

# Planning Through Land Acknowledgments

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### *Notes on this document*

This document includes the transcripts of podcast episodes produced as the final project entitled “Planning Through Land Acknowledgments.” A short reflection-style report is included after the transcripts, but the bulk of the final research is within the podcast itself and the notes in the description for each episode (entitled “Introduction,” “History,” “Planning,” and “Capitalism & Location”). The podcast is being hosted on Anchor and can be accessed through all major podcast platforms, including SoundCloud, iTunes, and Google Podcasts. It can also be found at this link: <https://anchor.fm/emnelson> .

### *Abstract*

How do non-Indigenous planning students understand the purpose, meaning, and intention of land acknowledgments in relation to their future work as land-based practitioners? What responsibilities lie in land acknowledgments, and how can planning serve as a platform to enact those responsibilities? This final research project sought to explore these questions through interviews with planning students and analysis of planning policy and theory. Taking my cue from topics covered in the interviews, I developed a research process and analysis framework and produced a four-part podcast series entitled “Planning Through Land Acknowledgments,” which weaves these discussions through my analysis. Ultimately non-participatory in nature, this project uses the principles of critical praxis-oriented research (CPOR, Klodawsky, Siltanen, and Andrew 2017) to align itself with goals of “critically reflecting on, and attempting to re-balance, power relations in the production and valuing of knowledge” (Klodawsky *et al.* 8). In interrogating how land histories in the Toronto area are referenced through actions the Canadian state regularly participates in, like land acknowledgments, I explored how recognizing Indigenous history and contemporaneity is the foundation of reconciliation, while never firmly placing my full confidence in the possibility of reconciliation. Understanding the undergirding truth of land acknowledgments became an especially transformative force as the project progressed. My commitment to being in solidarity with Indigenous struggles deepened and fundamentally changed the way I think about land use. As a part of the ethics of accessibility inherent to CPOR, I chose to present these findings in a

podcast as an expression of bringing academic work outside of the academic sphere. I aim to bring other non-Indigenous new planners and more seasoned practitioners into a conversation around responsibility, place, and reflection on who and where we are.

## *Foreword*

Although it came to fruition as I was just over halfway through MES, this project felt like a natural outcome of the courses and coursework I completed at York. After joining the planning program around the same halfway point, I felt my frustration with the apparent lack of connection between my academic studies and community organizer goals grow and become unignorable as I attempted to envision working in the planning field. By approaching issues around Indigenous sovereignty, especially as they pertain to land use, while I confronted my settler positionality, I was able to arrive at a conclusion that, while it is not literally conclusive, has illuminated potential paths forward outside of the program.

I established three components to address my areas of concentration. The first component focused on understanding the history of land acknowledgments which easily and rapidly expanded into learning about land claims and treaty processes, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations, and Indigenous resistance movements. The second component addressed planning's role in place-based thinking, examining planning's role in colonization, and learning from but not appropriating Indigenous perspectives on land-based thinking in planning. Finally, as I felt that I had much to learn as an interviewer, I designed the third component around gaining interviewing experience and exploring/translating ethics undergirding participatory research in a non-participatory project.

Much of the non-interviewing research I conducted for the first component was historical in nature. I often found myself reading about treaties, progressing into reading anti-colonial perspectives on reconciliation and modern treaty making practices. I integrated the work of Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012, with Smith 2019) throughout the project as well as

the Yellowhead Institute's *Land Back* report (2019), which is both historical and analytical. I was drawn to learning about Indigenous movements from the past fifty years, especially through the work of Grand Chief Ronald M. Derrickson and Arthur Manuel (2015) and the films of Alanis Obomsawin. While I listened to "Warrior Life," a podcast that covered some of the events at 1492 Land Back Lane, in order to keep up-to-date with current movements, I have also been a part of on-going legal support for solidarity groups and folks at Land Back Lane (as well as Rising Tide, Idle No More, and Decolonize Davenport) through the Movement Defence Committee (MDC). A legal collective of lawyers and non-lawyers, MDC was convened in the early 2000s to offer legal support—including bail council, *pro bono* representation, and observation of police action at demonstrations—for progressive activists. I have been involved as a jail support coordinator, have hosted "know your rights" and "legal observing" workshops, and manage and design content for our social media accounts. Having this tie to contemporary movements alongside reading about past movements has had a huge impact on the tone of this project, and I view this work as equally impactful as the reading and analysis that was required for component one.

Starting with an Independent Directed Study in the summer of 2019 (under Dr. Kipfer), I attempted to build a relationship with the land informed by my settler roots and identity. I grew up on the prairie in Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, Očhéthi Šakówiŋ, Cheyenne, and Yanktonai territory, and as the child of hunters, ornithologists, and conservationists, I have always felt that I have a relationship with the land—just not in the city. After moving to Toronto (Mississauga, Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, Huron-Wendat, and Métis territory), I started to think less and less about the land, as I believed it wasn't really "here" anymore, having been covered up by

concrete and streetcar tracks. But reading about place-based thinking (Barnd 2017, Larsen and Johnson 2017, and Haalboom and Natcher 2013) and exploring it through listening practice (first learned in a graduate Environmental Education class) unveiled the possibilities for reconnecting with the land while in the city. These possibilities are fundamental for arguments about urban planning's responsibilities inherent in land acknowledgments, because they forefront the history of the land as being continuous and present. I suggest throughout the podcast that connecting to surroundings is one potential outcome of, and an important part of connecting with, land acknowledgments.

Lastly, I have gained experience with interviewing through this project, both as a result of the actual interview process but also during transcribing and editing. In reviewing the interviews, I was able to reflect on how the conversation progressed and took these lessons into the next discussion, thus becoming a better interviewer in the process. I had also set out to translate the ethics of participatory research into a non-participatory project and did so by using critical praxis-oriented research (CPOR; Klodawsky, Siltanen, and Andrew 2017). This involved reflexive thinking in order to locate myself and the research somewhere in between academic curiosity and community-driven initiatives. By having the interviews guide each episode of the podcast, I was able to enact CPOR as I gained experience with interviewing as a requirement for the third component.

Overall, this project has allowed me to accomplish all of the learning objectives I set out for myself. This project will continue to adhere to the principles of CPOR as I plan to keep producing publicly available episodes that analyze current events in the context of planning.

## *Acknowledgments*

I have written several land acknowledgments throughout the course of this project. This particular land acknowledgment, although it is the last I will write in this research context, is by no means what I consider to be “the ideal.” It is, in fact, quite short. But I have written this meaning every word. I don’t say this assuming that everyone who reads this is a settler, but I urge anyone who comes across this project by way of this reflection to learn the history of the land you live on. I have found [native-land.ca](http://native-land.ca) particularly helpful for these purposes. As for the weight of the statements, I most intensely felt this as I digitized the “[Indian Treaties and Surrenders](#)” documents, which can be found on the Department of Indian Affairs’ page on [archive.org](http://archive.org). The 800+ pages of recorded land theft are the bedrock of this project and this land acknowledgment.

This work was conducted on the land of the Mississauga, Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, Huron-Wendat, and Métis. In 2010, the City of Toronto entered into an agreement with the Mississaugas of the New Credit in an effort to finalize the Toronto Purchase, a much-contested treaty with various iterations and confusing boundaries. The history of the area referred to as Tkaronto/Toronto is complex. As such, it was and remains host to many Indigenous nations, all of whom have been repeatedly denied the right to live and thrive on the land they stewarded for millennia. I continue to learn from the original inhabitants of this land about responsibility and what it means to be a treaty person. In developing this project, I declare my solidarity with Indigenous people across the land referred to by some as Canada in their fight for sovereignty and reparations for the injustices suffered at the hands of colonizers. I am unlearning and examining my biases through my efforts to express this solidarity and am incredibly grateful to be able to move across and live off of this land while I do so.

Thank you to my supervisor and advisor Traci Warkentin, as well as my second reader, Deborah McGregor, who have given valuable feedback and pushed me to think about different ways to push this project into the non-university world. Thank you to Luisa Sotomayor, who let me call her late at night on a Sunday to talk about anxiety and asking for breaks. Justin Podur also definitely deserves praise and gratitude for not only hiring me onto such a cool mapping

project but for offering advice and feedback on this project when I was getting really worried near the end. Thank you to Sarah Flicker, who steered me in the right direction very early on.

Thank you to all of the lovely people who offered their time to be interviewed by me. All of your patience around technology/rescheduling/understanding the questions underneath all my rambling made this project happen.

My friends Leah, Tibbles, and Evelyn have been very supportive and kind about meeting up, getting us groceries when we were advised to not go outside, and watching *What A Girl Wants*, *Parallax View*, and *Holy Mountain* with us over videocall. Also Zosia, Kate, Sima, Sparks, Allison, and Tacha for staying in touch and offering all kinds of love. My family has also been my cheerleaders as they've listened to me several hours a week, despite our variable physical distance. And to my fiancée Caligula, without whom I would not receive tea in bed, hugs every half hour, and endless feedback and inspiration for this project. I've never wanted to have my desk facing anyone until I met you.

Finally, I send my sincere gratitude to all the people whose work I have mentioned your thoughts and insights. This project was built off of generations of work and thought. Thank you.



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## *Episode Transcripts*

Note: This project is intended to be listened to instead of read. Please visit

<https://anchor.fm/emnelson> to experience the project in the way it was intended. The podcast can also be accessed through all major podcast platforms, including SoundCloud, iTunes, and Google Podcasts.

### *Episode 1: Introduction*

Hi! My name's Emma.

This podcast takes a critical look at land acknowledgments and attempts to understand what they're saying, why they are done, and how planners, as land-based practitioners, can integrate the what and why into their work. I talk about the Canadian state, settler colonialism, capitalism, and treaties. In this brief introduction to *Planning through Land Acknowledgments*, I wanted to cover some definitions of terms that I use throughout each episode as well as talk about what you can expect from this series.

Firstly, I want to address a crucial element of this project, which is that I only interviewed settler-identified people. I made this decision early on, having heard from Indigenous scholars and activists that they have been stuck with the topic of colonialism in Canada for way too long, with little to no settler engagement. Land acknowledgments, as one method of addressing the history of colonialism in Canada, gained popularity after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report in 2015 and now crop up in a variety of settings and are presented by a wide range of speakers, many of whom are settler-identified. I wanted to talk to other people who are settler-identified about these ubiquitous statements and have a conversation about what people think their responsibilities are when presenting them and

afterwards. I'm hoping that this podcast series can push people to think deeply about the words they say and consider how they can reflect on their place wherever and whoever they may be. I have written from my perspective as a settler but I hope that all listeners can find value in these discussions.

In addition, I use the term Indigenous to describe a vast array of people and as a placeholder for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. These discussions are specific to the area referred to as Canada as well as sometimes Toronto, so please bear that in mind when listening. I have included lots of articles and videos and books produced by Indigenous authors, and I urge you to check those out as well, so you can also read all of the really incredible work that's already out there on this topic.

So, now for the drier bit. When I talk about the Canadian state, I am working from a general conception of the state as a set of government offices, officials, laws, and government-operated systems (like prisons, the health care system, etc). I am also thinking about Max Weber's definition of state: "human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory" ("Politics as a Vocation"). The state self-ordains its legitimacy and reaffirms its monopoly over violence. This renders violence done by forces outside or opposed to the state as illegitimate, but the state's actions to quash this violence suggest that it views this violence as a legitimate threat. A Marxist definition of the state takes a different route, and emphasizes the bourgeois state as protecting and upholding the power of the ruling class through violence. When I say "Canadian state" throughout these episodes, I am talking about the government being based on principles of upholding bourgeois rule through racism and economic disenfranchisement.

I understand settler colonialism to be centrally tied to colonialism but to also go beyond it. Colonialism is when a body of people violently dispossess another body of people from the resources in the area by establishing militaristic control over the region, often enslaving the local people. Colonialism and genocide are often paired, as Patrick Wolfe states, but do not depend on the other to exist. Settler colonialism is colonialism with the invaders establishing themselves in the area. This is sometimes a precursor, sometimes an outcome, of genocide of those invaded. In Canada, settlers were assisted by governmental policy of extermination of Indigenous people.

I discuss capitalism on its own but also as it intersects with and relies on settler colonialism and racism. To put it somewhat simply, Canada is a capitalist state that relies on extractive industries like mining and oil as a means of continuing its existence. The exploitation that is integral to capitalism comes out through the lack of worker control, certainly, but also through the precarity seen in such a wealth-gap-stricken country as Canada. This precarity is caused by things like insufficient wages to housing prices, an emphasis on the productiveness of citizens over well-being, services like housing and health care being constantly boxed in by financial constraints, and the reliance on the subjugation of working class and poor people to sustain the economy.

There are many treaties mentioned in these episodes. Many if not all should be heavily scrutinized given the context of genocide and domination surrounding them. There are many websites where you can explore the treaty of the area you live in, or you may find that you do not live on treaty land, but rather land that was never ceded. Learning these facts should change the way you think about where you live, so if you don't know, check out [native-land.ca](http://native-land.ca).

Finally, it's important to know that I wrote this podcast as a final project for my Master's in Environmental Studies at York University. I am hoping to continue it afterwards, but just know that I'm coming from a specific place during these episodes.

Okay, that was a lot. Let's get started.

*Episode 2: History*

Interview audio is in Times New Roman.

[ANONYMOUS]: If... Say we give, you give back all the Crown Land work on the rest of it type of thing, but then like realistically the rest of us aren't going to leave, you know, like it's not going to be only Indigenous people living here now, and so building some relationship to the land... Acknowledging yourself as a settler, but still having that... Like I kind of struggle with that myself. Like how do I build a relationship to the land that I think is home or whatever? Where my mom was born, type of thing, without being weird and culturally appropriative of about it? You know, like without culture vulturing. That's where kind of where I struggle because I don't have a connection to other places. I don't have a connection to my heritage, whatever and so I that's like kind of more I run up against it personally in building, building that like cultural relationship to it. ...I always I always knew this but moving here made it really apparent that like the ocean is where I need to be a lot of the time. If I'm not near water, I get very antsy.

[INTERVIEWER]: And it's weird because you can't really tell that there's water in Toronto!

[ANON.]: Yeah, well you live close to me, like if you go down Exhibition, it's like weird Exhibition land and then it's lake, and you're like "Where it... what am I doing here? Where am I?" Medieval Times is right there! Like... What is this?!

[INTER.]: Orbs on the water.

[ANON.]: Yeah. Yeah, super weird super weird place.

For our first \*real\* episode, I got to sit down with a fellow planning student at York. We picked at some of the doublethink that happens when certain people or institutions include land acknowledgments in their repertoire of public management. We also talked about the differences between land acknowledgments performed in Toronto versus in BC and how the content of these statements can have different effects or meanings, even though they share the same general structure. And we talked about land back, a phrase that has been repeated in anti-colonial movements across Canada to reference the necessity of the Canadian government to recognize Indigenous land titles and treaty rights, as well as return land to the stewardship of Indigenous people. The student I talked to agreed to speak with me over Zoom at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I asked some of the people I interviewed to watch a video produced by the Centre for Aboriginal Student Services at York University before we sat down to talk. The video features several people from the York community talking about the purpose and substance of land acknowledgments. This video was an impetus for this podcast project because of the many important points made in the video, such as giving a more in-depth explanation of the Dish With One Spoon wampum belt, referencing the disruptive power of land acknowledgments,

and reiterating the responsibilities outlined by the statements. A link to this video can be found in the notes for this episode.

