboriginal rights, and Indigenous land. Re-enforcing the idea that minds need to be decolonized, or at least that colonial narratives of Aboriginal rights need to change, showed me how the idea of recognition as a solution had been deeply engrained into Aboriginal struggles with settlers.

Unfortunately, beyond local settler communities and their interaction (or non-interaction) with recognizing Indigenous rights, the Canadian nation-state has used

misrecognition, non-recognition, and selective recognition to divide and destroy innumerable Indigenous communities in this country (see for example, Lawrence, 2004; Lawrence, 2013).

Bonita Lawrence's work has consistently highlighted the tensions created by colonial politics of status-recognition among Aboriginal peoples and the diverse opinions that Aboriginal communities take towards who should be considered a member of the First Nations. Lawrence raises concerns surrounding federal recognition, claiming that it has turned into a form of genocide towards Aboriginal peoples who have had their relationship to their Indigenous nationality dictated (or erased) through colonial law (2004, p. 27). Moreover, during her work interviewing Aboriginal community members in Toronto, she found that urban native families, who already have to navigate recognition with the Canadian nation-state, too often had no recourse against settler racism other than through being silent regarding (or making secret) their native identity (p. 124).

In 2008, Stephen Harper recognized the long-term history of cultural and physical genocide against First Nations on behalf of the Canadian government (CBC, June 11, 2008) and so did the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada that works with residential school survivors and other survivors of settler-colonial genocide. Yet, inaction by the Canadian government in the case of over 1000 missing or murdered Indigenous women appears to be supporting further genocide against Indigenous nations (Bouttiller, A., 2014, n.p.). In fact, the Canadian government has gone so far as to support the corporate invasion and illegal development of unceded territories on the East coast of Canada (Henessy, 2013). All of these acts demonstrate that the Canadian state still has

unilateral and adversarial motives towards Indigenous nations.

While there appears to be more recognition of Indigenous struggles nationally because of social movements like Idle No More, there has been an increase in settler-colonial attempts to control First Nations through various pieces of legislature which go beyond the jurisdiction of Canada's treaty rights and sovereignty over Indigenous nations (Diabo, 2012, n.p.). Nevertheless, certain victories have been won in terms of the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty in the supreme court. An example is the recent case of the Tsilhqot'in Nation gaining title to their land as a result of challenging improper consultation by the crown (Nahwegahbow, 2014). But some would say that these victories only serve to legitimize the Canadian nation-state's capacity to control and grant title to Indigenous and Aboriginal rights.

Rejecting the Canadian nation-state's politics of recognition in order to avoid reproducing colonial domination is the central theme of Coulthard's (2006) "Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Recognition in Colonial Contexts". In it, he returns to Taylor's interpretation of the dynamics of recognition in liberal society, and questions how equal recognition could lead to the liberation of Indigenous communities. In particular, Coulthard questions why so many issues around Indigenous-settler relations and settler land use are tied up with the processes that involve gaining the Canadian state's recognition in order to receive accommodations of land, capital, and political power (p. 2).

By examining the struggle presented in Hegel's master-slave dialectic as the source of the discourse on "recognition", Coulthard (2006) describes how Hegel brought forth the idea that our self is constituted by our relationships with other subjects (p. 3).

However, Coulthard notes that "where 'recognition' is conceived of as a 'gift' bestowed from a 'privileged' group or entity (the liberal settler-state) to a dependent and 'subordinate' group or entity (Indigenous peoples)" not only do colonial relations of domination remain unaltered, they are also reaffirmed (p. 6). By interacting with legal frameworks that allow Canada to decide how to give recognition to Aboriginal communities, individuals are treated as citizens of Canada "whose rights and identities become defined by the colonial state" and are ultimately driven to become capitalist (citing Alfred 2005:23). Additionally, land claim processes that entrench private property ownership reproduce the kinds of relationships with land that exist in the colonies rather than affirming Aboriginal traditions of property and land use (p. 14).

Fanon's insights into resisting colonialism provide much of the sustenance of Coulthard's (2006) critique of the politics of recognition and Hegel's master-slave dialectic. For Fanon, Coulthard writes, colonialism functions in both an objective way - through historical conditions - and a subjective way through attitudes about these conditions (attitudes which may or may not involve recognition) (p. 6). In many ways this paper tackles both of these aspects: by turning to Indigenous history as well as qualitative research with urban Aboriginal activists to find out what they feel about self-determination and anti-colonial resistance.

Taylor's (1994) concept of mutual recognition between dominant and minority groups is critiqued by Coulthard (2006) for offering "reformist state redistribution schemes" and presuming to offer "cultural rights" as concessions derived from treating Indigenous nations and lands as subjects of the Canadian empire (p. 10). Further, he writes that integrating into the colonial-capitalist system is - for Coulthard as well as

Alfred (2005:133)(10) - not compatible with the philosophies and ethics of Indigenous peoples and only works to feed delusions of capitalist and liberal progress.

Where Taylor (1994) engaged Fanon by arguing that it is necessary for subjugated groups in colonial societies to undergo a revision of these representations in order to find freedom (p. 66), Coulthard's (2004) paper shows that Fanon's work highlights the importance of rejecting processes that seek to gain recognition from the colonial nation-state through political processes that favour settler nations. While Aboriginal struggles are centered around gaining rights through recognition, Coulthard argues that decolonization without transformative conflict will both retain colonial mentalities in Indigenous peoples and also make it appear as though the recognition given to them by the Canadian state is their own (p. 12). Coulthard (2006) insists that Fanon's critique of engaging with settler colonists as liberators and treating the already sovereign Indigenous nations as "emancipated slaves" perpetuates colonial domination and misrecognition of the self-determining agency of Indigenous communities (p. 11).

According to Coulthard (2006), through incorporating Indigenous nations as "sub-states" under Canadian jurisdiction, the need for mutual recognition ceases to exist; engaging in the politics of recognition from that position puts Indigenous communities at risk of experiencing non-recognition and domestication insofar as the colonial powers define the Indigenous-settler relationships (p. 12). The supreme court of Canada is often the environment where the Canadian state decides whether to recognize Aboriginal peoples rights, and Coulthard notes that all too often, the decisions made do not favour Aboriginal communities. Pointing to *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*, Coulthard notes that the Canadian government even granted itself rights - which cannot legally exist - to

extinguish Aboriginal rights so long as it is deemed economically beneficial (citing Tully, 2000b: 413).

In this context, it becomes obvious why Coulthard (2006) agrees with Fanon's reasoning that removing dependency on the colonizer for freedom and recognition can only be done through embracing self-determined histories, traditions, cultures, and identities that Aboriginal communities come up with themselves (p. 16). Linking Fanon's insights back to Indigenous resurgence theorists like Alfred Taiake, Coulthard calls for radical self-determination, created through multiple forms "of critical individual and collective self- recognition on the part of Indigenous people" (ibid). Coulthard notes that Indigenous societies possess a great degree of knowledge with respect to non-imperialist relationships between people and land, and that these fundamentally differ from the types of power structures that are implemented through interactions with the colonial nation-state.

In this spirit, my research also consciously turned away from the colonial politics of recognition and towards Indigenous and Aboriginal representations of pasts, presents, and futures within the city (p. 17). If Indigenous sovereignty does not - as the Canadian government presumes - flow from the recognition of status by the Canadian nation-state (as Coulthard argues), one can raise the following question: what would an urban form of Aboriginal self-determination look like in Toronto?

Exploring Aboriginal self-determination

Indigenous nations are quite often instrumentally left out of international meetings between governments that determine what is done with Indigenous land in Canada. The

Canadian state's recent trade agreement with China is an obvious example of this, ratifying a 31 year free trade agreement that grants China access to "Canadian natural resources" has caused the Hupacasath First Nation to contact the Chinese government themselves stating that Canada is putting itself in violation of treaty and Canadian law (Hupacasath First Nation, 2014).

Canada's politics towards Aboriginal rights and Indigenous self-determination continue to attempt to assimilate Indigenous nations into Canada's jurisdiction. Roy's (1998) extensive thesis on decolonization and Indigenous self-determination notes that for Indigenous peoples, self-determination includes the right to use traditional lands and the right to execute sovereignty as independent nations (p. 48). However, Roy argues that even multilateral institutions like the UN have been complicit with violations of their own international definitions of the right to self-determination because they support the assimilatory nature of Canadian laws on Aboriginal status in Canada (p. 45). Arguing against treating First Nations as nations-within-nations, Roy suggests implementing self-determination, maintaining that decolonization is a necessary step in any colonized space (47).

In, *Peace Power and Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto*, Alfred (2008) offers a different perspective by arguing that discussions of Aboriginal self-determination assume that settler-colonial society is monolithic and incompatible with Indigenous worldviews (p. 25). Alfred argues instead that there is danger in assuming that the worldviews and cultures of colonial societies are rigid and permanent, which shows his commitment to challenging essentialism and the notion that colonization should be naturalized as the political model settlers should live by (p. 21).

Alfred's (2006) alternative understanding of Indigenous self-determination and governance looks to return to an Indigenous governance structure that has no central or coercive authority, where decision-making is collective. His interpretation of Indigenous governance states that individual autonomy is central; that 'sovereignty' cannot be abstracted from the individual members of the collectives in the nation. To Alfred, self-determination in an Indigenous tradition means not giving up the inherent freedom to decide what to do with your life as an individual in order to produce an essentialist view of Indigenous life. Instead, Alfred argues that there are traditions of collective spiritualities and extended kinship groups that connect individuals through their own interpretations of Indigenous ways of living (25-26).

For Alfred (2006), Aboriginal community life is framed by the dual processes of social relations and culture and politics/interactions with the colonial state (p. 1). This view was supported by my participant observation at The Native Canadian Centre in Toronto, where the Thursday night socials showed me how smudging, dancing, social networking, singing, drumming, and other forms of cultural ceremony were central to community cohesion. While I encountered a different experience during my time with the activists I had met at No More Silence and Idle No More, where the focus was more explicitly political, the dual cultural and political processes seemed intrinsic to the struggle for Aboriginal rights in the city. For Alfred, Indigenous life "cannot be realized without respecting all facets of tradition: culture, spiritual, and government" (p. 4). I learned during my research that this kind of holistic approach was also part of why the struggle for Aboriginal rights transcended a social movements framework: many of the people I would have previously considered activists told me that asserting Indigenous

sovereignty and practicing resistance against colonialism was simply their way of life. Realizing that I was framing resistance against colonial oppression as being ‘activism’ because of recent social movement interventions like Idle No More and No More Silence, I ended up finding it more insightful to discuss the larger everyday struggle of Aboriginal peoples trying to survive environments of colonial racism, sexism, and classism in Toronto.

In view of the fact that the city is a colonially planned and capitalist environment, Aboriginal self-determination has the potential to alter the city’s spaces through engaging with ways of living that are not inherently designed to produce capital for the Canadian nation-state and settlers. In, *Native Urban Self-Government in Toronto and the Politics of Self-Determination*, Bobiwash (1997) asks whether self-determination can be executed without a discreet land base, what jurisdictional issues need to be resolved in settler-Aboriginal relationships, and how urban Aboriginal people should be represented (p. 88). Throughout the chapter he asserts that urban Aboriginal self-determination is systematically reduced by the Canadian state to the right to service provision and self-representation (p. 89). Bobiwash notes that this notion of self-determination is based on interactions that work to frame the province as the authority on legislating and recognizing the rights of Aboriginal communities to perform self-governance in institutions like schools, rehabilitation centres, and so on (p. 90).

