UNSETTLING MOVEMENTS:
DECOLONIZING NON-INDIGENOUS RADICAL STRUGGLES IN
SETTLER COLONIAL STATES

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ABSTRACT

Recent decades have seen a rise in Indigenous resistance to dispossession by the settler colonial state and resurgence in culture, traditions, languages and forms of governance. These processes have had a profound effect on the politics and principles of a growing current of non-Indigenous and settler activists in Canada and the United States. Coming out of Black and women of colour anti-racist feminism, migrant justice, anti-capitalist, queer/trans*, anarchist, abolitionist and other anti-authoritarian political movements, this emerging decolonial politics has had a profound impact on the strategies, tactics, and goals of social movements. Based on fifty-one in-depth interviews with organizers in nine cities within the Canadian and U.S. settler states as well as ethnographic and historical research, this dissertation grapples with the fluid and transformative principles of decolonization that are re-structuring social movement politics and practice. It also explores the historical trajectories that help align anti-authoritarian movements towards a politics of decolonization. Decolonization, I argue must be foundational to liberation in settler states, although one's positionality shifts or changes one's responsibilities to this process. This is particularly important considering how nationalism, sovereignty, and indigeneity are understood within a settler politics of decolonial solidarity. Finally, I challenge the settler colonial logics that underlie the desire to reclaim the commons in hopes of putting forward new pre-figurative possibilities that might help us in achieving decolonial futures.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Most of this dissertation was written in the city of Toronto, the traditional and unceded territories of the Huron-Wyendot, Neutral, Haudenosaunee, and Michi Saagig Anishinaabeg peoples. This city, the one I call home, has been and continues to be a shared and contested space and though I know very little about the relationships that existed upon these lands prior to European colonization, I recognize that these relationships are palimpsest in movements and encounters that shape the city today. These relationships flow through the Rouge, the Don, the Humber, and the Credit rivers, as well as all the other waterways buried deep below the concrete; they warp and bend city streets like Davenport Avenue that have been used for thousands of years as lake-side trading and travelling routes before Europeans filled in parts of Lake Ontario to claim even more territory; they creep along the train tracks where worn out graffiti calls out "This is Indian Land" and "Free Shawn Brant"; and they act as a great lesson of how we can come together to create a shared space of belonging should we choose to listen to these teachings. I hope that this dissertation is an acknowledgement of the need to re-generate and foster these relationships here in Toronto and throughout Turtle Island. In the course of doing this research I travelled through Haudenosaunee, Algonquin, Anishinaabeg, Métis, Sto:lo, Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh, Squamish, Saanich, Lekwungen, WSÁNEĆ, Ohlone, and Lenape territories and have been thankful to meet and talk with many people seeking to foster relationships of mutuality and accountability between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in all of these places.

I want to acknowledge and speak briefly about my own history and identity, at least as I understand it today. I grew up in a working class household in the poor post-

industrial city of Welland, Ontario. Welland is a city that straddles the settler-state-imposed border between Canada and the United States and one that emerged from the construction of the Welland canal as a shipping channel that connects Lake Ontario with Lake Erie. My father's parents followed the construction of the canal from the towns of Robertsonville and Gaspé in Québec and are the descendants of early French/Acadian settlers. My mother's parents were drawn to the Niagara region later as part of the wave of working people moving off farms and out of the mines into the factories of what we now call "the rust belt". My grandfather is a Polish migrant, who after World War II was unable to return to his family because he had fought for the British Army and Poland was now under Soviet control. Britain did not want to give Polish veterans immigration status and my grandfather along with five thousand others were sent to Canada as part of the Polish Resettlement Act of 1947 where he worked for many years in the mines of Noranda, Québec before migrating south to the great lakes region in order to work in the steel plants of southern Ontario. My grandmother's family is from Sturgeon Falls, Ontario where they lived as miners, hunters, and farmers.

My grandmother was of mixed ethnic origin and I have been told many different interpretations of what that mix might be, but most often it includes some combination of French, Spanish, English, and unspecified "Native". Similarly, my knowledge of my father's family comes from oral stories told by various family members who assert conflicting and contradictory stories about whether or not our French Canadian/Acadian family is mixed with Mohawk and/or Mi'kmaq ancestry. Given my understanding of the erasures of Indigeneity through settler colonial practices of elimination and the long history of settlers "playing Indian" (in the words of Philip J. Deloria), I am often

conflicted in how to think about and be responsible to identity. This is made more complex by the structures of capitalism and heteropatriarchy[1] that have generally broken up my ties with blood relations following my father's courageous decision to come out of the closet in the late 1990s and live as an openly gay man. I have been helped to think through some of these complexities by a number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous elders and mentors, and while I continue to delve deeper into my own family origins and stories as best as I can, I believe it is important to recognize and acknowledge my positionality as the descendant of predominantly poor white settlers. Nonetheless, as a queer-identified person, I also understand the importance of eschewing static conceptions of identity and believe that one's identity must be tied to the relationships, responsibilities, and histories that position you in the world. In this respect it has been important for me to learn more about my family history and try to piece together an understanding of how colonization has shaped my lived reality. For me, this includes being complicit in and benefitting from the structures of white supremacy, settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy – even if some of the stories of our mixed ancestry prove to be true.

Writing this dissertation has been a humbling, healing, and transformative experience. The desire to undertake this research is rooted in my participation in migrant justice, anti-capitalist, queer, and anti-colonial/Indigenous solidarity movements in the city of Toronto over the past decade. The questions that we faced as we tried to negotiate

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[1] Indigenous feminist scholars Arvin, Tuck & Morrill (2013) define heteropatriarchy in relation to heteropaternalism as structuring familial, community and state practices. They define heteropatriarchy as "the social systems in which heterosexuality and patriarchy are perceived as normal and natural, and in which other configurations are perceived as abnormal, aberrant, and abhorrent." They define heteropaternalism as "the presumption that heteropatriarchal nuclear-domestic arrangements, in which the father is both center and leader/boss, should serve as the model for social arrangements of the state and its institutions" (13).

what it meant to engage in decolonizing processes and practices within our myriad of anti-authoritarian movements was shaped primarily by the relationships that we forged on the streets, in our communities, during grassroots educational events, and in support of Indigenous practices of decolonization and resurgence (in the multiple forms that this takes place). This dissertation draws from those experiences and from the stories and lessons graciously shared with me by those I interviewed. We discussed many limitations, contradictions, failures, and struggles as to what it means to practice a decolonial politics as non-Indigenous peoples and some of those are unresolved within this dissertation. Nonetheless, the collective contributions of the many movement participants in this research have enriched it and given it significant meaning and whatever errors or weaknesses this project has are my responsibility.

Let me begin by thanking some of the folks that I consider to be movement Elders and mentors because they have had a profound impact on my understanding of what it means to struggle for liberation, practice solidarity, and be committed to processes of decolonization. Thank you to: Zainab Amadahy, Lee Maracle, Bonita Lawrence, Judy DaSilva, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, Amparo Torres, Gary Freeman, Natercia Coelho, Judy Rebick, Dieter Misgeld, Zahir Ofuq, John Clarke, Anna Willats, Gaetan Heroux, Matthew Behrens, David McNally, and Frank Showler. I also want to recognize Theresa McCarthy who as a sessional instructor at the University of Waterloo during my undergraduate degree, helped me along the pathway to decolonization through a pedagogical approach that completely shifted my way of thinking and being in this world.

Significantly, this dissertation would not have been possible without the collaboration, sharing, and ongoing organizing of all the folks I had the pleasure of

interviewing: Syed Hussan, Leah Henderson, Greg Macdougall, Sharrae Lyon, Mo Woolnough, Judy Rebick, Luam Kidane, Kim Katrin Milan, Thor Aikenhead, Kate Sjoberg, Michael Welch, Stephane McLachlan, Jarvis Brownlie, Alon Weinberg, Alex Paterson, Peter Kulchyski, Isaac Oommen, Hannah Lewis, Robyn Heaslip, Maryam Adrangi, Anthony Meza-Wilson, Ananda Lee Tan, Teresa Diewert, Annie Morgan Banks, Dylan Cooke, Clare Bayard, Luke Newton, Dixie Pauline, Ariel Luckey, Hilary Moore, Li Morales, Essex Lordes, Sarita Ahooja, Jaggi Singh, Cleve Higgins, Nora Butler Burke, Mostafa Henaway, Samir Shaheen-Hussain, Fred Burrill, Maia Ramnath, Lida Shao, Demelza Champagne, Che Gossett, Hannah Jones, Alexa Ross, Sachie Hopkins Hayakawa, Dinah DeWald, Zein Nakhoda, Jody Dodd, Leah Girardo, and Daniel Hunter. (Unless otherwise noted, comments from these individuals in the following pages are based on our recorded conversations. A complete listing of these interviews is in the bibliography.) I also wish to acknowledge the conversations I had with Melanie Cervantes, Dan Vea, and Brigette DePape and although I did not record formal interviews with them, their thoughts and experiences had a profound impact on me during the writing of this dissertation.

I tend to prefer doing "behind the scenes" work as an organizer as I am generally shy and awkward around new people so I benefitted greatly from the encouragement, advice and support of friends and comrades who helped introduce me to people to interview, find me places to stay, mentor me through the dissertation process, and give me a sense of the recent history of struggle in all the cities in which I conducted interviews. Those peoples include: Sharmeen Khan, Chris Dixon, Dave Vasey, Jan Braun, Irina Ceric, Mac Scott, Ryan Duplassie, Dan Berger, David Hugill, Nate Prier and

Chak, Jenny See-Yan Chan, Karl Gardner, Annelies Cooper, Devin Clancy, Ciarán Breen, Karen Cocq, David Moffette, Río Rodriguez, Aruna Boodram, Edward Hon-Sing Wong, Anabel Khoo, Tom Keefer, Cera Yiu, Lindsay Hart, Heather Hax, Aaron Lakoff, Renee Nadeau, Jessica Cook, Sarah Vance, Aliya Amarshi, Vino Shanmuganathan, Amanda Parris, Lauren Pragg, Nanky Rai, Alison Thomson, Farshad Azadian, Corey Snelgrove, Sheila Hewlett, Ben Peto, Kathryn Gwun-Yeen Lennon, Bader Takriti, Butterfly (Sabrina Gopaul), Victoria Barnett, Aman Sium, Chris Ramsaroop, Tzazná Miranda Leal, Yen Chu, Ninoondawah Richard, Shawn Brant, Nandita Sharma, Cynthia Wright, Nausheen Quayyum, Rafeef Ziadah, Nahed Mansour, Darius Mirshahi, Sakura Saunders, and Rosina Kazi.

Given the long-term isolation and constant self-doubt of academic life, I was happy to have received important advice and support at radical and academic conferences and within radical and academic journals where I shared parts of my dissertation. This includes: the Reclaiming the Anarchist Tradition gathering in Baltimore in 2010, the American Sociological Association conference in Las Vegas in 2011, the Political Studies Association International conference in Belfast in 2012, the Canadian Sociological Association conference in Waterloo in 2012, the North American Anarchist Studies Network conference in New Orleans in 2013, the Strategies of Critique – Decolonizing Anti-Racism conference in Toronto in 2014, the Western Political Science Association's Abolition and Decolonial conference in Las Vegas in 2015, and the Critical Ethnic Studies conference in Toronto 2015. I want to give special thanks to Luin Goldring and Patricia Landolt for inviting me and advocating for the inclusion of an early iteration of my work on migrant justice movements and decolonization in their edited

I am fortunate to have open-minded and infinitely supportive parents who have stuck with me as I have abandoned a career path in accounting, committed to radical and anti-authoritarian movements, and pursued careers in community work, social services, and now academia. My mother Sylvia Tomasic has shown me the importance of perseverance, hard work, and commitment to your family and loved ones. My step-father John Tomasic has pushed me to hone my arguments, write clearly, and to avoid hyperbole. My father Gerry Fortier has taught me the importance of being yourself, of loving deeply, and of being courageous in the face of your fears. My step-father David Mitchell has taught me the importance of collective organizing and to stand up for what is right. My sisters Jillian and Rachel and my brother Jacob all continue to be inspirations to me on how to live a good life and treat people with kindness and humility. My dziadek Zdzislaw Konecki taught me how to throw a fastball and how to organize and be organized (a skill that has helped me more in movement work than many others). My grandmother Rachel Konecki, taught me about relationality and decolonial love before I had the language to name it.

Finally, I owe a special debt of gratitude to Jenny See-Yan Chan. Perhaps I would not believe that other worlds could possibly exist if I had not met her. She has inspired me to not only dream of those worlds, but has pushed me to make them into a reality. She has taught me to communicate my fears and desires, pushed me to work on identifying and challenging my own practices of racism, patriarchy and misogyny, been patient with me as I worked through this challenging project over seven long years, and continues to teach me about what love is and what it could become. I don't know what kind of magic was behind lining up the dimensions of time-space so that we could exist on this narrow

plane together, but I am thankful for every quirk and quark of spacetime that it has brought us.

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INTRODUCTION

"If non-indigenous readers are capable of listening, they will learn from these shared words, and they will discover that while we are envisioning a new relationship between Onkwehonwe and the land, we are at the same time offering a decolonized alternative to the Settler society by inviting them to share our vision of respect and peaceful coexistence. The non-indigenous will be shown a new path and offered the chance to join in a renewed relationship between the peoples and places of this land, which we occupy together."

– Taiaiake Alfred

In a 2004 address at an event organized in support of the Kanehsata:ke Mohawk community by the Indigenous Peoples' Solidarity Network in Montréal, one of the collective's co-founders, Nora Butler Burke, asserted that "a decolonisation movement cannot be comprised solely of solidarity and support for Indigenous peoples' sovereignty and self-determination. If we are in support of self-determination, we too need to be self determining...A movement for decolonisation must be premised on a parallel process of self-determination" (Burke 2004:4). In this statement, Burke puts her finger on the pulse of a problematic that has captured the attention of a growing segment of social movement organizers in Canada and the United States. Namely, what does a politics and practice of decolonization look like for non-Indigenous peoples seeking to resist the state and support struggles for Indigenous self-determination?

This question is at the heart of this dissertation. Drawing on interviews conducted with fifty-one leading anti-authoritarian[2] activists in nine urban centres in Canada and the United States, I analyze the shift in politics, practices, and cultures of social movements as they develop relationships of solidarity with Indigenous struggles for sovereignty and

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[2] Dixon uses the term "anti-authoritarian" to describes social movement groups that share four core principles: refusing exploitation and oppression, developing new social relations, linking struggles and visions, and grassroots non-hierarchical organising. He acknowledges in his work that the naming of this current as "anti-authoritarian" is more for practicality purposes and that among activists within the current there are various names and definitions given to how they organize. Many may not even identify with this label, but would concur that their organizing work shares the core principles Dixon outlines above.

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self-determination. The overarching thesis of this dissertation is that in developing these relationships of sustained solidarity with Indigenous movements, anti-authoritarian activists are forced to re-consider their understandings of colonization/decolonization, nationalism, sovereignty, indigeneity, the commons, and the state in their political analysis, grassroots campaigns, and personal relationships.

This research project explores how the practices of Indigenous decolonization and resurgence influence urban social movements and transform their political frameworks. It builds on recent scholarship tracing the genealogies of anti-authoritarian currents within contemporary social movements (Dixon 2014; Day 2005; Walia 2013; Olson 2004; Graeber 2009; Conway 2004). Such currents have their roots in multiple theoretical frameworks and political experiences in the Canadian and U.S. settler states. Anarchist movements, women of colour feminisms, radical queer politics, environmental justice groups, Black liberation movements, anti-colonial struggles, and other anti-capitalist and anti-oppressive frameworks have converged, overlapped, and challenged each other in ways that have fundamentally altered their strategies, goals and tactics.

These events take place at an important historical conjuncture. Over the last twenty years, at least since the 1994 Zapatista uprising against the North American Free Trade Agreement, we have seen significant interactions between anti-capitalist, anti-colonial, and anti-state struggles throughout the world (McNally 2006). These interactions have led to a greater focus on pluralism as a liberatory strategy coupled with a widely shared desire for more popular and direct forms of democracy, and a critique of the multiple forms and structures of authoritarianism emanating from state, capitalist, and bureaucratic leftist institutions (Conway & Singh 2011). Conway & Singh (2011) argue

that the Zapatistas and other movements espousing a pluralistic conception of liberation (a world where many worlds are possible), are "struggles posed against the authoritarian imposition of neoliberal globalization on every society in the world and against the new relations of imperialism it enacts" (689). This moment of neoliberal austerity occurs concurrently with a drive led by the US and other Western nations to export or impose liberal democracy as the only legitimate mode of governance.

Movements in the West seeking to re-imagine or re-claim other forms of democracy while resisting austerity and neoliberalism (i.e. the Indignados in Spain, the student movements in Quebec and the UK, and the Occupy movements in the U.S.) have often remained constrained in their political visions by the limits of Western modernity (Benhabib 2002; Graeber 2013). Duncan Ivison (2010) argues that the problem with these alternative "deliberative" approaches to democracy is that they face a crisis of legitimacy when applied to colonial contexts and as Coulthard (2014) reinforces, *this is especially so in settler colonial contexts*. Through the interrelationships developed between anti-authoritarian movements against neoliberalism and Indigenous struggles for sovereignty, autonomy, and self-determination, non-Indigenous activists within settler states have been forced to challenge the Western conceptions of sovereignty and nationhood that underlie their politics.

Drawing on the work of Black liberation scholar Joy James (2013), Martineau & Ritskes (2014) argue "the prison cell" and "the reservation," as spaces of confinement within colonial geographies, lead towards the creation of liminal spaces of fugitivity that are part of a decolonial trajectory towards freedom. In other words, Black and Indigenous liberation movements serve as an important departure from struggles against

marginalization within dominant society and towards the fostering of self-determination based on a radical relationality not confined by settler colonial logics or the politics of liberal multicultural recognition. These fugitive knowledges and geographies have never been completely conquered by colonialism and their place-based logics are irreducible to capital and imperial globality (Escobar 2004).

In building relationships of solidarity with Indigenous activists and through their engagement with a growing body of Indigenous scholarship (Alfred 2005; Simpson 2011; Hall 2005; Byrd 2011; Coulthard 2014), non-Indigenous activists within the anti-authoritarian current are seeking to transform their struggles in hopes of achieving pathways toward a shared decolonial future. These attempts at practicing and fostering decolonizing relationships are important because they explore what liberation might look like outside of the logics and territorial bounds of settler colonialism and the settler colonial state. But these processes are also significant because they are constitutive of another politics, one that situates the multiplicity of our personal experiences in the long history of colonialism and domination.

The central argument of this dissertation, that decolonization is not only different from other forms of liberatory politics in settler colonial states but is foundational to their success, began to crystallize for me during my experience as a member and organizer with the migrant justice collective No One Is Illegal-Toronto. This became all the more apparent as I delved through the hundreds of pages of transcripts from my interviews with activists from a broad range of movements reflecting on our politics and practices. During the writing of this dissertation, I also witnessed the awakening of the Idle No More movement and the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's

Report. These events seemed to bring many of the lessons being learned among a small segment of the radical left to mainstream settler society. The theoretical and political analysis herein is a reflection of these conversations and experiences, and hopefully of an emerging decolonial praxis among non-Indigenous peoples in Canada and the United States.

Although this is a doctoral dissertation, the text is written with a much broader audience in mind. I attempt to write for those activists and organizers who have contributed to this research and the many others who are part of our movements. This work is intentionally descriptive, theoretical, and exploratory in recognition of the emergent nature of the analysis and practices of decolonization among non-Indigenous anti-authoritarians. Herein, I seek to draw readers into some of the many important conversations taking place between social movement organizers on what it means to practice a decolonial politics as non-Indigenous peoples in settler colonial states. These conversations are passionate, vulnerable, contradictory, affirming, and at times they are at odds with each other. In my attempt to weave them into a coherent text, I have taken care to ensure that a breadth of perspectives is represented. This is also an academic work and as such I have sought to situate these discussions in the realm of social theory. Specifically, this dissertation contributes to the debates around nationalism, sovereignty, liberation, and the gaining of the commons in political theory and social movement studies. I offer this work as a contribution to the growing field of research emerging out of interactions between Indigenous theory, social movement theory, and settler colonial studies.

This dissertation is organized into three parts. The first two chapters (1,2) set the

context for the analysis by presenting my methodological approach and situating the research historically. The next two chapters (3,4) explore the theoretical question of post-state sovereignty and nationalism without the state, particularly how Indigenous sovereignty movements and urban non-Indigenous anti-authoritarian activists negotiate the contradictions inherent in seeking to create autonomous social space within the context of settler colonialism. The final two chapters (5,6) deal with the challenges of putting these theories into action and traces the turn towards emotional, material, spiritual, and intellectual decolonization among participants in the anti-authoritarian current of today's social movements.

In chapter one, I situate myself within the movements that I seek to study and consider the ethical and methodological questions that emerged during the research process. I begin this chapter by considering some of the common methodological approaches used by activist-scholars to conduct research with social movements (ethnography, feminist standpoint theory, grounded theory, social movement theory) and show their limitations for scholars seeking to engage in decolonizing their methodological process. Drawing on the work of Indigenous scholars Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Margaret Kovach, and Audra Simpson I argue for the integration of Indigenous theory and research methodologies in the construction of all social movement research that takes place in settler colonial states like Canada and the United States. Additionally, this chapter draws on the work of Bevington & Dixon to argue for a "movement-relevant" and "movement-generated" approach to the study of social movements. This means developing a conscious and deliberate process of constructing a research project that is driven by the questions emerging out of and embedded within movements with

whom the researcher has a longstanding relationship. With these methodological approaches identified, I conclude the chapter with a discussion of some of the key questions that emerged during the research process.

At the forefront was the question of how to study non-Indigenous peoples' engagement with the processes of decolonization when they come from multiple identities and experience varying degrees of belonging within the settler state. Are all non-Indigenous peoples settlers? Lowman & Barker (2015) suggest that they are. They argue, "Settler Canadian identity is entangled both historically and in the present with the process of settler colonization, the means through which our state and nation have wrested their land base from Indigenous peoples" (1). Yet, it is also critical to account for the many different histories and identities produced in the settler colonial process. I find the central thesis of Lowman & Barker's work compelling: that the construction of "Settler" as an identity should mirror the construction of "Indigenous" as "a broad collective of peoples with commonalities through particular connections to land and place" (1). However, our connections to land and place are complicated by the structures of heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, imperialism, and the capitalist world system which position us differently within the structures of settler colonialism as enacted through the settler state and settler society. In this section, I explore some of the tensions I dealt with in trying to set the methodological parameters of who would be invited to participate in this study. I also discuss how these parameters led to a number of unforeseen questions regarding who was included and excluded from my research, notably the paucity of urban Indigenous activist voices.

In chapter two, I historically situate the anti-authoritarian social movements that

form the core of this research study by examining the cultural, political, and social trajectories that have informed these movements in their turn towards processes of decolonization. This chapter takes a critical look at the history of radical left movements and their reliance on settler colonial logics in their struggles for social gains in the early colonial period up to the present in both Canada and the United States. It also draws on the contemporary history of Indigenous resistance to colonialism to highlight key events and organizations that have shaped the growing relationships of solidarity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists over the last decade.

The current period of relationship building between Indigenous struggles and anti-authoritarian social movements while nascent and flawed, represents the potential for an important shift away from settler colonial logics and portends the possibilities for alliances between Indigenous peoples, white settlers, Black people, and people of colour; alliances that acknowledge the multiple pillars that maintain the structures of power within settler states. I trace this engagement with decolonial politics through four key social movement trajectories: (1) Black feminist movements and women of colour anti-racist feminism; (2) anti-colonial solidarity; (3) anti-capitalism/global justice; (4) and environmental justice activism. In doing so, this chapter works to help readers situate the political conversations taking place in my dissertation in a historical context.

In chapter three I draw on the discussions and debates taking place around the concepts of sovereignty, (de)colonization, nationhood, (im)migration and belonging among anti-authoritarian activists to suggest that decolonization must be foundational to all struggles for liberation within settler colonial states like Canada and the United States. This chapter intervenes in the debate between Lawrence & Dua (2005) and Sharma &

Wright (2009) to suggest that activists within the anti-authoritarian current see Indigenous decolonization as being neither nationalist nor globalist, but rather as reconstitutions of nationhood that do not subsume the nation to the state. In this chapter, I focus on the challenges confronting non-Indigenous movements to situate this decolonial politics as foundational to their political struggles without engaging in essentialism or appropriation. In taking this challenge, these activists are forced to interrogate the ways in which their individual and collective positionalities and relationships to the processes of settler colonialism shifts or changes their roles and responsibilities in decolonial struggles. In coming to see Indigenous decolonization as foundational to their own struggles, they are not seeking admission into Indigenous nations as much as they are attempting to negotiate relationships of co-existence with Indigenous peoples outside of the settler colonial logics of the state.

Chapter four builds on the argument that decolonization is foundational to social movement struggles. Through a careful deconstruction of our understandings of nationhood, sovereignty, and indigeneity, I argue that the task of decolonization must be intrinsic to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples' movements because our struggles are linked through the crisscrossing webs of domination and exploitation predicated on power structures that secure not simply the state, *but the settler colonial state*. In this chapter I argue that the affinities between Indigenous movements for decolonization and anti-authoritarian social movements are forged through a shared desire for liberation not beholden to state structures. Drawing on the work of Kevin Bruyneel (2007) who describes assertions of Indigenous nationhood as "a third space of

sovereignty,"[3] I argue that for decolonial anti-state politics to emerge among anti-authoritarian movements they must push against and beyond their own complicity in the structures and social relations of settler colonialism.

I present three key ways that non-Indigenous activists are grappling with these challenges. First, I analyze how anti-authoritarians negotiate an anti-state politics that situates Indigenous sovereignty as a liminal space for organizing new social relations outside of the structure of the nation-state. I ground this assertion in key examples derived from my interviews and ethnographic research. For instance, in discussing how activists seek to make decolonization foundational to their struggles within and against the state, I draw on the experiences emerging out of the Oshkimaadziig Unity Camp where Anishinabek and urban non-Indigenous activists have attempted to negotiate relationships of solidarity at this Indigenous land reclamation site outside of the city of Toronto. I argue that in collaborating to build structures at the camp, fundraising to support the reclamation, and participating in educational workshops on the topics of land-based traditions and cultures, Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists work to create a space where decolonial futures can exist outside of the state and to renew longstanding treaty relationships. To further elaborate the importance of treaty relationships to relationships of solidarity, I describe how some activists within the anti-authoritarian current have sought to transform their political practice to be accountable to their responsibilities as articulated in treaties like the Two Row Wampum that guides

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[3] Bruyneel (2007) explains the "third space of sovereignty" as the process by which: "[I]ndigenous political actors work across American spatial and temporal boundaries, demanding rights and resources from the liberal democratic settler- state while also challenging the imposition of colonial rule on their lives. This resistance engenders ... a "third space of sovereignty" that resides neither simply inside nor outside the American political system but rather exists on these very boundaries, exposing both the practices and the contingencies of American colonial rule"(xvii).

relationships between Haudenousanee peoples and settler society. I show how anti-authoritarians adapt their political practice to negotiate not only the power structures of capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and white supremacy that maintain control within the state, but also the settler colonial structures that are foundational to settler state sovereignty.

Second, I show how activists in the anti-authoritarian current attempt to negotiate pathways to decolonization mediated by their multiple positionalities in relation to the structure of settler colonialism. Drawing on examples emerging from the work of No One Is Illegal and Black Lives Matter, I suggest that the responsibilities of Black peoples and other people of colour to decolonial relationships are different than those of white settlers because their sense of belonging in settler society is mediated by the structures of white supremacy and anti-Black racism. The adaptations of No One Is Illegal's "Status for All" campaign is used as an example of how migrant justice organizers have sought to re-imagine their political struggles against deportations through a framework that seeks to align with Indigenous assertions of sovereignty and nationhood. Similarly, I show recent work to build solidarity between Black Lives Matter and Indigenous sovereignty movements focuses on the interconnections of white supremacy and settler colonialism that links their struggles for liberation.

Finally, this chapter considers how the incommensurability between anti-authoritarian struggles and those for Indigenous decolonization can be negotiated through an engagement with Indigenous understandings of nationhood and sovereignty that centres a relational worldview grounded in Indigenous cosmologies and place-based responsibilities. By engaging with the multiple conceptions of sovereignty and nationhood that emerge through a relational worldview, this chapter seeks to push the

boundaries of both materialist and identity politics in order to propose a politics of collective liberation suited to struggles in settler colonial states like Canada and the United States.

Chapter five explores some of the ways that activists within the anti-authoritarian current are seeking to transform their political analysis and practice by making decolonization foundational to their struggles. What are the responsibilities incumbent upon non-Indigenous peoples seeking to build relations of solidarity and peaceful co-existence with Indigenous peoples? How do the settler colonial logics that permeate radical movements make these struggles incommensurable with the third spaces of sovereignty opened by Indigenous assertions of nationhood? Drawing on the experiences of my interview participants in the Occupy movements that took place in their respective cities (among other struggles), I investigate the contradictions inherent in movements seeking to "reclaim the commons" within a settler colonial context. The reclamation of the commons has appeared as a core goal of anti-authoritarian movements opposing neoliberal austerity and the increasing authoritarianism of the state. I argue that the goal to (re)claim the commons is both extremely promising and rife with contradictions in the context of seeking to re-imagine democracy without fundamentally challenging the logics of settler colonialism. I locate contemporary anti-authoritarian movements in the long history of settler struggles for the commons in North America and discuss the relationship between these campaigns and the dispossession, genocide, and displacement of Indigenous peoples. Since the historical process of proletarianization disconnected people from land-based relationships while also displacing or re-settling them through the colonial process; class struggle must encompass decolonization; and decolonization must

be more than class struggle. I argue that decolonization must be the culmination of material, spiritual, emotional, and intellectual processes that redefine our relationships to the land and to Indigenous peoples in a reciprocal and consensual manner.

After assessing this history, I investigate Sharma & Wright's (2009) claim that decolonization can only happen through the seeking of a global commons and suggest that such a political goal fails to properly consider the context of settler colonialism. In the final section of this chapter I argue that the struggle to *reclaim the commons* should give way to a struggle to *decolonize the commons* that transforms settler relationships with the land, Indigenous peoples, and with each other. Rather than see the commons as an object of ownership (even if it is common ownership) of land, air, resources that are "empty" for settlers to reclaim, I argue that a decolonial commons must fundamentally re-orient our relationships to the territories on which we live.

Chapter six serves as a conclusion to the dissertation. It is here where I explore what these material, spiritual, emotional, and intellectual processes of decolonization look like in theory and practice. In seeking to negotiate the incommensurabilities inherent in the (re)clamation of the commons by non-Indigenous activists and assertions of sovereignty by Indigenous movements, I introduce Harney & Moten's (2013) concept of the undercommons as a political space that resists both the process of enclosure and the process of settlement. I explain that to struggle for the undercommons requires that activists in the anti-authoritarian current destabilize their intellectual, affective, spiritual, and material commitments to the power relations of white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and settler colonialism. In doing so, activists become unhinged from the logics of settler colonialism and are better able to learn from the place-based knowledges being shared

with them by activists within Indigenous movements for decolonization and resurgence. By refusing both the enclosure of the commons and the process of claiming land and territories through settlement, non-Indigenous people might abandon the territorial bounds that constrain their political struggles and can more fully participate in liberation on Turtle Island.

I write this dissertation with a great sense of humility and recognize that the discussions and debates presented in this work have been filtered through my own experiences and political lens. Dixon (2014) warns of the tendency for researchers to study social movements as objects in order to prove or advance their specific theories and I have worked hard to ensure that the discussions taking place in this dissertation are multiplicitous and responsible to the movements within which they are bubbling. I am also keenly aware of the limitations of a dissertation as a static document that attempts to study dynamic social movements in time and space. As an attempt to explain and situate a multitude of movement politics and practices that are consistently changing and developing, this dissertation cannot capture the true breadth and depth that permeates the conversations, conflicts, relationships, and actions experienced by organizers on a day-to-day basis. Thus, I offer this dissertation as an attempt to contribute a small piece to these larger fluid conversations in hopes that it is seen as useful to the many folks asking similar questions. This, to me, is an important part of the process of unsettling movements.

CHAPTER ONE
Decolonizing Methodologies/Decolonizing Movements

"The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world's colonized peoples."
– Linda Tuhiwai Smith

Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith in her seminal work *Decolonizing Methodologie*s mindfully articulates, "Decolonization is a process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels. For researchers, one of those levels is concerned with having a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values which inform research practices" (Smith 1999: 20). Although there has been significant strides made among critical scholars who have resisted colonialist assumptions in the academy, most research in the social sciences (even critical sociological research) continues to be structured by the limits of Western ontologies that delegitimize Indigenous ways of being and knowing (Hunt 2013). This means that Indigenous peoples, including Indigenous social movements, are often studied in the academy through a lens that makes them perceptible or legible to scholars who are thinking about the world exclusively through Western ways of knowing. As Kanienkehaka scholar Audra Simpson (2014) explains, this "historical perceptibility was used, and is still used, to *claim*, to define capacities for self-rule, to apportion social and political possibilities, to, in effect, empower and disempower Indigenous peoples in the present" (100). Although Simpson (2014) speaks most forcefully about resisting Western ontological hegemony within the discipline of anthropology, Indigenous and anti-colonial scholars have similarly challenged the foundations of other social scientific disciplines, including sociology (Smith 1999; Go 2014), geography (Hunt 2013), critical race studies (Lawrence and Dua 2005; Tuck and Wang 2012) and political science (Coulthard 2014).

Smith's (1999) approach to decolonizing methodologies challenges the epistemologies that underlie Western social science. As Smith suggests, these epistemologies are rooted in Enlightenment conceptions of time/space, history, the representation of self and of "the Other" with the express interest in valuing Western ways of knowing over all others. She asserts, "The production of knowledge, new knowledge and transformed 'old' knowledge, ideas about the nature of knowledge and the validity of specific forms of knowledge, became as much commodities of colonial exploitation as other natural resources" (59). Building on Edward Said's notion of 'positional superiority', Smith argues that like land, raw materials, and human labour, knowledge was also there to be "discovered, extracted, appropriated, and distributed by Western academics" (58). The positional superiority of Western knowledge still undergirds mainstream academic disciplines such as sociology and in order to engage in decolonizing research it necessitates challenging the epistemological and methodological decisions one makes throughout a research project. This entails being knowledgeable of and open to Indigenous ontologies. In the case of my dissertation, it meant taking direction and guidance offered by Indigenous activists, academics and knowledge-keepers, being reflexive about the epistemological assumptions being made during the course of the project, and re-imagining ways of engaging in research that are humanizing, responsive to struggles for decolonization, and open to multiple ways of knowing and being in the world (Kovach 2009; Denzin, Lincoln, Smith 2008; Wallace 2013).

This chapter aims to do three things: first, to consider the methodological and ethical problems of studying practices of decolonization among non-Indigenous social

movements organizing in settler colonial states.[4] Second, to articulate some useful methodological approaches for conducting research *on* and *within* social movements. And third, to discuss some of the challenges, barriers, successes and limitations I encountered while conducting ethnographic and qualitative research with fifty-one social movement organizers in nine urban centres in Canada and the United States. In the first section, I discuss the interventions of Indigenous scholars in decolonizing the epistemologies and methodologies undergirding the Western academic tradition and explore how such strategies can be incorporated into the research practices of social movement scholars. In the second, I position my research project within the ongoing debates on the relevance of academic research to social movements. I introduce some of the overarching methodological questions in social movement research and confront the blurring of lines between radical scholarship in the academy and engagement in social movement practice. In the third and final section, I address questions of identity and belonging, accountability and consent, and responsibility and appropriation that emerged as methodological challenges during my field research.

What is a decolonial methodology?

There is no standard model or practice for decolonizing research methodologies. In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Smith (1999) provides dozens of examples of strategies

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[4] Following Coulthard (2014), Wallace (2013) and Borrows (2006) among others, I use the terms "Indigenous," "Aboriginal," and "Native" interchangeably in the Canadian context and add the term "Native American" in the United States context to refer to the descendants of those peoples who occupied territory in what is now the Canadian and United States nation-states prior to the arrival of European settlers and state power. Where possible, I attempt to use specific self-descriptive names of particular Indigenous nations. Based on the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), I use the term Indigenous in an international context to refer to all non-Western societies that have suffered from European colonization. In this work I capitalize *Indigenous, Aboriginal,* and *Native* when these words refer to people, to emphasize the humanity, sovereignty, agency of Indigenous peoples. However, as Borrows (2006) contends, 'Indigenous' can be a problematic term "because it is not always clear which groups should be included within its meaning". As it will become evident throughout the rest of this work, I have allowed each interview participant the freedom to construct what they might mean by the terms Indigenous, non-Indigenous, settler, etc.

and techniques that critical scholars have used to conduct research with Indigenous communities (i.e. an emphasis on claiming and reclaiming Indigenous ways of being, the validation of storytelling and oral histories, documentation of the survival of Indigenous peoples rather than their demise or assimilation; intervening politically and socially in the struggles of Indigenous communities; etc.), but none of these strategies are presented as prescriptive or applicable to all situations. Much of the literature on decolonizing research methodologies focuses specifically on conducting research with Indigenous communities and very little has been written about whether such principles are relevant or useful in conducting research with settlers and non-Indigenous peoples.

Given that my research focused on the way that *non-Indigenous* social movement participants imagine, practice, and support process of decolonization in settler states, it was important to adjust my methodological approach to the context in which I was working. It also meant being aware of the limitations of simply applying decolonial methodological approaches used in conducting research with Indigenous communities. While it seemed critical to take direction from Indigenous theories and ways of knowing in order to establish a framework for conducting research on how non-Indigenous people grapple with processes of decolonization, I also needed to be aware of the risk of appropriating or misusing these epistemologies by seeking to absorb them into the Eurocentric cannon of radical thought with which I was most familiar (anarchism, Marxism, feminism, liberalism, etc.).

Studying processes of decolonization among non-Indigenous peoples can easily centralize the role of the non-Indigenous settler as the primary actor in anti-colonial and decolonizing actions. With these considerations in mind, I drew from Indigenous

methodologies, conversations with activists and Elders, and past experiences to establish five core principles that I hoped would guide my research process along a decolonizing pathway. These principles included: (1) drawing on multiple ontological realities and worldviews; (2) situating contemporary political struggles within the structures of settler colonialism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and the capitalist world system; (3) engaging in critical self-reflexivity; (4) seeking to embody practices of decolonization not only in my research but as a life praxis; and (5) creating long-term and sustained relationships across and between the participants of the study grounded in our shared experiences, desires, vulnerabilities, and understandings of home and belonging. To follow these principles meant that I had to be guided by an overarching relational worldview, one drawn from Indigenous ontologies (Amadahy 2010; Kovach 2009).

Margaret Kovach (2009) draws on the work of Standing Rock Sioux scholar Vine Deloria Jr. to define a relational worldview as one "that assumes relationships between all life forms that exist within the natural world" (34). Kovach suggests that this relationality honours the primacy of direct experience, interconnectedness, relationships and holistic thinking. Influenced by this practice of relationality, my research draws from the web of relationships held by participants in this study with movements, territories, and communities in the Canadian and U.S. settler states. In drawing from these relationships, I am also aware of the power dynamics inherent in conducting interviews with non-Indigenous radicals on their conceptualizations of decolonization and relationship building with Indigenous sovereignty struggles. Subaltern studies scholars have long warned of the underlying power structures of representation within academic theory and research. This research study does not escape Spivak's (1988) now famous question: can

the subaltern speak? Every interview and every ethnographic observation in this research project is filtered by how it is represented from my perspective and the perspective of my research participants *in relation to* Indigenous movements for land and life (Kovach 2009). In doing so, it is impossible to ignore the underlying power relationship pervasive in a study that seeks to interpret what it means to decolonize from the position of settlers or non-Indigenous peoples. And yet, in learning to speak to (rather than listen to or speak for) Indigenous subjects, it is critical to engage in research that explores the multiple positionalities, contradictions, and limitations that are brought to the fore through serious engagement with practices of decolonization by settlers and non-Indigenous peoples.

Applying these methods without being continually self-reflexive about one's position as a non-Indigenous researcher connected to colonizing institutions like the university can be difficult and at times impossible to reconcile. Andrea Smith (2014) cautions that such self-reflection should not, however, use the struggles of "oppressed" peoples as a foil to re-create settler self-determination in the face of anti-colonial struggles. She states, "Antiracist and anticolonial struggles have created a colonial dis-ease that the settler or white subject may not in fact be self-determining. As a result, the white or settler subject reasserts his or her power through self-reflection. In doing so, the subject's subjectivity is reaffirmed against the foil of the "oppressed" people who still remain the affectable others providing the occasion for this self-reflection" (218). In less jargon-laden terms, Smith argues that antiracist and anticolonial struggle bring forth anxieties among white people/settlers that their belonging in countries like Canada and the United States is based on the suppression of Indigenous claims to land and territory. In order to deal with this anxiety, Smith claims, white people/settlers engage in self-

reflection with the express purpose of lessening their feelings of guilt through confessions of the privileges they gain from the structures of settler colonialism. In doing so they also seek to take pity on those who have suffered most under white supremacy and the settler colonial state. These confessions of privilege, Smith explains, "rarely led to political projects to actually dismantle the structures of domination that enable this white/settler privilege. Rather, the confessions become the political project themselves" (Smith 2014:215). In doing so, white people/settlers seek to escape their responsibility to engage in and support anti-colonial resistance in tangible and material ways, including the relinquishing of stolen land and the loss of material benefits gained from living in a settler colonial state. In seeking to avoid this type of guilt-induced self-reflection, this dissertation is rooted in my personal experiences (and the experiences of other activists) engaging in political projects that seek to build solidarity with Indigenous movements for decolonization.

My personal relationship to processes of decolonization began in earnest in the fall of 2005 where as part of No One Is Illegal-Toronto I helped to organize a forum entitled "Decolonizing Borders" that initiated discussions around commonalities and contradictions between Indigenous struggles for sovereignty and migrant justice struggles in Toronto. Among the four speakers at the event was Mi'kmaw scholar Bonita Lawrence who talked about the Canadian state's role in denying status to thousands of Indigenous people and the potential problems embedded in No One Is Illegal's campaign for "status for all" in erasing or marginalizing Indigenous people's attempts to assert sovereignty and membership in their own communities. Zainab Amadahy, who spoke on behalf of the Indigenous caucus of the Coalition in Support of Indigenous Sovereignty, discussed the

importance of organizing our movements in relational ways that recognize the interconnectedness and interdependence on each other and other species of the planet - something that was not apparent in our political organizing work and trajectories up to that point.

It was around the same time that No One Is Illegal-Toronto members began developing relationships with a handful of communities on the front lines of Indigenous sovereignty struggles. In particular, members of our collective were participating in solidarity or support work with the reclamation at Six Nations, the resistance to illegal dumping in Tyendinaga Mohawk Territories, and the blockades in Grassy Narrows. These relationships were influenced and encouraged by other social movement groups like the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty and No One Is Illegal groups in Montréal and Vancouver who had much longer histories of working in solidarity with grassroots Indigenous struggles (Walia 2013; Fortier 2013). It was through participating in this work that I began to have discussions with other organizers about what it might mean to "decolonize" our movements or to engage in tangible and long-term actions that did not seem so contradictory to Indigenous struggles for sovereignty. My dissertation research emerged out of this context and through it I seek to contribute to the ongoing discussions about what decolonization means for non-Indigenous social movement participants organizing in settler colonial states.

I am guided in my methodological approach by the ongoing discussion on decolonizing research methods in Indigenous theory (Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith 2008; Smith 1999; Kovach 2009; Simpson and Smith 2014). As activist-scholar Rick Wallace (2013) points out, these discussions "must necessarily begin with an examination of the

principles, context and goals of Indigenous and decolonizing research methodologies...and must also include a self-reflexive exploration of [our] place as both researcher and activist, and of the actual design and presentation of the research" (32). This research also draws on the robust tradition of historical materialism in order to situate the conversations emerging from my interviews into a broader structural context. As such, my research is organized as a series of ongoing, conflicting, and at times overlapping conversations, reflections and dialogues amongst activists and organizers in a wide range of anti-authoritarian social movements on their engagements in relationship building with Indigenous movements and communities situated in a particular historical context.

This study builds on existing and evolving dialogues between Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists on negotiations of power, creating relationships of solidarity, and what it means to decolonize for non-Indigenous peoples (Davis 2010; Walia 2013; Alfred 2005; Smith 2013). While the project is influenced by Indigenous theory and some of my core decisions and directions have been guided by discussions and personal relationships with Indigenous activists, the study itself focuses on how processes of decolonization are learned, imagined and practiced among social movements that are comprised of activists differentially positioned as settlers, non-Indigenous peoples, peoples of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry, and those who identify as being Indigenous (either to Turtle Island or to other parts of the world) but who see their work as being *primarily within non-Indigenous social movement groups*.

A research project such as this runs the risk of excluding or silencing the voices of Indigenous peoples by centering the voices and experiences of non-Indigenous peoples in

the process of decolonization. Also, as theories of decolonization and resurgence put forward by Indigenous movements and theorists become more popular among non-Indigenous activists and academics, the risks of co-optation and appropriation also increases. This dissertation does not fully escape this criticism. However, the responsibility of non-Indigenous peoples to engage in self-reflexive and critical research around their own relationships to the settler colonial project is important in the development of self-determining relationships of solidarity (Alfred 2005; Walia 2013). These contentious questions are not unique to this project and I have tried to learn from the experiences and challenges of other activists and researchers who have engaged in similar work.

For instance, in the summer of 2013, the Unsettling Resistance editorial collective faced a number of questions regarding their desire to publish an edited volume of writing and art around the topic of "lessons learned, wisdom gained, and practical strategies from those non-Indigenous anti-authoritarian activists engaged in the struggle for decolonization" (Unsettling Resistance 2013). The project was put on indefinite hiatus in the fall of that year after members of the editorial collective sought to take more time to reflect on some of the questions posed to them as they began to organize the book. Commenting on the question of Indigenous participation and the need for Indigenous voices within the project, the Unsettling Resistance collective articulates some of the struggles and contradictions that their project faced in seeking to spur discussions around decolonization among non-Indigenous activists while not silencing or invisibilizing Indigenous presence within the project:

> We've all been pulled to figure out how settlers can take action in ways
> that aren't parasitic or draining on Indigenous peoples, and we saw this

project as a way for us to take initiative to create conversations and share knowledge among settlers. At the same time, there's also a longstanding dynamic of settlers sidelining Indigenous voices altogether. We believe Indigenous people endure a lived experience of colonialism that settlers have the privilege of avoiding, and we see the silencing of Indigenous perspectives as part of this colonial process (Unsettling Resistance 2013).

The collective's concern over the absence of Indigenous participation at the onset of the research project and their ultimate decision to put the project on hiatus reaffirms the need to be self-reflexive about the risks of turning Indigenous peoples into an essentialized "Other" when non-Indigenous activists discuss decolonization. Critical and decolonizing research needs to be grounded in long-standing relationships with specific Indigenous people and communities and what it means to be decolonizing as a settler remains open and dynamic and must inherently be, as scholar Adam J. Barker quips, "unsettled" (Barker 2009).

My research project also focuses primarily on non-Indigenous and settler interactions with processes of decolonization and, as such, does not escape the questions and critiques faced by the Unsettling Resistance collective. Nonetheless, I have proceeded cautiously with this dissertation research through ongoing discussions with research participants, Indigenous and non-Indigenous mentors, and in conjunction with an ongoing commitment to supporting on-the-ground social movement campaigns and struggles for decolonization. Also, I am in ongoing conversations about what it might mean to navigate public engagements or the uptake of this work in academia. How do presentations at conferences, journal publications, keynote addresses and other academic events change or transform my relationship to the social movements and Indigenous struggles I seek to support through this work? What does it mean to contribute to

decolonial struggles within the academy? Given that the impetus for this work emerged out of my experiences and relationships organizing in Toronto in collaboration with Haudenosaunee, Anishinabek, and Algonquin activists and urban Indigenous social movements, it is my responsibility to continue to engage in discussions on the usefulness of this research to these struggles and the other social movements represented in this study.

Like Barker (2009), Wallace (2013), Denzin (2007) and other non-Indigenous scholars I am influenced by theories and methods put forward by Indigenous scholars that connect with the "grounded theory" and "standpoint theory" approaches I have applied to this project. That being said, these approaches can in no way be taken for granted as inherently decolonizing. The following section explores the multiple methodological constraints I faced in attempting to create a framework to study social movements through a decolonial lens.

Social Movement Research and the Challenges of Decolonization

My dissertation considers how social movements transform and are transformed by their political context through an analysis of the ways Indigenous decolonization and resurgence have shaped the ideas, desires, and principles of contemporary anti-authoritarian social movements in Canada and the United States. Activist-scholar, Chris Dixon, explains that this is the process of developing "movement generated theory" (Bevington and Dixon 2005) which he describes as "the self-reflective activity of people engaged in struggle" (Dixon 2010:36). This reflexivity is collective and I have sought to maintain as much of this collectivity as possible within the framework and methods that

helped to guide my decisions throughout this research project. Noting the vast disconnect between social movement theory in the academy and what is actually useful and influential to social movement actors, Bevington and Dixon (2005) argue that we need to shift as activist-scholars towards movement-relevant theory. They suggest it is not enough to simply identify with a movement or to study its outcomes or processes, instead:

> [Movement-relevant research] is a distinct process that involves dynamic engagement with movements in the formulation, production, refinement, and application of the research. Moreover, the researcher need not and in fact should not have a detached relation to the movement. Rather, the researcher's connection to the movement provides important incentives to produce more accurate information, regardless of whether the researcher is studying a favored movement or its opponents. And while movement-relevant theory is not entirely new, the present moment offers distinct opportunities for it to play a more prominent role in social movement scholarship (190).

While movement-relevant theory seeks to avoid uncritically legitimizing the politics of a favoured movement, it must also contend with the fact that people engage in movements for a variety of reasons with varied backgrounds and experiences. There is no homogeneity in social movement groups. Choices about strategy, tactics, and relationships are made based on the terrain of struggle and one's understanding of the political context, which is ideologically conditioned. Equally significant, no one enters the movements as a clean slate. Movement-relevant research seeks to delve into these questions and address these political and social realities by analyzing how ideas and actions change and shift as one's political experiences and context changes.

In her book *Undoing Border Imperialism,* migrant justice organizer Harsha Walia (2013) argues for the incorporation of knowledges coming from academic research, movement practice, and lived experience when developing social movement theory. The

requirement that the researcher take appropriate actions to fulfill (at least partially) a contribution to struggles for social change in their work is a core principle of "movement-relevant theory" that helps to transcend some of the problems inherent in mainstream academic research on social movements (Kinsman 2006). With respect to social movement theory more specifically Bevington and Dixon (2005) contend that movement-relevant theory differs from resource mobilization, political process theory, and new social movement theory (among others) because:

> [I]t does not seek to privilege a particular variable or set of variables in the lifecourse of a movement. As such it avoids succumbing to the sort of overextension and internecine squabbles that have hindered previous schools [of thought]. Rather, movement-relevant theory emerges out of a dynamic and reciprocal engagement with the movements themselves. This engagement not only informs the scholarship but also provides an accountability for theory that improves the quality of theory (190).

Drawing from Perrow (1970) and Flacks (2004), Bevington and Dixon argue that there is academic merit in developing research projects and theory that activists and organizers find relevant. They note that a significant amount of social movement scholarship produced by academics seems obvious, inaccessible, or unimportant to contemporary movement activists. Thus, for research to actually be relevant to movements the researcher cannot simply rely on shared political ideas as a means to draw out theoretical discussions, but must contribute analysis and information that can support ongoing social movement campaigns.

Khasnabish and Haiven (2012) suggest that we can understand the various ways in which academic researchers engage with social movements through an analysis of the vocational purpose and content of the research. For instance, a "strategy of invocation" occurs when a researcher attempts to use the real and perceived power of the academy to

invoke social movements "as legitimate and important sites of social intercourse and creativity" (409). A "strategy of avocation" happens when the researcher abandons any pretense of the usefulness of academic knowledge production and instead engages in day-to-day grassroots organizing with social movements. The authors note that while both aforementioned strategies have proven successful and useful to social movements and have produced valuable academic knowledge, a third strategic direction for research they term "convocation" offers the best possibility for conducting research that is relevant to social movements. Khasnabish and Haiven use the term "convocation" not in its most common sense (a large assembly), but instead in its lesser-used sense of referring to the action of calling people together to discuss and make decisions. This understanding of convocation is not new, as it has long been a part of social movement history exemplified by the deep historical roots of town halls, community assemblies, and collective decision making in communities and in political organizations.

Referring specifically to academic scholarship, Khasnabish and Haiven offer convocation as a way to use the resources of academic institutions to create spaces of dialogue for social movements to explore what they call "the radical imagination". They suggest:

> The objective of this method is to critically and self-reflexively mobilize the privileged and conflicted position of the academic researcher to create a new "space of encounter" where social movements and their participants can rediscover one another. "Data" here are a byproduct of a process inspired by, but not entirely folded within, social movement practices. The objective of this convocation is both relatively modest and resolutely utopian: to open a new, temporary zone for the radical imagination to flourish. (410-411).

Given my history as an active participant in many of the social movements included in this study, the concept of convocation appealed greatly to me. My decision to begin this

research project came out of frustrations I had with the lack of opportunities to take the time to discuss and think through processes of decolonization in a broad and long-term fashion within some of the collectives in which I was a member. Since much of the time spent organizing in social movements takes place in reaction to community needs, regressive laws, or times of crisis, it is often difficult for activists to find long-term and sustained space for deep thought, reflection, and dialogue. While workshops, speaking events, blogs, and social forums all provide some aspects of convocation they are often plagued with two critical drawbacks I call "problems of participation" and "problems of duration".

Problems of participation often occur during panels and speaking events organized in a unidirectional manner in which the panelist(s) talk to/at the audience. In these situations, the experiences and theories of individual activists are privileged over collective dialogue and shared experiences and can sideline the multiple and contradictory knowledges and experiences of other participants in movements. Problems of duration are most present on social media platforms or at social forums and other gatherings and are manifested through the ephemeral nature inherent to those social spaces. In both social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.) and social forums (anarchist book fairs, people's forums, etc.) the social situation is changing so rapidly and the actors so mobile that long-term and long-standing relationships are difficult to establish. While movement activists have identified and have attempted to address such problems in a number of pro-active and creative ways (see Khatib et al. 2012, Sitrin and Azzellini 2012, Malleson and Wachsmuth 2011), creating spaces of convocation remains a challenge because of its demand for resources, organization, and long-term planning.

By attempting to establish a space of convocation among radicals in a multiplicity of movements, I hope to provide a forum for dialogue and discussion across and within movements on how we imagine, practice, and negotiate processes of decolonization. It is my hope that by leveraging the resources of the university in order to conduct this research, the discussions that emerge from this project will have long-term resonance for social movement struggles in settler-colonial states like Canada and the United States. This research is also an affirmation of the fact that activists and organizers regularly produce sophisticated and socially relevant theory for the movements in which they participate and for the broader public, yet they often lack the resources to document this knowledge production. As Bevington and Dixon (2005) observe, this movement-derived research is often marginalized in the field of social movement studies in the academy. They note:

> [T]hough it is mostly overlooked by social movement studies, this kind of theory has much to offer, and not only concerning the creative capacities of those involved in collective action. Indeed, social movement scholars should take guidance from it. The breadth and vibrancy of such theory suggests that relevance in the study of social movements can be found through critically engaging with the dialogues and questions that concern movements themselves (197).

The co-creation of social movement research through the process of convocation with radical activists from a wide variety of struggles constitutes an important contribution to the growing body of theory on processes of decolonization in settler colonial states. It is my hope that the discussions that transpired during the course of this research prove useful not only to the movement actors who participated in the project, but to wider Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences who are interested in the ways non-Indigenous peoples negotiate processes of decolonization and the challenges and barriers they face in

re-imagining their struggles through a decolonial lens.

Adapting Standpoint and Grounded Theory in Decolonizing Research

To address questions of identity and positionality in my research I adapted techniques from both feminist standpoint theory and grounded theory. Movement-relevant research practice that takes decolonization seriously needs to critically assess the usefulness of qualitative research techniques, particularly those developed outside of a decolonial analysis (Smith 1999). Sandra Harding (2004) offers standpoint theory as a method of qualitative analysis that seeks to remove radicals and those who resist from the periphery of social theory and to re-center their perspectives through engaged and active methodological approaches. This method of analysis should not be confused with relativism, whereby, each group's perspective is weighted equally and there are multiple ways of explaining a certain situation. Harding argues "against the idea that all social situations provide equally useful resources for learning about the world and against the idea that they all set equally strong limits on knowledge" (Harding 2004:131). It is for that reason that when conducting interviews with a diverse group of people from multiple backgrounds, cultures, and histories one must be aware of the potential to appropriate, misinterpret or misrepresent experiences and be mindful of interpersonal power imbalances that are the result of histories of structural oppression.

Nonetheless, standpoint theory like other theories that emerge out of identity politics runs the risk of replicating the power dynamics that redefine "objectivity" through an individualist foundationalism and render traditional Indigenous knowledges as being one of many differing "standpoints" rather than as being developed by land-based

relationships and existing prior to European invasion. This is what Wendy Brown terms a "reactionary foundationalism" that seeks to produce stability in the face of instability (Brown 1991:67). Brown situates feminist standpoint theory as a form of epistemological positivism. By attempting to value different women's voices and perspectives as equally valid knowledges, it homogenizes the "oppressed subject" as being possessed by a privileged access to truth (Stringer 2014). In this way, standpoint theory appears to romanticize powerlessness and creates a situation where the voices of research participants are read as undistorted by their interests in perpetuating the power relations that currently exist (Stringer 2014). This can create a depoliticized or ahistorical dynamic that erases or conflates the experiences of Indigenous peoples with those of non-Indigenous people of color or other oppressed groups in a way that denies the unique historical context of settler colonialism. Not all standpoints are equal and in this regard the fetishization of a feminist standpoint might, in fact, neglect or automatically obscure Indigenous lived realities, at least to the extent that they do not consider settler colonialism to be a relevant structure in the formation of standpoints. For instance, Harding talks very broadly about the standpoints of "marginalized peoples" being equally weighted and accessible in standpoint theory, but it might be the case that a feminist perspective and the formation of a feminist standpoint in key ways rests upon the exclusion or appropriation of Indigenous perspectives.

Social movement theorist Janet Conway (2004) offers an important corrective in the application of standpoint theory by suggesting that the knowledges that are produced by social movements through acts of survival, resistance, solidarity and organizing can be examined with respect to the contradictions, complexities and inconsistencies that exist in

actual social situations. She notes, "Movement-based knowledge is largely tacit, practical and unsystematized. It is partial and situated, grounded in activist practice, fostered by concrete engagement in social struggle and embedded in specific times and places" (56). Due to the partial and situated nature of movement-based knowledges, research that engages activist theory and practice must be fluid in order to reflect the evolving discussions occurring within and across activist groups. Standpoint theory can, in this respect, provide an important framework for collecting and interpreting interviews with social movement participants across multiple geographic and social locations and within a specified period of time. A study of how decolonization is practiced within anti-authoritarian social movements needs to take into account both the general historical context and the particular situated experiences of individuals and groups within those movements.

My methodology approaches the standpoint of participants in three key ways: (1) it is based on the lived experiences of people participating in anti-authoritarian social movements; (2) it examines theories derived from practicing, learning, and failing to incorporate processes of decolonization within these movements; and (3) it builds on the understanding that effective social movement research must be interactive, fluid, and useful to the struggles it seeks to study. This research is grounded in dialogue with members of a variety of anti-authoritarian groups and is based on their lived experiences as participants in anti-colonial movements in Canada and the United States.

In her book *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*, bell hooks notes that, "dialogue implies talk between two subjects, not the speech of subject-object. It is a humanizing speech, one that challenges and resists domination" (hooks 1989: 131 in

Collins 2001). To maintain such a humanizing quality within this project it was crucial to allow the stories and experiences of those that I interviewed to shape and shift the directions and questions of my research. Given this necessity, I also took guidance from grounded theory during the data analysis phase of the research (Charmaz 2003; Allen 2011). Wallace (2013) provides a particularly useful definition of grounded theory as "both a research methodology that is open and grounded in the actual data/experiences/narratives of both the researcher and the research partners and the actual process of data analysis that involves coding to develop larger theory" (38). Since this research is based on the premise that knowledge and theory about social movement practice is largely generated among social movement participants themselves, grounded theory provides an appropriate basis for engaging in research that privileges the lived experience and theoretical questions of research participants. Charmaz (2003:251) offers three important components for a constructivist grounded theory: (1) strategies need not be rigid or prescriptive; (2) the focus on meaning should be seen as furthering, rather than limiting the researcher's interpretive understanding; and (3) the method can be practiced without the positivist leaning of its earlier proponents.