The student I talked to was shown the video in a political science class she took last year.

[ANON.]: Our very first day the prof did a land acknowledgement and she kind of acknowledged also that she was embarrassingly new like considering Indigenous people and like land questions in her work and so we did basically like a whole class on this video and like what it meant some people just talking about like how they didn't really how they hadn't heard land acknowledgements that often or like don't really understand what they were if you weren't from Canada like didn't relate. You didn't know what it meant to type of thing, but I liked them because then they talk about like whose responsibility it is to be doing the land acknowledge and like honoring your obligations as part of it.

I think in the context of the class it became much more apparent...during the semester because it was also like the syllabus is quite heavy on like anti-colonial work and everything like that. So I think it became more apparent like as the term progressed like what it would mean to be kind of engaging with what a land acknowledgement would be like what it meant to plan like do planning in the like colonial context.

Oh yeah, I also really like the point about the like when they said in the video that it's like a politically correct thing like you say it because you can check the box and not because like you have a relationship with the land like that or like that you're interested in forming one like a some really related to... like you'll have the land acknowledgement and then like do something completely like unrelated or unsupportive of it.

This last point comes up several times both in the video and in many of the interviews I conducted. People spoke about the frustration and dismay they feel when land acknowledgments are treated like a “check box”—or a “political tool,” as Amy Desjarlais states in the video. Since land acknowledgments have become so ubiquitous, showing up at events, in email signatures, and on plaques, many of the advocates for the statements have questioned whether the way we’re engaging with the history of Canadian land theft truly registers.

Throughout working on this project, I have asked what makes a land acknowledgment take on a larger presence than a checkmark. I could also ask the reverse question: what turns a land acknowledgment into a “check box”? Several people in the video state that it is the speaker who controls the way in which a land acknowledgment comes across. This is as opposed to the content or text of the acknowledgment being the source of the rotteness.

The student I talked to stated that in her class,

[ANON.]: It was generally agreed upon that they’re not perfect but they’re better than not doing it.

Much of what this student talked about revolved around the lessons or responsibilities laid out in land acknowledgments. There was a clear sense that as a part of the process of reconciliation or decolonization, land acknowledgments are a good first step towards recognizing what ought to be talked about openly and then acted upon. The sheer lack of action taken in spite of the land acknowledgment did not escape her.

[ANON.]: Like if you if you're going to acknowledge whose land it is and then you're going to acknowledge that like you're like you're fine with it being stolen and not being returned.... Like if you're acknowledging whose land and that it's stolen, then the logical



step beyond that is like land back. Even if it's like a, it's like a progressive institution or whatever. Like if York is making this big deal about making a video and everything, but then you come up against the like, okay and then what? No one's going to be like, "oh we're going to surrender our title or whatever you want"... Whatever it would be.

I just want to add here, and I think this is what the student I talked to was saying too at the beginning of this episode...Writ large, I haven't heard from Indigenous people who say "Land Back" that settlers are, like, supposed to just go back to...England or France or wherever. There seems to be a concerted effort on the part of Indigenous people talking about land claims to address this semi-hysterical and bad faith take on the complexities of "Land Back." Taking my cue from Indigenous activists working on decolonizing this whole mess, I take this phrase to mean the Canadian state stepping back from its entrenched position of cutting off Indigenous people from the land. This means the literal return of land, as the student I talked to mentioned, but also rethinking relationships to land and, for settlers, purposefully sitting with our ties to settler colonialism and unknotting those strands inch by inch. It can mean flipping the governmental construction of land ownership in Canada—something I'm going to get into in a bit—and redefining ownership itself. I've linked a few articles below that highlight Indigenous voices on this topic, as I don't want my own thoughts on this to be the only ones you hear if this is new to you.

[ANON.]: I think also a big part of it, well the way she talks about in the video where she's like the difference between it being like a politically correct thing and like an everyday relationship that has had with the land... I think in the terms of it to like settler society being like a political thing then the technical transfer is important because that's what we would recognize you know what I mean, like the concept of like ownership. But

then in the long term, you have to kind of like completely shift, how you think about... Well everything would have to change, like so many things that would have to change! But just like the way we think about like ownership and responsibility and... Even like property. Like in my research, I'm reading a lot about like property rights and just like we think about property like private property only. Like, "get off, this is mine!" Exclusion only. But there's also like other readings of it where it's like property is about responsibility and like and it's like about relationships. It's not about the land itself... Like it can be about the land itself. But it's also built like relationships to other people in relation to the land. Like, how can we expand our understanding of like property and responsibilities beyond just like the idea of exclusion and exploitation?

Many of the land acknowledgments done in urban settings that have a bit more thought put into them note the importance of creating a relationship with the land. Perhaps it's easier to understand what that means when we talk about pipelines or tar sands or uranium mining—all things that take place usually outside of a large city and in more secluded, far-away setting (from an urban perspective)—but cities are always kind of sticky when it comes to talking about building relationships with the land, and then, as the student I talked to says, relationships to other people in relation to the land.

[musical interlude]

One of the jobs I managed to get my grubby little paws on this summer was to digitize the Indian Treaties and Surrenders documents, which detail the "surrenders" and "treaties" made between 1680 and 1903. I was to then figure out a process to map out each of these land transfers and create polygons, or rough sketches of the areas, which then could be layered on top of one another and then onto a map in order to animate the progressive loss of Indigenous

land to Crown claims. If you've ever seen that GIF of Native American land loss in the area known as the United States, that's basically what the project is trying to accomplish.

At its core, that treaty-mapping project shows the violent birth of the Canadian state. This process included sometimes painstaking detail, as land surrenders were sometimes for 67/100s of an acre or one half of the lot adjacent to a tree that no longer exists. Nonetheless the repetitive action of typing in entry after entry of "provisional surrender, part of township, by Chippewa Indians" inevitably followed up by "confirmatory surrender, part of township, by Chippewa Indians" really painted a picture what this land, all of it, including downtown Toronto, used to look like.

Urban development often blots out history. For most it is probably difficult to try to image Yonge Street as having ever been anything other than a paved road. If we can stretch our minds back further, we may be able to imagine it as a dirt path that functioned as a main thoroughfare for the nascent Toronto. But as a 2018 video entitled "Land acknowledgments: uncovering an oral history of Tkaronto" narrated by Sara Roque and Selena Mills states, streets such as Yonge or Bloor started out as deer paths, where the animals would wade through tall grasses in search of water. Hunters would follow, and further trample down the grasses. Following the path of least resistance, others would follow, until it soon became a pretty good place to rest for the evening, and how about set up that shop. Those shops became buildings, and the buildings precipitated the development of the road. Thus the bustling avenues we know today have always been tied to their original roots: the land.

This can of course be wielded in an apolitical way if the intent is to cover up the genocidal elements of settler society development, but it nonetheless serves the purpose of

revealing that we are not separate from the land just because we can't see it. Each and every time we dig, there it is. Every time a Red Tailed Hawk soars by, there it is. Same goes for raccoons, goldenrod, lake water, and Downy woodpeckers. Despite the efforts of bulldozers and cranes, the land remains steadfastly present.

So what would it mean to build a relationship to one another in relation to the land? And how do land acknowledgments fit into this picture? I've been thinking a lot about something the student I talked to said in particular that struck a chord with me both because it references a lot of the fears I have going into the planning field and also because I think she's getting at something pretty endemic to this goal of being in a tripartite relationship. She states,

[ANON.]: I've been like thinking about and reading about that divide between planning as like an academic field and planning as a profession. Planning as a profession can just kind of veer off into all these technical fixes to things. Physical determinism, I think it's called? Where it's like, "oh, if we just design this nice, everyone will be happy." But even then it's like you're planning for the like quote-unquote public good but the public is against someone always. There's always like the other that is planned against. Yeah, there's planning, but then there's also infrastructure planning and all the things that our Urban City Planning depend on to be maintained.

And so my cynical opinion is that all of these like "progressive," whatever "radical" understandings of planning kind of just evaporate when you go out into the workforce you try to get a job and work for some shitty consulting firm and all you do is plan the like private road for the condo now, you know?

So, yeah, pretty unnerving to hear that others are vocalizing this worry about the long-term efficacy of the progressive principles infused throughout planning classes given that there

is a diametrically opposed system under which we'd serve as planners. I'll unpack the possibilities for confronting the oppressive aspects of planning later on, but I think this also serves as an apt point of comparison for talking about the stated purpose of land acknowledgments. Similar to how progressive principles in a planner might be assumed to have an impact of the work they're able to do, land acknowledgments have been constructed to serve an importantly decolonial purpose. But also similarly to how progressive planners face a number of challenges including having to compromise their principles as provincial or municipal planner when they are unable to push for socially-conscious policies or what have you, land acknowledgments, as they are performed in a system which prioritizes drilling and mining and land theft, will be effective only up to a certain point.

What these progressive principles and land acknowledgments reveal is that the relationships we form with the land and with each other become the most meaningful when we actively work against extractive reasonings like capitalism and settler colonialism.

[musical interlude]

Despite my wildest, most desperate dreams, capitalism is not going to be defeated overnight. That is to say that the systems that render progressive principles weird quirks will continue to have the effect they have on land acknowledgments. But this doesn't mean we should then turn around and declare the whole thing pointless because capitalism still exists. Not only is that definitely not a settler's right, land acknowledgments are quite clearly still important. As stated by some of the folks in the Centre for Aboriginal Student Services video, land acknowledgments are an important first step in the conversation of decolonizing this land

referred to as Canada. This led me to be curious as to what makes land acknowledgments impactful for my interviewees. As for the student I talked to:

[ANON.]: I generally like ones that like do the land acknowledgement and then do it a little more in depth. Like if there's a treaty they'll kind of explain or they'll like highlight obligations in the treaty that are relevant to what's happening at that event or whatever like something like that or that present like actionable items for this time, you know, like present an action that you can do beyond that.

This was a common refrain amongst all the people I interviewed. Land acknowledgments have got to tell you to do something. They've also got to be accurate, at the very minimum. To this end, the student I talked to noted she was most familiar with the land acknowledgments presented in BC. One of the most important differences between Toronto and BC is that BC is largely unceded territory, meaning that there are very few if any treaties between Indigenous people and the Canadian government, despite the presence of one of the country's largest cities. There is a long history of Indigenous activism in this area of the land, covered in Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald M. Derrickson's book *Unsettling Canada*. The student I talked to noted that this fact was often cited in the land acknowledgments she heard while living there.

[ANON.]: It's very much the like we're grateful to be guests on this territory and like live, work.... It's like the "we're happy to be able to like live, work, and play on the territory as guests." Because there's no treaty, and because there's lots of different like overlapping nations for territory, they will they get it wrong a lot of the time, because there's kind of like three that are like they cover most of Vancouver but if you go a little bit east or a little bit north of get different Nation, but then they like wouldn't know that as you just

acknowledge the wrong people. And so you're like not really acknowledging the land itself and you're acknowledging the wrong people and when you do it, so it's even worse. I think they might have been doing them for like, I think they may be more have been more popular for a little bit longer than here, but I'm not sure that's just kind of like the vibe I get. But they were different because basically like all of BC is unceded territory. And so there's more of like a slant to it. Like it's very clear cut that has never been ceded. There's no treaty governing this. This is stolen land and so kind of depending... But like different people would frame that differently obviously, like if you're going to the like a talk at school, I mean, it's like an Indigenous presenter they might More in-depth. It felt a little bit more like an emergency about it because you would be like, yeah, like we're admitting this is the unceded territory of the Musqueam just to be like, okay. Yeah, it's unseated and when you stole it and that's fine...versus in Toronto, I feel there's more of like "we're honoring this treaty that we like definitely broke like a million times and we're not going to talk about that." So I think of it like as part of our reconciliation quote unquote or whatever you think that is, then you would definitely have to be moving beyond just saying who's land it is and actually like acting on that in terms of like there's been a lot of land about like went back has been a big thing during the...why am I blanking on this? (Rail blockades?) Yeah, like in the last like month or so you been it's been more like mainstream. Maybe. I don't know what my idea of mainstream is but like more in the public eye...Like what reconciliation would have to be done to be anything meaningful? And so I think talking about like, like it's all going to be, it's all about land at the end of the day and acknowledgement is like the first step. It's definitely not sufficient.

Perhaps because Toronto is seen as a “valid purchase” via Treaty 13, the content of the land acknowledgments presented in this region don’t hold as much urgency as those in areas that are more frequently viewed as unceded. As one of the interviewees in a later episode mentions, however, the Toronto Purchase was and is still viewed by many Indigenous people and historians as “a swindle.” As noted by Stephen Marche in his 2017 article “Canada’s Impossible Acknowledgment” for the *New Yorker*, the land which includes Toronto was “purchased” in 1787 for “two thousand gun flints, two dozen brass kettles, ten dozen mirrors, two dozen laced hats, a bale of flannel, and ninety-six gallons of rum. The British government officially purchased the land for an additional ten shillings, in 1805.” Also taking into account the fact that many treaty negotiations were conducted through translators working in the language spoken by the people in the area, French, and English, with the context being rung out with each translation, many treaties are often thought of as illegitimate. Even further, Canada historically has made efforts to cut off Indigenous peoples’ connection to surrounding resources and drain any potential of long-term stability without governmental assistance. This continues today. For this reason, the treaties are also considered to be signed under duress, and therefore doubly if not triply illegitimate.

I want to dig a bit more into this for a while, as its central to the project but I didn’t have the opportunity to really clearly discuss it in interviews.

In October 2019, the Yellowhead Institute at Ryerson published a Red Paper entitled *Land Back—Red Paper* referring back to the original 1970 Red Paper which was published by the Indian Association of Alberta in response to Canada’s 1969 White Paper. Just a note: if you want to learn more about the Red and White Papers because you are like me and didn’t know



any of this really important history, the aforementioned *Unsettling Canada* by Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald M. Derrickson does a really solid job of outlining what these papers were about as well as the cultural and political context around their releases. I won't get into it here because of limited time but I've included the names of this book as well as all other resources mentioned, including the Yellowhead Institute's report in the notes for this episode.

Okay, the Yellowhead Report entitled *Land Back* focuses on Indigenous land dispossession in Canada through a discussion on extractive industry and Indigenous consent. This seminal report explores the history of colonization in North America and examines the "infrastructure of theft." While treaties were negotiated between some First Nations and the British Crown, the understandings of the true meaning behind these treaties differed dramatically. The report states,

"to [First Nations], these were sacred and honourable agreements that did not include the possibility of surrender. However, these treaty territories have been interpreted by Canadian law as alienated lands under the jurisdiction of provinces...Indigenous nations and bands who did not sign treaties have also been presumed to live under Canadian law on Crown Lands, despite the fact that they did not 'alienate' their lands under the provisions of the Royal Proclamation." (17)

The insidiousness of this last sentence is more clearly outlined in Supreme Court Chief Justice McLachlin's remarks on the *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia* case in 2014: "the content of the Crown's underlying title is what is left when Aboriginal title is subtracted from it."

[pause]

I'm pausing because that still needs to sink in for me. This is what I mentioned earlier when I was talking about "Land Back." Land Back can mean that, if we continue under Eurocentric understandings of land ownership, Crown land claims should be "subtracted" from Aboriginal title.