Importantly, Bobiwash (1997) calls into question where the right to self-determination would flow from for Aboriginal peoples living in cities (rather than on reserve lands) (p. 88). Noting the large segment of the urban Aboriginal community that travels between First Nation reservations and the city on a regular basis, Bobiwash argues

that perspectives on self-governance are naturally influenced by the nations and communities that are travelling to and from the city. In his conclusion, Bobiwash states that fundamentally, Aboriginal peoples should have the right to demand *not only* the same level of services as settlers but also the power to access their Aboriginal rights wherever they choose to live. The denial of these rights will, in Bobiwash's opinion, necessitate interfering with/challenging the settler state itself through direct action (p. 94).

In the case of Toronto, access to traditional land-based resources such as the salmon (Freeman, 2010, p. 8), deer, and corn agriculture (p. 9) is no longer possible. The urban environment is a capitalist environment based on paid access to resources, private property, rental housing, and mass immigration. Lawrence (2004) notes that the challenges wrought by urban landscapes has led to a variety of questions about whether or not urban Aboriginal lifestyles can be considered traditional without the material and cultural practices that are present in Northern reserves such as hunting, fishing, and so on (pg. 168). With recent estimates by urban Aboriginal agencies putting the population of Urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto at around seventy thousand people (Jess Cook, 2013), the question remains: how is it possible to support Aboriginal rights and land uses in the city? While the idea of self-determination over land use seems to be impractical within a highly urbanized area, urban planners would do well to ask how, or if, including urban Aboriginal communities into reshaping the city could support Aboriginal sovereignty in a more explicitly multi-lateral way.

Urban Planning on Indigenous land

Urban planning is concretely the method through which land use and urban design is guided and shaped in Toronto. Evidently, this has implications for the types of relationships that both Aboriginal and settler communities are able to maintain with land. Legislation like the *The Ontario Planning Act* (Government of Ontario, 1990; 2011) and *The City of Toronto Act* (Government of Ontario, 2006; 2013) grants urban planners the judicial empowerment to maintain zoning controls over what can and cannot be done on land within the city. In the city, Aboriginal land rights to take part in practices deemed traditional by Canadian law such as smudging, hunting, and fishing are supposed to be upheld under Canadian law via Section 35 of the Constitution Act (Government of Canada, 1982). However, ecologies that provide subsistence to Aboriginal communities are not protected by urban planning processes that aim to improve conditions for the settler use of Indigenous land bases that Aboriginal peoples built their societies around in the past.

As with many settler colonial cities, the development of Toronto's urban environment required the colonial state to seek legal ownership of Indigenous land and then to attempt various projects to displace Indigenous settlements and agricultural practices in order to make room for mass-immigration, industrialization, and the creation of a capitalist urban space. The legality of the positions taken by the Canadian state should perhaps be called into question when dealing with rights afforded to Canada that have not been fairly ceded by local Indigenous nations. Even in seemingly positive moves towards consulting Aboriginal communities about large scale development decisions, the use of Canadian law continues to favour granting ultimate sovereignty over land to settlers.

Since the supreme court's decision with the Haida in B.C., the crown has been obligated to consult affected Aboriginal communities whenever a development project will interfere with their traditional land and resources (Olynuk, 2005, p. 2). However as Olynuk noted, the decision also reaffirmed the Canadian state's ability to define the legitimacy of Indigenous land claims as well as their right to determine the scope of consultations on a case-to-case basis (p. 2). Perhaps evidencing the lack of intention to legitimize Indigenous sovereignty over land - even when Indigenous nations are consulted - the supreme court's interpretation of the precedent set by consultation in the Haida case included a clause that stated that these consultations would not afford Aboriginal communities the right to veto any decision made by Canada (p. 5). This case-setting precedent heralds further consultations – more politics of recognition – but also attempts to reduce Indigenous nations to subjects of Canadian history and political sovereignty. Additionally, since municipal governments are not considered agents of the crown (whom land treaties were signed with), municipal urban planners are also not obligated to consult Indigenous nations unless the province policy framework or federal government directs them to do so (Fraser and Viswathan, 2013, p. 8).

Previously in Ontario, consultation with Aboriginal communities was only required if the community in question lived within one kilometer of a proposed development site, and not because of cultural affiliation (See Section 5(9)(19)) of the *Planning Act*). Because of this, authors like Viswanathan et. al (2013) criticized the Provincial Policy-Framework for relegating Indigenous communities to the status of “public bodies” to be consulted, rather than nations with the right to have significant impacts on land use decisions in the province (p. 22). While raising serious concerns

about the effectiveness of the crown's consultations with First Nations, Viswanathan et. al also noted that rather than building a capacity for First Nations to meaningfully participate in decision-making, local Indigenous nations are often only given the option of dealing with an "inordinate amount of consultation requests" and technical paper work for development projects in the Greater Toronto Area (23).

However, this February a new Provincial Policy Statement (Government of Ontario, 2014) was released in regards to the *Planning Act* (Government of Ontario, 1990; 2011) that contains three major changes to how land use planning will approach Aboriginal rights. In it, Section 4.3 makes all planning in the province now subject to being consistent with Section 35 of the Constitution Act. Section 2.6.5 states that planning authorities shall consider Aboriginal interests in regards to preserving cultural heritage and archaeological resources. Section 6.0 recognizes Aboriginal communities as part of the definitions of built and cultural heritage landscapes. While this has the potential to empower urban planners to work with Aboriginal communities in protecting heritage sites and in engaging in further consultation, it still does not fundamentally address the issue of reducing sovereign nations to sub-nations within Canada.

If, as Libby Porter (2010) suggests, "Indigenous claims for land justice, self-determination and sovereignty [...] are unsettling the certainties and central tenets of modern land use planning across the world" (p. 1) why is this so? In the article, *Municipal Colonialism in Vancouver*, Stranger Ross (2008) argues that the history of modern planning and implementation of Canadian municipalities is entrenched in processes of "municipal colonization" that have created urban spaces that are "tools for

dispossession [...] symbols of conquest [and] powerful expressions of settler possession” (p. 543).

Calling into question the colonial culture from which planning arose, Porter (2010) argues that planners should do “archaeological work” on planning itself to examine the cultures that their profession emerges and derives its logics from (p. 3). Fundamentally, land use planning in Canada came out of a white-supremacist tradition of European cartography, land surveying, and ideologies of terra nullius or empty (unplanned) land that attempted to erase the active role Indigenous societies have had in shaping land in history (or: historically?) (McKittrick, 2006, 129). Despite attempts to downplay the importance of Indigenous history in planning, the first colonial land use planning instruments in Toronto were actually legal agreements with First Nations such as The Royal Proclamation of 1763, and the various treaties made with local Indigenous nations. While these documents were originally communicated as multi-lateral agreements between the Crown and Indigenous nations, ongoing processes of colonial manipulation attempted - and continue to attempt - to assert a unilateral politics of recognition over who gets to control the development of Indigenous territory and nations (See Chapter 2 and 3).

In Cornell’s (2013) chapter on colonial boundary making in the book *Reclaiming Indigenous Planning* (Eds. Walker, Jojola, Natcher), the author argues that colonization engaged with political and spatial boundaries through a process of disruption and rigidification of Indigenous nations and geographies (p. 37). For Cornell, engaging in transformational planning that changes the relationship of Indigenous nations with surrounding states (citing Lane and Hibbard 2005, p. 182) is intimately tied up with the

process of revisiting and self-defining Indigenous political and geographic boundaries (42-52). While reclaiming self-identification dovetails with Veracini's (2011) concepts of transfer and re-naming by settler collectives (p. 45), Cornell (2013) also argues that, without understanding the ways that colonization separated and distinguished Indigenous groups and lands, efforts to promote Indigenous self-determination and self-governance will run the risk of relying on an internalized colonial politics of recognition (p. 42).

Transforming settler-colonial styles of development that oppress Aboriginal people through social learning is a new avenue of research. Emerging voices in planning theory such as Anderson (2013) call for an examination of Indigenous forms of planning. In his chapter on urban Aboriginal statistics, Anderson (2013) calls on urban authorities in settler colonial cities to engage in a transformative form of planning that will require identifying and implementing Aboriginal methods for the transformation of structures of oppression that inhibit Aboriginal people's ability to actualize their aspirations based on their own assessment of needs and feelings (p. 161).

While urban planning in Toronto primarily relies on population forecasts, ecological analysis, and economic statistics, Anderson (2013) asks "what [planners] should be measuring [and] why" (270) in urban Aboriginal environments. Different indicators produce different results, and Anderson argues that by changing the line of Questioning, urban planning research could contribute much more information about the role of Aboriginal communities in cities than it currently does. Anderson feels this should include multiple areas of research including poverty, class mobility, informal networks, aboriginal institutions, struggles over political representation, relationships to non-urban communities, and the power of Aboriginal women in Canadian urban spaces (p. 271).

Planning theorists like Friedmann (2011) who advocate for a social transformation approach of knowledge exchange rooted in a historical analysis of oppression, have looked both to social learning and social movements as resources for unhinging oppressive social structures (p. 62-80). In this way, I also looked to see if Aboriginal social movements would offer me opportunities for understanding how the politics of recognition informs that land use and settler-Aboriginal relationships.

Contemporary Activisms:

While the third chapter of this paper goes in depth into examining urban Aboriginal perspectives on self determination and activist struggles, the three social movements in which I was able to participate during this research - Idle No More, No More Silence, and Decolonize North America - provide indicators of how concrete struggles in Toronto deal with the politics of recognition between the Canadian state and Indigenous nations.

Idle No More (INM), the most widely known of the three social movements that I attended began as an Indigenous women's movement to protect land and water in response to Bill-C 45, the bill which removed many protections for Canada's waters, reduced Environmental Assessment requirements, and attempted to change the Indian Act without first consulting the First Nations. INM has been an active social movement in Toronto over the past few years since its emergence in October 2013. Originally a movement led by Indigenous women, INM wants to uphold the spirit and intent of the Treaty system as a method of distributing land between First Nations and the British Crown as equal sovereigns (CBC, January 5, 2013, n.p.).

On January 20th 2014, I attended an INM event in downtown Toronto that was organized in support of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation. Critiquing the way that the Government has unfairly colonized and hoarded wealth produced off of treaty land, INM seeks to end poverty for Aboriginal communities. Additionally INM challenges the Canadian state's attempt to further appropriate reserve lands from First Nations (Idle No More, 2011). While Idle No More works to seek equal recognition, such as was presented in the politics of recognition analysis provided by Taylor (1994), by demanding mutual legal and political recognition between settlers-Indigenous community it also works to assert Indigenous self-determination and Aboriginal rights. The Idle No More teach-ins represent a valuable resource for resisting settler erasure of Toronto's Aboriginal history and challenging the ways that Toronto naturalizes settler colonialism (U of T Library, 2013, n.p.).

No More Silence is a social movement that works to resist the non-recognition of the rising violence against Indigenous women in Canada. I attended the pre-strawberry ceremony "Honouring Missing Murdered and Indigenous Women" at York University. Throughout the event, community members who had lost relatives and friends gathered to share stories and raise public awareness of this urgent and growing problem in Aboriginal communities. After the Elder from the Aboriginal Association at York University, Blu, smudged the room, stories about women who have disappeared were told by various guest speakers. Following the event, I met one of the speakers whose daughter had been pushed in front of a train in Toronto but had not been able to receive assistance from local police in investigating her daughter's death.