Although grounded theory is conducive to studying social movements, the potential for this framework to replicate colonialist academic constructs remains. For instance, Denzin, Lincoln and Smith (2008) caution that even if we engage in grounded theory, the frameworks and epistemologies that underlie our work may still inevitably be tied up in colonialist logics. They introduce the term "decolonizing grounded theory approach" to argue that without modification, grounded theory (among other critical research methods) will not work within Indigenous or decolonizing settings. Denzin

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(2007) notes: "There must be a commitment to transforming the institutions and practices of research. GT [grounded theory] concerns for data, basic underlying social processes, and causal narratives may not accord with the pressing social justice concerns of Indigenous persons" (Denzin 2007 in Wallace 2013:38-39). I think it is important to extend this framework to suggest that decolonizing grounded theory is critical in all research that seeks to focus on the context of settler colonialism. By studying questions of decolonization among *non-Indigenous social movements* I had to take further precautions in ensuring that the dialogue fostered between myself and the participants was not simply appropriating Indigenous theories and knowledges and was responsive to questions emerging from the movements themselves in their interaction with Indigenous processes of decolonization and resurgence. This adaptation of the methodology is critical to the academic integrity of a research study seeking to understand the multiple ways in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples interpret and enact decolonization and is explicitly political in situating that dialogue within social movements themselves. Wallace (2013) notes, "The researcher and knowledge are themselves politically implicated in the entire process of collecting, analyzing and constructing findings" (38). In trying to imagine a research process that respects these decolonial social relations, the responsibility for interpreting, sharing, and communicating the thoughts and knowledges of research participants is then, in and of itself, a part of the prefigurative politics of social movements.

"We Make the Path While Walking": Some Lessons Learned

My methodology consists of three core components: (1) an ethnographic study

among anti-authoritarian social movement groups committed to processes of decolonization; (2) qualitative interviews with fifty-one participants in nine urban centres in the Canadian and U.S. settler states; and (3) a grounded theory approach to coding, analyzing, and generating theory out of the data collected. I see this research as being simultaneously a scholarly work and an active contribution to the movements where these alternative realities are being practiced. I want to acknowledge that much of what I present in this dissertation is a product of the collective discussions, inadvertent miscues, and unresolvable contradictions that I encountered during the research process. In this chapter, I offer a set of discussions and tensions that emerged in the process of engaging in this research. I focus here on three major themes that address some important methodological questions that were illuminated during my field research. The first theme centres around questions of *identification and belonging* and it explores the complications I faced in setting criteria for who would be included in the study. The second theme explores questions of *accountability and consent* by addressing some of the barriers and challenges I faced in developing relationships of mutual consent with research participants. The third theme engages the tension between *responsibility and appropriation* when incorporating Indigenous theory into research focused on non-Indigenous peoples and their processes of decolonization.

Identification & Belonging

The criteria I drafted for selecting participants at the onset of my research were partly influenced by my political experience organizing in relationship with Indigenous struggles but they were also based on the desire to contain the scope of the project. The

participants invited for interviews were all leading contributors to radical left social movements groups in Canada and the United States and had been identified by their organization or by other social movement participants as key contributors to the discussion around decolonization and radical politics in North America. To ascertain whether or not participants were indeed attempting to engage in processes and practices of decolonization I drew from past organizing experience (particularly within the Canadian context), discussions with allied activists in a number of cities, independent or mainstream media articles, and online content, blogs or websites of social movement groups. I also identified key moments and events where conflict or discussions about decolonization took place within anti-authoritarian political spaces during the past five to seven years (i.e. the Occupy movements in New York and Oakland; the G20 in Toronto; the anti-Olympics organizing in Vancouver, etc.). However, it was also important to ascertain that each prospective participant had a track record and history of organizing within social movements in their respective communities and had shown evidence of engaging in a politics of decolonization (i.e. solidarity campaigns with Indigenous struggles, writing or presentations on the topic of decolonization, conscious application of a politics of decolonization in a social movement group, etc.).

On Belonging

I limited my research to interviews in urban centres in Canada and the United States based on previous work that identified these areas as being the primary (though not exclusive) sites where non-Indigenous peoples have mobilized to engage in solidarity with largely rural Indigenous land-based struggles (kulchyski 2013; Pasternak 2014;

Walia 2014; see Wallace 2013 for an example of rural solidarity struggles). I also made the decision against doing a comparative study of solidarity movements in Canada and the United States early in the research process. While I understand that the historical and legal context in these two nation-states has resulted in particularly unique relationships between Indigenous peoples and settlers, I felt that prioritizing the nation-state border as a focal-point in my study would reinforce the colonial boundaries imposed upon Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island. Similarly, I began to recognize that relationships between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous peoples varied more widely depending on the local historical context than based on nation-state variations (Walia 2013; Dunbar-Ortiz 2014). Also positionality vis-à-vis the nation-state was a much stronger differentiating factor among research participants than nationality or geographic location. I conducted research over a one-year period from February 2013 to February 2014 through forty-five semi-structured interviews with fifty-one people involved in anti-authoritarian movements in Toronto, Montréal, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Vancouver, New York, San Francisco, Oakland, and Philadelphia. Each of these participants had either developed relationships with Indigenous peoples in struggle or had thought about and sought to engage in processes of decolonization in their movements. I spent time in Haudenosaunee, Algonquin, Anishinaabeg, Metis, Sto:lo, Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh, Squamish, Lekwungen, WSÁNEĆ, Ohlone, and Lenape territories as part of the research process, all the while reflecting on the inherent privilege afforded to me by the settler colonial state as a white-presenting Canadian citizen to travel rather easily from place to place. My capacity and ability to seek permission from each of the Indigenous nations on whose territories I travelled was severely limited by my lack of connections and

relationships with traditional leaders in these nations and the overarching structure of border imperialism that oversees travel between Canada and the United States.

In her zine, *Stuck in Place: Some Notes on Belonging*, Claire Urbanski (2013) discusses the fears of being rootless that many white settlers feel when confronted with the prospect of decolonization. She challenges those fears by noting that, "When we say we have no place, I feel like that denies the kinds of privileging and freedom of movement we access in our present place. We do have place. We have to undo how we know the world, how we currently exist in the world in order for it to become a home" (40). By complicating our notions of what place means and how it is tied to freedom of movement for non-Indigenous people born within the Canadian and U.S. settler states (particularly white settlers), Urbanski touches on the interrelationship between decolonization, borders, home, and belonging. Building on Urbanski's writing, it is also important to acknowledge that those considered to be non-whites are never truly "settled" within the Canadian state and their sense of "belonging" is always contingent on upholding the structures of the white supremacist state.

Belonging, as suggested by Snelgrove et al. (2014), "requires the discursive production and circulation of those who do not belong" while "to settle" might be differentiated based on axis of power-oppression" (5). By breaking down the seeming fixedness of borders and nationalist myths we are better able to understand the processes that legitimate the differentiation between U.S. or Canadian "citizens" and people characterized as "Aboriginals" and "Native Americans" or "foreigners" and "illegals"," through the acceptance of nation-state sovereignty over particular territories. A decolonizing methodological process necessitates that I critically reflect on my ability to

move freely across borders and the ways in which my identity and my connection to "home" are tied up in these racist, nationalist, and colonialist frameworks.

Settler colonial logics work to create a sense of home and belonging for particular groups of white settlers and to incorporate (though this is never quite fully attainable) those "model minorities" who are assimilated within the hegemonic culture through official multiculturalism policies. However, in that process the settler state continues to systematically deny membership to others (particular Black people and migrant workers) and attempts to erase Indigenous presence (Amadahy and Lawrence 2009; Lawrence 2004; Deloria 1998). Sharma (2012) warns that the discursive shifts produced by the ideological mechanism of multiculturalism "obliterates any distinction between colonizers and immigrants, thereby depoliticizing the process of constructing a racialized Canadian nation state through colonial practices" (86). In so doing it makes it easy to conflate the process of migration with the process of colonization and leads to the argument that all immigrants are inherently colonizers. This, in and of itself, is a highly contested characterization within radical social movement struggles and there is no clear indication that Sharma's critique is generally agreed upon.

For instance, Dakota activist Waziyatawin (2011) argues that since the land and resources claimed by the United States (and one can infer Canada as well) were taken at the expense of Indigenous peoples, anyone who occupies that land or benefits from those resources experiences colonial privilege. Following the work of Albert Memmi, Waziyatawin articulates, "No matter the extent of oppression faced by various settler groups, being a settler means belonging to the class of colonizers" (Waziyatawin 2011). Similarly, Adam J. Barker (2009) in trying to develop a definition of settler contends that

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one should not distinguish between settlers born in settler states and immigrants who intentionally come to occupy Indigenous territories, instead he suggests that by enjoying the fruits of colonialism both groups exploit Indigenous peoples and their lands (whether they seek to do so or not). However, regardless of one's positionality, even seeking a sense of home and belonging on these territories outside of the framework of the white supremacist nation-state, which this dissertation purports to do, may further perpetuate the structure of settler colonialism if it takes places without developing better relationships of solidarity with Indigenous peoples.

On Identity

Borrowing the term "anti-authoritarian" from Chris Dixon (2012), I understand this current to encompass a wide-range of political projects and collectives that could be seen as sharing common commitments to resisting structural oppression and authoritarianism as part of their social movement struggles. Dixon (2012) defines this anti-authoritarian current as follows:

> This tendency pulls together a growing set of activists and organisers who are developing shared ideas and approaches based in over-lapping areas of work. At the core, what distinguishes them is their commitment to combining anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist politics with grassroots organising among ordinary, non-activist people. In doing this, they use many labels to describe themselves – abolitionists, anarchists, anti-authoritarians, anti-capitalists, autonomists, and radicals, among others – and some choose to organise without political labels. Yet, together, they are a political current that cuts across a range of left social movements in North America. For shorthand, I call this the 'anti-authoritarian current', though I recognise this is not a self-description that everyone would choose (33).

The shared ideas, approaches, and principles of organizing that distinguishes this current within radical left movements is not without its contradictions, splits, or conflicts. In fact,

some conflicts result in profound and important changes to the politics of other groups within the current. One such change in Canada and increasingly in the United States is the emphasis on the centrality of Indigenous sovereignty to social movement struggles seeking to develop new social relations outside of state and capitalism (Walia 2013; Barker 2009).

Emerging from these processes is a whole new set of questions in which this current must now contend: can non-Indigenous peoples engage in a politics of decolonization? Is there a distinction between anti-colonial and decolonial struggles? Is a politics of decolonization strictly about engaging in solidarity with Indigenous sovereignty movements? What are the challenges of centralizing a decolonizing politics within contemporary social movement struggles? Does one's positionality matter with respect to how you engage in decolonization? These questions have shifted the political terrain of struggles within migrant justice, environmentalist, queer/trans*, anti-racist, anarchist, anti-capitalist, and other anti-authoritarian movements as they have developed relationships of solidarity and mutuality with Indigenous peoples. This research project comes out of my personal relationship grappling with some of these questions as part of social movement collectives in Toronto, especially as a member of No One Is Illegal-Toronto (Fortier 2013),[5] in our attempts to implement a decolonial analysis into our day-to-day social movement organizing.

Over the past several years, there appears to have been a clear shift among a

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[5] For No One Is Illegal-Toronto the shift toward a politics of decolonization meant a renewed emphasis on the dismantling of the settler-state and the building of relationships with Indigenous peoples and an awareness of the possibilities to re-assert settler logics while opposing racist and capitalist power structures. Building on the work of Andrea Smith (2006), this understanding of white supremacy as being undergirded by three pillars (slavery/capitalism, genocide/colonialism, orientalism/war) in the North American context required radical groups more general to situate their struggles in a historical knowledge of the particular ways in which white supremacy maintains power over specific groups of people.

number of radical groups and individuals from a diverse set of social movements across Turtle Island towards exploring and imagining practices and processes of decolonization as *non-Indigenous peoples*. Given this occurrence, I made the decision to limit my study to people who self-identified as "non-Indigenous" participants in "anti-authoritarian" movements and who saw "decolonization" as being central to their political work. This limit seemed appropriate based on my long-standing relationships with organizers in these movements in Toronto and several other cities in Canada and the United States.

I narrowed my participant criteria to people who self-identified as being "non-Indigenous" in order to avoid the common problem in academic work of trying to interpret or speak on behalf of Indigenous peoples (Wallace 2013; Denzin, Lincoln and Smith 2008). At first it seemed appropriate to limit the study to people self-identified as "non-Indigenous" for two reasons: one, this was the group of people with whom I shared the closest relationships in social movements and two, very little research has actually been produced that explores the ways in which non-Indigenous people attempt to engage in processes of decolonization. These criteria seemed to be a critical part of a movement-relevant research strategy and yet I was distinctly aware that I was embarking on a project rife with contradictions, differing opinions, and fluid/shifting definitions.

I recognize that my use of the term "non-Indigenous" is itself problematic and open to multiple interpretations. Since there is such variance in the ways that people interpret the terms "settler", "migrant", "non-Indigenous", and "Indigenous" this presents a considerable challenge in developing consistent terminology and definitions within a dissertation. On the one hand, I tried to keep a broad and open mind about the myriad ways in which people understand themselves within this current historical context, but I

also wanted to signal that I was primarily focused on engaging folks who see their work as being *in relation to* Indigenous people rather than *as* Indigenous people. This was inevitably complicated by the presence of people interested in participating in the study who self-identified as Indigenous but who organized primarily within urban non-Indigenous anti-authoritarian spaces (prison abolitionist, anarchist, anti-racist, migrant justice, queer/trans* just to name a few).

Additionally, the social movements I chose to study are rooted in urban communities and are tied to place. They are uniquely born of the historical conditions of particular geographies and identities and the lands and environments that they encompass. However, in Canada and the United States these movements are inherently mediated in all their facets by the ongoing process of settler colonialism. Because of this it is important to reflect on the meaning of being rooted in place as non-Indigenous social movements participants seeking to decolonize our struggles (Snelgrove et al. 2014).

In an FAQ I developed to send to prospective research participants I included a paragraph where I attempted to explain my interpretation of the term "non-Indigenous":

> I've narrowed my focus to interviewing and engaging non-Indigenous/settler people because I think that it is really important that we have important discussions about how we are holding up our end of either treaty relationships, responsibilities from living on unceded, stolen and/or occupied lands, and to reflect on the various ways in which we try to come together in order to decolonize our relationships with each other and our relationships with the multiple Indigenous nations and peoples who's territories we occupy (Dissertation FAQ).

My desire for interviewees to self-select based on this brief description was perhaps a bit presumptuous and I was provoked by some potential participants to be clearer in my definition of "non-Indigenous". In hindsight my response to these requests seems still to be inadequate. Nonetheless, I sent the following revised definition to those potential

participants who requested clarification:

> I am using the words "non-indigenous" in the context of my research proposal to describe people who do not self-identify as being "indigenous" to Turtle Island/North America (for the purposes of my project - people who trace their ancestral roots to places outside of the Canadian and US settler states). I realize that this can be problematic because it excludes people who identify as being indigenous to other parts of the world and that was part of the struggle I've been going through in terms of how to make my wording consistent when people's understanding of the terms are inconsistent. This is a really imperfect definition and one that I am problematizing in my thinking on this topic (Email Correspondence February 12 2013).

I was explicitly vague in defining the terms I used in the invitations because I felt that it was important to recognize the multiple and contradictory ways in which people understand their relationship to settler colonialism, indigeneity, and identity. I also realized that my definitions had to be fluid and flexible to account for the situations in which uncertainty existed as to whether a potential participant "fit" the research criteria. The use of these terms to bound or clarify targeted participants produced a number of responses – some people (particularly those who identified as white settlers) could see their lived experiences reflected in my chosen definitions of identity categories, while others (primarily though not exclusively people of colour or mixed-race people) struggled with the terminology. As the project moved forward I had to confront the lurking feeling that my participant criteria may also be silencing the voices of self-identified Indigenous peoples who wanted to contribute to a discussion on the responsibilities or relationships of settlers/non-Indigenous people to processes of decolonization.

While I presumed that I could not avoid questions of identity when conducting this research project I also wanted to avoid the colonialist practice of deciding who is or is not an Indigenous person. As Sium et al. (2012) caution, the colonial strategies of

measurement and containment through blood quantum and colonialist histories are done "through a policing of boundaries, especially under a binary system of Indigenous/non-Indigenous, which has a long history of colonial power taking up these tools of differentiation to divide and conquer, disenfranchise, and steal land from Indigenous peoples" (vi). I was helped to think about the complexities of settler identities through the writing of Beenash Jafri, who articulates that we should "think about settlerhood not as an object that we possess, but as a field of operations into which we become socially positioned and implicated" (Jafri 2012, in Walia 2013:128). By theorizing settlerhood in this way, Jafri moves away from a static conceptualization of identity and instead positions the subject as being a participant in a set of social relations that is both caused by and maintains colonialism. Such a definition provides for the possibility of collective liberation as being the act of defying these social relations *and* developing relationships of solidarity with Indigenous struggles for sovereignty. It also turns the discussion about privilege into one about complicity by acknowledging that one need not be privileged by the social conditions in a settler state to be complicit in the ongoing process of colonization. She notes:

> Thinking in terms of complicity suggests a reformulation of strategies/tactics, rather than the moral reformation of an individual with privilege. To think in terms of complicity shifts attention away from the self and onto strategies and relations that reproduce social and institutional hierarchies. The issue then is not about individual absolution of responsibility, guilt, and culpability ('checking' privilege) but, rather, one of reexamining strategies through which we give ourselves that responsibility and become accountable in the first place (Jafri 2012).

By focusing on collective struggles to dismantle the structures of settler colonialism we move beyond the politics of personal culpability or the "ally industrial complex" (Smith

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2013). In order to take these questions into account, I followed a principle of self-selection for potential interview participants that asked them to reflect upon the ways they were individually and collectively positioned within the social relations of settler colonialism.

Using snowball sampling to identify potential interviewees, I proceeded to explain the context, background, and parameters of the research and asked those whom I contacted to determine whether or not they saw themselves as a fit for the study (Denzin and Lincoln 2003). I also wanted to make sure that the study resonated with each participant - that they saw the research project as having the potential to contribute to useful dialogues on decolonizing social movements in their respective groups. I offered alternative routes to participating in the project for those who wanted to contribute but who did not see themselves as fitting within the research parameters. For instance, in California I had lunch with a Xicana activist who identified as Indigenous and who preferred to meet informally to discuss the project rather than participate formally in an interview. This lunchtime chat nonetheless provided significant historical background for me on the complexities of Xicana conceptualizations of indigeneity and their relationship to decolonizing practices within social movements in her community. In similar circumstances I met with non-Indigenous people of colour involved in anarchist and anti-capitalist movements who, for a number of reasons lacked the time or energy to conduct a full interview, but who met with me informally to discuss some of the frustrations they had with attempting to negotiate processes of decolonization in normatively white activist spaces.

Others supported the research by introducing me to potential interview

participants. These contributions proved invaluable to me in terms of building relationships based on trust as these non-participant supporters helped to vouch for me among social movement groups with whom I had no prior relationship and helped to narrow my list of potential research participants by sharing with me their knowledge of the history of social movement struggles in cities that would become sites of my research. While not being formally part of the research project, these people gave their time and insights to the research and expressed a desire to support longer-term projects of decolonization across broader anti-authoritarian social movements in Canada and the United States.

My plan to limit participation in the research study to self-identified non-Indigenous people came upon a number of challenges. Most glaringly, in New York City it was suggested by a number of organizers that I approach an Anishinaabe organizer with the Anarchist People of Color movement for an interview. It was not until the day before my interview that I found out that this potential participant identified as an Anishinaabe person. Immediately, I began to reflect upon whether or not it made sense to include this person in my research. While, it would have been in keeping with my initial research protocol to forego this particular interview, I realized that my original decision to narrowly limit research participants to those who solely identified as non-Indigenous was problematic for a number of reasons. First and foremost it made the false assumption that urban Indigenous people were not present participants in a multitude of urban anti-authoritarian social movement organizations. Secondly, it presumed that Indigenous peoples were not, in fact, actively working within these organizations to push a politics of decolonization. Third, it fell into the trap of creating a binary system of Indigenous/non-

Indigenous that Sium et al. (2012) warn about when they assert that part of the colonial strategies of measurement is to contain and erase indigeneity. After significant deliberation, I decided to include this participant in the project because she had a lot of experience organizing in the anti-authoritarian current in Los Angeles and New York City and, as an Indigenous women, could contribute to the discussion on decolonial politics in a significant manner. It was a clear deviation from my original research parameters and since it came late within the research process (I had already interviewed forty people by this point), I was unsure as to whether or not this would complicate the study or would single this person out as the "lone" Indigenous voice within the study. Since I had not considered this scenario previously I was forced to alter my research boundaries in terms of participants and to consider that this omission in previous interview sites might be a weakness of my research data. It also clearly pointed to an unforeseen weakness in my research process, as I recognized that my parameters excluded the important voices of Indigenous activists who had contributed to pushing a politics of decolonization within the anti-authoritarian current of the radical left.

Given that I was unable to expand my research parameters within the time constraints of the dissertation, the lack of multiple urban Indigenous activist voices in each city remains a glaring limitation of the study. Nonetheless, this experience speaks to the broader challenges of setting research parameters based wholly on identity. Instead, it is critical for researchers to develop parameters that take into account the social and political context of the movements that they seek to study and to avoid the trap of overly constricting one's research parameters. While those I interviewed are considered leaders within their respective groups/movements – my initial research parameters created a

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situation where the discussions I captured in this study are not fully representative of the vast disagreements, discussions, and debates that are ongoing among activists across a myriad of identities and experiences (although it is fair to argue that this is an impossible standard to achieve regardless of one's research parameters). However, this underscores the importance of engaging in deeper relationship building prior to the research process and developing clear accountability practices with those communities one seeks to study.

Accountability & Consent

One of the most challenging things about doing research with (rather than on) social movements is facing the inevitability of being accountable to multiple and divergent communities. The idea (or ideal) of the university as a place of critical analysis continues to draw a significant number of activists to graduate school in the hopes of contributing research to the movements in which they are active participants and the possibility of engaging broader society in discussions of social justice (Khasnabish and Haiven 2012). However, the neoliberal turn towards precarious, part-time and contractual labour in the academy and the increased emphasis on scholarly production and publication conflicts with the slow, deliberate, consensus-based decision-making processes being practiced in many anti-authoritarian social movements (Dixon and Shotwell 2007; Khasnabish and Haiven 2012). This leads to differing definitions of what it means to be accountable to research participants or to obtain their consent in the research process. It also forces scholar-activists to confront the challenges of epistemological absolutism prevalent within many research projects. Instead, my research seeks to emphasize the place-based, partial and situated knowledges that emerge from

resistance and relationship building in the act of struggle (Wallace 2013; Conway 2004).

Forging a relationship of accountability with research participants is a reciprocal and continually renewed process that goes beyond the informed consent forms and ethical protocols of the university. In understanding the academy as what Smith (2014:214) calls "an institution rooted in colonialist, capitalist, and white supremacist logics", non-Indigenous activist-scholars who desire to engage in decolonizing research processes are confronted with the need to negotiate our relationships with movements for collective liberation and in support of Indigenous resurgence during the entire research process against the neoliberal demands of the university (Smith 2014). Walia (2014:47) suggests that "a willingness to decentre oneself and to learn and act from a place of responsibility rather than guilt" are helpful in determining the boundaries between being too interventionist in the movements that you are researching and failing to uphold commitments because of a fear of making mistakes. This means that, as academics, we must find ways to act with greater humility and conduct research from a place of responsibility to those communities for whom you seek to contribute your academic work as opposed to exclusively conducting research for the academy or for the purpose of publication. For many activist-scholars, engaging in a process of mutual accountability with research participants moves into uncharted waters in that balancing issues of identity, positionality, desire, and purpose rests strongly on the ability to create trust through open and honest communication within and outside of the institutionalized academic research process (Davis and Shpuniarsky 2010).

My research practice with respect to theories of consent has been informed by strategies used by scholar-activists in developing relationships of trust with social

movement participants under the rubric of academic research (Kovach 2009; Smith 1999; Haraway 2004; Wallace 2013). However I have also learned significantly from theories and practices of consent and accountability emerging from within the anti-authoritarian current itself, in particular movements seeking to address questions of interpersonal and sexual violence (INCITE! 2011). Trying to dismantle structures of violence while still embedded within those systems is as important for academic research as it is for other intimate parts of our lives. Developing a radically anti-authoritarian concept of accountability requires learning together, re-negotiating boundaries of consent, and accepting that the process will not be perfect but that when we make mistakes we are accountable to survivors and our shared communities of struggle. It also requires both the researcher and the research participants be accountable to one another and to the movements with which they are connected and to consider the project (as much as possible) to be a creation of each other's mutual labour, experiences, and knowledges.

Making time to uphold and further develop your longstanding commitments to the struggles you are a part of is a critical component of the accountability process involved in movement-generated research projects. When I entered the Ph.D. program in the fall of 2009 I was maintaining a number of commitments to radical struggles in the city of Toronto. I was organizing with No One Is Illegal-Toronto, participating in coalitions to oppose the Toronto G20 meetings, and supporting solidarity actions with Indigenous sovereignty struggles in Grassy Narrows, Ardoch, and Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug. The irony in seeking to contribute to these struggles in tangible ways during the research process is that a project such as this (at least temporarily) requires time commitments that can reduce your ability to engage in day-to-day organizing. I anticipated this might

happen over the duration of the research so I tried to strategize ways to maintain my commitments to these movements during my dissertation. This often meant taking on smaller and more sporadic tasks and relinquishing responsibilities that required me to be consistently available during the term of the dissertation. However, it did not stop me from being present for key actions and events whenever possible. This approach raised a number of credibility questions that I regularly reflected on during the research process: *What are my intentions in conducting this research and how do I ensure that this work is not simply an academic pursuit? Is this work contributing to processes of decolonization among the movements I am studying? What is a healthy balance between family, scholarly, community and activist commitments that will not result in burnout?* These types of questions needed to be re-visited throughout the research process in order to ensure that my time as a researcher did not subsume my commitments to the very struggles I was studying.

This process of accountability does not simply apply to the research project or to the movements that I participated in as a scholar-activist, but represents a fundamental shift in the way in which I developed relationships with the people in my life more generally. Engaging in a decolonizing research process, thus, requires the researcher consider the project as an intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and material process and to create space in everyday life to balance your commitments to family, community, the academy, and the Indigenous and non-Indigenous movements at the heart of the research. Similarly, Fine, Tuck, and Zeller-Berkman (2008) caution researchers seeking to leap between local participatory projects and global analysis to ensure that we are "building, self consciously and transparently, mechanisms of participation so that our work remains

situated, even if multisituated, and accountable to place" (172). The need to be accountable to place for non-Indigenous researchers must also be balanced with a respect for and accountability to Indigenous peoples' long-standing relationships to their homelands (Sherman 2010; Snelgrove et al. 2014). Creating a space for dialogue on decolonization among non-Indigenous people in the settler colonial context of academic research is rife with contradictions. Kovach (2009) suggests that misconduct in these scenarios is based on the power structures of settler colonialism and not "a lack of cultural knowledge but good intentions" (142). To negotiate these contradictions, the researcher needs to be consistently re-evaluating the nature of each relationship of accountability that they initiate and determine principles to help make decisions when tensions arise. This means being honest and humble about your research intentions and the inevitable decisions you need to make to resolve or alleviate the contradictions that your research either faces or creates.

The participants in this research study sought to negotiate accountability to their organizing communities in a number of ways as well. For instance, every participant chose to have their names connected to the insights that they shared in this research. While each interviewee was given the option to use a pseudonym or to remain anonymous in their response, there was an overwhelming sense among the participants that what they said in the interviews should be accountable to the broader movements with whom they organize. Through the use of their own names participants also committed to being accountable to future generations of social movement organizers by contributing their experiences to the written history of the movements in which they have participated. Kovach (2009), referring to Indigenous methodologies and the transmission

of narratives, stories, and conversation to future generations, explains that having your name stand with your insights makes you accountable in the process of transmitting knowledge.

Similarly, in seeking to be accountable to research participants and the broader movements they represent, I felt it was critical for me as a researcher to uphold two key responsibilities: (1) to respect, listen, and consider each participant's thoughts and experiences with care and (2) to understand the historical context in which each movement's struggle is taking place. This is particularly important when conducting research across multiple sites and with participants who are differentially positioned along axes of gender, race, class, ability, sexuality, etc. It also requires a methodological approach grounded in a strong historical analysis of the conditions of settler colonialism and one that works to engage with the multiple and contradictory ways Indigenous peoples understand their relationships to land, cultural traditions, and ways of being.

To show accountability to the participants in my research project and their respective communities, I spent considerable time reading web content and historical texts created by them or by members of the movements they were affiliated with in order to gain an understanding of the political terrain in which they were organizing. I also tried to minimize jargon or academic language in my correspondence with potential participants as well as in the interview questions. Before, during, and after each research trip I also spent some time debriefing with mentors (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous), activists, and organizers with whom I have a long-standing relationships with to gain a better understanding of the conflicts, points of ongoing contention, and past relationship breakdowns within each city's anti-authoritarian current in order to be better

able to foresee any potential problems that could arise through participation in my research project.

These actions underlie the early stages of developing a practice of engaged and ongoing consent as part of the research process. In contrast to the bureaucratic "informed consent" procedures required by academic institutions in order to conduct qualitative research, this practice of consent requires ongoing and fluid discussion that necessitates the research participant be an active collaborator in how and when their insights are used. Even the use of the university "informed consent form" was viewed with suspicion by many of the participants in this study who considered this ethics process to be tied to the colonialist power structures of academia. One participant, himself an academic, was surprised that my *Informed Consent Form* seemed to incorporate only a passive push back against the move towards confidentiality and anonymity more common in qualitative research. After hesitantly signing the form, he noted:

> I guess those power dynamics are reflected in every stage of the work that we do, those power dynamics exist from proposal writing to doing the research and delivering the results and so always addressing those [is very important to me], maybe unlike some academics who do their research proper and are activists or agents for change or whatever outside of their research. But for me because I'm stretched so thin, I really try to create momentum and work with communities through the research or through my role as an educator and in a sense that's where I facilitate and support change that communities see as desirable (McLachlan 2013).

These types of accountability and consent practices are meant to resonate with the participants rather than to create (or legitimize) a dichotomous position of power between researcher and interviewee (Haraway 2004). Indeed, negotiating the power dynamics embedded within the academic research process became an ongoing topic of discussion with my research participants.

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Secondly, the researcher must apply these principles of consent and accountability to the writing, publishing, and promotion of the dissertation, not simply the interview process. Using the insights of the research participants in one's dissertation or in pieces intended for publication requires the difficult work of explicitly checking back with participants to see whether or not their words and the context in which they are used are articulated respectfully and in a way that aligns with how they would like to be represented. This means engaging in a process of renewed and renegotiated consent during multiple stages of the academic process. Longstanding relationships and reputations can be easily disrupted by careless use of quotations or the miscontextualization of someone's word. Furthermore, as a movement-generated project it is my intent to ensure that the work that I put forward serves to foster the emergence and spread of relationships and actions in support of Indigenous sovereignty and decolonization rather than provide fodder for the state or other oppositional forces to use as a means of attacking movements. However, as Bevington and Dixon (2005) caution, "movement-relevant research cannot be an uncritical reiteration of the pre-existing ideas of a favored movement. If the research is exploring questions that have relevance to a given movement, it is in the interests of that movement to get the best available information, even if those findings don't fit expectations" (191). While the researcher cannot predict all the ways in which information produced in a particular study could be used, being attentive to the ways in which social movement participants desire their words to be represented requires that both researcher and interviewee share responsibility for co-creating knowledge that is useful to the movements with which they are connected. Nonetheless, it must be acknowledged that research can be useful to some while being

harmful to others and while every precaution has been taken to reduce the amount of harm caused by such a project, accountability also means being prepared and open to criticisms, concerns, and disagreements with the outcomes of the research.

One of the ways to build this accountability into one's research practice is by engaging in a process of repeated and reaffirmed consent. In many radical communities the concept of repeated and reaffirmed consent has emerged as an important intervention in dealing with patriarchy, violence, and misogyny in intimate relationships, personal conflicts, and group dynamics (INCITE! 2011). The idea of engaged and active consent should also be seen as an important practice in decolonizing research methodologies. This is especially true given the long history of colonial violence perpetrated by the academy through the appropriation of knowledges, artifacts, and territories. However, it would be an error to suggest that Indigenous peoples have been passive victims of this academic violence as this research is often met with resistance and refusal by research subjects, Indigenous peoples in particular. Audra Simpson (2014) explains, for instance, how the refusal of consent to participate in ethnographic research is part of a strategy of resistance among the Kahnawa'kehró:non to assert political sovereignty. She argues:

> They deploy [refusal] as a political and ethical stance that stands in contrast to the desire to have one' distinctiveness as a culture, as a people recognized. Refusal comes with the requirement of having one's *political* sovereignty acknowledged and upheld, and raises the question of legitimacy for those who are usually in the position of recognizing: What is their authority to do so? Where does it come from? Who are they to do so? Those of us writing about these issues can also 'refuse'; this is a distinct form of ethnographic refusal and is tied inextricably to my final claim (Simpson 2014:11).

Opening up this research project to a process of repeated and reaffirmed consent means being aware of the possibility of refusal at any stage in the research. This means refusal

by Indigenous communities with whom the participants in this study have relationships and it means refusal on the part of the participants themselves. To be open to such refusal requires acknowledging the possibility that participants might want to dis-engage from the project, revise their interviews, or play a more hands-on role in the writing process. It may also mean a fundamental re-organization of the entire research project. Boundaries must be consistently re-negotiating over which segments of an interview are acceptable to be used publicly and which have been privately shared with the researcher to give context or to build personal trust with an explicit (and at times implicit) understanding that such information will not be shared beyond the interview itself.

As part of this accountability process, I gave participants an opportunity to edit (and re-edit) their transcripts for content, wording, and missing information at each stage of the process. This was especially important because recordings from oral interviews that take place during a single moment in time are an imperfect medium to capture a moving and fluid dialogue within, between, and inside dynamic social movements. With that in mind, I also gave participants the option to share their transcript with the movements in which they organize and to delete or pull back information that they felt uncomfortable sharing after collective deliberation. In doing so, I sought to foster a collective process of self-reflexivity rather than see this process as being inherently individualistic. In so doing, I hoped to subvert some of the self-actualizing power that comes from non-Indigenous or settler subjects reflecting upon their relationships with Indigenous peoples (Smith 2014). This is particularly evident in the way the research project tried to engage with the responsibility of imagining what unsettling/decolonizing looks like for non-Indigenous people and the practices needed to transform these social

relations in material ways.

As I suggest above, accountability and consent are ongoing and continuously re-negotiated before, during, and after the completion of the research project. During this dissertation I have attempted to maintain clear, timely, and consistent communication with research participants, however, I am aware that too many messages seeking consent or clarity can also create a situation where participants feel burned out by the amount of work they are being asked to put into this research project. Information overload can create a situation where participants stop responding or reading emails; communication can become too long, detailed, and complex to be clearly understood; and most importantly the researcher can abdicate their responsibility to make decisions on their own. I struggled to find an appropriate balance during the research process and I feel as though at times research participants felt burned out or incapable of giving their time to the research project. They may have also had to prioritize their personal life and political organizing above and beyond the demands of the research project. This created a situation where, as the researcher, I had to make decisions that reflected confidence in my long-standing discussions and relationships with organizers who participated in my research project, but also be aware of the possibility that my decisions may be challenged and could require revision, apology, or a new framework for collectively determining the future of the project. The following section deals more specifically how these experiences forced me to think more seriously about balancing one's responsibility to the decolonial process with the risk of appropriating or inappropriately adapting Indigenous knowledges/practices to fit one's research agenda.

Responsibility & Appropriation

Responsibility in a decolonizing research practice rests upon an ongoing collaboration with research participants, the broader social movements they represent, and the multiple Indigenous communities with whom they have developed social and political relationships (Stanton 2014). This dissertation emerged out of a particular historical context, namely, contemporary struggles for decolonization, assertions of Indigenous resurgence, and the development of relationships of solidarity with non-Indigenous people engaged in a multitude of anti-authoritarian struggles in Canada and the United States. In conducting this research I sought to enact that responsibility during the data collection phase, the data analysis, and the writing and distribution of the research. For instance, I made a conscious effort to develop research questions that challenged myself and other activists in non-Indigenous social movement spaces to grapple with Indigenous peoples' theories and practices of decolonization and resurgence with their particular social, political, and historical context in mind. As Nora Butler Burke, one of the research participants in this project, asked, "What are responsible ways to then engage in this work that are not just token talking about colonization at the same time?" Indeed, the tensions between responsible engagement with Indigenous theories, methodologies, and practices and the appropriation or misrepresentation of Indigenous knowledge underlie every decision taken in this research project. Snelgrove et al. (2014) suggest,

> [W]ithout centering Indigenous peoples' articulations, without deploying a relational approach to settler colonial power, and without paying attention to the conditions and contingencies of settler colonialism, studies of settler colonialism and practices of solidarity run the risk of reifying (and possibly replicating) settler colonial, as well as other, modes of domination (4).

In centering Indigenous theories and knowledges I am not discounting the important contributions that settler colonial studies has made to these discussions. Snelgrove et al. (2014) clearly show that the discipline has provided ways to understand the operations and effects of settler colonialism. For instance, settler colonial studies has contributed the important framing of settler colonialism as a structure rather than as an event (see Wolfe 2006; Veracini 2013; Barker 2012; Rifkin 2013). Nonetheless, the rise of settler colonial studies and its increasing importance in academic departments has often been at the expense of Indigenous theory (Macoun and Strakosch 2013). The study of settler/non-Indigenous processes of decolonization within anti-authoritarian social movements runs the risk of either re-centering settlers/non-Indigenous people as the primary actors in processes of decolonization or obscuring settler/non-Indigenous complicity in the colonial project through a move to innocence. Snelgrove (2014) explains, "As a move to innocence, it's a deferral of one's complicity and responsibility, as if colonization is only a problem because of others not quite getting it. In moves to innocence, those performing the move presume that there is such a thing as a good settler, a good colonizer, as if decolonization can occur outside of large scale, systematic subjective *and* objective transformations" (15). Such a move to innocence is a recurrent problem in developing a decolonizing methodological process for studying social movements.

Philip J. Deloria (1998) explains that settlers in the early stages of colonization often resisted the rule of elite by "playing Indian". He notes, "the Indianization of misrule transformed the rituals of protest still further, for it allowed rioters to *invent* American customs they so sorely lacked" (25, *emphasis in original*). In studying the ways in which contemporary radicals articulate their struggles in a decolonizing framework, this project

could also act as a tool to legitimize appropriative rituals of protest. Adam Barker (2010) contends that, "One of the frustrating implications of the decolonizing, unsettling, and ultimately, respectful approach to becoming a Settler ally...is that there is no 'plan,' no universally applicable model, no clear set of friends and enemies" (327). Instead, this research project seeks to contribute to an emerging set of principles derived from collective experiences in struggle, including many failures that often linger until they are pointed out by Indigenous peoples themselves.

However, given the history of "playing Indian", we must also question whether non-Indigenous scholars and research participants *can* apply Indigenous and/or decolonizing theory and methodologies to study processes of decolonization *without* being appropriative. This was most apparent in my research project when I struggled to articulate research questions that explored the role and responsibility of non-Indigenous people in responding to processes of Indigenous resurgence. For instance, I began to re-consider some of the ways I had framed questions about Indigenous decolonization after some participants identified that they were framing the discussion in an appropriative manner. For example, when discussing the process of Indigenous resurgence, one of my research questions was originally constructed as follows:

> "The context of resurgence among Indigenous peoples has some parallels and similarities with the ideas, desires and principles being practiced by a number of non-Indigenous radicals within settler states. How does this particular concept resonate with you?" (Fortier, Interview Themes, 2013).

My intention in asking this question was to get participants to respond to theories being articulated by Indigenous scholars Leanne Simpson (2008, 2012) and Taiaiake Alfred (2005) on the role of cultural, linguistic, and spiritual resurgence as part of the decolonial

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process for Indigenous peoples. My desire here was to inquire about the responsibility of settlers/non-Indigenous people to that process and whether a parallel process of reclamation or remembering of ways of being outside of the logics of capitalism/colonialism was possible and/or necessary in developing relationships of solidarity with Indigenous peoples. Although this was my intention, the question itself seemed to infer that a parallel process of resurgence was possible (and desirable) for non-Indigenous people seeking to develop relationships of solidarity with Indigenous movements for decolonization. Participants in the study responded to these questions in a multitude of ways, but many of the respondents were quick to point out the problematic nature of the question itself. One respondent, Fred Burrill who identifies himself as a white settler noted:

> I think a lot of people talk about these things in terms of the Two Row Wampum and parallel yet separate paths. I think it's important to keep that in mind because the alternative to that is a very uncritical and kind of appropriative relationship to the concept of resurgence. I don't know how it is in Toronto but in Montréal Idle No More events personally make me feel very uncomfortable - lots of white folks wearing feathers and doing round dances and stuff. I know that those actions come from the organizers of Idle No More who are Indigenous people, but personally I don't want to participate in a round dance. It's a resurgence of not my culture.

While there was no clear consensus among research participants as to what the lines/boundaries were between the responsibility to speak to these questions and the risk of doing so in an appropriative manner, Fred's comment reflects a general unease among research participants to questions/inferences that would conflate the responsibilities of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to the process of decolonization.

The semi-structured approach I took in conducting the interviews allowed for the possibility to revise and reflect on how my questions were framed and so I began to make

a conscious decision to simplify the questions and to be clear about the relational context in which I was asking them. In this sense, I wanted to ensure that I was not assuming parallels and similarities between anti-authoritarian politics and those central to Indigenous decolonization and resurgence. Additionally, I was aware of the potential "move to innocence" that could be created by focusing on the development of critical consciousness around processes of decolonization among non-Indigenous radicals. Tuck and Yang (2012) suggest that such moves to innocence are characteristic of settler desires for relief from the relentless guilt and haunting of the settler-colonial context. These can be manifested in a number of ways including the attempt by non-Indigenous progressives to differentiate themselves from mainstream settler society because of their greater consciousness of the settler colonial condition. In doing so progressives seek to absolve themselves from considering or working towards material change, including land reclamation/relinquishment and the transformation of governance structures. Tuck and Yang (2012:19) argue that, "to focus on decolonizing the mind, or the cultivation of critical consciousness, as if it were the sole activity of decolonization; to allow *conscientization* to stand in for the more uncomfortable task of relinquishing stolen land," can act as an intellectual substitute for activists in lieu of the difficult process of material decolonization.

Conscious of these moves to innocence, I sought to provoke research participants to grapple with what decolonization meant for them in material ways (i.e. as evidenced by actions, relationships, and direct experience) and to consider how the process of Indigenous resurgence changed their relationships and responsibilities with Indigenous peoples, each other, and the land. Conversely, I felt that it was also important to challenge

the fear of appropriation that many non-Indigenous anti-authoritarian organizers have of borrowing Indigenous knowledges or practices. Being open to knowledges and teachings shared by Indigenous peoples is part of the process of solidarity – a process that can only take place in a reciprocal manner (Alfred 2005). One research participant, Jaggi Singh, articulated such a point when I explained how it was difficult to construct questions about non-Indigenous relationships to processes of Indigenous resurgence without being appropriative:

> I'm a bit critical of people who are hardline anti-cultural appropriation. Cultural appropriation to me is a very specific thing and clearly I'm against that – it's about the very exploitative use of culture. But there is a respectful borrowing that can happen when you talk about debate and dialogue ...

Indeed, the ability to take guidance from and to respect the knowledges that Indigenous peoples have offered settlers seeking to live in a good relationship on these territories seems critical to any discussion of decolonization in settler colonial states. It is also critical to understand that Indigenous peoples do not speak with one voice and that disagreement, contradictions, and debates across and within Indigenous communities are as prevalent as they are within and across non-Indigenous anti-authoritarian social movements and settler society in general. Building relationships of solidarity must also mean discussing these differences with an open mind and heart and being ready and willing to listen and respond to conflicts as they arise. Working from a place of humility when it is paired with being accountable to struggles for Indigenous self-determination can be a powerful way of honouring one's commitments to the process of unsettling – despite the complications and contradictions that exist in building these relationships.

Sharing knowledge in a non-appropriating way is a critical component of

developing a decolonizing research framework. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) states:

> Sharing knowledge is a long-term commitment. It is much easier for researchers to hand out a report and for organizations to distribute pamphlets than to engage in continuing knowledge-sharing processes. For indigenous researchers, however, this is what is expected of us as we live and move within our various communities. The old colonial adage that knowledge is power is taken seriously in indigenous communities and many processes have been discussed and enacted in order to facilitate effective ways of sharing knowledge (16).

Understanding that Smith is referring to research contexts *within* Indigenous communities, it seems clear that some form of knowledge sharing is also critical in constructing research projects designed to grappled with issues of decolonization *among non-Indigenous people* as well. Being conscious of what is being borrowed and attributing these knowledges to specific and particular Indigenous people and nations is important when developing a relational approach to decolonization. This was a driving consideration in the development and re-development of my research questions and themes.

Conclusion

This chapter considers important ethical and methodological questions that emerged over the course of my dissertation. I begin with these considerations precisely because I want to situate the following chapters in the context that they were written. By exploring some of the key methodological challenges and limitations of this study, I seek to emphasize the contingent and fluid nature of theory as it emerges and is applied in practice. As part of a movement-generated research process, my dissertation has not been immune to the changing political landscape in which it was written. This includes the ongoing conversations about the usefulness of a project such as this to the project of

decolonization.

As I struggled to establish parameters for who would participate in this research project and where I would go to conduct the research, I was faced with methodological decisions that were also fundamentally political. While the interviews that I conducted among fifty-one research participants in nine different cities were deep, rich and filled with a wealth of theoretical and experiential knowledge, my original use of self-defined identity (rather than experience) as a means of setting research participation parameters inadvertently restricted or limited the participation of self-identified Indigenous activists and in many ways continued the settler colonial project of silencing and erasing their voices. By the time I faced a situation that forced me to adapt my methodology, it was far too late in the project to fully address this glaring gap. As such, my dissertation research must be read with these limitations in mind.

Nonetheless, by centering Indigenous theories and epistemologies within my research methodology, I have been guided by a desire to respectfully contribute to a broader discussion on the role of non-Indigenous people in dismantling settler colonialism and supporting Indigenous resurgence on Turtle Island. This research has been driven primarily by my relationships and experiences with ongoing social movements and it is hopefully a contribution to the growing body of literature in academia that is generated by and relevant to social movements. Therefore, this chapter also serves as part of a process of community accountability. It is an attempt to practice many of the lessons that are shared in the following chapters and it is a challenge to other academics to make transparent even the most vulnerable and shameful inadequacies of our research. As such, I believe that a decolonizing research process has the potential to

build trust through engaged and reaffirmed consent at multiple stages of the research process and one's academic career. This is why I have attempted to explore some of the core decisions and mistakes that I made during the research and the barriers, tensions, and contradictions that continue to shape my academic process in the hopes that these experiences will help to improve our collective practices of scholar-activist research.

CHAPTER TWO
Social Movement Pathways Toward Decolonization

"[T]he possibility of alliances between whites, blacks, and aboriginal peoples, and the fear of such unity in the European ruling class' imagination, at home and on the plantations, was constantly present. It is for this reason that, starting in the 1640s, the accumulation of an enslaved proletariat in the Southern American colonies and the Caribbean was accompanied by the construction of racial hierarchies, thwarting the possibility of such combinations."

– Silvia Federici

"Land, justice, self-determination: Canada is an illegal nation." This chant rings out loudly from the crowd and is repeated over and over with significant zeal. It's a sunny Thursday in downtown Toronto. Drums are beating and thousands of people have mobilized on the streets as part of a week of actions leading up to the 2010 G20 Summit taking place in the city's financial district. Protest actions fairly typical for G8/G20 meetings have already occurred in anticipation of the two major weekend actions, the Friday community rally and Saturday labour march. Today's demonstration, however, has been called by "The Defenders of the Land", an Indigenous-led collaboration that describes itself as "free of government or corporate funding, and dedicated to building a fundamental movement for Indigenous rights" (Defenders of the Land 2014). The Defenders of the Land are a coming-together of Indigenous communities and organizers who believe in land defence, self-determination and resistance to colonization. While not fully representative of the breadth and depth of Indigenous decolonial struggles and practices of resurgence, Defenders of the Land is an important pan-Indigenous network seeking to coordinate resistance efforts across many nations. They are joined in the march by scores of non-Indigenous radicals and social justice activists including environmentalists, radical queers, anarchists, anti-poverty activists, migrant justice organizers and many others.

I march as part of the migrant justice contingent made up predominantly of members of No One Is Illegal, a network of autonomous groups with strong bases in Vancouver, Montréal, Toronto, Halifax and Ottawa. After five years of trying to make connections and build relationships between migrant justice struggles and Indigenous sovereignty as a member of No One Is Illegal-Toronto, today's march feels like a watershed moment of solidarity in an ongoing process of decolonizing our movements (even if there were legitimate critiques that emerged following the demonstration).[6] It certainly differed from the version of Canada's settler colonial history advocated by Prime Minister Stephen Harper who, atop the podium at the previous year's G20 Summit in Pittsburgh glibly proclaimed, "We...have no history of colonialism. So we have all of the things that many people admire about the great powers but none of the things that threaten or bother them."[7] The disjuncture between the Prime Minister denying the history of colonization in a settler state like Canada and the chants on the streets of Toronto challenging the legitimacy of that very state was highlighted by rows of militarized riot police guarding the perimeter walls where the G20 leaders were meeting. Dene scholar Glen Coulthard unravels the seeming contradiction of Prime Minister Harper's denial of Canada's history of colonization and the recent moves toward public apologies and reconciliation for residential schools and other colonial practices by showing how settler colonial states work to control historical narratives. He explains:

> In settler-colonial contexts – where there is no period marking a clear or
> formal transition from an authoritarian past to a democratic present –
> state-sanctioned approaches to reconciliation must ideologically

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[6] A pointed critique of Defenders of the Land and the June 24th Day of Action was made by a group of anonymous Indigenous women active within the network and Indigenous decolonization struggles more broadly. A mock-apology was published followed by a public letter explaining the action. It can be read in full here: https://warriorpublications.wordpress.com/2011/04/28/why-we-wrote-the-statement-of-apology/

[7] Retrieved on November 21, 2014 at: http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/09/26/columns-us-g20-canada-advantages-idUSTRE58P05Z20090926

manufacture such a transition by allocating the abuses of settler colonization to the dustbins of history, and/or purposely disentangle processes of reconciliation from questions of settler-coloniality as such (Coulthard 2014:108).

Consigning Canada's past (and ongoing) practices of colonization to the dustbins of history extends well beyond the state's official policies and is replicated on a mass scale by non-Indigenous settlers invested in the production and re-production of Canada as a nation-state.

The political left has not been immune to such practices of collective amnesia. As activist-scholar peter kulchyski (2013) reminds us, while the radical left have "been strong supporters in solidarity struggles for social justice around the world, they have a less inspiring record when it comes to dealing with indigenous struggles in their own backyard" (25). However, as a number of activists and scholars have recently noted, there is a growing anti-authoritarian undercurrent of groups and movements within the radical left that have shifted their analysis in a way that centralizes the need for decolonization within their political struggles (Walia 2013; Alfred 2005; Barker 2009). There is also greater acknowledgement of how the long histories of anti-colonial struggles by Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island have helped to shape some of the contemporary practices of the anti-authoritarian current in today's movements (Dixon 2014). That being said, how decolonization is understood, imagined and practiced by non-Indigenous anti-authoritarians varies widely and at times disparately and those differences have material consequences in terms of solidarity relationships, political strategy, and pre-figurative practice.

When I asked peter kulchyski about the shift towards a politics of decolonization taking place among some contemporary social movements he was quick to remind me of

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the risks of having a narrow conceptualization of history. "Sort of from the activist side, for me it's more a question of a lot of older painstaking work being built upon," he said, "rather than something appearing out of nowhere sort of suddenly." Other interview participants alluded to the process of distorting, erasing, or forgetting social movement histories as being connected to the organization and administration of ideology and power by state and capitalist institutions like schools, the media, and government institutions (Kinsman and Gentile 2010). This is especially true in settler colonial societies where a large part of maintaining order is the creation and re-creation of national myths to perpetuate settler dominance (Fortier 2015). As one of the older and most consistent Indigenous solidarity activists that I interviewed, kulchyski draws on close to four decades of relationship building with Indigenous peoples in struggle. He suggests, for instance that it can be easy to focus on the "newness" of recent developments in radical practice and to inadvertently erase the histories of movements, events, and individuals who helped to lay the foundation for this shift. kulchyski goes on,

> Certainly there's a new wave of energy and excitement that I appreciate in settler decolonization in Canada and I think that's very important...but my tendency more is to acknowledge the elders and acknowledge the activists that came before me who are often unheralded. And I think their work didn't just disappear, it built slowly until we reached a point where we could have a critical mass and start self-generating a lot more.

As kulchyski points out, social movement participants rely significantly upon collective memory and storytelling to transmit their histories and often because of high rates of turnover, burnout, and change within social movements this results in collective forgetting or pre-occupation with the perceived newness of a contemporary struggle. These histories face erasure, distortion, or appropriation by the state and other

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institutional actors making it even more important that we engage in projects that seek to record and capture important discussions and debates within our movements.

This chapter intervenes in the history of social movements in Canada and the United States through an anti-institutional lens. Influenced by the work of radical historians such as EP Thompson (1991), Howard Zinn (1995), and Robin D.G. Kelley (2002), my historical framework emphasizes lived experience rather than abstract theory as mediating social relations and social consciousness. As William Sewell (2005) suggests, "Structures shape people's practices, but it is also people's practices that constitute (and reproduce) structures. In this view of things, human agency and structure, far from being *opposed*, in fact *presuppose* each other" (127). To study the multiple pathways that have contributed to a material shift towards a politics of decolonization among anti-authoritarian movements requires that we study not just the structures that patterned these social relations but also the principles that pattern these practices (Sewell 2005). As Dixon (2014) clearly points out, tracing these trajectories cannot be done through a simple linear narrative, as this is rarely the way in which movements develop. This chapter aims, instead, to present a brief history of the social movement trajectories that have coalesced to produce an emergent politics of decolonial struggle amongst a large segment of non-Indigenous anti-authoritarians in the Canadian settler state and a growing faction in the United States.

In constructing this history, I draw from interviews I conducted with fifty-one organizers from various social movement groups in nine different cities. A useful way to explore these political transformations in the anti-authoritarian current is to delve into the tensions that underlie the historical context of settler colonialism, capitalism,

heteropatriarchy, and white supremacy with which these activists must contend. Just as Thompson (1991) shows that the dominance of capitalism is contingent rather than inevitable, my historical approach seeks to trace how the alliance of the white elite and poor whites (including those on the radical left) is consolidated through not only the logics but the material benefits afforded to settlers through the project of conquest. In this way, the tensions that arise in today's movements as contradictions or challenges are situated as being historical rooted in the choices made by previous liberation struggles to disinvest (at best) and perpetuate (at worst) the structure of settler colonialism.

As Glen Coulthard (2014) explains, this "settler-colonial relationship is one characterized by a particular form of *domination*, that is, it is a relationship where power – in this case, interrelated discursive and nondiscursive facets of economic, gendered, racial, and state power- has been structured into a relatively secure or sedimented set of hierarchical social relations that continue to facilitate the *dispossession* of Indigenous peoples of their lands and self-determining authority" (7). My argument in this chapter is that radical and left social movements have been historically complicit in securing these social relations despite their desire to topple classist, gendered and racialized structures of oppression in our society. While in every era there exists some exceptions to this trend, some individuals or social movement groups who see the centrality of settler colonialism to the power structures of Canada and the United States, I argue below that it is only recently that a commitment to a politics of decolonization has been taken up in a broad and sustained manner by non-Indigenous-led social movements. I hope to briefly discuss why and how this has happened in the following sections.

523 Years of Indigenous Struggle against Domination

The history of (de)colonization in the Americas is part of a much older story in human societies about the desire and practice of domination and the multiple ways in which this domination is negotiated and resisted. The logic of domination always lurks as a possibility for organizing society and is reflected in the cultural, epistemological, and administrative processes that, "characterizes the formation of most modern Western nation-states" (Scott 2009:3). Domination is a crucial component of any project of civilization, ancient and modern. However, as Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz (2014) correctly points out, the form of colonialism that Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island have experienced "was modern from the beginning: the expansion of European corporations, backed by government armies, into foreign areas with the subsequent appropriation of lands and resources" (6). The processes of genocide, displacement, and exploitation foundational to the logics of capital accumulation are also particular to the desire for totalizing domination inherent to settler colonialism in the modern world system (Wallerstein 1974). Since the imposition of Romanized Christianity as the dominant religious tradition in Western Europe and its symbiotic yet tenuous relationship with Enlightenment thinking we see a pattern that conceptualizes humans as being dominated by God and thereby being driven to dominate the land, the animals, other humans, the mind, and the spirit.

The intimate relationship between the logics of domination in Christianity, capitalism, and conquest were set at least by the eleventh to thirteenth century European Crusades to conquer North Africa and the Middle East and secure trade routes for the emerging mercantilist class (Dunbar-Ortiz 2014). As Dunbar-Ortiz (2014) notes, "This

profit-based religion was the deadly element that European merchants and settlers brought to the Americas" (32). This desire for domination seeks to be all encompassing and forms the core logic of capitalism and colonialism.

Given that capitalism aspires to become a totalizing system of domination, it must continuously expand its reach and cannot allow for the existence of large land bases on which people live and practice non-exploitative forms of governance and relationships with the land. However, as Frederic Jameson (1984) argues, any social formation consists of many modes of production that exist simultaneously as residual, dominant and emergent. Because of the contingent threat of other modes of production, these alternate ways of organizing society need to be consistently attacked, isolated, or erased in order for capitalism to maintain its control as the dominant mode of production. In this sense, Indigenous resistance to the colonization of the Americas is also a struggle against the capitalist mode of production and the logics of domination that maintain the structure of settler colonialism (Wolfe 2006). But these struggles are also an assertion of ways of organizing society and relating to others and the land that are premised on mutuality and reciprocity (Amadahy 2010; Simpson 2011; Coulthard 2014).

Telling this story from a decolonizing lens requires that we challenge the linear narratives that pervade Western concepts of history, including those of the political left. For instance, the overriding belief that capitalism "evolved" from the feudal mode of production and thus represents a better or higher form of social life prevents many non-Indigenous radicals from taking the holistic process of decolonizing our struggles seriously. These logics can be traced to the counter-revolutionary force of capitalism that emerged to suppress the mobilizations of European land-based peasants against

domination by the monarchy, social elites and warlords (Thompson 1991; Federici 2004).

As Silvia Federici explains,

> From the vantage point of this struggle, we can also see that capitalism was not the product of an evolutionary development bringing forth economic forces that were maturing in the womb of the old order. Capitalism was the response of the feudal lords, the patrician merchants, the bishops and popes, to a centuries-long social conflict that, in the end, shook their power, and truly gave 'all the world a big jolt.' Capitalism was the counter-revolution that destroyed the possibilities that had emerged from the anti-feudal struggle – possibilities which, if realized, might have spared us the immense destruction of lives and the natural environment that has marked the advance of capitalist relations worldwide. (21).

By extending Federici's analysis, we can understand colonialism as an expansion of European systems of domination to other spaces and territories of the world. Colonialism is the cause of the largest displacement of humans and theft of land the planet has ever known. Nonetheless, at every turn colonialism has been a contested terrain, never capable of achieving its totalizing mission in any part of the world (Singh 1963). This totalizing process was never guaranteed to succeed, as everywhere this system sought to take hold people resisted, "fighting against land privatization, the abolition of customary rights, the imposition of new taxes, wage-dependence, and the continuous presence of armies in their neighborhoods, which was so hated that people rushed to close the gates of their towns to prevent soldiers from settling among them" (Federici 2004:82). One underlying threat to this process of domination in settler colonial states was the possibility to enact relationships of solidarity between those who were being displaced, enslaved, and dispossessed. However, in the North American context, examples of such attempts at solidarity appear only sporadically in the historical records. It is much more common to read about the interests of poor white settlers seeking land

pitted against those of Indigenous peoples, enslaved Africans, and more recently migrants of colour exploited for their labour power (see Olson 2004; Boggs and Kurashige 2012). J. Sakai (1989) argues, "the capitalists proved to their satisfaction that dissent and rebelliousness within the settler ranks could be quelled by *increasing* the colonial exploitation of other nations and peoples" (11). This would become a recurrent story in the history of settler left struggles, whereby the potential solidarity with insurgent Indigenous, African, Asian, and other oppressed and exploited people was mitigated by the ruling classes through the promise of land and the doctrine of white supremacy.

The White Settler Radical

Early European settlements on Indigenous territories in North America, such as those in Jamestown, Virginia or on the banks of the St. Lawrence River suffered from repeated desertions of settlers to Indigenous nations. In Jamestown, for instance, one in every seven settlers deserted the colony during the winter of 1609-1610 (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000). Some early colonists related to Indigenous nations and systems of governance and saw in those practices characteristics related to their own ancestors like the Picts, Celts, and Britons who resisted the Roman and later English civilizing missions (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000). The ruling colonial elites, understanding the threat such desertions posed, were quick to implement tools to maintain power including the *Laws Divine, Moral, and Martial* (1609). Sanctioned by the Virginia Company, these laws condemned to death those who deserted the colony to live with neighbouring Indigenous nations. Such regulations, Christianization, and the "escape valve" of western expansionism to prevent uprisings by poor Europeans formed the backbone of the

doctrine of white supremacy in North America. The doctrine of white supremacy became an important weapon to destroy potential solidarity between European settlers and both Indigenous peoples and enslaved Africans. This doctrine of white supremacy was vast and multifaceted and was re-enforced after each major uprising where solidarity between poor white settlers, Indigenous peoples, and enslaved Africans took place (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000; Kelley 2002).