The T̓silhqot̓in Nation v. BC case established that provinces must engage in meaningful consultation when planning, in particular, to clearcut on land protected under Aboriginal title. It does not, however, mean that the Aboriginal title holder has to consent to any activity on the land—just that the province must be able to show it engaged in a consultation process. And the Crown can overrule any opposition from title holders if they say that the development or activity is in the public interest. “Meaningful engagement,” “consultation process,” “public interest”...There is no dictionary definition for these terms. These vagueries are what keep the economy of extractive industry alive on Indigenous land.

The Yellowhead report goes into detail about alienation of Indigenous communities from their lands and clarifies the difference between Aboriginal rights, Treaty rights, and Aboriginal title. These terms were invented in the courts to further expand on/whittle away the true intent of Section 35 of the Constitution which states, “the existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.” The First Nations & Indigenous Studies program at University of British Columbia states on their Indigenous Foundations website that aboriginal title refers to the

“inherent Aboriginal right to land or a territory. The Canadian legal system recognizes Aboriginal title as a sui generis, or unique collective right to the use of and jurisdiction over a group’s ancestral territories. This right is not granted from an external source but is a result of Aboriginal peoples’ own occupation of and relationship with their home territories as well as their ongoing social structures and political and legal systems. As such, Aboriginal title and rights are separate from rights afforded to non-Aboriginal Canadian citizens under Canadian common law.”

Aboriginal rights and treaty rights were, according to the Yellowhead report, “dealt with as activity-based rights,” treaty rights being activity-based rights on treaty lands: “Aboriginal title

is the only Aboriginal right to the land itself and it comes with incidental rights to govern, manage, and enjoy economic benefits.” (18-19)

It is important that people understand what these rights guarantee as well as what’s missing from them. There are many caveats set up by the Canadian government in order to defang them as much as possible. For example, Indigenous land can only be sold to the Crown, as outlined in the Royal Proclamation of 1763. The Crown must negotiate the terms if Aboriginal title-holders want to sell to a third party (i.e. someone other than the Crown). While this may have been set up to affirm the nationhood of Indigenous groups, it instead renders these title-holders as wards of the state.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples or UNDRIP states that Indigenous people have the right to free, prior, and informed consent. In 2017, the Canadian government published Principles Respecting the Government of Canada’s Relationship with Indigenous Peoples in which ten commitments for nation-to-nation discussions were laid out. Despite noting the UNDRIP’s declaration, Canada does not recognize free, prior, and informed consent as defined by the UN. It instead states that Canada is bound by law to uphold section 35, meaning that meaning engagement is therefore mandated whenever the Government may seek to infringe a section 35 right” (Principles Respecting). As stated in the Yellowhead report, “while the Principles, and by extension the Crown, recognizes UNDRIP, they are not prepared to recognize even the UN’s notion of state-sanctioned free, prior, and informed consent” (19).

So, okay, let’s zoom back out for a second.

This project is about land acknowledgments in planning. On one hand, we're looking at land acknowledgments potentially as a tool to push the conversation around land theft and decolonization into people's minds every time we gather (and hopefully beyond).

On the other hand, we're considering how the responsibilities outlined in land acknowledgments, including but not limited to recognizing the historic and on-going injustices done to Indigenous people, can be enacted in planning, by planners. It is extremely important to talk about things such as free, prior, and informed consent, Aboriginal and treaty rights, and the history of land as it was turned into property. Planning is, after all, a way of ordering people on land, and if the land we're talking about is stolen or forcibly taken, these historical facts have to enter the equation. The effects of colonialism are wide-reaching and multi-tentacled. As an unjust and violent system of oppression, understanding what it looks like in theory and then in practice should be top priority for any planner looking to plan equitably and responsibly.

As they show up at the beginning of planning policy documents, in the email signatures of city staff, and at the beginning of city council meetings, land acknowledgments remind us of our responsibilities.

[musical interlude]

[ANON.:] Rather than making the land acknowledgment this umbrella that has to include everything, rather than [something] in one shot, keeping it the land acknowledgement as a, like a, even like it having ceremonial elements is fine. Like that's, that's good. So, we just like acknowledge that the land acknowledgement is very ceremonial and it's like at these events and that expanding the work around land acknowledgements or even like the treaty obligations that we have here. How can we bring those to the forefront of

conversations outside of just the events where there's land acknowledgments, you know what I mean? So I think rather than like changing land acknowledgements, expanding points of entry for like talking about Indigenous sovereignty and land.

[INTER.]: I think I'm really distracted by the function of the land acknowledgment. Yeah, like if it's supposed to be like a greeting. (Yeah.) Sometimes it is. Or if it's, ummm...

[ANON.]: Do you know where they say like, you know, not where it started but like where or when it became like mainstream for like settlers to do it?

[INTER.]: Yeah. So the TRC report, the in 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, of Canada. There's a comma there! (laughs) So, their report that came out in 2015 and had like a whole bunch of recommendations and I don't think it was a specific recommendation about having a land acknowledgement, but they kind of started after that and that's what made them really popular widespread across Canada.

[ANON.]: Right, because like it's like an easy really, out of all the recommendations in the TRC...It's like the simplest one probably! (Exactly.) (Yeah.)

[INTER.]: It's kind of like... I'm also really interested in this idea of like the Settler State kind of absorbing these ideas that are really radical at the beginning. (Mhmm.) Once these things like... so there's all these good recommendations in the TRC report. Stuff like hire more Indigenous people largely, expand all forms of education into Indigenous communities, in the way that they want them there. (Mhmm.) And those are all really great. And then as soon as they start to be implemented, it's like they're absorbed into the logic of settler colonialism and they lose something in them, where it's like there's... There's... the things that come out of them are not what was originally put into them.

(Right.) And so yeah, I'm just yeah that makes sense, if that's what the land acknowledgment I came from, right? (Yeah.)

[ANON.]: Like something that you can do to like feel good about it that you're like, “oh, yeah, I did this because TRC-Canada said I should do it!”

[INTER.]: That—yeah, yeah, and “I was never called to do anything more. It was just a recommendation.”

[ANON.]: And like we published these recommendations and then they kind of disappeared.

[INTER.]: Yeah, they did, and I don't know... they're still there! They're still online!

[ANON.]: Yeah. I think my, my old school. I think they had them they had some posted in like one of the main registrar's office or something. They had them up for a while, but I would doubt that they're still there.

[INTER.]: And what... I'm like, I'm really glad that they were posted there but where...how do we move into the implementation phase? It's kind of like we're at the point where if we say or if we can pick out the certain buzz words or if we can say the right few phrases we're exempt from the rest of it all. Yeah, and since land acknowledgments are such a like a physical thing, really, in the end... I just... This is where I'm stuck. I just keep circling it. (Yeah, that's it.)

[ANON.]: [laughter] We all need a little bit of ceremony. And so why not this one?

[musical interlude]

At the end of every episode, I wanted to try to put together a land acknowledgment to reflect on what I learned from each person I interviewed. My conversation with this student got me thinking about land history.

I live in Toronto on Dundas Street. Recently, this street has been in the news after a petition called for it to be renamed. Henry Dundas, 1st Viscount Melville, was a politician in the 1700s who amended a bill to abolish slavery in order to delay abolition for 15 years. This led to the continued forced labour of 630,000 enslaved people and for the slave trade to continue to flourish.

The name “Toronto” has a history as well, most often thought to be an Anglicization of the Mohawk word “Tkaronto.” Although it was thought that Toronto originates from a word in the Huron language that means “meeting place,” this suggestion is no longer regularly accepted as it came from a historian who didn’t speak any Indigenous languages. It is more likely that Tkaronto referred to the fishing weirs in what is now called Atherly Narrows north of the city between Lake Simcoe and Lake Couchiching. These fishing weirs were carbon dated to be 4500 years old, the same age as the Great Pyramid of Giza. They were used by many first nations including the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee (a confederacy which includes the Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Seneca, Cayuga, and Tuscarora). They are now called the Mnjikaning Fish Weirs and are managed by the Chippewas of Rama First Nation. The French picked up the name Tkaronto and so Fort Toronto, at the mouth of the Humber River, was born.

After the British took over the area, the name was suggested for the entire metropolitan area. Lt. Gov. Simcoe believed that it sounded “too Native” and changed it to York, but it was changed back in 1834. Ironically, Benjamin Vaughan Day, celebrated in the north suburb of Toronto named after the same man, was renamed Simcoe Day in June 2020 because Vaughan argued that freeing slaves in Jamaica would signal an end of all civilization.

As mentioned, Toronto was “purchased” through Treaty 13. The Mississaugas were the main occupiers of the north shore of Lake Ontario in 1763 after defeating the Haudenosaunee during the Beaver Wars. The British approached the Mississaugas in 1787 to distribute gifts of 1,700 British pounds and 149 barrels of goods. This was understood by the Mississaugas that these were gifts in order to lease the land at the very most, not as payment for permanent exchange. The deed itself for this tract of land remained blank, as no sale was conducted at this initial meeting.

Here I’ll quote directly from the Toronto Purchase Specific Claim: Arriving at an Agreement put together by the Mississaugas of the New Credit:

“The only record which remains of the lands discussed in 1787 is contained in a letter written twelve years after the fact in 1798 by Sir John Johnson, head of the Indian Department at the time:

‘ten miles square at Toronto, and two to four Miles, I do not recollect which, on each side of the intended road or carrying place leading to Lake Le Clai (Lake Simcoe), then ten miles square at the Lake and the same square at the end of the water communication emptying into Lake Huron—this Deed was left with Mr. Collins, whose Clerk drew it up to have the courses inserted with survey of these Tracts were completed and was never returned to my office.’”

In 1788, a surveyor named Alexander Aitken was sent out to map the area and, after he travelled west of the Humber River, was met confronted by Mississaugan people stating that the treaty had not included the land he’d stepped foot on. British authorities intervened, and Aitken surveyed a few miles past Etobicoke Creek. In 1805, the “purchase” was revised in order to “fix” the original contested boundaries and include other land treaties that had been made in the area. It was at this point that it became known as the Toronto Purchase. It is important to note that the Toronto Islands, which formed a peninsula until a violent storm flooded and separated them permanently in 1858, were never included in the original deed according to the



Mississaugas. They were instead added into later surveys. Nonetheless, as early as the 1790s, buildings were constructed on the islands that are considered to be sacred by the Mississaugas.

In 1986, the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation entered into a land claims settlement process with the Canadian government in order to attempt to settle the dispute over the compensation and bloated borders. They are cited as the current treaty holders.

This area is also Dish With One Spoon territory, an agreement made between Indigenous peoples to peaceably share the area as hunters. The central tenets, although not having originally included settlers in the agreement but are understood to extend to settlers as some now live in the territory, are expressed through the metaphor of the dish with one spoon. We share the dish, so we must leave enough for others and not dirty the dish. The spoon is also an important symbol, as noted by Ruth Kolezsar-Green in the Centre for Aboriginal Student Services video mentioned earlier. She states that weapons, such as knives, unpeaceful language, or hostile positions, should not enter the territory covered by the Dish with One Spoon.

The Two Row Wampum belt, also known as Guswenta and as the Tawagonshi Agreement of 1613, is also associated with the area. Dating back to the early 1600s, the Two Row Wampum was an agreement originally between the Dutch fur traders and the Haudenosaunee. It is understood to underscore all future interactions between the Haudenosaunee and settlers. The wampum belt itself has a white background with two purple lines of shell beads running horizontally through it. These two rows represent the independent and distinct cultures of the Haudenosaunee and settlers, which coexist but should not interfere

with each other's affairs, which includes cultural practice. This wampum is understood to apply to this area and the tenets to extend to all settlers living here.

Many nations and peoples are known to have passed through and lived on this area. There is so much more history to learn about this area than I've touched upon in this land acknowledgment. This area holds histories of entire civilizations.

This area was and is an abundant source of food, water, cultural practice, and inspiration. It no doubt served as the setting for peoples' childhoods, relationships, the honing of skills and talents, for learning, for growing, and for creating.

I am here as a settler. My own ancestors are from the same place as many other white people living in Canada: England, Scotland, Norway, and Sweden. Despite their arrival after the foundation of the countries on this continent, my ancestral line including me have benefitted from land theft and oppression of Indigenous peoples, whether it be through that land theft, or placing sacred value on white prosperity.

It is necessary that we fight together to decolonize this place. That means understanding the way land use works in the legal and planning context. It means reading about the history of the area and knowing what treaty obligations you must meet as you live here. And it means listening to Indigenous elders, youth leaders, women, and community members and really, truly, hearing what they have to say.

I stand in solidarity with the Land Back movements, in particular the Wet'suwet'en people on the West coast and the ongoing 1492 Land Back Lane encampment at Six Nations. Although we're living in a pandemic and money can be tight, donating to these movements can help. I've included links below. If you live in the city like me, places like the Native Women's

Resource Centre of Toronto is also looking for donations, money, food, and clothing. And while getting out and gathering with people is really difficult during a pandemic, I want to encourage people to safely get out and support the ongoing struggles for justice across the land. As treaty people, we have a responsibility to do so.

*Episode 2 Notes*

Centre for Aboriginal Student Services Land Acknowledgment video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qNZi301-p8k>

Land back:

<http://4rsyouth.ca/land-back-what-do-we-mean/>

Indian Treaties and Surrenders document:

<https://archive.org/details/indiantreaties0102cana/page/n173/mode/2up>

“Land acknowledgements: uncovering an oral history of Tkaronto” (Selena Mills and Sara Roque): <https://locallove.ca/issues/land-acknowledgements-uncovering-an-oral-history-of-tkaronto/>

Native American Land Loss: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZCvUroBpaE>

Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald M. Derrickson, *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-Up*

Call (<https://btlbooks.com/book/unsettling-canada>)

Stephen Marche “Canada’s Impossible Acknowledgment”:

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/canadas-impossible-acknowledgment>

Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation on Toronto Purchase: <http://mncfn.ca/torontopurchase/>

Aboriginal title:

[https://Indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/aboriginal\\_title/](https://Indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/aboriginal_title/)

Yellowhead Institute “Land Back”: <https://redpaper.yellowheadinstitute.org/>

Tsilhqot’in Nation v. British Columbia: <https://canliiconnects.org/en/summaries/45546>

Principles respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples:

<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/principles-principes.html>

UNDRIP: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/Indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-Indigenous-peoples.html>

Dundas Street: <https://www.blogto.com/city/2020/06/toronto-renaming-dundas-street/>

Toronto purchase:

[https://web.archive.org/web/20080510120931/http://schools.tdsb.on.ca/jarvisci/toronto/tor\\_buy.htm](https://web.archive.org/web/20080510120931/http://schools.tdsb.on.ca/jarvisci/toronto/tor_buy.htm)

Toronto name:

[https://web.archive.org/web/20061016222541/http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/education/toronto\\_e.php](https://web.archive.org/web/20061016222541/http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/education/toronto_e.php)

Simcoe’s part in the name change: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/a-defining-moment-for-tkaronto/article18432992/>

Mnjikaning Fishing Weirs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMEJILLlml>

About the Two Row: <http://honorthetworow.org/learn-more/history/>

About the Dish with One Spoon: <https://nandogikendan.com/dish-with-one-spoon/>

1492 Land Back Lane: <https://ca.gofundme.com/f/legal-fund-1492-land-back-lane>

Donate to Unist’ot’en Camp to support the Wet’suwet’en: <https://unistoten.camp/support-us/donate/>

About the Native Women's Resource Center: <http://nwrct.ca/get-involved/>

Donate to the Native Women's Resource Center: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/10351>

*Episode 3: Planning*

Interview audio is in Times New Roman.