The following week, on Valentine's Day, No More Silence held a ritual called the Strawberry Ceremony: dedicated to honoring and calling home those women who went missing or died. As a social movement, No More Silence advocates for the urgency of finding missing Indigenous women and protecting Indigenous women from violence, while also importantly working to create a space for healing and confronting oppression through community and cultural gatherings. The organization's website also provides the public with an updated list of those missing or murdered women who are being remembered and sought after by their loved ones (No More Silence, 2014, n.p.).

The final social movement event that I attended was with Decolonize North America, a social movement that is run by Davyn Calfchild and his friends and family. Their main objective is the decolonization of Canada and First Nations through the adoption of a new collaborative form of Indigenous-Settler governance. This system is based on the great law of peace and the Iroquois Confederacy. I was fortunate enough to be able to interview Davyn and discuss the current position and progress of the movement. Davyn explained that the movement was focused on gathering signatures for a potential referendum and doing land patrols at night with groups of individuals working to ensure that women do not get abducted in the downtown core.

All of the social movements that I was able to interact with during this research were engaged in struggles for recognition with the settler public in Toronto as well as the Canadian state. Nevertheless, it should be noted that these movements represented a significant exertion of self-determination. They gave Aboriginal activists an outlet for resisting colonial oppressions. Recalling Coulthard's (2006) argument that the politics of recognition actually reify the colonizer's power (p. 6), these social movements appeared

to serve the dual function of asserting the primacy of Aboriginal struggles in the city while interacting with settler colonial governments that seek to subvert Indigenous sovereignty. All of these movements importantly also represented Aboriginal visions of transforming urban space: one without colonial genocide (No More Silence), one with a joint Indigenous-Settler governance structure (Decolonize North America), and one that was dedicated to continuing the Aboriginal protection of the land and water (INM).

My experience with Aboriginal social movements highlights the need not only to moving past the non-recognition of Aboriginal rights by settlers, but also to resist the colonization of Toronto's urban spaces. As Lawrence (2004) has noted, in this society even traditional spirituality represents a form of resistance (p. 169). When I got the opportunity to attend Thursday night socials at the Native Canadian Centre, I witnessed what I believe could be considered a form of self-determination via the continuation of tradition and the enactment of traditional land uses. While most people at the Centre did not identify as activists, when I informed them of my project, or attempted to gather respondents, I still felt that it was enriching to learn about the customs of drumming, singing, dancing, regalia making, and prayer. Echoing what Alfred stated in his 2008 manifesto, the Aboriginal community is shaped by politics and culture, which importantly manifests in the practice of cultural traditions (p. 1). Experiencing this first hand during my research encouraged me to reframe what I was looking for in terms of activism, regarding cultural resurgence as an important act of social organizing.

Throughout this chapter, I have explored theoretical discussions about the politics of recognition in Toronto, a settler colonial city and a site of urban Aboriginal struggles. By highlighting the ways that the politics of recognition play into urban

Indigenous/Aboriginal-settler relationships and development, readers can begin to see the need to go beyond acknowledging Aboriginal struggles or advocating for the Canadian state to grant rights to sovereign Indigenous nations. In order to provide the historical context necessary to argue against colonial domination over development in Toronto, the next chapter examines the ways in which Indigenous and settler histories interacted with colonial politics of recognition, non-recognition, and misrecognition while arguing for a return to the spirit and intent of the original treaty relationships set out by multi-lateral law.

Chapter Two

The rise of settler colonialism in Toronto and the meeting place: a brief historical context

What does it mean to do historically grounded research in settler urban environments? In the context of planning research in Toronto, there are many historical records that are frequently called upon by the urban planning profession when shaping long term plans for development. One only has to notice the emphasis on Canadian case law precedents from previous court rulings on land use, Euclidian zoning laws, and the adoption of policy frameworks and legislature that guide social, economic, and physical development on Indigenous land to see that the types of history that are most often called upon by planners favour a Canada-centric viewpoint.

Without having to focus on the particular Indigenous and Aboriginal histories in this region, urban planning research can proceed in a completely uni-lateral context approaching land use in Toronto uninformed by the Aboriginal struggles with settler colonialism in this region. In order to resist a Eurocentric understanding of Toronto's development this chapter attempts to highlight some of the troubling historical processes of colonization, and particularly, settler colonialism that have not fulfilled the responsibilities of those treaty relationships and that are at the root of ongoing Aboriginal struggles in this region.

According to local historian, Jon Johnson (2013), Toronto has been continuously occupied by Indigenous nations since the last Ice Age (over ten thousand years ago) (p. 59). Johnson's work with the Toronto Native History Project brings his writing to life with the Great Indian Bus tour that runs from the Native Canadian Centre on Spadina. According to his research there is archaeological evidence that indicates that Toronto had been used as an international Aboriginal meeting ground for trading long before the

arrival of Europeans (p. 72). In Toronto, artifacts have been found from nations that lived as far away as Ohio and the Gulf of Mexico (2013, p. 292).

Freeman's (2010) dissertation, *Toronto Has No History* is one of the most extensive resources that I uncovered for examining the history of Indigenous-settler relations since contact. In it she notes that at around 500 BCE Iroquoian corn-growers (p. 26) lived in the land surrounding Lake Ontario (p. 44). Toronto's hardwood forests, large population of animals for hunting, and fertile soil made it an ideal area for a society to have developed its civilization on (p. 9). Additionally, there is evidence that settlements after 1000 CE had a cosmopolitan make-up like contemporary Toronto. The Wendat and Tionantati lived with several ethnic/nation groups in villages (p. 28). According to Freeman (2010), at the time of European contact, Toronto was still inhabited by Haudenosaunee, the Mississaugas (now the Mississaugas of the New Credit Nation, MNCN), the Huron-Wendat, and the Senecas. Although many of these groups were not bound to only one geography, all of these groups could perhaps be considered Indigenous to this region (p. 9, 46). This has implications in terms of the treaty process, as the idea that one nation could cede the rights of other nations could be seen as problematic.

In his chapter, *The Great Indian Bus Tour: Mapping Toronto's Urban First Nations Oral Tradition*, Johnson (2013) notes that when the Jesuits arrived in 1640 Toronto already had a population of 65,000 Indigenous people (p. 281). Because of the diverse land uses that were already going on, from salmon fishing, game hunting, corn cultivation and agriculture, trading areas, transportation routes, and resting places for visitors (on the Island) (Freeman, 2010, p. 9), the attempted displacement and establishment of colonial rule over this area could be seen as a "re-settlement" of an

Indigenous space rather than a “settlement” created by Europeans. Typically Indigenous land use was perhaps not as dense as European cities, nor was it industrial. But with a population that large and multiple nations living together it could perhaps be argued that Toronto had already become an international urban environment prior to the arrival of Europeans (Johnson, 2013, p. 292).

Due to the proximity to the Dutch, New France and Hudson’s Bay, Toronto represented a very important strategic geography for British and French colonists. According to Johnson, when European expansion reached the shores of Lake Ontario with the French explorer Etienne Brûlé in 1615, the Huron-Wendat acted as guides and showed the French how to find the connection from Lake Ontario to the St. Lawrence River (Johnson, 2013, p. 59). When Etienne traveled with the Huron-Wendat through Baby Point, he may have encountered other settlements like the Seneca village Teiaiaagon, which was rumored to have been destroyed by France in 1668 (p. 63). French documents from that time also indicate that some of the Haudenosaunee were still in Toronto in the 1600’s, after contact, hunting, fishing, and participating in the fur trade (Freeman, 2010, p. 46).

Freeman (2010) notes that by the time Europeans arrived, the Wendat population in Toronto was already migrating to the Georgian Bay area. However, many of them stayed in Toronto until they were defeated at war by the Haudenosaunee at around 1650 (p. 45). The Five Nations Confederacy became the Six Nations after the Wendats were allowed to join with conquering Haudenosaunee politically. This now stands as one of the reasons why some members of the Six Nations people have challenged the cessation of land rights to the crown by the MNCN (p. 1). According to Freeman, the Anishinaabek

had successfully resisted the attacks by other nations during the 17th century and became the leaders of international trade in this region. After years of conflict with the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabek allied themselves with the latter under the “one bowl one spoon” wampum that acknowledged their shared land base in 1666 (p. 45).

The intense colonial competition between the empire of New France and its Indigenous allies, as well as the British empire and their Indigenous allies during the fur trade and in the territories colonized by Spain came to a peak during the seven year war between 1754 and 1763. As a result, France abandoned their claim to Indigenous territories and subsequently the British became the remaining colonial force in the area (Freeman, 2010, p. 167).

This time period represented an important moment of political resistance against colonization, when the Anishinaabek leader Pontiac saw that the French were leaving after the loss of the Seven Years’ War, his allies sought to remove the British from area South of the Great Lakes Region in an attempt to decolonize their traditional territories (Manataka Indian Council, 2011, n.p.). During the battles that followed in 1763, eight crucial British forts were destroyed (ibid). The British could not afford to sustain a long-term war so soon after the war, and thus resorted to using biological warfare (small pox) against the resistance at Fort Pitt (Findlay et al, 2007, n.p.). Nevertheless, the decolonization effort was nearly successful, and potentially would have been if it had not been for the Chief of the Toronto Mississaugas. The Chief Wabbicommicot negotiated an end to the war based on the caveat that the British grant concessions to Indigenous sovereignty, those made in the course of the wampum exchange, the Treaty of Niagara in 1764 and the Niagara Purchase of 1781 (Freeman, 2010, p. 52). Among the agreements

made by the British were promises to provide gifts in perpetuity in exchange for living on Indigenous territories, and to keep settlers out of areas that were not given to them through the establishment of treaties. The threat of an Aboriginal revolution against a weakened European presence led to formal agreements being made to secure relationships between British settlers and Indigenous nations through the Royal Proclamation.

Britain's victory after the Seven Years' War against France and the unrest brought about by Indigenous resistance during Pontiac's war, put pressure on the British to cement their ability to occupy Indigenous land (Freeman, 2010, p. 52). Under the Proclamation, the British claimed it was "illegal" to own and sell Aboriginal land to anyone but the British crown, while also claiming to recognize Aboriginal title to all unceded territories in the region. Couched in a language of reciprocity, the Royal Proclamation took a paternalistic approach towards dealing with Indigenous nations, as Burrows (1997) notes:

"the proclamation wavers between Aboriginal sovereignty and subordination [...] evidenced by the Proclamation's description of [giving legal recognition to] Nations or Tribes with whom we are connected, and who live under our protection" (p. 63).

This positioning of the British Empire as the only option for seeking "protection" from the genocide and dispossession wrought by European colonization entrapped local Indigenous groups (Freeman, 2010, p. 52). As Victoria Freeman (2010) noted, positioning the British crown as the only nation that could buy land from local Indigenous peoples in Toronto was instrumental in stopping competition from interfering

with keeping costs low when the crown sought to displace Indigenous peoples from their traditional territories (p. 66).

According to Freeman (2010), the British representative Sir William Johnson met with twenty-four Indigenous nations at Niagara in order to attempt to re-establish wampum belt relationships, asserting that Britain would renew its responsibility to uphold the Covenant Chain wampum belt by promising that the settlers would only occupy one small corner of the Great Lakes region, and that the welfare of the local Indigenous nations would be a responsibility of settlers who lived on Indigenous land (Freeman, 2010, p. 54). The establishment of the Niagara Purchase - which gave settlers the use of a small tract of land near the Fort - was the first of many treaties made between the British crown and Indigenous nations that was based on the idea that settlers would engage in perpetual gift giving, similar to the sharecropping of feudal European states, in order to contribute to the advancement of the 24 nations who had been there at the treaty meeting (p. 54-55).