It is important to underscore that the doctrine of white supremacy was not simply a psychological affiliation with racist ideology, but was produced materially through the transfer of land from Indigenous peoples to white settlers and the re-configuration of the settler economy to ensure that white settlers would be differentiated from enslaved Africans and Indigenous peoples within the workforce. Dunbar-Ortiz (2014) traces this divisive practice back to the ideology of "pure" Christian bloodlines that legitimized the Crusades. She notes, "The ideology of white supremacy was paramount in neutralizing the class antagonisms of the landless against the landed and distributing confiscated land and properties of the Moors and Jews in Iberia, of the Irish in Ulster, and of Native American and African peoples" (37). What Dunbar-Ortiz points to is that white supremacy in North America fulfills the needs of the colonial elite to secure racial unity in the face of class solidarities between poor whites, African slaves, and Indigenous peoples. Joel Olson explains that the concept of race in North America, therefore, grew out of a combination of imperialism, settler colonialism and chattel slavery. Drawing on the work of Hannah Arendt, Olson (2004) argues, "European racism has served as a bridge connecting nationalism and imperialism, two ideologies that are otherwise internally contradictory" (7). In Europe, imperial expansion is justified by the promise of

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granting the domestic poor spoils won through imperialist enterprises and the assurances of racial superiority over those who are colonized. However, in settler colonial states like Canada and the United States the racial contract between the white ruling elite and the white working class is predicated upon sharing the spoils of not only imperial conquest but also settler colonial rule. The spoils of settler colonial rule are drawn from the institution of chattel slavery (Olson 2004), the exploitation of the labour of migrants of colour through restrictive immigration laws (Sharma 2006), and the appropriation of Indigenous territories through the institutionalization of genocide and internal displacement (Wolfe 2006).

Beyond martial law and punishments of white European settlers for treason, the British Crown used treaty making as a tool to limit poor whites from negotiating relationships with Indigenous nations. By declaring itself the only entity allowed to purchase land from Indigenous peoples, the Crown became the broker between those nations and settler colonists on questions of land. Since the Crown could now be seen as the only entity through which settlers could attain land (even if they were often excluded from land ownership by speculators), their survival (and desire for upward class mobility) was tied to the ability to be granted land from the British authorities in exchange for their labour within the emerging capitalist system (Keefer 2013). Imposing clear demarcations based on race and favorable treatment towards European settlers, the British Crown (and later the settler states of Canada and the United States) were able to advance the ideology and practice of white supremacy to consolidate power. As Federici (2004) notes, "white", in the colonies, "became not just a badge of social and economic privilege...but a moral attribute, a means by which social hegemony was naturalized" (107). This "white"

privilege helped the elite to consolidate their control over the land base, transform property relations, and expropriate territories from Indigenous peoples. The foundation of white supremacy allowed for the monopoly of the means of production and the means of subsistence in the hands of white settler society.

Through this historical lens, we can understand settler colonialism to be a white supremacist project and a genocidal policy that is premised on the elimination of Indigenous peoples in order to expropriate land and resources and to assert the white settler as the logical inheritor of these territories and resources. This logic, while challenged periodically by white settlers in resistance to their exploitative class conditions, came to dominate left political struggle from the seventeenth century into the twentieth century and continues to have a pervasive presence today (Olson 2004; Wolfe 2006; Smith 2006; Amadahy and Lawrence 2009). Andrea Smith (2006) adds that the logic of white supremacy and the pillars of genocide, orientalism, and slavery that undergird it, can also have destabilizing impacts in trying to achieve solidarity between people of colour and Indigenous peoples, noting, "Our survival strategies and resistance to white supremacy are set by the system of white supremacy itself. What keeps us trapped within our particular pillars of white supremacy is that we are seduced with the prospect of being able to participate in the other pillars" (69). For Smith, these logics ensure that attempts to construct decolonizing relationships of solidarity amongst groups differently positioned within heteropatriarchy and white supremacy are difficult and often unsustainable.

By the end of the nineteenth century consolidation of the U.S. and Canadian settler states through genocidal wars resulted in a shift of focus in official state policy

towards a practice of assimilation that would continue the settler colonial strategy of extermination (Wolfe 2006). At the same time, North America began rapidly industrializing. Multiple waves of (mostly) European migrants began shifting the demographics of the continent considerably. This had three tangible effects: the first was to increase the rate of proletarianization in North America amongst Euro-American settlers; the second to increase the rate of land dispossession of Indigenous peoples; and the third to restructure the labour force in a way that excluded, harassed, hyper-exploited and terrorized Black, Chinese, Japanese, Mexican, Indigenous and other non-white workers in such a brutal way that these populations were either driven out of the workforce altogether or formed a large body of the working underclass (Sakai 1989).

In both Canada and the United States white workers organized and engaged in massive strike actions against the ruling classes, but often with demands for access to Indigenous lands or for better work conditions at the expense of Black workers and other non-whites. J. Sakai's *Settlers: the Mythology of the White Proletariat* offers an important critique of left historical revisionism that seeks to find evidence of sustained solidarity between white and Black workers. Sakai (1989) makes the important observations that since white settlers "clung to and hungered after the petty privileges derived from the loot of empire, they **as a stratum** became rabid and reactionary supporters of conquest and the annexation of oppressed nations" (25). Southern and Eastern European workers, who were discriminated against upon arrival in North America, began to be integrated in the workforce as labour movements asserted "white-only" policies and completely divested from any sustained solidarity with Indigenous struggles for sovereignty and Black struggles for liberation.

Joel Olson (2004) drawing from the work of W.E.B. Du Bois asserts, "White workers...repress the Black community because they see it in their (short-term) interests to do so. The tragedy is that in exchange for such wages poor whites maintain a system that exploits them, too" (14). Even some of the most militant unions like the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), who saw themselves as anti-authoritarian internationalists focused their energies on campaigns around the eight-hour workday and largely avoided direct opposition to colonialism or imperialist wars like World War I (Sakai 1989).

The origins of white settler colonial domination lie in a cross-class alliance between poor and working whites and the white colonial elite. As Olson (2004) explains, "Class consciousness is blunted within the dominant race because social prestige and civil and political rights are granted to all members regardless of wealth, giving poor whites the right to identify with the upper class" (17). Similarly, another great contradiction preventing white settler solidarity from forming with the struggles of Indigenous peoples, Black people, Xicanas/Xicanos, and other non-white people is the parasitic nature of settler colonialism. Since even the lowest rungs of the white settler society share in the benefits of land and resource theft in Canada and the United States and global capitalist exploitation through imperialism abroad, there are only a few historical examples of sustained movements of solidarity to dismantle settler states, challenge white supremacy, and resist imperialism (see Zinn 1995; Linebaugh and Rediker 2000; Kelley 2002). Since this chapter's main focus is to trace the trajectory of some strands of solidarity between the white working class, Indigenous peoples, people of colour, and Black liberation struggles it is important to acknowledge that such alliances represent an exception rather than an historical norm. However, even some of

these famous historical examples given by radical historians like Howard Zinn (1995) to show evidence of sustained racial solidarity, such as Bacon's Rebellion, break down under further scrutiny. In the case of Bacon's Rebellion of 1776, now widely understood as a cross-racial alliance of poor Europeans and Africans, the purpose of the rebellion was to attack, kill and displace Indigenous peoples – not the colonial elite – this was an incidental outcome of an otherwise overt land grab. Although Bacon's Rebellion did have the resulting effect of causing the Virginia leadership to flee temporarily, this alliance's main goal (as well as many others between poor Europeans and Africans) was the appropriation of Indigenous lands. An in-depth analysis of what prevented the white working class from participating in a cross-racial class struggle for liberation are beyond the scope of this study, but are taken up rigorously in Joel Olson's *The Abolition of White Democracy*, J. Sakai's *Settlers: The Myth of the White Proletariat* and Paulette Regan's *Unsettling the Settler Within*. In the proceeding sections of this chapter I seek to trace the roots and trajectories of how cross-racial alliances have been constituted (if precariously) through a politics of decolonization rather than through the logics of settler colonialism.

Indigenous Sovereignty and the Seeds of Solidarity

The emergence of the white settler as a social class is central to the history of left struggles for political gains and political power within the settler state. Since these struggles have tended to replicate the settler-colonial logics of state-building foundational to maintaining the structures of colonialism the revolutionary potential of left social movements in Canada and the United States have been significantly blunted. Even when these movements have given legitimate attention to the inherently oppressive nature of

racism (and this too is extremely rare), left social movements have struggled to escape the pervasive logics leading to isolation, antagonism, and instrumentalism in their relationships with Indigenous peoples.

One of the ways that the white left has sought to resolve this contradiction without actually engaging in meaningful and material transformation in its political practice is through a historical narrative that equates white immigration with the struggles of Black people and people of colour to find home and belonging on these lands. As Dunbar-Ortiz (2014) notes, "[T]he revised [multicultural] narrative produced the 'nation of immigrants' framework, which obscures the US practice of colonization, merging settler colonialism with immigration to metropolitan centres during and after the industrial revolution" (13). This narrative, suggests Dunbar-Ortiz, is not wrong or deficient in its important contributions of historical facts and details about struggles against capitalism, racism, and the ruling elite, but is fundamentally flawed *in its essence*. By erasing the presence of Indigenous, Black, and other people of colour's struggles, these histories produce the possibility of a distinct American (or Canadian) radical tradition and eliminate the significant contradictions within the organized left with respect to its broad support of the settler colonial project. As Jafri (2013) argues, "settler/colonial desire is integral to the construction of settler subjectivities, to settler narratives, and to the project of erasure underlying the indigenizing efforts of settler projects" (79). Rather than deal with the challenges and contradictions produced by the structures of white supremacy and settler colonialism, the project of erasure reimagines left social movements as domestic or indigenized struggles. In other words, the white left sees itself as a national body seeking to reclaim American democracy (Graeber 2013; Olson 2014) or some form of

reconciliation (Asch 2014) rather than dismantle the structures of white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and settler colonialism that underlie the capitalist project in settler states like Canada and the United States.

It is important to make explicit the ways in which the radical left has historically abandoned (at best) and actively participated in the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their territories. This was a recurrent theme in my interviews. For instance, when I interviewed members of the Maypop Collective, an environmental justice group in Philadelphia, Zein Nakhoda cautioned:

> [F]or me [decolonization] is both a responsibility to history, which means understanding the history of colonization, the history of the country that I grew up in, and events, places, groups of people, genocides, forced displacements, cultural violence, land seizure, and to understand our responsibility to that history [...] The movement continues through now and there are people who continue those ongoing struggles and the legacies are ongoing.

It is also important to articulate that Indigenous struggles against colonialism should have clear resonance with non-Indigenous anti-authoritarian movements. As Dixon (2014) correctly points out, "More than any other lineage of resistance in North America, Indigenous struggles for self-determination have consistently challenged the territorial control of nation-states, offered a living alternative to private property, and foregrounded colonialism as an ongoing system of domination" (25). Although there are many examples of non-Indigenous struggles (labour movements, early anarchists, anti-imperialists, abolitionists) that have contributed to this anti-authoritarian history, the dissonance arising from a lack of engagement in relationship building, solidarity, and support for Indigenous resistance is ever-present.

In fact, a number of the organizers that I spoke to in my interviews discussed how

their experience of supporting Indigenous struggles outside of Canada and the United States (i.e. Palestinians, Zapatistas, Aymara, among others) forced them to contend with the need to ground anti-authoritarian politics in a decolonizing framework *within the settler states they called home.* For instance, Judy Rebick a long time anti-racist feminist and Indigenous solidarity organizer in Toronto described how it was not until she engaged in solidarity work in Bolivia that she realized the importance of Indigenous anti-colonial struggles back in Canada. Judy recounts:

> I'd been involved in supporting Indigenous struggles for years and years but it wasn't until I went to Bolivia that I started to get a real feeling for how much we had to learn from Indigenous people. Like really had to learn. I felt their leadership was going to become central to solving the problems of the world…They were saying things that were so challenging to my ideas and yet here they were making a revolution, a real revolution. And I couldn't understand what they were saying, so I had to really start thinking about it and understanding.

Judy's story is common among white settlers in the organized left – Indigenous struggles (as well as Black and people of colour struggles) remain largely illegible or indecipherable within the confines of their political ideologies. To understand one's complicity in the settler colonial project means being open to radically transforming the ideologies, practices, and goals that drive left social movements in Canada and the United States. By developing sustained and long-term relationships with Indigenous sovereignty struggles and breaking from the politics of assimilation and liberal recognition that underlie the settler colonial project, non-Indigenous anti-authoritarians have started to consider the importance of centralizing decolonization within our movements.

Pathways Toward Decolonization in the Anti-Authoritarian Current

What precipitated this shift towards decolonization among radicals in the anti-

authoritarian current? How have decolonial politics been influenced by Indigenous resurgence? A number of Indigenous scholars and activists identify the mid 1960s as an important turning point in anti-colonial resistance on Turtle Island (see for example Hill 2010; Coulthard 2014a; Dunbar-Ortiz 2014; Churchill 2003). This era is seen as a time of transformation and resurgence in the strategies, tactics, and terrain of struggle for Indigenous peoples against the Canadian and U.S. settler states. During this time, we see the increased use of direct action as a strategy to assert Indigenous sovereignty and as resistance to further dispossession and colonial incursions on Indigenous territories. An oft-noted starting point of these actions is 1965-1970 when Indigenous nations in the Pacific Northwest (including the Puyallup, Nisqually, Muckleshoot, among other nations) exercised their inherent rights to fishing in their traditional territories in violation of colonial laws (Churchill 2003). Termed by some as "flashpoint events", these acts of direct application of Indigenous sovereignty in defiance of the settler colonial state, settler society, and both local and multinational corporations have taken place with increasing frequency since the 1960s (Russell 2010).

Some important examples of such actions include the occupation of Alcatraz (1969-1971), the blockades at Anicinabe Park (1970), the siege at Wounded Knee (1973), the ongoing resistance to strip mining by the Dine' at Black Mesa (1974), the ongoing assertion of sovereignty by the Algonquins of Barriere Lake (1980), the Lubicon Cree disruptions of the Calgary Winter Olympics (1988), the Temagami First Nations blockades against logging (1988-1989), the "Oka Crisis" in Kanehsata:ke (1990), the standoff at Ts'peten (1995), the reclamation of Aazhoodena at Ipperwash (1995), the struggle to assert fishing rights by the Miq'Mak at Burnt Church (1999), the ongoing

blockade against logging and mercury poisoning of the water at Grassy Narrows/Asubpeeschoseewagong (2003), the reclamation of Kanehstanton by the Haudenosaunee of Six Nations (2006), resistance to gold mining by the people of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (2008-2010); the "No Olympics on Stolen Native Land" resistance to the Vancouver Olympics (2010); the rise of the Idle No More movement (2013); and most recently Miq'Mak resistance to shale gas exploration in Elsipogtog (2014).

In addition to these flashpoint events, the organization of radical pan-Indigenous movements like the American Indian Movement (AIM) and the National Indian Brotherhood (later known as the Assembly of First Nations) helped to coordinate a number of important actions and initiatives that mobilized large numbers of Indigenous peoples across multiple nations. The Assembly of First Nations built on the important work of Indigenous activists like Onondeyoh (Fred Loft) who founded the League of Indians of Canada following the First World War. Inspired, in part, by the Black Panther Party, the American Indian Movement was founded in 1969 in Minneapolis and represented a distinctly militant and urban-based shift in Indigenous political organizing (Hill 2010). At the heart of the American Indian Movement was a concerted renewal of Indigenous spirituality combined with material struggles against colonialist governments in Canada and the United States (Wittstock and Salinas 2006). AIM opened "survival schools" offering culturally based education to Indigenous youth, organized language revival programs, and initiated the "trail of broken treaties" march on Washington, D.C. that ended in the occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs headquarters where activists gained access to thousands of internal files on "Indian Affairs." The group also played a

significant role in a number of Indigenous uprisings over the next decade including the infamous standoff at Wounded Knee in 1973.

In Canada, the federal government's attempt to legislate assimilation of Indigenous peoples in 1969 in what came to be known as the "White Paper" resulted in the unprecedented coordination of resistance by Indigenous peoples across a number of nations (Wilkes 2006). As Coulthard (2014) asserts, "The sheer magnitude of First Nations' resistance to the White Paper proposal forced the federal government to formally shelve the document on March 17, 1971" (5). This widespread opposition resulted in initiatives among Indigenous peoples to coordinate trans-national resistance to colonialist policies *within* the Canadian settler state. For instance, during the 1970s and 1980s Indigenous women mobilized behind three important legal challenges to the patriarchal provisions of the Indian Act that stripped Indigenous women of their Indian status if they married someone who was not a "status Indian." National Indigenous women's organizations played an important role in mobilizing against the law and resisted the pushback of the state and other institutionalized male leadership within Indigenous communities (Lawrence 2004).

These mobilizations brought about an important revitalization of resistance and resurgence within Indigenous communities, but they also forced non-Indigenous activists and social movements to acknowledge and contend with Indigenous struggles in a serious way. When I asked peter kulchyski about the history of these solidarity actions, he noted,

> More broadly and historically, it's certainly my sense that all the work that people did in the 60s, 70s, 80s and even before that, from the Indian-Eskimo Association to the Canadian Association in Support of Native People to the Lubicon support group, you know all these groups that developed, I think that slowly trained a generation that there was something different going on here, that their political energies are well-

spent here, and so that helped to prepare people.

From the 1980s onward, a number of disparate movements that can be identified broadly within the anti-authoritarian current of the radical left in Canada and the United States were forced to contend with numerous contradictions and questions about their relationship to settler colonialism and Indigenous sovereignty. The following sections will trace the politics of decolonization within anti-authoritarian movements through four key trajectories: (1) Black feminist movements and women of colour anti-racist feminism; (2) anti-colonial solidarity; (3) anti-capitalism; (4) and environmental justice activism. In doing so, I highlight some key flashpoints of Indigenous sovereignty and resurgence within the Canadian and U.S. settler states that challenged non-Indigenous anti-authoritarian radicals to begin to engage with a politics of decolonization in a sustained manner.

Black Feminist Movements and Women of Colour Anti-Racist Feminism

Drawing on a long history of resistance to slavery, white supremacy, colonialism, heteropatriarchy, and gendered violence, radical Black women and women of colour-led social movements have been at the forefront of forming a decolonial politics within the anti-authoritarian left (Smith 2006; Lawrence and Dua 2005; Trask 2000; Casteñeda 1992). For instance, groups like Critical Resistance and Incite! Women of Color Against Violence have played important roles in advancing the politics of prison abolitionism (Davis 2003; Oparah 2004) and struggles against gendered state violence as well as inter-group violence (INCITE! 2006, 2011) through a decolonizing framework. Migrant justice groups like No One Is Illegal and other women of colour-led movements have theorized

and resisted border imperialism (Walia 2013) and have created possibilities for transnational solidarities in the struggle against racism and patriarchy (Mohanty 2003; Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981). Radical Black feminist organizations like the Combahee River Collective, Sista II Sista, among many others helped to influence theories of intersectionality (Collins 2000), solidarity (Young 1990; Walia 2014), love and care (hooks 2003; Wekker 2006; Carillio-Rowe 2008), and the spiritual and the sacred (Alexander 2005) – all of which have become an important part of negotiating practices of decolonization and relationship building with Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island.

We can trace the roots of this strand of politics from a number of important historical sites, in particular, the movement to abolish slavery. Some of the earliest acts of non-Indigenous insurrection against the Euroamerican white elite were spurred by the resistance of enslaved African women, including the burning of the colonial settlement of present-day Montréal (Cooper 2006), the organization of the underground railroad by such notable abolitionists as Harriet Tubman (Bordewich 2005), and the establishment of maroon communities or mixed African-Indigenous communities in resistance to white settler colonies (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000; Amadahy and Lawrence 2009). As Dixon (2014) notes, "Abolitionism also helped to inaugurate a tradition of Black freedom struggle that has carried powerfully through subsequent movements and steadily highlighted race as a key social fault line" (25). The abolitionist movement has always had to contend with the contradictions of imagining liberation in relationship to Indigenous desires for decolonization (Byrd 2011; Gossett 2014). For instance, Amadahy and Lawrence (2009) critically discuss the quest for Black liberation in relation to Indigenous struggles against colonization, noting:

> [W]hether we are talking about contemporary migration from Africa itself, or the ongoing diaspora of peoples of African descent created by slavery, the reality is that African people living in the Americas are living on the lands of other Indigenous peoples. And for all peoples forced to live on other peoples' lands, a crucial question becomes what relationships they will establish with the Indigenous peoples of that land whose survival is so under siege. Ultimately, to fail to negotiate a mutually supportive relationship is to risk truly becoming "settlers," complicit in the extermination of those whose lands they occupy (119).

Questions of how to create relationships of solidarity between Black women, women of colour, and Indigenous women permeated a number of my interviews. For instance, in my interview with Sharrae Lyon, a multidisciplinary artist, afro-futurist writer and organizer based in Ottawa, Ontario, she discusses some of the ways in which women of colour feminism influenced helped her to resolve some of the contradictions inherent in enacting a decolonizing Black liberation politics. Sharrae explains:

> It was really through my reading [that I began to think of the complexities of decolonization as a Black woman]. When I was reading *This Bridge Called My Back* edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, that's when I was actually like ok – there's my ancestry and my aching because of what's happening with the loss of my culture, but there's something that is going on right here that in some ways I'm complicit in – directly and indirectly; knowingly and unknowingly. And that's when that [work to build relationships of solidarity with Indigenous women] started.

Emerging out of a critique of the ways in which women's liberation movements of the 1960s, 70s, and 80s failed to account for the multiple differences in experiences of oppression faced by women of colour, anti-racist feminists had a profound impact on the political movements of that era. During the civil rights and Black liberation struggles in organizations such as the Black Panther Party and the Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee, Black women formed caucuses to begin discussions about the intersecting axes of oppression that they faced. Similarly, Women of All Red Nations emerged out of

the American Indian Movement in response to the multiple levels of oppression faced by Indigenous women within the structures of heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism.

One of the most formative moves toward the development of a politics of decolonization emerging out of women of color feminism was the Third World Women's Movement. According to Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003), "Third World feminisms" grappled with two simultaneous projects: "the internal critique of hegemonic 'Western' feminisms and the formulation of autonomous feminist concerns and strategies that are geographically, historically, and culturally grounded" (17). Third World Women's organizing emphasized transnational solidarity, intersectional and interlocking systems of oppression, and strategies of cooperation and communication across differences. As anti-racist feminist theorist Rabinder Kaur Sehdev (2010) argues, such solidarity work demands shared intimate knowledges and the mutual desire for closeness.

In my discussions with Luam Kidane, a Black queer cis-woman artist and organizer, she reflected on how this notion of solidarity is important not only in developing relationships across difference but also as a means of being present in struggles in a holistic way. Luam states:

> [T]he central aspect of a decolonial struggle is to make sure that all parts of us, even the contradictory ones, can be addressed in transparent ways, in fluid ways, in non-punitive ways. So that for me is why I am engaged in decolonial struggle. It's about my survival. It's about the survival of the people around me and it's about us being able to move through this world with love.

Sehdev gives the example of the relationship forged between Stó:lo activist Lee Maracle and African-American organizer Audre Lorde as being indicative of the potential for solidarity between women of colour and Indigenous women through what Kidane highlighted as being an act of survival, noting that, "No emancipatory politics on this

land will be viable without Indigenous women active in their conception and realization"
(107).

In a similar way, Third World feminisms have had a profound impact on the how
relationships of solidarity are conceptualized and enacted within contemporary
movements. To acknowledge and address the potential contradictions in trying to develop
these solidarities, Third World feminisms emphasized the importance of developing
relationships across difference, what Aimee Carillo-Rowe calls "bridge work" (Rowe
2008). As Sehdev (2010) suggests, this labour, "commits us to doing the hard work of
connecting these configurations of power to the agency and selfhood of those located
within them (the anchoring posts of the bridge). This is an active remembering against the
general imperative to forget or dissociate" (118). Black and women of colour anti-racist
feminists have contributed this decolonizing analysis to three movements in particular:
anti-violence against women, prison abolition, and migrant justice.

In 2000, the *Color of Violence: Violence Against Women* conference held at the
University of California – Santa Cruz, brought together grassroots organizers who were
challenging the lack of a structural analysis within the anti-violence against women
movement. Smith (2001) notes that the conference helped to develop a critique of this
approach because it is "impossible to seriously address sexual and domestic violence
within communities of color without addressing these larger structures of violence, such
as militarism, attacks on immigrants' rights and Indian treaty rights, the proliferation of
prisons, economic neo-colonialism, and institutional racism" (66). This conference
spurred the organizing of Incite! Women of Color Against Violence who integrated a
women of color-centered politics that was decidedly oppositional to the state and broke

away from service provision work that tended to be state funded and state-influenced.

Women of colour anti-racist feminists were also central in developing an analysis of the Prison Industrial Complex (see Davis 2003; Oparah 2004), the interlocking set of institutions, social relations, and economic incentives that maintains a system of carceral violence against Black people, people of colour, and Indigenous peoples in the United States and Canada. In 1998, radical women of colour and trans* organizers came together in Berkeley, California at a conference called "Critical Resistance" that would precipitate the founding of an organization of the same name (Dixon 2014). Critical Resistance has since played an important role in the prison abolition movement and has prompted the emergence of a number of important abolitionist groups throughout the North American settler states. In trying to understand the links between prison abolition movements and decolonization, I reached out to Che Gossett, a Black genderqueer femme who has organized with Critical Resistance and ACT UP in Philadelphia and has also engaged in Palestine solidarity work. Che eloquently explained to me the interconnections between prison abolitionism and decolonization, noting:

> There's big structures of power and that whole language of transformative justice or the language of abolition or the political and social imaginary of abolition is all about the carceral continuum from prisons to detention centres to involuntarily confining people in psych institutions and is attached to the colonial continuum because it has always been used as part of the colonization process. Prisons have been really central to that. We don't want to reproduce that same violence. People who are still struggling for national liberation - well there's prisons in the Palestinian Authority and there are prisons in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, you know? So thinking about ways that liberation is collective. Decolonial struggle is attached to a lot of other collective liberations.

Through this type of analysis and practice, Critical Resistance and similar groups like the Prisoners Justice Action Committee in Toronto have expanded resistance against prisons

to include immigration detention, youth corrections, police violence, queer/trans* state violence, and theft of land as being central to an abolitionist struggle. The politics associated with a prison abolitionist framework influenced by Black women, women of colour, anti-colonial, queer/trans* and Indigenous theory and practice fundamentally challenges the state and patriarchy and envisions new ways of relating to each other and dealing with social problems outside of carceral violence. Gossett (2014) referencing the work of Achille Mbembe (2003) on "necropolitics" (the relationship between sovereignty and power over life and death), writes that "Carceral necropolitics play a central role in settler colonial occupation" and suggests that these interrelationships point towards solidarity between struggles against carceral regimes, anti-blackness, and settler colonialism (Gossett 2014).

Similar to the prison abolition movement, the political development of migrant justice movements like No One Is Illegal has been significantly influenced by the leadership of women of colour and relationships of solidarity with Indigenous struggles The emergence of this anti-authoritarian women of colour-led migrant justice movement, at least since the early 2000s, has sparked a number of important conversations on how to challenge racist border controls and build relationships of solidarity with struggles for Indigenous sovereignty. In a 2001 speech following the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City, Sunera Thobani speaking to a conference of Indigenous women and women of colour activists boldly asserted the importance of understanding the centrality of decolonization to anti-racist and migrant justice struggles, noting:

> [W]e have to recognize that this level and this particular phase of globalization is rooted [...] in the colonization of Aboriginal peoples and Third World peoples all over the world. That is the basis. And so globalization continues to remain rooted in that colonization, and I

think, recognizing that we are on Aboriginal land is a very, very important starting point for any one of our movements. But that cannot be the end point [...] [W]e have to recognize that there will be no social justice, no anti-racism, no feminist emancipation, no liberation of any kind for anybody on this continent unless Aboriginal people succeed in their demand for self-determination (Thobani 2001).

Thobani's statement both challenged many of the assumptions of traditional anti-racist political organizing in Canada (particularly those seeking recognition from the state) and resonated with a growing base of activists who were starting to see decolonization and Indigenous solidarity as central to any anti-racist or anti-capitalist resistance in North America.

Groups led predominantly by women of colour (such as the network of No One Is Illegal groups in Canada) have initiated campaigns that resist systemic and racialized gendered violence. For instance, the *Shelter, Sanctuary, Status* campaign fought and won a policy that prevented immigration enforcement from entering into women's shelters (Miranda 2010). During the campaign, organizers argued that by entering shelters to carry out deportations, immigrant enforcement officers were violating the sanctuary of women's shelters and practicing state violence against women of colour. Through this campaign, many of the women of colour organizers with No One Is Illegal-Toronto began to develop relationships of solidarity with the No More Silence campaign organized by Indigenous women to highlight and seek solutions to the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women. Both campaigns argued that the systemic violence faced by women of colour and Indigenous women in Canada was a result of the ongoing structures of racialized and settler colonial violence perpetrated by the state and by white settler society. These relationships pushed groups like No One Is Illegal to think seriously about what organizing their campaigns through a framework of decolonization might

look like. Harsha Walia (2013), a longtime organizer with No One Is Illegal-Vancouver Coast Salish Territories, explains the importance of a decolonizing framework for migrant justice by noting, "Decolonization is rooted in dismantling the structures of border imperialism, settler colonialism, empire, capitalism, and oppression, while also being a generative praxis that creates the condition to grow and recenter alternatives to our current socioeconomic system" (18). These principles have led No One Is Illegal groups to develop long-term relationships of solidarity with Indigenous sovereignty movements through on-the-ground support. These relationships are not without their challenges, contradictions, and mistakes as organizers within No One Is Illegal seek to apply these principles in their practice. However, the work of organizers like Harsha Walia and members of No One Is Illegal in Vancouver, Montréal, and Toronto has been inspirational to a vast swath of the anti-authoritarian current in terms of thinking through strategies for developing relationships of solidarity among people who are differentially positioned within the structures of capitalism, settler colonialism, white supremacy, and heteropatriarchy.

Anti-Colonial Solidarity Movements

The period following World War II saw the acceleration of anti-colonial struggles throughout Asia, Africa, Central and South America. These movements spurred critical questions with regard to the limits of nationalism, the connections between migration and displacement, and the possibilities for transnational solidarity. By the early 1960s, with a fierce anti-colonial battle raging against the French and the subsequent U.S. military occupation in Vietnam, other occupied territories drew on the successes of national

liberation struggles in China, India, and Cuba and the resilience of the Vietnamese as possibilities for decolonization. Dixon notes, "In these circumstances, recently decolonized countries and anti-colonial movements crafted a set of politics and sensibilities of Third World liberation that circulated widely" (29). Solidarity between these revolutionary movements blossomed through official channels like the Conference of Non-Aligned States and non-official channels of transnational solidarity including the sharing of resources, strategies, and information by geographically disparate grassroots revolutionary groups (Prashad 2007).

In Canada and the United States these anti-colonial struggles inspired and were inspired by the rise of the Black, Xicana/Xicano, and Indigenous liberation movements (Carmichael and Thelwell 2003). Anti-colonial resistance also had a profound influence on the growing movement against the Vietnam War (Lynd and Grubacic 2008). By understanding itself as an anti-colonial struggle, the Black liberation movement was a force that inspired and supported other groups within settler colonial states like Canada and the United States to take up a militant anti-imperialist politics. Meanwhile, the peace movement that had emerged in opposition to U.S. military aggression was also forced to refine and imagine anti-colonial solidarity following the end of the Vietnam War. Most notably, a growing network of 'international solidarity' groups influenced by a combination of socialist, feminist, anti-racist politics and liberation theology developed strong links with anti-colonial and national liberation struggles in Central and South America. Activists within these international solidarity movements mobilized to bring attention to U.S. military interventions against democratically elected governments in Chile, Colombia, El Salvador and Nicaragua, developed sophisticated channels to support

refugees fleeing state violence, and began to articulate an anti-imperialist politics within their local struggles (Landolt and Goldring 2010). By the 1980s this political current played an important role in developing campaigns of boycotts, divestments, and sanctions in solidarity with the liberation struggles against apartheid in South Africa (Culverson 1999).

A number of the people I interviewed talked about anti-apartheid struggles in South Africa and Palestine as being formative to the development of their conceptualization of anti-colonial solidarity. For instance, Sarita Ahooja, an anti-capitalist and migrant justice organizer in Montréal explained, "South Africa was something I grew up with, the boycotts against apartheid in South Africa. This issue was something that was very important in our house." Sarita went on to discuss the ways in which the political commitments of her parents to anti-apartheid and migrant worker struggles guided her towards relationship building with the Zapatista liberation struggles in Mexico and Haudenosaunee resistance in Québec. peter kulchyski recounted how even though his academic work in the 1970s and 1980s was focused on understanding the history and context of Indigenous struggles in Canada and the United States, his "political organizing [at that time] was around university divestments around South Africa and Chile." Other activists I interviewed discussed how their analysis of colonialism in the North American context was shaped significantly by their experiences engaging in solidarity organizing in Palestine.

The theorization of apartheid as a core aspect of settler colonial logics of domination has played an important role in identifying effective strategies and tactics of solidarity such as boycotts, divestments, and sanctions in support of liberation struggles

in South Africa and Palestine and has forced solidarity activists to consider the similar historical foundations to the Canadian and U.S. settler states at home. The identification of apartheid as a core feature of settler colonial policy in Canada and the United States forced anti-authoritarian organizers to not only look at the historical roots of apartheid policies in the Indian reservation systems of North America, but to also understand how apartheid logics are pervasive within our current political contexts as well (see Finkelstein 2003; Davis 2003). By comparing the manifestations of apartheid in settler colonial states like Israel, South Africa, Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand organizers are also careful to recognize the distinct differences in the histories and conditions of apartheid in their specific terrains of struggle.

As I spoke with Jaggi Singh, an organizer with No One Is Illegal-Montréal, he explained how understanding Canada operates through the logics of apartheid was critical to the development of his political analysis:

> A lot of what I described about my confusion as it relates to digesting the events of Oka in 1991 or the Zapatista uprising had a lot to do with living in this apartheid reality. We live in the same societies but it's an apartheid reality, which, as I mentioned, it's not too difficult to develop and advance this theoretical framework. When you do so, you can go back in history and those links are made for you - the apartheid system of South Africa was based on a study of the reservation system in Canada, for example.

This conceptualization of Canada or the United States as apartheid states has often been a challenge for anti-colonial activists to explain to the wider public (even among those on the political left). Monique Woolnough, an Indigenous solidarity, migrant justice, and environmental justice organizer based in Thunder Bay, Ontario observes, "there are pockets of people that are starting to talk to each other about [the conditions of apartheid in Canada], but because of the Canadian mythology, it is still shocking to call this an

apartheid state." However, as movements in support of Palestine liberation have grown in size and analysis in Canada and the United States it has become increasingly important among those in the anti-authoritarian current to acknowledge the interconnections between Israeli apartheid and the settler colonial regimes in North America.

Che Gossett makes the connection, for instance, between the U.S.-Mexico separation wall and the Israeli separation wall in the West Bank. Che reflects:

> Thinking about those struggles and how borders are set up to exclude and to police really resonates with decolonial struggle because so much of it is about the apartheid wall or the use of technologies to regulate space or the Mexican-US separation border being architechted by the same people that did the Israeli separation wall.

In addition to connecting the similarities between how apartheid works in Israel and in North America, Palestinians and Palestine-solidarity activists began to make direct connections with Indigenous sovereignty struggles on Turtle Island. An important example of this is the development of solidarity between Palestinian organizers and Haudenosaunee communities engaged in resistance in Québec, Ontario, and New York State. Mostafa Henaway describes how this "on-the-ground" solidarity emerged in the mid-2000s:

> So when Six Nations did the land occupation [in 2006], I remember the first trips going up it was mainly migrant justice organizers and Palestine solidarity organizers and the same thing in Kanehsata:ke in 2005. To make those connections between colonized people, to be that bridge between activists from Palestine and Indigenous activists here, and to show the continuity of colonialism [...] we brought Palestinian activists to the longhouse in Kanehsata:ke. Now, in Kahnawà:ke, Tyendinaga, and even Six Nations you see the Palestine flag hanging from those places. Building that support is so fundamental because in the long run, that injustice in Palestine, Indigenous communities here are taking up that solidarity. It will be way more effective in fighting colonization both here and in Palestine.

The growing relationship between Indigenous struggles for decolonization on Turtle

Island and the Palestinian resistance to Israeli Apartheid has had a profound impact on the way that many in the anti-authoritarian current understand their political responsibilities with respect to solidarity with struggles abroad and resistance to structures of colonialism in the places in which they reside.

This politics was at the heart of a program described by Clare Bayard, an anti-racist organizer with the Catalyst Centre in San Francisco. Bayard discussed an exchange organized by a Native-American cultural magazine called SNAG that sent a delegation of youth "to Palestine to meet with youth there and to have a learning exchange around the similarities they faced as occupied people." This joint-struggle was evident in 2012 amidst the rise of the Idle No More movement when Palestinian activists in the United States released a public letter of solidarity and joined in a number of Idle No More actions. In their letter of solidarity the Palestinian organizers assert:

> We recognize the deep connections and similarities between the experiences of our peoples – settler colonialism, destruction and exploitation of our land and resources, denial of our identity and rights, genocide and attempted genocide. As Palestinians, we stood with the national liberation movement against settler colonialism in South Africa, as we stand with all liberation movements challenging colonialism and imperialism around the world. The struggle of Indigenous and Native peoples in Canada, [sic] the United States, have long been known to the Palestinian people, reflecting our common history as peoples and nations subject to ethnic cleansing at the hands of the very same forces of European colonization (Palestinians in Solidarity with Idle No More 2012).

The influence of anti-colonial movements and international solidarity movements on contemporary practices of decolonization within the anti-authoritarian current in Canada and the United States has manifested in two important features: the development of international solidarity groups in support of Indigenous struggles within the Canadian/U.S. nation-states, and the focus on issues of displacement and the right to

return through a lively and vigorous discussion about the role of nationalism in anti-colonial and decolonizing struggles.

Based in part on the framework developed by the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) that aims to support and strengthen Palestinian resistance through the practice of accompaniment (i.e. Rotating stints of international solidarity activists who live alongside Palestinians subject to harassment and attacks from soldiers and settlers), anti-colonial activists sought to establish anti-colonial political groups that could establish relationships of solidarity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island. For instance, the emergence of Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) on the campuses of Toronto-based universities in the mid-2000s and their proliferation on campuses throughout North America and beyond helped to influence the establishment of Indigenous Sovereignty Week which uses the IAW model to bring together Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, activists, Elders, and land-based defenders to discuss critical questions with respect to the struggle for Indigenous sovereignty on Turtle Island.

By early 2002 some of the activists who helped to organize what came to be known as "Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movements" had also done a trip or perhaps several to Palestine with the ISM and saw this model as being useful and necessary in the North American context. Others had been engaging in direct solidarity work with particular Indigenous communities and saw the development of the "IPSM" model as a way to coordinate solidarity efforts in a more sustained way. Samir Shaheen-Hussain, one of the co-founders of the Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement in Montréal spoke about the importance of IPSM in shifting the focus of other radical political groups towards a politics of decolonization and solidarity with Indigenous sovereignty struggles.

Samir recounts:

> I would like to think that with the creation of IPSM we ended up (and I hesitate to use the term) institutionalizing Indigenous solidarity work. I don't mean that in a negative way. I actually mean that in a positive way, but institutionalizing Indigenous solidarity work in a way where it kind of put it on the map in a certain respect. Because a lot of the stuff that was happening in Montréal then and because of the numbers that we had in IPSM (between 2002-2005), and the prominence of the group, a lot of different movements and groups that were in existence at the time would often end up asking: 'How does our work tie into Indigenous struggles or how can we support Indigenous self-determination in various ways?'

From the early 2000s to the present, the IPSM model has helped to foster relationships between Indigenous land-defense struggles and urban anti-authoritarian non-Indigenous activists. While IPSM-Montréal ceased to exist, similar groups currently exist in Ottawa and Winnipeg. Internally, these IPSM collectives have raised a number of self-critiques including whether or not the model is most effective in developing relationships of solidarity with Indigenous peoples in struggle, particularly given the lack of direct participation by many Indigenous peoples themselves in these collectives. Another critique that was raised in the interviews was the tendency for IPSM groups to overly rely on the direction of Indigenous leaders without taking enough initiative to make independent decisions that are accountable to the communities with whom they were in solidarity. Some groups like the short-lived Coalition in Support of Indigenous Sovereignty (CSIS) in Toronto attempted to develop a model that saw urban Indigenous peoples lead and guide Indigenous solidarity among anti-authoritarian settlers in a more organic way, though with ultimately limited success.

In Montréal, the Anti-Colonial Solidarity Committee recently emerged as a result of a collective process of reflection with respect to the failures and contradictions that

were seen as limiting the work of IPSM-Montréal. Cleve Higgins, a member of the re-

formed Anti-Colonial Solidarity Committee explains:

> We renamed it from the Indigenous Solidarity Committee to the Anti-Colonial Solidarity Collective in part because we wanted to be clear from where we were coming from politically with that project. Based on conversations that happened for years before about what we mean by solidarity and what Indigenous solidarity is and coming to a position for myself at least that solidarity means shared struggles *necessarily* - whether we acknowledge it or not - it has to be there or at least shared politics.

This anti-colonial international solidarity model has drastically changed the discussion

and practices of a number of anti-authoritarian radical groups within the Canadian and

U.S. settler states.

Anti-Capitalist/Global Justice Movements

¡*Ya basta*! On January 1st, 1994 the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional

(Zapatista National Liberation Army – EZLN) rose up and in doing so, declared that

capitalist modernity had reached its limits. Emerging from the mountains of southeastern

Mexico on the day that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into

effect, the EZLN characterized their rebellion as "the product of five hundred years of

struggle" against Spanish colonialism, North American imperialism and the system of

capitalist development. NAFTA was the limit, in the words of the Zapatista "a death

sentence for the Indians." While engaging in liberation discourse similar to the nationalist

struggles that characterized anti-colonial movements in 1960s and 1970s, the Zapatistas

uniquely declared that they had no interest in obtaining political power and that they were

more interested in creating a "democratic space, where the confrontation between diverse

political points of view can be resolved" (Carrigan 2001:417). Such an arguably radical

shift in political goals and rhetoric captured the hearts, minds and imaginations of radicals, activists and academics around the world, particularly among those in the anti-authoritarian current.

The Zapatista uprising inspired anti-authoritarians worldwide with some declaring it to be the first "post-modern revolution" (Carrigan 2001). Theorists have pointed to the fluid and consultative decision-making structure of the EZLN (Burbach 2001); the Zapatista's aim of representing their struggle as a polemic against modernity (McGreal 2006); the downplaying of individual roles and the role of the "heroic" guerilla commanders within the EZLN (Burbach 2001); the creative and sustained use of electronic media and international solidarity as part of its struggle (Gitlin 2001); and the Zapatista goals of commitment to Indigenous self-determination, autonomy and to the democratization of the political process (Carrigan 2001) as examples of the unique nature of the Zapatista rebellion.

There was a natural affinity between the way in which the Zapatistas were organizing and the anti-authoritarian current within the emerging "anti-globalization/global justice" movement. Sarita Ahooja, one of the co-founders of the Convergence des Luttes Anti-Capitalistes (CLAC) in Montréal and a solidarity participant in the Zapatista liberation struggle discussed the overlapping principles shared between the CLAC and the EZLN. Sarita recounts:

> I would say that my first experience [in Canada] of horizontal organizing, mutual aid, and direct democracy in action was with the CLAC. I noticed more and more, my affinities, what I had learned and what I cherished as very valuable to change society and what the Zapatistas taught me, I saw it in the ideas of the anarchists that were organizing.

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Following the rise of movements against neoliberalism in the Global South, the global justice movement exploded onto the U.S. and Canadian horizons in the late 1990s and early 2000s as a vibrant and broad-based anti-capitalist struggle, it was very influenced by the principles and practices put forward by the EZLN. However, as these groups began to converge around global economic summits, some key weaknesses of the nascent movement became clear.

For instance, it was evident that as exciting as this movement was, it was composed mostly of young white radicals and was narrowly focused on global capitalism. In that respect, it failed to take some of the key lessons being offered by the Zapatistas, other Indigenous peoples, and people of colour. While inspired by the Zapatista movement, many global justice activists failed to recognize the centrality of Indigenous land-based struggles, knowledges, and epistemologies in re-imagining revolutionary struggle. Clare Bayard, an organizer with the Catalyst Project in San Francisco explains her experience negotiating these contradictions within the global justice movement, noting,

> You know it was the late-90s, I was organizing around the WTO in Seattle and then coming out of that everything that got stirred to the surface around racism in that movement and what was going on in there being such a disconnect between the movement in the US that identified itself as the global justice movement, both being majority white, but also having no sense of its own history. This was a movement that really saw itself as young and new, but it was very disjointed from 500 years of anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggle and that was a big eye-opening experience for me and a lot of my comrades – like "oh shit, we have to figure out what we are doing".

Similarly, Jaggi Singh, who helped organize protests against the Asia Pacific Economic Conference in Vancouver in 1997 and the Summit of the Americas in Québec City in 2001 highlighted the struggles that student organizers faced in connecting their struggles

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against capitalism to broader anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles. He recounts:

> This anti-capitalist analysis was clearly emerging out of the Vancouver APEC protests and out of the Seattle protests. But it's not enough to talk about capitalism you have to also talk about the colonial reality. Colonial reality is not simply some historical eccentricity - it's actually describing the realities that we live in today.

And indeed it was hard to miss the resurgence of land-based resistance by Indigenous peoples taking place in Canada. The standoffs at Kanehsata:ke in 1990, Gustafsen Lake on the west coast and at Ipperwash in Ontario in 1995 were just some of the fierce battles by Indigenous peoples against the settler colonial state and developmentalist capitalism bursting onto people's television sets. One of the catalyst groups in attempting to bridge the organizing of the global justice movement with Indigenous uprisings was the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP).

OCAP, a Toronto-based anti-capitalist poor people's organization came to prominence in the mid-1990s through their struggles against the neoliberal Progressive Conservative government of Mike Harris in Ontario. In their resistance to the Harris regime, OCAP began to develop strong relationships of solidarity with numerous anti-racist, Indigenous, and poor people's groups opposed to the neoliberal policies of the Harris government. This included solidarity with the family of Dudley George, an Anishinaabe man killed by the Ontario Provincial Police during the Ipperwash occupation. OCAP integrated an anti-colonial analysis into their anti-capitalist politics and expanded their relationships with Indigenous land defenders to Six Nations and Tyendinaga as well as with urban Indigenous peoples in Toronto. Shawn Brant, a Kanienkehaka (Mohawk) organizer with OCAP was a major actor in pushing for this politics. Brant helped to bridge relationships between OCAP and Mohawk warriors in his

home territory of Tyendinaga as well as with other Haudenosaunee communities such as those in Six Nations, Kanehsata:ke, Kahnawà:ke, and Akwesasne.

As the global justice movement began gearing up for the Free Trade Area of the Americas Summit to be held in Quebec City in April 2001, enough of a relationship had been built between organizers in Toronto, Montréal, and New York City with Haudenosaunee radicals that some form of joint action was discussed in order to assert the sovereignty of Haudenosaunee communities from the Canadian and U.S. settler states. As anarchist scholar David Graeber (2009) recounts in *Direct Action: An Ethnography*, representatives of the New York City Direct Action Network (DAN), New York City Ya Basta!, the Independent Media Centre-New York City, Philly Direct Action Working Group and the People's Law Collective met in Cornwall, Ontario months prior to the Summit of the Americas with members of the Tyendinaga Mohawks, the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, the Guelph Direct Action Group, and the People's Community Union (PCU) in Kingston to plan an action in which Mohawks at Akwesasne would open the border to activists from the United States wishing to pass into Canada as an assertion of their sovereignty.

Graeber refers to a public email sent across anti-globalization listservs as evidence of the negotiations of solidarity between global justice and Indigenous sovereignty. A passage from that email reads, "The Mohawks intend this 'Day of Rage' as an assertion of sovereignty, since the bridge crossing the border is on Mohawk Land. Currently Mohawks allow use of the crossing 364 days a year, and open it once a year to assert sovereignty" (21). This plan reflected one of the first major attempts to insert an anti-colonial or decolonizing politics within the global justice movement. While relatively

symbolic, the action had the potential to establish important relationships between Indigenous resistance and the insurgent global justice movement. However, as some of the participants in my research interviews attested, a number of assumptions and mistakes on the part of the non-Indigenous organizers created a situation of hostility and conflict at Akwesasne. Maia Ramnath, a participant in the caravan from New York City to Akwesasne recalls:

> I think that there's a lot of ongoing attempts [to build relationships with Indigenous peoples in struggle], I wouldn't necessarily call them failures, but I would say it hasn't totally been successful either. The examples that I can think of, one goes all the way back to the FTAA protests in Quebec City. Tons of people went up from New York City, a big chunk of them decided to go up through the Mohawk reservation and that became complicated. The relationships built were complicated and I think that there were some good connections made and also some missteps made [as well].

The missteps referred to by Ramnath included a lack of awareness of the relationships being cultivated between the Haudenosaunee community at Akwesasne and the non-Indigenous radicals travelling to the Summit of the Americas. Many protesters feared being denied crossing the border by immigration enforcement and saw the route through Akwesasne as being an easy way to get to the summit. They did not understand the important and sensitive nature of the political relationships that were being cultivated.

Additionally, not enough work had been done to gain the trust of the Mohawk community and the border crossing became a divisive issue for many of the residents of Akwesasne. The activists did not account for the multiple political perspectives within the community itself as Jody Dodd, an organizer in Philadelphia and one of the planned speakers at the border crossing recalled:

> The relationships that people said existed for us to be welcomed there were not there. And so when people showed up there was this really

small group of people who were trying to be welcoming, but we weren't welcome there - we just weren't. So it was a little confusing because we were told one thing, but we weren't really welcome ... Despite the fact that we kind of descended on them (talk about the need for decolonization) I actually remember saying thank you to the Elders and thank you for letting us be here.

While the confusion and conflict that took place at Akwesasne led to a number of activists from New York and Philadelphia retreating somewhat from fostering relationships with Indigenous communities, organizers in Québec and Ontario sought to engage more deeply.

Emerging out of the Coalition des Lutte Anti-Capitalistes, the main anti-authoritarian coalition organizing for the Summit of the Americas protests, No One Is Illegal-Montréal and the Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement committed to strengthening their understanding of Indigenous struggles and the prospects for developing relationships of solidarity. Samir Shaheen-Hussain, a member of both NOII-Montréal and IPSM discussed organizing a conference in Montréal in 2002, a year after the Summit of the Americas, titled "Our Home on Native Land" where activists discussed the links between migration and colonization in a more nuanced way. Samir explains:

Migrant communities who were fighting deportations were speaking on the same panel as people coming from communities like Tyendinaga who were self-determining and pushing to fight off government and corporate interventions in various ways. Making those links, I felt, was extremely powerful - but that too came with its own contradictions and tensions.

Other anti-authoritarian groups across Turtle Island sought to organize solidarity with Indigenous sovereignty movements more consciously while being more open about the affinities and contradictions in trying to negotiate these relationships, including in

Vancouver (Coast Salish Territories), Minneapolis (Dakota territories), and Black Mesa (Dine' and Hopi Territories). These relationships produced a number of important contributions to radical movements including the highly distributed *Unsettling Ourselves: Reflections and Resources for Deconstructing Colonial Mentality* organized by Unsettling Minnesota, a collective of non-Dakota people working in solidarity towards decolonization on Dakota homelands.

By 2008 there existed a strong enough network of non-Indigenous groups engaged in building relationships of solidarity with Indigenous sovereignty and resurgence movements that representatives from some of these collectives were invited to the inaugural Defenders of the Land gathering in Winnipeg where they met with each other and Indigenous land defenders and shared stories of their successes and failures in building relationships of solidarity. This was also an opportunity to strengthen connections between Indigenous and non-Indigenous struggles in resistance to two major international events in 2010: the Vancouver Olympics and the meeting of the G20 in Toronto. What was different about the Vancouver Olympics in particular was the effort to centralize Indigenous sovereignty struggles and to take leadership from land defenders in the preliminary stages of organizing the protests.

As Isaac Oommen, an independent media activist from Vancouver (Coast Salish Territories) explains, "The motto of the anti-Olympics protests was 'No Olympics on Stolen Native Land' and that was really confrontational in the sense that it wasn't just acknowledging the native land but also the fact that it was stolen." Similarly, activists organizing the G20 protests made room for a specific day of action that would highlight Indigenous sovereignty struggles and their relationship to the policies of the G20. These

actions were not without valid critique. Most importantly a number of Indigenous activists criticized the lumping of the Indigenous day of action within the mosaic of anti-oppression struggles as flattening the differences between Indigenous sovereignty and other political projects without asserting the foundational nature of decolonization to liberation on Turtle Island (Lewis 2012).

Most recently the convergence of anti-capitalist, environmentalist, anti-racist and Indigenous sovereignty movements against the proliferation of pipelines that would transport oil and crude from the Alberta tar sands to the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and through the United States is a renewed opportunity to centralize decolonization within this resistance. Through the struggles against the Keystone XL, Enbridge Line 9, Northern Gateway pipelines, the continued exploitation of the tar sands, and the proliferation of fracking on Indigenous territories, environmentalist and anti-capitalist groups have started to understand that Indigenous resistance to these projects is the best hope for victory. While these struggles remain primarily reactive in their nature, they have formed the beginning of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists that have spurred greater discussions on what a decolonial future would look like. This has required a significant shift in how relationships have been constructed between activists and Indigenous communities in the past.

Environmental Justice Movements

In many ways the environmentalist movement has engaged most closely with land-based Indigenous struggles but has been most reticent or resistant to practices and principles of decolonization (Black et al. 2014). Nonetheless, the centrality of land-based

struggles and their relationships to Indigenous sovereignty has resulted in numerous partnerships between environmentalists and Indigenous peoples against resource extraction, development, and pollution. These relationships have at times been strategically effective in resisting particularly devastating projects but they have also been fraught with colonialist logics and instrumentalism. The environmental justice trajectory among the anti-authoritarian current emerged out of a confluence of peace activism, anti-nuclear resistance, Indigenous sovereignty struggles, and environmental activism. These movements were particularly robust on the west coast but permeated anti-authoritarian politics throughout Canada and the United States. Ananda Lee Tan, a veteran climate justice activist discussed the relationship between the environmentalist movement emerging on the west coast in the late 1970s-early 1980s and past movements:

> A lot of what was happening in Vancouver at the time wasn't new and was likely on the shoulders of other grassroots political work that had been done in the past. But it was a coming together of environmental activism, First Nations activism, and the politics of the anti-imperialist, anti-militarism work [...] My entry point was with the Vancouver Peace Flotilla Coalition that used to go and protest warships in [Vancouver] harbor (US warships that were trying to come in). It was framed around an anti-nuclear platform and inspired by the New Zealand Peace Squadron, a grassroots flotilla of kayaks, boats, and sailboats that used to go out and blockade the harbors in Auckland and other New Zealand cities to prevent US warships from coming in. We decided that it would be a direct action environmental coalition as well. But as it emerged a lot of questions arose: Whose harbor was it anyway? Outside of the city's jurisdiction it was federal jurisdiction but that brought about questions of recognition of the traditional authorities: the Tsleil-Waututh, the Suquamish, and the other Indigenous nations. Where were their voices in this space?

Indeed as the predominantly white environmentalist movement broke into the mainstream through tree sits, flotillas, and other forms of direct action that brought groups like Greenpeace, Rainforest Action Network, Earth First!, and the Earth Liberation Front

among others into popular consciousness, the question surrounding relationships with Indigenous peoples and their struggles for sovereignty and racialized people and their existence at the forefront of environmental devastation was brought to the fore.

Dixie Pauline discussed how this dissonance between environmentalists and Indigenous peoples had a direct impact on her politics, "I was really naïve. I just assumed that all the tree-sits, the non-native tree-sits I heard about, like Redwood Summer and Judi Bari, I just assumed that all these activists were working with the tribes. I found out that we weren't so it kind of became a staple in my activism." Similarly, Ananda Lee Tan explained that learning about the Indigenous blockades against forestry companies and mining companies on Vancouver Island, Haida Gwaii and the northwest part of British Columbia and then organizing court support for Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs at the Supreme Court in the case of Delgamuukw versus the Crown played an important role in shifting the trajectory of his environmentalist politics. He recalled a particular conference in 1986 where these links became abundantly clear:

> In 1986 the BC Environmental Network was having a conference at UBC and it was one of the first times the organizers of the conference had invited members of the Haida and Nuu-Cha-Nulth First Nations to come and address the conference and the plenary. It was expected to be a short five-minute introduction, but it turned out to be the entire morning. It was an engaging conversation between First Nations activists and the environmental movement that if we indeed wanted to protect the beautiful forest lands, the glaciers, the mountains and rivers of BC, we needed to really look at the people who were part of that cultural mosaic. They were central to these conservation values and the fact that there had been First Nations stewarding those ecosystems for tens of thousands of years prior to contact was critical to weave into the story the environmental activists were trying to script. It became very evident that there was a big gap in a lot of [our] conservation efforts.

Through these experiences some participants in environmentalist groups began to have broader conversations about the responsibilities their movements should have to

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Indigenous peoples. Similar to all the other trajectories within the anti-authoritarian current discussed above, these conversations around Indigenous sovereignty and settler colonialism were difficult and divisive and this was made especially so by the predominantly white settler composition of most environmentalist groups.

Nonetheless, relationships were slowly forged between Indigenous land-defenders and environmentalist groups, including through the Uni'sto'ten camp set up in Wet'suwet'en territories, the Friends of the Lubicon solidarity campaign against Daishowa's clear-cutting of Lubicon Cree territories, the solidarity struggles at Big Mountain in support of the Hopi and Dine' fight to preserve the sacred site at Black Mesa, the creation of the Indigenous Environmental Network, the tree sits in support of the Temagami Anishnabai, and solidarity with the blockades at Grassy Narrows Asubpeeschoseewagong against the logging of the Whiskey Jack forest and the mercury poisoning of the English-Wabigoon watershed.

Partly because of the success of direct action oriented land-defense coalitions between Indigenous peoples and settlers and the growing consciousness around the climate crisis, a number of environmentalist groups sought to gain mainstream appeal and institutional power often at the expense of the relationships that they had forged with Indigenous communities. As a result, a number of the participants I interviewed in this project began to take the process of decolonization seriously only after severing ties with mainstream environmentalist groups and their ideological frameworks. For instance, Luke Newton, an organizer based in the Bay Area described how he came to engage in Indigenous environmental solidarity work after breaking from mainstream environmentalism:

The Eurocentric mainstream environmental ideology was predominant in the economic programs and the environmental organizations I was working with. I spent a lot of time trying to figure out how that was and why that was and all the myriad of things that were being intentionally or unintentionally erased from the picture. So I ended up really engaging in Indigenous environmental justice solidarity work that was connected to broader cultural work, broader Indigenous rights and sovereignty related work – survival work quite frankly. That path was just really instrumental in being able to kind of see and define my analysis around the exclusions and internalized colonialism in the environmental movement. Some people call it "green colonialism".

By the early 1990s and into the 2000s, rumblings within the environmentalist movement with respect to issues of race, gender, class, and colonialism and their intimate relationships to environmental degradation began to spur discussions around principles of environmental justice. These principles emerged out of the experiences of frontline communities of colour (Black, Latin@/Xican@, Asian-American) and Indigenous communities, particularly in the United States, about the ways that these communities were disproportionately affected by pollution and environmental crises.

Ananda Lee Tan describes the emergence of what came to be known as the "environmental justice" movement during two major summits in the mountains of Jemez, New Mexico. Ananda recalls:

There was a people of colour summit in 1991, that was the first people of colour summit and there was another one in 2000. All these activists came together and said, "we need to reclaim the whole frame of environmentalism and really make it about the people who are most impacted in their communities – also communities that have turned to a knowledge base that isn't necessarily housed in academic knowledge, it's housed in Indigenous knowledge and other place-based knowledge that has been shaped enough and influenced by communities when people were seized as slaves or displaced as immigrants or just migrated within Empire.

At these summits, activists agreed to a set of principles dubbed, "The Jemez Principles" that would help guide and shape environmental justice frameworks within a number of

contexts. Influenced by the Zapatista uprisings and the early successes of the global justice movement, activists at Jemez in 1996 formalized six core principles that were needed in order for the environmental justice movement to challenge colonialism, capitalism, imperialism, and support grassroots communities at the front lines of those struggles. These principles are listed as: (1) Be inclusive; (2) Emphasis on bottom-up organizing; (3) Let people speak for themselves; (4) Work together in solidarity and mutuality; (5) Build just relationships among ourselves; (6) Commitment to self-transformation (Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing 1996).

The potential for a decolonizing relationship within an environmental justice framework contrasted with the "green colonialism" that had permeated the environmentalist movement for most of its history. Ananda Lee Tan suggested that it was through these principles that the practice of respecting community leadership of Indigenous peoples began to be taken more seriously. He explains that Jemez meant "recognizing that whenever we're on a land base, the voice of the local leadership and the community-based leadership, the traditional leadership, the Indigenous leadership, should always come first and should always provide the context within which we have our exchange and build our cause." Along those lines, a number of Indigenous and people of colour-led environmental justice actions, including the Mother's Milk Project at Akwesasne, the campaign to protect Bear Butte in the Black Hills Mountains, and food sovereignty projects in Detroit mobilized in the 1990s and 2000s in ways that deeply affected white anti-authoritarians and others who had been organizing within more mainstream environmentalist movements.