Welcome to the second episode of *Planning Through Land Acknowledgments*. Last episode, we discussed Land Back, some of the history of the area around Toronto, as well as some of the challenges that young planners are seeing as they work towards completing York University's planning program in the Faculty of Environmental Studies.

This episode, I talk to another fellow planning student named Eli. We discuss solidarity as an expression of further action beyond land acknowledgments and take a closer look at planning policy and history. For this episode, I wanted to focus on planning's role in land-based practices and really start to explore the colonial roots of planning.

[ELI]: For me like the longest time I've struggled with land acknowledgements and more so with the significance and validity of land acknowledgements in general. Because in the beginning especially like being I think the first time I ever heard a land acknowledgment was my first year of undergrad. And I thought it was so nifty because we learned about or at least I learned about personally throughout the years and decades especially in Canada, on my own, because I didn't really learn it in school. And it was nice to hear someone finally acknowledge a bit of the pain that they've gone through in our country, but then over time I started to realize that you can only attend so many presentations and talks and student presentations or classes where people would just acknowledge and acknowledge and acknowledge, acknowledge.

It has already been acknowledged, right? when it comes to Indigenous people and their land being taken away or stolen really and it's come to a point where I was like, so if we're just continuously acknowledging this is like for or like for four years, I'm realizing we just been acknowledging and I'm sure it's been being acknowledged for decades now too: when are we actually going to do something about it where we can finally stop having to acknowledge it and we can start acknowledging the good that we're doing. Like maybe acknowledging like hey they got their land back or this certain group of Indigenous individuals got their land back and that has never happened because they're not, frankly, they're not getting their land back really, or the land that they deserve. these words of acknowledgements mean nothing, really, they're just said and they're put out there into space and they just go nowhere, right? There's no action of reconciliation. There's no action of Justice. There's no Provisions giving to these Indigenous people on significant level, I feel, and that's when I realized that land acknowledgments really are just not as significant, I guess, compared to other ways you can provide for the Indigenous communities, right? Because I'm sure Indigenous people appreciate people acknowledging their pain and the history and their histories, but I'm sure they're at a point as well where they're just like, okay, we're tired of all this acknowledgement and we want some sort of reconciliation starting, you know, some significant reconciliation from the top down rather than just constantly seeing it from the bottom up, right, because the top down is what probably has a lot more power and a lot more capabilities to create some sort of change, right, and the bottom up can only do so much because we're limited by our own finances or own sort of support from the public or whatnot.

I wanted to start with this part of the interview because it captures a lot of what Eli and I talked about throughout our conversation. There's a sense that land acknowledgments, despite having existed for just five years, have become wallpaper at an event. As we heard last episode, this undermines the potential for people to fully engage with the content of the land acknowledgment.

At this point of the project, I was of the opinion that land acknowledgments are important and necessary, but because they're presented within/under oppressive systems like capitalism, they aren't as effective as they could be. So the content—which is usually a run-down of who are the groups that are understood to have lived in the area, any treaties that apply, and potentially but not always an expression of gratitude or some such platitude—may not be the problem with the acknowledgments. It may be something deeper, something tied to the culture it's being presented in and the intentions of who it is being presented by.

Eli differed from me a bit on this. He's interested in seeing how we can expand the language in the acknowledgments, yes, but he's also suggesting that we cut a lot of the language that has become universally included in the acknowledgments and instead place the importance on what we're going to do about the issues that these acknowledgments present.

Eli mentioned a discussion he'd had with someone about land acknowledgments.

[ELI]: What would be an alternative to the land acknowledgement, that would be much more beneficial that would be much more impactful. And they say not having Land acknowledgment at all, right, not having a traditional land acknowledgement at all and changing it up and really applying more pressure a lot more urgency within your Land acknowledgement right and that led me to really think about, Okay, So what's my

alternative then? How can I create my own land acknowledgement that's impactful that's significant - really places pressure or urgency on individuals to take action, right, and that's when I came up with the idea of like possibly one sentence.

Just leaving it to one sentence of acknowledging that yes, Indigenous people have no land, had their land taken away and constantly get their land taken away and so many of our other rights as well, right? Not just land and these are the organizations that you, the audience that is listening to me, can take part in to help provide some sort of reconciliation for these communities, right? And obviously I participate and volunteer for these organizations myself just so I can not talk the talk but I also walk the walk as well, right.

So with my land acknowledgements now I would always like acknowledge just once very brief that Indigenous people as we all know and as we've been saying for years and decades have had their land taken away and constantly is taken away along with several other rights of theirs, but If you would genuinely want to help these communities then join these organizations.

I'm going to place the pressure on you the people listening to me for my presentations or wherever I may be speaking publicly to take action and actually help these Indigenous communities that you claim you empathize and sympathize with, right, and I feel like that is just much more impactful than just simply acknowledging pain and Trauma, which is very important, but we are in a year now, we're in a decade, we're in a point in the world where we just acknowledge too much and we claim we empathize and sympathize with people too much, but yet, there's no visible action being taken, right? And we see that



from our governments even today from Parliament or in Canada specifically with the Trudeau government.

We see so much acknowledgements, especially of Indigenous communities, but there's never really significant change. making sure action is being taken for the communities that I advocate for and the communities that I acknowledge myself are going through or having going through some sort of trauma or pain.

I feel like that's important and I feel like it just it would mean a lot more to Indigenous communities. And I really don't want to speak for them, that's why everything I'm saying is more of... I'm speaking from my discussions with Indigenous people themselves, not for my own feelings. So I want to acknowledge that I'm not Indigenous myself. So anything that I'm saying is just straight from discussions that I've had with Indigenous people from various Indigenous communities. It's just a lot more meaningful for them to just see people on the sidelines with them -- especially being racialized myself. I'm queer I'm Black and I'm Asian and just whenever I see people Provide support to whatever community that I'm advocating for when it comes to my identity that aren't part of that Community, It just means a lot, right, because it shows that your issues mean a lot to people who don't necessarily identify with your issues. But when I see them on those front lines with me and they're sort of like an accomplice to my fight for justice, it really is a lot, at least it means a lot more.

Eli and I actually presented together for a class presentation on neoliberalism in planning—such a fun topic—and before that presentation, he did a land acknowledgment. In it, he gave examples of groups in Toronto that are doing work he thought the class should support. A lot of people seemed to appreciate this, as they came up afterwards to thank him for the suggestions.

Eli used the term “accomplice” to describe himself and the people who fight alongside him in the struggles he faces as a racialized queer person living in Toronto. Because he has some experience already working with Jay Pitter, a well-known urbanist and planning consultant in the city, I was curious about how he felt about his role as a planner. Thinking along the lines of being accomplices, I asked him...

[INTERVIEWER]: Do you see planners as accomplices?

[ELI]: So I feel like the issue with planners, especially being an aspiring planner myself, is that there's always that saying that “planners are planners first and then advocates second.” I feel like you could definitely be a planner and an advocate at the same time. I feel like it's not impossible to ensure your plans or your work or your projects are not completely destroying communities or displacing communities. I feel like that is definitely not hard to do and by putting in measures by putting in policies that prevents those very disruptive things from occurring or chaoticness recurring, makes you an advocate and it shouldn't necessarily be seen as two separate things because I feel like as soon as you start doing that you start losing your respect and Humanity when it comes to emphasizing, sympathizing with certain individuals and groups. and as soon as you start doing that, you'll start destroying communities.

I totally agree with Eli here. I think in an effort to get York students to focus on the technical knowledge we would need in the field as opposed to the heavy theory, we are sometimes reminded to be mindful of the difference between planning and advocacy. But it seems like the tools that planners have at their disposal, whether they be policy documents or public meetings, are based in the idea of advocacy. I see this as a recognition of the political element of planning.

For whatever reason, there are some people, including professors, City employees, and planners, who see politics as irrelevant to planners. There's a good chance that even though their work may change dramatically, planners will remain regardless of who holds office. This looks quite different than jobs that are viewed more as "political," such as aides or counsels. But as many a York student will tell you, this field is not apolitical. It is dangerous to view it as such, because that can allow planners to view themselves as "just the policy guys" and not have to contend with or consider the very real impacts guided by politics that their planning decisions can have on the rest of the public.

Because the main goal of this projects is to get a sense of how planning (and thus planners) can respond to and work through land acknowledgments, I am really interested in the idea of planners as advocates. I asked Eli for some examples of how planners can take on that advocacy role.

This is, of course, complex, especially because I'm also interested in the decolonial possibilities in planning. On one hand, if we're to consider how planning has so far offered a space for advocacy, we have to look at the fact that planning's current method of consultation with Indigenous people nation-wide leaves much to be desired. Eli notes that at the very least,

[ELI]: For one they should be in the room when they're being spoken to because there is a whole issue about speaking for others and people shouldn't be speaking for others especially if they have no idea what those communities have experienced throughout their lives or their histories right?

You need to bring these people into the room so they can speak for themselves and you need to bring people who... Get to make sure they were consulted about this and not just

one Indigenous individual: It's consult a whole Indigenous Community, you know have a proper working group and actually and actually take what they're saying seriously, you know because there are times when we have these public consultations that we just listen, right, and it goes out the other ear and then we just write it down as if we just had a public consultation and that's done and done.

I'll add to this too, that even duty to consult is laughable from an advocacy perspective. As I mentioned in the previous episode, the current conception of land in Canada is that Crown title is what remains once Aboriginal title has been subtracted from it, and that the province is required to consult with local Indigenous groups when there is a plan to infringe upon their Section 35 rights. Even then, if the province can prove that the proposed development is for the public good, the development can override any Aboriginal claim to the land. So when planners come in to consult, where exactly is the power located in that interaction?

Nonetheless, I think both Eli and I understand that there is a basic necessity to establishing contact with the people who'll be affected by the development. We know that doesn't exist in many cases, so it gives us somewhere to start. [LARGE SIGH]

Eli also discussed how land acknowledgments specifically can fit into planning:

[ELI]: I feel like recommending groups as if I would do it in a more of an academic setting is not enough. I feel like at that point have a mini Workshop before you start your presentation or start discussing your project about how your project can impact the Indigenous communities. Have that as a special feature in a workshop, right? And that can be looking at your plan, right, and seeing how doing something for an Indigenous community and what sort of area could impact them. Or go around the room and asking people how can Indigenous issues and Trauma be acknowledged within the planners

approach that you're doing and have a sort of working group with that in the beginning of the presentation or beginning of a meeting, right?

I think well land acknowledgement when it comes to planners specific work should be applied differently than just like again acknowledging that land has been stolen because land acknowledgement doesn't necessarily have to mean a simple actual traditional acknowledgement of stolen land.

I feel like a nice neat way of implementing, sorta, finding knowledge, call it, initiative or policies within our planners work is putting in a note, rather not policy or clause or anything, but like putting in a note in the work that certain proposals or certain sort of ideas or policies they may disproportionately affect Indigenous communities, right? And I feel like simply doing that sort of land acknowledgement is impactful and it's a good way to implement sort of land acknowledgment initiatives in the work that you do, using this land to create this sort of amenity for the community, something that's related to an Indigenous community or something that holds space for Indigenous communities that are very prominent within this residential area or within this part of the city. It's a great way of also implementing some sort of planning land acknowledgement initiative or sort of policy within your work.

So I feel like there's definitely work arounds, and it's definitely easy to stray away from the traditional way of providing or doing land acknowledgements and you can get very clever with it in a sense and instead advocate for the fair treatment of Indigenous communities in the work that you do. And that's already done, I know, in like I believe the north York secondary plans of 2018 or 2019, I'm forgetting the year, their most recent one it should be if I remember correctly.

They had certain areas or they had certain zones that they were recommending be given or be Certain zones that they wanted to ensure had space for Indigenous communities, right, and they were talking about putting in an Indigenous, I guess historical, sort of space, so I don't know not necessarily a museum, but it was a space where Indigenous individuals display their histories.

I think Eli was actually thinking of the Downtown secondary plan for Toronto's *Official Plan*.

Toronto is thought of as "a city of neighbourhoods," and this is reflected in the way it is planned. The *Official Plan* includes several secondary plans for various areas of the city, which includes the downtown core. So in the "Parks and Public Realm" section (part 7) of the *Downtown Secondary Plan*, policies are listed, a few which caught my eye:

1. Parks have an intrinsic role in shaping the urban landscape, creating a healthy, connected city, and contributing to placemaking, liveability and resilience. Parks are an essential element of complete communities. New, expanded and improved parkland located within and serving Downtown, will be acquired and provided to:

- 7.3.2. reinforce historic places, including those places of Indigenous presence previously unrecognized;
- 7.3.3. celebrate Indigenous histories and recognize cultural and natural heritage through placemaking, naming, wayfinding, monuments, interpretive features, public art, partnerships and programming;
- 7.3.4. support Indigenous cultural and ceremonial practices through the provision of programmable spaces (pg. 21)

The section introduces these policies by stating that "natural features are the setting for Downtown Toronto. They create a link to Indigenous histories and are valued by contemporary Indigenous peoples" (21). While this isn't as concrete as what Eli had mentioned, I cannot find any other comparable line in *Official Plan* or *Secondary Plan* documents. And I think this is good a moment as any to once again do a deep dive, this time into policy and how the facts in land acknowledgments fit into this whole picture.

[musical interlude]

As a means of legitimizing the presence of settlers, planning served to solidify the colonial idea of Canada. By confirming street placement via maps or setting about the construction of services needed in new settlements to build them into cities, planners participated in the building of the nation from the get-go. In his 2004 book *Unsettling the City: Urban Land and The Politics of Property*, Nicolas Blomley states that “the city is a site of particular ideological, material, and representational investments on the part of a settler society, [therefore] native contestation has a particular valence here” (127). This contestation as it was put into action is analyzed by Julie Tomiak in her article on Chief Theresa Spence’s hunger strike on Victoria Island in Ottawa. She argues that the use of scale jumping—that is, locating the site of the hunger strike on an unceded island within view of Parliament Hill to call attention to concerns about Attawapiskat First Nation on the west coast of James Bay—is a method of reestablishing boundaries and reconfiguring entrenched colonial understandings of place. Tomiak’s article points to cities as a particularly important centre of colonial power and notes that “To ignore the historical production and contemporary contestations related to “Ottawa” is to entrench settler colonial power and existing injustices in and of the city—and it forecloses possibilities for different, decolonizing politics” (Tomiak 11). The same can be said for all Canadian cities, I’d argue, and Tomiak (and Chief Spence) chose Ottawa because of its identity as the nation’s capital.

The literature that is critical of planning as a profession points to the context in which planning arose as a source of contention. Oren Yiftachel states in an article entitled “Planning and Social Control: Exploring the Dark Side,” “a perception of planning as an activity devised to

reform and improve cities, regions, and society...[is] too narrow, too idealistic, and often unrealistic. [Such a perception] ignores the position of planning as an arm of the modern nation-state. Empirically, it overlooks the numerous instances in which planning functions as a form of deliberate social control and oppression exercised by elites over weaker groups” (Yiftachel 397).