Freeman (2010) notes that around the time of the Niagara treaty, Toronto started to experience an ecological collapse of the salmon fisheries. Also, the bald eagle (which the Mississauga's took their name from) began to dwindle due to overhunting (p. 74). As the settler surpluses began to grow, thus aiding in the development of local settler society, the loss of a sustainable land base made subsistence less possible for local Indigenous peoples. This allowed the British to gain ground in positioning themselves as suppliers of goods for the Anishinaabek (p. 337, p. 65).

When the American Revolution took place, a large influx of British loyalists came to the Toronto area. In 1787, Sir John Johnson met with Mississauga bands at the Bay of

Quinte to negotiate the Toronto purchase, a controversial document that was left as a blank deed (p. 63). Despite the promise made by British officials to stay in one corner of the land, the settler population that developed after the adoption of the covenant chain at Niagara increased. There was pressure on indigenous groups to conclude more treaties and cede more land despite controversy about whether or not there was fair payment (for example with the controversial Gunshot treaty, p. 56). By manipulating the treaty processes until they gained a large amount of ceded land, the British were able to establish York in 1793.

In the Toronto area, as settlement increased and the subsistence resources for local Aboriginal peoples decreased at a rapid rate, tensions between settlers and the Mississaugas grew (Freeman, 2010, p. 65). When the settlers murdered a Mississauga chief, the Mississaugas gathered to try to form a plan to decolonize the area. However, when they went to seek allies, Joseph Brant, a Mohawk leader, told the Mississauga's that the Six Nations would not support an uprising (p. 65). Brant later became the representative for the Mississauga nation in land cessations. He was known for getting the colonial government to pay more than the tiny amounts of money the colonizers had hoped to gain back quickly through land speculation (p. 66).

Freeman's (2010) shows that as the Mississauga's became reliant on British gifts under treaty rights, the British, under William Claus, got them to cede more and more land through various treaties, each time expanding the amount of land owned by the British drastically (p. 70-75). By the time the Mississaugas were displaced and relocated to a reserve area, settler racism had become so extreme that instead of goods or compensation the Mississauga's asked for protection from settler violence (p. 72).

Ironically, it seems that it was the defeat of the Americans in the war of 1812 in Toronto under an Indigenous alliance led by Tecumseh that allowed the British to gain enough territorial control to establish Canada in 1867 (Freeman, 2010, p. 116). Exactly nine years later after establishing the Canadian nation-state, the Canadian government presumed to take control over Indigenous and Aboriginal identity completely with the 1876 Indian Act, whereby the Government claimed to be able to grant or deny Indigeneity (p. 156). The genocide against Indigenous people in this country implemented through trade wars, dispossession, and biological warfare, continued after the establishment of residential school programs in the late 19th century. However, despite the settler erosion of the traditional resource base, settler violence, and ongoing colonization, Toronto remained an important site for urban Aboriginal struggles.

Based on the work of Lawrence (2002), Johnson (2013a; 2013b), and Freeman (2010), it becomes quite evident that the notion – and the hope for equal recognition (Taylor, 1994) was the basis for Indigenous nations engaging in the treaty process with Europeans. However, as Coulthard (2006) suggests, these processes of recognition were (and still are) enmeshed in unilateralism and colonial supremacy (p. 12). Where-as Aboriginal self-determination may require repatriating ownership of land to Indigenous nations, the treaty system seems to imply that Europeans sought out ways to appease Indigenous nations into ceding their land rights to neutralize threats to the privatization and development of settler colonies in North America.

The basis of determining who would be recognized as having Indigenous precedence and the title to the land under colonial rule was based on Locke's labour theory of value which held that "as much land as a man [sic] tills, plants, improves,

cultivates, and can use the product of, so much is his property” (Kolers, 2000, p. 393, citing Locke). This became the basis for recognizing those who were currently occupying the Toronto region as being the sole proprietors of Aboriginal title. However, prior to the Royal Proclamation, this Lockean doctrine had served as the basis for free settlement. Then, land that was deemed uncultivated by European colonizers, or land that was said to be empty (“terra nullius”) was considered to be free to be privatized (Freeman, 2010, p. 18).

In recent years, the judicial test of continuous land use and occupation since before contact has been used by Indigenous nations to access Aboriginal land rights under Canadian law (Section 35 of *The Constitution Act, 1982*). This, of course, has served to legitimize settler claims over any area where Indigenous tribes had already vacated due to nomadic land use, or colonial dispossession. Recently, in the landmark Williams decision by the Supreme Court of Canada (Supreme Court of British Columbia, 2014), the Canadian government has - for the first time - recognized the rights of a nomadic Indigenous nation to hold titles over land that they frequently (but not continuously) occupied. This may also have ramifications when applied to the supposed cessation of land rights via the treaty system from a nation like the Mississaugas in regions like Toronto that were frequently home to many nations. Canada has excluded various nations from the benefits of their own land by granting limited recognition to their history in this territory

The fact that European settlers felt that they had the right to determine unilaterally the conditions of Indigeneity, land-claims, and styles of political organization, through the establishment of Upper Canada, the City of Toronto, and eventually,

Metropolitan Toronto (Freeman, 2010, p. 5), shows that politics of colonial recognition have been consistently used as a method to suppress and define the limits of Aboriginal self-determination over land-use in this region.

Fed by the wealth created during the mercantile era and the fur trade (Bourgeault, 1983, p. 63), capitalism and industrialization in the 19th Century transformed cityscapes rapidly. The displacement of Indigenous communities, and privatization of the land base are all parts of the basic conditions of primary accumulation that are commonly seen during colonization. However, due to the fact that many Aboriginal populations have remained in the city as it has developed, Coulthard's insight that primary accumulation is ongoing in settler colonial environments seems true of Toronto.

Researching the history behind the treaties and Indigenous-settler relations in Toronto highlights the physical and social displacement of the Mississaugas of the New Credit Nation and other Indigenous nations in Toronto, along with the continual presence of their nations within the city as it became a "Canadian" owned space. In this chapter, I attempted to highlight the ways that the treaty system was misused by the colonial regimes. I also insisted on the need to,unlearn our assumptions about this land. Further, despite the collapse of the land base that had provided food and materials to generations of Indigenous peoples prior to contact, and despite the intentional forms of discrimination they have faced in this region, Toronto remains central ground for many Aboriginal nations. By visiting the Toronto Native Centre and going to activist events I was able to see that the community, although dwarfed by the swelling settler population, is both active, engaged, and resisting colonial oppressions. In order to question how settler colonialism continues to be resisted by efforts for urban Aboriginal self-determination,

the next chapter examines five different urban Aboriginal activists' perspectives on contemporary urban Aboriginal struggles in Toronto.

Chapter 3:
**Urban Aboriginal Activists on self-determination and
urban struggles**

Introduction:

This chapter explores five interviews with urban Aboriginal activists exposing different threads of Aboriginal self-determination efforts and ideas about decolonization. The first section deals with the unveiling of Toronto's history, both in landscapes and in various forms of activism, with local historian Jon Johnson calling for Torontonians to embody the ethos of being "the meeting place", which is one interpretation of the original meaning behind the Indigenous word Tkoronto that the city got its name from. The second section deals with issues of identity, isolation, and northern-urban connections with Niki Nash - an early childhood educator who has worked with communities in Ontario's Northern mining region colloquially known as the "ring of fire". The third section deals with questions of pan-aboriginal unity and divisive nationalism in a discussion with Architectural technologist and visual artist Clinton Saddington. The fourth section features reflections on childhood as an urban Aboriginal activist, as well as current political issues facing the urban Aboriginal community with community organizer Nica Thundercloud. The Fifth and final section in this chapter features reflections from Davyn Calfchild, one of the cities most prolific urban Aboriginal activists speaking on decolonization and other urban Aboriginal struggles.

While differing viewpoints emerge in this discussion regarding what should be done next to support urban Aboriginal struggles for self-determination, all of my respondents felt directly affected by the types of recognition and representation that were presented in Toronto by settler culture. By elucidating some of the main issues that they brought to the table - ranging from Indigenous identity politics, missing and murdered indigenous women, line 9, and Indigenous education – it is hard to miss the continued

impacts of colonization and the efforts of urban Aboriginal peoples to end colonial domination.

Jon Johnson: Histories, landscapes, and the Ethos of the land

I first met Jon Johnson while I was still preparing my proposal for this project. Jon and two other Aboriginal educators were leading the Great Indian Bus Tour, that took me and other students from York University to important historical sites and trade routes including Davenport, High Park, and Baby Point. At York University, Johnson works as a Professor of History; his courses are focused on bringing to light the various Aboriginal narratives that he has encountered throughout the city, both in his time collecting oral stories, and during his time as researcher and teacher.

Jon's passion for raising awareness is driven by his knowledge that Indigenous nations are still present in Toronto; that in fact they never stopped their cultural practices even as they transformed into contemporary forms. As Jon and I sat down, we began discussing at length what we believe constitutes Aboriginal activism in the city; in a place where much of the work put forth towards resisting colonialism is community rather than social movements based. Jon pointed out that part of what blocked Indigenous people from claiming to be activists or from attending protests was the association of activism with militancy. Because the Canadian state has a history of militancy and cultural genocide towards Indigenous peoples, resisting framing Aboriginal struggles in a militant way could be seen as airing on the side of caution when dealing with a hostile state.

However, I believe – and Jon later pointed out – that many urban Aboriginal people concentrate their efforts on educating others rather than protesting demands to a colonial

state. Jon told me that even outside of social movements, he felt as though his work constituted activism because it sought to promote Aboriginal alternatives to oppressive conditions created by colonial life. This can be seen in multiple ways, with his work contributing towards going beyond the histories that are recognized by the Canadian state through teaching the Indigenous histories of Toronto in the academy, writing chapters in recently published books, and working at the Great Indian Bus Tour.

Despite not being associated with a social movement, as a member of the Toronto Native History Project (that has contributed to Idle No More teach-ins and the creation of the First Story's phone application), Jon's collaborative work strives to create recognition of the urban Aboriginal environment. Recalling techniques such as place-based art installations as a way of encoding the landscape with Indigenous knowledge, Jon maintained that art and theatre are both methods of activism that his friends have used as tools for education.

One example that seemed to have great potential for transforming the city into visibly Indigenous spaces was The Ogimaa Mikana Project, (The Ogimaa Mikana Project, 2013). The Ogimaa Mikana Project is an activist action that pastes "Anishinaabemowin place-names to the streets, avenues, roads, paths, and trails of Gichi Kiiwenging (Toronto)" (2013, n.p.). By taking spaces marked with English - a colonial language - and reclaiming them in Indigenous languages, the artists involved in the Omigaa Mikana Project have redressed public spaces in a way that is reminiscent of a form of decolonial tactical urbanism (whereas a non-Indigenous version might be a pop-up café or some sort of reclamation of urban space).



Figure 1: Street sign with traditional place name in downtown Toronto (The Ogimaa Mikana Project, 2013)

Jon felt that art had the strong potential to be used for activism and that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples were contributing to this movement in the city.

While Jon felt like decolonization in terms of repatriating Indigenous land in the city would be a challenge, he spoke strongly about the rights to self-determination having never been extinguished. Recalling Taiaiake Alfred's (2008) argument from the book, *Peace, Power and Righteousness*, Jon pointed out that self-government in the form of bargaining with the Canadian government was a position of weakness, which is a sentiment that is echoed by Coulthard's emphasis on letting go of the politics of recognition (2006). Jon expanded his position that Indigenous rights did not flow from the Colonial government by stating that people wrongly assumed that urban dwelling Indigenous people were simply provincial citizens rather than members of separate sovereign nations. Jon pointed out that the nonrecognition of Indigenous rights by the settler state presumed the power to change Indigenous rights.