Monique Woolnough and Leah Henderson who both began political organizing

within mainstream environmentalist groups discussed how relationships with Indigenous communities (or at times the lack thereof) spurred a radical shift in their trajectory and future organizing work. For Monique Woolnough, this included trying to distinguish between tangible solidarity and the lack of accountability that permeated environmentalist movements towards Indigenous communities. She reflects, "I think that Indigenous communities have done an amazing job of calling out the environmental movement...and I don't think that conflict is solved in any way, but even since I was a kid you can see some more lip-service being paid to environmental justice." Similarly, Leah Henderson discussed how developing relationships with Indigenous communities fighting logging in Alberta pushed her to realize "that [we] needed to have an analysis around Indigenous land rights and sovereignty issues because that's the land and territory we were talking about." This tension within environmentalist movements exists to this day, particularly given the fact that mainstream environmentalist groups have access to significant resources.

Some groups within the environmental justice movement, such as Movement Generation in the Bay Area and the network of Rising Tide groups throughout the Canadian and US settler states, have pushed for a decolonizing and anti-colonial lens within coalition work and in local struggles. Hilary Moore, an environmental justice organizer in the Bay Area, explains her experiences working around resistance to Chevron within the climate justice movement as being significantly influenced by these small but vocal segments of the environmentalist movement. She recalls:

> In 2009 I started organizing with a big coalition around climate justice stuff here in the Bay around Chevron and a few other projects, it was international and local at the same time. That was mostly what I cut my environmental teeth on and because of the groups that were involved,

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> Movement Generation and the Ruckus Society, that's how I came to develop more of a relationship with Indigenous solidarity. That is not my focus and not how I define my political orientation but it is definitely embedded within it.

The influence of environmental justice movements on contemporary practices of decolonization within the anti-authoritarian current in Canada and the United States has manifested in two important features: the emergence of environmentalist direct action steeped in a decolonizing politics, and the practices of a radical Indigenous-led food sovereignty movement.

Direct action has been a key feature in the successes of environmentalist resistance to resource extraction and pollution. Direct action has often been tinged with a masculinist machismo that is not always accountable to broader communities affected by the consequences of these actions, particularly frontline and directly affected communities. A debate centered around the concept of "diversity of tactics" has raged within radical movements in the last twenty years, with most of the contention pivoting on whether or not to support a multiplicity of approaches to resistance (including the use of physical force, self-defense, and property destruction) or to limit tactics in collective actions to strictly non-violent tactics with the belief that other actions alienate movements from developing mass appeal. However, both arguments tend to erase the long history of direct action by Indigenous peoples, Black people, and migrants in resisting racism, land theft and colonialism and asserting autonomy and self-determination.

Jaggi Singh reflects on the development of the concept of diversity tactics within the global justice movement suggesting that within the Coalition des Luttes Anti-Capitalistes, there was a desire to, in fact, recognize the history of direct action among Indigenous movements and movements in the Global South. He notes:

I believe we are the first place where we used that term [diversity of tactics] although people have practiced respect for diversity of tactics in different ways and in different settings, but we specifically had in mind a respect for movements of the Global South and movements of Indigenous people who choose different tactics. So, the practice of solidarity as reflected through the respect for diversity of tactics; colonization/decolonization as a practice; capitalism; also organizing in an anti-authoritarian horizontal framework.

While the intent of diversity of tactics was to honour the strategies of resistance of a multitude of movements and peoples, at times those engaged in anti-capitalist, environmentalist, and other forms of movements struggled to build relationships of accountability with those directly impacted by the political issues being resisted and by the subsequent repression of the state after confrontational actions. Sarita Ahooja, also a member of the Coalition des Luttes Anti-Capitalistes recalled that this became a significant factor in the divisiveness of the issue:

It was a very, very fundamental issue that would split or draw a line between people as far as they would go. So there were organizations that were completely against diversity of tactics and there were others who would accept it but maybe not particularly promote it in their activities, but were in solidarity with those that did; and then there were others who actually made space for all those tactics, like the CLAC.

While these debates have permeated a significant number of major anti-authoritarian actions over the past couple decades, struggles against oil pipelines have been an important site of discussion and experimentation in terms of what bringing decolonizing relationships of accountability into these struggles might look like. This includes the negotiation of relationships of solidarity with Aamjiwnaang First Nation in Chemical Valley and the environmental justice group Rising Tide (among others), direct actions against Enbridge's Line 9 in collaboration with members of Six Nations, the coalition between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people on a blockade against fracking in

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Elsipogtog in Miq'mak territories, and the negotiation of relationships of solidarity between environmentalists and Indigenous activists against the Kinder Morgan Pipeline on Burnaby Mountain.

These alliances have often been initiated by Indigenous communities who have invited environmental justice activists and other radicals to participate in relationship building, including through annual events like the Tar Sands Healing Walk in the Athabasca region where Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are invited to participate to walk and to pray for the land, the people, and a different future based on relationships of friendship and responsibility to the land and all living things in conjunction with the Athabasca Cree. Similarly, each year the Yinka Dini Wet'suwet'en peoples hold a camp inviting Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island to join them in protecting their lands from extractive industries, building relationships, and learning the histories of the land. Their Unis'tot'en camp is a "resistance community whose purpose is to protect sovereign Wet'suwet'en territory from several proposed pipelines...and shale gas from hydraulic fracturing projects in the Peace River Region" (Unis'tot'en Camp 2015). These opportunities to build relationships between Indigenous communities in struggle and anti-authoritarian environmental justice activists have had a significant impact on how direct action is undertaken by non-Indigenous environmentalists even if much work remains to be done.

Similarly, anti-authoritarian segments of the food sovereignty, food democracy, and food justice movements has been deeply influenced by a politics of decolonization and relationships with Indigenous projects seeking to reclaim traditional foods. Hannah Lewis, a liaison coordinator with the University of British Columbia Farm and a food

justice activist discussed the profound influence that her relationships with xwməθkwəy̓ əm (Musqueam) and other Indigenous peoples on the farm have had on her political orientation. Hannah explains:

> In the spaces that I work in right now, specifically, [my political work] seems to be around decolonizing the food system especially with respect to Indigenous food sovereignty and knowledge [...] [I]t comes down to the land and people's access to food being affected for quite a while by things like the quality of the water and restriction of territory and licenses which mean that you can only access your traditional food at certain times of the year, and things like that.

The food sovereignty movement has been forced to think through what it means to be an ally and how activists engaged in community gardens and other food justice projects can honour Indigenous knowledge of the territories in which they are in and show respect to the Indigenous communities with whom they share these lands. Steph McLachlan, who is involved in food justice projects in Winnipeg explains that this work is based on long-term relationship building in terms of identifying alternatives to the current food system. He discussed some of the principles that have emerged out of these experiences:

One of the organizing principles and cultures [I'm engaged in] is around food, so we've worked to create processes where [Indigenous] communities can have active involvement in the work that we do in terms of this university community alliance that we've created, which is really about working towards something called food justice.

The negotiation of food justice principles based on relationships with Indigenous communities and with the land has the potential to transform the practices and possibilities of the environmental justice movement towards a politics that is antagonistic to settler colonial logics and to capitalism. While the work is slow and the pull of mainstream environmentalism and green colonialism often undermines these important

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relationships, anti-authoritarians within environmentalist struggles emphasize the importance of taking guidance and leadership from Indigenous communities as they try to develop a greater understanding of the history of the land and the people who have stewarded this land for thousands of years prior to colonialism.

Conclusion

The first two chapters of this dissertation are meant to historically situate how a large segment of activists engaged in the anti-authoritarian current of contemporary social movements in Canada and the United States have come to understand decolonization as fundamental to their struggles for liberation. Similarly, these chapters are meant to historically contextualize and explain the process in which I came to conduct this research. In chapter one I introduce my relationship to the social movement activists and groups that have participated in this study. I do so in order to contextualize my relationship to this research and how my position as a participant in these movements has a direct impact on my methodological decisions and to whom I am accountable for this work. In chapter two I trace the trajectories, events, and organizations that have influenced this shift towards a politics of decolonization among social movements within the anti-authoritarian current.

As an attempt to historicize these trajectories, this chapter is built upon a number of premises that may or may not be accepted as given within critical theory but are rapidly emerging as core principles among social justice activists within the anti-authoritarian current in Canada and the United States. First, that left social movements have been implicated in the establishment of the settler colonial state (even in their

struggles with and against the state) and that any true process of decolonization must acknowledge the complicity of the radical left in this structure (Wolfe 2006; Sakai 1989). Second, Indigenous movements for decolonization and resurgence have continued uninterrupted despite centuries of war, genocide, assimilation, land theft, and administrative occupation. These movements affirm that for Indigenous peoples "place, land, sovereignty, and memory matters" (Byrd 2011: xiv). In doing so, they offer non-Indigenous people possibilities for engaging in decolonizing relationships with the land and Indigenous peoples emerging from re-articulations of traditional Indigenous governance practices that seek to address contemporary realities (Alfred 2005; Simpson 2011). Third, that despite widespread acceptance of intersectionality as a paradigm for organizing across multiple identities among critical scholars and social movement activists, there must be greater attention paid to how the structures of capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and white supremacy are interconnected and mutually reinforced by the logics of settler colonialism. As I will argue in chapters three and four, this premise requires that Indigenous people must be central and that decolonization must be seen as foundational to any struggle for liberation that arise within settler colonial states on Indigenous lands (Byrd 2011). The following chapter interrogates how anti-authoritarian radicals have come to understand Indigenous decolonization as foundational to their struggles for liberation. It focuses on the challenges confronting non-Indigenous social movements participants to imagine Indigenous post-state sovereignty and nationhood outside of the framework of the nation-state.

CHAPTER THREE
Decolonization as Foundational to Radical Struggle on Turtle Island

"How might one imagine radical justice that addresses the cacophonies of colonialism?"

-   *Jodi A. Byrd*

I am sitting in a café in downtown Oakland with Annie Morgan Banks. Annie is an anti-colonial organizer active in racial justice movements on the west coast and is currently in the Bay Area to take part in the Anne Braden program, an intensive anti-racist training course for white social justice activists who participate in a range of social movements. Given Annie's long-term commitment to building relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and the important teachings and lessons she's learned from these experiences I was eager to hear her insights about what it means to practice radical struggle within a decolonial framework. When I asked Annie to explain her personal understanding of decolonization, she provided a response that I felt helped to get at the complexities and contradictions inherent in decolonial relationships. Annie explains:

> I think I've tried to define it and then I realize that because so much of
> the work for me has been in relationships with people, I think it's really
> contextual and kind of based on who I'm working with and what their
> vision is. But to me it goes back to the value of whose worldview is
> being held up. Whose way of organizing people in a certain context and
> space is being held up as the legitimate official authority and whose
> isn't.

In articulating that decolonization is contextual and emphasizing the importance of whose worldviews are being respected within radical struggles, Annie Morgan Banks highlights the tensions in building solidarity relationships with Indigenous communities. On the one hand, Annie emphasizes the importance of working from a basis where Indigenous worldviews are respected and made to be foundational to building relationships of

solidarity. On the other hand, Annie is clear that there is no absolute worldview or inherent internal harmony within Indigenous communities and across different Indigenous nations (as is true for non-Indigenous communities and nations). Nonetheless, if non-Indigenous activists seek to build relationships of solidarity with Indigenous movements for decolonization, they must struggle to find ways to articulate their political desires and campaigns in a way that recognizes the fundamental importance of Indigenous worldviews and their responsibility to develop new relationships of coexistence outside of the logics of settler colonialism. As the preceding chapter affirmed, this has been a challenge historically for non-Indigenous social movements.

Annie discussed the insecurities that arise when non-Indigenous people imagine decolonization through Western ways of knowing. Annie recounted a conversation she once had with a friend, Carol Bilson, about the fears that non-Indigenous people have about decolonization, Indigenous nationhood, and notions of home and belonging. Annie recalled:

> [We] would often talk about seeing a lot of settlers getting into a colonial mindset of like "Oh, what does decolonization mean? We have to all get back on a boat and leave?" Carol's like, "Can you imagine another way of understanding the world where it's not about borders or it's not about forcing British common law on people who have never practiced British common law? Where there are longstanding Indigenous laws?" There are ways of organizing community that are not just imposing them on Indigenous communities from the outside. To me it's a process of returning power to those forms of organizing and also working collaboratively because new things are happening all the time and conceptually things have changed.

Through this story, Annie addresses important insecurities that often prevent settlers and non-Indigenous people from supporting Indigenous struggles for sovereignty and self-determination, namely the fear that Indigenous peoples claims to land are based on the

same property relations that has dispossessed them of their territories.

These questions about sovereignty, (de)colonization, nationhood, and belonging have permeated discussions and debates among anti-authoritarians within activist groups and in the academy. For instance, in their provocative article "Decolonizing Antiracism," Mi'kmaq scholar Bonita Lawrence and anti-colonial theorist Enakshi Dua argue, "To acknowledge that we all share the same land base and yet to question the differential terms on which it is occupied is to become aware of the colonial project that is taking place around us" (Lawrence and Dua 2005:126). Lawrence and Dua's intervention in anti-racist theory challenges scholars and activists to centralize processes of Indigenous decolonization within their political analysis and practice. They assert that at the core of Indigenous survival and resistance is reclaiming a relationship to land and in their critique of anti-racist politics they argue that even if people of colour are positioned differently within the power structures of the nation-state they can still be complicit as settlers because their struggles against racism within settler states like Canada and the United States may often be premised *on their inclusion* in the ongoing settler-colonial project rather than *challenging* colonialism on Turtle Island.

The questions and challenges posed by Lawrence and Dua (2005) continue to resonate deeply in political debates and academic discussions on what it means to "decolonize" struggles for radical justice. Most notably, this article sparked a response by activist-scholars Nandita Sharma and Cynthia Wright (2009) who challenge the conflation of migration and settler colonialism. For Sharma and Wright, decolonization cannot be secured through a nationalist project and they suggest that Lawrence and Dua's expansion of the category "settler colonizer" to include "all non-Natives" is related to the

rise of neo-racist ideologies emerging out of the consolidation of neoliberalism in the late 1980s. They argue that such conflation, in fact, reproduces the colonial state and colonial social relationships rather than challenging them. By positing, "all migrants are settler colonists" argue Sharma and Wright, Lawrence and Dua render the vast historical process of human migration as a problem by implying that the only way not to be a colonizer is to remain on the land with which you are associated. This has created an impasse among organizers within the anti-authoritarian current who seek to support Indigenous struggles for self-determination, but who oppose all forms of sovereignty and nationalism as inherently hierarchical.

This chapter seeks to consider how organizers within anti-authoritarian movements on Turtle Island have taken up some of the questions central to the debate between Lawrence and Dua (2005) and Sharma and Wright (2009). Specifically it supports Lawrence and Dua's argument that decolonization should be foundational to radical social movement struggles in settler colonial contexts and seeks to negotiate Sharma and Wright's critique by interrogating the ways in which one's position and relationship to the processes of colonialism shifts or changes one's role in decolonial struggles. In the proceeding chapter, I examine the seemingly contradictory argument that assertions of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty can align with the anti-state goals of anti- authoritarian organizers. Both chapters draw from my research interviews with anti-authoritarian activists in the United States and Canada to explore potential pathways toward decolonization that seek to resolve the presumed impasse between Lawrence and Dua's critique and Sharma and Wright's response.

Being Foundational

The terrain of struggle in Montréal has shaped and nourished the political ideologies, practices and cultures of radical movements in this city.[8] The present site of the metropolis of Montréal is constructed on top of the Kanien'kehaka (Mohawk) village of Hochelaga and borders the present-day Kanien'kehaka communities of Kanehsatà:ke to the west and Kahnawá:ke to the north. Montréal has a long history of colonial war and occupation dating back to the landing of French invader/explorer Jacques Cartier in 1535 and the standoff mounted by Chief Onasakenarat against the Sulpician priests who refused to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Kanien'kehaka over their traditional territories in the late 19th century (Nanibush 2010).

These over-arching historical events have shaped the political and social terrain of struggle in Montréal in a profound way and the spectre of ongoing Kanien'kehaka resistance to settler colonial claims to land and territory is ever-present. Most notably, the uprising at Kanehsatà:ke in 1990 against the building of a golf course overtop of their sacred pine groves resulted in one of the largest military operations by the Canadian state within its own jurisdictional boundaries in history. Over 2650 Canadian soldiers, including military tanks, engaged in an armed standoff against 55 Mohawk women, Elders, and warriors seeking to protect their sacred site (Simpson 2014). The standoff at Kanehsatà:ke prompted numerous solidarity actions including the blocking of the Mercier Bridge by Kahnawá:ke warriors. As scores of Kanien'kehaka families fled the potential attack by the Canadian state, white settlers lined the streets to pelt their cars with rocks

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[8] I use the term "terrain of struggle" in this dissertation to refer to the ideological, cultural, and historical frameworks that shape political action in a particular geographic, social, or cultural place. The ongoing historical process of settler colonialism that structures the ideology and culture of both Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous settlers also shapes the terrain of struggle for activists within settler states like Canada and the United States. However, the terrain of struggle does not look the same from place-to-place as local context, histories, and relationships have a material impact on the social and political milieu.

and other objects and to shout racist taunts and insults. This event profoundly transformed the context of Indigenous struggles against Canadian colonialism (see Simpson and Ladner 2010; Simpson 2014; Coulthard 2014) and unavoidably altered the terrain of struggle for anti-authoritarian movements in Montréal and more broadly across the Canadian settler state.

When I discussed the importance of decolonization within anti-authoritarian struggles with Jaggi Singh, a long-time organizer with No One Is Illegal-Montréal, he expressed the belief that radical movements must see the systemic and systematic dispossession of Indigenous peoples of their lands and the colonial reality that this created as being *foundational* to all other organizing. This was not a unique position among the activists I interviewed, particularly among those organizing within the Canadian settler state. The notion that Indigenous decolonization and resurgence should be considered foundational to a liberatory politics within settler states was pervasive among the participants in my research, though many, including Singh himself, suggested that this was a recent occurrence. For instance, in trying to situate the terrain of struggle in Montréal, Jaggi explains:

> That's something that has clicked for me in the last decade. I mean talking about [decolonization] as being foundational. Yes, we don't say that sexism is more important than racism, they both interact, but before you talk about that you need to understand the foundational reality. That's something that we can't excuse ourselves from and we have to take that with a high degree of openness and engage communities on that – this colonial reality is foundational to all other organizing.

What precipitated the shift in thinking towards an understanding of Indigenous sovereignty and decolonization as foundational to all other radical struggles within the Canadian and US settler colonial context? Anthony Meza-Wilson, an organizer with the

Purple Thistle Institute in Vancouver expressed the difference between framing Indigenous decolonization as foundational versus understanding this process as part of intersectional identity politics movements against racism. Anthony contends:

> I feel like it's really important that it not be just another identity within the spectrum of identity politics. The left is really good at having criticism within its struggles but decolonization is really foundational. When we're talking about racism, well the dispossession of people of their land is really at the heart of racism in the American state, the Canadian state, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, most of Latin America. The basic idea being that 'these people aren't capable of making decisions by themselves' and that to me is the epitome of racism. Also dispossession through colonial projects means a disconnection to the land and basically everything that makes you alive in that spot. That's like one of the most fucked up things to do to people. Slavery is fucked up too and there is a connection between colonization and slavery – it was about taking people from their land and enslaving them on someone else's territories.

If we are to study a radical anti-authoritarian politics that positions Indigenous decolonization as foundational to non-Indigenous struggles, then a few questions arise: What does it mean to suggest that the colonial context is foundational to radical struggles? And how does one's local context and terrain of struggle impact the way in which anti-authoritarian activists practice decolonization? This section explores the ways in which radicals within migrant justice, anti-capitalist, environmentalist, anti-racist, queer/trans* and other anti-authoritarian movements understand, debate, and attempt to practice a politics that asserts decolonization as foundational to liberatory struggle. Through this analysis, we will grapple with Sharma and Wright's (2009) critique of this type of political analysis as being dangerous in its claims to *originary* oppression.

The violent processes of proletarianization in Europe, the African slave trade, the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their lands on Turtle Island and the resistance to each of these processes have shaped and re-shaped the terrain of struggle not only in

settler states like Canada and the United States but in Africa, Europe, Asia and in most other regions of the world. Silvia Federici (2004) describes the colonization of the Americas as "the most massive process of land privatization and enclosure" in history (68). It is also one of the most pervasive processes of genocide the world has ever known (Wolfe 2006). For settlers to claim possession of Indigenous territories requires that Indigenous people be continually disappearing. Andrea Smith (2006) argues, "through this logic of genocide, non-Native people then become the rightful inheritors of all that was indigenous-land, resources, indigenous spirituality, or culture" (68). Through their relationships with Indigenous movements for sovereignty and self-determination, anti-authoritarian activists have gained a deeper understanding of these historical circumstances and because of this have come to insist that decolonization must be foundational to all other struggles in settler states like Canada and the United States.

I discussed this trend with Nora Butler Burke, a support worker for trans* people and an anti-colonial organizer in Montréal, who explained how a better understanding of the historical relationship between the nation-state structure and settler colonial logics played a big role in shifting the political analysis of anti-authoritarian organizers in that city. Nora recounts:

> I remember a point at which some of the organizing we were doing was simply to challenge other groups to fundamentally understand that any and all work that we do has to challenge the settler-colonial state. Not just the state, but to understand that settler colonialism is a foundational underpinning of what the state is and how it exists and how it's been created and how it survives and where the wealth comes from. It's foundational for capitalism; it's foundational in all the kinds of work that we're doing.

This shift in political analysis among non-Indigenous radicals coincided with a decade of Indigenous resurgence and resistance that had not been seen in over a generation of anti-

colonial struggles in Canada and the United States (Simpson and Ladner 2010; Coulthard 2014). Similarly, a number of migrant justice and anti-racist organizers have connected the lessons learned in anti-colonial struggles in Asia, Africa, and South America to the processes of decolonization and resurgence that are ongoing in North America.

Quick to point out that our conceptions of decolonization are time and place dependent, Syed Hussan, an organizer with No One Is Illegal-Toronto explained how anti-colonial struggles in many different countries have contributed to our collective understanding of decolonization on Turtle Island. Hussan thoughtfully recollects:

> My grandparents and great grandparents lived through an anti-colonial struggle [on the Indian subcontinent]. So in some ways colonization there, in one way, ended. You can talk about neo-colonization, but it's not as though decolonization didn't happen anywhere. It's a project that in some places has moved forward. And I think that often we are forgetting that history and so it's really important to remember that most of the people of colour of the world did have their decolonizing struggles and those weren't the end all.

As Hussan suggests, these experiences and influences have had a significant impact on the way in which discussions on decolonization are taken up within social movement spaces comprised primarily of non-Indigenous activists. Decolonization as a global project of liberation has occurred differently in many places and some struggles have resulted in strong nation-state structures that replicate the power dynamics of previous colonial administrations. These realities inform activists in settler states like Canada and the United States who have migrated from or whose family has migrated from countries where decolonization struggles took place (and continue to take place). Some of these activists point to the importance of class struggle, anti-racist movements, the resistance of ethnic minorities, and anti-patriarchy movements in countries that have achieved political independence from colonial European powers as evidence of the continued anti-colonial

resistance in those states. It is for this reason that many anti-authoritarian activists are wary of nationalist or sovereigntist movements for decolonization and see them as being tied up within the expansion and dominance of capitalist social relations and the system of nation-states (Sharma and Wright 2009). Yet, the fact that any true liberation movement that takes place within settler colonial states like Canada and the United States must contend at some point with the material realities of Indigenous decolonization is unavoidable. Like a sample from the old KRS-ONE (1993) song "Sound of da Police" left on a continuous loop, the spectre of Indigenous decolonization rings through radical movements with the lines "there could never really be justice on stolen land" underlining their political decisions and relationships. It is for this reason that many organizers within the anti-authoritarian current have come to understand decolonization as being foundational to struggles for liberation within the context of settler colonialism.

The assertion and practice of decolonization as foundational to radical struggles is manifested in three main ways: (1) in recognizing the need to fight the erasure of Indigenous presence within radical discourses and political campaigns, (2) in asserting the primary relationship to land and place in decolonial struggles, and (3) in acknowledging the importance of Indigenous epistemologies, traditions, and leadership in pre-figuring alternative ways of organizing society.

Fighting the Erasure of Indigenous Presence

As discussed in chapter two, erasure has been an underlying process of the indigenizing efforts of settler projects, including those on the political left. Making Indigenous decolonization foundational to radical struggle, thus, requires that indigeneity

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and Indigenous peoples be placed at the forefront of discussions of anti-racist, anti-colonial, anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist politics. Jodi A. Byrd (2011) suggests that this intervention is necessary in the current historical moment because it helps activists and theorists, "elucidate how liberal colonialist discourses depend upon sublimating indigenous cultures and histories into fictive hybridities and social constructions as they simultaneously trap indigenous peoples within the dialectics of genocide" (xxxiv). In other words, two processes contribute to this erasure – the generalization of Indigenous peoples as one homogenous group that are absorbed into the settler colonial state as an ethnic minority and the "myth of the disappearing Indian" that assumes that the genocide of Indigenous peoples is complete (or near complete) despite over five hundred years of resistance and resurgence.

In this sense, an intervention that makes Indigenous decolonization foundational to liberation gets to the heart of the debate between Lawrence and Dua (2005) and Sharma and Wright (2009). On the one hand, as Lawrence and Dua argue, if Indigenous peoples are erased from or marginalized in the discourses of struggle we are implicitly contributing to the logics of elimination that underscore the settler colonial project. Genocide is considered inevitable and by not acknowledging the resilience of Indigenous communities to resist this process in the face of administrative, material, and military policies of elimination, non-Indigenous activists contribute to its continuation. On the other hand, if activists understand Indigenous sovereignty and decolonization to be foundational to radical struggles and they manifest into a form of authoritarian autochthonous nationalism, as Sharma and Wright suggest is a possibility, it can only be imagined as one that will commit heinous genocides in defense of lands and one that will

practice exclusionary border policies that target migrants and migration as the root of all problems. For many of the participants in my interviews, the dichotomy that traps Indigenous peoples within these dialectics of genocide can only be overcome by understanding the ways in which living as a non-Indigenous person within a settler colonial context can easily materialize as maintaining the presence/absence critical to the erasure of Indigenous peoples. It also requires that we come to recognize Indigenous nationalisms and sovereignties as being plural and multiplicitous rather than static, homogenous and derived exclusively from Western political traditions.

Mostafa Henaway, an organizer with the Immigrant Worker's Centre in Montréal, explains how he came to recognize settler colonial erasure in the Canadian context while engaged in solidarity work in Palestine:

> Tel Aviv was sort of this white bustling metropolis, only miles away from an occupied territory, and people were actually not even recognizing it. Its not like people were like, "Oh, I'm an Israeli, I'm a colonizer." No it wasn't even in the public discourse and that made me feel like, "Oh, actually this is how it works in Toronto or Montréal or within the Canadian context." [...] Being involved in Palestine-related organizing made me see the connections to [erasing Indigenous presence through] colonialism here.

Similarly, Dylan Cooke became engaged in solidarity organizing with Ohlone struggles after returning to the Bay Area following time spent working as a community worker with Indigenous Elders living in social housing in Vancouver's downtown east side. For Dylan, the centrality of Indigenous struggles against colonialism only became present within their politics after those experiences. They explain, "a lot of the history [of colonialism] I really just had no concept of because of the line we were fed in the school system." By resisting these erasures and building linkages with Indigenous struggles against colonialism, anti-authoritarian movements have grappled with the risks and

responsibilities inherent in making decolonization foundational to their politics.

Contrary to the fear of autochthonous nationalisms highlighted by Sharma and Wright (2009), most of these activists expressed that the Indigenous peoples they have organized with have explained their understandings of "sovereignty" and "nationhood" in a way that differs significantly from how they are conceptualized through Western logics. In a 2007 interview roundtable hosted by *Fuse Magazine* featuring Nandita Sharma among other participants, Jaggi Singh argued that Indigenous nationhood should not be easily conflated with the desire to expel all settlers or non-Indigenous people. He explained:

> I have never heard of an indigenous theory of decolonization that is about expulsion — expulsion of a corporate mine perhaps — but never of people who migrate to achieve dignity in their lives. The Mohawk Two Row Wampum, which represents the idea of natives and non-natives traveling side-by-side in mutual respect, provides us with one example of a basis for understanding a relationship of respectful and just coexistence between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. "Decolonization" — understood as the active practice of self-determination against colonialism and neo-colonialism by non-natives — is something we need to actively be thinking about and taking responsibility for (Singh 2007 in Henaway et al. 2007).

For Singh and a number of the other participants I interviewed, recognizing Indigenous sovereignty as central to struggles for liberation in a settler colonial context needs to take the form of understanding the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples in relation to particular places, uncovering the historical realities of the settler colonial context, and then connecting these knowledges into our local struggles.

The history of erasure in settler states is not necessarily limited to Indigenous peoples. Amadahy and Lawrence (2009) show that the presence of longstanding communities of colour (Black people who entered Canada between the sixteenth and

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nineteenth centuries, East Asian and South Asian communities since the early nineteenth century) is also constantly erased from the Canadian national myth. They assert, "Black Canadians in particular face a nation-state which has continuously excluded large-scale Black settlement, and which, despite the existence of centuries-old Black settlements, continues to construct a vision of Canadian nationhood where Black people are forever marginal newcomers, always external to the nation" (115). In this respect, the acknowledgement of the colonial context as foundational to radical struggles for liberation identifies the settler colonial process of state-making in Canada and the United States as a primary site for exclusion, exploitation, and dispossession. It also centralizes land and our relationship to land for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people as being of fundamental importance to any conception of transformative justice that would effectively challenge colonialism.

Land as Foundational to Decolonization

In their influential essay, "Decolonization is not a metaphor," Tuck and Yang (2012) open by stating, "Our goal in this article is to remind readers what is unsettling about decolonization. Decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life; it is not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools"(1). With the proliferation of discourses of decolonization within progressive and radical left social spaces Tuck and Yang's warning is of significant importance. Echoing the earlier critiques leveled by Lawrence and Dua, Tuck and Yang highlight the multiple settler moves to innocence adopted by non-Indigenous people. Especially prevalent among political activists is the use of the language of decolonization in superficial or

metaphorical ways as a stand in for whatever project of social justice we are engaged in.

In my conversations with Demelza Champagne, an Anishinaabe organizer and member of the Anarchist People of Color activist group in New York City, she reaffirmed the importance of land and its interconnections with culture and language to Indigenous decolonization. Acknowledging the multiplicity of ways in which the terminology of decolonization has been used within anti-authoritarian currents, she explains:

> To me, decolonization is about repatriation of land, it's about repatriation of language, and it's about repatriation of culture and specifically Indigenous culture. I'm sure everyone else you've interviewed, depending on what culture they come from, has another definition, but for me decolonization especially within the United States needs to be focused on that - on Indigenous struggle and the repatriation of land.

Anti-authoritarian activists seeking to build long-standing relationships of solidarity with Indigenous communities have been challenged to re-focus their struggles in ways that affirm the centrality of land (in both a material sense and as reciprocal relations and obligations) to ongoing anti-colonial resistance by Indigenous peoples, including processes of resurgence and the regeneration of languages, cultures, and traditions (Coulthard 2014; Barker and Pickerill 2012). Perhaps nowhere was this made more clear to me than in Winnipeg, where activists and organizers in that city confront questions of land, occupation, and control of space by the settler-state against Indigenous peoples on a daily basis.

When I interviewed Michael Welch, a community radio journalist in Winnipeg, he related to me the difficulty non-Indigenous people have in coming to terms with what it means to understand land as being foundational to decolonization. He explains:

> So decolonization means that you've got to recognize that all of these relationships happen in some kind of context where you're rewarded for

some kinds of behaviour and punished for others. When you have a system that has succeeded by taking control of territory that didn't belong to them – there's a lot of resistance to recognizing that. How do you deal with the fact that we took over somebody else's land and put them on "bad land" and subjected them to something called the Indian Act that treats them as wards of the state? [...] [Y]ou have to disrupt that package of beliefs and habits and instincts, it's an ongoing process, a lifelong process.

The lifelong process that Michael Welch refers to requires challenging the historical orientation of leftist struggles towards campaigns seeking inclusion within or gaining power over the settler state. While it remains important to recognize the material struggles for survival faced by poor people, racialized people, Indigenous peoples, queer/trans* people and many others within the nation-state, the supposed end-goal of seeking what Amadahy and Lawrence (2009:129) term "a piece of the colonial pie or even a recognition of territorial boundaries negotiated with the federal government," is fundamentally challenged by a reconceptualization of struggle that centers relationships to land as being foundational to liberation. This is not to suggest that political struggle does not take place in relationship to the state, but rather this struggle necessarily requires supporting Indigenous peoples in their assertions of a reciprocal relationship and responsibility with the land that is not governed by settler property relations. Similarly, it means that the struggles of poor people against gentrification, migrants against deportations, and environmentalists to protect the old growth forests (among many others) must also recognize the need for material and relational reclamation of land by Indigenous peoples.

As Lawrence and Dua (2005) suggest, by acknowledging that we share a land base and yet questioning the differential terms on which it is occupied is how we become aware of the colonial project. It is not enough to simply become aware of this project but

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to act towards challenging colonialism in material ways by supporting the re-establishment of Indigenous connections to land. Leah Henderson, a long-time environmental justice organizer and supporter of Indigenous struggles, explained how ongoing relationship building between Indigenous land-defenders and anti-authoritarian activists has had a deep impact on the way land is conceptualized within urban radical communities. She recounts her experiences in Ontario as such:

> In Ontario, you have communities like Grassy Narrows, like Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug, like Six Nations, like Tyendinaga that now have longer multi-year relationships with activist communities because of different campaign moments that have happened on blockades or at different events where some of those relationships have been built and sustained. With those comes more opportunities to learn from each other, build analysis and have that spread into more urban activist culture so that activists that don't necessarily have relationships with people in those Indigenous communities or have the history of having been at some of those different blockades or events still have some of the lessons and the practices that those of us who were there have gained.

As Leah suggests, the experiences gained by urban anti-authoritarian organizers by being on the frontlines of key Indigenous struggles is diffused and spread among social justice activists back in the city. This includes a greater awareness of the social and political relationships to land of urban Indigenous peoples, the importance of acknowledging the traditional relationships and treaties that govern the territories on which you live, and the interconnection between struggles for space in the city with the settler colonial project.

One of the most significant lessons being transferred through the relationships between Indigenous land defenders and anti-authoritarian activists from urban communities is the necessity to re-frame our analysis and political struggles around the questions of land, space, and home (even within an urban context). This lesson, however, can easily be taken up in a purely symbolic or tokenistic way in which land

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acknowledgements become rote and lose any of their connection to ongoing struggles for

Indigenous reclamations of land. Instead, understanding decolonization as re-imaging our

relationships to land requires anti-authoritarian movements find ways to materially

support Indigenous sovereignty struggles. Syed Hussan, an organizer with No One Is

Illegal-Toronto, explains the necessity in moving from purely symbolic understandings of

decolonization as related to land (such as land acknowledgements before meetings) to

really focusing on tangible political actions that support assertions of Indigenous

sovereignty. This material support for Indigenous self-determination must also come with

the recognition that settlers have different responsibilities and relationships with the land.

Hussan explains:

> I think that we often talk about decolonization as, you know,
> decolonizing our minds, our imaginations, our language, our culture,
> our ways of life – and I think that's space and time based – so in a
> settler colony I think that we have to be very careful that we prioritize
> land-based struggles and then understand that when there is talk about
> language reclamation or decolonizing our minds (when it's coming
> from Indigenous communities) that's actually also about relationships
> to the land. And it's different when settler communities do so.

The work to align struggles within the anti-authoritarian current with Indigenous

reclamations of land has taken place in a number of contexts. In Vancouver, which sits on

unceded Coast Salish Territories, this has meant active support of Indigenous land

defenders at Burnaby Mountain fighting against oil pipelines and opposition to Olympic

facilities being constructed without the consent of Indigenous communities at Sun Peaks.

In California and other parts of the west coast, this has included work to build

relationships between organizers in the alternative music festival scenes and Indigenous

communities whose territories are used for these celebrations. In Quebec, the relationship

of the student movement to land-based struggles was hotly debated during the 2012

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student strike as activists began to link the theft of land associated with Plan Nord, then-Premier Jean Charest's mega-development project in Quebec's far north, with austerity in education. Fred Burrill, an organizer during the Quebec student strike explained to me the important debates that took place during the strike (including on the streets) about the importance of asserting an Indigenous sovereignty analysis within the student movement. He recounts:

> It was a big issue in the strike actually, at some points we were doing those nightly demonstrations and doing them everyday and it became a kind of contest between people being "A qui le Quebec? A nous le Quebec!" and us being like "A qui le Quebec? Au Mohawk le Quebec ou a les Algonquins le Quebec!" - and really trying to push on those issues of decolonization and land.

This is an example of an intervention in opposition to the colonialist discourse prevalent among the radical left - one that seeks to claim ownership of particular places and territories without an acknowledgement of the settler colonial context in which their struggle takes place. Other examples of such chants include, "Whose streets? Our streets!" As I have written elsewhere, rally chants bring into the public realm political debates that are happening within movements (Fortier 2015a). They also signal shifting relationships and politics and, as Fred Burrill, suggests these debates on the streets contributed to the ongoing process of trying to link the Quebec student strike with Indigenous struggles against the proposed Plan Nord, a large-scale development project proposed in the north of the province.

While the question of land and returning Indigenous stewardship over land has become more prevalent as a central feature of anti-authoritarian liberation strategies, what that means in a material sense is not readily agreed upon. For instance, while Lawrence and Dua (2005) argue, "Aboriginal people need to reestablish control over their own

communities: have their land returned to them, making communities viable and rebuilding nationhood, with a legal framework that bring Aboriginal peoples existing and returned lands under their own authority" (126), there is some debate among activists as to whether such a framework may replicate modern capitalist conceptualizations around ownership of land as has been the case in other anti-colonial struggles around the world. This requires that anti-authoritarian organizers grapple with Sharma and Wright's (2009) warning that, "The tying of a particular group of people to particular places – and basing principles of justice and the allocation of resources (especially land) on notions of their natural connection to these – has become increasingly widespread since the late 1980s" (121). For Sharma and Wright, it is a slippery slope that separates the idea of reclaiming territory with the practices of exclusion and expulsion. This argument suggests that Indigenous claims to specific geographical locations and originary possession of traditional territories can be seen as a replication of nationalist logics. This has lead to critiques of anti-authoritarian Indigenous solidarity groups for supporting (either strategically or inadvertently) the rise of reactionary nationalist movements. However, as Glen Coulthard argues, "it is a profound misunderstanding to think of land or place as simply some material object of profound importance to Indigenous cultures (although it is this too); instead, it ought to be understood as a field of 'relationships of things to each other'" (Coulthard 2014:61). While there is a genuine material need to defend Indigenous territories from further encroachments by neoliberal capitalism and the state and to strategize ways to support Indigenous land reclamations, there is also a need to understand the ontological differences between Indigenous understandings of relationships to land and those prevalent within settler society.

Jodi A. Byrd (2011) argues that arguments for the originary within Indigenous decolonial struggles are not inherently nationalistic. She asserts "that despite cautions against the original and originary within post-structuralist theory ... there must be the possibility of the originary in the new world, and that is located within the historical experiences of new world colonizations, genocides, and violences" (Byrd 2011:xiv). What Byrd suggest is that activists seeking to resist the settler state recognize the long line of continuity between the past and present within Indigenous communities, their origin stories, and their relationships to land. For Byrd, as well as other Indigenous activists and scholars, it is critical that non-Indigenous activists respect and understand this continuity not so that it might legitimize claims to a state, but rather as a potential means of decolonizing our relationships to the land and the territories on which we live as well.

For instance, in discussions with Luam Kidane, a Black queer organizer currently based in Montréal, she expressed a common understanding of the disjuncture between settler conceptualizations of land and the way in which Indigenous peoples speak about and relate to land. Luam asserts:

> For me, any time I've ever talked to any Indigenous Elders or Indigenous scholars that I'm working with or Indigenous activists and movement organizers, the understanding I've always had was that the relationship to the land and around Indigeneity is a *relationship* to the land, it's not an *ownership* of the land. Part of that relationship to the land is an understanding of the movement of people and welcoming the movement of people in relationship to the land. So when you come into a community that you weren't born into, the understanding is that you are in relationship with the people in the community and with the land as well. Then there is an expectation of reciprocity and respect, of leaving things as they are or adding to something before you leave. Centrally the idea is to build relationships.

At the crux of Luam's argument is that Indigenous assertions of sovereignty and

nationhood are tied up in a reconceptualization of their relationship to the land that is based in Indigenous worldviews and subverts the property relations of the settler state and settler society. For Luam, as well as other research participants, this worldview aligns strongly with their anti-state politics. Luam speaks openly about the importance of non-Indigenous people respecting the relationships that Indigenous peoples have fostered with the lands and territories that we seek to call home.

Post-colonial scholar Zahir Kohlia (2013) offers a potentially useful way to understand the disconnection between the way that anti-nationalist scholars like Sharma and Wright and anti-authoritarian activists in support of Indigenous sovereignty movements interpret Indigenous claims to land. He suggests that Indigenous conceptions of geography are bound by relationships that are both sacred and reciprocal whereas settler conceptions of the nation-state are bound by rigid linear notions of possession and occupation. In other words, Sharma and Wright see Indigenous claims to land as being governed by the possessive territorial logics of state-building societies, whereas the anti-authoritarian activists I interviewed have come to understand Indigenous claims to land as being bound by responsibility to their long-standing sacred relationships to the territories they call home. For Kohlia, by producing a secular history of Indigenous nationhood, Sharma and Wright reject the possibility of imagining coexistence on this land based on alternative forms of being in relationship with the land outside of modern Western historiography. Such an argument was made regularly throughout my interviews. For instance, Syed Hussan an organizer with No One Is Illegal-Toronto, spoke specifically about this disjuncture, noting:

> [Y]ou referenced the Nandita/Bonita Ena/Cynthia debate earlier and I find that they are actually meaning very different things. The Indigenous peoples that I know of, that I work with, when they use the word sovereignty some of them do and some of them don't mean actually gaining state recognition, you know being a country and a nation-state.

Kohlia (2013) suggests that the potential for solidarity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people with respect to connections to the land rests on the understanding that these articulations, "are rendered not as general 'we are of the land' narratives, but rather correspond to very specific geographical locations and practice-based ceremonial cycles that are connected to ancestry and memory" (17). Thus, while it is conceivable that some Indigenous struggles ascribe to a territorial nationalism based on originary claims to the land, the vast majority of Indigenous resistance within the Canadian and U.S. settler colonial states has, in fact, challenged the nation-state itself as an oppressive colonial construct (Simpson 2014).

Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg author-activist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2011), for instance, explains the importance of alternative Indigenous conceptualizations of land in the dismantling of "the capitalist industrial complex and the colonial gender system within settler nations by challenging the very foundation of the nation-state and its relationship to the land and Indigenous nations" (87). It is for this reason that there seems to be significant affinity between those on the radical left who hold an anti-state analysis and see decolonization as foundational to their struggles and Indigenous land defenders who recognize the importance of land reclamation to a revitalization of cultures, languages, and ceremonies that can act as a clear alternative to capitalist and colonialist logics.

Taking Leadership

The third way in which decolonization is asserted and practiced as foundational to radical anti-authoritarian struggles is through the recognition of the centrality of Indigenous leadership and guidance in transforming our relationships with each other and the land. When I asked Ananda Lee Tan, a long-time environmental justice organizer based in Vancouver, about developing relationships of solidarity with Indigenous communities, his response touched upon the importance of respecting grassroots leadership. Ananda notes:

> We need to recognize that whenever we're on a land base that the voice of the local leadership and the community-based leadership, the traditional leadership, the Indigenous leadership, should always come first and should always provide the context within which we have our exchange and build our cause. Ultimately that leadership is critical to us and to future generations if we can recognize that it is the traditional practices of Indigenous peoples around the world that can be a pathway to the scale of global movements we need to take a stand.

The concept of taking leadership from Indigenous communities can be met with skepticism within anti-authoritarian movements. For many activists leadership is often understood as being a practice of domination. Dixon (2014), for instance, explains that the masculinized and Eurocentric model of leadership that promotes charisma and machismo through a vanguard (and also through more informal leadership structures) is still seen as conventional within the radical left. For Dixon, this style of leadership "tends to be linked to specific individual characteristics, including assertiveness, enthusiasm for taking initiative, analytical skills, aggressiveness, ease with public speaking, self-confidence, and facility with telling other people what to do" (177). Samir Shaheen-Hussain, one of the co-founders of the Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement in Montréal, explained to me how having a very narrow understanding of what it means to

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take leadership can result in reproducing colonial domination in attempts to build solidarity with Indigenous communities. Samir reflects:

> On the political front what's hard in terms of challenges or pitfalls is the risk of basically perpetuating colonial dynamics. Basically settlers coming in and dictating how a struggle should be led, deeming whether a given action is "radical" enough or not without recognizing the importance of leadership within communities themselves to figure out for themselves what makes the most sense for them in a given situation.

A number of movements, in particular Occupy, have tried to move away from this style of leadership, although, as Dixon acutely observes, many of these strategies fall into two recurrent fallacies: the "no leaders" fallacy and the "all the same" fallacy.

The "no leaders" fallacy makes it seem as though leadership has vanished even though informal and often unaccountable leadership emerges, making leadership harder to evaluate, appreciate, or share (Dixon 2014). The "all the same" fallacy arises when we assume that we come into movements with similar skills, experiences, knowledges, time, and confidence. This fallacy tends to create a situation where we act as though everyone should be able to contribute the same things to organizing. These fallacies are heightened when considering the implications of taking direction from Indigenous communities. This may result in either a dependency on Indigenous peoples to direct the actions of solidarity activists or it may result in activists unconsciously picking and choosing who they align with and then acting under the presumption that those people represent the views of all people within the Indigenous community/nation one is working with.

In particular, there is a romanticization of Indigenous strategies or leaders that fit most closely with the political goals of anti-authoritarian groups. However, there is also a danger of romanticizing the internal harmony within Indigenous communities. Often this is characterized by a flattening of the important differences in politics, beliefs, traditions,

and leadership structures within Indigenous communities themselves (Simpson 2014). Cleve Higgins, an organizer with the Anti-Colonial Solidarity Collective in Montréal, explains how being honest and accountable about the reasons why your collective has aligned with particular Indigenous activists and not others is a practice that attempts to reduce the harm caused by this phenomenon. Cleve notes:

> For example, I'm saying, "You're choosing which Indigenous people to put up there," that's your choice, that's your politics, that's based on you being an anti-capitalist and being against this system. You can't ignore that you're making that choice and then trying to convey that choice to other settlers. You're just doing the same thing that I'm doing except I'm being explicit about it and you're not. So those are the terms of that argument. I think accountability is really important too and that needs to be centered because of power dynamics and because of the ways in which the position of power settlers hold will make the things they do harmful even if they don't want it to be and that will end up reinforcing colonization despite intentions to oppose it.

While Cleve is certainly not arguing against choosing to align with those Indigenous folks with whom you share politics, he makes an important point that it is important to be clear on who you are aligning with and why. It is easy to wade into or interfere in the internal political struggles of Indigenous communities (see Graeber 2009; Simpson 2014) by assuming homogeneity or unanimity among all members of a particular community or nation.

Amadahy and Lawrence (2009) suggest that it is also easy to romanticize and idealize Indigenous societies and leadership structures in ways that maintain settler colonial logics. The romanticism of a perceived "pure" Indigenous politics perpetuates an often superficial and uncritical practice of relationships building between non-Indigenous activists and Indigenous communities or collectives. Amadahy and Lawrence (2009) suggest, "such romanticism prevents outsiders from seeing in real terms the actual

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strengths and values that contemporary Indigenous communities maintain today" (117).

A number of my research participants acknowledged the need to combine the practice of

centering Indigenous leadership within our movements with an understanding of the

reciprocity needed to forge genuine relationships of solidarity. This requires, as Luam

Kidane suggested to me, becoming "active participants in creating the now that's

happening." In order for that to happen we have to have dialogue and reciprocity and for

Kidane that means shifting our understanding of how we contract relationships.

Jaggi Singh also discussed this issue with me and suggested that we "have to be

open to [the discussion of taking leadership from Indigenous peoples], but it can also end

up essentializing Indigenous folks." As an alternative to this unquestioning fetishization

of Indigenous cultures and traditions, Sarita Ahooja suggests that the practice of

accompaniment could be a useful model to build relationships in the Canadian and U.S.

contexts. Sarita recounted how she learned the practice of accompaniment through her

experience supporting the Zapatista liberation struggle. Sarita recounts:

> I learned a lot [in Chiapas] about decolonizing. It's in the word itself –
> decolonizing is a process of undoing the constructs of colonial society
> and the segregation that has been imposed on us as well, as non-
> Indigenous people. Learning the real history of the land, the real names
> of the land, and this land that we belong to too now. Learning its real
> identity in a sense, going with the people that have that knowledge and
> accompanying them. Sometimes it's a silent accompaniment and
> sometimes it's an active and vigorous accompaniment because they've
> asked you to intervene in something that is going on with your
> government and their people. It's a continually changing thing
> decolonization, because it's premised on, I think, a dialogue and
> ongoing exchange between those people who decided to resist their
> colonial reality in the Native sphere and those people who have also
> decided to resist their colonial reality in our Western capitalist world.
> There has to be a continuous dialogue and exchange because of the
> diversity, the differences, and varieties of ways in which we are living it
> – because it is an apartheid situation. But it has to be a direct thing, like
> face-to-face.

The process of accompaniment described by Sarita Ahooja suggests an accountability and reciprocity that differs from the notion that solidarity activists rely solely on Indigenous leaders to direct them. Instead, it suggests the need for all people living on Turtle Island to engage in processes of decolonization that correspond with how they are situated within the settler colonial context. Solidarity in this sense would be closer to what Glen Coulthard describes as a process of mutual recognition outside of the politics of liberal multiculturalism. For Coulthard (2014) liberal multiculturalism "promises to reproduce the very configurations of colonialist, racist, patriarchal state power that Indigenous peoples' demands for recognition have historically sought to transcend" (3). Following the work of Richard J.F. Day, Coulthard argues that "the politics of recognition" model of liberal pluralism seeks to 'reconcile' Indigenous assertions of nationhood with settler-state sovereignty. Rather than material redistribution of land to Indigenous peoples, the settler-state seeks to accommodate Indigenous identity and cultural claims that subsume Indigenous peoples into a domestic dependent relationship within the state. This results in a discourse and public policy around dealing with "our" First Nations rather than recognizing the inherent and ongoing sovereignty and autonomy of Indigenous peoples. This liberal multicultural politics of recognition is perpetuated by the state and at times by left-leaning activist groups who seek to accommodate Indigenous assertions of sovereignty into some form of political relationship *within* the settler colonial state (Day 2005; Coulthard 2014). Through an approach to solidarity based on the politics of recognition, activist groups risk perpetuating two dangerous colonial logics: (1) subsuming Indigenous struggles for decolonization into the broad range of equity seeking movements within the state or (2) rendering the claims of non-Indigenous people to

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justice and liberation as peripheral to Indigenous decolonization.

Against the Flattening of our Struggles

Some of the anti-authoritarian activists I interviewed made an important distinction between taking leadership from and being accountable to Indigenous peoples in the process of decolonization. This distinction revolved around the responsibility of non-Indigenous people to think about and act in ways that remove the state as a mediator of our relationships with Indigenous peoples. Alex Paterson an environmental justice and anti-capitalist organizer in Winnipeg explained this distinction as such:

> I often think that decolonization for a lot of people often means a kind of uncritical taking leadership version of Indigenous solidarity. I don't think enough non-Indigenous people are doing the really hard intellectual work to come up with alternative proposals where we can start responding to what Indigenous people are saying. I think it's really clear what they want. But there's this missing part where there's not enough intellectual work being done among non-Indigenous people and more specifically amongst white people.

As Paterson suggests, a common approach to "taking leadership" is to respond to requests for solidarity from Indigenous peoples in struggle by appealing to the state and its various branches of government to respect the demands of those Indigenous communities. While this is often a result of political context and is an important strategy in fighting for immediate and urgently needed material redress (i.e. stopping a development project, seeking action to address the cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women, or dealing with a housing crisis), activists run the risk of legitimizing the state as the mechanism for achieving justice. This is not to say that these campaigns seeking a better life within the state are not necessary but that without being conscious of the potential to further establish settler-state authority activists run the risk of replicating the logics of

settler colonial rule. These solidarity actions can, intentionally or unintentionally, have the residual effect of framing Indigenous sovereignty and decolonization as being granted by the state.

In contrast, Harsha Walia (2013) argues that decolonizing movements must create alternatives to the state power structure, "through committed struggles against settler colonialism, border imperialism, capitalism, and oppression, as well as through concrete practices that center other ways of laboring, thinking, loving, stewarding, and living" (12). And as Alex Paterson suggested above, imagining and practicing alternatives to the state structure is important in developing self-determination among non-Indigenous people so that our solidarity is backed by an effective counter-power to the settler colonial state.

Glen Coulthard (2014) drawing from the history of Dene sovereignty struggles in the Northwest Territories explains that a critical part of the commitment of his people to social relations premised on reciprocity means developing a relationship with non-Indigenous people according to the principle of mutual self-determination. Mutual self-determination means that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people must participate in struggles to dismantle the settler colonial state and to engage in relationships of kinship, shared affinities, and responsible solidarities (Walia 2014). Jarvis Brownlie, a long-time organizer in support of Indigenous sovereignty movements based in Winnipeg, explained this concept in clear and simple terms:

> So decolonization has to happen on a very broad front. We need all kinds of people doing all kinds of different things. We really need, of course, Indigenous people leading the way and expressing the needs that they see, the pressing issues, and the ways that they would like things to change. So it's really important to take the lead from Indigenous people although they won't always speak in the same voice.

But at the same time, everyone has to be involved, because everyone
has to be decolonized.

In asserting the responsibility of all people within settler colonial states to engage in

processes of decolonization the notion of centering Indigenous leadership, then, involves

significant responsibility and reciprocity on the part of non-Indigenous people. It requires

developing alternative power structures to the state and relationships with Indigenous

communities unmediated by settler colonial governments.

By arguing that making Indigenous leadership central to decolonization struggles

deviates from an intersectional standpoint approach, Sharma and Wright (2009) warn that

activists can perpetuate a dangerous minimizing of the seriousness of other anti-

oppression struggles. They argue, "By insisting that the moral claims of 'Natives' are

central, the claims of others are rendered as peripheral to the realization of either

decolonization or justice. In keeping with the anti-miscegenist character of such politics,

the numerous past and present alliances across 'Native'/'non-Native' divides are wholly

denied, as are the classed, gendered, and sexualized divisions *within* such categories"

(126). This critique highlights the potential problem of failing to integrate a politics that

connects the historical processes of capitalism, slavery, dispossession, patriarchy and

other forms of domination.

For many activists this problematic approach can involve focusing exclusively on

immediate support for Indigenous sovereignty struggles without significant work being

done in non-Indigenous communities to build a decolonial politics. Fred Burrill, an anti-

capitalist and anti-colonial organizer in Montréal, explained this conundrum, noting:

I've always been a bit uncertain about how to engage in Indigenous
solidarity work. It's always seemed to me that the only way to really do
it is to do nothing else because it takes, like any organizing with people
who don't live in the city, a lot of time and resources. I've never been

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able to figure out a way to balance it with my other organizing in a way that felt like it came with the integrity needed and forming the relationships that are needed. So eventually I just kind of stopped doing it. Not stopped having the perspective or stopped integrating that into other struggles, but I stopped being an active participant in what's now called the Anti-Colonial Solidarity collective in Montréal.

Given that a growing number of activists and collectives focus exclusively on engaging in direct solidarity with Indigenous peoples in struggle, it is easy to see how taking direction from Indigenous movements can result in consistently reacting to short-term needs or threats faced by those communities rather than strategizing long-term goals of creating processes of decolonization within broader settler society. This has the residual effect of many activists seeking to be seen as more "decolonized" or in more "allyship" with Indigenous peoples than other activists or those who are not politicized around these issues. Daniel Hunter, a Black social movement educator based in Philadelphia, explained the risks associated with activist groups exclusively taking direction from Indigenous sovereignty struggles in an effort to show their commitment or allyship to decolonization. He asserts:

> One legacy of anti-oppression or decolonization has taught us or at least as we've been picking it up, is that one goal is to be the one who is perceived the most in allyhood with a movement. So there's a kind of way in which both organizations as well as individuals will navigate to appear or want to appear as most in tuned with the one who is most marginalized at the moment. There's a kind of ranking that comes from that in our subcultures. So one reason that's so troubling is because it then actually makes less space for a resurgence to happen because if something happens then lots and lots of people are, "Yes, I want to support that! I want to do it or be it or be with you or hold your hand while you do it!" or so on and so forth. It doesn't actually respect someone else to be able to do their thing.

This competitiveness with respect to developing relationships of solidarity with Indigenous struggles has three immediate effects. It has the potential to stifle independent

decision-making and resurgence within Indigenous communities, it can reinforce the capitalist logics of competition and striving for perfection, and it can distract from ongoing political organizing within settler communities themselves.

Gaztambide-Fernández (2012) provides advice to solidarity activists struggling with these issues noting "a decolonizing pedagogy of solidarity must shift the focus away from either explaining or enhancing existing social arrangements, seeking instead to challenge such arrangements and their implied colonial logic" (49). In particular, this means that decolonizing solidarity needs to spur not only action in support of Indigenous struggles for sovereignty, but also challenge the very notion of what it means to engage in relationships. For Gaztambide-Fernández this includes "what it means to be human, and by extension, the logics of inclusion and exclusion that enforce social boundaries, including notions of social, political, and civic solidarity. It is about imagining human relations that are premised on the relationship between difference and interdependency, rather than similarity and a rational calculation of self-interests" (49). Thus, a politics solely focused on "Indigenous solidarity" can limit or even undermine the possibilities for decolonization.

Decolonization and the Fear of Other Struggles Being Peripheral

Syed Hussan, an organizer with No One Is Illegal-Toronto highlighted the way that many groups have transitioned from a process of uncritical solidarity to a more nuanced process of building relationships of accountability and responsibility. He explains:

> As you let go of your racist assumptions, actually practicing solidarity
> and understanding your role in it – then I think the conversation goes

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> from "take direction from whom and when and how" to "how do you separate initiative from direction?" Because obviously always asking communities who are under, you know, a lot of pressure, to tell you what to do is not good solidarity.

For Hussan and others who I interviewed, the idea that decolonization can be foundational and Indigenous leadership can be central to that practice without it being your main site of struggle resonated as an important shift in anti-authoritarian practice based on learning from past failures and mistakes. In this sense, a decolonial politics is embedded within queer, migrant justice, anti-capitalist, environmental justice, anti-racist and other anti-authoritarian struggles. It impacts the decisions made and the relationships of solidarity that group members seek to foster. It requires an acknowledgement and understanding that our campaigns and struggles need to be waged with the settler colonial context in mind. Similarly, Amadahy and Lawrence (2009) acknowledge that Indigenous leaders are also challenged with the need "to develop a vision of sovereignty and self-government that addresses the disempowered and dispossessed from other parts of the world who were forced and/or coerced into being here on Turtle Island (a global phenomenon in which Canada shares culpability)" (131). This leads back into a discussion of reciprocity, and as Jaggi Singh explained, "one of the frameworks of support is understanding that we can give it and that we need it – and nobody simply just gives it and nobody simply just needs it – although it might seem that way sometimes." To embrace the vulnerability of our movements and to commit to incorporating decolonization as foundational to our day-to-day organizing is an important aspect of solidarity that would seem to avoid, as Sharma and Wright (2009) fear, the risks of shifting these issues to the periphery of struggle. Taking an intersectional approach to decolonization suggested by Sharma and Wright itself comes up against important

contradictions, especially given that each of us comes into political organizing from a variety of experiences and positions within the settler colonial context. Jodi A. Byrd (2011) expresses this sentiment when she explains that decolonization, "asks that settler, native, and arrivants [to] each acknowledge their own positions within empire and then reconceptualize space and history to make visible what imperialism and its resultant settler colonialisms and diasporas have sought to obscure" (xxx). And as Li Morales, a queer anti-colonial organizer of colour based in the Bay Area, reminded me, "so much of the action is also about showing up and being present with how fucked we all are with all of these legacies and positions and how complicit all of it is." Li's important intervention highlights the fact that it is not only important to transform our relationships of solidarity but to understand and acknowledge the different pathways we must take to develop these relationships based on the positions we occupy within colonialism.

Conclusion

By analyzing the shifting frameworks for engaging in anti-authoritarian struggles in the settler colonial context, we begin to gain a greater understanding of the complexities and contradictions inherent in an analysis that seeks to make Indigenous decolonization and resurgence central to pre-figuring what liberation looks like on stolen land. As we can see through the discussions taking place among the activists I interviewed in this chapter, there is no clear political line to follow, but rather an acknowledgement of the importance of being responsible, accountable, and vulnerable as we seek to re-imagine anti-authoritarian struggles through a decolonizing lens.

This political tendency draws on the experiences of a number of movements,

including queer/trans*, anti-racist, environmental justice, migrant justice, anti-capitalist, anti-colonial and anarchist but they are developing shared ideas and approaches to decolonization based on over-lapping relationships and commitments to supporting Indigenous sovereignty struggles. However, these are not merely sub-cultural movements. They engage and aspire towards mass mobilizing among members of their communities and as such envision broad-based struggles to resist the neoliberal state and establish new ways of organizing society outside of the state's reach. In coming to see Indigenous decolonization as foundational to their own social movement struggles, they are not seeking admission into Indigenous nations as much as they are attempting to negotiate relationships of co-existence with Indigenous peoples outside of the settler colonial logics of the state. They do so by recognizing the long history of erasure and isolation of Indigenous social movements among settler society. This erasure and isolation has also been a feature of movements on the radical left where in the attempt to secure resources from the state the interests of poor settlers, racialized people, and Indigenous peoples are put into competition. This has often resulted in the expansion of the settler colonial project rather than resistance to it.