Here land acknowledgments do a lot of important work. By referencing the history of the area and talking about what happened there/who was pushed out, and who still thrives, we’re bringing the legitimacy of the city into question and are potentially chipping away at the myth that has been built around Canada and its cities. In the previous episode, the person I interviewed noted that people doing land acknowledgments in BC would often cite the wrong Indigenous group when speaking about whose territory they were on, conflating and mixing up Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Watuth. Getting these correct draws lines through streets and buildings and points out that settler society was physically projected onto what had already existed in the area for millennia, including not only the boundaries of Indigenous territories but the natural elements of the area as well. This is a large part of a settler colonial mindset: seeing the world as a blank canvas to develop and build on top of, not even to acknowledge that things are being erased because those things, like trees, waterways, and natural geographic formations, don’t register as part of the world in the first place. If they come into the consciousness of settlers at all, they represent barriers, sources of extractable wealth, or sources of fearful, unfamiliar things that must be crushed or tamed.

In many ways, the environmental movement has fetishized Indigenous people in their long-standing relationship with the land. Hippies and environmentalists without an anti-racist



and anti-capitalist analyses alike love to see the work of Indigenous people through the lens of the Noble Savage. This certainly did not start with the hippies, however, and stretches as far back as can go, when early “explorers” saw inhabitants of what’s referred to as North and South America as part of the ecology of the place. This makes it quite easy to then conflate Indigenous peoples with the resources extracted for profit in the area. It also allows for a conflation of the development of settler cities and the organization and “ordering” of the land with the displacement of Indigenous communities and destruction of the natural environment. Indigenous communities were not treated as nations throughout the settling and treaty-building process because they were thought of as part of nature, not as sovereign, independent, and long-standing nations (I say nation knowing this is a settler term and inadequate, but the weight that it holds, especially as nation-to-nation talks are upheld as a potential route forward, makes me inclined to use it when attempting to reference the racism that inflected relationships between settlers and Indigenous people).

And so to understand planning’s role in colonization is to understand how relationships between settlers and Indigenous people were inflected with racism from the outset. Writing on the oversimplification of land use in the Mississauga-Algonquin conflict of territorial boundaries in the 1783-1923 period, Marijke Huitema, Brian S. Osborne and Michael Ripmeester state,

Formerly unbounded space became limited by boundaries and appropriated as regulated territory.... The usual assumption is that these different social constructions may be attributed to long-standing cultural—and even racial—categories of difference. Indeed, much has been written about the theological constructions of innocence, savagery and nobility. Whatever the lens, by the eighteenth century, Europe had positioned itself as the arbiter for assigning the relative hierarchy of stages of human development. (Huitema et al. 88)

I find this helpful in its analysis of the ways that land, especially in southwestern and southeastern Ontario, was referred to in treaties. The European practice of assigning one group as a holder and then as surrenderer of a large tract of land oversimplified land use pre-European contact. It rendered complex relationships and communal use agreements into Eurocentric property titles, all of which was done with the express purpose of then making it easy to surrender and be absorbed by the settler state.

Accounting for the ways Indigenous people across US/Canadian borders were and are represented in media, Thomas King writes in *The Inconvenient Indian* that he sees three categories created to describe Indigenous people: “the bloodthirsty savage, the noble savage, and the dying savage” (King 84). In terms of how planning dealt with these stereotypes, it used the first, the bloodthirsty savage, as a picture of what “lays in them thar hills,” where there remains land beyond the reach of a grid system. It fetishized the image of the noble savage and, when attempting to reference the past inhabitants the land and Crown were “moving beyond,” held up this stereotype in order to give a final farewell-wave. And planning reaffirmed the third trope, the dying savage, as it constantly pushed for the image of all Indigenous communities to be one of the past, albeit the recent past: they were “still there,” so you can’t say they’re completely of the past, but by-golly, we’re sure going to make sure they’re on their way out. As planning worked side-by-side with settler forms of representation in order to define and confine Indigenous people in ill-fitting and oppressive relationships with Canada, it also halted all conceptions of Indigenous futurity and historicity. Huitema et al states that the

same impulse [to define, order, and classify the natural world] prompted the classification and fixing of Native peoples in ethnographic time and geographical space. European conceptualizations of political territory could not accommodate spatial

overlap and eventually, the initial assigned territories became ossified in official maps, Indian Department documents, and treaties and surrenders (Huitema et al. 89).

I mentioned in the previous episode the complexities of the Toronto Purchase. As a reminder, there was a discussion between the Mississaugas (now of the Credit River) and Sir John Johnson as a representative of the Canadian government in 1787 at the Bay of Quinte where 1700 British pounds of goods were exchanged. This was not a sale discussion but rather an agreement over land use. This was later termed a treaty-making ceremony, even though the deed that was later found many years later had no signatures on it. In 1805, a new “treaty” was created, which established boundaries on paper (a process which is highly contested given that everyone who had been at the 1787 meeting had passed away) and surreptitiously added land into the agreement. The Mississaugas of the New Credit were given ten shillings in this deal. Only seven years later would they prove indispensable in pushing back the Americans as they attempted to invade Canada. This piece of land was pursued for military interests, in order to establish boundaries to be protected, and was legitimated by the presence of settlers, regardless of the presence of an agreed-upon treaty or not.

Yiftachel defines planning as “the formulation, content, and implementation of spatial public policies” (395). Going back to the policies of Toronto’s Downtown secondary plan, I am tempted to point out that a quick search for the word “Indigenous” within the 92-page document returns a handful of hits, the vast majority are found within the Parks and Public Realm section. This section outlines policies and visions for the “natural features” which provide “the setting for Downtown Toronto. They create a link to Indigenous histories and are valued by contemporary Indigenous peoples” (21). The word appears when discussion of

consultation with Indigenous people is brought up, and other than this assertion of modernity, firmly attaches “Indigenous” to ideas of natural settings and the past.

I also searched within the *Official Plan*, and while “Indigenous” did not return any results, I had more luck with “First Nations” and “Aboriginal” scored one. There was more variety to the ways in which “First Nations” was used, but although it was not as frequently included in discussions of nature, it was largely associated with heritage conservation and archaeology. Most of these mentions were in the “Building a Successful City” section, with one showing up in the “Shaping the City” section. Although it was not my intention to run an analysis of word usage with its context, I found this short exercise quite interesting after having read and regurgitated all of that theory. The only mention of engagement with Indigenous communities in the *Official Plan* (engagement plans do exist, and I’ll mention one in a second) is found in this passage:

The Plan policies call for an engagement protocol with First Nations and the Métis for heritage properties and archaeological sites that may be of interest to them, as well as ensuring that information is provided to First Nations and Métis where archaeological resources are found to be First Nations or Métis in origin. (3-10)

This leaves much to be desired. The Official Plan is a document that encapsulates visions for the city held by planners and communities alike. It lays out land use designations and set policy goals and outlines for areas of the city. But it is also a document that mentions things like community, people, diversity, and history several times, so that it holds an amount of administrative weight is not an accurate or reasonable excuse to have such sparse and stereotypical references to the people whose land the city was built on.

[musical interlude]

I remember the class I took with Dr. Luisa Sotomayor in the Perspectives in Planning course at York having a week on colonialism's role in planning. Although there was only one class with that title, this perspective was carried through the class by Luisa. Planning students at York, at least, are equipped with this knowledge and are encouraged to carry it into the field with them. Knowing the people I was surrounded by in this class, I am confident that our new generation of planners will do so confidently.

Nonetheless, I worry that it is too often suggested that we change the system by implementing different policies and gradually turning the whole thing into a better machine—fixing it cog by cog. Maybe there's someone who can do that. But I don't think it works that way. I think what matters most is the way that planners carry all of this theory into the work, and how that shapes their planning practice.

In our conversation, Eli brought up a statement he'd heard that was a type of "homeless acknowledgment" (his words):

[ELI]: "Homeless people are human beings with immense value. They are members of our families, communities, neighborhoods, cities, and for number of people reading this they are themselves or have been homeless. the fact that homeless people do not have housing is a wrong done against them, not a sign that they've done something wrong. to then try and ban them from public spaces in existing and public, including doing things we all have to do like sleep or eat, it's just another Grievous wrong. An attack on homeless people is not protecting the community it is an attack on the community because they are part of the community themselves. homeless people aren't my enemy, those who had banned them from things like sleeping in public are my enemy."

We often see homeless people as second-class individuals similar as we will see other marginalized groups as second class individuals, like queer people, like QTBIPOC people, especially, black people, other racialized groups, Indigenous people, right there constantly seen as second-class.

Individuals not just acknowledging the disproportional treatment that the homeless Community receives, but they're also standing by them and they are checking their privilege at the door. Also, they stated that they will forfeit their privilege just to stand with them as well.

He tied this to what he'd experienced working under Jay Pitter, a local planner and self-described urbanist:

[ELI]: Just like I know Jay Pitter herself when she works on a project, She always states to the developers, and these are people at decision making tables that she says right to them, "I will quit or I will not work with you, If you either displace individuals or treat marginalized groups a certain way which goes against my morals or my principles," right?

There's a lot about planning I would change. Eli's suggestions about establishing a set of expectations for the development relationship, basic inclusion of people at the discussion table, and considering ways to include communities in policy are all valuable insights into how planners can maneuver through this system, morals intact. I also appreciate the idea of planners as advocates, and think that this is one of the main differences between a planning education which is grounded in historical context and one which is not.

My fiancée, a casual leftist military strategy historian, reminded me of the importance of campaigns in all of this. Leftists often hit roadblocks in their search to fit their specific political

goals into various structures which were founded in opposing systems of thought, whether they be legal systems or municipal planning. The groups that find success are those who see all pieces fitting into the larger puzzle of a campaign. Land acknowledgments are one piece; they are not everything and they are not nothing. What we can do is learn as much as we can about the structures we're working for/under and not view this learning or these acknowledgments as the end of it all.

[musical interlude]

Eli and I talked a lot about the role planners can play as equity advocates. The "homeless acknowledgment" he read hit home for me as well, and because it talks about solidarity and structural systems, I wanted to use it as a model for this episode's land acknowledgment.

The systems that make up Canada do not place value on Indigenous lives. Through the dismissal of sovereignty, the insistence on tokenizing treatment in all levels of government, the ignorance of suffering and simultaneous fetishization of trauma, and the constant relegation of an entire range of people to one group with one history, Canada and those who fight to uphold it are complicit in the very history they now try to distance themselves from.

It is imperative that everyone who lives in the land known as Canada know the history of where they live. It's not a history that's easy to minimize into a few sentences. To say the facts but not know the context behind them is to reaffirm the acceptance of anti-Indigenous racism and continue to accept Canada is a legitimate state.

The Toronto Purchase is more than a treaty; it is a set of lies layered on top of one another, first over the course of eighteen years, then over two hundred years. A sale was never

conducted. Instead, words were misconstrued and documents irrelevant to one culture were used to subjugate it. Toronto is the result of a process of displacement and capture.

Without recognition of Indigenous sovereignty, there is no path towards reconciliation, let alone conciliation (I'm referencing Michelle Daigle, who identifies herself as Mushkegowuk, a member of Constance Lake First Nation in Treaty 9 in northern Ontario, and of French ancestry, in an article that was foundational to this episode entitled "The spectacle of reconciliation: On (the) unsettling responsibilities to Indigenous peoples in the academy"). Indigenous people across this continent have always fought for sovereignty and the return of land. Over the years, I have learned about some of these resistances through the films of Alanis Obomsawin, including *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*, *Trick or Treaty*, and *Incident at Restigouche*. I have also been reading people like Thomas King, Vine Deloria Jr, Leonie Sandercock (she also made a documentary with Giovanni Attili called *Finding Our Way: Beyond Canada's Apartheid*), the book *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-Up Call* By Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald M. Derrickson, and Laura Harjo's book *Spiral to the Stars: Mvskoke Tools of Futurity*. These will all be in the notes for this episode.

As a dedicated community activist, I also want to bring all of the theory into my life through community organizing. There are several groups in Toronto that do this activism, but I am thinking of the Grassy Narrows protest I attended last year. Grassy Narrows is a reserve in western Ontario that has faced deadly levels of mercury in the water system after several tonnes of it was dumped upstream by Reed Paper company in the 1960s. Over 90% of the reserve's population shows signs of mercury poisoning. I remember attending this protest and learning about the specifics after listening to the speakers. We were asked to stage a die-in on



Bay Street in front of the Department of Indigenous Services Canada. Over three hundred people showed up by my recollection, and as we laid on the ground, looking up at the clouds passing by the tall glassy buildings, the voice of a young activist came through on the speakers. She stated that when she had left the reserve a few days earlier, she never dreamed that there would be that many people here to greet her and her family. The news footage of the event, although lacking and not capturing much of what speakers had to say, featured people who seriously expressed that solidarity was the key to this fight that had been taken up a long time ago by people from Grassy Narrows. This demonstration was specifically to hold the provincial government accountable to their promise to build a mercury care home on the reserve and commit to the costs of maintaining such a facility for the next 30 years, as is necessary to make any amount of change in the lives of the people affected by the dumping.

At the time of the protest, only 1% of the funding for just the construction of the building had been paid, which froze the construction and support for people affected by the toxins in the water and soil. April 2020 was the 50th anniversary of the halt of fishing due to the contamination. The community has been facing this problem over several generations and continues to keep the pressure on the government. Chief Rudy Turtle and Marc Miller, minister of Indigenous Services, signed a framework for the care facility near the anniversary this year, but the government has yet to secure funding for the operation of the site. You can read more at [freegrassy.net](http://freegrassy.net).

I am also thinking of 1492 Land Back Lane near Six Nations being held by Haudenosaunee Land Defenders. After a questionable agreement was made between elected officials of the Six Nations Reserve and the Mackenzie Meadows developers, the construction

site was occupied and an injunction was served. Details of the accommodation agreement were released after they were submitted as evidence for an injunction by the developer. Among the things agreed to by the elected council was that the council would make public declarations of support for the development and support the developers in any legal action that might arise from protests. In early August, Land Defenders were dragged off the property by the Ontario Provincial Police. Those arrested face large legal fees and those who remain are, as of the most recent report I can find on the encampment on August 27, working on building a cabin on the land but remain worried about possible raids. Given the pandemic situation, much of the solidarity that has been expressed has been online, but I have also seen on the Facebook group that people are planning to travel to the area and offer support in any way that is called for.

This event led me to learn more about the Haldimand Tract, which was piece of land “granted” to Six Nations members by governor-in-chief Sir Frederick Haldimand in 1784. The Six Nations reserve covers only 5% of the tract’s total acreage and has gradually been illegally sold off or illegally transferred to settlers. Mackenzie Meadows is within the Tract. The injunction sought against the land defenders is, like many other injunctions granted to developers aiming to have defenders removed from tracks or roads, is seen as an extreme overreach of the Canadian court system. Injunctions are served by courts that cannot make these decisions as it implies territorial boundaries which are often still undetermined or within land claims processes. On August 24, the Yellowhead Institute published the Statement from Concerned Haudenosaunee Women Regarding Injunctions at 1492 Land Back Lane which calls for allies to amplify these messages safely and peacefully.

Learning about past and present movements and talking about what is going on across this land helps us to situate ourselves as accomplices and as advocates. In becoming familiar with these struggles and resources, and I'm going to quote Michelle Daigle again here, we address what she sees as the "root of responsibilities to Indigenous peoples: not a performance or feel-good mandate, but relations of responsibility and accountability based on Indigenous law that Indigenous peoples continue to embody, regenerate, and demand for radical and transformative change" (715).