Jon experiences with non-recognition and settler society's lack of interest in responding to Indigenous history, sovereignty, and historical injustices frustrated him deeply. After studying Coulthard (2006), Lawrence (2002; 2004; 2013), and Freeman (2010), I too shared this sentiment and felt like settler-non-recognition could be viewed as a historical process of colonial dominance and willful ignorance. Yet again drawing on Alfred (2008), Johnson was quick to note that destructive interpretations of settler-colonial rights that framed Indigenous nations to be treated as nations-within-the-nation could change. One has to wonder, though, whether or not the Canadian government has any other plan but to extinguish Indigenous rights. Based on documents like the White Paper (1960) that sought to terminate Indigenous and Aboriginal rights, the treaty system and the leaked memo revealing that the Canadian government chose to adopt it as a long term political plan (Diabo, 2013, n.p.), it seems evident that colonial supremacy over Indigenous land continues to be the agenda of the settler state.

Jon's vision of decolonization was centered around the Anishinaabek people's seventh fire prophecies which he explained to me focused on how all people might work together:

“The self-governance, the self-determination, that's all really important stuff, but even bigger than that is the prophecy of the seventh fire. Which is how do we find a way to work together? And how do we respect Indigenous sovereignties?”.

Rather than seeking to eliminate settler presence, this tradition represents an interesting avenue for Indigenous-settler allieship. Jon believed that given Toronto's history, if you were able to understand the ethos of Toronto, you might find that Toronto is meant to embody that type of allieship through being the meeting place. While any attempt to

“work together” with settlers to end colonization would need to avoid being assimilationist or engaging in what Tuck and Yang refer to as the settler trope of “colonial equivocation” (2012, p.13), the spirit and intent of the Anishinaabek peoples treaties have always made an effort to create multi-lateral but autonomous connections with settlers.

Jon and I discussed how the settler state often treated Indigenous nations as though they were cultures, which in a way attempts to use a multicultural rhetoric to erase the multilateral relationships that exist between sovereign nations and Canada. Like Taylor’s critique of multiculturalism erasing difference (1994), the extension of an equalizing rhetoric to other nations is an especially harmful version of misrecognition. For Jon, the development of relationships with land as well as with other Indigenous people, and learning lessons through realizing that the land is alive - was a pathway for all people to support Aboriginal self-determination. It was through this pathway that he hoped that there might be another way for settlers and Indigenous nations to design urban environments that satisfy basic urban needs without obliterating the landscape or destroying the environment.

One option, Jon (2014) pointed out, was to look to the many Indigenous cities that could teach lessons to urban planners regarding how to stop living as though we need to be sheltered from the elements like McLuhan’s notion of an urban carapas (a bug’s shell) (p. 16). Planning theorists like Michael E. Smith (2007) in, *Form and Meaning in the Earliest Cities: A New Approach to Ancient Urban Planning*, have argued that throughout Mexico and other parts of the world, such as Peru, evidence suggests that urban planning in ancient Indigenous civilizations was exercised through various, unique

methods of building that are atypical of contemporary cities. For instance, the circular layouts of urban spaces that were present in some of the ancient world are quite different from the European colonial tradition of streets based on Euclidian grids (p. 22). Perhaps in some of these cities people did not experience the same disconnection from the land that Jon felt needed to end. However, in urban environments like present day Toronto using older Indigenous forms of planning would require planners to adapt Indigenous practices in ways that were conducive to supporting a significantly higher level of population than in the past. Additionally, any such move in the organization of land use in Toronto would require adapting new social interactions that might challenge fundamental governance and market structures that settlers and Aboriginal peoples live under.

At the end of our interview, I was left wondering if Jon's own research into the diverse land use that existed here in pre-contact days in Toronto would be able to inform a more responsible land use in the contemporary moment. Since Indigenous nations had obviously organized and cultivated the land, if we were to utilize a type of urban planning that did not act like a McLuhan urban carapas, would it look like the dense thickwood forests and large corn fields with spread out settlements that existed here before? Is it possible to have higher density and maintain that type of subsistence land base?

For Jon, Indigenous land use and ecologies still exist through the surviving non-human species that are Indigenous to this land and the national cultures that still practice their traditions and transmit their knowledge with the new generations. This sentiment, however positive, reminded me of the tension brought up by Bonita Lawrence (2004): the question remains whether or not the urban environment can support past-based

traditionalism without remediating the land to the ecologies of the past (p. 166). While authors like Bourgeault (1983) who adopt a critical Marxist stance to Aboriginal struggles argue against espousing a strategy that would attempt to decolonize capitalist-colonialist societies back to ways of life that can't exist in current conditions, activists like Jon Johnson demonstrate through storytelling and site-seeing that much of the landscape however urbanized remains the same. While we cannot return to the past, the short amount of time that settler-colonialism has developed in Toronto versus the 10,000 plus years that the Iroquois and other Indigenous civilizations thrived here makes me wonder which is more transient, this "modernistic" bug like carapas, or the ancient world that our buildings sit on top of. If settlers worked in a way that was rooted in Indigenous history, would resisting colonial relationships to people and land become more attainable? Importantly, Jon emphasized that self-determination in Aboriginal communities did not preclude the choice to collaborate with settlers in Toronto and did not necessarily require the removal of settlers from Indigenous land. It seemed that in his opinion through enacting Aboriginal projects in the city and through Aboriginally centered understandings of land, the Aboriginally community experienced self-determination. Jon's input reflected a hope that the city could be transformed in ways that challenged the way that colonization had constrained relationships and land in the city.

Niki Nash: Northern-urban connections and Aboriginal identity in Toronto

Niki Nash is an Aboriginal student studying Early Childhood Education, a musician, and an advocate for urban-Northern community relationship building. I interviewed her shortly after her return from a program that allowed her to go work with a community in the Northern part of Ontario's "Ring of Fire" area near James Bay and Thunder Bay (Ontario Nature, 2014, n.p.). Her experience with the community showed her how remote communities in fly-in zones are often put into a position where they are disconnected economically and socially from the rest of Ontario. In a discussion prior to the interview she explained to me that many people couldn't afford to go back home after flying out to go see a doctor, or to go to school, and that the community she visited would often lose its population simply because of the difficulty of commuting.

Niki felt that one of the most important struggles for Aboriginal activists was raising awareness about Aboriginal issues and rights in Canada. She expressed that although social movements like Idle No More had caught the public's attention in recent years, there were still quite a few people she talked to who had no idea what the movements issues or goals were. Niki expressed a desire to take part in the protests and to raise awareness about Aboriginal issues but found that due to her schedule her activist work had to mostly be based out of the academy. To her, youth are forerunners of change, and she hoped that in the future a youth based social movement could emerge in the Aboriginal community in Toronto.

Niki shared some of her experiences struggling with Aboriginal identity and said that she's felt a lack of connection with the Aboriginal community as a whole in Toronto. Although she has Indian-status under Canadian law, Niki felt as though she didn't look

racialized enough for others to see her as Indian. Niki and I talked about experiencing both white-privilege and alienation from Indigeneity in a racist urban environment and in the urban Aboriginal community. This reminded me of Bonita Lawrence (2004) who noted that the urban environment is so highly racist that many Indigenous peoples who were not racialized would avoid acting native around white people entirely (p. 120). Whether or not we identify with the experiences of our racialized family members, Niki noted that we do not experience them ourselves and that sets us apart:

“There often seems to be this competition of who the ‘better’ native is or who has more of a right to be status. Over time (and numerous occasions of being nicknamed ‘white girl’) I decided that maybe I should give in and stop trying to be part of a community that didn’t seem interested in having me in it.

Coincidentally, this occurred around the same time that my mom decided to stop being involved in the community as well. Her complaints were generally that the community was too gossipy and promoted stereotypes”.

Niki’s mom put pressure on her to marry a white male and move away from her Aboriginal identity to fit in in the city, and when she went to see family members from her reserve they thought that because she lived in the city she was ‘less native’. This kind of insider-outsider position is explored at length in Lawrence’s (2004) book, *Real Indians and Others*, and represents a serious part of the challenges facing the urban Aboriginal community. Further it would seem apparent that these types of attitude represent an internalized colonial recognition, whereby racialization becomes the dividing line for Indigeneity or assimilation into Canadian society. Resisting this type of identification is risky as people who experience privilege because of our skin colour, yet embracing a

sense of alienation could actually be seen as a form of supporting the erasure of what constitutes the urban Aboriginal community.

After making clear that she felt like she couldn't speak for non-urban communities, she told me that her trip up north helped facilitate a youth-elder retreat that ended up being centered on the importance of connecting new generations to traditional knowledge. Niki noted that there is a lack of resources for fly-in communities, where food and labour were in short supply. In her opinion, this makes it hard for people in fly-in communities to enact community plans due to both a lack of nonhuman resources and a lack of certified community members who are eligible for grants and government funding.

Specifically, Niki mentioned that they could not get funding for things like parenting programs, because no one had official certification. In isolated Aboriginal communities seeking recognition of skillsets becomes that much harder without institutions for higher education. In order to seek higher formal education (past grade eight) people from the community have to fly-in to one of the major cities and Niki met many people who struggle with this decision from a personal and a practical standpoint; the amount of money needed to fly out to a big city and live there is astounding. In this way, Niki noted the systematic brain-drain of the community with people leaving for education, and how that has an extractive impact on fly-in non-urban Aboriginal communities.

Niki argued that self-determination for Aboriginal people would mean the ability to decide the fate of the community. For Niki, this necessarily means working as a collective from the ground up to assess needs and make decisions that benefit the whole

community. For urban Aboriginal peoples from fly-in areas, this could include fixing the brain-drain problem that made them have to leave their homes in the first place. Because she felt that the Aboriginal community should be in charge of determining its own needs and making the real choices that impact the community as a group, two important questions came to my mind: The first question, is whether or not we can view urban Aboriginal life as being made up of one community or group. The second question is whether or not consulting Aboriginal communities can shape the city if the city is primarily developed through economic means.

While consultation processes remain a very real obligation for the federal and provincial government, at the end of the day having input in a settler-colonial environment and self-governance over settler occupied territories are two very different challenges. Having a voice (without action) is easier to achieve in Canadian society, than to be viewed as a sovereign authority over land use or urban environments.

In terms of how settlers could support Indigenous control over land, Niki responded that settlers need to stop being passive because of their guilt, because “feeling sorry isn’t helping anyone”. Niki stated that she thought that if we went beyond talking about and reading about things and were mindful while taking action we could lead a better example. She argued that issues surrounding Indigenous sovereignty were not really “Aboriginal issues” but instead were Canadian issues (p. 3).

One of the things that bothered her a lot about being an Aboriginal in Toronto is that there is very little cultural celebration around Aboriginal people by the larger population. Niki felt that while other marginalized groups have things like Black History

month while there is a lack of celebration or even acknowledgement of Aboriginal culture in most Toronto schools.

The differences in the way that Aboriginal people are treated as compared to the various communities of colour has been raised by theorists such as Dua and Lawrence (2005) who argue that black communities have largely ignored Indigenous struggles. However, other authors like Sharma and Wright (2008) have argued that generalizing the experiences of people of colour and Aboriginal peoples along divisive lines is highly problematic. While it is true that there have been different privileges for different communities under colonial regimes like the Canadian-state, Andrea Smith (2010) has argued that one of the ways that white supremacy society is able to reproduce itself is through making those targeted by it's three logics (slavery, genocide, and orientalism) believe that oppressing each other they will grant their own groups privilege and recognition:

“What keeps us trapped within our particular pillars of white supremacy is that we are seduced by the prospect of being able to participate in the other pillars. For example, all non-Native peoples are promised the ability to join in the colonial project of settling indigenous lands. All non-black peoples are promised that if they conform, they will not be at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. And black and Native peoples are promised that they will advance economically and politically if they join US wars to spread ‘democracy’ ” (Smith, 2010, n.p.).