Many of my interview participants acknowledge that the logics of settler colonialism have long structured the bounds of resistance among left social movements. Eschewing the dichotomy of civilized and uncivilized that derives from these logics, they are seeking to take leadership from Indigenous peoples who have maintained traditional knowledges and ways of being in the face of capitalist dispossession and proletarianization. These ways of being are seen as critical to the development of a post-settler-state polity in which settlers and non-Indigenous people may develop relationships

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of reciprocity and mutual aid with the land and with Indigenous peoples outside the logics of property and the capitalist mode of production. This is not an argument for "nativism" or an essentializing of Indigenous knowledges or their anti-colonial struggles but a recognition of the importance of situating our political struggles within the historical context in which they take place, namely settler colonialism and the possibility for decolonization.

As such, this chapter explores what it means to understand Indigenous decolonization as foundational to anti-authoritarian struggles within a settler colonial context. It places the discussions and experiences of grassroots activists in conversation with the questions central to the debate between Lawrence and Dua (2005) and Sharma and Wright (2009). Are anti-authoritarians unwittingly or strategically supporting Indigenous nationalist movements that Sharma and Wright (2009) suggest are embedded in "autochthonous neo-racism"? Or have anti-racist and anti-authoritarian activists, as Lawrence and Dua (2005) suggest, perpetuated the structure of settler colonialism by ignoring the ongoing colonization of Indigenous peoples and failing to understand their own complicity in the project of settlement? For those that I interviewed, these are complex questions with no easy answers. However, through engaged and committed relationship building between anti-authoritarian activists and Indigenous movements for decolonization and resurgence, they see the possibility of centering Indigenous sovereignty within their movements without pushing anti-racist, anti-oppression, anti-capitalist, and other struggles to the periphery. By envisioning an alternative to a politics invested in the settler colonial project, this chapter suggests that anti-authoritarian activists are pushing the boundaries of what it means to be in relationship with the land

and to act from a place of responsibility.

The following chapter builds on these discussions by attempting to articulate how one's positionality, relationship to the state, and understanding of the multiple conceptualizations of Indigenous sovereignty impacts the ways in which we form relations of solidarity with Indigenous struggles for nationhood in theory and in practice. A big question about movements that critique the settler colonial state and seek to find alternatives to state power is how they articulate this politics in practice. Is the struggle for post-state sovereignty a struggle against the welfare state and state bureaucracy in general? What does it mean to understand oneself as complicit in the settler colonial project and to seek to engage in political movements that resist this structure while also negotiating the material realities of poverty, heteropatriarchy, racism, and other forms of oppression? A lot of movements criticize the state and seek a radical break from state-centric politics, such as liberal multicultural inclusion and the desire for state recognition, the following chapter illuminates how anti-authoritarian struggles envision liberation *within and outside* of these context. The desire for and creation of a post-state society that breaks from the logics of settler colonialism must also negotiate the day-to-day resistance to the structures of white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism. Specifically, chapter four seeks to investigate how anti-authoritarian activists within a broad range of social movements understand Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty in theory and practice. What does it mean to support Indigenous struggles for nationhood as anti-authoritarians? How does it change the way we structure our campaigns and political analysis? Chapter four responds to these questions by studying how activists seek to develop political campaigns that recognize the multiple positionalities in which we are

situated in relation to settler colonialism and how they attempt to negotiate relationships of solidarity with Indigenous struggles outside of the structure of the settler colonial state.

CHAPTER FOUR
Indigenous Nationhood, Sovereignty and
Dismantling the Settler State

"It's become this hot topic to talk about settler colonialism and people identifying with, 'Oh, you know I'm a settler on Indigenous territories' without really thinking through what those things mean. What does it mean for you to say that? And just because you said that am I now to assume that you are in solidarity - to use that phrase - with Indigenous struggles, but then every other aspect of your life re-affirms the Canadian nation-state."

‒   *Luam Kidane*

During a hot mid-summer day in 2013, a group of activists from the First Nations Solidarity Working Group of my union local, CUPE 3903, which represents contract faculty and teaching assistants at York University, travelled about two hundred kilometers north of Toronto to help build a structure at the Oshkimaadziig Unity Camp. Oshkimaadziig is part of a process of reclaiming land in Awenda Provincial Park by members of the Anishinabek Confederacy to Invoke our Nationhood (ACTION). Kaikai Kons and Giibwaanisi, the founders of the camp, explain the purpose of Oshkimaadziig as follows:

> Oshkimaadziig in the Anishinabek language refers to the New People of the Anishinabek Seventh Fire Prophecy who will pick up the many things left on the trail to ensure humanity's survival in the Eighth Fire. Oshkimaadziig Unity Camp is located on one of five council fires within the Anishinabek-Haudenosaunee Friendship Belt, which Ontario's Awenda Provincial Park now illegally occupies. This is also a reclamation site whereas these lands were suppose[d] to be a part of the Aisance Band/Beausoleil First Nation where ACTION's Oshkabewis are from (ACTION 2015).

For Kaikai Kons and Giibwaanisi, the Oshkimaadziig camp serves a number of purposes, but foremost it is a direct invocation of Anishinabek nationhood and sovereignty, as well as an assertion of the connection between this nationhood and the land. Oshikimaadziig is an interruption of settler colonial sovereignty and it is also an invitation to re-negotiate

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human and non-human relationships based on the Anishinabek Seventh Fire prophecy.[9]

For the organizers, this has meant acknowledging the long-standing co-stewardship of these territories between their nation and Haudenosaunee peoples and a desire to invite non-Indigenous people to participate in a renewal of the long histories of Indigenous governance on these lands.

For the members of CUPE 3903's First Nations Solidarity Working Group, the trip was an important opportunity to participate in tangible solidarity with ACTION through financial support, manual labour, active learning, and ongoing relationship building. The invocation of the Seventh Fire prophecy has been the foundation of resistance and resurgence for many Anishinabek peoples and the organizers of the Oshkimaadziig Unity Camp see their work as being directly tied to the responsibilities incumbent upon them in this prophecy. Nishinaabeg author-activist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2008) explains the important role that the "new people," the *Oshkimaadziig*, play in the Anishinabek Seventh Fire prophecy: "If we are to take seriously our current responsibilities, our generation has a profound ability to contribute to the recovery and rebirth of Indigenous Nations, and to peaceful and just relations with our neighbouring nation states" (14). While Simpson situates the negotiation of these new relationships between Indigenous nations and the Canadian and U.S. nation-states, she also acknowledges the importance of working directly with settler society given that these states have expressed an unwillingness to make any fundamental adjustments to this

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[9] Leanne Simpson (2008) explains that the Seventh Fire prophecies are a series of sacred predictions that have foretold Nishnaabeg history since the beginning of Creation. She notes, "The later part of that prophecy relays that we are currently in the Seventh Fire, a time when, after a long period of colonialism and cultural loss, a new people, the Oshkimaadziig emerge." As Simpson also notes, this is only a small portion of the prophecy. For a more complete discussion she suggests Sally Gaikesheyongai's *The Seven Fires: An Ojibway Prophecy* (Toronto: Sister Vision Press, 1994); Benton-Banai's *The Mishomis Book* (Hayward, WI: Indian Country Communications, 1988); and Thoams Peacock and Marlene Wisuri's *The Good Path* (Afton, MN: Afton Historical Society, 2002).

unjust relationship (Simpson 2011). The Oshkimaadziig Unity Camp is an example of how some Anishinabek peoples are seeking to re-assert their nationhood and are inviting non-Indigenous people to renew relations of co-existence *by disavowing the state as an intermediary* instead of trying to influence the behaviour of their governments. The Oshkimaadziig camp acts as an expression of sovereignty for Anishinabek peoples and an autonomous space unmediated by the state in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples can begin to negotiate treaty relationships at the grassroots level.

Lawrence and Dua (2005) assert that nationhood and its relationship to land is at the heart of Indigenous peoples' resistance to colonialism and "their survival depends on it" (124). At the core of Lawrence and Dua's argument is the ongoing struggle by Indigenous peoples against the erasure, assimilation, and genocide perpetrated by the Canadian state and supported by settler society. As discussed earlier, Lawrence and Dua echo a number of Indigenous theorists and activists (see Alfred 1999; Monture-Angus 1999; Borrows 2006), when they explain that for decolonization to take place, Indigenous peoples need to reestablish control over their communities and rebuild nationhood. In establishing what this nationhood might look like, these authors draw on an array of teachings and definitions that, at times, appear to be contradictory. Is nationhood a sacred concept that ties Indigenous peoples to the land through stories and memory that are seemingly indecipherable through Western logics? Or is nationhood defined through the language of international law that links national sovereignty to political sovereignty and the nation-state as vehicles to establish and maintain control of territory?

Lawrence and Dua (2005) seem to suggest that Indigenous struggles for nationhood can be construed as exhibiting both of these tendencies (and they are not

limited to only these two). For instance, they describe how in Mi'kmaq conceptions of nationhood the territories that now comprise Canada's Atlantic provinces are understood as being a sacred order, "flowing from a creation story that moves seamlessly from mythical time into historical time around the end of the last ice age" (126). However, in other places the authors' assert Indigenous nationhood within the provisions of international law and the definitions set out by the United Nations. In this sense, Indigenous nationhood is simultaneously spiritual and political, something that seems on the surface to be incommensurable. However, as Audra Simpson (2014) explains, Indigenous notions of nationhood have inherently been transformed and shaped by the process of settler colonialism and while nationhood is something that exists prior to colonialism as a sacred order it is also an interruption of contemporary settler colonial claims to sovereignty and dominion over territories.

The assertion of Indigenous nationhood at the United Nations, then, serves as a disruption of settler state sovereignty in two ways: (1) by asserting that multiple self-conceptions of nationhood existed prior to European colonization it challenges settler dominion claimed through the doctrine of *terra nullius*; and (2) by articulating that settler state sovereignty is subservient to and dependent on treaties with Indigenous nations it challenges the argument that the power of settler colonial states originates from their founding constitutions (Bhatia 2013). Sharma and Wright (2009) argue that these articulations of Indigenous nationalisms must inherently be tied to the oppressive structures of the nation-state. For Sharma and Wright, Lawrence and Dua do not consider how various nationalisms have relied upon and reproduced the colonial state and colonial social relationships. They note, "Like other nationalist arguments that read the existence

of contemporary nationalized polities back into time immemorial, Lawrence and Dua maintain that such critiques are *attacks* against both the pre-colonial identity of indigenous people and of their contemporary efforts at achieving sovereignty" (Sharma and Wright 2009:120). The problem with such nationalisms, contend Sharma and Wright, is that they "can be construed as a liberation of 'nations' rather than as a liberation of people from social relations that are organized through hierarchy and global competition for profits..." (128). This points to potential tensions between Indigenous nationhood and anti-authoritarian struggles against the nation-state, however from the interviews I conducted it is clear that this does not have to be the case. Let us look at some ways that anti-authoritarians engage with this debate and see if that complicates the story Sharma & Wright are presenting.

For many activists within the anti-authoritarian current, questions of nationalism and sovereignty and how they are understood within a politics of Indigenous decolonization are critical to the practice of a settler politics of solidarity. In this chapter I argue that the affinities between Indigenous movements for decolonization and anti-authoritarian social movements are forged through a shared desire for liberation not beholden to state structures. Indigenous decolonization and resurgence is neither statist nor globalist, as debated in the literature, but is rather a reassertion of nationhood (not subsumed to the state), what Kevin Bruyneel (2007) describes as a "third space of sovereignty". Similarly, decolonial politics within anti-authoritarian movements rely on a fusion of rejection and affirmation, pushing against and beyond dominant social relations and the settler state as the mediating structure of their relationships with Indigenous peoples (Dixon 2014). The politics of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty and the

negotiation of (un)belonging for non-Indigenous people within and outside of the structures of the settler colonial state are asserted and practiced within the anti-authoritarian current in three main ways: (1) through an anti-state politics that understands Indigenous assertions of sovereignty and nationhood as existing as a possibility for organizing society outside of the nation-state structure; (2) through a recognition of the multiple positionalities in which we are situated in relation to settler colonialism; and (3) through an understanding of decolonization as an enactment of sovereignty through a relational worldview.

Solidarity in the Third Space of Sovereignty

To Sharma and Wright (2009) relationships of solidarity between Indigenous sovereignty movements and anti-authoritarian groups appear to be incommensurable. They warn that the nationalisms embedded within Indigenous struggles for sovereignty are tied to modernist concepts of nationality that seek to control people's mobility across spaces claimed by these various nations. Yet, a growing number of anti-authoritarian activists, many of whom oppose and seek to dismantle nation-states, are working to support assertions of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty within the U.S. and Canadian settler colonial contexts. This is despite the caution that "some of the key aims of indigenous nationalist movements – 'nationhood' and sovereignty – are unable to realize *decolonization*" (Sharma and Wright 2009:129). Is Sharma & Wright's reading of Indigenous sovereignty movements correct or is it overstated? Is anti-authoritarian solidarity strategic or do activists understand Indigenous peoples' evocations of sovereignty and nationhood as deviating from nationalisms tied to the nation-state?

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This section puts my conversations with organizers from the anti-authoritarian current into dialogue with some of the most recent theory (both academic and grassroots) on nationhood, sovereignty, autonomy, resurgence and the negotiation of just relationships between Indigenous peoples and settler society. I argue that there is a high degree of affinity between Indigenous concepts of sovereignty and the kinds of autonomous political formations envisioned and practiced by anti-authoritarian activists in resistance to the nation-state. These relationships of solidarity are forged in "third spaces of sovereignty" through the desire to mutually respect treaty relationships. In this chapter I ground this theory in two contemporary examples. First, I show how the construction of and participation in the Oshkimaadziig camp is an example of the negotiation of a third space of sovereignty that invites non-Indigenous people to work towards decolonial relationships tied to place. Second, I show how grassroots collaborations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to affirm treaty relationships are a resistance to the power of the settler state and an example of negotiating nation-to-nation relationships outside of the state structure.

Many anti-authoritarian activists are conflicted by the prospects of working in support of projects that they believe are striving towards the construction of a nation-state. These activists fear that most forms of nationalism must be supplemented by practices of exclusion and territorial control. While projects of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty appear on the surface to be struggles for national liberation, some believe they are guided by a neo-colonial politics of domination, exclusion, and xenophobia (Balibar 2003; Sharma and Wright 2009). This unease is fueled, in part, by the fear that past anti-colonial struggles throughout the world have been seeped in nationalist logics

seeking recognition within the global system of nation-states. Although many of these struggles achieved political decolonization, this has often taken place in the form of sovereign nation-states ruled by authoritarian, repressive and undemocratic governments that replicate the power relations of former colonial regimes. Despite these reservations, there are a number of examples where anti-authoritarian social movements have allied with nationalist groups in political struggle. For instance, anti-authoritarian activists in Canada and the United States have supported a myriad of national liberation struggles around the globe (i.e. Venezuela, Cuba, Palestine, South Africa) that seek or have achieved control of the nation-state. This solidarity could be explained as both an affirmation of the autonomy of oppressed groups to determine their own course of liberation and as a political strategy of weakening a common enemy.

If this strategic solidarity exists to support nation liberation struggles in different parts of the world, why has it been more challenging to sustain this solidarity within the settler states these activists call home? I suggest that the reticence of left social movements to support Indigenous sovereignty movements in Canada and the United States is fueled by the fact that Indigenous struggles for nationhood exist as both a conflict and crisis for the settler state and settler society in that they appear on the surface to challenge settler belonging (Simpson 2014). Given that the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples in the United States (through the Marshall decisions)[10] and Canada (under the rubric of 'self-government and extinguishment of Aboriginal title) is limited by, and subject to, the sovereignty of the settler state and settler society (Day 2001), some activists within the anti-authoritarian current fear that support for Indigenous sovereignty

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[10] The United States Supreme Court decisions of 1831 and 1832 named after Justice John Marshall recognized Indigenous peoples as domestic dependent nations under the control of U.S. sovereignty.

struggles can only result in the inversion of this power structure.[11]

Clare Bayard, an organizer with the Catalyst Centre in San Francisco, explained that these anxieties are an obstacle for some organizers in the anti-authoritarian current (particularly in the United States) to committing to relationships of solidarity with Indigenous sovereignty movements. Clare explains that settler activists hesitate to reach out to these movements due to the "fear of admitting that there's something not legitimate about [us] being here, [a] fear of not just getting called on it but getting kicked out, losing your home." Given that most activists connect nationalism to their experiences fighting against state border policies, xenophobia, anti-Black racism, and state imperialism and wars, it is understandable that many would hesitate to support nationalist movements. If activists have not developed relationships with Indigenous communities, they are often guided by these logics and see evocations of nationhood and sovereignty as incommensurable with their concepts of liberation.

For instance, when I discussed Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty with Leah Girardo, a white anarchist settler active in organizing in Philadelphia, Toronto and Montréal, she tried to explain how settler colonial logics seep into the feelings of fear, guilt, and entitlement that circulate among some non-Indigenous activists. Leah explains:

> [I]f you're a settler, even if you feel nervous or questioning your relationship to the land, you still feel like, "Well, I get to be here. I get to go to work." You still internalize the idea that you have some ownership over your time and place in Canada ...But then if you begin to understand [how your belonging is embedded within the settler state], suddenly that relationship is a little bit iffy. Now you are acknowledging that Indigenous people exist, you're acknowledging that there are many cultures and nations and folks who have cultural practices that are rich and alive and present and tied to this land. What

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[11] This concern is particularly prevalent among white anarchist-identified activists in the United States, which points to the importance of being attuned to positionality within the process of decolonization that will be discussed in the following section.

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is your relationship to those people and that land?

Leah's questions are pertinent because they help us think about the ways in which settler activists evade responsibility to the process of decolonization by avoiding questions of land and their investment in securing the settler colonial project. As Tuck and Yang (2012) caution, these evasions are *moves to innocence*. They explain "settler moves to innocence are those strategies or positionings that attempt to relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up land or power or privilege, without having to change much at all" (Tuck and Yang 2012:10). As I have argued in earlier chapters, settler colonial logics structure the boundaries of political possibilities for non-Indigenous people. Because of this, non-Indigenous people struggle to imagine any project of Indigenous nationhood that does not destabilize their own belonging within decolonized territories. They see such struggles not only as incommensurable with their politics of liberation, but incommensurable with their sense of belonging on stolen lands. They are hesitant to give up their settler claims to territory for the potential of negotiating a shared decolonial future with Indigenous peoples.

Arguing against these apprehensions Andrea Smith (2011) suggests, "Many indigenous nation-building projects represent a direct intervention *against* pro-nation-state models of governance built on exclusion and chauvinism. These theories situate indigeneity as flexible, shifting, and inclusive" (62 *emphasis mine*). On this point Smith is not alone, a number of Indigenous theorists show how the fluidity of Indigenous nationhood challenges Eurocentric definitions of sovereignty that are tied to the ownership of land and the control of property and populations (Alfred 2005; Monture-Angus 1999; Simpson 2014). Kahnawà:ke Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred, for instance,

explains, "Europeans should not transpose their experience with nationhood on others. I myself do not think the term accurately describes our people - only our own languages and words can do that - but it is useful in a sense; it conveys an equality of status in theory between our societies and that of the colonizer. And it reiterates the fact of our prior occupancy of this continent" (Alfred 2010). Alfred points to both a linguistic incommensurability and a political incommensurability between Indigenous conceptions of nationhood and those bound by settler colonial logics. Similarly, Syed Hussan discussed negotiating the complexities and multiplicities of Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty in building relationships of solidarity with Indigenous nations as part of No One Is Illegal-Toronto. He notes:

> The Indigenous peoples that I know, that I work with, when they use the word sovereignty some of them do and some of them don't mean actually gaining state recognition, you know being a country and a nation-state. We're sorta stuck with the English language and so all matters of collective autonomy are also talked about using terms like sovereignty and self-governance. I don't want us to say that sovereignty means the same thing everywhere or that self-determination means the same thing everywhere...I think getting too attached to academic descriptions as to what sovereignty really is – is counter-productive.

As both Alfred and Hussan suggest, the use of the terms nationhood and sovereignty to describe Indigenous projects of decolonization and resurgence is partly strategic. Indigenous peoples understand nationhood and sovereignty differently from one community to the other (and also within communities) and we cannot overlook the influence that colonialism has had on how these politics are taken up from nation to nation. There are indeed multiple and contradictory interpretation of nationhood and sovereignty among Indigenous peoples, but the same is also true for settlers, including activists within the anti-authoritarian current. Some projects of Indigenous sovereignty

are struggles for nation-state recognition. However, quite often Indigenous peoples speak of nationhood and sovereignty because they are terms that the settler state and settler society can understand. They are discursive and political interruptions of settler sovereignty precisely through the invocation of longstanding Indigenous relations to place.

Kevin Bruyneel (2007) suggests that Indigenous resistance to settler sovereignty works across the spatial and temporal boundaries of the settler state by demanding rights and resources from its governments while also challenging the imposition of colonial rule on their lives through the invocation of "other" sovereignties. This is not an instance of dual sovereignty whereby two sovereign nations co-exist within one territory, as suggested by Asch (2014) and Ivison (2003), but rather something else. Bruyneel (2007) calls this resistance:

> A 'third space of sovereignty' that resides neither simply inside nor outside the American political system but rather exists on these very boundaries, exposing both the practices and the contingencies of American colonial rule. This is a supplemental space, inassimilable to the institutions and discourse of the modern liberal democratic settler-state and nation (xvii).

While Bruyneel speaks specifically within the United States, it is clear that this applies equally to Canada and perhaps other settler colonial contexts as well. Barker (2015) argues that Indigenous peoples' traditions and strategies of resistance in Canada and the United States constitute a parallel affective process. For Barker, the third space of sovereignty can be negotiated in a multitude of ways and he identifies the transgressive space created by the Idle No More movements as one such example. This third space of sovereignty, as Barker (2015) suggests is not only a demand on the settler government, "but rather declares a position with respect to the entirety of Settler society, and demands

that Settlers dialogue and struggle among themselves in order to respond appropriately to this Indigenous positionality" (54). These discussions were readily apparent within my interviews with organizers in the anti-authoritarian current. For instance, in my interview with Fred Burrill, a white settler social housing activist in Montréal, we discussed the responsibilities that non-Indigenous people have to engage in developing decolonial relationships that respond to Indigenous sovereignty within our own communities. He explains:

> [Y]ou can't be in solidarity with something if you are not anything, then you are actually just a parasite or a leach in that sense. So while resurgence is happening in Indigenous communities, the way that we can support it is to [create autonomy and political power in our own communities]...So that when the day comes that there are successful Indigenous uprisings on these territories, there will be some ability to have a coherent response to that as anti-colonial and anti-capitalist settler communities.

Many of the activists that I interviewed shared Fred's viewpoint and discussed the importance of developing spaces of political autonomy in relationship with the third space of sovereignty created by Indigenous resistance to settler colonialism. They sought out examples from their own political and cultural traditions that could be seen as potentially complimentary to how Indigenous peoples understand and create these sovereignties.

While many Indigenous theorists have critiqued Western conceptions of sovereignty as monolithic and incompatible with Indigenous worldviews (Grande 2004; Smith 1999), anarchist theorist Richard J.F. Day (2001) points out that there is more diversity within Western political theory than there may appear at first glance. He argues that scholars such as Taiaiake Alfred differentiate between mainstream Western concepts of sovereignty and other radical traditions. As Day (2001) suggests, "we must remember

that the resources of Western social and political thought are far from exhausted by a consideration of liberal multiculturalism. There are other traditions in the West that are more open to diversity in general, and which display strong affinities with Native American political theory in particular" (188). Similarly, the participants in my research draw on long, diverse, and vast anti-authoritarian histories of imagining and practicing autonomy in the face of colonialism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and absolutist state sovereignty (Ramnath 2011; Walia 2013; Day 2005; Federici 2004).

In their attempt to map some of these trajectories in Western social movement history Pickerill & Chatterton (2006) describe anti-authoritarian spaces seeking to constitute non-capitalist, collective forms of politics, identity and citizenship as "autonomous geographies." They argue that there are many examples of these autonomous geographies in the histories of anti-authoritarianism in Europe and North America including the Diggers and Levellers, Italian Autonomism, the Situationist International, Reclaim the Streets, the Global Justice movement, as well as many other small and temporary spaces of autonomous activity. Similarly, anarchist scholar Hakim Bey (1991) uses the term "Temporary Autonomous Zones" to describe the socio-political tactic of creating temporary spaces that evade formal structures of control. These autonomous spaces seek to avoid reproducing the relations of state-sovereignty through a number of practices including horizontal decision-making (Sitrin 2012), the dispersion of power (Zibechi 2010), and the claiming of the commons (Linebaugh 2014). However, as will be further elucidated in the next chapter, within countries like Canada and the United States, if constituted by non-Indigenous peoples, autonomous geographies must contend with whether or not such spaces break from the logics of settler colonialism that structure

our relationships with Indigenous peoples and the territories on which we live.

Barker & Pickerill (2012) suggest that anti-authoritarian organizers bring unconscious spatial perceptions into their activism complicating the power dynamics in their relationships with Indigenous activists. For instance, by perceiving Indigenous assertions of nationhood and sovereignty to be incommensurable with their anti-state politics, they lack "deeper understandings of Indigenous peoples' place-based relationships [that] can be of great importance in approaching solidarity work in place and with respect" (1706). Barker & Pickerill suggest that part of the problem is that non-Indigenous activists lack experience working *in solidarity in place* with Indigenous peoples. Without these relationships to Indigenous peoples and to place, these activists struggle to understand "Indigenous politics and governance, [its] heterogeneity and aspirations, or [its] perceptions of settler colonialism and decolonization" (1705). Given this lack of relationships, the incommensurability between Indigenous struggles for nationhood and sovereignty and anti-authoritarian social movements is partly the result of non-Indigenous people being unable to imagine societies beyond the state *that are also outside of the structures of settler colonialism*. Relatedly, Simpson (2011) argues, "western theories of liberation have for the most part failed to resonate with the vast majority of Indigenous Peoples, scholars or artists. In particular, western-based social movement theory has failed to recognize the broader contextualizations of resistance within Indigenous thought, while also ignoring the contestation of colonialism as a starting point" (31). If settler activists are open to and willing to have discussions and engage in practices that decolonize Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships to each other and to the land, then perhaps there is a possibility for solidarity to occur despite this

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seeming impasse.

Certainly the task of actually creating autonomous geographies that recognize Indigenous sovereignty remains mired in the incommensurabilities discussed above. However, as Tuck and Yang (2012) argue, we should not shy away from these incommensurabilities because "the opportunities for solidarity lie in what is incommensurable rather than what is common across these efforts" (28). In that respect, it is critical to delve into these incommensurabilities precisely because they offer the opportunity to build towards decolonial transformations in our relationships In this respect, the place-based reconnection and resurgence driving Indigenous sovereignty movements has the potential to radically transform anti-authoritarian struggles for space, that is if activists are willing to move beyond settler colonial logics (Barker 2015).

Through long-term relationship building with Indigenous peoples in place, some activists within the anti-authoritarian current have come to see Indigenous assertions of nationhood and sovereignty as living examples of alternative forms of governance. While they are diverse and contradictory and tinged by years of suppression by the settler colonial state, Indigenous peoples are distinctly and decidedly continuing to practice modes of governance and place-based relationships outside of the framework of the nation-state (Alfred 2005). Mostafa Henaway, an organizer with the Immigrant Workers' Centre in Montréal explains:

> There are huge lessons for the radical left [to learn from Indigenous communities] in terms of the way that we organize outside of the state structure. Even fundamental basic concepts in terms of the idea of - not to use that sort of language - but the commons, for example. That a community can still have a level of strength and power to decide collectively what happens with the land, what happens with its resources, what happens with its children and defend those interests. That leaves us with a lot of lessons and [Indigenous] resurgence gives

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us the possibility to take those lessons to our own communities.

Like Mostafa, many activists in the anti-authoritarian current see developing relationships with Indigenous sovereignty movements as an opportunity to strengthen our resolve to oppose the nation-state and to also question the settler colonial logics that permeate our own notions of what an imagined post-settler-state society might look like. However, these organizers also see the importance of learning Indigenous peoples' roles in, and connections, to place (Barker and Pickerill 2012). In reference to anarchist movements specifically, Barker and Pickerill (2012) explain, "autonomous zones and social centres can remain tactically important, but anarchists need to spend time with Indigenous peoples in place, learning the "personality" (Deloria and Wildcat 2001) of the place and the ways that Indigenous peoples perceive and interact with the entire dynamic community of place" (1718). This engagement with Indigenous ways of relating to place can help anti-authoritarians begin to understand the place-based relationships that differentiate autonomous zones from decolonial spaces.

In participating in the third space of sovereignty, non-Indigenous radicals are challenged to relinquish their ties not only to the state but also to settler colonialism as a structuring logic of their movements. Indeed, as Jaggi Singh, an organizer with No One Is Illegal-Montréal, points out, "So much of our cultures, non-Native cultures and identities, are wrapped up in the notion of the nation-state, not just the nation, which can be innocuous or not, but the settler colonial nation-state. It's pervasive, even in the radical anti-authoritarian left it's pervasive." As Jaggi suggests, activists on the left, including those among the anti-authoritarian current, often engage in campaigns that seek to "reclaim" the democratic origins (or at least the democratic ideals) of the state (see

Graeber 2013 as a recent example) without challenging the underlying settler colonial structure imposed upon the territories on which they struggle. As Andrea Smith (2011) suggests, by critiquing the undemocratic decisions of a current government through an appeal to prior more democratic "American values", these activists mask the foundational power relations of settler colonialism through which these democracies were forged. Smith argues that they do so by evoking a common settler trope – the search for "lost origins". In this respect, Smith is referring to the lost origins of the dream of American or Canadian democracy. These "lost origins" rely on the erasures of the genocides and displacements that these "democractic" settler societies were founded upon. This is not meant as a dismissal of the importance of these movements, but rather to highlight the fact that settler colonialism is a powerful structuring force in non-Indigenous social movement campaigns.

Despite these incommensurabilities, anti-authoritarian and Indigenous movements do have a great deal in common (Alfred 2005; Day 2001). As Barker & Pickerill (2011) suggest, "They share the goal of creating decolonized societies, defined by the mutual sharing of place, maintenance of social-spatial organizations commensurate with their respective cultures, and mediated through respectful protocols designed to maintain alliances across, rather than in spite of, difference" (1706). Anti-authoritarians also talk about enacting spaces of sovereignty outside of the political sovereignty of the settler colonial state. They tend, however, to avoid the terminology of "sovereignty" given how firmly it is couched in liberal democratic theory. Instead they use terms like "autonomy" and "self-determination" to explain their struggles to build spaces beyond the control of the state, a practice that is also quite prevalent among Indigenous activists. Why is this

so? Perhaps the refusal to speak of liberation in terms of sovereignty is in recognition of their positionality as settlers and affirms their desire to seek liberation outside of the structures of settler colonialism – to stop being colonizers – or perhaps it is in keeping with a broader anti-state politics within anarchist political traditions. Many Indigenous peoples also use the terminology of "autonomy" and "self-determination" in favour of speaking of their struggles in terms of "sovereignty". However, regardless of the terminology used, there is clearly an affinity between the way that Indigenous peoples speak about and enact sovereignty and how autonomy and self-determination are talked about in grassroots meetings and practiced in a number of political actions organized within the anti-authoritarian current. This is not to conflate the two processes. Indigenous sovereignties are not simply resistance to state-making societies they are also enactments of long-standing sacred relationships to place. For anti-authoritarians, autonomy and self-determination is more closely aligned with a break from or resistance to the nation- state, what Dixon (2014) refers to as the emerging politics of "against" and "beyond". What seems to be generally agreed upon among those that I interviewed is that possibilities for solidarity with Indigenous sovereignty struggles lie in our ability to break from the settler colonial logics that have plagued past movements seeking to create autonomous spaces within settler colonial states.

I introduced the Oshkimaadziig Unity Camp at the beginning of this chapter as one such attempt to enact these solidarities. I will now proceed to discuss this collaboration in further detail by suggesting that the Oshkimaadziig Unity Camp as a third space of sovereignty opens the possibilities of developing Indigenous/non-Indigenous relationships of reciprocity and mutual aid outside of the structures of the

settler colonial state.

The camp began as a protest against the legal resolution of the Coldwater Narrows Land Claim that took place under Canada's Specific Land Claims process (Gardner and Giibwanisi 2014). In the settlement, four First Nations bands renounced their claims to over 10,000 acres of land in return for $307 million, currently the largest sum awarded in the history of the specific claims process. This Specific Land Claims process is the latest attempt by the Government of Canada to assert settler sovereignty and establish "certainty" of title by facilitating the extinguishment of original Indigenous title to the land (Corntassel 2012; Alfred 2005). In the face of this extinguishment, a small group of Anishinabek activists who opposed the claim founded the organization ACTION (Anishinabek Confederacy to Invoke our Nationhood) and chose Awenda Provincial Park as the site of their land reclamation. This site was chosen due to its rich Anishinabek history and the presence of a Council Fire rock where significant historic negotiations took place, with etchings dating back to 1795 (Gardner & Giibwanisi 2014). As a land reclamation, Oshkimaadziig Unity Camp not only defies the Specific Land Claims process and the legitimacy of the Canadian state's control of and its claims to these lands, it "also opens up a positive and creative space in which to build new decolonizing relations that work toward coexistence based on peace, respect, and non-interference" (Gardner & Giibwanisi 2014:168). Three years after the reclamation, the camp has grown and now includes a small permanent structure built in collaboration with Toronto-based non-Indigenous activists. It has been a space to facilitate a number of discussions, teachings and skill building workshops. Giibwanisi, one of the camp founders explains, "although some of us who utilize the camp are not yet skilled hunters, trappers, medicine

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men, sweat lodge conductors, or anything fancy, we have begun to lay the foundation of what decolonization can look like and feel like on a personal and relational level" (Gardner & Giibwanisi 2014:170). As a place for Anishinabek and other Indigenous peoples to reconnect with the land and reclaim important skills, knowledges, and relationships, the camp has also provided opportunities of healing from the intergenerational traumas caused by settler colonialism. In this way, the Oshkimaadziig Unity Camp disrupts settler colonial space by reasserting Indigenous place-based relationships and opening up the possibility of forging new relationships with settler society outside of the state. Although fairly small and humble in comparison to the reclamations at Kanehstanton, the Uni'sto'ten camp, Elsipogtog, Grassy Narrows, and Black Mesa (among many others), the camp is nonetheless an assertion of anti-statist autonomy that is forged through a disruption of settler colonial logics and spatialities (Barker 2015). The camp acts as a space of potentiality towards a decolonial future and as an assertion of a long-standing sacred order that exists outside of the settler state's claim to sovereignty. As such, it has become an important place where longstanding treaty relationships can be revived and practiced.

Treaty relationships have often been construed as nation-to-nation agreements, however, as many of the participants I interviewed in my study suggested, a critical part of the decolonization process is for settlers and non-Indigenous people to recognize their responsibilities to tend to treaty relationships beyond the actions of our governments. Jarvis Brownlie, a white settler organizer based in Winnipeg, described what those responsibilities look like for non-Indigenous people, particularly those who do not have significant influence over state institutions. For Jarvis, treaties are intimately connected to

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reciprocal responsibilities that require life-long commitment. They explain:

> You don't just make a treaty and sign a piece of paper and it's done, it is ongoing and has to be tended. It has to be tended by all people. It's a radically different approach to the world, where really there are obligations and responsibilities that have to be fulfilled. That's one of the really important aspects of decolonization is to continually tend to relationships. You can't rely on politicians to tend those relationships for you, you have to tend them yourself. Underlying that, then, is this understanding of the processes of life as being these ongoing, long-term tendings instead of doing one thing then it's done and it's over and you move on to the next thing, which is a capitalist approach to things.

How do activists commit to treaty relationships? Which treaties do they follow? What are the treaty responsibilities incumbent upon individuals and small groups of non-Indigenous people? These questions are a matter of significant discussion among those that I interviewed in my research.

When asked to explain what it means to enact treaty relationships, a number of my interview participants pointed to the Two Row Wampum as an important example of how these relationships might be structured. The Two Row Wampum treaty has governed relationships between different nations within the Haudenosaunee Confederacy as well as with other Indigenous nations outside of the Confederacy (like the Anishinabek and Huron-Wyendot) well before it was introduced to European settlers. When the Haudenosaunee first came into contact with the European nations they sought to negotiate treaties of peace and friendship with them (Day 2001). Treaties were represented through belts made of wampum shell. Grand Chief Michael Mitchell (1989) explains the significance of the Two Row Wampum as follows:

> There is a bed of white wampum that symbolises the purity of the agreement. There are two rows of purple, and those two rows have the spirits of your ancestors and mine. There are three beads of wampum separating the two rows and they symbolise peace, friendship, and respect.

> These two rows will symbolise two paths or two vessels, travelling down the same rivers together. One, a birch bark canoe, will be for the Indian people, their laws, their customs and their ways. The other, a ship, will be for the white people and their laws, their customs and their ways. We shall each travel the river together, side by side, but in our own boat. Neither of us will try to steer the other's vessel.

It was mostly activists who live within the territories of the Haudenosaunee who referenced the Two Row Wampum as a treaty that guides their attempts to develop relationships of solidarity, however, as one of the most recognizable and well-known treaties between settlers and Indigenous peoples, many others referenced its principles as well.

Tom Keefer (2007) a white settler and longtime solidarity activist with the Haudenosaunee at Six Nations, explains that to follow the principles set out in the Two Row Wampum means that non-Indigenous people must "steer their own ship" and be accountable to the violations of the provisions of the treaty by of settler communities and our governments. As Keefer suggests, activists should not expect the leadership of the Six Nations Confederacy or the broader Six Nations community to "provide leadership" to them on how this is to be done, because "to do so would be a violation of the Two Row Wampum [and] that would legitimize attempts by the Canadian government or its agents to meddle with the internal affairs of Six Nations" (5). In this respect, one of the core principles of the Two Row Wampum is that each party to the agreement must work within their own societies to ensure that they are upholding the core principles of peace, friendship, and respect. Given that the Canadian state has neglected its responsibility at best and willfully and repeated violated the principles of this treaty more often than not, for Keefer and the activists I interviewed in my research, it is incumbent upon those within settler society to develop strategies and tactics to resist these violations and to

honour the original intentions of the treaties.

Actions to do so have taken place in a number of ways: some activists have committed to building long-term sustained relationships with members of Six Nations by moving to neighbouring settler cities and creating organizations like The Two Row Society or the Two Row Times newspaper in collaboration with Haudenosaunee activists (Keefer 2014). These activists have also committed to confronting reactionary settler colonialist and white supremacy movements that have protested, provoked, and violently threatened the land reclamation site of Kanehstanton (Keefer 2007). Others have organized cross-cultural festivals and workshops, including the initiative by the Black Action Defence Committee to organize a youth hip hop exchange between Black youth living in Toronto and Haudenosaunee youth from Six Nations (Wasun 2008). There have been protests at the Ontario Legislature (including the dumping of toxic sludge on the front lawn of the legislative building) in response to the provincial government's inaction against the illegal dumping of toxic waste on Tyendinaga Mohawk Territories. Activists have also organized jail and court support and fundraised for a number of Haudenosaunee activists in court or in jail for resisting colonial state violence (Pasternak et al. 2013). In 2009 and again in 2013, a group of activists (primarily people of colour and those with precarious immigration status) went to Awkwesasne to support the communities' assertion of sovereignty against the Canadian states' decision to arm border guards on their reserve (No One Is Illegal-Montréal 2009).[12] There have also been numerous educational campaigns in schools, community centres, union halls, and social service organizations on the meaning of the Two Row Wampum and the responsibilities

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[12] The community of Akwesasne, part of the Mohawk nation and member of the Haudenosaunee Six Nations Confederacy straddles and is divided by the U.S. and Canadian colonial border.

incumbent upon non-Indigenous people to this treaty.

It is through these actions that the slogan "we are all treaty people" has been popularized as a way to acknowledge the responsibilities of all non-Indigenous people to the treaty agreements between settlers and Indigenous peoples. The clearest manifestation of this commitment occurred in the summer of 2012 when thousands of non-Indigenous people from across southern Ontario gathered in Caledonia, Ontario and marched jointly into Six Nations as part of the "We Are All Treaty People" demonstration and cultural festival (Kellar 2012). Many of my interview participants expressed the importance of fostering these treaty relationships as a resistance to state power, the creation of spaces of autonomy outside of the state's reach, and as a way to acknowledge Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. This belief extends far beyond the Two Row Wampum and includes a number of other treaties that are helping to guide Indigenous-settler relations.

Cleve Higgins, an anti-colonial activist living in Montréal, identified the longstanding treaties between the Mi'kmaq nation and settlers as being key to the process of engaging in collective land defence. In order to explain the importance of organizing resistance to state and capitalist land seizures through treaty relationships, he drew on his personal experience travelling to the community of Elsipogtog on Mi'kmaq territories within the settler province of New Brunswick. He explains how these relationships were strengthened when Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples came together to block a hydraulic fracturing company from starting work. Cleve recounts:

> In terms of settlers [being involved] in land defence and how that relates to anti-colonial struggles and Indigenous struggles what's going on in Elsipogotog in New Brunswick is probably the main reference point I have for that now. In terms of seeing that happen in practice,

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where there is an explicit language that this is all of our struggle and a clear attempt by the government and media and police to divide that and be like "No, no, this is a Native struggle. We're going to negotiate with the Band Chief and we're not going to arrest non-natives," and all of these things that they've done. And people are fighting back against that: Acadians, Anglophones, Mi'kmaq, we're all in this together. It is very clearly a struggle that is centering Indigenous and Mi'kmaq land defense and yet they are also saying that it is all of our struggles and that the treaties are going to defend the settlers [too]. The treaties are the last line of defence for everybody here.

Cleve and others I interviewed suggest that there is significant promise for creating decolonial futures by picking up our responsibilities for tending to treaty relationships. Longstanding treaties like the Two Row Wampum, the Dish With One Spoon, the Silver Covenant Chain among many others provide important direction not only in guiding relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, but also how non-Indigenous people can challenge the colonial practices of their governments and mainstream settler society.

However, there are two major issues with the practice of seeking to respect tradition treaty relationships. First, as stated above, not all treaties have been agreed upon in a consensual and non-coercive fashion making it challenging for Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists to negotiate relationships where treaties were forced upon Indigenous nations by the state. Additionally, and not insignificantly, many Indigenous nations have never signed a treaty and their lands remain unceded. This was especially important for the activists I interviewed in British Columbia where nearly the entire province is unceded and settler society sits on stolen land. Second, the concept "we are all treaty people" presupposes that we are all here to stay. This becomes problematic, as Bhatia (2014) points out, when we take into account the experiences of precarious migrants, undocumented people, and other communities where this supposition does not

hold. For these reasons it is critical that any practice of developing relationships of solidarity with struggles for Indigenous sovereignty consider the multiple histories and positionalities in which we are situated on these territories. In the following section, I explore these questions in more detail and outline two examples: No One Is Illegal's Status for All campaign and Black Lives Matter that help us to think through questions of positionality with respect to struggles for decolonization on Turtle Island.

Positionality and Our Relationships to Settler Colonialism

Scrunched into a small meeting room in the law library at the University of Ottawa I am speaking with Sharrae Lyon, a Black artist and activist of Caribbean descent. Sharrae is trying to explain to me how she sees herself within the treaty relations that govern the territories on which the city of Ottawa sits. She recounts a conversation that she had with Claudette Commanda, a member of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg nation and a professor at the University of Ottawa, in which she asked for guidance as to her position as a Black person in relation to treaty relationships. Sharrae explains:

> I asked, where are people of colour in treaty relations? This idea that we are all treaty people is something I've been in conflict with because my ancestors were not here when the treaties were made – we didn't have a say in them. And [Claudette Commanda] responded that, we are all treaty people. She said that the treaties are eternal and that they are open to everybody, until the last drop of water in the rivers are gone...But this idea that it's an eternal thing, brings to mind how the processes of immigration complicate that for people of colour.

This conversation between Sharrae Lyon and Claudette Commanda points to the importance of thinking through positionality in relation to our treaty relationships. While Claudette Commanda affirms that her nation, the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, in contracting treaties with non-Indigenous peoples open such relationships to all

immigrants regardless of their origins, there is an assumption that racialized migrants have had a consensual process of adoption into the Canadian state that is analogous to the eternal treaty relationship between Commanda's nation and settler society (Bhatia 2013). Bhatia (2013) argues, "the issues of full membership and consensual relationships, versus precarious, temporary, and non-status people in coerced and forced migration, cannot be so easily assumed" (58). Despite the fact that racialized immigrants and Indigenous peoples have had relationships for as long as Europeans and Indigenous peoples,[13] the structures of white supremacy that govern immigration policies within the Canadian and U.S. settler states create a situation where people of colour are often positioned as outsiders in treaty relationships. Bhatia (2013) suggests that Indigenous laws and the traditions of treaty making could help to "decolonize" the "treaty right to be here" by questioning the Canadian state's monopoly over access, status, and belonging in the contexts of Canadian immigration and Indigenous self-determination. In this section I explore the importance of positionality vis-à-vis movements for Indigenous sovereignty and struggles by racialized people *within and against* the U.S. and Canadian settler states. In framing struggles against heteropatriarchy, settler colonialism and white supremacy as being historically different but interlinked, Andrea Smith's (2006) *Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy*, is a helpful framework for developing strategies of collective resistance prefaced upon the principle that "we would check our aspirations against the aspirations of other communities to ensure that our model of liberation does not become the model of oppression for others" (69). Along these lines, the organizers who participated in my research project discussed their collective attempts to resist white

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[13] Here Bhatia (2013) references African enslavement, the migration of the United Empire Loyalists, the building of the railroads by Chinese migrant labour, and the transnational labour force of the British Empire from South Asia as examples of these long-standing relationships.

supremacy and engage in a politics of decolonization that acknowledges and takes into account the complex histories that have positioned us differently within the context of settler colonialism and treaty relations.

For instance, when I discussed the relationship between the struggles of Black people and Indigenous peoples in the U.S. and Canadian settler states with Luam Kidane, a queer Black anti-colonial organizer, she highlighted the risks inherent in flattening the complexities of one's positionality vis-à-vis the colonial project. Luam explains:

> When I'm thinking about decolonization, I'm also thinking about the complexities of our histories. So when we are talking about Indigenous sovereignty on Turtle Island, I don't think we can talk about it without talking about chattel slavery of Africans and the ways in which African and Indigenous communities together resisted occupation. Also, how African communities and Indigenous communities also exploited each other at different times. So the complexities of our histories are not something that we need to shy away from in order to make clear demands for protests, for chants, and things. I think the complexities of our struggles are really the fuel for this notion of a pre-figurative politic: imagining the future now or expanding the now so that the now becomes the future - so that there isn't a separation.

These acknowledgements and articulations of the complex web of relationships that maintain or reinforce the structures of heteropatriarchy, capitalism, colonialism, and white supremacy clearly suggest a political praxis that attempts to avoid the conflations Sharma and Wright (2009) foresee when they ask "whether it is historically accurate or analytically precise to describe as *settler colonialism* the forced movements of enslaved Africans, the movement of unfree indentured Asians, or the subsequent Third World displacements and migrations of people from across the globe, many of them indigenous people themselves" (121). As Luam Kidane suggests, it is indeed historically accurate to describe these processes as part of settler colonialism, but they must be understood in a framework that integrates an analysis of capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and white

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supremacy. These processes did not take place in a vacuum and while many people were forced into the settler colonial project without their consent, collective resistance against the settler state and its logics must acknowledge and seek to address the multiple and complex ways in which different communities have been implicated within it.

Bonita Lawrence re-engages the question of the complicity of people of colour in settler colonial power structures in a piece with Zainab Amadahy where the co-authors acknowledge that people forcibly transplanted from their own lands and enslaved on other peoples' territories (as Africans were in the Americas) should not be considered to be true "settlers" (Amadahy and Lawrence 2009:107). Nonetheless, they caution that as free people, Black people and other people brought to the Americas without their consent, have still been involved in some form of the settlement process. Likewise, Jodi A. Byrd (2011) cautions against critiques of ongoing settler colonialism that condemn "diasporic migrants, queers, and peoples of color for participating in and benefiting from indigenous loss of lands, cultures, and lives and subsequently to position indigenous otherness as abject and all other Others as part of the problem, as if they could always consent to or refuse such positions or consequences of history" (xxxviii). In doing so, she underscores the point Luam made with reference to her own history in relation to settler colonialism: that we should think about the complex dynamics of colonialism through an analysis of the simultaneity of histories of oppression that exist horizontally and are informed by continued complicities in each others' domination. For Byrd, it is problematic to argue for the ascendancy of a linear "primary and originary oppression within lands shaped by competing histories of slavery, colonialism, arrival, and indigeneity" (xxxvi). Similarly, Amadahy and Lawrence (2009) reject postures of innocence where one group insists that

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"the primacy of their own suffering and powerlessness is so unique and all-encompassing that it erases even the possibility of their maintaining relationships of oppression relative to another group" (105). This line of thinking seems to put into question the political position expressed by my interview participants in the previous chapter who sought to establish decolonization as foundational to their struggles.

If decolonization is made central to radical struggles within settler states, does it necessarily insist on the primacy of one site of oppression over all others, as Sharma and Wright seem to suggest? Using two key examples, No One Is Illegal's Status for All campaign and the Black Lives Matter movement, I suggest that this potential contradiction is lessened if we understand the process of decolonization not solely as being engaged by Indigenous peoples in struggle for land, sovereignty, and a resurgence of culture, but as also requiring different pathways for non-Indigenous people based on a consciousness of our positions within particular histories and horizons of settler colonialism.

Status for All

Migrant justice activists, even those who seek to challenge the legitimacy of colonial nation-state authority, must always contend with the day-to-day functions of the state apparatus in maintaining and enforcing border policies. Resistance to contemporary border policy occurs both *against and within* the nation-state (Fortier 2013). Resistance to federal immigration enforcement inevitably leads to the mobilization of migrant communities against deportations and/or exclusion from basic rights and services denied to them within the nation-state. Anti-deportation campaigns and campaigns to secure

essential services for migrants are often important moments of building movement strength for migrant justice activists, but they also pose a dilemma in terms of practicing a decolonial politics.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous movements are continually engaged in strategic debates (both internally within groups and externally across groups, communities, and nations) around whether it is more important to emphasize campaigns that seek recognition and incorporation into the settler state (i.e. pathways to immigration status or forms of limited Indigenous self-government as domestic dependent nations) and political actions that reject the state altogether. It is easy to fall into a line of political struggle that reinforces the logics and structures of colonialism in order to resist an acute form of oppression, particularly in times of dire emergency. Toronto-based migrant justice organizer Syed Hussan explains these tensions, noting:

> How do we go about doing anti-colonial work and simultaneously stopping an individual's deportation? Sometimes the only way to do so in terms of getting enough people to sign a petition that might actually pressure the government to change its mind requires pitching the person as, in some ways, a good citizen you know, a valuable contributing member of society, which is fine, I mean people can be valuable contributing members of society, but what we are actually saying is, "we want this person to have membership in the state." That is the only way to keep this family together, which goes against the notion that we should be organizing against colonization. So that's a conflict and contradiction that comes up all the time.

Organizers with No One Is Illegal collectives across Canada negotiate this contradiction regularly through their campaign "Status for All". Status for All is a broad campaign with twelve overarching principles agreed upon by each of the No One Illegal collectives, but practiced differently based on each group's local context. The central goal of the campaign is to demand that the Canadian government implement "a comprehensive,

transparent, inclusive and ongoing regularization program that is both equitable and accessible to *all* persons living without legal immigration status in Canada" (No One Is Illegal-Vancouver 2004). Activist-scholar Peter Nyers (2010) explains that while the demand for regularization of status is focused on recognition by the state, there is a more disruptive undercurrent at play within this political campaign. For Nyers, the subversive potential of No One Is Illegal's campaign for Status for All lies in its ability to create political spaces where undocumented and non-status people can be seen and make their presence known. This increased visibility is an assertion of one's right to be recognized as equal with other members of the settler polity but on the surface it does not appear to disrupt the settler state's sovereignty. In fact, it could be argued, as Lawrence & Dua (2005) do, that such a campaign may *help to legitimize* the state's claims to sovereignty over Indigenous territories.

South Asian activist and author Harsha Walia (2013), a member of No One Is Illegal-Vancouver Coast Salish Territories, suggests that one way migrant justice movements grapple with the contradictions inherent in the Status for All campaign is by challenging the state-centric framings of their struggles, "such as 'Immigrants are American too' or 'Refugees want to enjoy the freedoms of Canada,' that buttress the legitimacy of the state and its illegitimate foundations in settler colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, and oppression" (76). Walia asserts that these framings rely on a regime of state-sanctioned rights, state-perpetuated myths of tolerance and benevolence, and state-enforced assimilation that use citizenship status, the border, and the denial of Indigenous sovereignty as techniques to maintain the normative whiteness of the settler state (Walia 2013). In adapting their political framing of anti-deportation campaigns as a challenge to

the legitimacy of the settler state rather than a demand that the settler state recognize and include migrants, at least rhetorically No One Is Illegal groups seek to align their fights for migrant justice with the goals of Indigenous sovereignty movements.

A second way that No One Is Illegal groups have attempted to integrate a decolonizing framework into Status for All is through the development of local "Solidarity City" campaigns. What differentiates Solidarity City from anti-deportation campaigns or the broader Status for All campaign is the focus on building community autonomy and power to resist the enforcement of immigration legislation at a local level. In doing so, No One Is Illegal is better able to challenge the legitimacy of the settler state's immigration policy. The hope is that in seeking "regularization from the ground up", these campaigns can have the long-term impact of creating settler/non-Indigenous spaces that have significant affinity with Indigenous struggles for sovereignty and self-determination (Kamal and Mishra 2007).

The solidarity city/sanctuary city model of organizing first developed in Toronto in late 2006. The concept was adapted from migrant justice campaigns in the United States where activists sought to establish "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policies in their cities – meaning that anyone should be able to access essential municipal services without being asked to produce immigration status or be reported to immigration enforcement if they did not have documents. Cities such as Cambridge, Massachusetts and San Francisco, California already had long-standing policies that functioned in such a manner. In Toronto, however, No One Is Illegal sought to push the community autonomy aspect of this campaign because it could be framed as both a struggle to gain access for migrants to essential services in the city while at the same time denying the legitimacy of the

Canadian state's immigration policies. Rather than simply seeking access to government services (a reinforcement of the state), the group began to see the campaign as a means for local residents to assert the right to free movement through non-cooperation with federal immigration policy.

With varying levels of success, this campaign of non-cooperation has given migrant justice activists an entry point for discussions with Indigenous communities on how to build anti-colonial campaigns in urban contexts that seek to imagine decolonial relations of autonomy that exist outside of the settler state's regulation of Indigenous and migrant bodies. In questioning the Canadian state's monopoly over access, status, and belonging, these campaigns open up the possibility of re-imaging immigration policy through relationship building with Indigenous nations. Bhatia (2013) explains that the existence of living and ongoing practices of immigration protocols among Indigenous nations and the multiple treaties in which co-existence outside of immigration has been negotiated serve as a potential opportunity for collaboration between precarious migrants and Indigenous nations seeking to challenge the sovereignty of the settler state.

At the same time there is a significant amount of dialogue and discussion necessary to ensure that such campaigns are not seen as disrespecting the immigration protocols of Indigenous communities and to assuage the legitimate fears Indigenous peoples have of more settlers and migrants laying claim to Indigenous territories and resources (Lawrence & Dua 2005). Although, there remains a large gap between goals and reality, the shift away from direct appeals for state recognition through local "Solidarity City" campaigns provides a window of opportunity to re-imagine relationships of solidarity that does not inherently legitimize the state. In contrast, they

point to a widespread disinvestment from the state as a vehicle for long-term revolutionary change.

A third strategy No One Is Illegal groups have engaged in to integrate a decolonial framework into their Status for All campaigns is the commitment to directly supporting ongoing struggles for Indigenous sovereignty as part of their day-to-day political practice. Through their sustained support for Indigenous struggles for sovereignty and decolonization, organizers within No One Is Illegal have worked to develop long-term relationships in which many of the questions and contradictions of their campaigns can be discussed in the context of joint struggles with Indigenous peoples. Sarita Ahooja, a South Asian activist and co-founder of No One Is Illegal in Montréal emphasized the importance of these relationships to the development of a politics of decolonization not only among organizers in the collective, but also among the broader non-Indigenous communities in which they organize. Sarita notes:

> I think that relationships are fundamental and that the decolonization process is a radical shift in relationships. So relationship between individuals, relationships between individuals and the land, relationships between groups of people – you know, it's all about relationships and how they interact – and we are proposing a different relationship. In our own organizing we aspire to creating those relationships that we see as the future of our society. I think it's extremely difficult in large urban settings, you see over and over again the conflicts that go on in Montréal within communities...but it is a conversation that is taking place.

The relationships that Sarita refers to have the potential to challenge borders and the legitimacy of the settler state in theoretical and concrete ways and to create possibilities for building solidarity between migrant justice movements and Indigenous sovereignty struggles that is attuned to these multiple positionalities. Native American scholar Sandy Grande (2004) explains that the act of challenging the border is not a choice but a lived

reality in the fight for survival against colonialism. In her book *Red Pedagogy* she notes:

> Indigenous peoples did not "choose" to ignore, resist, transcend, and/or transgress borders of empire. They were rather, forced into a struggle for their own survival. Thus, indigenous resistance to the grammar of empire – mixed-blood/full-blood, legal/illegal, alien/resident, immigrant/citizen, tribal/detribalized – must be examined in terms of the racist, nationalist, and colonialist frameworks from which it emerged (Grande 2004:167).

As suggested by No One Is Illegal's Status for All campaign, migrants are also forced to transgress borders for their survival. And while it remains a political necessity to struggle for recognition by the nation-state to resist deportations and their exclusion from equal participation in state-society, it is also important that their movements seek a disidentification with the state and settler society.

Isaac Oommen, an independent media journalist and person of colour located in Vancouver, explains that divesting from state structures is important in order to engage in practices of decolonial solidarity. He notes, "the massive gamut of settlers that are here, some [are] in solidarity [with Indigenous peoples] and some are completely un-informed, and others are super heavily invested in the state." As Isaac suggests, it is through the work of racialized non-Indigenous people to seek and practice a disidentification with and disinvestment from the settler colonial state that the possibility lies to re-imagine relations of co-existence and solidarity with Indigenous peoples and the land. Andrea Smith (2010), drawing on the work of queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz, suggests that a model of disidentification may be a useful way to shift the orientation of our political engagements in order to lessen the effects of these contradictions. Muñoz's (1999) disidentification differs from the process of assimilation (the incorporation or identification with dominant society) and counteridentification (the rejection of dominant

society) because it neither opts to assimilate with state structures nor strictly opposes them. In this sense, disidentification is a political strategy that is aware of the complexities of our multiple contexts and because of this works on and against the dominant ideology (Smith 2010). For Smith "disidentification forces us to admit that we cannot organize from a space of political purity, that we have been inevitably marked by colonization" (58). If we no longer carry the burden of political purity then, Smith suggests, we can be more flexible and creative in engaging in multiple strategies to use the logics of settler colonialism against itself. The adaptation of No One Is Illegal's Status for All campaign on a local level is one such example of the creativity that arises from a politics of disidentification.

Black Lives Matter

For other interview participants, in particular those who identified as Black, disidentification is tied to having a strong historical consciousness of the inter-relationship between slavery, colonialism, and white supremacy. Essex Lordes, a queer Black organizer based in Oakland, explains this complexity when he notes:

> This land was taken for a reason and that was for the purpose of Empire and it's important to locate my history within that as a descendent of people who have been taken here against their will. And just looking at the fact that Black people's history is different than white people's as settlers and while Black people are often complicit in nation-building and capitalism the discourse is different, it's not like everybody outside of Indigenous people are settlers – there's a variance.

This historical consciousness necessitates, as Luam Kidane suggests, an acknowledgement of the complexities of blackness and Black identity within the settler colonial context. Che Gossett, a Black femme abolitionist organizer based in Philadelphia

reinforced the importance of openly discussing and exploring the ways in which Black

and Indigenous communities have been forced into positions of complicity with white

supremacy because of the repressive and interconnected structures of racialization and

colonization. Che explains:

> I think that blackness really complicates any form of settler colonialism.
> A lot of the "civilized" First Nations were deemed [to be civilized] for
> white supremacist reasons because they owned and traded Black
> people. I think that's something to really grapple with and it falls off the
> radar of a strict decolonial analysis that calls Black people settlers or
> even citizens in this way. It's never fully the case. [I'm] thinking about
> the Black Panther Party and other people who talk about internal
> colonialism as an immigrant competing in settler colonialism. But on
> the because of these complexities, we need to fight against both anti-
> blackness and settler coloniality and we can't pick one or the other.

The ability to fight anti-blackness, decolonization, and migrant justice struggles in ways

that are mutually beneficial and reaffirming is evidenced in some of the important

discussions emerging out of the nascent Black Lives Matter movement.

As Black Lives Matter grew out of the experiences of Black people in the United

States and Canada resisting state violence and murder at the hands of the police, Luam

Kidane references the inspiration she received from the work of Nishnaabeg author-

activist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson in re-focusing her engagement in political

struggles. She recounts:

> If we are looking at it in terms of a visual, I really like [Leanne
> Simpson's] description of decolonial constellations of resistance. What
> that's recognizing is that there's local circumstances in community that
> are going to affect and shape the demands and paths of liberation. I
> think that the constellation piece also creates the relationship between
> all the different movements for liberation so that there's a connection
> and that there's an energy flow that happens. That energy flow is
> facilitated by dialogue: cross-communal-dialogue, cross-movement
> dialogue, dialogue about tactics and strategies that we're utilizing while
> still honouring the locations that we're struggling in and the locations
> that have informed the very idea of how we even understand struggle.