*Episode 3 Notes*

"Crown title is what remains once Aboriginal title has been subtracted from it":

<https://redpaper.yellowheadinstitute.org/>

Section 35 Rights:

[https://Indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/constitution\\_act\\_1982\\_section\\_35/](https://Indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/constitution_act_1982_section_35/)

Downtown secondary plan for Toronto: [www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/966f-city-planning-to-core-opa406-attachment-1-schedule-5-downtown-plan.pdf](http://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/966f-city-planning-to-core-opa406-attachment-1-schedule-5-downtown-plan.pdf)

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Access to Alanis Obomsawin's films: <https://www.nfb.ca/directors/alanis-obomsawin/>

Vine Deloria Jr.'s *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*:

<https://www.oupres.com/books/9779813/custer-died-for-your-sins>

Leonie Sandercock: *Towards Cosmopolis: Planning for Multicultural Cities* (book) & "When Strangers Become Neighbours: Managing Cities of Difference," *Planning Theory & Practice*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 13-30, 2000. (more: <https://scarp.ubc.ca/people/leonie-sandercock>)

Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald M. Derrickson, *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-Up Call* (<https://btlbooks.com/book/unsettling-canada>)

Laura Harjo's *Spiral to the Stars: Mvskoke Tools of Futurity* (<https://www.ubcpress.ca/spiral-to-the-stars>)

Grassy Narrows: [freegrassy.net](http://freegrassy.net)

1492 Land Back Lane: <https://ca.gofundme.com/f/legal-fund-1492-land-back-lane>

Donate to Unist'ot'en Camp to support the Wet'suwet'en: <https://unistoten.camp/support-us/donate/>

Yellowhead Institute: "Concerned Haudenosaunee Women Regarding Injunctions at 1492 Land Back Lane": <https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2020/08/24/statement-from-concerned-haudenosaunee-women-regarding-injunctions-at-1492-land-back-lane/>

On the Six Nations injunction: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kx3JuGT1GkM>

Latest on LBL: <https://www.aptnnews.ca/videos/the-latest-from-the-1492-land-back-lane-camp-in-caledonia/>

About the Haldimand Tract: <https://rabble.ca/toolkit/rabblepedia/haldimand-tract> & <https://www.alternativesjournal.ca/policy-and-politics/living-stolen-land>

1492 Land Back Lane Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1656879034481566>

#### *Episode 4: Capitalism & Location*

Interview audio is in Times New Roman.

This is the last episode for this podcast series that I'll be producing for my Master's project. There is so much that I didn't have the time in the first three episodes to talk about, and so much that has come up since even the first episode. One thing that I'm thinking about especially right now, even though it's pretty minor, is that the Faculty of Environmental Studies is officially called the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change. I'm not usually so entranced by this internal university stuff, but I know the merger between Environmental Studies and Geography had a lot of discussion around it. I think that the TRC recommendations as well as

the ways planners can really interrogate their position as they work on Indigenous land are things that sound like they'd be central to the new faculty's focus. The Michelle Daigle article that I mentioned last time is specifically about universities as colonial institutions and what role they can play in decolonization. Work like Daigle's will be incredibly important for universities—administrators and students alike—in the future as they move towards amplifying messages like the need to address climate change and racism.

For this episode, I talked to Kim, a community activist and soon-to-be PhD holder from Toronto who has worked with the Taiaiaako'n Historic Preservation Center for over ten years. Although she's not involved with planning directly, I really appreciated her perspective as someone who has been doing decolonization-oriented organizing for a number of years and as she'll mention later on, someone who is familiar with the planning process through attending meetings and being consulted for various City projects.

Before I bring in the audio of our conversation, I wanted to take a minute to try to ground myself in my location as my discussion with Kim inspired me to do. The land acknowledgments she presents during Taiaiaako'n events are from a settler perspective and are about understanding the treaties, the history, and the modern implications of colonialism in Toronto. She asks people to think about their relationship to the land when performing or listening to a land acknowledgment, potentially through their ancestral roots, which is especially important for settlers.

As I'm learning more and more about the history of colonization, I am continuing to search for a way to build a new, less extractive relationship the land. Part of that has come from gardening and learning about how plants grow and the connections between the plants

themselves, but I have been acutely aware of my location in my apartment on the second floor. It's been several months since my feet or body has touched the ground for more than an hour at a time. I am afraid to go to the community garden where a ginormous raspberry plant grows because there's no way to socially distance from other walkers when passing underneath train tracks. So as I've been doing this research and designing this project, I've continued my search as to how to connect with my surroundings beyond recorded or unrecorded history. Inspired by listening to Indigenous scholars and knowledge keepers, I've arrived at listening to what's around me in order to try to figure out my position here.

[audio: room sounds]

First off, there's the sirens. They're pretty constant, along with the trucks and cars passing by.

[audio: sirens]

As I'm inside, my cat is pretty constant as well.

[audio: purring cat]

The deck garden has been a hot spot for bees, especially bumble bees, which vibrate blossoms to get them to open early so they can gather the nectar.

[audio: bee buzzing]

The streetcar, which have recently been updated to be sleek, longer, and super uncomfortable passes by my window. I miss the old streetcars that sounded like they were dying and moved like boats.

[audio: mechanical noises of mid-2000s TTC streetcar passing and breaking]

I'm active in online organizing spaces even though I can't leave the house and have lots of memories of being at rallies downtown, surrounded by huge glass buildings, the sounds of the drumlines echoing all around us.

[audio: drums, chanting, clapping]

The Homelessness Memorial, which I attended a few times in the winter but am pretty disconnected from right now, absorbed in worries about the new shelters and COVID and my own safety...

[audio: community organizers presenting names for the Homelessness Memorial]

I even miss the sounds of transit, when the subway would idle at the York station for several minutes or walking past underground construction in a crowd of people...

[audio: crowd sounds, walking, shuffling]

Quite different from being in Three Forks, Montana where I walked on new ice near the headwaters of the Jefferson, Missouri, and Gallatin rivers...

[audio: silent except squeaking, breaking ice]

And later returned to my parents' home where I showed my mum how the recorder on my phone works...

[audio: Emma speaking, mum making "agreeing noises"]

And then to my mum's home province of Nova Scotia where we walked together on the beach on a windy afternoon.

[audio: wind, waves crashing]

I've been lost in sounds. When we first moved to this apartment, I couldn't stand the window being open. It made me really agitated and high-strung. I've gotten used to it over time, prairie girl that I am, but on the few mornings we get up before 7am and sit out on the deck, I am still



obsessed with the silence of cars that invites early morning robins, mocking birds, starlings, ravens, sparrows, and orioles to sing.

I think if I've learned anything from listening to these recordings again, it's been that it helps me to understand where I am and where I've been. We've insisted on there being things like borders, the silliness of which the migrating flocks of birds and worldwide presence of plants like amaranth and yarrow have pointed out. We've also thought that trucks and cars and industrial noise is just a given, which allows it to fade into the background, when it is a thing that can sometimes dramatically impact our lives. I have given up on editing out the background to these recordings. It's simply too loud sometimes. Beyond my own personal comfort, the noise that surrounds me tells me things about the outdoors; I can tell the time of day without looking outside by the amount of truck noises (they tend to drive around in the mid morning and late at night).

While these tangible teachings have been interesting on their own, it's also become clear that listening is something we should be doing—not because we have something to gain (although gain we will) but because it is part of our duty as a part of this world and ecosystem and surroundings. There are things I can learn here about this place even though its heavily industrialized and lacking in what some would call natural elements. I don't have to go to the forest or ocean to learn about my place in the current moment. And it is something we should be doing all the time.

It's also had the effect of engaging my curiosity in learning more about the area, some of which I've discussed for the past couple of episodes. As I've learned, I've reaffirmed my commitment to decolonization, not that convincing me was anyone's role in the first place. And

it's here that I want to make sure that I'm not going to start watering down the definition of decolonization by referring back to the eternal Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang in their piece

"Decolonization is not a metaphor":

"Decolonization is not a swappable term for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools. Decolonization doesn't have a synonym... Decolonization must involve the repatriation of land simultaneous to the recognition of how land and relations to land have always already been differently understood and enacted; that is, all of the land, and not just symbolically" (3 and 7).

There are two parts to this: there's land back, and there's a change in relationships.

Decolonization is not something that can be put on a provincially-mandated timeline, nor can it be "achieved" after the Prime Minister makes a statement about the importance of Indigenous people in Canada's future as he simultaneously supports pipelines. Just as settler colonialism is not an event, as settler-identified academic Patrick Wolfe puts it, neither is decolonization. It is a process that happens with, and potentially through, cultural change, but it becomes a metaphor when that cultural change is the only thing promoted, especially when those changes hold no one accountable.

My discussion with Kim was wide-ranging. The Taiaiaiko'n Historic Preservation Centre is an Indigenous-led group that works to protect sacred sites in High Park. There are 57 burial mounds in the area as well as the ancient Mohawk-Seneca town of Taiaiaiko'n near the Baby Point area. The Taiaiaiko'n website also notes that the bones of a 600 year old Seneca woman were found 3 metres from the front door of a house in Baby Point: "this and other evidence proves that the village of Taiaiaiko'n had a much longer occupation by Seneca people, than just 40 years during the 1600's" (on Taiaiaiko'n "About" page). Near the area is the Thunderbird Mound in Magwood Park, which borders the east side of the Humber in the Baby Point

neighbourhood. Baby Point, just for the record, is an incredibly wealthy area. It's named after Jacques Baby, who, as a sign recently erected by an anonymous citizen states, was a slave-owning furtrader who opposed Governor Lieutenant Simcoe's efforts to abolish slavery (check show notes).

We talked about her work with the group and how the relationship they have with High Park has been tinged by things like the TRC report:

[KIM]: Like I said, I've been with the group [Taiaiaako'n Historic Preservation Society] since 2009, but they've been in existence much longer, and we would go to the High Park Resource Council meetings, which are led by Parks, City Parks. And basically we were treated so poorly. We were scorned, just like... nobody talk to us. It was just like yeah, it was very confrontational uneasy space for us and then after Truth and Reconciliation, everybody's looking at us like, "Oh, will you come and work with us?" Just like overnight is the relationship changed.

So that was like a really, really interesting... So I think Truth and Reconciliation is really, you know, and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women report and these various like historic moments that have kind of come to public attention in the past few years has shifted people's consciousness and I think it's a really important opening that we need to really, like, squeeze into a build on.

The group hosts events like nature walks and feasts. Kim does a land acknowledgment for these events, which she explained to me. It was incredibly in-depth and has informed a lot of the historical aspects I've discussed so far. As a part of the acknowledgment, she discusses her settler ancestry in order to establish her relationship to the work and the area. These

statements are really impactful for the people attending these events, because many ask her to send hers when attempting to create their own.

[KIM]: You know, I feel good about disseminating [her land acknowledgment] as part of a larger conversation and actually how to do land acknowledgements, because it's not a static thing. It's an evolving thing that we need to get better at, all of us, together. So I just I consider myself like part of a larger conversation and just trying to do my due diligence according to the conversations that I've heard and the critiques that I've heard.

You can't take responsibility for something if you don't identify who you are in relationship to something. So, you know, just acknowledging that relationship and where I stand, and where I stand with in it, is the beginning of the potential of a political recognition of the problem of the issue at hand. To me, the land acknowledgement is like understanding where we stand now in terms of a decolonization process. So it's not just okay, "Well we're recognizing that these are traditional Indigenous territories." Well, where does that get us? It doesn't...it has no teeth, politically or in terms of decolonization. Like what is our intention in doing that?

We need to, to be accountable within ourselves and our organizations. And in that, yeah, decolonization process.

I asked how people respond to her land acknowledgment, and expressed that I have sometimes found it difficult to engage with some of the history especially in urban areas.

[KIM]: Like in the urban context when we talk about we're on this land... I think a lot of people have a hard time connecting like what that means to their surroundings, which is why High Park is such an interesting place. Because it's kind of like it pops out of the urban landscape as like, "Hi, we're—it's still here" I'm trying to think of how all of the

educational work that you're doing and the group is doing can also still work when we're talking about, like, we're tearing this building down to build another building. [Yes.] It's still on land and it's still like that act is an echo or more than an echo of like what colonialism is and so to continuously bring that recognition of what's happening on that is land and like the lack of consent and the lack of transparency to that process is still like embodied in the building processes, even though there's not like trees there, you know. Land is everywhere. You can't not be on land. And I think it is really interesting to stand anywhere and observe what is going on with the land in that spot, whether you're on a piece of concrete. That concrete is a displacement, just not of humans, but of critters, microorganisms...It interacts with the environment in a particular way. It absorbs sun in a particular way. It's you know, it's organizes humans in a particular way. So everything about any place in a urban setting I mean and you could do this anywhere, but we're talking about the urban setting, has so much to tell us about our relationship to land. We could just go on and on and on through the history, but also just looking at the present and who was displaced. What kind of dangers the that form of development creates for critters, for organisms, for water, for, you know, the Earth for humans like... it's a set of relationships. That's the way Indigenous knowledge looks at. It is, everything is a set of relationships, you know, one thing isn't a discrete... So you can also kind of look at it how how piece of land is being discussed, say, by developers? And whose stories are not included in that discussion? Like that's a very pared-down discussion according to a very capitalist, developmental set of priorities, and who is excused from that discussion. In those planning meetings, because I've been to them for condo developments, because I also do work with a low-income community and we're just like in the Junction and we're

surrounded by condo development. So we have been to these meetings to try to introduce other perspectives into development, and it's impossible pretty much in those planning meetings.

We have Gord Perks as our councillor and he's supposed to be one of the most Progressive counselors, and he basically will not, he intervenes on all questions coming from the public to the developers and the architects and basically doesn't make them have to be accountable to any sort of conversation other than—and basically he's like, “The planning process is the way it is. This condo is going through. Let's get this meeting over with.” And he doesn't want to have a conversation and I—you know that bothers me, because I think even if that's the case, it's really important to have these conversations, and to hold those planners and architects accountable, but I've found it absolutely impossible. You're really like having to go in there in a protest mode.

I have spoken up in those meetings alongside other community members, and the other folks in the meeting, you know immediately if you bring up anything around Indigenous land or low-income housing, like it just hangs in the air and then the next question just goes back to well... “Is this condo development going to cast shade on my backyard? What is going to be the increase in property... the increase in traffic flow? And is this building gonna be architecturally in-line with the historic, i.e. colonial aesthetic of the neighborhood?” Those are like the three main concerns that people revert to.

So even the general public who go to these meetings are not that much interested in a broader kind of conversation in my experience.

This is the crux of this project, too: how to work in this framework when in an urban area. Aside from the myth that there are insignificant numbers of Indigenous people living in urban areas—

it is of course definitely the opposite—I think a lot of the dismissal of the serious implications of the land acknowledgment come from the sense that colonialism is a past event, something that no longer really requires or can even be changed with any form of redress. The impacts of settler colonialism are on-going, whether they're seen in things such as the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls or land claims travesties like what's happening at 1492 Land Back Lane and on Wet'suwet'en territory. What's more, there are serious solutions posited by inquiries and communities alike that can make substantial changes in the lives of Indigenous people, including those who live in urban areas. So to include a discussion of settler colonialism through land acknowledgments done in urban areas is indeed relevant; I think people know this, too, because land acknowledgments are done very frequently in cities. It's now about how to really understand what these mean.

While it's true that Toronto as a city and mark on the land has irrevocably changed the land, that doesn't then lend an unshakeable futurity to the systems that built the city. We can still, and we should, call those into question.

I was curious about how the unceded nature of the Toronto Purchase could fit into unsettling the city in people's minds and potentially in the way things are done here.