Similarly if you take what Andrea Smith is saying in reverse, by longing to be recognized in the ways that other oppressed people are differentially recognized by oppressive social systems like settler colonialism, Niki's focus was diverted away from the group whose

history is celebrated the most and normalized in the city: that of the British/French white population.

Niki's interview with me demonstrated multiple ways that the colonial politics of recognition shape urban Aboriginal struggle, through identity creation, through differential resource allocation and economic isolation, and through racialization. In each case where she was engaged in resisting colonial oppression both in the Northern community and in Toronto, exclusionary experiences presented serious challenges to Aboriginal network building.

We have seen in the previous chapters that in all eras the presence of the Aboriginal community in Toronto has been instrumental to the development of Toronto and the Canadian nation-state. The question then, is how can urban Aboriginal activists overcome the divisive experiences produced through the various forms of identity formation that make them seem like othered to themselves (see Veracini, 2011) in order to provide a space for what Coulthard (2006) calls for: a transformational form of self-recognition. Similarly, Niki's interview highlighted the ways that self-determination is related to self-recognition through the ability of Aboriginal communities struggling to sustain, define, and collaborate with themselves in the midst of settler colonial culture.

Clinton Saddington: arguing for Aboriginal unity

Clinton Saddington is an Aboriginal architectural technologist and visual artist that works to introduce technological advancements into Native [sic] society. I first began talking to Clinton at the start of my research through one of my peers in the MES program. Although Clinton now lives in Kitchener, his large amount of experience traveling across Canada, from the North West Territories as a member of the Gwichin nation, British Columbia, and Ontario, have given him a lot of perspective into contemporary Aboriginal struggles. His work in the community aims at making positive environmental impacts while teaching others to not abuse the land that they live within.

When I interviewed Clinton, he expressed that he felt like he was overly cynical due to a lack of progress in Aboriginal struggles during his lifetime. In Clinton's view, Aboriginal peoples needed to adapt to globalization while retaining their culture and beliefs because this time period had mixed the populations of the world through mass migrations. In Toronto, Clinton found that the common practice of people trying to immediately identify what tribe/band he was from was oppressive, because he felt that what part of Canada he is from should be irrelevant as an Aboriginal person living in such a diverse city.

Clinton felt like the Canadian state's politics of recognition with First Nations have begun to be more respectful after Meech Lake where Elijah Harper prevented an accord from passing that would have amended the constitution act to perpetuate the myth of Canada being solely created by French/British founders.

While Aboriginal land based subsistence areas have been diminished to a high

extent in Toronto, places like the Native Canadian Centre on Spadina, and Council Fire have become hubs for cultural-revitalization where Aboriginal people can come together. These spaces differ from reserves and other areas where non-urban Aboriginal peoples live. Because of this, when Clinton lived in Toronto before recently moving for school, the main issues he saw facing Aboriginal activists were related to cultural revitalization and the health effects caused by disconnection from land, and rural-city transitions.

Clinton felt that Aboriginal peoples needed to come together to be able to stop colonial oppression, because they were so divisive around their national identities. This sentiment is full heartedly echoed by Indigenous theory in Cornell's (2013) chapter on *Colonial Boundaries and Institutional Innovations*, where the author asks: "Who is the self in self-determination" (p. 42)? As we mentioned earlier in chapter one's discussion of the politics of recognition, Cornell's observation that colonization created rigid boundaries politically by divisively organizing geographies and peoples (p. 42), caused him to call for a reconstitution of self-defined boundaries that serve those whose futures are at stake (p. 52).

On the one hand, national traditions do vary across the Aboriginal community and could be seen as a way of maintaining national identity. This made me wonder which is more conducive to urban Aboriginal self-determination, an embrace of a nation based paradigm of Aboriginal identity, or an embrace of all Aboriginal people as one group? Clinton gave the example of the homogenous cultural centres in the city, like Chinatown, and Little Italy, arguing that there were no areas like this for Aboriginal peoples because of their lack of cohesion. This seems to conflict with Johnson's presentation of all of Toronto as an Aboriginal space, and highlights another way that land being

contextualized culturally impacts the urban Aboriginal community.

While the idea of recognizing Aboriginal experiences as being unified by being descendents of the First Nations in Canada might seem like a good move in terms of making an alliance to stop colonial oppression (indeed this was a strategy employed by Tecumseh in 1812 against Americans, and Pontiac in 1763 against the British—see chapter 2) it is questionable whether or not the Aboriginal community would want to embrace a culture of Pan-Indigenous traditions. Fundamentally, it seems to be a form of urban Aboriginal self-determination that each Aboriginal individual and nation should be able to decide for themselves whether or not to adopt a pan-Aboriginal politic. However, I couldn't help but think that it is also important to recognize the potential divisiveness that proponents of this position could face given differing historical relationships that Indigenous nations have had with each other. Yet recognizing the potential for a unified Aboriginal resistance to colonialism in Canada is still a hopeful avenue for political self-reconstitution that goes beyond the colonial recognition of Indigenous nations.

Nica Thundercloud: Growing up in the urban Aboriginal Activist community

Nica Thundercloud is a camera-person for the Aboriginal hip-hop label the Animikii Music Group, an aspiring Aboriginal event organizer and a long time activist in the urban Aboriginal community. Nica's activism was tied in with raising awareness even as a child when her mom's active political lifestyle brought her to various protests. When Nica was younger she helped her mother to set up Toronto's Aboriginal Voices radio station. Living in an activist environment led Nica to engage with various Aboriginal struggles and to work for an Aboriginal education group that travelled and presented in various schools in the city.

The protest that Nica remembered as one of the most decisive urban Aboriginal struggles she had contributed to was the fight against city hall's decision to send the garbage up north to the Kirkland Lake area in northern Ontario. The municipal government planned on bringing the garbage to Algonquin Temiskaming territories, and to place waste in an abandoned mine. Nica and her mom were so involved in the protests that they even got permission to run a school field trip for some of her schoolmates to go to City Hall. In solidarity with the Algonquins from that area, Nica remembered a lot of non-natives from that area protesting the city's plan. Seeing urban Aboriginal communities come together with northern communities as a child made Nica feel that successful resistance could be attained through activism.

When I asked Nica about her recent experiences as an Aboriginal activist, she told me recently she had been involved in an anti-Line 9 protest because she kept hearing about towns covered in Oil from pipelines spilling. Line 9 has been a controversial issue in the activist community this past year as the government plans to send crude oil through

highly dense areas of the city in Toronto (Jane and Finch) and there is no real safety plan for an accident should it take place. In one activist action, the path that Line 9 takes had been labeled by local activists in order to raise awareness about its presence (Stopleveline 9, 2014, n.p.). Aboriginal nations like the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation have filed for an appeal to the Canadian governments decision to allow the pipeline to be reversed because they were not properly consulted (McDiarmid, 2014, n.p.). Line 9 is an old pipeline that was not designed for the crude oil they are planning on pumping through it when is being reversed (Stopleveline9, 2014, n.p.).

Nica told me that she had been interested in Idle No More but had been too busy with school and working to make it to any of the events the social movement had organized in Toronto. Nica felt that raising settler awareness of Indigenous cultures and struggles with the Canadian government was the biggest issue facing the urban Aboriginal community right now, which is definitely something Idle No More aspires to do. Understandably, the activities that urban dwellers do to subsist whether it be working or school often interferes with going to protests for would-be-activists. Nevertheless, Nica's work with the music label AMG also contributed to raising awareness through supporting political hip hop artists like Young Jibwe who rap about colonization and Indigenous rights.

Nica argued that in regards to self-determination, it's hard to consider anything "self-determination" if Aboriginal organizations rely on funding from the settler government and cannot write their own policies or freely do what they want with their money. The neutralization of radical politics in not for profit and other organizations via state funding is a critique made by Incite! Women of Color Against Violence (2007) in

their book, *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the not for profit industrial complex* (p. 1-17). Additionally, in his chapter on Toronto, Bobiwash (1994) argued that when relying on state recognition for funding that no true Aboriginal self-governance could be achieved (p. 90). Nica also felt that the settler-state was more financially supportive of Immigration services than it was of First Nations organizations. It seemed evident to me at the time that because the settler state relies on an influx of population growth in order to grow this could be both true and intentional under settler-colonialism.

Nica told me the story of a boy who was suspended from public school because settlers at his school thought the Sage he had smudged with smelt like Marijuana. Cultural illiteracy like this around Indigenous practices like smudging was a big issue that Nica felt Aboriginal social movements are trying to get settler society to address in Toronto. In order to improve acceptance of Aboriginal ways of life, Nica suggested that we should create a mandatory course in public elementary schools that allow children to learn Toronto's Aboriginal history and cultural practices in the city in order to proactively work against racism and discriminatory world-views. Further critiques of the lack of Indigenous programming in school have been made by scholars like Susan D. Dion et al (2012) in their report "*Decolonizing Our Schools*" that looks at the impacts of the lack of Indigenous programming for children and suggests implementing Indigenous methods for teaching such as using talking stick to take turns speaking (7).

Nica expressed concern about the fact that she saw state oppression against homeless Aboriginal people, stating that she often sees them getting harassed by police. She pointed out that one of the biggest resources for homeless native people in Toronto were drop-in programs like the one at Council Fire, and the use of food banks as

emergency resources. Nica agreed that although poverty is a struggle that impacts both settlers and Indigenous people in Toronto, she was still particularly concerned that there needed to be more social housing for Aboriginal people. The difficulties of attaining housing for Aboriginal peoples in the city were also highlighted in a study by Yale Belanger (February 19 2014): “1 in 15 aboriginal people in urban centres experience homelessness compared to 1 in 128 of the ‘general population’” (n.p.). Nica told me that Aboriginal women have difficulty trying to find Aboriginal-housing without children and that she felt this puts a lot of pressure on people to have families at a young age to avoid housing shortages.

Nica’s biggest concern was with the continued violence of colonialism and the exponentially growing number of known cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women. To Nica, the Canadian government’s lack of interest in treating Aboriginal women’s lives as being as important as that of settlers was a ruthless part of colonialism. Nica felt like Indigenous women were marked as expendable by settler society, and that when compared with settlers, it wasn’t even just white people who received more protection from violence. Nica felt that settlers of colour were also more protected by the Canadian state. Critiquing the government’s foreign interventions against those who commit violence against women in other countries she noted that the settler state does nothing to save Indigenous women from similar or worse fates. Further, she argued that the deaths of Aboriginal peoples in Canada were often not thoroughly investigated because they were misrepresented as suicides or the result of illegal lifestyles.

Despite numerous calls from the Aboriginal community and the activist community the Canadian government refuses to address the issue of missing and

murdered Indigenous women (Boutilier, 2014). When it comes to the refusal to recognize the urgency to end genocide, the politics of recognition between the Canadian state and Aboriginal nations becomes a tool of violence. The abnormal rate of women who have disappeared is matched perhaps only by the abnormal rate in which Aboriginal women are being incarcerated as the fastest growing prison population in Canada (Pate, 2008). For Nica, on one hand the Canadian government claims to make Indigenous people their wards, and on the other hand Canada doesn't care about preventing their death.