In order to engage in the dialogues that are foundational to these "decolonial constellations of resistance" Kidane suggests it requires that we are conscious of the multiple positions we occupy within the structures of white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, colonialism, capitalism and the nation-state. Flattening the differences between all people of colour or all non-Indigenous people in such a way that we are all positioned monolithically as settlers can foster a culture of racism, xenophobia and in particular anti-Black racism within our movements. One of the ways that this occurs most clearly is when white settlers or non-Black people of colour align their movements of solidarity with Indigenous struggles that positions all non-Indigenous people as equally complicit in the processes of colonization. Che Gossett offers important advice on why it is critical to understand the historical specificity of multiple positionalities within settler colonialism:

Anti-blackness and the suffering of Black people can't be left out of the picture nor can Black liberation, it has to be in the interest of decoloniality. That goes back to the whole collective liberation ethos in the sense that if that is happening there can never be collective liberation if somebody is being thrown under the bus. Interestingly, settler colonialism is now a very big topic in cultural studies, but I think that there are ways in which thinking about blackness and anti- blackness is helpful. They are both strategies of dividing and conquering, but we are talking about stolen land *and* stolen people. It's important to not have that as an afterthought (or unthought).

The importance of understanding the interrelationship between the processes of slavery and colonization and the ongoing campaigns of genocide against Black and Indigenous peoples requires that movements engaging with processes of decolonization consider these complexities when they develop their campaigns, messaging, and

relationships of solidarity.

As the nascent Black Lives Matter movement continues to develop its politics, a number of activists have pointed to the important commonalities between Black liberation struggles and Indigenous sovereignty movements. For instance, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2014) drawing on the work of Moyo Rainos Mutamba (2014) asserts, "Indigenous and Black peoples are disproportionately attacked and targeted by the state and, in fact, policing in Turtle Island is born of the need to suppress and oppress Black and Indigenous resistance to colonialism and slavery." One tangible example of enacting this solidarity occurred when Black Lives Matter organizers in Seattle participated in anti-Columbus Day actions organized by Indigenous activists in this city - including the successful push to have the Seattle city council eliminate the celebration of Columbus Day and to declare the day Indigenous Peoples' Day. An open letter written by Black Lives Matter organizers in Seattle states:

> Seattle Black organizers and activists stand in solidarity with Indigenous people who denounce Columbus Day. Christopher Columbus was not a hero to be celebrated, but in fact contributed to the ethnic genocide of one people and the kidnapping and enslavement of another. We, Black people, know the history of having our loved ones, cultures, and identities taken from us...
>
> Abolishing Christopher Columbus day at the state and national level and reclaiming the day as Indigenous Peoples day is a step in the right direction. We can begin to heal the gaping wounds bleeding into the soul of our people (Black Lives Matter-Seattle 2015).

Although the declaration of Indigenous Peoples' Day relies on recognition from the state, it is also an interruption of the white settler colonial myths of discovery and *terra nullius* that helps give credence to the logics of settler colonialism. As Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2014a) suggests the emergence of Black Lives Matter as a resistance to the

violent police murders of Black people "is a call not only to indict the system but to decolonize the systems that create and maintain the forces of indigenous genocide and anti-blackness." In recognizing the positionality in which Black people are situated within these decolonial struggles, Simpson acknowledges her own responsibility as a Nishnaabeg person, "to make space on my land for those communities of struggle, to center and amplify black voices, and to co-resist" (Simpson 2014a). As Simpson suggests, disidentifying with the settler-state does not lessen one's responsibility to negotiate structures of oppression within and across communities. However, there is a risk of shifting the site of critique (and resistance) to the process of racialization instead of colonization, by displacing the structuring logics of dispossession "onto settlers and arrivants who substitute for and as indigenous in order to consolidate control and borders at that site of differentiation" (Byrd 2011:221). For Byrd, this renders Indigenous peoples unactionable in the present and their liberation is deferred until such a time that we have achieved an inclusive and non-oppressive society, though one still deeply seeped in the logics of settler colonialism. However, the co-resistance alluded to by Simpson (2014a) and exemplified by the solidarity between Black Lives Matter and Indigenous activists attempts to avoid this trap by acknowledging the interconnected structures of settler colonialism, white supremacy, and anti-blackness against which their struggles must take place. In doing so, they pick up and engage in long-standing relationships of solidarity, some that have been agreed upon through treaty and others fostered by a four hundred year history of parallel resistance (and sometimes co-resistance) to colonialism, slavery, and white supremacy.

Similarly, for non-Black activists within the broader anti-authoritarian current,

making categorical distinctions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples or between the experiences of Black people and other people of colour does not obscure the history of colonization by blurring the distinction between migration and settlement. Rather, it seeks to tangibly and practically enact struggles against colonialism, heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, and colonialism with a historical consciousness that sees these interrelated processes as being foundational to the power of the Canadian and U.S. settler states. As such this historical consciousness allows us to understand how we are positioned within these structures and to act in ways that directly challenge the logics of settler colonialism. While positionality is important in helping us to understand some of the approaches and responsibilities that we have to the process of decolonization, we must also investigate how these relationships can be fostered in place.

Sovereignty through an Indigenous Relational Worldview

I am meeting with Hannah Lewis on a breezy summer afternoon adjacent to a blooming garden filled with traditional medicines that have been planted by predominantly xwməəθkwəəẏ əəm (Musqueam) Elders and youth on a farm run by the University of British Columbia, itself occupying the unceded territories of the xwməəθkwəəẏəəm people. Hannah coordinates the program that links members of the xwməəθkwəəẏ əəm and other Indigenous nations to the UBC farm. When I asked Hannah how she conceptualizes this work as part of a decolonial politics her response highlighted the importance of understanding settler colonialism as a pervasive and ongoing structure rather than as an historical event. She relates:

> I'm obviously prefacing it with still being on my own journey and
> recognizing that what it means to me will be shaped by all the different

kinds of privilege that I carry. But to me, it's about understanding the continuing legacy of colonization and the ways it still operates in all of our lives and in the spaces that we're in. And what it means to come together to work at dismantling that and envisioning a future beyond that. In the spaces that I work in right now, specifically, that seems to be around decolonizing the food system especially with respect to Indigenous food sovereignty and knowledge. Especially the ways that traditional food knowledge has been delegitimized and threatened by colonization over time and still today.

Through these personal reflections Hannah offers an example of the ongoing discussions within the anti-authoritarian current on how understanding colonization as a pervasive and ongoing structure relates directly to the ways in which we conceptualize and practice solidarity with Indigenous struggles for sovereignty, nationhood, and resurgence. Specifically, it highlights the commitment of these organizers to the long-term work of transforming social relations through a decolonizing framework. As discussed in the previous sections, such work takes place both in conjunction with and in contrast to their efforts to directly challenge state power and the state's oppressive relationships with Indigenous peoples.

A significant part of the decolonization process for non-Indigenous people is recognizing and resisting the ways that dominant epistemologies and ontologies of settler colonial thought seep into our practices, relationships, and aspirations. To understand settler-colonial sovereignty as a relationship rather than as an historical event is to disavow it of its seeming permanence. As Coulthard suggests, settler sovereignty is constituted by relationships. Sovereignty as the notion of "supreme authority over territories" is the dominant paradigm of the contemporary settler colonial state. However, it also structures the logics with which we resist these very states, particular with respect to the seeming battle for control over the state (or state-defined territories) between "the

people" and the capitalist elite.

Among left political movements there is a hegemonic belief that liberation should occur through the resistance to and the taking of the state. This belief is derived from Western concepts of sovereignty as embedded in relationships of domination and control. Richard Day (2005) calls this phenomenon "the hegemony of hegemony" and suggests that what makes groups aligned with the anti-authoritarian current so interesting is that they "are breaking out of this trap by operating *non*-hegemonically rather than *counter*-hegemonically. They seek radical change, but not through taking or influencing state power..." (8). This seems especially so for those groups within the anti-authoritarian current who have made a serious effort to engage in practices and processes of decolonization within their political struggles.

The spread of the anti-authoritarian current into more mainstream left politics provides an opportunity to begin conversations on how settlers and Indigenous peoples can structure relationships of coexistence. Alfred (2005) suggests that there is a natural affinity between Indigenous movements for resurgence and anti-authoritarian resistance to state structures because they both deny the state's legitimacy. In their struggles for sovereignty most Indigenous movements do not seek recognition and self-determination through the creation of a new state, but through the achievement of a cultural sovereignty and a political relationship based on group autonomy and invested in place-based relationships (Coulthard 2014). As such, Indigenous sovereignty is articulated through relationality rather than domination. This relationality emphasizes interdependence between humans, animals, the natural world, the ancestors, and the cosmos (Simpson 2011; Yerxa 2014). And it is by understanding this relational form of sovereignty and

seeking to work within its framework that non-Indigenous people within the anti-authoritarian current have sought to profoundly change the ways they conceptualize their roles and responsibilities to decolonization.

One interpretation of this relational framework comes from Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2011) who, referencing the work of fellow Nishnaabeg scholar Gerald Vizenor, describes Indigenous forms of sovereignty as transmotion. Simpson explains that the disconnection between the logics of sovereignty conceptualized by setter states and settler society and those of Nishnaabeg peoples is that "centralized government and political structures are barriers to transmotion; this static state is never experienced in nature" (89). Simpson argues instead that Native transmotion is based on a reciprocal relationship with nature that is neither monotheistic nor territorially sovereign. Thus, the boundaries that establish the dominion and authority over territory based on Western conceptions of sovereignty differ greatly from "boundaries" in an Indigenous sense, which Simpson says are more accurately understood as relationships. This results in a fundamental difference between Indigenous ways of understanding sovereignty and how they are understood in Western thought.

Taiaiake Alfred similarly argues, "Nowhere is the contrast between indigenous and (dominant) Western traditions sharper than in their philosophical approaches to the fundamental issues of power and nature. In indigenous philosophies, power flows from respect for nature and the natural order. In the dominant Western philosophy, power derives from coercion and artifice – in effect, alienation from nature" (84). Luam Kidane, a Black queer organizer based in Montréal, explains the importance of imagining relationships outside of the state-structure as we attempt to build solidarity with

Indigenous assertions of sovereignty and practices of resurgence. Luam notes:

> I think for me, understanding decolonization as fundamentally rooted in relationships means that you cannot remove dialogue from the process. And I think that is the fundamental difference between decolonial struggles versus state apparatuses and the way that they work. There is no meaningful dialogue there...In decolonial struggles we are active participants in creating the now that's happening. It's not about tomorrow and it's not about ten years from now. It's actively creating today in every moment that we are relating to each other. And in order for that to happen we need to have dialogue. We can't have dialogue without reciprocity. You cannot have reciprocity without relational ways of being.

For these relational ways of being to flourish, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2011) argues that it requires a disruption of capitalist, colonial, heteropatriarchal structures and many other institutions based on the Western notions of sovereignty and domination. This requires "challenging the very foundation of the nation-state and its relationship to the land and Indigenous nations" (87). So what do these different ways of being look like? How are they being discussed and explored within the anti-authoritarian current?

Participants in the anti-authoritarian current seek to break from their complicity with settler colonial domination by re-imagining their relationships with each other, with Indigenous peoples, with the land and all other living things within a decolonizing framework and through a rejection of the settler state. Li Morales, an organizer within queer people of colour spaces in Oakland explains, "[I]n these long-standing relationships and communities, I think a lot of my work is to try and work with other people who are like but who are maybe more positioned within the matrix to facilitate the continuation of the nation-state as is so that we can support each other to try to imagine and creative a different existence. A different way of living." Participants in my research project highlighted two important ways that their political ideas, desires, and principles have

changed due to their emerging understanding of relationality from an Indigenous perspective. First, they seek to transition from logics of control to logics of interdependence. Second, they seek to develop a practice of accountability by learning how to be responsible to relationships with the territories they share with Indigenous nations.

From Logics of Control to Logics of Interdependence

When I interviewed Teresa Diewert, a member of Rising Tide-Coast Salish Territories, on a sunny afternoon in the Commercial Drive neighborhood of Vancouver she grappled with what it means to build relationships of solidarity with Indigenous peoples. As a white settler and social justice activist Teresa talked about the need to challenge the colonial and statist logics that have guided her activism. She explains, "If we [are] going to be working with Indigenous organizations and groups we need to understand that relationship better, we need to understand our relationship to the land better; to the state." Teresa points to the need to commit ourselves to supplanting the colonial logic of the state in order to create the conditions in which to live and the social relations we wish to have (Walia 2014). South Asian activist and author Harsha Walia (2014) draws on the work of German anarchist Gustav Landauer to explain that by understanding the state as a set of relationships, we are better able to imagine ways of existing outside of state-based logics, thus being able to contract other relationships based on principles of interdependence rather than control. This aligns strongly with how organizers have come to see the importance of enacting treaty relationships as part of their grassroots organizing.

The state exists in our social spaces, in all of our relations, and is always a potential way of relating to each other. And yet the ability to contract other forms of relationships also remains infinitely possible (Zibechi 2010). Zibechi (2010) cautions that we cannot simply evolve away from state-based relationships since they always exist as a potential way of organizing society. He explains, "[T]here is no evolution of the non-state toward the state, because it arises 'whole and in one piece;' so we must identify those relationships [...] that encourage state power" (67). It is in this sense that Walia (2014) discusses the importance of understanding relationality as always being a potential way to assert sovereignty. She explains, "Decolonization requires us to exercise our sovereignties differently and to reconfigure our communities based on shared experiences, ideals, and visions" (50). Like Walia, the participants in my interviews also spoke about strategies and challenges they face in trying to reconfigure their relationships away from state-based logics. Ariel Luckey, a hip hop artist and anti-colonial activist in Oakland, reflected on the importance of recognizing and then resisting the seeds of state-based relationships in our day-to-day organizing. Ariel explains:

> [T]here's something about decolonization that gets to the hegemony of all this stuff. It gets to private property and our relationship with the land, which gets into the Christian worldview that the Earth was given to people by God and that animals and the land are to be exploited and used for whatever we want. It gets to borders, it is right in there with the formation of nation-states, government structures, all of these [parts of] the global capitalist system we're in right now – these are like premises, both philosophically and practically – private property, nation-state governments, all these things. In order to really do decolonization work effectively it is about raising these fundamental questions that are for the most part taken for granted, to really get to the roots of things and that's hella radical and is as urgent I think in some ways as the other political issues.

One of the ways that Ariel tries to live this shift in relationships is through his work

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organizing an annual cultural arts event called *Thangs Taken: rethinking thanksgiving* which he describes as bringing "artists, activists and communities together to explore the complex history of Thanksgiving and to acknowledge the legacy of U.S. colonialism and genocide against Native Americans" (Luckey 2015). Luckey sees this event as an opportunity to build and strengthen relationships across multiple communities in the Bay Area and to forefront the struggles of Ohlone peoples in their attempt to assert sovereignty within their traditional territories.

These types of activities contribute to what Richard Day (2005) describes as negotiating groundless solidarity. Through our growing attempt to develop grassroots relationships of solidarity through our incommensurabilities, Day suggests "we might finally have done away with the idea that either conflict or consensus are 'at the heart' of human social relations; both are not only always possible, but always present, intermixing and at play" (189). Groundless solidarity means that we do not engage in relationships with the assumption that there will be always be consensus or that conflict will never take place, rather we understand that finding ways to become interdependent requires that we accept the vulnerability inherent in the process of building relationships with one another. It often means pre-figuring social relations that significantly alter colonial relationships between settlers and Indigenous communities in material ways – including the redistribution and reclamation of land by Indigenous nations (what decolonial scholars sometimes refer to as "the end of settler futurity") (see Tuck and Yang 2012; Sium et al. 2012; Gaztambide-Fernández 2012). As Tuck and Yang (2012) note, "the metaphorization of decolonization makes possible a set of evasions, or 'settler moves to innocence', that problematically attempt to reconcile settler guilt and complicity, and

rescue settler futurity" (1). Instead we must strive for a decolonial future that is impossible to know, but that requires a constant (re)negotiation of power, place, identity, and sovereignty (Sium, Desai and Ritskes 2012).

Negotiating the tangible unknown underlying decolonial futures means that we must act with what Richard Day calls "infinite responsibility". Day (2005) articulates, "this means that as individuals, as groups, we can never allow ourselves to think that we are 'done'...infinite responsibility means always being ready to hear another other..." (200). This is a particularly important lesson given that even within social movements, there are possibilities to crystallize or consolidate relationships that mirror the state as much as there are attempts to impede and move beyond them (Zibechi 2010). This includes developing bureaucratic top-down structures within social movement groups, the pervasiveness of anti-Black racism within anti-authoritarian organizing, and the cult of personality that can prioritize individual leaders over community relationship-building. These issues will be discussed in more detail in chapter six.

Luam Kidane explains that mobilizing through principles of interdependence and accountability is one way to ensure that we avoid re-creating relationships of domination and control within our movements and in our relationships with Indigenous communities. Luam notes, "I think interdependence is the fundamental thing for me. I think it's being concerned with ensuring that the way you walk on this earth is one that honours our ancestral struggles, that honours the struggles of the people around you, and that honours accountability." A logic of decolonial relationality based on groundless solidarity and infinite responsibility (Day 2005) demands that our relationships be re-imagined and practiced through interdependence.

A Practice of Accountability

In trying to imagine relationships outside of the logics of the settler colonial state, non-Indigenous people must envision new forms of sovereignty based on the practice of accountability. In contrast to relationships based on the settler colonial state, which are most concerned with the sovereignty of the individual, the possession of territory, and the privileging of legal procedure, Indigenous concepts of sovereignty take direction from community, traditions, cultures, and the continuity of relationships of accountability with all living things (Grande 2004). The recognition that one must work within shared experiences and yet recognize the multiple and different pathways toward decolonization is critical in re-imagining relationships that seek to dismantle both the settler colonial state and the logics of settler society. It is a process that does not guarantee (and to a great extent disavows) a settler futurity and instead infers that liberation for non-Indigenous people on these lands is tied to a radical reformulation of our relationships (Sium and Ritskes 2013).

Smith (2014) explains that liberation "would require different selves that understand who they are in radical relationality with all other people and things. The goal then becomes not the mastery of antiracist and anticolonial lingo but a different self-understanding that sees one's being as fundamentally constituted through other beings" (221). For some of my interview participants, this process entails developing an understanding of the protocols of responsibility articulated by Indigenous communities within the territories in which you reside. For instance, Dixie Pauline, an herbalist and anti-colonial organizer based in Berkeley, explains:

> [T]he world that I see is really following these protocols that have been
> in place for a really long time, which is pre-colonial times, which I've

been taught to find out whose land you're on, whose ancestral territories you're on and to honour those protocols rather than following rules [...] [T]he relationships that I've built over time have shown me that. Like, none of this analysis comes from me, it comes from walking alongside people and also being shown, sometimes in easy ways and sometimes not so easy ways – and I owe everything to the relationships that I've built.

These protocols are based on longstanding relationships that Indigenous communities have to the territories in which they live, but they can also be based on existing treaty relationships between Indigenous peoples, other nations, and settler society. Robyn Heaslip, a white settler who works in support of self-determination with members of the Sto:lo nation, talked to me about the importance of understanding treaty relationships as a process of divesting from state-based logics and being accountable to the longstanding relationship between Indigenous peoples and the territories you call home. She explains:

We need to know the Indigenous laws of these lands and in learning them begin to figure out what it means to respect them and participate in the responsibilities that go along with those laws. Because [Indigenous law] is very responsibility-based instead of rights-based. Knowing the names and acting with a certain care for places and the land and the other non-human beings that we co-exist with who, at least from a Sto:lo perspective are other nations that have relationships that we're invested into – like treaty relationships. So we have to know what the treaty relationship is with the salmon too and learn how we can participate in that and hold that too.

Alfred (1999) similarly argues that Indigenous people seek just relations with the settler state and settler society through the restoration of a regime of mutual respect and reciprocity. Given that most participants within the anti-authoritarian current see the settler state as incapable of contracting authentic relationships of respect, accountability, and responsibility, there is a much greater emphasis among these groups on engaging in relationship building with Indigenous peoples outside of state institutions (i.e. government agencies, state-sanctioned inquiries, the legal system). However, because of

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the potential for statist relationships to emerge even within radical movements (as discussed earlier in this chapter), non-Indigenous activists need to be attuned to the types of alternatives they create that replicate statist and settler colonial power dynamics.

Alfred foresees this problem and articulates that Indigenous ideals of relationship building with settler society stands in "clear contrast to the statist notion, still rooted in the classical notion of sovereignty, which, in the name of equity, may direct more material resources to indigenous people, but which preserves the state's [and one can infer settler society's] superior position relative to them and to the earth" (88). To counter-balance the tendency to fall into colonial statist logics, organizers within the anti-authoritarian current affirm the need to be open to criticism and be ready to change at all times in the relationship building process with Indigenous peoples. Li Morales, a queer person of colour organizer based in Oakland, explains the importance of being conscious of the levels of domination that we hold in our relationships with each other and the land. In our interview, Li thoughtfully articulated this point by noting:

> Being in a relationship means being open to feedback. To be especially on guard about when the kind of feedback you are getting isn't the kind of feedback you would like to be getting. Whether that's like a lack of resonance - people aren't listening anymore or people are telling you x-y-z about yourself. But being conscious of the levels of domination and oppression that we've faced and knowing that we are going to have to work through these things. I feel as though the whole thing of being collectively minded or community minded and really showing up with basic respect for self-determination and autonomy of other human beings is a really hard project. And how to do that with; I always think it's possible but it's hard.

The process of developing relationships of accountability plays out in a number of ways. One way this happens is that activists become more focused on sustaining and nurturing long-term relationships with Indigenous peoples outside of flashpoint events. Another

way that accountability is negotiated is by recognizing that Indigenous sovereignty is an assertion of the right of Indigenous peoples to be responsible to their relationship with territory (Monture-Angus 1999). This also implies a need for non-Indigenous people to understand the vulnerability required in relinquishing settler logics of control. Leah Girardo, an anarchist organizer based in Philadelphia and Montréal, stated it in simple terms noting, "Like any relationship you need to be vulnerable and that's not a fun thing for a lot of people to be vulnerable, especially when you are walking into something that is bound to challenge everything about your relationship to your work, to your life, to the land that you are on." This vulnerability often means working through and acknowledging the truths of our settler colonial context and struggling alongside Indigenous communities to undo the logics and structures that maintain this system. It is a vulnerability that places significant responsibility on non-Indigenous communities to work tirelessly to dismantle the systems of state and corporate power that maintain these relations of control and domination, but to do so explicitly in relationship with Indigenous struggles for sovereignty.

Conclusion

This chapter argues against the assumption that Indigenous movements for nationhood and sovereignty must inherently be nationalistic struggles seeking the establishment of a state. Drawing on my interviews with activists in the anti-authoritarian current and the writing of Indigenous theorists I suggest that we must move beyond the narrow definitions within mainstream Western thought in order to understand how Indigenous peoples conceptualize sovereignty and nationhood. The presumed

incommensurability between anti-authoritarian movements organizing "against" and "beyond" the state and Indigenous sovereignty movements seeking to assert the autonomy of their nations from settler society are the result of two interconnected logics. First, there is a hesitation among anti-authoritarian activists that all struggles based on nationhood are embedded with the logics of the state. Second, and perhaps most crucially, Indigenous assertions of nationhood and sovereignty speak to the contingency of settler belonging. This contingency if taken to its logical conclusions rests upon an unjust claim to Indigenous territories based on the structures and logics of settler colonialism. The radical left, including the anti-authoritarian current, as I have argued in previous chapters is not immune to such logics, and in fact, have been core actors in solidifying settler colonial control over territories. This chapter investigates how Indigenous and non-Indigenous movements develop relationships of solidarity despite this historical and continued incommensurability.

Non-Indigenous anti-authoritarians negotiate (un)belonging within and outside of the structures of the settler colonial state as they come to understand the complex and place-based ways sovereignty is articulated by the Indigenous nations with whom they have developed relationships of solidarity. Through these experiences, anti-authoritarians see affinity between their struggles for autonomy and self-determination and those of Indigenous peoples. I argue that Bruyneel's "third space of sovereignty" is a helpful formulation for understanding how Indigenous place-based resistance to settler-state sovereignty opens up a transgressive space that allows for the possibility of negotiating solidarities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. These solidarities are based on grassroots attempts to re-imagine relationships of co-existence between Indigenous

peoples, non-Indigenous peoples, and the territories they share. How these solidarities are negotiated within the "third space of sovereignty" can differ significantly from nation-to-nation and within the particular historical context of Indigenous-settler relationships within specific territories. In some situations, like the Oshkimaadziig Unity Camp, Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists seek to co-create spaces of political autonomy that assert Indigenous sovereignty but explore the possibilities for sharing responsibilities to place. In other situations, like the movement to uphold the treaty relationships stipulated by the Two Row Wampum, anti-authoritarians seek to support Indigenous peoples in their assertions of sovereignty through relationship-building, intercultural dialogue, and political actions aimed at resisting colonial domination by the state or other members of settler society.

These relationships of solidarity must recognize the multiple positionalities in which non-Indigenous peoples are situated in relation to settler colonialism. In particular, the responsibilities of Black people and other people of colour to decolonial relationships cannot be conflated with those of white settlers because their relationship to the settler state is always mediated by the oppressive structure of white supremacy. Moreover, the interconnection between white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and settler colonialism creates unique challenges, responsibilities, and possibilities based on one's position with respect to the process of settlement.

No One Is Illegal's adaptations of their "Status for All" campaign is an example of how migrant justice organizers have sought to re-imagine their political struggles against deportations through a framework that seeks to align with Indigenous sovereignty struggles by questioning the legitimacy and power of the settler state in theoretical and

material ways. Drawing on the growing solidarity between Black Lives Matter and Indigenous sovereignty movements, the question of positionality is further complicated. For instance, among the Black-identified participants in my interviews, it was critical to show how the long interconnection between anti-Blackness and colonization is foundational to the structuring logics of settler colonialism. As such, relationships of solidarity between Black peoples and Indigenous peoples in Canada and the United States cannot be subsumed under the category of "people of colour," but must be negotiated on their own terms.

Finally, I argue that activists in the anti-authoritarian current address the incommensurability between their struggles and those for Indigenous sovereignty by rethinking the concept of sovereignty through the lens of relationality. Inspired by some Indigenous worldviews that articulate sovereignty as being based on interdependence with the land rather than domination of particular territories, anti-authoritarians seek to decolonize their political ideologies and transform their political practices. However, as will be discussed in the following chapter, this decolonial transformation in politics remains relatively marginal within the broader organized left. Drawing on the long history of struggle for the commons among anti-authoritarian movements within the Canadian and U.S. settler states, I suggest that many anti-authoritarian movements continue to replicate settler colonial logics in their attempts to create autonomous political spaces. Beginning with a critique of the place-based activism of Occupy Wall Street, chapter five traces the struggle for the commons within the long history of settler (re)appropriations that helped to form the contemporary settler state. I suggest that these movements, while critically important to the expansion of radical democratic politics,

must abandon claims to settler futurity and re-imagine the commons as decolonial practices, places, and relationships if they are committed to true liberation within settler colonial states like Canada and the United States.

CHAPTER FIVE
(Re)Claiming the Commons in a Context of Settler Colonialism

"The commons refers neither to resources alone nor to people alone but to an intermixture of them both. The commons is not only 'common pool resources' nor is the commons purely 'the people.' In other words it is not a thing but a relationship."

– Peter Linebaugh

If decolonization is understood as foundational to liberation within settler colonial states and Indigenous movements for sovereignty and nationhood are seen as opening a "third space of sovereignty" that transgresses the boundaries of the state, then what are the responsibilities incumbent upon non-Indigenous people if they seek to build relations of solidarity and co-existence with Indigenous peoples and the territories on which they live? Some activists within the anti-authoritarian current are seeking to transform their political analysis and practices based on the decolonizing relationships that they have started to build with Indigenous peoples in their struggle for self-determination. As Nora Butler Burke, a white settler activist based in Montréal suggests in the introduction to this dissertation, if non-Indigenous peoples are to be in solidarity with Indigenous struggles for self-determination, then we too must be self-determining. One key framework that has been both extremely promising and rife with contradictions is the articulation of the "reclamation of the commons" as a core goal of anti-authoritarian movements seeking to contribute to processes of decolonization.

This chapter examines the contradictions inherent in seeking to reclaim the commons within a settler colonial context. Specifically, I locate contemporary anti-authoritarian movements in the long history of settler struggles for the commons in North America and discuss the relationship between these campaigns and the dispossession, genocide, and displacement of Indigenous peoples. Using the Occupy movement as my

central example, I show how contemporary movements to reclaim the commons, if not attuned to and respecting Indigenous place-based sovereignties, fail to effectively articulate a liberatory practice outside of settler colonial logics. Engaging with the question of the commons more broadly, I then place contemporary radical left theory that promotes the reclamation of the commons as a political project into dialogue with Indigenous theories of decolonization and resurgence to highlight some of the ways in which settler colonial logics remain prevalent within these political formulations. Finally, this chapter offers possibilities for re-imagining our relationship to the commons in a decolonial context by engaging with some of the ways in which organizers in the anti-authoritarian current have confronted, discussed, and transformed their movements in their attempts to break away from the logics that structure settler colonialism.

Occupy All Streets – the Settler Colonial Context of the Occupy Movement

On September 17, 2011, the first substantial general assembly of Occupy Wall Street (OWS) took place at Bowling Green Park. The "Occupiers", as they came to be known, stood between the Charging Bull statue, one of the most iconic symbols of the capitalist elite, and the National Museum of the American Indian, itself an important though perhaps unintentionally ironic symbol for a movement based on the strategy of reclamation and occupation. It is on the steps of the National Museum of the American Indian where the decision was made to march through the financial district, occupy Zuccotti Park, and rename it Liberty Plaza (Holmes 2012). As part of a wave of global opposition to neoliberal austerity following the 2008 financial crisis, the occupation of Zuccotti Park joined a growing list of (temporarily) reclaimed public spaces that included

Taksim Square, Tahrir Square, Puerta del Sol, Syntagma Square, the Wisconsin Capitol Building, Oscar Grant Plaza and most recently Causeway Bay and Mong Kok in Hong Kong (Kilibarda 2012; Khatib et al. 2012).

These spaces have been central to anti-austerity resistance efforts and have also been incubators for experimentation in developing alternative forms of social relations outside of the logics of capitalism. The people who have set up these encampments have been described as engaging in the practice of reclaiming and re-negotiating the commons as a shared space of struggle (Linebaugh 2014). For instance, George Caffentzis (2012) in an anthology written about the Occupy movements, argues, "the truly subversive intent of the Occupy site is to transform public space into a commons" (396). For Caffentzis, the commons differs from public space in that it exists outside of state control and is opened by those who live on it and share it according to their own rules.

A number of scholars have noted that the fight for the commons has been a thread that has connected the history of class struggle into our time (see Thompson 1993; Federici 2010; Linebaugh 2014). Inspired greatly by the Zapatista takeover of the *zócalo* in San Cristóbal de las Casas in 1994, the concept of the commons has been gaining popularity among the radical left (Federici 2010). In the context of decolonizing social movements, Sharma and Wright (2009) propose that projects of decolonization must "challenge capitalist social relations and those organized through the national state, such as sovereignty ... their goal must be the gaining of a global *commons*" (131). However, from the viewpoint of an anti- authoritarian strategy of decolonization that understands settler colonialism to be a pervasive and ongoing structure, it is important to think about the multiple ways in which the desire to reclaim the commons, even a "global commons",

can be embedded within settler colonial logics. Along these lines, this chapter interrogates whether political projects to "reclaim" the commons by non-Indigenous people in settler colonial states reproduce logics that are antagonistic to Indigenous struggles for decolonization and sovereignty.

What do social movements mean when they refer to "the commons"? Historian Peter Linebaugh (2014) notes, "the commons refers neither to resources alone nor to people alone but to an intermixture of them both" (14). In that sense, the commons is not only the common shared resources and territory in a particular community, but also includes the actions, beliefs, and relationships between people based around the logics of sharing power and collectively making decisions within a given society. In this respect, movement organizers understand the commons as being both a historically viable mode of organizing society and a potentially liberatory possibility for re-imagining social relations in the contemporary era. Linebaugh suggests that the making of the "commons" and the practice of "commoning" have occurred throughout history in many different cultures, nations, and territories. He provides detailed and carefully researched historical work of what the commons was like in medieval Europe and (with Marcus Rediker) in the pirate, sailor, slave, and Indigenous societies of the "revolutionary Atlantic" (see Linebaugh and Rediker 2000). For instance, drawing on medieval Europe, Linebaugh (2014) explains, "the forests, the hills, the coasts, the estuaries were locations of commoners who were respectively foresters, shepherds, fishers, and reed people. The commoner was the person who *commoned* in such lands, and on parish to parish to another parish *intercommoned,* and the bullying giants of legend, the lords and ladies, *discommoned*" (18). For Linebaugh and other theorists of the commons (see Federici

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2004; Graeber 2009; Hardt and Negri 2009 among many others), these practices while suppressed by capitalism, colonialism, and other hegemonic forms of power have never fully died out and are beginning to find resurgence within the theories and actions of contemporary radical movements (particularly among the anti-authoritarian current).

What is the commons? Like the state, the commons is also a potential way to organize our relationships to each other and to the land. In classic European political texts, the commons is often claimed to be "the common wealth of the material world – the air, the water, the plants and medicines - the inheritance of humanity as a whole, to be shared together" (Hardt & Negri 2009:viii). Hardt & Negri (2009) in *Commonwealth* expand this definition to also include those results of social production that are necessary for social interaction and further production. These include: knowledges, languages, codes, information, affects, etc. Linebaugh (2014) further articulates that the commons is also a way of organizing relations of exchange based on an anti-hierarchical ethos that is not dependent on commodity capitalism, domination, and waste. What differentiates the commons from spaces of autonomy and self-determination, suggest Hardt & Negri (2009), is that it does not position humanity as separate from nature, "as either its exploiter or its custodian, but focuses rather on the practices of interaction, care, and cohabitation in a common world, promoting the beneficial and limiting the detrimental forms of the common" (Hardt & Negri 2009:viii). Clearly there seems to be significant affinity between the notion of the commons (and the practice of commoning) and the relational ways of being that inform Indigenous land and place-based sovereignties. Thus, it is no surprise that many activists within the anti-authoritarian current see the reclamation of the commons as a promising political project seeking liberation from the

state that is compatible with Indigenous sovereignty struggles.

A number of contemporary political projects have been informed by the ethos of "reclaiming the common" including environmentalist back-to-the-land movements or festivals like Burning Man; community gardens and alternative currency movements; sanctuary city movements that seek to resist the enforcement of racist border policies; queer/trans* radical arts and dance spaces that seek to renegotiate desire, belonging, and care in urban centres; and most visibly the Occupy Wall Street movement that emerged and spread throughout the United States and beyond. Like all social movements, those struggling for the commons are also full of contradictions; even while striving for liberation and taking bold actions, we bring in all sorts of ways of thinking and acting that are shaped by the dominant logics of ruling relations and institutions. Thus, the tensions that Occupy struggled with as an exciting and innovative movement are present within and among many other radical processes of liberation. Thus, it is no surprise that even early in the life of Occupy Wall Street the contradiction of reclaiming the commons within a settler colonial context became one of the most persistent and inescapable internal debates facing the burgeoning movement (see Montano 2011; Kilibarda 2012). For instance, John Paul Montano, a Nishnaabeg writer and language instructor, in a widely circulated open letter written only days after the movement began, articulates an important critique that lingered throughout the encampments, namely:

> I had hoped that you would acknowledge that, since you are settlers on indigenous land, you need and want our indigenous consent to your building *anything* on our land - never mind an entire society. See where I'm going with this? I hope you're still smiling. We're still friends, so don't sweat it. I believe your hearts are in the right place. I know that this whole genocide and colonization thing causes all of us lots of confusion sometimes. It just seems to me that you're *unknowingly* doing the same thing to us that all the colonizers before you have done: you

want to do stuff on our land without asking our permission (Montano 2011).

Jessica Yee (2011) (Kanienkehaka/Mohawk) and Joanne Barker (2011) (Lenape) among other Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists (see Occupy Winnipeg 2011; Walia 2014) followed with similar open letters that sparked long and intense discussions and debates in Occupy general assemblies across the United States and Canada about the tactic of occupation within a settler colonial context.

Notably, these discussions resulted in a split in the Occupy movement in Oakland following a long and bitter argument over the merits of changing the name of the encampment to "Decolonize Oakland" (Khatib et al. 2012; Barker 2012; Grande 2013). Kilibarda (2012) argues that while Occupy's strength was to clearly and forcefully challenge capitalist relations, "its critique remains circumscribed by eliding the racialised nature of inequality in North America, which has been built on settler-colonial dispossession, genocide, slavery, imperial adventurism, indentured and precarious labour, as well as patriarchal, xenophobic, and anti-immigrant nationalisms" (24). Settler colonial logics are not only apparent within the Occupy movement, they also exist within a number of anti-authoritarian struggles including: migrant justice, queer/trans* liberation, environmental justice, anti-austerity, anti-gentrification and other radical campaigns that identify the reclamation of *a commons* as a desired goal. The following chapter situates Occupy Wall Street in the long history of settlers claiming the commons as resistance to the state and capitalist social relations. I argue that these claims to the commons have also perpetuated settler invasion and Indigenous dispossession. Beginning with a history of the occupation of Manhattan, the site of Occupy Wall Street, I show how movements to (re)claim the commons on Turtle Island are often structured by the logics of elimination,

evasion, naturalization, and appropriation that are foundational to settler colonialism. Despite these contradictions, there remains significant affinity between some of the core values and principles emerging out of movements such as Occupy Wall Street and Indigenous sovereignty struggles. Building on the last chapter, I draw on my interviews with participants in the anti-authoritarian current to identify how activists might transform their movements through relationship building with Indigenous peoples and the centralization of decolonization as an organizing logic of their struggles.

The Long History of Settler Occupations of Manna-hata

Sandy Grande (2013) in her insightful critique of Occupy Wall Street argues, "the discursive trope and strategy of 'occupation' reconstitutes (territorial) appropriation as the democratic manifest and, in so doing, fails to propose something distinct from or counter to the settler state" (370). Situating the place-based activism of OWS within a historical context of settler (re)appropriations, she convincingly articulates how the liberal democratic principles underlying this movement maintain the long history of dominion-as-domination present within settler claims to the commons.

The "reclamation" of Wall Street by the "99%" from the "1%" invokes a long-standing story of the struggle for the commons against regimes of enclosures and private property, however, in doing so, it erases the settler colonial trajectories that make such (re)occupations possible in the first place. Historian Allan Greer (2012) convincingly argues that while the long-run tendency toward enclosing private property is a critical part of the process of colonizing Indigenous territories, it "was also accompanied by the establishment of commons" (366). Greer draws on historical evidence from seventeenth-

century Spanish, French, and English settlements in North America to show the interplay of enclosures and commons in forming regimes of property. For Greer, "common property was a central feature of both native and settler forms of land tenure in the early colonial period and...dispossession came about largely through the clash of an indigenous commons and a colonial commons" (366). We can apply Greer's analysis to the history of lower Manhattan, the site of Occupy Wall Street, in order to show how OWS's appeal for the reclamation of the commons through the strategy of occupation is part of a longstanding process of settler (re)appropriations and (re)colonizations.

The site of the first Occupy Wall Street meeting, Bowling Green Park and subsequently Zuccotti Park, are important referents to locate the historical trajectory of settler occupations in which OWS came to be situated in Manhattan. Bowling Green Park is located a short distance from the estuary of the Hudson River and the Atlantic Ocean, a vital ecological space that had been historically shared by fish, shellfish, seals, whales, dolphins, migratory birds and other forms of life, including the Lenape people who refer to this territory as Manna-hata (Barker 2011). The Lenape of Manna-hata lived communally and developed complex relationships of diplomacy, trade, and sharing with other Lenape villages, as well as the Haudenosaunee, the Mohicans, the Shinnecock, and the Wampanoag and Narragansett peoples (National Museum of the American Indian 2010). The Lenape also developed and sustained these types of relationships with the Dutch, Swedish, and English settlers who arrived in their territories in the early seventeenth century.

The history of European occupation of Manna-hata began with the Dutch, which, in contrast to many of the puritanical settler colonies in other parts of the eastern

seaboard, was seen as a relatively multicultural and democratic settlement. For instance, historians of the Dutch colony highlight the communal nature of the early settlement on Manhattan and their rather progressive (though perhaps begrudging) tolerance of a multitude of newcomers, including Italians and Sephardic Jews (Shorto 2004). These settlers established an economy based on trade and agriculture and dispersed land to newcomers in individual plots that included *outlying commons* used as grazing grounds for domestic livestock that were shared by all settlers. In the early years of the settlement, when the Dutch still relied heavily on the Lenape for survival, the Europeans lived in relative peace with the surrounding Indigenous communities. However, much of the early conflicts between the Lenape and the Dutch occurred because of the fundamental difference in their relationships to land and how they related to the commons. Historian Herbert Kraft (1986), for instance, recounts how small annoyances over the ways in which the newly established European commons (used primarily for livestock grazing) grew more severe as the Indigenous commons, maintained for seasonal agriculture and tending to medicines, began to be damaged or threatened. Kraft (1986) explains that "the Dutch allowed their cattle, goats, and swine to wander freely in the woods, and the animals repeatedly ravaged the Indians' gardens and trampled their corn" (222). Moreover, since each recipient of a land grant for the Dutch colony was required to recruit at least fifty additional colonists, the size of the colony soon required greater and greater expansion of individual settler properties and, most importantly, a larger settler outlying commons.

The co-dependence of regimes of property and settler commons is an example of what Nicholas A. Brown (2014) terms "settler accumulation." Brown argues that the

logic of settler accumulation helps us "to diagnose more precisely how settler-colonial structures are naturalized in the landscape and how new modes of accumulation – or flexible conditions of possibility – exploit these embedded and enduring structures... (16). The way that the Dutch organized their commons in conjunction with regimes of property clashed significantly with the Lenape conception of the commons as maintaining and being responsible to their relationships with the land and the other living creatures who shared these territories. Given that the Lenape understood their relationship to the land as being one of interdependence, their practices were in conflict with the Dutch settlers who saw the land as a resource to be commonly exploited.

While the distribution of land and the form of land-tenure that dominated the colony was highly contested within settler communities, the fundamental difference in how settlers understood their relationship to land in comparison to the neighbouring Indigenous communities contributed to one of the most infamous land swindles in the history of U.S. colonialism. In 1624 Dutch Governor Peter Minuit famously defrauded the Lenape of their territories for goods worth sixty guilders, claiming Manhattan "for their *exclusive use* – an exclusivity that the Dutch would work violently to protect against the Lenape and the English" (Barker 2011). The Lenape, who did not practice regimes of property, believed that the goods were a symbol of the settlers' desire to peacefully co-steward and care for the territories they now shared (Kraft 1986).

By the early 1640s, the amount of land needed to maintain the settlement and its outlying commons was expanding and Dutch Governor William Kieft tried to impose a tax on the Lenape for the privilege of living on their own territories (Newcomb 2013). When the Lenape refused to pay rents, the Dutch built a wall and a citadel "attempting to

block the Lenape, other Native nations, and the English from attacking 'their' settlement" (Barker 2011). When these structures failed to force the Lenape off the land, the Dutch engaged in a massacre against the community in 1643 and continued a relentless reign of terror until they themselves were dispossessed of the territories by the English (who then continued where the Dutch had left off) (Kraft 1986).

The citadel that was built, Fort Amsterdam, stood just south of Bowling Green Park, where the National Museum of the American Indian is now located and "by the time the Americans came on the scene, the original fortifying wall had been torn down, paved over and, in commemorative fashion, renamed 'Wall Street'" (Grande 2013:375). It is in this same commemorative fashion that Occupy Wall Street chose to rename Zucotti Park, a privately-owned public space named after the CEO of the multinational corporation Brookfield Place, to Liberty Plaza, the name for which it was known when it was opened as a public park in the 1930s as part of a previous phase of gentrification. Grande (2013) observes that this act of occupation, reclamation, and renaming is only the most recent episode of the continued occupation of Lenape territory as it has been contested by and passed down from settler to settler.

Walter Mignolo (2011) explains that, "the European Left in revamping the idea of 'the commons' allows for the reorientation of previous concepts of communism and socialism. As the proletariat was reconceptualized in terms of the multitude, socialism and communism are replaced with the idea of the common: the construction of public space as alternative to the dominion of the private in a capitalist-oriented society" (39). The common, in this sense, is analogous to the autonomous geographies and temporary autonomous zones discussed in the previous chapter. They are internal interruptions of

state and capitalist society, where non-hierarchical forms of social relations are negotiated. These include horizontal decision-making, collective access to land and resources, alternative economic systems (like gifting economies), etc.

The problem with this reconceptualization in settler states like Canada and the United States is that it evades the question of ongoing settler complicity in the project of occupation. In this respect, elisions of settler colonial history in campaigns to reclaim the commons are not unique to Occupy. They appear within a multitude of radical social movements seeking to assert spaces of liberation outside of the dominant structures and logics of capitalism, heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, and ableism. For instance, Scott Lauria Morgensen (2011) probes the way that queer liberation back-to-the-land movements resolved "their settler colonial inheritance by creating queer cultures that make the land their medium for liberating sexuality and gender" (127). For Morgensen, the liberation sought by these movements is dependent on longstanding evasions, naturalizations, and appropriations foundational to the logics of settler colonialism. Similarly, Harsha Walia (2013, 2014) and other migrant justice activists (see Hussan 2013; Henaway et. al 2007; Fortier 2013) have discussed the multiple risks inherent in promoting a radical reconceptualization of borderless communities without an analysis and practice of making Indigenous decolonization foundational to such projects. Finally, recent organizing against austerity and gentrification, in which activists seek to reclaim public space and resist privatization and dispossession, must also contend with what it means to wage these struggles inside and outside of the logics of settler colonialism (Coulthard 2014). In the following section, I will explore these examples in greater detail in order to show how activists in the anti-authoritarian seek to break from the settler

colonial logics inherent in claims to the commons.

Evasion, Naturalization, and the Appropriation of the Settler Commons

I am lost in San Francisco's Mission District on my way to meet up with Clare Bayard, a white anti-racist educator with the Catalyst Project in San Francisco. We are supposed to meet at a local café, a small holdover from a previous era in a rapidly gentrifying part of the city. I am late because I have been wandering through back alleys where graffiti artists have painted dozens of murals that tell the stories of over five hundred years of Indigenous resistance to colonization. I duck out of the alleyways and make my way down a residential street where I come upon an inconspicuously placed plaque that is dedicated to the Rammaytush Ohlone people. The plaque shows a map of the area (which, in my state of being lost, is what drew me to it in the first place) and shares a quote written in both the Rammaytush and English languages. It reads: "Sun, moon, sky, village, friend, alive: we eat, drink, sing, and dance." I interpret the words as an allusion to the relationships and practices that govern and sustain the Ohlone peoples within these territories. The plaque is situated on the site of the original Mission Dolores constructed in 1776. The same Mission Dolores that is notorious for its widespread practices of occupation, dispossession, conversion, and extermination of Indigenous (and particularly Ohlone) peoples.

The historic struggle of the Ohlone peoples against colonization and displacement seems to be present everywhere. And yet, given the current intensity of queer liberation, migrant justice, and anti-gentrification struggles in the Mission neighbourhood, the message written on the plaque seemed indecipherable in the context of non-Indigenous

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anti-authoritarian politics. This indecipherability of Indigenous ways of being outside of the logics of settler colonialism lingered in the back of my mind when I finally made my way to meet up with Clare. In that interview, Clare succinctly posed a question that I believe underlies the contradictions embedded in non-Indigenous struggles for the commons within settler colonial states, stating: "The difficulty that a lot of non-Native people have in imagining what unsettling would look like in this country is that it's not a political possibility. We can't even imagine what that would look like – how do we do that?" Clare's question speaks to the normalization of settler colonial logics even within pre-figurative visions of other worlds. In my understanding, Clare suggests that settler colonial logics are so deeply engrained in our lives, including those of us within the anti-authoritarian current, that it seems impossible to imagine what decolonization would look like. In that respect, we fail to see how our desire to reclaim the commons and resist economic, gendered, and racial oppression neglects to acknowledge the settler colonial context in which our movements take place. Glen Coulthard (2014) explains that these logics are not only the erasure of settler colonial histories from radical anti-authoritarian projects, but are also projects that are potentially antagonistic to Indigenous attempts to re-assert and sustain decolonial relationships. Coulthard (2014) argues:

> [W]hat must be recognized by those inclined to advocate a blanket 'return of the commons' as a redistributive counterstrategy to the neoliberal state's new round of enclosures, is that, in liberal setter states such as Canada, the 'commons' not only belong to somebody – the First Peoples of this land – they also deeply inform and sustain Indigenous modes of thought and behavior that harbor profound insights into the maintenance of relationships within and between human beings and the natural world built on principles of reciprocity, nonexploitation and respectful coexistence (12).

Coulthard's critique signals an important consideration for movements seeking to

"reclaim the commons", namely, that there are multiple ways in which the commons can be organized and articulated. A commons fought for, envisioned, and practiced by non-Indigenous radicals that ignores the historical context of settler colonialism can and often does threaten or interfere with processes of Indigenous decolonization and resurgence.

Historian Allan Greer (2012) observes, "The association of 'commons' with the poor in England and the Indians in America, not to mention its overtones of sharing and cooperation, can lead to a romantic view that emphasizes the *collective* aspects of commoning to the neglect of the *exclusive* nature of most commons known to history" (386). Literature on the radical left is awash with overtures towards the reclamation of some form of commons or commoning as an important political project inspired by early resistance to capitalism and colonialism waged by peasants in England (see Thompson 1963, 1993), the motley crew of enslaved Africans, poor white settlers, and Indigenous peoples in the revolutionary Atlantic (see Linebaugh and Rediker 2000), and the contemporary multitude engaged in a radical reclamation of the commonwealth (see Hardt and Negri 2009) or radical democracy (see Graeber 2013). While these texts are all important contributions to an ongoing discussion on the nature of anti-authoritarian political projects of liberation 'in the shell of the old' system of capitalism, overwhelmingly authors and activists alike have the propensity to suggest that Eurocentric conceptions of the commons and those of Indigenous peoples in North America are complementary, equitable, or even synonymous with each other.

What Greer's research clearly shows is that while the negotiation of a commons was a central feature of both Indigenous and settler forms of organizing land relations, "these two commons were not different places, but rather contending customs and rules

regulating the use of a given space and its resources" (376). In flattening out the important differences between how white settlers, arrivants (to borrow a term from Jodi Byrd), and Indigenous peoples conceptualize and practice land-based relationships is to erase the inherent conflict embedded within claims to the commons.[14] It is also, as Adam J. Barker (2012) observes, an erasure of "the very memory of Indigenous ways of knowing and being" by subsuming them "into a multicultural Settler polity" (330). This is why political movements in Canada and the United States that are geared toward reclaiming "our streets" or "our cities" or "our countries" from the capitalist elite often fail to properly consider the ways in which our own movements continue to perpetuate the structure of settler colonialism. Such projects to "reclaim the commons" remain ensnared within settler colonial logics in three important ways: through the evasion of complicity in producing and maintaining the structures of colonization, through the attempt to naturalize settler polities and systems of governance, and through the appropriation of Indigenous territories and ways of being within the overarching structure of the settler commons.

The Settler Commons as Evasion

I am speaking with Anthony Meza-Wilson, a mixed-race organizer with the Purple Thistle Institute, in a pub near Hogan's Alley, a neighbourhood adjacent to False Creek in Vancouver. We are discussing the current campaigns against gentrification in this area following the construction of condos built for the 2010 Vancouver Olympics

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[14] Byrd (2011) argues that it is important to use a term that differentiates white settlers from those forced through the violence of colonialism to migrate to the Americas. She notes, "Of particular concern is how to theorize the degrees to which indigenous peoples, settlers, and arrivants – a term I borrow from African Caribbean poet Kamau Brathwaite to signify those people forced into the Americas through the violence of European and Anglo-American colonialism and imperialism around the globe – have functioned within and have resisted the historical project of the colonization of the "New World" (p.xix).

athlete's village. The condos were originally promised to be used as social housing after the games were complete, but they have instead been turned into luxury-priced housing units and sold to professionals and real estate speculators after forcing out the last of the low-income tenants (Vulliamy 2013). Anthony and I are discussing the long history of struggles for space in this neighbourhood and in particular the way in which the Black community established along Hogan's Alley had been displaced by an earlier wave of gentrification to construct a highway viaduct in the 1970s. The struggle between poor, racialized, and immigrant populations in this neighbourhood and the city's elite has a long history of dispossessions and reclamations. Anthony explained to me how discussions of these histories were taking place at a community forum on gentrification in the neighbourhood when an intervention by Khelsilem Rivers, a Sḵwx̱wú7mesh and Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw community organizer fundamentally shifted the terms of the conversation. Anthony recounts:

> [Khelsilem talked about] his grandfather and his experiences in the area and [...] about the reserve in Kitsilano that was basically destroyed for development purposes in the fifties. He just basically told his whole story about how he came to be here and talked about the land and the False Creek flats where we are now. So False Creek ends at Science World, but it used to go all the way up to Clark Drive but then they filled it all in with fill for Expo 86 and the Skytrain. This whole area used to be hunting grounds, you know he was just telling all these stories about this place and people who knew Vancouver didn't know this. I feel like it really blew people's minds.

For Anthony, what made Khelsilem River's intervention so provocative to the mostly non-Indigenous group of activists assembled at the meeting was the invocation of a long history of Sḵwx̱wú7mesh relationships with these territories that had been largely erased or unknown to those organizers concerned with struggles to "reclaim" the neighbourhood from the wealthy gentrifying newcomers. This provocation forced activists to struggle

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with how their movements may also be complicit in replicating settler colonial logics. As Adam J. Barker (2012) explains, "the diffuse nature of settler colonialism enables the perception that, while everyone may be somehow connected to colonization, no one is responsible for it" (330). The longstanding erasure of the histories of Indigenous resistance to dispossession, particularly within those territories most bitterly contested through class struggles *among* settler populations, creates a situation in which non-Indigenous activists may sidestep their own complicity in the creation and perpetuation of these settler colonial spaces.

As Barker (2012) suggests, the fact that these elements manifest inside movements like Occupy or, in this case, the resistance to gentrification following the Vancouver 2010 Olympics are not surprising, but inevitable. Drawing from the work of Lorenzo Veracini (2010), Barker argues that the long history of resistance to the conditions of capitalism and other forms of oppression within the state produces a situation where settler activists conceal their own complicity with the structures of settler colonialism. As Veracini notes, "The settler hides...behind the activity of settlers elsewhere, behind the persecuted, the migrant, even the refugee...Settler colonialism obscures the conditions of its own production" (14). These elisions are apparent not only within the structures of colonial power, like the state and capitalist enterprise, but reside as an undercurrent within social movements who resist these very structures. As such, one of the critical challenges for activists within the anti-authoritarian current seeking to decolonize their struggles is to unearth and acknowledge these evasions within the broader movements in which they organize. However, this is not an easy task as these evasions within social movement struggles have a deep history. For that reason, it is

instructive to draw from the history of early colonial settlement to show how class conflict among early settlers, including struggles for the commons, underlie the formation of the settler state and liberal democracy.

The longstanding discourse on colonization and dispossession in the Americas, explains Allan Greer (2012), frames the enclosure movement that first took shape in England and Western Europe as extending overseas "bringing survey lines, fences, and legal rules fostering exclusive access and transferability" (365). This historically linear, way of linking capitalism, colonialism, and modernity suggests that as this new system emerged, all others vanished (Mignolo 2011). It also makes the assumption that the process of dispossessing Indigenous peoples from their territories in the Americas was the result of the same system of enclosures that had proletarianized the peasants of Europe. This results in the subsuming of Indigenous struggles for land and life under the rubric of a more general global struggle for the commons, one that resists both the old and new systems of enclosures. In doing so, it erases the long history of occupations and dispossessions perpetuated not by the ruling elite, greedy prospectors, or corporate interests, but rather by poor settler commoners, yeoman farmers, and other populations seeking to carve out spaces of resistance to the capitalist system within settler society. However, it is a kind reading of history to say that poor settlers coming to Turtle Island were seeking to carve out spaces of resistance. There were, in fact, many prominent narratives at play including: land as opportunity, adventurism, religious freedom, survivalism, among others. More so, while many settlers likely sought out "the new world" to escape the emerging capitalist order being built in Europe, they arguably did not see settling as resistance as much as they did a new, ostensibly unfettered way to

make a living somewhere else. Thus, from early colonial history until today, non-Indigenous people struggling for the commons have done so, not in solidarity with Indigenous peoples but more often in contestation with them.

Take, for instance, the period leading up to the American Revolution in the Ohio Valley. Given the threat posed to the British by Indigenous resistance that had organized widespread solidarity across a vast network of nations to resist further incursions, the Crown established a boundary line in the 1763 Royal Proclamation that denied settlers the right to move west into the Ohio Valley. While the line was effective in barring wealthy land speculators from obtaining legal title to Indigenous lands west of the Proclamation Line, it was less robust in preventing individual settlers and families from moving westward and dispossessing Indigenous peoples (often violently) of their territories. As Historian Woody Holton (1994) suggests:

> Speculators must be distinguished from actual settlers as a separate class with very different interests. Speculators were interested in Indian land because of its exchange value. But they could not cut homesteads from Indian land to sell to farmers until they obtained legal title to the land, and they were prevented from taking title by the Proclamation of 1763. So the proclamation effectively abolished land speculation (454).

The abolition of land speculation was an important victory for yeoman farm families seeking to break from the proletarian condition on the eastern seaboard and "reclaim" the means of production on homesteads west of the Proclamation Line.

While settlers were now able to obtain Indigenous land without paying any money to speculators, they still had to displace the communities who resided on these territories in hopes that the Crown would one day grant them title based on prior possession. The struggle of the settlers fleeing oppressive labour conditions in the east could hardly be considered one in which they were negotiating and articulating relationships of solidarity

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and resistance with Indigenous communities. Rather the question of the day tended to be, "If the Indians' land was to be taken from them...would farm families be allowed to settle Indian land free of charge or would they have to pay speculators for it?" (477). A number of scholars have noted (see Deloria 1998; Wolfe 2006; kulchyski 2013), that one of the important conditions leading to the American Revolution was the struggle over who would be able to claim ownership over Indigenous lands. As peter kulchyski (2013) emphasizes, "historians in the usa say it was a revolution over tea and taxes, but it was also a revolution against aboriginal rights" (24). Struggles for the possession of Indigenous territories have never been the sole domain of the settler state and the elite. They emerge as well from a complex and confrontational relationship between the state and those within settler society that resist it. Audra Simpson (2014) explains that within this confrontation between the settler state and settler society remains an underlying framework that requires the dispossession of Indigenous peoples. She argues:

> These techniques – occupying, treating, forceful elimination, containment, assimilation, the coterminous logics and practices of languages of race and civilization, the practice of immigration (called such in the United States and Canada, rather than 'settlement'), the legal notion of natal right, and presumptions of just occupancy – all form the fulcrum of settlement's labor (and its imaginary) as well as a whole host of other self-authorizing techniques and frameworks that *sustain* dispossession and occupation (21).

These techniques are clearly present in the actions of the state. For instance, the settler state regulates and controls the bodies and movements of migrant and Indigenous peoples through legislative policies aimed at securing control over the land base while simultaneously maintaining an exploitable and precarious workforce. But we also see these techniques *within* movements, like when Indigenous activists in some Occupy encampments are silenced, or chants ring out claiming "Whose streets? Our Streets?"

without consideration of how that naming and claiming of territory perpetuates settler colonial logics.

The vociferous debates that took place during the Occupy protests provide an important example of how activists within the anti-authoritarian current struggled to deal with the elisions of settler complicity to Indigenous dispossession within their movement. Occupy began on Wall Street in New York City and then rapidly spread across North America. This movement sought to confront the "age of austerity" following the crisis in capitalism after the 2008 default of major financial institutions in the United States. Kilibarda (2012) contends that the Occupy movement lacked an analysis of the capitalist crisis rooted in anti-colonial struggles and the longstanding use of the tactic of occupation by Indigenous peoples. Kilibarda (2012) points out, "This history of struggle is significant in the Canadian context since prior to #occupy, one of the most common uses of the actual term 'occupy' in the media was to describe indigenous peoples' resistance to state appropriation of their lands" (27). Yet, Indigenous struggles and claims to sovereignty were conspicuously absent from the Occupy movement and moreover the language of "Occupy" and the slogan "We are the 99%" often performed the same erasures of Indigenous presence as past movements by seeking to re-claim the commons without contending with the settler-colonial context in which these movements existed.

As Indigenous organizers and their allies began to raise these concerns within Occupy general assemblies, they were often met with stern resistance and as Kilibarda (2012) notes only 2.6% of the 39 Occupy social media sites he surveyed adopted a statement of unity that took Indigenous sovereignty as foundational to its analysis and only 15.4% of sites addressed the issue at all. While Occupy groups were either unaware

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of this decolonizing critique or resistant to it, organizers in a number of cities sought to make the connections between this nascent movement and Indigenous sovereignty struggles more clear. For instance, in the Bay Area, Indigenous organizers and allies involved in Occupy Oakland and Occupy San Francisco took a slow and gradual approach to making those links more concrete.