[INTERVIEWER]: I'm kind of interested in the role [mentioning the Toronto Purchase in a land acknowledgment] plays in like unveiling all of those...[Yeah!]... like the capitalist realism attitude that all of this these processes tend to have. How does it do that?

[KIM]: Exactly, and I mean, I think it makes me think of something to add to my land acknowledgment. Like I can't take up like an hour with anything. (Totally can!) Yeah, [laughs] this notion that this notion that you could buy land, like that is a foreign notion

to Indigenous peoples, and it is something, like this private property piece is super problematic in terms of like Adam Smith's notion of how one acquires private property. It's sexist, it's ageist, it's ableist. It's, like, it's such a narrow conception of land according to how you can make it productive. And only if you can make it productive can you have the right to own it. And nobody else's inhabitation of the land is recognized as something to be respected, unless it's being developed in a way that makes sense to European consciousness. So, the whole lens of private property is so colonial. It's just something that can't continue to exist in my mind in terms of a decolonized society. It's a huge violence. It causes poverty. Like the way the land is organized according to private property is just like hugely displacing. All the Consciousness around, "This is my land"...

Creates a very entitled ownership mentality, which, basically to own something is not a democratic relationship. It's a relationship of slavery. It's enslaving the land, enslaving the plants, everything... if you have that notion that you own something, where does that stop? Like you own people's labor when you pay them, but you're evacuating that person's being in that relationship when you're just saying, "I pay you, so you do this." And there's no integrity, there's no autonomy, in that relationship. So whether that's... you're owning somebody's labor, or you're owning the land... the consciousness of that relationship is not respectful of beings' autonomy and integrity. I think the Toronto Purchase and just this notion of, "Yeah, well, we bought this land and therefore we can control it..." Doesn't speak to a relationship of integrity and reciprocity and acknowledgement and all of that.



In the city of Toronto having an interest in—and even need this comes from the Indigenous Affairs office—having an interest in officializing the, their control over these lands or their purchase of these lands through the deal of having paid the Mississauga, that now they recognize the Mississaugas as their treaty holders to so there—and the Mississauga are really also reinforcing that relationship to the exclusion of other nations—and you know kind of looking deeper into what, what a what the history actually is. It's not solved.

Without wading into criticism of the deal between the Mississaugas and Canada, it's important to talk about the effect that the finalization of this treaty has. Because the land has been officially absorbed into the state and is now confirmed as settler-owned, it can be “legitimately” sold, subdivided, and developed. This allows investors to more fully participate in Toronto's real estate market. But beyond this too, because I'm not sure developers were ever truly worried about Indigenous land claims due to the Canadian government's support for settler advancement, this chapter of Toronto's history, previously marred by shady map making and dyed-in-the-wool settler theft, can be closed and a new chapter of reconciliation can be opened. Some of the news coverage I can find from 2010 highlights the lukewarm response to the deal, with articles quoting people saying that there was no way to receive a better monetary offer and that the decision was met with a shrug on the part of the some Mississaugas. There is no way to compensate people for the land, cultural, spiritual, or economic loss. But, hey, the reserve did plan to use some of the money to pipe in water to serve the residents who'd been living without for years...

With the land now officially owned by Toronto, *a fair deal struck*, the idea is that we have free reign to do with it what we like. But like Kim, I think it's necessary to consider what this ownership entails.

We hear a lot about planners needing to consider the context in which they're developing by doing community consultation and getting a good feel for the area by visiting the site several times. In some ways, contextual consideration was built into the *Official Plan* as it clarifies that new development should adhere to the local character or not extend beyond certain physical boundaries. And the committee of adjustments meetings will go much more smoothly if you don't have neighbourhoods showing up to say they weren't consulted and that the new building will ruin the neighbourhood's historic character.

Aside from interventions on the part of pesky environmentalists trying to save rare species or the impossibility of building a house on a swamp, I am curious about the possibility of expanding environmental considerations into development approval processes. We discuss sunlight and shade, wind patterns and bird-deterring window glazes, but how could we take into account the site's history, quality and origin of materials used, the ethical labour practices in place, the impact on the soil and microorganisms? In other words, are there ways to not reiterate the same subjugative relationship with the land in current development processes?

There are more specific iterations of this idea: for example, how does development change when it is thought about as happening under agreements like the Two Row and Dish With One Spoon? Because the latter was not an agreement made with settlers, and we're at the state we're at in terms of appropriation and fetishization of Indigeneity, I'm not eager to say that we could use this specific agreement as the scaffolding on which development

processes are redesigned. There are other methods out there to consider. If we are working to address the truth of land acknowledgments in planning, these shifts in what we consider to be important will serve to improve material conditions of urban life.

Development in Toronto is embedded within our economic structure. Development charges represented a substantial portion of the revenues for the city budget, so there are real incentives to things getting built here. Considering the intertwining of capitalistic development and land use once again pushes to the forefront the roots of modern planning. When discussing an introduction to planning course with Kim, I referenced a few notable figures whose ideas of city-building have become foundational to planning in the West, thinking specifically of Frank Lloyd Wright, Ebenezer Howard, and Le Corbusier.

[INTER.]: We talked about like planning movements, historical planning movements. There's all these guys—there are always guys, and they're always European—who have their vision of like the perfect City and it's a never a starting City. It's a brand new thing with flat land or whatever. There's never like something they're building off of, and I think that's where a lot of the developers come from, especially in Toronto, where they're like, “You know what? I can't even begin to think through the complexity that there is another history here. I'm gonna just build my own.” And it makes so much sense, because that's the logic behind all of, all of what we're experiencing right now, but it's scary because it is this denial of previous people being there and like this ultimate like drive to Futurity. It is drive to like...[Yeah.] You know, like, “we're in here now! And maybe we're going to build this building. So it lasts for like 10 years and then those people take over.”

[KIM]: And they don't think about the disruption that construction brings. Like actually it's a little bit traumatizing to live in a city of constant construction, because I think our bodies, you know, our bodies absorb the stress of what is actually happening and it is actually a violence and even if we're in not opposed to it, we're still physiologically impacted by it, you know, and I guess maybe if we're maybe... if we love high-rises that can ameliorate some of the physical impact but you know, just like all the kicking up of dust and all the noise and just all the interruptions of like flow of our bodies through the space and just I don't know like... it's... living in Toronto as a city of constant construction I just find exhausting.

I think I overstep here, assuming that these particular planners represented the planning field in its entirety, when this is not the case, as people like Peter Marcuse suggest (check the show notes for some reading suggestions on other planning movements). I'm also pretty focused here on Western planning, and easily ignore ancient city planning worldwide, which is heading to the top of my "Things I Want To Read More About After I Graduate" list. Nonetheless, there are real influential ideas undergirding Wright's, Howard's, and Le Corbusier's visions that can be seen in Toronto's planning practice, namely that of reshaping the physical realm in order to reshape society. Critiques which point out simplicity and generalization of context-specific data have stuck, but nonetheless, ideas like Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design prevail. These three men's ideas also promoted the largescale reshaping of environments as an extension of modern values. Both the development of the Gardiner expressway and of the new City Hall in the 1960s came from this desire to build anew a place while leveling entire blocks. Although wealthier neighbourhoods are invariably immune from this fate, I, along with many

other planning scholars, would argue that revitalization fits this mold as well, an good example of which is Regent Park.

Kim suggested an architecture firm that opposes this approach to development.

[KIM]: There are these architects that I kind of read about. They're French. Vassal and Lacaton? I may have a really interesting philosophy to development, which is... They do a lot of like renovations. Sometimes like they might be asked to go in and tear down and rebuild and they just, they won't. They'll just go in and find out, like they do really extensive community consultations and they find out like really, how are the people experience who are living in that space experiencing space and then they just try to adjust the space to enhance their experience of it as opposed to just tearing down like they have this idea that we need to tear down and build something is wasteful. [Yes.] And everything that gets built is of a lesser quality of the thing that got torn down because of capitalism is always trying to cheapen its inputs and maximize its profit. So, you know, and they don't work this way and they're can spare concerned with like how much light are people getting? How much fresh air are people getting? How is this building actually functioning as an organism, you know? In a way. And they'll do very little, and sometimes they'll do a lot, but I think it's just a really interesting approach to development and design.

I want to reiterate a point that I made in the first part of this episode. I talked about listening to the world around us not because we'll gain something and because that gain is the point, but that we should listen because it's something we should do. I want to tie this to the idea that we should not be reconfiguring, reexamining, and/or reimagining planning as a potential route for decolonization because we stand to gain something from it as planners/people living in the

space, but because it is something we should do. When we reimagine planning, we can stand in the camp of being responsible to the treaties, the environment, each other, the future, everything. We should not look at this way of development as a new way to get condos built more ethically, because that means we haven't understood the point. This shift in thinking is about revealing that building condos on land in general, and especially in the way that they're built now, is not a path to the future. I'm going to be very careful in the way I word this next part, because it's coming from having been steeped in this topic for almost a year, and I know it can be taken in the absolute wrong way. But as we are thinking about our planning processes in an anti-capitalist manner that supports and upholds Indigenous sovereignty, historical presence, and ultimate claim to the land, we should not be making more or less of an effort depending on the number of Indigenous people living in the area; this is a responsibility to the relationship that everyone is involved in with the land, not because they feel some sort of guilt if they don't do it, but because it is what we are mandated to do as inhabitants of the planet.

This being said, these shifts cannot happen amongst settlers without Indigenous involvement. This is not an exercise to map out where Indigenous people and values fit in to a settler context; this is a different system that highlights the different identities and experiences in a place. I believe that decolonization is about these theoretical/mental/ethical changes, and I believe that decolonization is about the return of land.

[KIM]: This is, these are like the unfixable conundrums of a private property system.

Basically in an Indigenous worldview, you never take what you don't need. Capitalism is in the business of creating needs that we don't actually have. You know, you sell all your labor and then you shop basically as therapy, as some way to you know, comfort yourself

for your alienation. You want to get the latest newest thing, capitalism has to keep going, so that has to keep producing....I mean if we lived in a society where we just produced what we need, and we produced it well, so it didn't break... We wouldn't have to work. We just... Everything would be just about redistributing, and you know, making sure our communities that should be organized around our most vulnerable people so that we center the children the elderly, you know, any any kind of like, you know, those are the folks that should be in the middle of our communities and we just produce what we need in order to survive is communities. Not this: you have to wake up every day in a capitalist society. If you're not a plutocrat if you're not sitting on a pile of wealth and you're not in that ilk, the rest of us, we have to get up every day and sell our labor another day in order to have the right to exist at all or have the capacity to exist. It's not guaranteed to us, you know, either we work or we perish so... That's not how the planet [laughs]...that's shouldn't be our relationship to life.

[musical interlude]

I designed this land acknowledgment to look at the structural elements of settler colonialism and to consider how those play a part in locating myself.

As someone who lives on the stolen territory of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Wendat, Anishinabek, Metis, and current treaty holders the Mississaugas of the New Credit, decolonization is a current throughout all of my work. The Dish With One Spoon wampum, an agreement between the Anishinaabe and the Haudenosaunee, is a guiding principle for how I live on this land. Even though this was not an agreement that settlers were originally a part of, as residents, settlers have a responsibility to know and enact the values of the agreement in their lives. The Two Row Wampum was an agreement made between the Dutch and the

Haudenosaunee; it is therefore also important for any inhabitant. This wampum established that two cultures could coexist peacefully without interfering in each others' affairs.

The futures that these wampums sought to secure have not been upheld, either through extractive industry which threatens and destroys Indigenous communities alongside large swaths of forests, oceans, prairies, lakes, and river systems. As key elements in the colonization and establishment of the land known as Canada, settlers' transgressions of these agreements have lead to a world of extreme disparities in wealth, racism, femicide, and cultural loss for Indigenous people. The horrors of the residential school system and Sixties Scoop continue to surface as some survivors gain access to community support to help them through publicly discussing the abuse they endured. Indigenous land loss was persistent throughout the 1700s and skyrocketed in the late 1800s until the current situation, where there is now slightly more than just 0.2% of the land in the area known as Canada termed as reserve land.

This was not a mistake. This is the intent of settler colonialism: to not only fracture and extract, but to replace. Despite this, First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people remain here and thrive. The vast majority of what I read and listened to for this project was the work of Indigenous scholars, officials, and activists. The numbers of Indigenous people in academia are especially growing, but there remains work to be done, especially on the front of combatting institutional racism and shoddy land claims processes.

Land acknowledgments are about locating ourselves in the present and understanding the past, and that the events of the past have determined and continue to influence what happens now, through institutional means like policing, health care, resource and forestry management, universities, the economy, and planning. As such it may not be that planning, as a



field, can do much on the decolonization front. Land acknowledgments have the power to undo the erasure and legitimacy of the Canadian state promoted by planning. So, as planners make these statements, they can make some changes in their planning capacity to mitigate suffering incurred under the colonial elements of their field, but they must also bring these understandings outside their work if they plan to participate decolonization efforts.

Learning the things you need to know for writing a land acknowledgment takes time, but it changes the way you think about where you're at. There is immense value in understanding this history because it benefits everyone involved as treaty people.

My own ancestors played a role as settlers in Nova Scotia. On one side of my family, I am able to trace my ancestors back to their arrival in Digby, along the coast of the Bay of Fundy. Although things are murky in terms of the where and when, they were most likely homesteading settlers who have lived in the area at least since the late 1700s. Other relatives arrived from England more recently, probably in the 1900s. On the other side, my great-grandfather arrived from Norway in the late 19th century from the island of Værøy, with another great-great-grandmother coming over from Sweden in the 1800s. This side of my family settled in Western Minnesota and parts of North Dakota, attracted by the offer of farmland. I don't know what their lives exactly entailed—some relatives have put together a history that I'll read one day—but I do know that my ancestors' passage was eased by the mindsets that pushed for white supremacy, settler colonialism, and the replacement of at least the Chippewas of the Mississippi through US Cession number 357 and Mi'kmaq and nations of the Wabanaki Confederacy through the Peace and Friendship Treaty. I directly benefitted from their settlement on those lands and have continued to benefit from systems that are built on

disadvantaging Indigenous people and people of colour. I have moved a lot in my lifetime, too, having lived on the land of the Cheyenne, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, Metis, Očhéthi Šakówin (oh-shetty sha-ko-win), Apsáalooke or Crow, Salish Kootenai, Anishabek, Haundenosaunee, Huron-Wendat, and Mississaugas. These histories stretch into the past far beyond settler imaginations and far into the future. It's my intention to learn the treaties of each location I travel to in the future and to pull this mindset through all my future work, whether its in the planning field or not.

I have put a lot of resources in the episode notes for each of these episodes. This project was designed to implore settlers to think more deeply about their role as someone living in the area referred to as Canada, so while this was written from a settler perspective, it's my hope that everyone can feel welcome here and find value in some of the things I've covered. As we are each other's accomplices, we find new paths to liberation.

[...]

I just want to do a brief thank you section, because I've received a lot of love and support throughout this project. Firstly, thank you to my supervisor and advisor Traci Warkentin, as well as my second reader, Deborah McGregor, who have pushed me to think about different ways to disseminate this project so that it goes beyond the academic sphere and into the real world. Thank you to Luisa Sotomayor, who let me call her late at night on a Sunday to talk about anxiety and asking for breaks. Justin Podur also definitely deserves praise and gratitude for not only hiring me onto such a cool mapping project but for offering advice and feedback on my project when I was getting really worried near the end. And also Sarah Flicker, who steered me in the right direction very early on.