Like Jon Johnson, Nica stressed the importance of helping others understand the context of living in a place like Toronto that got its name from a native word for "meeting place". One idea Nica had to raise an awareness within settler society about how Aboriginal and settler society was connected was to make June 21st (summer solstice) into National Aboriginal Solidarity day, which she felt could tap into the use of holidays to produce historical-memory.

When I brought up the critique that historical-representations and other forms of education could be considered decolonization of the mind rather than a physical decolonization, Nica pointed out that even changing fundamental cultural practices like using the English language could bring fundamental decolonizing change. For Nica, her own illiteracy of Cree (her father's language) was extremely frustrating and she emphasized that because of her father not taking it upon himself to teach and there not being any proper classes for her to take outside of her home, she experienced communication barriers within her community. While the NCC does offer Cree language courses, her family's dialect isn't taught there so her relatives warned her against taking classes. For Nica, immersing herself in her traditional language would require moving

back to the reserve which she told me she had no intention of doing.

Nica argued that taking part in the decolonization of the mind through language would feel like a victory, giving her the ability to hear her family speak. Cultural revitalization through traditional language, culture, and ceremonies is a huge part of Toronto's urban Aboriginal community and in many ways, as Taiake Alfred argues, represents the heart of the Indigenous community (2008, p. 1). Although Tuck and Yang (2012) argue that Decolonization is Not a Metaphor, for Nica the experience of not being able to talk to her family members because of knowing colonial languages is something that could be decolonized to undo colonial domination.

By resisting putting the environmental impacts of the city onto distant Aboriginal communities, and taking part in activism that resists potential environmentally damaging pipelines, Nica's activism has called for settlers to be more responsible to Indigenous land and peoples. Throughout the interview, it became apparent that to Nica the ability to resist environmental hazards being foisted onto Aboriginal communities and to improve urban Aboriginal education were important ways of supporting self-determination.

Davyn Calfchild: Living beyond the politics of recognition and Decolonization

Davyn Calfchild is a hereditary chief of the Sisika Nation in southern Alberta, and currently works for the Iroquois confederacy asserting their sovereignty over Toronto's land. His involvement in multiple social movements including Idle No More, Decolonize North America, Occupy Toronto, and Cop Watch, have garnered him a reputation for being a no-nonsense advocate of Indigenous self-determination. Davyn is heavily invested in educating settlers and has given talks at Idle No More teach-ins, and supported settlers dealing with police brutality despite having been targeted by the police force for his activism.

I first met Davyn Calfchild at Occupy Toronto, where I saw him speak about Indigenous rights, and took part in numerous marches that he helped to lead. Davyn's activist work goes beyond social movements as he does land patrols on behalf of the Iroquois confederacy, and looks after/manages sacred sites with graveyards of Iroquois descent (such as in high park).

His current organizing is taking him around the city collecting signatures to petition for decolonizing Canada and creating a joint Indigenous-Settler government system. Him and other activists engaged in this work call themselves "Decolonize North America". Decolonize North America was created when Davyn and his wife, a leader in the Anishinaabek confederacy joined with 5 members of the Iroquois confederacy at Occupy Toronto in order to attempt to take "the pope, the queen, Barack, the Jesuits, the Military Order of Malta, and the Vatican [...] to court on their claim of false "decolonization" here on our land on Turtle Island". Ultimately, the case got thrown out of court, but it still allowed them to express the inaccuracy of the doctrine of Terra Nullius that settlers had

tried to use to claim Indigenous land.

According to Davyn's teachings, settlers took most of the land on Turtle Island by force, making the Aboriginal community believe that they surrendered lands and territories to the Canadian and American governments through treaties and wars. However, Davyn believed that is a false history because these agreements were made by agents of monarchs who didn't necessarily report back accurately to their counterparts in Europe.

For Davyn, the importance of asserting nationhood and sovereignty could not be understated:

“We are nations. That is what we are led to believe. [...] We have as Indian people our own government, our own traditions, our own religion, our own culture, the way we did things, and to me that sounds like an independent nation that is thriving. So when we talk about decolonization we talk about, on the Indigenous side, that we as the Indigenous population have the first and foremost right to decolonize here, more than any other people who are living in Canada. Because we are nations, we never surrendered our lands or our territories, ever since the signing of the so-called treaties”.

Fitting well into the critique provided by Coulthard (2006), Davyn argued that attempts to govern Indigenous land outside of the reserves are largely ignored by settler governments in an act of refusing recognition to Indigenous nations while reserves were basically used as prisoner of war camps. .

The number treaties one through eleven had all, in Davyn's opinion, been dishonoured by the Canadian government who continues to engage in selling Indigenous

lands and resources to foreign nations and corporations without consultation. An example he raised was the contemporary struggles on the East coast between my ancestors nation the Mi'kmaw working to defend their land against illegal fracking in New Brunswick.

Davyn pointed out that the FIPA agreement was currently showing the complete lack of consultation and respect that is paid by the Canadian government to decisions impacting Indigenous territories. The implications of free trade agreements enacting unilateral decisions over Indigenous land bothered him. In fact, Davyn was greatly concerned that he had heard that Harper gave the Chinese "the authority" to sue the seven Indigenous nations whose land they are violating if they attempt to remove the pipeline systems that are being put into place.

On the topic of Idle No More, Davyn stated that if the movement had really been about "reclaiming the land" activists would have been more about direct action. He expressed frustration towards Idle No More for letting allies become the focus of the events. Idle No More had some great ideas, he said, but ally-activists seemed to only attend events that were not direct-action oriented. Davyn noted their absence at blockades defending Aboriginal land rights, like the one that he took part in near Lansdowne and Bloor at the secretive uranium plant in Toronto.

Davyn stated that he felt like Aboriginal peoples were no less or more sovereign before the round dances than they were after the round dances put on by Idle No More, and therefore it had not been an effective form of direct action. Davyn brought up Theresa Spence, and how he felt that the Aboriginal community left the direct-action to one woman, one chief. Davyn felt like the other chiefs in the same predicament with the Canadian government should have been on that parliament hill fasting with her.

When I asked Davyn what he thought Aboriginal self-determination would look like in Toronto he said that the only way that sovereignty and self-government can be respected is through the implementation of the Great Law of Peace of the Haudenosaunee, instructions for multilateral peacemaking. He also advocated embracing the teachings of the Two-Row Wampum that showed that mutual respect between Indigenous nations and Settler nations must come from treating nations as distinct and sovereign. Davyn argued that the Dutch unlike the British, French, or Americans, had always lived up to their responsibilities in the two-row wampum, and that they just celebrated 400 years.

Davyn rejected Canadian laws in favour of Indigenous laws because he asserted that sovereignty for Indigenous peoples does not come from the Canadian constitution and that respecting Indigenous sovereignty is absolutely essential in this city. In some ways this kind of radical self-determination is exactly what ignoring the colonial politics of recognition might call for. If Aboriginal rights do not flow from the colonial government then should the law that governs them? Unless granted through agreements made multi-laterally between Indigenous and settler nations, or through the responsibilities of dual citizenship, why should Canadian law be presumed to be absolute for all Indigenous people?

Davyn told me that he travels outside of the city occasionally to educate people in Aimjuwang about the Ojibwe-Iroquois Friendship belt, which is a wampum that states that when the Ojibwe confederacy is in need that the Iroquois will come out to help it and vice versa.

When I asked him about the controversy over whether the Mississauga's had the right to sell Toronto's land, Davyn clarified that in his mind, Indians don't own land. To

Davyn, Aboriginal peoples are the caretakers of Turtle Island, and he thought it should be known that they have responsibilities to cultural and national teachings emphasizing to take care of the land. Furthermore, Davyn pointed out, like I have noted in the previous chapter, that the Mississauga New Credit nation was the most recent Indigenous nation to settle in this region, not the sole proprietor. We know this because of archaeological finds like the ten thousand year old Iroquois burial grounds in High Park that Davyn has helped to protect.

Davyn told me that he felt that the biggest issue facing Aboriginal activists in Toronto right now is Line 9. In his eyes the idea of approving Line 9 is a betrayal of Indigenous sovereignty that must be dealt with before it is too late.

Further, Davyn expressed his dismay with violence against women in Toronto, not just Aboriginal women but all women. The fact that the Canadian government acts like they don't care about the missing and murdered Indigenous women, and have been caught lying about the number of people is alarming. Davyn questioned the results of investigations put on by the Canadian state that frame the death of Indigenous women as suicides:

“A lot of them are deemed suicides, or something happened. Like Cheyenne Fox , she was murdered, and the only credible witness was a John. Bella, she died from "suicide", they say it was suicide, but we know it's fucking [sic] murder. Then there was Tara, Tara Gardiner, she just ‘mysteriously jumped in front of a train’ while she was partying on the sideline with her friends there and nobody knows what the fuck happened. Because she was a witness in a murder case and the police were fucking harassing her”.

Davyn noted that these incidents should concern us all not just native people. In response to the violence that Aboriginal peoples face, Davyn argued that Torontonians should work with the Iroquois laws of consensus, and the law of great peace while engaging in anti-violent community responses.

When I asked Davyn what he thought about how urban planners work towards planning for the population to be exponentially larger he said that shouldn't happen and that the white people need to look at the situation they bring upon this land and the hardships that they make the people they invite to this territory go through. Davyn pointed to the racialization of all non-white settlers as evidence of the hardships that white settlers brought down on non-white Torontonians. He went on to give the examples of the Chinese people put in dangerous situations to build the railroads, Japanese people who were forced into concentration camps, Muslims and Jews who were ostracized, and Black people have had to deal with non-stop racism.

Davyn thought settlers in Toronto who try to promote Aboriginal self-determination or Indigenous sovereignty as allies, should understand the ways in which their allies ship takes up space:

“Allies need to know their place. They need to stop asking Indigenous people to lead our rallies only to cut them off or stand in front of them. They cut off drummers, they disrupt flag carrying, both of which have deeply national meanings for Indigenous nations” (p. 17).

In order to do ally work properly, Davyn believes that settlers need to learn Indigenous, including offering Tobacco in exchange for work.

Before we ended our talk that day, Davyn made very clear that the allies who risk nothing for supporting Indigenous sovereignty in Toronto aren't really in solidarity with decolonization. This falls in line with Tuck and Yang's (2012) critique of settler moves to innocence, as Davyn emphasized he did not want settlers to simply attempt to decolonize their mind. As an activist Davyn works to embody what he believes in through action and in many ways serves as an example of what urban Aboriginal self-determination might look like if Indigenous people refused to look to the Canadian state for permission to execute Indigenous law. However, the practicality of living this way is limited in our city because of the amount of resistance that the state and settler cultures puts towards people who ignore Canadian law. Davyn, for one, has had to deal with police brutality, and other forms of violence being directed at him during his work as an activist, nevertheless he remains adamant that decolonization through direct action is possible.

Conclusion:

What does urban Aboriginal self-determination look like? Planning to create the necessary conditions for urban Aboriginal communities to be able to govern themselves in Toronto would, in my opinion, require expanding on this area of inquiry while playing close attention to the various struggles that structure the urban Aboriginal experience in Toronto.

Some of the discussions that were raised with my respondents point to the idea that in order for Indigenous nations to be able to execute self-governance they need to be able to re-orient themselves through Aboriginally-driven educational resources and cultural revitalization. Promoting Indigenous histories, language classes, and community practices such as dancing, singing, drumming, are all integral parts of Aboriginal peoples determining their own expressions of urban life in Toronto. Others like Davyn saw direct actions that challenged Canadian sovereignty and implemented Indigenous sovereignty over land as being the only way to support Indigenous sovereignty here in the city.