Dylan Cooke, a community worker at an LGBTQ anti-violence organization and a white settler activist, explained to me how the strategy taken to build relationships between Occupy and Ohlone struggles in the Bay Area began:

> It started with little things, for instance, there's an action that happens every Thanksgiving day at the Emeryville Mall, which is at the corner of Ohlone Way and Shell Mound Street because the largest shell mound in the Bay Area was right there. Every year there is an action on the day after Thanksgiving, Black Friday. So I brought a proposal to both [Occupy] Oakland and San Francisco to basically be in solidarity with those actions and go to those actions, that sort of thing. That was part of the bridge we were going to try and build in order to start that conversation.

After moderate success in drawing folks from the Occupy camps to support the Thanksgiving Day action, organizers felt as though the conditions might be right to begin the difficult conversation about what it would mean to decolonize the Occupy movement. However, as Cooke recalls, Indigenous organizers who brought forward the discussion to the general assembly were met with significant resistance:

> We didn't know if we were going to get to that place of having the decolonization conversation but we ended up doing that and I was just playing a supportive role in trying to have that conversation and I didn't end up being at the General Assembly where it happened – it was a two hour long absolute debacle...It was pretty rough (from what I heard and from talking to people about it). People got really passionate and defensive and some of it was really beautiful passion – and I'm excited that people were that enthralled by a social movement, especially since many had not been involved in movements before, but I was sad about the outcome of that conversations and the ways that it was divided...I

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> felt like it was a 50/50 split between people who felt it was important
> and that we needed to move to Decolonize Oakland and people who
> were set and felt like either Indigenous solidarity wasn't an important
> framework or that it was an important framework, but just not as
> important [as other issues].

Similar interventions occurred in other Occupy general assemblies with varying levels of success. As Kilibarda's research shows, in Toronto and Montréal Indigenous organizers and their allies had some real success in bringing forward a centering of decolonization within the Occupy camps though the issue remained divisive. In Vancouver, the Indigenous solidarity committee that emerged within the Occupy camp worked to "educate those onsite around the fact that 'all the economic and political injustices [we are protesting] are built on the history of colonialism and that colonialism and indigenous struggles are foundational'" (Kilibarda 2012: 30). However, even within the Vancouver Occupy camp participants struggled with the idea of centering Indigenous sovereignty and decolonization (Walia 2011). Despite these challenges, Occupy became the first major phase of anti-capitalist and global justice movements in a North American context to be consistently faced with questions of settler complicity in Indigenous dispossession and the need to centralize decolonization as a principle of struggle. Demelza Champagne, an Anishinaabe organizer who participated in Occupy Wall Street discussed the potential possibilities opened up by this movement as they relate to decolonization:

> It's like a double-edged sword. I think there is actually something to
> learn from the Occupy movement. Of course it is open to critique with
> that word "occupy". I mean Native people did try to go there, there's
> like a rag-tag bunch of people, some of us who are loosely connected
> did go there and tried to bring that up [...] It wasn't a decolonization
> movement necessarily even though some of those ideas [that spurred
> Occupy Wall Street] can combine easily with processes of
> decolonization.

As Demelza suggests, while there were indeed significant affinities between the political

cultures being asserted in the Occupy camps and movements for Indigenous sovereignty, the reticence (and at times refusal) of the occupiers to come to terms with the settler colonial logics embedded within their movements foreclosed their ability to move towards processes of decolonization.

When I discussed the possibility of breaking from these relations of settler colonialism and avoiding these settler evasions with other activists in the anti-authoritarian current, they had a number of questions about what that might look like and how it could be achieved. Did it require that we recover or retrieve some lost European, Asian, or African traditionalism? Did it require a mass evacuation of Indigenous territories or the negotiation of citizenship within Indigenous nations? Did it mean the end of Canada and the United States as we have come to know them? Is it a long-term multi-generational endeavour or is there a possibility of achieving some form of decolonization within our lifetime? There are no easy answers for these questions and while there are many different perspectives within the literature on what decolonization for non-Indigenous people might look like (see Wazyatawin 2011; Tuck and Yang 2012; Sium et al. 2012; Snelgrove et al. 2014 as just some examples), among the organizers that I interviewed there was skepticism as to whether or not these questions were answerable at all.

For instance, Annie Morgan Banks, a white anti-colonial organizer on the west coast, provided a thoughtful response with regard to whether or not reclaiming a lost European traditionalism might be helpful in the process of unsettling and negotiating a decolonial commons. Drawing from her understanding of the long history of dispossessions in Europe and the process of settlement in the Canadian and U.S. settler

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states of her ancestors, Annie explains:

> I didn't learn anything about paganism or land-based traditions from England or Ireland (or even the colonization of Ireland) – any of that stuff. So to reconnect to that and have it inform my morals, I don't know [...] [I]t's often really counter-intuitive [...] I believe it is more important to reorient ourselves towards this very strong base of values around what it means to be in community and respect the land and co-exist with people and take leadership from Indigenous people who rightfully have a lot of leadership to offer and who have a lot of land-based and cultural knowledge.

Similarly, Cleve Higgins, a white anti-colonial organizer based in Montréal attempted to address the question of how long and under what circumstances decolonization might take place on Turtle Island. Frustrated by what he believed to be a common myopic outlook among many non-Indigenous activists seeking to re-imagine the commons today, he warned:

> I have a rule-of-thumb: things either happen slowly over long periods of time or they happen very intensely. Usually those things happen at different times, but colonization has been very intense and has been happening for a very long time and so for it to be undone it will have to also be very intense and for a very long time. I don't see a way around that in the other direction to undo all that. It's like putting things in that perspective, the degree of intensity that we, whoever we is, we're not heading in that direction now. I don't see it in this context. That doesn't mean that we can't.

Annie and Cleve's responses signal an important desire to acknowledge the long-standing complicity that non-Indigenous radicals have had in the settler colonial project while also considering the limitations of campaigns to reclaim the commons or any other settler-led initiatives to achieve decolonization on Turtle Island. While this is an important first step, something that a number of activists attempted to make happen within the Occupy movement, Jodi Byrd (2011) cautions against movements to reclaim the commons that do "nothing to disrupt the genocidal and colonialist intent of the initial and now repeated

historical process" (205). For Annie and Cleve, among other participants I interviewed, seeking to develop relationships with Indigenous peoples that move away from the naturalization of the settler polity and its focus on settler futurity requires tangible and material solidarity and action in support of Indigenous land reclamations, social movements, and processes of resurgence. Not only this, but it means opening up the potential for non-Indigenous people to engage in decolonial politics within their own movements and struggles for community control of territory, resources, and public space.

The Settler Commons as Naturalization

In my conversation with Robyn Heaslip, a white settler who works with the Sto:lo Nation, we talked about the difficulty in developing connections to land and space in a society where many people no longer have sustained relationships with the territories on which they live and are in a constant state of precarity, displacement, and movement. Referencing the work of Glen Coulthard, Robyn responded to my question by re-affirming the importance for non-Indigenous people seeking to follow pathways of decolonization to practice mutuality and responsible relationship building with Indigenous communities. Robyn asserts:

> [Glen Coulthard] talks about place against empire and that there's a need for settlers to imagine and go down the path of becoming true people of the land that we're on. But that's what I was saying before and you're saying there's a real contradiction in that being the goal with the fact that there's so much displacement and requirement to move around and I don't have the answer to that at all. More that it just kind of puts more emphasis on the need to create communities of mutual support, so that people can stay where they want to and create alternative economies and things like that ...

Engaging in the process of reclaiming relationships to place alluded to by Robyn requires

that non-Indigenous people break from the concepts of naturalization that dominate struggles for social justice within settler colonial states. In this sense, naturalization is when settlers and Indigenous peoples switch places through a series of "transfers". In the case of social movements, non-Indigenous activists come to understand the goal of their movements as wrestling the state away from the elite, which rightfully belongs to "the people" or "the multitude". As Hardy (2012) explains, "the modern citizen-subject of the settler society is rendered natural, and in fact, *indigenous to* the modern nation-state and its territory while the original inhabitant, the 'Indian' or 'Aborigine' is de-naturalized, made foreign, and per Wolfe, marked for elimination" (132). Such naturalizations are apparent in the ways that some movements uncritically desire to "reclaim American democracy" or "make Canada a safe-haven for queer migrants". In articulating and pursuing these goals, progressive movements can get caught up in the nationalist mythos underlying the settler colonial project.

Barker (2012) argues that one of the major ways in which this naturalization occurs among radical social movements is through the appeal to a new multiracial or multicultural polity *that includes* Indigenous peoples as part of a re-imagined commons. In this sense, movements seeking to assert spaces of political liberation or new ways of relating to each other and the land within a settler colonial context attempt to supersede oppressive structures and to create a "post settler polity" (Veracini 2010). In less jargon laden terms, rather than deal with the ongoing structure of settler colonialism, non-Indigenous movements ignore or minimize the importance of Indigenous sovereignty in order to side-step the question altogether. By side-stepping the question of settler colonialism, activists focus on imagining and creating a just society where settler

colonialism is re-defined as a past historic event that can be overcome by the liberation of the commons and the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in a new "post-settler" society. These were some of the underlying assumptions that caused such vociferous debates in many of the Occupy encampments. The pre-figurative post settler polity is an underlying and often unconscious goal of non-Indigenous social movements. It can appear within environmentalist fights to stop logging in forests, migrant resistance to racist border policies, the claiming of public/social spaces by queer/trans* communities as they contest heteropatriarchy, mass mobilizations opposed to international trade summits or the Occupy movements' general assemblies seeking to work out a radical vision of grassroots democracy.

Nicholas A. Brown (2014) suggests that resistance by "subjects of empire", including "settler subjects", structures the character of primitive accumulation within settler colonial states. In other words, the struggle over resources within these states assumes the naturalization of settler subjects through the ongoing process of Indigenous dispossession. Citing the work of Glen Coulthard, Brown argues that the emphasis on the history and experiences of proletarianization of non-Indigenous people and the subsequent resistance to neoliberal dispossession of social goods won through class struggle risks erasing the foundational and ongoing process of Indigenous dispossession that informs dominant modes of Native resistance. These two forms of dispossession are not the same, nor are the resistance movements seeking to halt or reverse them.

There is a growing broad-based resistance to neoliberal austerity that, in settler states like Canada and the United States fighting against what David Harvey (2004) calls "accumulation by dispossession" - the accumulation of wealth through neoliberal

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privatization, speculation, and dispossession of the general public through the clawing back of public goods and social services. These movements contest the divisions of wealth within the settler state and even challenge the structure of the state itself, yet they overwhelmingly assume the naturalization of the settler polity within their organizing structure. In parallel to Occupy Wall Street, these movements frame their struggles as multicultural and multiracial and seek to re-appropriate social goods from the elite and to redistribute wealth within the settler state in a more just and equitable manner. While such movements are vital if we are to build a broad and mass-based struggle against capitalism, they must also develop relationships of solidarity and mutual aid with Indigenous resistance to dispossession of their territories, a dispossession that is foundational to the settler colonial state.

Another function of what Brown (2014) calls "settler accumulation" is the tendency of social movements to prefigure new social relations that remain embedded within the structures settler colonialism. Perhaps there is an assumed evolution of settler spatialities towards a more just and equitable future, but it is not a break from settler control of territories since it does nothing to unsettle or disrupt the logics and structures of elimination and genocide of Indigenous peoples (Wolfe 2006). If we apply the concept of settler accumulation to our understanding of the commons, then we are better able to contend with some of the problematic assumptions that we may hold as we negotiate resistance to neoliberalism and its repossession of social goods within settler states (i.e. like attacks on labour rights, social security, stable employment, public space, marriage equality, etc.).

Sharma and Wright (2009) in their critique of Lawrence and Dua's (2005) article

"Decolonizing Anti-Racism", suggest that by focusing resistance against the expropriation of the commons, movements for decolonization gain a better understanding of how colonization continues to take place. They argue, "By comprehending colonialism as occurring each time the commons is expropriated and the commoners are exploited, our understanding of colonialism and who has been colonized should expand" (Sharma and Wright 2009:133). Sharma and Wright distinguish this type of decolonization from one that is based in nationalist common sense, as they characterize Indigenous sovereignty movements. They explain, "By understanding *colonialism* as the theft of the commons, the agents of decolonization as the *commoners,* and decolonization as the gaining of a *global commons*, we will gain a clearer sense of *when* we were colonized, *who* colonized us, and *how* to decolonize ourselves and our relationships" (133). However, if we use the concept of settler accumulation to interrogate Sharma and Wright's proposition, we begin to see the limitation of such an approach.

First, Sharma and Wright argue that we need to understand colonialism as "the theft of the commons". This argument relies on Marx's *Capital* to relate the theft of the commons to the emergence of capital via a primary/original phase of accumulation, often translated as primitive accumulation. More recent formulations expand on Marx's classic thesis to argue that the process of dispossession is an ongoing and consistent feature of capitalist accumulation (see Harvey 2004; Federici 2004; De Angelis 2005 among others). As Glen Coulthard (2014) explains, these are "the "formative acts of violent *dispossession* [that] set the stage for the emergence of capitalist accumulation and the reproduction of capitalist relations of production by tearing Indigenous societies, peasants, and other small-scale, self-sufficient agricultural producers from the source of

their livelihood – *the land*" (Coulthard 2014:7). Silvia Federici (2004) points out that this process has not just involved the severing of people from the land, but has included a longstanding accumulation of "differences, inequality, hierarchies, divisions, which have alienated workers from each other and even from themselves" (115). In this respect, the process of dispossessing people of their lands, their removal from their means of production, and their eventual proletarianization has not only transformed our material conditions, but has transformed our ways of being and the relationships that we make with each other and the land.

One of these major transformations in relationships occurs through the process of settler colonialism. As European peasants are displaced from their territories and their relationships with the land are severed, many are enticed, coerced, or forced into the process of colonialism. In the emerging settler states of Canada and the United States, this process is foundational to the establishment of European control and hegemony of territories with which Indigenous peoples had maintained longstanding relationships. It is this process that places the European commons, influenced by the new relationships emerging out of the capitalist mode of production, in contestation with multiple Indigenous commons. In this sense, both the colonial elite and the settler subject are complicit in the process of severing Indigenous peoples from their longstanding relationships with particular territories and perpetuating an ongoing dispossession through the assertion of settler citizenship.

Morgensen (2011) explains that not only are Indigenous peoples dispossessed of their territories through this process but settler citizenship also requires the incorporation of indigeneity in order to claim national belonging. In his study of the politics of

recognition among radical queer social movements in settler states, he shows how Philip J. Deloria's argument that settler citizenship is based on the conquest and incorporation of Native American indigeneity, "makes primitivity a resource that settler subjects access when asserting their national belonging" (Morgensen 2011:45). Similarly, through the assertion that decolonization is the struggle to gain a global commons, Sharma and Wright (2009) sidestep the historical process of settler colonization and naturalize settler citizenship. In their effort to rightly critique the conflation of the process of migration with the process of colonialism, they flatten all forms of dispossession as originating from the same process of accumulation or theft of the commons. Such an analysis fails to correctly situate the complicity of settler subjects in participating in the process of dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their territories, even within their own struggles against proletarianization and dispossession at the hands of the capitalist class. That being said, building relationships of solidarity with Indigenous movements for decolonization and resurgence does not preclude struggles for the commons, rather it requires that we understand the multiple and diverse ways in which the commons are constituted by different communities and in different contexts and that we take the time to learn, understand, and negotiate the contradictions that may arise in the process of struggling for and achieving such commons. For instance, Glen Coulthard (2014) explains that Indigenous anti-colonialism and anti-capitalism differs from those of settler society, noting:

> The theory and practice of Indigenous anticolonialism, including Indigenous anticapitalism, is best understood as a struggle primarily inspired by and oriented around *the question of land* – a struggle not only *for* land in the material sense, but also deeply *informed* by what the land *as a system of reciprocal relations and obligations* can teach us about living our lives in relation to one another and the natural world in

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nondominating and nonexploitative terms – and less around our emergent status as 'rightless proletarians' (13).

Coulthard here does not exclude the possibility of non-Indigenous struggles for the commons, rather he offers an important distinction between non-Indigenous anti-capitalist struggles against proletarianization and the questions of land that permeate Indigenous decolonization. We must acknowledge the longstanding distinctions of how settlers, arrivants, and Indigenous peoples relate to and understand our relationships with the land as being both contradictory and incommensurable with each other. Rather than seeking to claim a singular commons, we must see the struggle for the commons as multiplicitous and contingent upon a simultaneous process of decolonization.

The Settler Commons as Appropriation

In drawing from the history of settler-Indigenous relationships, it is also important to understand the various ways in which colonialism has functioned as both an erasure and appropriation of Indigenous peoples cultures, systems of governance, and territories. The disrespect for treaties and for Indigenous commons did not simply proliferate from the nation-state in a linear and hierarchical manner but was always rhizomatic and fluid among "the individual settlers and arrivants who saw indigenous lands as profit, fortune, and equality" (Byrd 2011:13). The need to reconcile this ongoing condition requires that anti-authoritarian movements forge relationships of solidarity with Indigenous peoples that acknowledge and negotiate the contradictions inherent in the multiple conceptions activists have of what the commons means. Beyond the dismantling of capitalism, heteropatriarchy, the state, and white supremacy is the need for anti-authoritarian movements within settler nations to challenge "the very foundation of the nation-state

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and its relationship to the land and Indigenous nations" (Simpson 2011:87). Walter Mignolo (2011) suggests that instead of seeking to adapt or appropriate Indigenous systems of governance, radical left movements would be better off seeing them as concurrent projects that require building relationships of solidarity through the negotiation of conflicts, contradictions, and I would add consent. These projects cannot be subsumed under the abstract universal ideal of reclaiming the "global commons", but instead must recognize the particular and distinct place-based relationships that are asserted through struggles for Indigenous sovereignty and resurgence.

Even some of the most promising radical movements and scholars in Canada and the United States fail to escape the logics of settler colonialism when they try to adapt or borrow from Indigenous ways of being. For instance, the concept of the frontier has gained significant traction within academic and activist literature on the history of radical democracy and the commons in North America. David Graeber (2013), in his post-Occupy book, *The Democracy Project: A History, A Crisis, A Movement,* highlights frontier societies as spaces that inspired people to experiment and practice radical forms of direct democracy. Graeber (2013) argues, "Frontier communities might not have been as densely populated as pirate ships, or in an immediate need of constant cooperation, but they were spaces of intercultural improvisation, and, like the pirate ships largely outside the purview of any states" (179). For Graeber, what is most notable about this intercultural improvisation is that through the entanglements of settler and Native populations in frontier societies, settlers began to adopt Indigenous crops, clothes, medicines, customs, and most important to his argument - a radical democratic egalitarianism. Graeber is not alone in this endeavour, as a number of anti-authoritarian

scholars have made the link between societies on the frontier of colonial projects (i.e. pirate ships, maroon villages, wild west, mountain regions) and the practice of radical forms of egalitarianism, pluralism, and democracy among Indigenous peoples (see Linebaugh and Rediker 2000; Scott 2009; Linebaugh 2014).

In Graeber's account, the recuperation of relationships of solidarity and mutuality between Indigenous peoples, Black people, non-Indigenous, and settler communities is at the core of reclaiming radical forms of democracy in North American social movements. While it is possible to have appreciation for many of these bottom-up democratic struggles within frontier societies and to take important lessons from them, this historical interpretation of intercultural sharing between Indigenous and settler communities within frontier society is nonetheless problematic as it elides the process by which poor white settlers engaged in dispossession and appropriation as part of their movements to establish radical democratic practice within the settler polity. Allan Greer (2013) in his important historical analysis on the differences between Indigenous and settler commons explains that when settlers proclaimed Indigenous crops, deer, fish, timber, and customs as open to all, they also fiercely protected their own commons from Indian incursions (including their livestock and territories). Greer notes, "Beyond the limited clearings that were occupied and farmed by the English, they were asserting control over a larger zone that would correspond to the 'wasteland' of rural Europe. Indians were allowed to live here and to support themselves as best they could, but the rules governing access to resources would be those of the colonists" (382). As the frontier circulates within the foundational myths of North American democracy, Jodi A. Byrd (2014) contends that it has also, "created a lasting logic through which the USA both imagines and critiques

itself." (151). Similarly, radical left projects of democracy remain stuck in what Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg author and activist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson calls "the cognitive box of imperialism." Simpson (2011) suggests that social movements need to "remove our colonial blinders and at least see the potential for radically different ways of existence" (148). In order to do so, we need to be able to differentiate between appropriation and mutual self-determination.

This topic was at the forefront of my discussion with Samir Shaheen-Hussain, a co-founder of the Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement (IPSM) in Montréal. Discussing some of the mentorship and guidance he received from Kanien'kehá:ka activists Shawn Brant and Ellen Gabriel, Samir was careful to explain the important distinction between settler appropriations and mutual self-determination when reflecting upon anti-authoritarian practices of decolonization, noting:

> [Ellen Gabriel and Shawn Brant] brought up the notion that decolonization is basically the process of mutual self-determination between "two peoples" in which the state is essentially taken out of the equation. So it is developing those relationships with communities and people without the interference of the state and by recognizing that people have their own drives and interests and whatnot and how we can rearrange our relationships to try to aim for that while also recognizing that there is a history of colonization that's taken place. That we need to be accountable to that.

For Samir, understanding the history of colonization in developing relationships of mutual self-determination with Indigenous communities in struggle was required in both the analysis and practice of IPSM. In practice, this often meant struggling with what it means to negotiate consent to share territories and exchange teachings with Indigenous communities. This type of political practice differs noticeably from the casual borrowing of Indigenous systems of governance and the erasure of territorial appropriation that is

prevalent within movements to reclaim the commons. Most importantly it is based on ongoing dialogues that seek to address important contradictions in strategy, tactics, or desires between predominantly urban-based movements and both urban and land-based Indigenous communities.

In failing to develop relationships of solidarity with Indigenous communities, many anti-authoritarian movements seeking to engage in radically democratic relationships outside of state and capitalist logics may, in fact, be re-enacting some of the very behaviours that are foundational to the settler state. Robyn Heaslip, a white settler who was involved with Occupy Vancouver, explained that while a lot of the work that went into developing alternatives to the capitalist system within the camps (i.e. experimentation with gift economies, decentralized decision-making, and communities of care), it was vital to develop and maintain relationships with those nations on whose territories the camps were taking place. Robyn explains:

> I was really focused mainly on [developing] an Indigenous solidarity community [in Occupy Vancouver] - creating and bringing in some language around decolonizing and what it means to occupy already occupied land and that whole narrative that went on. But a lot of all the other work that went on there around gift economy kind of thinking: how can we renew practices of meeting each other's various needs and supporting each other's physical and emotional needs in a sense that is really creating a self-sufficiency, that is also radical because it's so hard to do in the capitalist structure [...] And integrating that into the kind of governance practices and decision-making that Occupy was attempting to experiment with and whatnot too was a really important part of relating to [Indigenous] resurgence too.

In this example, Robyn refers to the importance of negotiating relationships of consent with Indigenous communities in struggle by pushing to centralize Indigenous solidarity as a core part of community building in Occupy Vancouver. In doing so, they sought to develop relationships that could support ongoing Indigenous struggles in the community

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and attempt to address contradictions that might arise, such as the potential to displace poor, homeless, and marginalized Indigenous peoples from the spaces that were chosen as sites to occupy.

At the beginning of the chapter, I introduced Caffentzis' definition of the commons as a public space that exists outside of state control and is opened by those who live on it and share it according to their own rules. While useful as a definition, it fails to acknowledge the responsibilities inherent in trying to establish a commons within a settler colonial context. To do so requires that we "redefine the epistemological underpinning through which the colonial world order is conceived (Grande 2013:376). This redefinition of our epistemological understandings must be forged in action, through relationships of solidarity at blockades and reclamation sites, marches and round dances, fundraisers and petitions – but they must be done with an understanding that our desires for the commons are multiplicitous and at times contradictory. Nonetheless, we can learn greatly how Indigenous peoples understand and assert sovereignty through, "the repetition of political and economic and social and spiritual and expressive activities" (kulchyski 2013:70). The final section of this chapter will highlight some of the ways that organizers within the anti-authoritarian current have re-imagined what a struggle for the commons might look like in a decolonial context. This section focuses specifically on the decolonial commons as a practice, as a place, and as a relationship.

The Decolonial Commons and the End of Settler Futurity

In her response to Occupy Wall Street's provocative question, "What is our one demand?" Sandy Grande (2013:377) asserts that activists should abandon occupation as a guiding principle and take up decolonization as a practice. Similarly, the struggle to

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reclaim the commons should also give way to a process of decolonization that transforms settler relationships with the land, Indigenous peoples, and with each other. As Harsha Walia (2013) points out, this does not mean that we need to start from scratch, since "as a prefiguring framework, decolonization grounds us in an understanding that we have already inherited generations of evolving wisdom about living freely and communally while stewarding the Earth from anticolonial commoning practices, anticapitalist workers' cooperatives, antioppressive communities of care, and in particular matriarchal Indigenous traditions" (11). To do so within our current settler colonial context, however, we must re-imagine the commons not as territorial reappropriations, but instead as decolonial practices, places, and relationships forged in a way that does not seek to perpetuate settler futurity through a post-settler polity, but rather to affirm Indigenous futurities and the possibility that all those who live upon and share these territories can engage in non-dominating and nonexploitative relationships. This process is not easy and as we have seen in the previous section, it is rife with real and potential conflicts and contradictions. Nonetheless, a growing number of organizers within the anti-authoritarian current are making genuine attempts to practice decolonial ways of being. Drawing from the experiences of activists within the antiauthoritarian current of migrant justice, queer/trans*, environmental justice, and anti-gentrification struggles this final section seeks to highlight glimpses of this process in action.

The Decolonial Commons as a Practice

One of the most useful and insightful theoretical assertions to emerge from within contemporary struggles to reclaim the commons is the acknowledgement that the commons is not simply a piece of property or a resource, but a practice (Linebaugh 2014;

Federici 2010). Through the practice of commoning we nurture relationships of mutuality with fellow commoners and develop the frameworks for new ways of organizing society (Sharma and Wright 2009). However, the practice of commoning is not inherently liberatory within a settler colonial context. As Jaggi Singh, a member of No One Is Illegal-Montréal explains in Walia's (2013) book *Undoing Border Imperialism*, "settlement is as much an ideology as a practice, and the only way to escape complicity with settlement is active opposition to it" (Walia 2013:129). What makes decolonization so important to the practice of commoning is that it requires those seeking to forge relationships of mutuality to do so while simultaneously opposing the practices of settlement and colonialism. This is true for settlers, arrivants, and Indigenous peoples and requires not only that we challenge colonial understandings of space based in regimes of property, but also that we challenge colonial understandings of time based in modernist teleology. Challenging colonial practices of settlement, claiming, and erasure have always been central to Indigenous struggles for decolonization, but they are also critical to non-Indigenous movements seeking to re-imagine our relationships to the territories on which we live.

Hannah Lewis, an environmental justice activist working at the UBC farm in Vancouver, discussed the challenges that she faces as a settler in forging decolonial relationships with Indigenous peoples and with the land. In particular, Hannah discussed her difficulties in trying to resist reproducing the practices of settlement in the program she coordinates by forgetting to make time and space for Indigenous spiritual and cultural practices. She explains:

> I know a lot of the dreaming and visioning of our participants is around
> ceremony and spirituality in the garden space and for me personally

that's been something that I've struggled with around my own Western worldview. It's so ingrained in me that I often don't think of spirituality or ceremony when I'm planning for things. [I am] the one who often does the outreach and communications and sets up spaces for these events to happen and then the community members lead and take on coordinating the events themselves. But, often in setting up those spaces I forget to make the space or the time or the budgeting for the ceremony and those spiritual aspects. Later I'm reminded of that and recognize what I'm reproducing in that – that's been a real struggle – because as much as I've been learning logically that that's something I should always be including – am I practicing that myself and do I believe in it enough to include it? I do, but it's a hard thing to work out of me and to work into my practice.

In her response, Hannah acknowledges that non-Indigenous people cannot work towards decolonial social change exclusively on a material level, but must also transform our social relations in an affective, spiritual, and embodied way.

Examples of organizers striving towards decolonial changes through affective and spiritual practices exist among individuals and groups across a wide spectrum of struggles but were most readily apparent to me within radical queer and trans* people of colour movements. In her study of the emergent affective social transformation in two-spirit, queer, and trans people of colour (2-QTPOC) radical media collectives, Anabel Khoo (2015) explains how emotional care and reclamation of spiritual practices among radical queers helps "to co-constitute relationships from which movements emerge, fall apart or continue to gradually evolve" (38). While there are some parallels between the affective social transformations being attempted and envisioned within 2-QTPOC movements and the struggles for the commons highlighted by theorists such as Hardt and Negri or Sharma and Wright, their attempts to centre a decolonial framework result in much less homogenizing or flattening of differences and histories. Instead, Khoo (2015) suggests that the social transformations 2-QTPOC movements seek require "a finer

attunement to the parts *between* and *within* each of us; the complexities and contradictions that characterise the relationality so fundamental to growing practices of resistance and survival that are: anti-racist, decolonial, non-patriarchal, queer, and non-able-bodied "(39). By focusing on the workings of affect and desire within transformative social movements, radical queer and trans* people of colour collectives seek to disrupt their emotional attachments to the colonial project and re-constitute their subjectivities outside of the settler colonial state (Jafri 2013).

Rather than attempting to "reclaim" space and "reconstitute" a commons, 2-QTPOC movements seek to facilitate the emergence of affective practices of solidarity through a "recapitulation of history/knowledge/experience formed *with* these paradoxes, rather than *despite* them" (Khoo 2015:39). This process can be destabilizing when some social movement participants refuse to relinquish their emotional attachment to the colonial project or fail to acknowledge and address the contradictions and conflicts of history, positionality, and experience that structure power relations within radical struggles.

In my discussions with Essex Lordes and Li Morales, organizers within queer people of colour struggles in the Bay Area, they highlighted some of the challenges that they faced in trying to resist anti-Black racism and engage in decolonial practices within the Horizontal Alliance for Very Organized Queers (HAVOQ), a multiracial anti-authoritarian queer activist collective. Li expressed frustration with the difficulty that they had in negotiating interpersonal and structural conflicts within the collective. This was particularly acute when they attempted to shift the power dynamics within the collective in material and relational ways. While a number of conflicts based on material

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and relational power dynamics helped to transform their relationships with individual members within the collective, struggles within HAVOQ to identify, discuss, and negotiate conflicts arising from anti-Black racism and settler colonial logics eventually led to a split in the group. Li explains:

> For me this [affective] work has been so beautiful because in the Undoing Borders zine we wrote about this thing called "Fabulosity" [referring to the] ever-expanding circles of responsibility we hold and really trying to grapple with the legacies that we've inherited and how they play out; how power plays out amongst us and amongst people who care for each other. In some ways it's this interesting place for this political work because a lot of the time political work and political activism is supposed to be externally quantifiable and I think that there is also something to be said about taking this analysis and really being in relationship with it. With it's applicability within the group and what that means. It's fucking messy and it's heartbreaking, but it's the political work we are doing right now. We are undoing borders by confronting white supremacy within these activist spaces. It doesn't look like the neo-Nazis, it looks like something completely different, but it is still white supremacy. We are trying to give voice to what that means and trying to get these dynamics addressed and then I don't know what happens after that.

For Li and Essex, a decolonizing radical queer politics needs to be both caring and destabilizing. Rather than striving for a homogenizing practice of commoning, they suggest that what is required is what Tuck and Yang (2012) describe as a "dangerous understandings of uncommonality that un-coalesces coalition politics –moves that may feel unfriendly" (35-36). In other words, the conflict that came about from resistance to anti-Black racism within HAVOQ (among other issues) created the possibility for transforming affective relationships among organizers coming from very different backgrounds, precisely because it was destabilizing. Thus, while some may interpret the intervention as a process that disrupted the work of the group and may ultimately lead to its demise, the assertions of Black liberatory and decolonial politics as critical

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frameworks in which relationships must be negotiated (particularly when done with care) provides an opportunity to imagine possibilities of organizing society that were not apparent prior to this rupture. It is through this same "uncommonality" that we relinquish our desire for settler futurities, recognize our complicity in the process of settlement, commit to supporting struggles for Indigenous decolonization, and attempt to forge new practices of solidarity outside of the settler state. These are made possible only through the relinquishing of our claims to a settler commons.

As Gardner and Giibwanisi (2014) suggest, a decolonial commons forged in practice and through relationships based on respect, friendship, and peace, must bring to the fore the contingency of settler futurity – which makes it a potentially alienating concept for many non-Indigenous people struggling to relinquish their affective affiliations with settler colonial relations. Dylan Cooke, who works with an LGBTQ anti-violence program in the Bay Area, explained how the power relations of settler colonialism are pervasive within struggles to create radical queer spaces. Dylan focused on the tendency of activist groups to critique these power relations at the level of state structures but to elide complicity in these processes within their own radical organizing spaces, noting:

> I don't know. I feel like it's so tricky because there is so many different ways of having power, especially when you look at the politics of decolonization. Power is the ability of the hegemonic majority to re-write history or the power to choose to ignore Native American struggles and I feel like that power is being constantly used, not only in mainstream circles, but within our activist circles. There's the power of the majority of white organizers to choose to not engage in local Native American struggles and then there's the power when people decide to engage in those struggles and when they decide that shit's important.

Dylan suggests that settler colonial power relations can only shift or be subverted if we

are aligning our movements to make Indigenous struggles for decolonization foundational to our practices. This means shifting not only the way that we interact with each other, but also challenging our relationship to land, to space, and to the borders and boundaries that maintain the settler state and settler society.

The Decolonial Commons as a Place

In an important intervention into the differences between Indigenous blockades and occupations as an assertion of sovereignty and the proliferation of the tactic by non-Indigenous people within the Occupy movement, Adam J. Barker (2013) explains that for Indigenous peoples land is not being occupied but reclaimed. Barker (2013) notes, "At issue is not just ownership or control, but rather ways of being on and with the land. The goal is not to reform imposed systems such that Indigenous peoples can equally benefit from them, but rather to fundamentally decolonize power and place through a transformation of how people relate to and in place" (331). This is a critical distinction if we are to re-imagine the commons through a decolonial lens. The transformation of how people relate to and in place has been a core question for activists within migrant justice and anti-gentrification struggles in urban centres. In particular, organizers in these movements must identify and negotiate the contradictions inherent in their struggle to claim access to space and the right to the city with the land and sovereignty claims of urban Indigenous peoples (Coulthard 2014).

Li Morales, a queer organizer within migrant justice and anti-gentrification struggles in the Bay Area, discussed how movements cannot avoid the realities of colonialism that dispossess people of their territories and displaces people from their

homes. Li argues:

> It's really hard to talk about gentrification without *a priori* understanding empire, colonialism, and illegal occupation. Like, you got the same history that I did, right? Everything was taken through theft and broken treaties. People are still here and what would [decolonial movements] look like? Sometimes it feels all encompassing. It's hard for a lot of people to think that through, it makes it easier for me because I have status while other people who are immigrants/neo-settlers are trying to get a social security number and trying to cross the desert.

In this response, Li alludes to the importance of understanding the interconnections between displacement, migration, gentrification, and the ongoing violence of colonial dispossession. Making those links clear not only in the political analysis of activist groups, but in the strategies, tactics, and relationships they build has been important in developing relationships of solidarity with Indigenous struggles for justice and self-determination.

Harjap Grewal, an organizer with No One Is Illegal-Vancouver Coast Salish Territories, explains that such an endeavour should transform not only our relationships with Indigenous peoples but also with the territories on which we live. He notes, "Our struggles for migrant justice cannot be limited to gaining access to nation-states or property. Migrants' relationships to the land needs to be rooted in stewardship of the land rather than colonial and capitalist ideas of landownership" (Walia 2013:240). This orientation moves away from the decidedly anthropocentric politics that dominate most contemporary struggles for the commons. As Bang et al. (2014) articulate, this anthropocentrism "privileges settler colonial relationships to land...[and constructs] land as an inconsequential or inanimate material backdrop for human privileged activity and enables human dislocation from land" (44). As discussed in the previous chapter, groups

like No One Is Illegal have become conscious of the need to not only challenge the border as a racist mechanism meant to sustain a system of exploiting migrant labour, but also as practice of dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their relationships to land. Simultaneously, these very groups must find ways to avoid making indigeneity "a cipher for the global hegemonies of borderless subjects [that] positions Native peoples in the past so that settlers can inherit a globalized world in which settler colonialism remains naturalized" (Morgensen 2011:161). This is not an easy task given the conditions of displacement, exclusion, and precarity that structure struggles for migrant justice.

Drawing from the work of Toronto-based novelist Dionne Brand, Leah Girardo, an anarchist settler activist, explains, "All of these people are so tired of the land shifting beneath their feet that they can't think about the fact that they are also in a place that is contested and in a place that's not theirs. I feel like that's how I think about it actually." A major part of the decolonizing work of groups like No One Is Illegal is to help develop spaces where these contradictions can be discussed and worked on in tangible ways. Syed Hussan, a member of No One Is Illegal-Toronto explains:

> So, what we do, as people who are despondent about the kind of world we live in, but aren't completely able to step out – we can't just step out of capitalism and colonization and civilization – so we create these spaces. They might be political spaces, they might be communal spaces, they might be spaces for art or whatever, and in those spaces we practice. And we often fail, but we keep trying. And the hope is that these many different ways of being (because there isn't just one way of being anti-homophobic or anti-patriarchal or anti-capitalist or anti-colonial or anti-racist, right?) these different practices that are emerging and all these different sub-sub sections of people will eventually, as they do, speak to each other. And perhaps expand that and include more people to create the many kinds of worlds we want to live in.

In forging these spaces, activists within the anti-authoritarian current of the migrant justice movement are seeking to move away from what Glen Coulthard warns is an

anchoring of struggles "against the neoliberal city's further enclosures to a decontextualized and ahistorical notion of 'the commons' that threatens to inadvertently treat settler colonial cities as urbs nullius: urban space void of Indigenous sovereign presence" (Coulthard 2014:12). In their acknowledgement of the foundational nature of settler colonialism in structuring all struggles for space within settler states like Canada and the United States, radical migrant justice organizers are tasked with not only seeking to create movements that assert the right to "move, stay, and return", they must also be open to working towards developing new non-exploitative relationships with the land and with those Indigenous communities who have stewarded those relationships.

The Decolonial Commons as a Relationship

When I spoke with Fred Burrill, a white housing justice organizer in Montréal, he discussed how the process of gentrification disconnects us from each other and the places we live. Fred pondered what effects this has on the relationships that settler populations forge with each other and with Indigenous peoples and the territories on which they live, noting:

> It's a bit touchy to talk about questions of land and territory amongst settler populations, but I think one effect of gentrification on the way we organize and the way that we build relationships is that we are not very geographically stable...We don't have the sense of community that necessarily comes from being in the same place and being able to support each other in that way and that in my mind is a clear way that we need to go in order to build transformative relationships and to not have relationships in our political work that are fundamentally business-like.

For Fred, the intense combination of state austerity policies and urban inner-city gentrification destabilizes non-Indigenous peoples' connection to place, while continuing

the settler colonial project of extermination of Indigenous peoples within urban centres. Indigenous peoples, Black people, queer/trans* people, and migrant populations are most directly affected by cuts to the shelter systems, racial profiling by police, and the displacement of homeless or precariously housed people from the downtown core. For Fred and other activists seeking to resist gentrification and austerity through a decolonial lens, their struggles must avoid trying to recuperate or reform the settler state. Instead they see the need to link these struggles to broader resistance against Indigenous dispossession due to resource extraction. This requires that we build autonomous and deep relationships of solidarity across difference, what scholar Ruben Gaztambide-Fernández terms "relational solidarity". For Gaztambide-Fernández (2012) relational solidarity means that "individual subjects do not *enter* into relationships, but rather subjects are *made* in and through relationships" (52). Negotiating this form of solidarity requires that we recognize the complex and contradictory histories that bring us together in our commitments to forging decolonial relationships that dismantle settler futurity in order to re-imagine collective responsibility and mutual accountability between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Sharma and Wright (2009) assert that decolonizing relationships have proven to be more difficult than decolonizing territories because national liberation movements have produced "conscripts of modernity". They suggest that these "conscripts of modernity may continue to imagine that colonialism was/is mainly about 'foreigners' who usurp(ed) the power that rightfully belongs to the 'Native'" (130). In contrast, the activists I interviewed tended to argue that the difficulties they had in forming decolonizing relationships were based on the double-bind of being made by while also

trying to surpass colonized subjectivity. In other words these activists identified that their struggles against capitalism, the state and other structures of oppression always take place within the settler colonial context.

The resistance to gentrification by poor and working class communities always takes place atop the prior and continuing history of Indigenous resistance to dispossession of their territories; the struggle against racist immigration and border policies must always contend with the *a priori* imposition of colonial borders on autonomous Indigenous nations; the assertions of queer and trans* sexualities against heteropatriarchy must always contend with the underlying suppression of Indigenous gender and sexual identities by the settler state and settler society; and the desire to save and protect the natural environment must always recognize the long-standing relationships that Indigenous peoples hold with the land. This double-bind of being made by but also trying to surpass colonized subjectivity means that any struggle within the settler colonial context will always be tied by the logics of settler colonialism unless activists work to build decolonial relationships that relinquish claims to settler futurity.

Often, organizers within the anti-authoritarian current struggled with slipping back into a politics that seeks to recuperate or reform settlement through the incorporation of Indigenous peoples into the multicultural settler colonial state (Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013). For instance, Nora Butler Burke a white organizer within anti-colonial and trans* movements in Montréal, argued that slippage can take place in struggles against gentrification that do not also challenge settler futurity. Nora notes:

> I can talk about gentrification as an extension or form of colonization. I can think of those things in theoretical ways. Sometimes I feel like I'm reaching though, you know?...That [these struggles] don't feel particularly connected to a process of decolonization, but at the same

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time it comes from those values for me too in terms of understanding where we live and what responsibilities we have to where we live and caring for the place that we live in.

These contradictions have forced non-Indigenous anti-authoritarians to reflect upon the types of relationships they are making with Indigenous peoples and how they are related to the territories on which they live. By relinquishing their claims to a settler futurity, they are not foreclosing "the inhabitation of Indigenous land by non-Indigenous people, but [...] settler colonialism and settler epistemologies" (Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013:80). Through their focus on a relational commons steeped in a process of decolonization, these activists (as imperfectly as these processes are in practice) signal their intent to build movements that centralize the struggles for Indigenous futurities. And as Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) assert, these Indigenous futurities do not "require the erasure of now-settlers in the ways that settler futurity requires of Indigenous peoples" (80). By working to create deep, long-term, and accountable relationships with Indigenous struggles for decolonization and self-determination non-Indigenous people can open up the possibility of sharing in a decolonial future.

Clare Bayard, a white anti-racist organizer with the Catalyst Project, explains that this means moving beyond abstract theory and discussions to the messy work of negotiating those relationships despite the conflicts and contradictions that are bound to ensue. Clare notes:

> I think it is a question of how we can create more avenues to be accountable and to shift the flow of visions, strategies, and priorities to be aligned with those coming out of Native struggles here. The non-Native (particularly majority white side) of that needs to think about some of the concrete ways that we can actually support this, I'm talking about this in a little bit of the deficit of it not happening currently, but clearly there are instances of that happening, but I think it's at a really small scale compared to where it needs to be.

If we are to create a decolonized commons, then we must commit to dismantling the state, heteropatriarchy, capitalism and imperialism by also divesting of the logics of settler colonialism. As Gardner and Giibwanisi (2014) suggest these new societies may "incorporate various degrees of traditional Indigenous governance and may have political forms that are parallel with some strands of communism and anarchism," but they will be forged through relationship building and support for Indigenous reclamations of space that would otherwise "be suffocated by Canadian settler society" (173).

Conclusion

The struggle for the commons should not be seen as simply a battle over control of space, but rather as a renegotiation of our relationships to land and place. Just as the settler commons was incommensurable with Indigenous commons at the onset of colonialism, social movement's today must acknowledge and recognize that the practice of commoning is not inherently liberatory in a settler colonial context. Settler colonialism structures and drives the relationships that non-Indigenous people have to place, even when they are contesting the power of the state and the capitalist elite. Occupy Wall Street, anti-gentrification/anti-eviction struggles, anti-austerity movements, campaigns for the right to the city, the claiming of public space, environmental justice movements can all be framed as movements seeking to reclaim the commons. These movements are vital and promising to the creation of new societies and new ways of being outside of the logics of capitalism and the state. However, as I argue in this chapter, they must understand and respect Indigenous place-based sovereignties as foundational to any struggles for liberation on Turtle Island.

Through an investigation of the history of movements to (re)claim the commons within the settler colonial context, I trace the settler logics of evasion, naturalization, and appropriation evident within today's social movements to some of their origins in early colonial society. I argue that some members of the anti-authoritarian current within today's social movements are seeking to break from these logics by engaging in relationship building with Indigenous communities seeking self-determination. Rather than striving towards a singular "global commons" as suggested by Sharma & Wright (2009), these activists are resisting the homogenizing practices of commoning and are focusing more closely on the incommensurabilities between their political projects and Indigenous struggles for sovereignty and nationhood. They draw on their personal experiences organizing in anti-gentrification, migrant justice, queer/trans*, and Occupy movements, to reflect upon the behaviours, presumptions, and principles of settlement that underlie their political praxis. In doing so, they articulate new political possibilities emerging from their sustained attempts at developing relationships of solidarity and mutual respect with Indigenous peoples engaged in practices of decolonization and resurgence.

The following chapter concludes this dissertation by tracing how participants in the anti-authoritarian current seek to transform their ideas and practices. I suggest that Harney & Moten's (2013) concept of the undercommons could help bridge incommensurabilities between settler and Indigenous communities and support the negotiation of relationships of solidarity and mutuality among all peoples on Turtle Island. This can only take place, however, if we commit to intellectual, material, spiritual, and emotional transformations in their movements and in broader settler society.

CHAPTER SIX
Unsettling Social Movements through Decolonial Relationships

"Decolonization is more than a struggle against power and control; it is also the imagining and generating of alternative institutions and relations. Decolonization is a dual form of resistance that is responsive to dismantling current systems of colonial empire and systemic hierarchies, while also prefiguring societies based on equity, mutual aid, and self-determination."

–   Harsha Walia

A group of roughly one hundred people assemble somberly on a Sunday evening at Victory Square in Vancouver, unceded Coast Salish Territories. A vigil has been called in solidarity with the multiple actions, events, and riots taking place in the United States following the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of Trayvon Martin in Florida. Organizers pass around candles and set up large printed images of the young Black man in front of the war memorial that stands as the focal centre of the park. A number of speakers address the crowd linking Trayvon's murder to the larger structures of white supremacy, anti-Black racism, settler colonialism, and imperialism. They echo the words of the Trayvon Martin Organizing Committee who in their call for solidarity actions assert that justice will not come through the legal system or political and religious leaders but only through the grassroots organizing of communities directly affected by these systems of structural violence (Trayvon Martin Organizing Committee 2013).

The following day, as I interview Ananda Lee Tan, a long-time environmental and racial justice activist on the west coast, the important points brought forward by the speakers at the vigil were in the foreground of my mind. I ask Ananda what it looks like to support the organizing of community-led place-based movements in a committed and long-term way. Exhibiting great patience with the large and convoluted question, Ananda reflects before responding thoughtfully:

> [W]hen you are articulating ideas and desires for the future it is always

> good to reflect on where those ideas originated. In most place-based cultures there's an acknowledgement of a long tradition and history that is very iterative and transformative and while ideas never remain static, they are part of an evolution of a community's culture and identity [...] So my story is not just about my story, it has roots in where my community is, where my place is, where my culture is and the history of my community in relation to that struggle. The principle [of taking leadership from directly affected communities] is really guidance for us to collectivize our activism and is most helpful in building local alliances and also global social alliances. What we've found from multiple movements over the years is that there is a common thread to place-based respect and recognition.

One of the lessons I took from Ananda's response was that place-based struggles are those that are attentive to the multiple histories and relationships that have transformed a particular locale. Ananda also suggests that we must approach these struggles with humility and an openness to learning from the knowledges that come from those place-based relationships rather than seeking to pre-figure a society that assumes the futurity of settlers through (re)appropriations of territories, cultures, and communities.

This way of thinking gets to the heart of what Harney and Moten (2013) refer to as the struggle for "the undercommons." Harney and Moten distinguish the undercommons from the commons by arguing that the latter is a refusal of the process of enclosure while the former resists both enclosure and settlement. It is an acknowledgement of the potentiality and possibility to organize our relationships differently through the resurgence of place-based knowledges and relationships that are suppressed by the logics of colonial modernity. Cherokee scholar Jeff Corntassel defines place-based relationships as approaches to spatial solidarity on particular territories that would entail "the regeneration of Indigenous languages, ceremonial life, living histories, and nationhood" (Snelgrove et al. 2014: 24). The concept of the undercommons is one pathway that could lead to these place-based relationships of spatial solidarity. As

Halberstam (2013) succinctly argues in the forward to Harney and Moten's book *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*, "the undercommons is a space and time which is always here. Our goal – and the 'we' is always the right mode of address here – is not to end the troubles but to end the world that created those particular troubles as the ones that must be opposed" (Halberstam 2013:9). To struggle for the undercommons we must destabilize our intellectual, affective, spiritual, and material commitments to the power relations of white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and settler colonialism. We must also, as Kwagiulth Kwakwaka'wakw activist and scholar Sarah Hunt argues, engage in a fundamental ontological shift as non-Indigenous people. She offers, "How do we come to know that which is rendered outside the knowable world? As I suggest, for non-Indigenous people interested in engaging with Indigenous ontologies, this may involve becoming unhinged, uncomfortable, or stepping beyond the position of 'expert' in order to also be a witness or listener" (Hunt 2013:5). The decolonial process of becoming unhinged in order to learn Indigenous place-based knowledges requires that non-Indigenous anti-authoritarians go beyond the refusal of enclosures and the making of a global commons. In the process of refusing the enclosure of the commons, non-Indigenous anti-authoritarian movements must be equally attentive to the process of refusing settlement. To unsettle anti-authoritarian struggles requires that non-Indigenous people abandon the territorial bounds of colonialism in our liberatory praxis.

Drawing from Harney and Moten, Martineau and Ritskes (2014) suggest that this unsettling must take direction from those Indigenous, Black, and other "fugitive" communities to not only move away from colonialism, but to move away from the

standpoint where colonialism makes sense. They assert that decolonization, in this sense, "is a performance of other worlds, an embodied practice of flight. [...] [I]t is a reorientation toward freedom of movement, against the limits of colonial knowing and sensing. It seeks to limn the margins of land, culture and consciousness for potential exits, for creative spaces of departure and renewal" (iv). This final chapter explores the ways that organizers within the anti-authoritarian current have imagined, practiced, and attempted to live out this simultaneous struggle against enclosure and settlement. The decolonial politics at the heart of this transformation is emergent and much of it is learned and experimented with through trial and error, with errors tending to be much more prevalent than successes. This process is happening both within non-Indigenous movements and as a response to processes of decolonization, assertions of sovereignty, and practices of resurgence being enacted by Indigenous communities.

In this chapter I explore some of the core components, tensions, and debates emerging from the experimentation and practice of a politics of decolonization among organizers within the anti-authoritarian current. Specifically, I discuss the intellectual, affective, spiritual, material, and relational processes of decolonial ways of being that are learned, imagined, and practiced among anti-authoritarian activists and groups within the Canadian and U.S. settler states. This format for the final chapter was inspired by conversations I had with Giibwanisi, a founder of the Oshkimaadziig Unity Camp, who suggested that we should reflect upon activist praxis through the principles of the medicine wheel. Additionally, I draw from Indigenous theory, Black radical thought, queer theory, and other liberatory praxes in this chapter to trace how participants within the anti-authoritarian current confront what Harney and Moten (2013) call "the hard

materiality of the unreal [that] convinces us that we are surrounded, that we must take possession for ourselves, correct ourselves, remain in the emergency, on a permanent footing, settled, determined, protecting nothing but an illusory right to what we do not have, which the settler takes for and as the commons" (18). In so doing, I examine how these movements work within the crevices and fissures of possibility and potentiality emerging out of a decolonial politics grounded in a respect for Indigenous placed-based knowledges and practices.

Unsettling and Decolonizing

What makes decolonial struggles different from other forms of liberatory politics? This is the overarching question that permeates my interviews with anti-authoritarian organizers in the Canadian and U.S. settler states. In chapter one we grapple with decolonization as a fluid and transformative process that structures not only social movement practice, but also methodologies of research. In chapter two we explore some of the historical trajectories that help align anti-authoritarian movements towards a politics of decolonization. In chapter three we investigate what it means to assert decolonization as foundational to liberation in settler states and how one's positionality shifts or changes one's responsibilities to this process. In chapter four we break down how nationalism, sovereignty, and indigeneity are understood within a settler politics of decolonial solidarity. And, in chapter five we challenge the settler colonial logics that underlie the desire to reclaim the commons in order to give way to a process of decolonization that transforms settler relationships with land, Indigenous peoples, and each other. Nonetheless, we have yet to fully explore what this transformative process

might/should/could look like. This chapter seeks to do just that.

In particular, I draw from my interviews with organizers in the anti-authoritarian current to explore the multiple facets of decolonial politics that are transforming the way some activists orient their struggles within settler states. In the first section, I look at how Indigenous knowledges and practices of decolonization are influencing and shifting the political thought and radical imagination of anti-authoritarians activists. I turn in the second section to an analysis of the role of emotional justice and healing in the unsettling of anti-authoritarian movements. The third section examines how the attention to the spiritual and the sacred among some anti-authoritarian activists has opened up new possibilities of collaboration and relationship building with Indigenous peoples. Then, in the fourth section, I consider what this decolonial shift means in terms of developing place-based relationships of solidarity within our material struggles against colonialism, capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and other forms of oppression. As we look at the problems and contradictions inherent in engaging in movements for decolonization within settler states as non-Indigenous people, we are increasingly forced to contend with the importance of understanding our struggles within a relational worldview that focuses not only on material conditions but also on the interconnections we hold with other beings and the land.

Intellectual Decolonization

Perhaps no other part of my interviews with anti-authoritarian organizers evoked as strong and as disparate a reaction as the decolonization of the mind. Almost all of the participants spoke at length about the seriousness and importance of transforming the

ways we think, listen, understand, and learn as part of our radical struggles and yet the discussion of intellectual decolonization was often met with eye rolling and frustration. Many of those that I interviewed quoted at length from the works of Frantz Fanon, Taiaiake Alfred or Amilcar Cabral, all scholars who emphasize the importance of decolonizing the mind, but bristled at the discussion of decolonization focusing on anything outside of the material land-based struggles of Indigenous peoples.

The framing of colonialism by the state and by settler society (including activists on the Left) as being a black mark in Canadian/US history requiring apology and "reconciliation" not only fails to address the structures that maintain settler colonialism in the present, but normalizes them. It also places the responsibility for reconciliation with the federal government, thereby dissolving the autonomy, complicity and accountability of settler society to undertake the actions required to transform our institutional, social, and political relationships in ways that would unhinge and unsettle the foundations of the settler colonial state. As Dene scholar Glen Coulthard (2014) explains, without these commitments to transformation among settler society, "reconciliation will remain a 'pacifying discourse' that functions to assuage settler guilt, on the one hand, and absolve the federal government's responsibility to transform the colonial relationship between Canada and Indigenous nations, on the other" (127). I spoke at length with Judy Rebick, a long-time feminist organizer in Toronto, about the reticence of activists within both the mainstream and radical left to acknowledge the importance of this decolonial transformation and to work towards the changes it would entail. Judy offered important insights as to why this resistance might exist, explaining:

> To be actually open, to really be open to realizing that everything you
> know has to be questioned, that's really hard, especially for people like

us. We're a minority fighting against neoliberalism, for example, or fighting against sexism and patriarchy, you know – you have to be so sure of yourself to be in that fight and for me that's such an important part of my power was being sure of myself, you know? And now all of a sudden, I'm thinking, well you know, I'm not so sure anymore.

While this uncertainty is unsettling, that's precisely the point: *unsettling should be unsettling*. The process of decolonizing our minds is not simply an individual transcendence of racial prejudices and feelings of entitlement, guilt, or shame – it is a collective transformation of the knowledges and worldviews that shape our societies, our interactions with each other, and the way we live on these territories.

Paulette Regan, a white settler scholar discussed what the responsibility of unsettling might entail at a symposium for graduate students in the Indigenous Governance program at the University of Victoria. Regan (2005) explains, "the task before us is to transcend the old colonial roles and imperial mindsets that keep us trapped in a relationship defined by the historical dichotomies of oppressor/oppressed and perpetrator/victim. At the same time, we must create a positive political vision by transforming or re-imagining our relationships, drawing on the principles and practices of old intercultural treaty diplomacy" (5). Getting to the point where we may be able to engage in these transformative relationships, as I discussed in reference to treaty relationships in chapter four, requires not simply acknowledging the colonial power structures that govern our interactions within settler colonial states, but fundamentally changing the way we see the world.

One possible place to start the transformation of our relationships might be to accept the partiality of knowledge. As Sarah Hunt (2013) explains, the relational, fluid and emergent nature of knowledge means that if we try to fix meaning to the decolonial

process, we are always at risk of missing out on the emergent knowledges and lessons that come from engaging in the act of decolonization itself. She argues, "If we accept the alive and ongoing nature of colonial relations, and the lived aspects of Indigeneity as critical to Indigenous ontologies, any attempts to fix Indigenous knowledge can only be partial" (Hunt 2013:5). In this sense, accepting the partiality of knowledge in the process of decolonization is both an acknowledgement of the knowledges and ways of being that have been preserved by Indigenous peoples and other non-Indigenous communities of struggle and an affirmation of the knowledges that are being created in today's struggles against enclosures and settlements.

I felt as though Luam Kidane, a Black queer organizer based in Montréal did a great job explaining how activists within the anti-authoritarian current are embracing the partiality of knowledge as both historic and emergent as part of their attempts to develop a decolonial praxis. Luam notes, "The reason that you are here and the reason that you have these knowledges is because of people's struggles, not just because you picked up a book one day and you read it. All of those knowledges have come from our people's struggles, have come from generations of people trying to centre love, trying to centre accountability in a system that daily destroys that." Without romanticizing the past, we must accept that we have much to learn from our ancestors and the long-standing land and placed-based relationships that Indigenous peoples have maintained in spite of over five hundred years of colonialism and genocide (Walia 2013). However, we must also recognize the important ways in which the process of decolonization itself is transforming what we know, how we know, and what we consider to be important with respect to the societies we are seeking to create.

Like Martineau & Ritskes (2014), anti-authoritarian activists argue that to unsettle our movements requires that we take leadership from Indigenous, Black, queer, and other "fugitive" communities to fundamentally transform our worldviews and our pedagogies. Jacqui Alexander (2005), a queer Black feminist scholar, explains that these pedagogies must be understood in multiple ways:

> As something given, as in handed, revealed; as in breaking through, transgressing, disrupting, displacing, inverting inherited concepts and practices, those psychic, analytic and organizational methodologies we deploy to know what we believe we know so as to make different conversations and solidarities possible; as both epistemic and ontological projects bound to our beingness...(7).

These ontological transformations require that we take the time to listen, learn, and engage with land-based knowledges. In doing so we must move away from theories of decolonization guided by shame and guilt and towards those guided by responsibility, consent, and accountability.

Depending on the city in which people were organizing, the content and form of decolonial education differed significantly. Jody Dodd, a long-time organizer in Philadelphia spoke about the significant lack of knowledge that radicals in that city have about the contemporary struggles of Indigenous peoples in that region. She explained that the severe poverty crisis, heightened anti-Black racism, and queer struggles against violence have made if difficult for organizers in that city to recognize and engage in solidarity with ongoing Lenape and other urban Indigenous struggles for sovereignty. Admittedly, there was also a lack of effort and time put in by these organizers to make those connections. However, Jody felt that shifted following the rise of Idle No More. She recounts, "I think Idle No More captured a lot of people's attention. Like I saw lots of people on Twitter and Facebook talking about it and really excited about it and wanting

to know more about it and really intrigued by what was happening." This newfound interest in Indigenous struggles, however, quickly turned to frustration as non-Indigenous activists in the city began to recognize that they lacked the sort of relationships with Lenape and other Indigenous struggles to effectively build decolonial politics within their movements. Some organizers contemplated whether this was the result of a lack of politicization among Indigenous peoples in the region, while others discussed the successful campaigns of colonial extermination and displacement around Philadelphia that weakened Indigenous political resistance. For instance, Daniel Hunter, a Black anti-racist educator in Philadelphia explains, "Long story short, the Lenni Lenape were pushed out and so most of them, I think their big areas are Oklahoma and I think they live in Ontario is their other big spot. Near as I know there is not a single Lenni Lenape organization in Philadelphia. There are some people who have trace or stronger root ties as Lenni Lenape, but most of them are in New Jersey on the other side of the river." Nonetheless, Daniel as well as most of the other organizers I interviewed in Philadelphia acknowledged that the greatest barrier to building relationships of solidarity with Indigenous communities was that a knowledge of the histories of resistance and the contemporary context of Lenape struggles and other nearby Indigenous nations was relatively sparse, which meant that their movements were susceptible to being entrenched within settler colonial logics.