Thank you to all of the lovely people who offered their time to be interviewed by me. All of your patience around technology and rescheduling and understanding the questions underneath all my rambling made this project happen.

My friends Leah, Tibbles, and Evelyn have been very supportive and kind about meeting up, getting us groceries when we were advised to not go outside, and watching What A Girl Wants, Parallax View, and Holy Mountain with us over videocall. Also Zosia, Evan, Kate, Ian, Jasmine, Sparks, Allison, and Tacha in Montana for staying in touch and offering all kinds of love. My family has also been my cheerleaders and have listened to me several hours a week, despite our variable physical distance. And to my fiancée Caligula, without whom I would not receive tea in bed, hugs every half hour, and endless feedback and inspiration for this project.

Finally, I send my sincere gratitude to all the people whose work I have mentioned your thoughts and insights. This project was built off of generations of work and thought. Thank you.

#### *Episode 4 Notes*

Taiiako'n Historic Preservation Society: <https://taiiakon.wordpress.com/>

Books that led me to the listening exercise: Robin Wall Kimmerer's Braiding Sweetgrass

(<https://milkweed.org/book/braiding-sweetgrass>) and Gathering Moss

(<http://osupress.oregonstate.edu/book/gathering-moss>)

On learning from/in "nature":

Brody, Michael. (2005). "Learning in nature," Environmental Education Research, 11:5,

603-621, DOI: 10.1080/13504620500169809

Tuck, Eve and K. Wayne Yang. (2012). "Decolonization is not a metaphor," Decolonization:

Indigeneity, Education & Society, 1:1, 1-40.

Wolfe, Patrick. (2006). "Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native," Journal of Genocide Research, 8:4, 387-409, DOI: 10.1080/14623520601056240

Baby Point named after Jacques Baby: [http://www.babypointheritage.ca/bphistory\\_mcd2.html](http://www.babypointheritage.ca/bphistory_mcd2.html)

I was made aware of Jacques "James" Baby's slave ownership through the anonymous artist who posted signs detailing little-highlighted history of areas in Toronto, first seen here:

<https://twitter.com/IreneMooreDavi1/status/1297127704089722881>

The following links were featured on the sign on Jacques Baby:

<https://windsorstar.com/uncategorized/artists-research-francois-babys-slave-owning-history>

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/black-enslavement>

<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2020/07/01/slaveowners-swindlers-residential-school-promoters-these-are-who-torontos-streets-are-named-after.html>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/windsor-streets-named-after-slave-owners-1.5606769>

TRC Reports: <http://nctr.ca/reports.php>

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls final report: <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>

1492 Land Back Lane: <https://ca.gofundme.com/f/legal-fund-1492-land-back-lane>

Donate to Unist'ot'en Camp to support the Wet'suwet'en: <https://unistoten.camp/support-us/donate/>

“Shrugs greet historic \$145M Toronto land claim settlement”:

[https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2010/06/08/shrugs\\_greet\\_historic\\_145m\\_toronto\\_land\\_claim\\_settlement.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2010/06/08/shrugs_greet_historic_145m_toronto_land_claim_settlement.html)

It is difficult to determine exactly how much of Toronto’s budget comes from development charges, but for an example, the development charges to build a single-oriented dwelling unit add up to \$76,830. More here: <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/983a-Nov-2019-DC-and-NON-DC-rates.pdf>

It is important to note that with Bill 108, the Ford government has done away with development charges and have replaced them with “community benefits charge,” the impact of which on city budgets planners are still attempting to understand. This came into effect in the spring of 2020. (more:

<https://ontarioconstructionnews.com/toronto-city-staff-councillors-anxious-about-provincial-legislation-budget-implications-on-planning-and-infrastructure-funding/>)

Further readings on planning movements:

Fishman, R. (2016). “Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier.” In: Fainstein, S. S., & DeFilippis, J. (Eds.). (2015). Readings in planning theory. John Wiley & Sons, pp. 1-20.

Marcuse, P. (2011). “The three historic currents of city planning.” *The New Blackwell Companion to the City*, 643-655.

Friedmann, J. (1987). “Chapter 1: The Terrain of Planning Theory”. (pp. 19-48). In *Planning in the Public Domain. From knowledge to action*. Princeton University Press.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design is a philosophy that spaces can be designed to deter crime. This is a philosophy promoted by police (see PDF link under “CPTED” heading:

<http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/crimeprevention/> &

<https://www.edmontonpolice.ca/crimeprevention/communitysafety/cpted>). Instead of addressing wealth gaps, lacking social support networks, institutional oppression, and disenfranchisement of poor people, CPTED seeks to place the blame within a hypothetical part of humans that exploits and preys upon weakness. I link this to middle class anxieties around property ownership. This also works from a narrow understanding of “crime” and ignores the largest form of theft, which is wage theft (through unpaid overtime, lost breaks, etc.).

Furthermore, it ignores the “invisible” crimes which happen in areas not thought to be “crime-ridden,” such as domestic abuse, tax evasion, etc.

Before the Gardiner:

[https://www.blogto.com/city/2012/04/what\\_sunnyside\\_looked\\_like\\_before\\_the\\_gardiner\\_arrived/](https://www.blogto.com/city/2012/04/what_sunnyside_looked_like_before_the_gardiner_arrived/)

About the development of New City Hall:

[https://www.blogto.com/city/2014/03/a\\_1960s\\_toronto\\_photo\\_extravaganza/](https://www.blogto.com/city/2014/03/a_1960s_toronto_photo_extravaganza/)

Lacaton & Vassal (architecture firm): <https://www.lacatonvassal.com/publications.php>

Finding out territories of where you live: [native-land.ca](http://native-land.ca)

US-Specific cession and reservation map:

<https://usfs.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=fe311f69cb1d43558227d73bc34f3a32>

“0.2% of Canada is reserve land”: <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100034846/1100100034847>

Other relevant links not explicitly mentioned:

Some interesting historical maps of Toronto: <http://oldtorontomaps.blogspot.com/p/index-of-maps.html> & <http://oldtorontomaps.blogspot.com/2013/01/1788-mann-plan-of-torento-harbour-with.html>

Guide to Indigenous engagement (municipal councillors):

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/ontario-municipal-councillors-guide-2018/5-municipal-organization>

Meeting in the Middle—Engagement Strategy and Action Plan (co-created by SSHA and

Indigenous organizations in Toronto): <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/8eeb-SSHA-Meeting-in-the-Middle.pdf>

## *Reflection*

For my final MES project, I looked at land acknowledgments and attempted to understand first the history of the statements, then the intention behind them, ending with an examination of planners' responsibilities as land-based practitioners as laid out or suggested by the acknowledgments. This project also included an analysis of the colonial roots of planning alongside a discussion of the treaty-making process and a consideration of how planners reflect the shady history of Canada's development in their choices as planners. I ended the series by suggesting that planning as a field, in its current iteration as a tool of organization by the Canadian state, must undergo immense change in the ways it perpetuates colonization/capitalism/racism before it can be considered to have decolonizing potential. I also emphasized that planners who aspire to undermine colonialism through their work should also engage in decolonial activism.

This project took many turns. Near the mid-point of the degree, I was still planning to research green spaces/rooftop gardens, but I felt like I was awash in too much theory and was going to avoid putting the theory into practice. The idea of looking more deeply at land acknowledgments came after I watched [a video by Local Love Magazine](#) which pointed to Dupont's history as a deer path (Mills and Roque, n.d.). Understanding local streets as reference points to history was hugely impactful to my approach to urban spaces as spaces of colonization. I was reminded again of this idea after I attended a number of Committee of Adjustments meetings for classes and OCAP demonstrations, each of which began with a monotone and all-too-quick land acknowledgment. No one seemed to pay attention at these



moments; in fact, most people seemed to find that to be the perfect opportunity to shuffle some papers around.

That's not to say that I sat at rapt attention then or other times in the past. I too found the statements sterile, verging on boring, and potentially more confusing than anything. I didn't know how to put any of this information into context, so I mostly felt uncomfortable during them.

This was one large reason I designed this project the way I did: I wanted to see where other non-Indigenous people were at and confront this boredom, confusion, and discomfort head on. Having said this in the original proposal but being at the other end of the project now, I want to reiterate here that I *do not* think that the words in land acknowledgments need to be any more "jazzy" or something. I *do* think that settlers have an obligation to get more involved when performing or listening to land acknowledgments. If that involves expanding the statements (which I did for each of the land acknowledgments I put together, because I found that the historical context has fundamentally changed my work and activism going forward), I don't see how that could be harmful. There is harm, however, in believing that settlers need to be "entertained" during a land acknowledgment in order to take it seriously. Even if the statement remains the same, it is up to the settler to more deeply reflect on it and find meaningful ways to bring that truth into their own life. Regardless, there has been a dearth of meaningful action following land acknowledgments, which, as has been repeatedly noted, themselves often ring hollow. To enumerate the amount of land lost, lives taken, or to point to your surroundings as being steeped in colonial logic is not a desired route for a society ultimately intent on upholding mythologies of greatness. This skirting of responsibilities is

exemplified in the eagerness to attend to one of the *least costly* recommendations of the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Committee report. Thus it has struck me that an unspoken norm has emerged when it comes to designing and performing land acknowledgments: “just get the statements over with.”

As I believe these things, I am mindful of who I am as well. Tuck and Yang (2012, with Smith 2019), Gaztambide-Fernández (2012), and Snelgrove, Dhamoon, and Corntassel (2014) discuss settler solidarity and how these practices “run the risk of reifying (and possibly replicating) settler colonialism as well as other modes of domination” (Snelgrove *et al* 2014). Tuck and Yang’s “Decolonization is not a metaphor” (2012) explores and critiques settler approaches to decolonization, stating that they “make possible sets of evasion;” “problematically attempt to reconcile settler guilt and complicity;” and “rescue settler futurity” (1). In grounding my research and critical discussion of land acknowledgment’s impact in these works, I aimed to (re)engage settlers (myself included) with the principles of land acknowledgments that *decenter* settlers from entrenched positions of those-appealed-to and *recenter* them in complicity and responsibility.

I briefly considered interviewing both non-Indigenous people and Indigenous people, thinking that by talking to the latter, I would be avoiding any potential for amplifying the wrong voices in a conversation that is already unfairly weighed against them. But after a conversation with Dr. Flicker, I realized that the project made more sense as an opportunity to do this (re)engagement work with myself and with other settlers. It was for this reason that I decided to go the direction I did and was the reason I wanted to do interviews.

I was unable to interview as many people as planned, mostly due to the pandemic, but also because I was not able to garner a meaningful response from the alumni listserv, and my contacts at the City did not happen the way I thought they would. I ended up interviewing three students (approached because I had known them to speak about land acknowledgments in class), an activist/acquaintance (contacted because of her work on land acknowledgments), and an alumni (who responded to a call-out posted to a group gathered by then-alumni coordinator Rosanna Chowdhury). I used just three (two students and the activist) of these interviews due to the ever-growing scope of the project. I chose to do interviews in order to enact critical praxis-oriented research (CPOR; Klodawsky, Siltanen, and Andrew 2017) as a methodology, which is described as a midway point along

“a continuum that locates community-driven research at one end and scholar-driven curiosity at the other...two common features help to identify critical praxis-oriented research: explicit and intentional efforts to critically engage with and learn from both scholarly critique and on-the-ground interventions; and research practices that critically reflect on, and attempt to re-balance, power relations in the production and valuing of knowledge.” (Klodawsky *et al.* 8)

This methodology felt right for this project because of my stance as a researcher and advocate. I wanted to build into the project a critical analysis of my own role in the research and societal practice that I studied. I developed a land acknowledgment for each episode to reflect on what I’d learn from each interviewee. This also helped me figure out how to be reflexive when talking about land acknowledgments, as I heard from each interviewee (and felt it myself) that locating yourself in the statement/on the land is a large part of deeply engaging with the truth.

CPOR also guided my choice of interviewees: “a range of actors should be brought together in the research process to find ways to do research that supports common goals of knowledge production for audiences both within the academy and among larger communities

of interest” (Klodawsky *et al.* 9). I had planned to only interview non-Indigenous planning students and planners, but I realized very quickly that planners are not the only people involved in planning processes (nor are they the most important people involved, as this choice might’ve originally implied). I also was drawn to putting in much more effort in making connections with other planning students rather than current planners in order to highlight and co-learn with people who are not frequently viewed as experts as much as professional planners.

Professional planners might also not have as much experience with so-called “on-the-ground interventions,” which led me to want to interview the activist for her experience as a settler working directly on land acknowledgments and as someone who has experience with planning processes.

The alumni I interviewed, who requested to remain anonymous, has had some interesting experiences in their attempts to increase and expand the presence of land acknowledgments. They are a transit planner and have worked with Indigenous communities to develop a guide for engagement on projects that pass through or use Indigenous land. They were unsure of the status of the guide, as they left the project a few years ago, but through this discussion, I learned about the way this planner had experienced the complexities of working under Canadian planning systems on Indigenous land. I am planning to develop another episode around this interview in the future.

The interviews were recorded over video call. I prepared a transcript of the interviews and coded each by highlighting and grouping key themes of the conversation. In order to make sure that these codes were accurate and contextually-sensitive, I listened to the interviews several times. Although there was much more material gathered than used, all of the

discussions informed the way I wrote the episodes and represented the conversations. For example, there was a lot of crossover between interviewees, specifically around people's frustration that land acknowledgments are not done properly, that they're not enough, or that they're being used in place of any meaningful change that the government/settler society could enact. In order to not highlight one voice over others, I chose to discuss these shared sentiments in each episode so that they were carried through the project. The more specific emergent themes, such as historical context, policy approaches to decolonization, and capitalism, shaped each episode, and I further reflected on these themes in the land acknowledgments I put together.

CPOR also determined my choice to produce a podcast instead of a paper. On top of feeling overwhelmed at the thought of writing another long academic paper, I felt like a paper would be much more difficult to bring into the realm of "real life," where I firmly believe the discussions that took place should remain. I want it to be accessible for everyone and strive to reach others who feel the same way about the state of planning and building solidarity nationally/internationally. The podcast is locally hosted on Anchor and is available on podcast aggregator apps. I am hopeful that the project will continue past MES and change over time. I am eager to translate what I've learned in this project into my work as an activist.

At the end of this project, I am more aware of "place" than ever. Land acknowledgments are place-based announcements which draw audiences into thinking about the spaces they share with others. The work of Barnd (2017), Larsen and Johnson (2017), Perry, Morton, and Jones (2013), and Calder (2013) informed my understanding of space and place as both contextual cues and ontological guides, especially in the discussion of "place names" (Dundas,

Toronto, etc.). Larsen and Johnson (2017) state, "Place teaches coexistence, not consensus...Place is a 'scale of relation' that 'encompasses the infinite within the immediate,' and it is in these messy, agonistic scales of coexistence that [communities can] find themselves" (9, quoting Howitt 2002, 302). Places are not equalizers, nor do they affect each inhabitant the same way. By understanding the "infinite" individual experiences within a community, "coexistence" becomes a show of respect, a central tenet of Indigenous-settler relations. "Native space must be constantly recognized and made viable through daily practises" (Barnd 15, 2017) so that it is not subsumed into the Canadian hegemony. In reciting land acknowledgments, I believe that settlers can participate in the disruption of hegemony, and planners can approach their work more consciously and ethically.

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