Despite this view, activists like Jon Johnson point out that providing Aboriginal history to Torontonians through other types of direct actions (like Indigenous street signs), public performances (dancing, art, theatre), bus tours, and the academy can be vital parts of changing the city. Furthering Indigenous culture and claiming Aboriginal influence over Toronto's landscapes represents an important part of allowing the Aboriginal community to look to themselves for a self-determined context of living in Toronto. Further, Jon pointed out that settler-ally collaborations in this area also open up new possibilities for transforming settler relationships to the land and Indigenous people in Toronto.

For Nica Thundercloud, ending the repression of cultural, political, and social

visibility for Aboriginal peoples in the city had her looking towards Aboriginal uses of memorialization (holidays), Aboriginal education in the Toronto District School Board, and other forms of education to create a more accessible urban environment for Aboriginal peoples. Further, through urban Aboriginal communities acting against environmental justice, they could work towards limiting the impacts of the urban environment on Aboriginal communities in a self-determined way.

Nica's emphasis on the urgency of making language classes more accessible is definitely an essential part of breaking down language barriers that inhibit Aboriginal peoples from learning things that have not been translated into English or French. Further, the refusal to use colonial languages that Nica saw with her relatives could also be seen as an important form of Aboriginal self-determination which might warrant the creation of city spaces that are not based on the use of colonial language.

Niki contributed an important discussion about how urban Aboriginal identity is challenged by the internalized colonial politics of recognition, and her work creating networks that transgress urban-rural regional boundaries set up by the Canadian nation-state. Understanding the impact that reserve and fly in communities feel due to the centralization of resources in Canadian cities and the ways that these communities are a part of urban environments is an important area of inquiry for supporting Aboriginal self-determination and nation-building in Canada. The process of relationship building with peripheral environments in the city allows urban Aboriginal peoples to help organize and support their own community development.

The importance of creating cohesive spaces for Aboriginal communities in the city was highlighted by Clinton in his discussion on pan-Aboriginal unity and colonialism.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, however, navigating nation-specific and pan-Aboriginal struggles could be both a source of cohesion and divisiveness depending on how urban Aboriginal individuals relate to their communities. Further, the investment in a self-determination that is based solely upon Aboriginal identity also runs the risk of overlooking the contributions that Aboriginal peoples make into transforming the Canadian nation as Canadians.

While the Canadian state continues to exploit its ability to become entrenched in the self-organizing aspects of Aboriginal communities through offering conditional state funding, executing land use legislature and regulating Indigenous status, interactions with the Canadian nation state represent a key influence over the way that Aboriginal communities determine their urban lives. Many authors including Bonita Lawrence (2002) have dealt with these issues in the city and continue to provide important avenues for people seeking to know more about how the urban Aboriginal experience is shaped.

During my research it appeared that urban Aboriginal self-determination is different from equal forms of recognition between Indigenous and settler nations because it requires repatriating governance over Indigenous land to Indigenous nations and recognizing that the Canadian state has no inherent authority over Aboriginal peoples on Turtle Island except through their own Canadian citizenship. However, it should be noted that abstaining from interactions with settler colonial culture and being Canadian was not the emphasis I encountered in gathering primary data. Rather, it is through the refusal to cede Aboriginal rights, the self-led reinterpretation by Indigenous states of settler responsibilities to the treaties, and the rejection of normalized violence that marked my discussions with respondents.

Violence against Aboriginal peoples comes in social, physical, and cultural forms in the city. Whether it be the complacency of the Canadian state in the mass disappearance of Indigenous women, the erasure of Indigenous accounts of history from public and (most) post-secondary educations, or the stigmatization of the Aboriginal community---planning for Aboriginal self-determination necessarily relies on taking risks in research by affording a close examination of areas where settler society impedes on Aboriginal urban life in oppressive ways. As Nica noted, the lack of action towards ending the ongoing genocide against Indigenous women, and the normalized state violence against homeless Aboriginal peoples in the city makes confronting settler colonization culture a life or death matter.

Recently, in the book, *Red Skin White Masks*, which came out as I was revising my paper, Coulthard (2014) explores the relationship of settler colonial territorialism, and the politics of recognition (p. 152). In it he argues that in settler colonial contexts, Marx's theory of primitive accumulation cannot retain its normative developmentalist character that relegates dispossession and territorial acquisition to a temporal moment in the past when capitalism is established (p. 152). Coulthard argues that settler colonialism is not simply violent, it is also a project "to reproduce forms of life that make settler-colonialism's constitutive hierarchies seem natural" (p. 152). Drawing on Alfred and Simpson, Coulthard argues that settler-colonial rule is a form of governmentality:

"[This] set of governing relations [...] operate through a circumscribed mode of recognition that structurally ensures continued access to Indigenous people's lands and resources by producing neocolonial subjectivities that coopt Indigenous people into becoming instruments of their own dispossession" (153).

In Toronto, urban planners run the risk of coopting Indigenous peoples in this way by not attempting to challenge the Canadian authority over the landscape, architecture, modes of transportation, social interactions, and land use that are all governed by colonial legal frameworks. The act of consulting impacted Aboriginal communities without giving them a veto power in development decisions is, I would argue, a process that continues the type of governmentality described above.

Urban planners seeking to work in a multilateral, rather than seeking out equal recognition between states, must work against the oppressive and extractive nature of settler-colonial politics that shape Canadian claims to sovereignty over Indigenous land. Aboriginal communities must be supported in determining how to realize their own right to self-determination, which puts practitioners into the tricky position of researching varied decolonial subjectivities that reduce rather than entrench the control of Canadian law and other forms of settler control over Indigenous peoples in Canada. The value of providing the best professional advice towards the social, physical, and cultural development of urban settlements in Canada is still practical when applied to this process because it moves away from pretending that settlers know what is the best praxis for Aboriginal communities.

Problematically, the research in this paper is highly limited in its ability to create the types of change that I hope to promote and instead represents a starting point that further research might build on. The way that I took part in this research could have been improved in terms of supporting urban Aboriginal self-determination by engaging in a community-led study where the line of inquiry was created by the communities I worked

and supervised by Aboriginal community members instead of resulting from my own interest in these subjects.

Following community-based protocols was emphasized during my research when I attended an Urban Indigenous Research Symposium at the Toronto Native Canadian Centre on Spadina avenue. One presenter, Suzanne Stewart, a scholar at OISE and community organizer, argued that ethical research with Aboriginal communities must be called for, led, directed, and presented in such a way that is self-determined by the people who are being researched in order to avoid extractive research relationships. In the future, I hope that research I participate in with urban Aboriginal communities will be done this way because it represents an important avenue for supporting urban Aboriginal self-determination in the academy.

My research, while attempting to argue for supporting urban Aboriginal self-determination was framed in such a way that it allowed me to approach multiple Indigenous communities in Toronto as an activist researcher and an urban planning student. The importance of recognizing the different viewpoints between Indigenous nations also makes doing this kind of research somewhat problematic in so far as readers cannot take these statements as being representative of any particular nations viewpoints. However, authors like Lawrence (2013) have shown that nation-specific research with Aboriginal communities requires years of gathering national approval while navigating conflictive representations and official representations of Indigenous nations. Therefore, I felt that framing my research in a pan-Aboriginal way would better fit the scope of my research.

My work doing this paper has increased my interest in comparing historical representations of urbanization in Toronto and urban Aboriginal struggles in new ways. One such avenue for further research might be the use of multimedia platforms like Geographical Information Systems softwares that would allow users to see how varied and different the accounts of settlement and colonization in Toronto are. Additionally, I have spoke to Jon Johnson about the potential of collaborating with the Toronto Native History Project to make such a project community-led. In order to prepare myself for utilizing cartography as a way of extending this research I have been working in the applied digital geography and geographical information systems program at Ryerson during the fall of 2014, and hope to apply to pursue this as a possible dissertation project in the Geography department of the University of Toronto. Urban Planners working in the Toronto region could also look to alternative visualizations of Indigenous land in cartography as a source of promoting Aboriginal rights.

As a mixed-Aboriginal researcher who has a limited history of working within the Aboriginal community in Toronto, my orientation towards the issues presented in this paper have been based on witnessing colonial oppressions towards all urban dwellers and my desire to learn more about how this impacts Aboriginal peoples here in the city. In many ways my call for supporting urban Aboriginal self-determination is also a call to imagine what an Aboriginally-oriented form of relationships and governmentality might look like in Toronto.

Regardless of the oppressive nature of settler politics that seek to ignore and erase Aboriginal sovereignty, rather than fully rejecting participating in colonial politics of recognition, many of my respondents indicated that they found that self-determination

was impeded through a lack of equal recognition. Further, the fact is that the urban capitalist settler colonial environments offer circumstances that are ripe for settlers joining movements for social transformation that are Indigenously oriented. This is echoed by Coulthard's new book (2014), that states that Indigenous nations have the potential to offer viable alternatives to capitalism through the critical consciousness promoted by Indigenous ways of life (153).

Throughout this paper I have argued that Aboriginal peoples have rights that do not flow from colonial recognition. By examining Toronto's past and contemporary historical context, I have attempted to sketch an outline of the city as an incomplete and ongoing settler colonial project. At the same time, I have questioned in what ways we can see and support the autonomy of Indigenous nations within Toronto as an ongoing process of multilateral development.

I believe that based on my research, planners seeking to work for Aboriginal communities would be wise to advocate the transformation of policies that do not allow urban Aboriginal peoples to veto development decisions. How veto power, or consensus in the Aboriginal community in Toronto would be exercised, however, remains a more complex issue due to the varied relationships Aboriginal peoples have to each other in the city.

The situation remains hopeful that things might change in the way that colonial politics dominate discussions of land. Recent changes in the Provincial Planning Policy Framework and other acts of colonial recognition of Aboriginal rights like the recent adoption of the practice of formally acknowledging that the city is operating on Mississaugas of the New Credit territory could signal a willingness to face the

responsibilities that settlers have towards dealing with the ongoing displacement of Aboriginal peoples.

For urban planners my researchs problematizes treating First Nations as another public to consult and argues that upholding our treaty responsibilities would require us to go beyond the changes made by the recent Provincial Policy Statement in order to plan to support Aboriginal self-determination. It is because of this sentiment that I chose to frame my discussion around Coulthard's (2006) rejection of the colonial politics of recognition while examining calls for new approaches to urban Aboriginal life. Research on urban Aboriginal struggles has been taken up in the works of various scholars like Lawrence (2002), Bobiwash (1997), Freeman (2010) and others and represents an important and under-utilized field of research on cities in urban studies.

By addressing a research gap in my studies on urban planning and Environmental Studies at York University, I have broadened my understanding of Toronto's history. Through raising discussions with activists around urban Aboriginal struggles as urgent issues in the city, I have attempted to prepare for future research into the social and physical development of Toronto that goes beyond centering settler experiences.

Paying heed to the damage that internalized colonialism and processes that center and normalize colonial approaches towards Aboriginal life can cause, this paper has worked to further understand struggles which I have found to be centered around cultural revitalization, and resisting settler violence in the city. It is my hope that one day this type of research into the social and political context of settler colonialism and Aboriginal history in Toronto will become a mandatory area of study for students in the city.

Embracing a multilateral perception of development and treating Toronto like an international territory may not be the easy way out, but examining the context of our history provides a solid footing for moving forward. I believe firmly that establishing responsible relationships with Aboriginal nations will require us to forge new alliances (some of which have been outlined here) and to design new urban spaces that are no longer based on unilateral exploitation.

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