However, the increased visibility of Indigenous sovereignty struggles through movements like Idle No More have brought about the unmistakable responsibility for non-Indigenous people to understand the importance of decolonial struggles to their own political projects within settler colonial states. Greg Macdougall, a white settler

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Indigenous solidarity activist explains that there is a "need for education (both for ourselves and also the general non-Native population." Macdougall, who is based out of Ottawa, suggests that this education cannot just be left to Native peoples or people of colour to educate settlers, but he also emphasizes that this learning is primarily based on teachings received from Indigenous peoples with whom the group has developed longstanding relationships. It is for that reason that the Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Movement Ottawa (IPSMO), with whom Greg organizes, has prioritized self-education and community-based education with the broader non-Indigenous population in that city. IPSMO sees part of their responsibility in the decolonization process as trying to educate other non-Indigenous people of the histories and contemporary contexts of Indigenous struggles and to make that education turn into actions and the development of sustained and responsible relationships of solidarity with Indigenous communities.

In cities like Winnipeg or Vancouver where there has been greater continuity in the relationships forged between Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists, interview participants spoke about the importance of listening for and learning from Indigenous place-based knowledges. Thor Aikenhead, a white settler organizer with the Friends of Grassy Narrows in Winnipeg explains, "that knowledge comes from being in contact with the land, so landscape as informing how we view ourselves, view the world, and view each other (and our relationships with each other) is part of a decolonization process." Thor also touches upon an important link between developing relationships of solidarity with Indigenous communities in struggle, decolonizing the mind and decolonizing one's relationship to land and place. As Martineau and Ritskes (2014) explain, "Theory removed from the land, removed from practice, and detached from the contexts that give

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it form and content propose a decolonizing strategy that risks metaphorizing its constitutive ground" (ii). In this sense, the move toward seeing place-based knowledge as essential in the unsettling processes of non-Indigenous people requires a commitment to fighting colonization, and a recentering of what Walia (2013) describes as "memories of another way of living" (251). These memories of another way of living transform not only our material relationships to land as something to be conquered, owned and commodified, but also transform the fundamental ways in which we come to understand knowledge, culture, and relationships (King 2013).

Ananda Lee Tan, a long-time organizer in environmental and racial justice movements on the west coast, gave an example of what it means to respect these living memories derived from Indigenous place-based knowledge within radical social movement spaces. He recounts:

> [L]ast week this conference I went to in Wisconsin I had to really insist that we invite local First Nations communities to come and frame, if you will, the meeting and share with us in their welcoming address their histories of resistance and resilience. It was interesting to see, especially the folks who were funding the meeting didn't quite get it, but after the first day a number of them spoke up and said that they kind of understood why it was important to demonstrate a place-based respect. Recognizing that sometimes the smallest communities, the least funded, the least prominent, the least visible, their voices and knowledge-base are special because place-based respect really goes back to the "how do we become what we want to see"; how do we practice in all our organizing (being consistent in our practices in terms of respect and recognition).

What Ananda demonstrates through this example is the important difference between inviting Indigenous peoples to participate in movements in a tokenistic way and attempting to build the foundations of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples that respects and is accountable to the place-based knowledges held

by Indigenous communities (that is, if activists consider engaging with Indigenous peoples and struggles at all).

Sarita Ahooja, a migrant justice organizer in Montréal, emphasized the importance of turning education into action through her own experience working in relationship with Haudenosaunee activists as a member of No One Is Illegal-Montréal. She explains:

> Obviously in a lot of struggles things start with education and learning and you have to have a certain point where learning has to be active, it has to lead to action. So decolonizing is a process and we still don't know where it's going to go yet, but we hope it will go to certain ideals that we have where there is justice for all the peoples on this land, that Natives have the ability to take their land, to use their land the way they want; that there is a respect between those that have settled the land, the foreign settlers, and the Natives.

Some of the actions that Sarita and other interview participants discussed as part of this process include developing long-term and reliable relationships with Indigenous struggles (both land-based and urban); financial and logistical support for movements like No More Silence, Defenders of the Land, Idle No More, and the multiple blockades and reclamations taking place across Turtle Island; the important work of engaging with non-Indigenous communities around issues of racism; settler evasions, naturalizations and appropriations; and understanding that our responsibilities to decolonization change depending on our positionality. As Smith (2014) contends, "for this process to work, individual transformation must occur concurrently with social and political transformation. That is, undoing privilege occurs not by individuals confessing their privilege or trying to think themselves into a new subject position but through the creation of collective structures that dismantle the systems that enable these privileges" (217). Similarly, anti-authoritarian activists have a responsibility to move beyond

acknowledging the settler colonial context toward incorporating and integrating decolonial knowledges into all of their strategies, tactics, and campaigns (even those that on the surface do not seem to relate to Indigenous sovereignty).

It also means, as Walia (2013) duly notes, that "meaningful support of Indigenous struggles should not be imposed or directed by non-natives; non-natives must learn to take leadership from Indigenous communities" (253). This is a critical lesson to learn because often organizers within the anti-authoritarian current reproduce settler colonial logics that erase or delegitimize Indigenous relationships with land/territories because they are invested in a Western worldview and seek to assert this worldview (either consciously or unconsciously) in their relationships with Indigenous communities (Amadahy 2013). As Clare Bayard, a white anti-racist educator in San Francisco, asserts, "We have clearly internalized so much toxic shit that we can't figure out how to relate to the planet that we are living on and all the other people and things living on it with us. Really, I just want to get away from this false binary that it's like either material conditions or moral/spiritual motivation." Clare brings forward an important point when we consider what it means to learn from Indigenous place-based knowledges, explaining that much of her own learning has come through emotional and spiritual transformation rather than simply gaining a greater understanding of the history and context of settler colonialism. Nonetheless, Clare explains that breaking away from the binary between intellectual and emotional/spiritual learning can be a source of anxiety and vulnerability for those motivated to engage in respectful and reciprocal relationships of solidarity with Indigenous peoples. This is particularly true because non-Indigenous people must often confront feelings of shame, guilt, and complicity for their own perpetuation of settler

colonial logics.

When I spoke to Dixie Pauline, a white settler who has spent a lot of time organizing in solidarity with Western Shoshone, Dine, Hopi, and Chochenyo Ohlone communities, she spoke about the long and difficult struggle she had with shifting away from organizing out of feelings of guilt. These feelings of guilt often led to her trying to differentiate herself from other white settlers or denouncing and shaming other activists who she perceived as being trapped within settler colonial logics. Dixie explains:

> In my own personal work I used to have a lot of shame and guilt and that was how I used to operate by telling people what not to do and yelling at them and making them feel bad...But [decolonization] has really become an unfolding process [for me]. It's really about love; it's all a labour of love. I really think that part of the liberation struggles of anti-colonialism is having each others' backs and I think that part of my responsibility is to work with other white folks especially.

What I take from Dixie's response is that part of the transformative potential of decolonization is that we can learn to transform not only what we know but also how we relate to each other. Dixie suggests that learning about her responsibilities to the land, to Indigenous peoples, and to other white settlers and the different actions those responsibilities required led her to developing principles of accountability and consent that she tries to share with other non-Indigenous activists. For Dixie, moving away from cycles of shame toward a politics of responsibility and accountability were crucial parts of developing her decolonial knowledge.

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2011) explains that cycles of shame are not just individual, but are perpetuated and maintained within the Western theoretical constructions of 'resistance,' 'mobilization' and 'social movements' more broadly and have a deleterious impact on Indigenous decolonization, sovereignty, and resurgence as

well. While decolonizing for non-Indigenous people begins with an acknowledgement that "we are all, in some way, beneficiaries of the illegal settlement of Indigenous lands and unjust appropriation of Indigenous jurisdiction" (Walia 2013:251), it is equally important to learn from the place-based philosophies and strategies of mobilization that influence Indigenous processes of resurgence and cultural regeneration. Wallace et al. (2010) pertinently ask how non-Indigenous people can "transform our own cultural communities' world views, a paradigm consciously and unconsciously rooted in a history of colonialism, structural violence, and systemic racism?" (92). If we are working from a framework of responsibility and accountability then decolonization requires that we learn collectively and challenge each other in our complicities with settler colonial logics.

Sharrae Lyon, a Black Ottawa-based artist and activist, explains that being open to the decolonial knowledge that Indigenous people offer can be both destabilizing and nourishing. She argues that non-Indigenous organizers must be willing to set aside their desires to claim place if they are to work towards imagining what belonging might look like in a decolonial future. Sharrae explains:

> So now that I am here in Canada and I've struggled with this, it's like, ok, I don't know what it is to live in Jamaica. I don't know what it was to live in Africa or India. I'm here now on Turtle Island where there is so much knowledge that is floating around and so many people that hold this knowledge and are trying to relive that knowledge. They are also trying to share that knowledge and I need to be open so that I can learn some of that and connect to some extent to land-based relationships – a reconnection to the land.

Being open to the knowledges shared by Indigenous peoples and self-educating about specific histories of the land on which we reside with the consent and guidance of Indigenous nations and groups should fundamentally shift our worldviews and open the possibilities for organizers within the anti-authoritarian current to contribute material

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solidarity and build long-term relationships of trust and accountability with Indigenous struggles for decolonization (Walia 2013). In doing so, activists must be careful not to simply appropriate Indigenous wisdom without being accountable to the communities who have shared this knowledge as Sharrae Lyon suggested above. This lack of accountability remains prevalent despite the best intentions of social movement participants. Jodi A. Byrd (2011) discusses this lack of accountability with specific reference to Hopi struggles, arguing that engagement in Indigenous sovereignty struggles "might radicalize leftists politics without having to make those politics accountable to and actionable for ending the colonization of the Hopi and other American Indian peoples" (31). As such, to even entertain the possibility of learning from Indigenous knowledges requires that our movements engage in ongoing and accountable actions to dismantle the settler state and to disengage from the settler colonial logics that permeate our relationships with Indigenous peoples. In the following sections, I discuss the importance of being attuned to the emotional and spiritual transformations that must accompany collective processes of decolonization.

Emotional Decolonization

As we sat in a small café in downtown Oakland, my conversation with Li Morales and Essex Lordes moved fluidly between the material context of queer, migrant, and Black struggles in which they are active participants and the surreal dreams of intergalactic federations of unicorns and post-apocalyptic worlds imagined through the sci-fi works of Octavia Butler that guide their praxis. We spoke about the violences, hierarchies, contradictions and fragmentations within anti-authoritarian movements and

the intimate desire to heal from the traumas of colonialism, white supremacy, and heteropatriarchy that we recreate in our interpersonal relationships. When I asked about the importance of desiring utopias in the process of decolonization, Essex Lordes was candid in his response:

> It's essential, absolutely, I think people desire something different, but nobody knows what that looks like. It's something that has to be created in concert with many, many people. The challenge is to learn how to have some sort of culture or shared values that aren't structured on hierarchy, domination and violence so that we can actually begin to create something that is sustainable in the world.

While Essex is correct that we may not yet know what these other worlds may look like, he and Li also signal that fragments of these other worlds are woven into the fabric of our day-to-day resistance through our collective imagination. To dream of such things requires that we nurture the politics of emotion as a quintessential part of our struggles. As queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz (2009) explains, the desire for utopia is on some level a part of the politics of emotion and is central to the principles of love and hope that help to guide movements through the exhausting process of daily resistance. However, Muñoz acknowledges (as Li and Essex also made clear in their interview) that love and hope are not the only modalities of emotional recognition that structure our feelings of desire and belonging, "sometimes shame, disgust, hate, and other 'negative' emotions bring people together..." (Muñoz 2009: 97). As was discussed in the previous chapter, the emotional labour required in the process of unsettling means negotiating the tensions between our desires to heal from interpersonal, environmental, historical, and structural traumas and the work necessary to collectively imagine, enact and embody decolonial politics and relationships of decolonial love and belonging (Walia 2013).

But that imagination does not come without the experience of living through all of

these emotions, explains Mostafa Henaway, a migrant justice organizer in Montréal. There is a particular responsibility for people who have been involved and engaged in anti-authoritarian movements for a longer period of time and have experienced and tried to deal with crises and trauma within our movements to actually develop alternative visions of the worlds we want to create instead of being in a consistent place of reaction. Mostafa identifies a tension between the desire to foster the radical imagination and the need to react to immediate crises by paraphrasing a recurrent conflict within our movements, noting that the argument generally goes like: "Oh you're not thinking about the long-term, you're just reacting, reacting, reacting or you're not doing radical movement work, you're building institutions. Building that radical imagination was often seen as outside of what a movements look like. So that fake dichotomy has been a real hindrance." This fake dichotmy of which Mostafa speaks has long roots in Western radical thought that has deprioritized emotional labour, love, and imagination as the powerful social and revolutionary forces that they are (Kelley 2002). For instance, in his articulation of the Black radical imagination, Robin D.G. Kelley argues that love and imagination as political forces are "not replacements for organized protest, for marches and sit-ins, for strikes and slowdowns, for matches and spray paint" (193), but yet they are vital to fostering the societies we wish to create. Kelley insists that revolution must begin with our thoughts, emotions, and imagination in order for us to reconstruct our social and individual relationships.

The process of working towards developing relationships of love, care, and mutual accountability within and outside of anti-authoritarian movements is difficult to negotiate in practice. While the intent might exist within social movement groups, we

often enter into these spaces guided by the logics of domination and emotional violence that permeate our societies. This is particularly relevant when radical groups place emotional accountability on the backburner in their efforts to achieve material political objectives. Essex Lordes explains, "My experience with people [in anti-authoritarian movements] is that they have ideals of what they want and it is based on the thought of themselves as good people, but their desire goes in another direction where they have these political goals that they want to achieve and that leads them to reproducing what the state does. I think that's most people, like that's me." What Essex brings up is an important consideration about how the power structures of white supremacy, settler colonialism, heteropatriarchy, ableism (among others) organize our relationships with each other and condition the ways that we react to situations and treat each other, including within anti-authoritarian spaces. It is often very difficult to recognize that these behaviours are taking place and to take the necessary steps to change them.

For instance, Robyn Heaslip, a white settler who works in support of Sto:lo nation, explained that even though she has spent a great deal of time developing personal relationships and friendships with Sto:lo peoples seeking to assert their self-determination, sometimes the harsh reality of the structures of settler colonialism comes to the surface. She explains:

> We've managed to develop this beautiful relationship in spite of this colonial history and baggage – and then it kind of just interjects itself, you know? And I feel redefined as the settler and they feel redefined as the Native person and we are no longer defining who we want to be in relation to each other. And it's fluid, I'm not saying that it suddenly stays like that, but those are real moments of sadness, anger, and frustration. It feels like a lack of freedom to be who we want to be in relation to each other. So that's a big motivation and it kind of comes from the oppressor/oppressed dynamic; we are both confined and controlled by that dynamic. Of course the experience of day-to-day

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oppression is severely weighted on Indigenous folks, but the day-to-day experience (and many settlers aren't even aware of it) of feeling confined by that identity and dynamic (which is really set up external to you) is heartbreaking. I feel very emotionally driven by the desire to break down that dynamic and no longer feel confined by that oppressor/colonizer role.

As Robyn explains, the need to dismantle the structures of oppression that govern our relationships and to deal with the historical and ongoing traumas caused by settler logics of domination is an ongoing consideration among organizers and groups within the anti-authoritarian current who are seeking to take decolonization seriously. As many of the participants in my interviews suggest, engaging in decolonial relationships can only happen if we are able to face the multiple traumas and harms caused not only by the state but by the logics of settler colonialism that permeate the ways that we treat each other.

Given the disparate and diverse histories, social positions, and interpersonal relationships that exist among organizers in the anti-authoritarian current, trauma exists and is reproduced in a number of ways. Lida Shao, an organizer with the Anarchist People of Color movement in New York, explains that what might appear to be an acute traumatic event playing out inside a social movement group, may have roots in long-time intergenerational trauma. As Lida expresses, "those shards of memory somehow play out in all of our interactions." Healing from the longstanding traumas caused by the violent processes of settler colonialism, heteropatriarchy, and white supremacy, requires that we acknowledge and recognize that this pain underlies all of our contemporary interpersonal and social conflict. African-American and Cherokee author-activist Zainab Amadahy explains that intergenerational trauma is so profound that recent scientific research shows that it changes our epigenetics (Amadahy 2013). She suggests that healing from these intergenerational traumas requires, in part, creating communities and spaces based on a

radical relationality and accountability.

One of the ways in which organizers are attempting to do so is by making space for storytelling within social movement spaces. Learning and telling the stories of ongoing resistance by Indigenous peoples, Black people, people of colour, queer and trans* folks, women, disabled people, and other poor and marginalized communities and being open to listening to each other in meaningful ways is critical to dealing with this trauma. As Essex Lordes explains telling these stories can e a powerful way to begin the process of healing, noting: "these real stories that never got told because of whatever x conditions that didn't allow for stories to be told or information to get passed down have very real lineages and cause very real trauma...when I think about the internal work of decolonization, decolonizing your own mind and body and way of relating to people, telling those stories is important." What I think Essex is getting at here is the critical importance of storytelling as a tool to negotiate building relationships with people dealing with a diverse range of traumas, privileges, and positionalities.

Because we are seeking to build mass movements, activists are drawn from a variety of communities and experiences and that reinforces the need for spaces to tell stories, to heal from structural and interpersonal trauma, and to build relationships of trust and care. Sharrae Lyon, a Black artist and activist based in Ottawa, explains "Everyone is experiencing hurt and it's important to heal in your own community, but it's also important to do that across communities." Attempting to engage in processes of inter-community healing from the traumas of settler colonialism is usually spoken about in the language of reconciliation. This can imply a relationship between the state and Indigenous peoples that ignores or minimizes the role of non-Indigenous people to

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acknowledge our complicity and ongoing responsibility to dismantling the structures that maintain these conditions of oppression. Isaac Oommen, a media justice activist in Coast Salish Territories, explains:

> The other big factor that I heard is part of the whole decolonization bit is the idea of healing, which is one that is really new to me. The idea of actually being able to...I mean the word reconciliation gets used a lot, but I've met a few people who really don't like that word and prefer the word healing...just being able to move in a way that addresses the sheer amount of trauma that's happened over the five hundred years of colonization here and extended to the hundreds of years of colonization that have happened elsewhere as well.

For this healing process to take place, as Isaac suggests, it requires that we think seriously about the way we structure our movements and build our communities to ensure that they are not simply reproducing the same traumas. He argues that this means being consistently present and available to support Indigenous anti-colonial actions when invited and in whatever form that they take, but notes that this also means that we have to also have communities and organizations that are equally engaged in the process of healing so that we are not bringing so much of our own sicknesses into relationships of solidarity.

As much as radical social movements seek to "be the change that we want to see in the world," our personal and social relationships are inflicted with the dominant logics of capitalist, heteropatriarchal, white supremacist and settler colonial society. As Chris Dixon (2014) explains, our movements straddle the tensions between attempting to be "against" and "beyond" these structures. Many of us participate in movements as an escape from the conditions that we face in our daily lives and as a means of empowerment towards struggling for real social change. Yet, as Judy Rebick, a long-time feminist activist in Toronto attests, "You have a lot of people running around in our

movements who are very damaged and aren't dealing with whatever it might be that has caused them trauma. They are not dealing with that, they are having their activism instead of that and then the activism becomes destructive, at least in their personal relationships. So I think it's also important that we take care to heal ourselves as we engage in movements." The process of healing that Judy talks about here is not simply a personal responsibility but a collective responsibility that requires a framework of emotional and healing justice.

Harsha Walia, a South Asian author and activist with No One Is Illegal-Vancouver Coast Salish Territories, argues for a framework of healing justice that acknowledges the interdependence of self-and community care. She mindfully explains, "Healing justice is a holistic concept and intentional project that addresses personal, collective, and systemic trauma" (Walia 2013:267). Healing justice is a value system that seeks to acknowledge and work against the ongoing pain and violence created in our communities while simultaneously seeking to create spaces that affirm decolonial relationships. Walia (2013) further elucidates, "Healing justice is a value system of creating and sustaining communities of care that honors both our individual care needs as well as our responsibilities to each other and the Earth. It deconstructs the rigid borders that separate the self from the broader community by recognizing that we are interdependent; self-care requires community care and community care requires self-care" (267). Two important transformation that underlie a politics of healing justice within the anti-authoritarian current are the push to establishes processes for being accountable within and across our communities and interpersonal relationships and the efforts to teach, share, and develop collectively what it means to organize politically

through a practice of decolonial love.

Jaggi Singh, a long-time anarchist and migrant justice organizer with No One Is Illegal-Montréal, articulated a useful summation of what emotional justice might look like within our movements. Speaking in the context of the Montréal Anarchist Book fair that he helps to organize, Jaggi explains:

> Over the last decade [of organizing the anarchist book fair] I see issues as they come up. The idea of support is that you can offer support and receive support. We all have levels of being able to offer and receive based on where we are at in life and we all have vulnerabilities related to so many factors in our lives: personal traumas, family traumas, mental health, health in general. This is what I would call more of a grounded approach to struggle.

The grounded approaches to giving and receiving mental and emotional support Jaggi refers to can often be neglected within social movement organizing. Yoko Akili (2011), an emotional justice educator and activist, explains that the culture of disdain for emotional justice within social movements is often a result of internalized heteropatriarchy within activist circles. Akili notes, "This disdain leads to many things: a dismissal or minimization of our own and other's feelings, a fear of revealing oneself as 'emotional' (instead of as sternly logical) and a culture of 'just suck up your feelings and shrug them off'" (Akili 2011). Jaggi, who acknowledges his own perpetuation of these behaviours at times, explains that the work of emotional justice is often made into a caricature that does not match the reality of the social and revolutionary force that it is. He argues that one caricature is that we are engaged in a process of mass collective counselling and that this process only serves to halt, delay and make movement organizing less effective. After reflecting a moment, Jaggi continues, "But it doesn't mean we're less effective. It makes us more effective because we are all part of the

struggle...There are points in that struggle where it is kind of all or nothing – we're either going to keep this blockade or not, we're going to get our friends out of jail or not, this uprising is going to be crushed or not, but it's understanding that struggle is a long-term process." In that sense, committing to processes of emotional justice within activist groups can be derailed by the dominant culture of a particular group or movement, including: organizing fast-paced short-term oriented campaigns focused on very limited (and often reformist if we are to be honest) goals without consideration of the long-term process we are committed to, and taking on so much work that most of the members of the group are over-capacity and minimize the importance of doing the patient and caring emotional justice work needed because we lack time and energy.

Another issue to consider is that often those organizers with structural privilege can drain the emotional capacity of collectives or coalitions by acting defensively for being called out for oppressive behaviour. In this respect, Akili (2011) points out, emotions are used as a tool for those with privilege to minimize or escape accountability. Daniel Hunter, a Black social movement educator based in Philadelphia, offers an important consideration about what emotional justice should look like in terms of building relationships with Indigenous decolonization movements, noting, "One thing that I just hear over and over and over again from Indigenous people is a desire for other people to own their part in their history. I think that would be great. One way to support resurgence is to do our own part and to identify our own history." For Daniel, owning our history means being open to criticism and critique and humble in our self-assessment of the power that we bring into any social situation. It is also recognizing and being conscious of the trauma that you carry with you. Li Morales, an organizer in queer people

of colour movements in the Bay Area, explains that recognizing your own trauma can be difficult, noting, "That's a wild card and for me. I don't even know what that's going to look like, but it's definitely a lifelong process. It's a central piece of decolonization for me that allows us to open up to more material discussions around settler colonialism and what that looks like in terms of our different positions [within and against] this project." By being more clear of our own positionality within the structures of settler colonialism and being honest about the multiple traumas and privileges that we bring into our relationships, we begin the long process of developing structures of accountability and consent. In this way, we can imagine decolonization as a process of mutual support "that restores life and allows settler, arrivant, and native to apprehend and grieve together the violences of U.S. [and Canadian] empire" (Byrd 2011:229). Rather than a desire to become "Indian" or reduce the guilt of being complicit in settler colonialism, we are called to negotiate an unsettling that allows for the possibility of meaningful connection on these lands – of practicing decolonial love.

Demelza Champagne, an Anishinaabe activist based in New York City, talks about how non-Indigenous people can learn a lot from Native approaches to healing trauma within their communities. She explains, "The idea that healing and ceremony are central to [Anishinaabe] spirituality is something from an Indigenous space that I think activists in New York could maybe understand and learn from. We see a lot of fracturing going on in the community and it can be hard to negotiate relationships when this person is a friend of this person and that kind of thing." Similarly, Anthony Meza-Wilson, a mixed-race organizer on Coast Salish Territories, suggests that given that settler colonialism creates abusive relationships with the land and with Indigenous peoples,

organizers need to do significant emotional work to come to a place where we might be able to begin to dismantle those structures and to heal. Anthony explains, "It's something that takes many, many, many years – hundreds of years; thousands of years; generations of history to develop that relationship the right way and we are so not in that right now. We are fucking off the rails and out of touch with the land. And the land is where we come from...People feel that, people feel that for sure, whether they know it or not – that desire." The desire that Anthony refers to might best be explained as the desire for decolonial love.

In my interview with Nora Butler Burke, a settler organizer within trans* and anti-colonial movements in Montréal, we discussed some of the conditions necessary to build relationships that are accountable to processes of Indigenous decolonization. Nora spoke to me about the author Junot Díaz's concept of decolonial love. Díaz defines this type of love as learning how to "love one's broken-by-the coloniality of power self through holding the hand and walking with another broken-by-the-coloniality-of-power person" (Moya 2012). This was a theme that resonated with my interview participants as we discussed what emotional decolonization might look like in terms of developing relationships of interdependence. Luam Kidane, a Black queer organizer based in Montréal, rooted her desire for revolution in non-hierarchical love, noting, "I think that affects everything about my life. It affects the way that I am with lovers and partners, it affects the way that I am with friends, it affects the way that I am with people on the street." Similarly, Recollet (2015) in her study of Indigenous urban flash mobs and art interventions suggests that these actions illustrate the way in which a radical pedagogy of decolonial love is practiced as a means to develop relationships of solidarity and

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resistance. Referencing the work of Gaztambide-Fernández, Recollet (2015) argues that "radical decolonial love is spatial and generative, made manifest in the glyph-making strategies of 'creative solidarity'" (130). As a form of Indigenous love, it critiques the settler colonial condition and produces a self-reflexive space that challenges love as a space of permanence and as strategy of containment. Recollet (2015) suggests that rather than being permanent or contained, decolonial love is fluid and constantly negotiated through processes of solidarity, accountability, and mutuality that is aware of its ruptures and impermanence.

Decolonial love bridges the mental, material, emotional, and spiritual through the practice of relationality and reciprocity. It is an invitation to shift and transform our affective and spiritual relationships on these territories. Through the explorations of emotional justice and decolonial love non-Indigenous organizers have also begun to acknowledge the importance of spirituality in engaging in decolonial relationships. The following section grapples with some of the key tensions and barriers that organizers in the anti-authoritarian current face in trying to re-imagine and reclaim spirituality within radical struggles for liberation.

Spiritual Decolonization

In recent years there has been significant discussion among organizers in the anti-authoritarian current on the role that the radical imagination plays in revolutionary struggle (see Graeber 2009; Reinsborough 2010; Khasnabish and Haiven 2012). While there are multiple and divergent interpretations of what "the radical imagination" actually is, broadly speaking activists and scholars who use the term talk about it as, "the ability to

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envision and work toward better futures based on an analysis of the root causes of social problems" (Khasnabish and Haiven 2012:410). David Graeber (2009) devotes an entire chapter of his ethnography on direct action within anti-authoritarian movements to the role of the imagination. He traces the concept of the imagination through Western thought and differentiates between transcendent and immanent imagination by explaining that the former is what we tend to understand as "the realm of the make-believe" and the latter as being the zone of passage between reality and reason. It is the immanent imagination that Graeber describes as being at the heart of the radical imagination. He argues, "one must be able to imagine oneself and others as integrated subjects in order to be able to produce beings that are in fact endlessly multiple; imagine some sort of coherent, bounded 'society' in order to produce the chaotic, open-ended network of social relations that actually exists" (526). If we try to understand the transcendent and immanent imagination through a decolonial lens we see that both of these concepts remain clearly within the confines of Western logics. While transcendent imagination has the potential to move outside of the realm of the "real" and into the realm of the "magical," both concepts see imagination as a process that is primarily driven by anthropocentric mental reasoning.

Not coincidentally, these are the same functions of the imagination that allow settlers to imagine Turtle Island as *terra nullius*, "a land empty of civilization, culture, law, governance, and empty of people worthy of respect" (Alfred 2010:5). The intellectual trick of the Western imagination that turned land into property through the processes of commodification, dispossession, and settlement was justified by the settler state and settler society (Coulthard 2010). Discussions of the radical imagination among

non-Indigenous organizers within the anti-authoritarian current tend to consistently take place within the bounds of a Western worldview, though there are some notable exceptions, particularly within Black liberation thought (see Kelley 2002; Alexander 2005 as examples). Haudenosaunee scholars Sheridan and Longboat (2006) differentiate between the way in which settlers and Indigenous peoples conceptualize the imagination by explaining that a Western worldview sees imagination as inherently tied to the mind and an Indigenous worldview understands imagination as being produced through the interconnections between human beings, the land, and all other beings. They argue, "Imagination is understood to be a quality of mind in settler culture...[But for Haudenosaunee people] spiritual and intellectual integrity is achieved on Turtle Island by the interplay of human and more-than-human consciousness. The experience of imagination is minding all things" (Sheridan and Longboat 2006: 365). Imagination in this context is no longer simply a mental projection of the types of societies that we wish to create, but a sacred relationship attuned to reciprocal responsibilities where the "more-than-human" grants qualities of mind to the human (Sheridan and Longboat 2006).

For many Indigenous scholars, this sacred relationship has been disrupted or distorted by the process of settlement. For instance, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz (2014) argues that this worldview is directly tied to the commodification and theft of land that underlies the settler colonial project noting, "Once in the hands of settlers, the land itself was no longer sacred, as it had been for the Indigenous. Rather, it was private property, a commodity to be acquired and sold – every man a possible king, or at least wealthy" (55). In turn, this sacred and relational way of understanding imagination was dismissed by settlers (particularly white settlers regardless of their political beliefs) as being

"primitive" and fanciful.

The dismissal of Indigenous spirituality continues among large sections of the mainstream and radical left to this day, although a greater number of non-Indigenous activists within the anti-authoritarian current are now more attuned to the importance of understanding the relationship between the sacred and the imaginary. Judy Rebick, a long-time feminist activist based in Toronto, explains how participating in Idle No More events fundamentally changed her perspective on this. She explains, "I think when we work with Aboriginal people we think 'spiritual, they're into that'. We'll just sit and wait while they have their ceremonies, you know, so as to be polite. Not thinking that maybe we have something to learn from this about what humans are and the importance of connection to the Earth, to the creatures, to each other. And that it's not about intellect or emotion – it's about something else. And I can feel it now." In her reflections on Idle No More, Judy highlights the ways that some activists within the anti-authoritarian current are giving more importance to the spiritual knowledge being shared by Indigenous peoples who are engaged in processes of decolonization and resurgence. However, recognizing the importance of teachings offered by Indigenous peoples who choose to share parts of their spirituality and ceremony with non-Indigenous people does not mean that organizers must fully believe or understand these teachings in order to maintain strong relationships of solidarity, nor does it mean that non-Indigenous people should seek to appropriate or join in all forms of spirituality and ceremony even if they are invited.

There is much debate and uncertainty as to the best way to apply the knowledges that Indigenous peoples share about the sacred ecologies that guide their ways of life on

their territories. Jaggi Singh, a migrant justice organizer with No One Is Illegal-Montréal,
talks about how he observes and learns from these teachings, without necessarily feeling
a strong sense of spirituality himself. He explains:

> Maybe I'm different from a lot of folks, maybe not, maybe I'm cutting
> myself short but I don't have a spiritualized notion of the imagination.
> And when you are undertaking decolonization work and you are
> engaging other people (or even just community organizing) you have to
> understand that a lot of people have a strong spiritual sense of how
> things change. Whether that's through religion or, with Native
> communities, through a spiritual sense of relationships with nature and
> traditional understandings. I don't have that. I don't reject others, but I
> don't bring that to imagination, but I know that also plays into things –
> so I observe that without necessarily feeling it.
>
> For example there was an eagle that flew over the demonstration in
> Ottawa when the Cree marchers had arrived and that was full of
> resonance for folks. People were crying. I didn't have that same
> reaction, but that for me conveys a sense of imagination as well, in a
> spiritual sense, but I can't speak to it because my own personal
> trajectory and my own personal approach isn't that.

While a number of the organizers that I interviewed had similar experiences to Jaggi they
also spoke about the way that engaging with Indigenous spirituality has made them
question their own connections to the sacred and to the land. It is in this context that
activists discussed the importance of the radical imagination in breaking from Western
cosmologies and seeking to recover or re-engage in land-based spiritualities from the
many different cultures in which they have emerged.

Given the way that Indigenous, African, Celtic and other land-based cosmological
systems have been subordinated by the hegemony of Eurocentric Christianity within
settler states, the desire to recuperate or reclaim these spiritual traditions opens the
possibility of negotiating relationships outside the confines of the hierarchies of conquest
(Alexander 2005). Luam Kidane, a Black queer organizer based in Montréal, suggests

that the affirmation of the spiritual and the sacred is as much a pre-figuration as it is a refusal. She explains:

> [T]here's a difference between the religious and honouring the spiritual and sacred. I think there's ways in which the sacred and the spiritual really undermine the static institutionalization of belief that happens in religious paradigms and spaces. I think there's a decolonial practice in acknowledging the different ways that we are all engaged to spirituality and sacred spaces. So for me, I think the ceremony and the ritual that sits behind sacred spaces is extremely important because it's a way to root the movement in understanding why we are here. I think every time that we do ritual and every time that we do ceremony it's a reminder, it's a place for questioning, and it's a place for reformulating why we are here and what it is that we are doing. [...] I think the manifestation of ritual and ceremony being able to be palpable in so many different ways is directly tied to autonomous, non-hierarchical decentralized ways of being. So, I think it's a really important grounding and it's something that was really pushed out of movements because we understood movement organizing as having to be hierarchical, to have to be a direct response to the ways in which white supremacy structures politics and the ways that we understand each other.

As Luam articulates, this spiritual grounding is a re-evaluation of the way in which the sacred ecologies of Indigenous ways of being have been conceptualized within radical left movements. They do so through re-engagement with ritual and ceremony, and there is possibly no better place to see these discussions taking place than at the Allied Media Conference that happens in Detroit every summer. Steeped in the Black radical tradition and influenced greatly by radical queer/trans* pre-figurative practices, the Allied Media Conference has been a place for activists to come together to discuss emotional and healing justice, afrofuturist political imaginaries, community gardens, and to share the rituals, ceremonies, practices, and spiritual knowledges cultivated within a range of radical movements. Drawing from the inspirational writing of movement elders like Grace Lee Boggs these activists attempt to connect the material aspects of their struggle

with the spiritual and radical imaginaries of the worlds they seek to create (Boggs and Kurashige 2012).

These experiences have provoked some organizers within the anti-authoritarian current to interrogate the historical processes that have severed much of the world's people from land-based practices, spiritualities, and relationships. These organizers are recognizing the profound way that disconnecting people from land-based spiritual relationships was foundational to the social construction of "the settler," "the slave," and "the savage" within settler colonial societies. As Sheridan and Longboat (2006) assert, "Dismissing [land-based spiritualities] as imaginary keeps those assimilated by modernity content with their condition by dispelling this numinous heritage much as colonization misjudged Aboriginal teachers as childish or naïve in trying to naturalize neo-American minds" (370). While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to study the wide-breadth of ways in which reclamations of the spiritual are taking place among non-Indigenous activists, it is crucial for our purposes to examine some important questions and concerns that emerge from these processes.

Namely, what does it mean to want to "reclaim" land-based spiritual traditions within a settler colonial context? Is this not akin to the desire of seeking to "reclaim" the commons that we problematized in the previous chapter? How do one's context, geographic location, positionality, and identity shift one's responsibility to this process? And what are the risks associated with appropriation and mis-application of land-based spiritual practices? Silvia Federici (2004) argues in her seminal work *Caliban and the Witch* that the violent attacks on pagans, heretics, and witches in Europe and the Americas paralleled the murderous repression of Indigenous and African spirituality

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during the process of settlement. These attacks were meant to provide for the emerging capitalist elite a seemingly limitless supply of land and labour necessary for accumulation. Black and Indigenous scholars have also argued that European colonizers attempted to wipe out land-based spiritual practices in order to facilitate the process of colonial capital accumulation through the dispossession of Indigenous peoples of their territories and the displacement and exploitation of African people for their labour (see Alexander 2005; Kelley 2002; Simpson 2011; Coulthard 2014). Through the logics of modernity, the magical conceptions of spirituality that were connected to nature and "did not admit to any separation between matter and spirit," (Federici 2004:142) became a threat to the advance of capitalist accumulation and were branded as a crime. In helping to lay the foundations for the white supremacist heteropatriarchal settler state, the witch hunts in Europe and the Americas were relatively successful in destroying the land-based spiritualities of colonists of European descent. There were also numerous attempts to wipe out land-based spirituality among Black, Indigenous, and other non-white communities through violent repression, illegalization, and Christianization. Nonetheless, as Alexander (2005) articulates, many of these cosmological systems persisted and transformed through the processes of dispossession and dislocation. She explains that these spiritual practices were transformed by seeking "locatedness, rootedness, and belonging that map individual and collective relationships to the Divine...They have also traveled internally as a result of wars of conquest, in the name of religion, and for the sake of capturing people and owning territory" (291). In other words, while there has been a concerted effort to suppress and destroy land-based spiritual practices through the processes of settlement, proletarianization, and dispossession, these experiences have

often served to transform and adapt spirituality among those directly affected by white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and settler colonialism.

That being said, all people living on Turtle Island have been drastically impacted by the concerted effort of the colonial elite to sever people from place-based relationships and knowledges. The primary purpose of this disconnection of people from land-based spirituality according to Federici (2004) is to legitimize capitalist social relations based on the control nature. The capitalist mode of production "must refuse the unpredictability implicit in the practice of magic [and we can infer other land-based spiritual practices], and the possibility of establishing a privileged relation with the natural elements, as well as the belief in the existence of powers available only to particular individuals, and thus not easily generalized and exploitable" (174). By severing people from land-based spiritual practices and their belief in the cosmic energies of the divine and magical, capitalism seeks to produce a distinction between humans and the land. It also structures society in a way in which only the hierarchical knowledges derived through the process of capitalist accumulation are given credence and power in society. Through this interpretation of history, we can understand better how the reclamation of place-based spiritualities can be seen as a revolutionary act.

The desire to reclaim land-based spiritualities as part of radical struggle was an oft-discussed topic within my interviews although the pathways towards this reclamation diverged and differed significantly based on one's positionality and relative dislocation from land-based spiritual practices. Sharrae Lyon, a Black artist and organizer based in Ottawa, talked about how her engagement in radical struggles heightened her desire to reconnect with long-standing spiritual traditions practiced among her ancestors. She

explains:

> I guess this experience of spirituality is something that is pushing me in the process of decolonization. It is the idea that at one point in my ancestry Indigenous knowledge was practiced. Connections to the land were very much integral ways in which people related to each other and related to everything in this earth – on Mother Earth. Having that knowledge and learning that knowledge is always there and is within me and in the energies that are around us...I think that's what gives me hope, because I've been disconnected.

Others, such as Leah Henderson, a white settler anti-colonial activist based in Toronto, pointed to the ways that land-based spiritual traditions have been passed down to them (often clandestinely) over generations. For Leah, this land-based spirituality comes out of the witch tradition that her family and ancestors have practiced for many generations. Leah recounts how this tradition informs her political practices:

> I was raised as a witch, and the tradition that my family practices is innately anarchist, it's part of its value system, it's not hierarchal, and it's also deliberately and intentionally political. Even the idea behind the tradition's name, "Reclaiming", it's like reclaiming the earth, reclaiming the land, reclaiming the air, reclaiming our communities. So definitely that was part of [cultivating] a value-system that recognizes greed and capitalism and colonialism as these forces that were creating destruction and injustice and that we had a responsibility to alter and resist.

Others activists were engaged in more exploratory stages of learning about land-based spirituality by reading histories about the witch hunts, the banning of potlatches, and African ceremonies in slave societies. A number of these organizers have gravitated towards engaging in workshops and trainings to help in that process, including somatics programs, mindfulness workshops, yoga practice, and the exploration of religious traditions rooted in their family's ancestry. Alon Weinberg, a long time activist with connections to the people of Grassy Narrows, for instance, discussed his experiences at a spiritual retreat focused on eco-feminist and land-based Judaism in Manitoba. Reflecting

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on the lessons that he learned from this retreat, Alon articulates:

> [L]earning what it means to practice these symbolic traditions that are a couple thousand years old that are transplanted from the Middle East in a way that actually is grounded in the presence of being here [was a really important component of the retreat]. That means acknowledging who's land you're on, getting to know some of the people who are of that background, working with them, sharing with them, trying to share some of your culture with them as well.

Alon focuses on the importance of sharing in discussing how he interprets decolonizing spiritual traditions, but is cautious about the move toward appropriation. While many activists grapple with what it means to incorporate place-based spirituality into their political praxis, there is a heightened awareness of the risks associated with appropriation and the erasure of the long history of settler colonial violence on these territories. As discussed in the previous chapter, there is an inherent risk associated with non-Indigenous people seeking to decolonize by learning Indigenous place-based spiritual beliefs and ignoring the fact that Indigenous spiritual oppression is based primarily on the seizure of Indigenous lands (Mignolo 2011). Spirituality is not simply something that comes with learning specific protocols or participating in Indigenous ceremonies, but is instead a way of living in good relations with the land and other beings (Sheridan and Longboat 2006). As anti-colonial scholar Walter Mignolo (2011) stipulates, "It is a road to re-existence delinking from the beliefs that modernity and development are the only way to the future" (64). In this sense, there is a sharp critique among anti-authoritarian activists for non-Indigenous people who seek to appropriate, adapt, or claim Indigenous spiritualities.

Annie Morgan Banks, an anti-colonial organizer based in Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ territories, discussed the article "Understanding Colonizer Status" by Dakota activist and scholar Waziyatawin as an important piece that helped her to think through

her own place in the process of decolonization as a white settler. Annie explains:

> [Waziyatawin] thinks that there's a place for colonizers in struggle, but there's a few things that we need to do in order to be someone she would consider working with, and one thing is having a very strong grounded sense of our own spirituality so we're not going to grab or start taking on Indigenous spirituality to fill this [spiritual] vacuum within us.

Numerous examples of this appropriation are prevalent within and on the periphery of the anti-authoritarian current. These include the proliferation of new age spiritualities, the appropriation of Eastern, African or Indigenous spiritualities by white people, and the attempts to uncritically apply Celtic and pagan land-based practices on occupied Indigenous territories. Dixie Pauline, a white settler herbalist based in Berkeley, explains, "I feel a lot of times, as white folks, we often feel a spiritual lack or guilt, and so that's what causes a lot of people to try to take Native spirituality and that results in cultural theft." Given these tendencies, there has been a longstanding hesitation to engage in any spiritual processes at all. Instead, anti-authoritarian activists seeking to support Indigenous decolonial struggles have done so through a strictly materialist politics.

The division of the material and spiritual within some sections of the anti-authoritarian current, however, has resulted in what some Indigenous peoples see as a deep spiritual gap in settler and non-Indigenous people political organizing (see Sheridan and Longboat 2006; Amadahy 2013). For instance, Jody Dodd, a white settler activist based in Philadelphia, told me a story about how her friend Lakota Harden, an Oglala activist, addressed a crowd of young radicals during an anti-police state rally at the Republican National Convention in 2000. Jody recounts:

> Lakota got up to the mic and said, 'I'm so sorry for what the police did to you. But, I can't support your movement because you don't pray. I can't be a part of a movement that doesn't pray as part of their work.'

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> She said it in the most sincere and heartfelt, not like a condescending,
> way. There was great kindness in her voice, but it was pretty damn deep
> to just have someone say that you don't have a spiritual component to
> the work that you are doing.

Through this story Jody attempts to explain how the spiritual dearth within non-Indigenous radical communities can often cause disconnects when trying to work in solidarity with Indigenous peoples. She suggests that we need to find a way to break the artificial divide between the spiritual and the material in order to be better able to understand, relate, and develop longstanding relationships of solidarity and reciprocity with Indigenous decolonization.

So how do organizers engage with the spiritual without being appropriative or maintaining a colonialist understanding of the radical imagination? One of the ways that activist within the anti-authoritarian current are trying to engage with the spiritual is through an understanding and respect for the protocols of relating to the land and territories being shared with them by Indigenous peoples. These protocols can differ significantly based on the nation on whose territories you live and also among Indigenous peoples within a specific nation, however, the care and respect that comes from being attuned to those teachings is an important starting point in developing a better understanding of the land-based relationships that govern the territories on which you live. As Sheridan and Longboat (2006) assert, "The real failure to understand North America is a failure of wanting to understand the continent and the protocols of her Indigenous Peoples. It is a fear against wanting to understand and experience the experience of the past and so is also a failure to know and to trust in the Beginning." (371). Understanding and respecting protocols is particularly important given that, as Demelza Champagne, an Anishinaabe organizer with the Anarchist People of Color

movement in New York City, explains, "we don't want to forget about cultural revitalization and ideas or spirituality and all of that, but all of that is connected to the land." By observing and respecting the ways in which Indigenous peoples engage in relationships with the land, non-Indigenous people can begin the process of recognizing the sacred power of the treaty agreements that govern our relations with Indigenous peoples and the territories on which we live (Dunbar-Ortiz 2014).

A second way anti-authoritarian organizers are seeking to re-engage with place-based spiritualities in our movements is through the recognition that while it is important to learn from ancestral spiritual practices, we have a responsibility to re-imagine what a contemporary spirituality looks like given the long-standing traumas and histories that have transformed our relationships with each other, the land, and Indigenous peoples. Annie Morgan Banks, a white settler activist based on the west coast, explains that this sometimes means forging new models that have yet to exist. Annie explains:

> I'm having more conversations with people about, like, an anti-colonial social justice-based, value-based spirituality for folks within radical communities who maybe don't have that. For sure some people have that, maybe from their families but for all the folks who don't, having something that will build up our own strength to do the work that needs to be done and to also show up fully in relationship to the other groups that we are working with or folks who have that grounded spirituality or have a way of understanding the world that doesn't invest in white supremacy is so important.

Guided by place-based knowledges, these spiritualities emerge not simply in what we perceive to be "religious practices," but also within music, art, sport, and other forms of interaction that resist the bounds of modernity, capitalism, and settler colonialism (Mignolo 2011; Fortier 2015).

They are also found in the process of struggle. These moments of struggle are

where the radical imagination is deeply connected and bound by the reciprocal relationships we are all responsible for when living on these territories. Robin D.G. Kelley (2002) explains that if we do not foster our ability to imagine and develop deep relationships of reciprocity, "all the protests in the world won't bring about our liberation" (198). Thus, understanding material struggle as part of a web of relationality is a critical component of the process of unsettling for non-Indigenous people and helps to foster our ability to support and participate in Indigenous-led processes of decolonization.

Material Decolonization

Uruguayan political theorist Raúl Zibechi (2005) argues that we are moving toward a new relationship between people and territories. Specifically, the concept of territory has had a much more central role in political struggles since the rise of contemporary struggles by Indigenous peoples, the unemployed, and landless peasants from the *sótano* or margins of society. Zibechi (2005) explains, "The new relationships between territory and subject emerge from the prior deterritorialization, which represents a wound in the urban fabric. The flight of capital, with regard to the working class, is a flight from the spaces in which territorially grounded working-class power limited its options" (16). This flight of capital also leaves devastation in its wake when it seeks temporary geographic expansion and displacement in order to solve the crisis of over-accumulation (Harvey 2004). However, capital flight alone does not cause displacement and devastation. As Coulthard (2014) clearly reminds us, in settler colonial states the ongoing and active process of dispossession of Indigenous peoples of their territories remains foundational to capital accumulation, particularly through resource extraction.

The trail of urban decay and rusted-out abandoned factories that pushes Black communities and other working class people into the margins in cities like Detroit, Baltimore, Hamilton, and Buffalo are directly linked to the processes that make Fort Chipewyan, Aamjiwnaang, and Sogorea Te the sites of environmental destruction and ongoing Indigenous genocide.

Many of the movements emerging out of the anti-authoritarian current that form the basis of this research come from these margins of society. They consist of unemployed and homeless people who fight back against the scourge of neoliberalism through groups like the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty; Black communities who dare to assert that "Black Lives Matter" as they confront and resist the murderous genocidal war of the police state and the prison industrial complex; undocumented migrants who assert that "No One Is Illegal" and continue to defy racist borders; queer and trans* communities who assert new ways of living and loving outside the confines of heteropatriarchy; and Indigenous struggles for land and life that assert that they are "Idle No More" and persist in their five hundred years of resistance to settler colonialism and the settler state. While these movements are often disparate, they are beginning to forge relationships and bonds of trust that could lay the foundation for developing just relations with and on these territories, although this is no fait accompli.

The material aspects of decolonization that are critical to these processes include the ability to develop counter-power within these deterritorialized spaces; the negotiation of relationships of solidarity; and the re-imagining of relationships with the land, Indigenous peoples, other living beings, and each other. Collectively the seek to create the undercommons as a space of radical relationality that refuses enclosures and

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settlement in order to collectively work towards new and as yet unimaginable societies.

Mostafa Henaway, an organizer with the Immigrant Workers' Centre in Montréal, explained how he began to understand the need to develop grassroots non-Indigenous movements that could serve as counter-power to the state as being critical to relationships of solidarity with Indigenous peoples during his time organizing with Tyendinaga Mohawk organizer Shawn Brant and his partner Sue Collis in the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty. Mostafa notes:

> Someone like Sue Collis, who is a former OCAP organizer and partner of Shawn Brant and living in Tyendinaga was like, "There's going to be no strength if we don't build movements in our own communities, how are we going to show any real effective solidarity with Indigenous struggles." That changed a lot of my thinking in terms of what I saw as building any sort of movement that could build power from below and that became my focus. It means having to organize in a more local context and also doing Indigenous solidarity work.

The notion of building effective counter-power to the settler colonial state is important within the context of decolonization because it provides Indigenous peoples with an alternative to negotiating exclusively with the Canadian and U.S. governments. The existence of the Canadian and U.S. states and their governments is expressly tied to the process of settler colonialism and capital accumulation and there is no indication from any political party in either country that this is likely to change. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2011) argues that it is futile to engage in scholarly and political processes of decolonizing Indigenous-state relations in Canada because "there is no evidence there exists the political will to do so on the part of the Canadian state" (18). Settler colonial logics are pervasive within all contemporary state attempts to re-negotiate relationships with Indigenous peoples, including the most recent attempts at reconciliation and recognition (see Coulthard 2014; Turner 2006; Simpson 2014).

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But what about settler society? Is there reason to believe that non-Indigenous people can effectively develop the types of relationships of peace, prosperity, and friendship with Indigenous nations that were supposed to be the foundations of treaties like the Two Row Wampum? According to many of the activists I interviewed within the anti-authoritarian current, while this is an aspiration of their struggles, it is far from a reality. Alex Paterson, a white settler organizer in Winnipeg, was blunt when he expressed frustration at the state of our movements in this current juncture. He contends:

> Fact of the matter is, if we want Indigenous people to take us seriously we've gotta get some damn better counter-power on the side of our portion of society! They're asking us to go to the government because they know it's them that control the resources. So if we want to have and remake the treaty relationship, we need to be successful revolutionarily inside our own communities...It's like, I need to get my shit together here, I'm not actually that much use except in crisis circumstances. I'm a drain on resources, I'm a drain on people's time, like I have good friendships, but I need to work on my family, I need to work on my workplace, I need to work on my neighbourhood. And then if I can get some counter-power there, boy oh boy will I be able to bring more to the land struggle when the time comes.

While Alex makes an important observation, it is also clear that we can emergence of grassroots counter-power among a number of the anti-authoritarian movements that have emerged over the last twenty or thirty years. It is still in an emergent stage and at risk of being defeated by state violence, internal divisions, contradictions, and co-optation, but some of the core principles coming out of these movements could provide the foundations for decolonial futurities.

For instance, the concepts of collective liberation emerging out of anti-racist and radical Black struggles has bolstered an abolitionist politics that moves beyond the Prison Industrial Complex and seeks to fundamentally transform the way that we deal with violence and social problems (see Crass 2014; Kelley 2002; Oparah 2004). The notions

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of horizontalism and autonomous zones that have guided collective decision making and governance structures from as disparate a set of movements as the Zapatistas in Mexico and the Aymara struggles in Bolivia to the Occupy encampments across Canada and the United States have provided numerous people with tangible visions of the types of societies we could create (see Khatib 2012; Zibechi 2010; Holloway 1998; Sitrin 2012). The global struggles against austerity and the re-emphasis on collective economies are both responding to and contributing to the crises of capitalism. What makes all of these movements so important is that they are no longer simply reacting to capitalist, colonialist, heteropatriarchal, or white supremacist power structures, but are also seeking to develop new sources of power.

If we are unable to forge relationships of solidarity that help to build mass movements, we risk not being able to harness the potential of this growing counter-power. Cleve Higgins, a white anti-colonial activist in Montréal, suggests that we cannot expect the majority of settler society to engage in decolonial movements and argues that instead we should strive to expand and develop the power-base within the margins. He explains, "I don't think that the centres of power in this context: government, state, and corporate power and settler power are going to be convinced or change their mind or be swayed or gradually come on-side or those kind of things." To so do requires that we incorporate movements that see the interconnection between prison abolition, anti-imperialism, gender liberation, disability justice, migrant justice, and a number of other struggles in collaboration with Indigenous decolonization. As South Asian activist and author Harsha Walia (2013) argues, incorporating these movements "moves us away from discourses that reinforce expendability for those who refuse to or cannot assimilate

into systems of domination, and instead, brings us closer to a vision of decolonization"

(264). This intersectional analysis needs to lead to actions that tie all those seeking to

build relations of solidarity to the fates of other communities. Luam Kidane articulates

that this type of solidarity means that we must abandon the desire to become allies in

order to pick up the responsibilities of being co-conspirators in the coming worlds. This is

a much more dangerous position for those who benefit from and are complicit in the

structures of white supremacy, settler colonialism, and heteropatriarchy. Luam suggests:

> I like the term co-conspirator better because it demands immediate
> action and that action is understood in relationship to what it is that you
> are fighting together [...] [I]t's in these conversations and dialogues of
> figuring out strategies and tactics that I think decolonization really sits.
> So, looking at ways to transform systems of capitalism and looking at
> ways to reaffirm Indigenous sovereignty and looking at ways to really
> unearth anti-blackness in our movement organizing. All of those things,
> I think for me, make sense when we think of it as co-conspirators.

Becoming co-conspirators requires that organizers from a multitude of different

movements see their struggles and lives as being intricately linked with those of others

through the process of engaging in concrete actions predicated on an understanding of our

positionality within the structures of white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, border

imperialism, and settler colonialism. For Kidane and Abbas (2014) this requires

attempting to dismantle and challenge these very systems (even if you stand to benefit

from there) and this must take place by not only a*ny means necessary* but also by *every*

means necessary.

What Kidane and Abbas mean by "every means necessary" is that we must take a

holistic and broad approach to both our movements of resistance and our acts of pre-

figuration. In our material struggles for decolonization we must attend to the emotional,

spiritual, intellectual, and relational. Recent demonstrations across Canada and the United

States in opposition to tar sands pipelines are important examples of this work. Activists within the anti-authoritarian current have sought to forge relationships of solidarity with Indigenous land-based struggles within a diverse range of tactics and strategies to oppose the tar sands and their pipelines. This has included lobbying, community research and education, rallies and protests, direct actions and blockades, traffic disruptions, and a number of other strategies (Black et al. 2014). In conjunction with these actions, there has been an increased emphasis on relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities – as well as an emphasis of building relationships with the land. In Fort Chippewayan, many non-Indigenous activists have started to participate in the annual Tar Sands Healing Walk organized by members of the Athabasca Cree community. Jesse Cardinal (2014), the coordinator of Keepers of the Athabasca and a co-organizer of the Healing Walk, explains the importance of prayer and spirituality in building relationships of resistance to the tar sands, noting:

> "We try to ensure that our guests understand why and how we are praying, how they can participate, and any protocols that should be followed, so that when we start the walk, we can start *in a good way* - meaning to have good intentions and a better understanding of what prayer is and how prayer can help to heal the land, the people, the water, the air, and all living beings. We want to begin the walk in a unified way and with the knowledge of our elders and ceremonial people" (132).

While some have argued that urban radical activists and movements are too far disconnected from land to develop true place-based relationships, based on an interconnection of the material and spiritual, Fred Burrill, a housing justice activist in Montréal, argues against the romantic notion that we all need to find nature and re-develop relationships to the land and explains instead that he interprets place-based relationships as exhibiting respect and rootedness. Fred explains:

> I think when people talk about being disconnected from the land, I grew
> up in a rural area, you have to drive to get everywhere and there's no
> public transport et cetera. It's really no more peaceful or a lot less
> violent than urban living. It's as destructive and as awful as living in a
> city. It's just different. I think people who have grown up in an urban or
> suburban context talk about the ways that colonialism (even for settler
> populations) separates us from the land with a somewhat romantic
> version of what it means to live in a non-urban context without realizing
> that being separated from the land means more than only ever living in
> one place for six months at a time and not knowing the names of your
> neighbours. That question of being rootless, that's what colonialism
> does to us.

It is through this process that non-Indigenous people can develop connections with the land and place-based relationships of solidarity in the formation of new societies outside of the logics of settler colonialism. These relationships require a great deal of humility and accountability as we struggle to negotiate mutually beneficially, consensual, and reciprocal relationships to place and with each other on these territories.

Conclusion

The observations and analysis in this dissertation are partial, fluid, and incomplete. Just as the debates and discourses around decolonization within the anti-authoritarian current are filled with contradictions, failures and missteps, I recognize that this research project is also rife with limitations and unanswered questions. This is why it is so hard to write anything conclusive as a conclusion. Nonetheless, in drawing from the experiences and analysis of organizers within a myriad of anti-authoritarian movements, this dissertation seeks to highlight the core debates and discussions taking place around what it means to unsettle or decolonize social movements; to intervene in key theoretical debates about our relationship and responsibility towards Indigenous nationhood, sovereignty, and decolonization within settler colonial states; to historicize the ways that

settler colonial logics have permeated radical left politics in North America; and to illuminate some key pathways and principles that have helped guide activists in their attempts to negotiate processes of decolonization.

If our movements seek to engage in struggles that make Indigenous decolonization foundational to our collective liberation, then we must continuously be working towards developing meaningful and accountable relationships that break away from the naturalization of the settler polity as being our primary site of struggle. Instead, we must seek to dismantle the settler state, unsettle settler society, and refuse the logics of settlement altogether.

We have the opportunity to work collectively across our many differences and in solidarity with Indigenous peoples to begin to construct decolonial futures. There is no guarantee that we are going to be successful or that our pathways will not change, however, a growing segment of the anti-authoritarian current is approaching these questions and possibilities with a humility and determination that is rare within the long history of radical left politics in North America. This humility does not mean that settlers and non-Indigenous people must "disappear themselves" and their struggles or prioritize Indigenous struggles above all others. The humility that we are seeking to foster brings settlers and non-Indigenous people into radical relationality with Indigenous peoples, other beings, and the Earth. It seeks to renew our commitments to mutual accountability, consent, and reciprocity that are at the core of what Richard Day (2005) calls "grounded solidarity" and "infinite responsibility". When I spoke to Hilary Moore, an environmental justice activist based in Berkeley, about the importance of humility she cautioned that being humble does not mean shirking one's responsibility and history. Instead, Hilary

argues:

> [Acting with humility is] about learning. I think learning is a hard thing, to be a learner. Especially to do something that you haven't done before again, like trying to do a new organizational structure or a new movement strategy or to go to school again after a long time or to be in a new relationship with a new person whatever kind of relationship it is. It's constant learning. I don't think neoliberalism or our social context gives us a lot of tools to be open to learning – especially whiteness – I want to have all the answers and "I know more than you" and that kind of shit and it's hard [to be humble].

Despite the difficulties cultivating a healthy culture of humility that Hilary mentions, she emphasizes the importance of a fluid and transformative learning process that undergirds the potential for decolonization. In the spirit of this learning process, I think it is most appropriate that this conclusion end with a series of questions emerging out of this dissertation that have been left unanswered. I offer these as possibilities for continuing the conversations that appear within the pages of this dissertation and also in recognition of the tentative nature of the types of transformative shifts taking place among activists in the anti-authoritarian current as they develop stronger and more accountable relationships to Indigenous peoples engaged in processes of decolonization and resurgence. I offer five questions that are of particular interest in this current context:

1. What is the responsibility of non-Indigenous anti-authoritarians to work within mainstream society to shift colonialist histories that erase Indigenous presence and naturalize settler society? How do we move beyond educating each other about settler colonial history and decolonization within our small radical collectives? How do we intervene in mainstream discourses and put our hearts, minds, bodies on the line to resist further dispossessions? How does this change in analysis lead to tangible and sustained political action?

2. What is the relationship between prefigurative politics, decolonization, and the radical imagination? How can we ensure that the new ways of being that are created through shared struggle and the politics of collective liberation break from the logics of settler colonialism?

3. What does decolonial place-based spirituality look like for non-Indigenous urban activists? Is it useful to retrieve and/or recover land-based traditions from Europe, Asia, Africa and other parts of the world where our ancestors were rooted? Is it critical for us all to learn from and adapt spiritual teachings shared by Indigenous communities with respect to the specific territories on which we reside? How prominent should spirituality, ritual, and ceremony be in our day-to-day political organizing?

4. What are the lessons that can be learned from similar decolonial processes taking place in Latin America, Palestine, and other parts of the world? What is the relationship between these decolonizing processes and global struggles against austerity, capitalism, and imperialism? What are some teachings that we might possibly share with radicals in other parts of the world who are guided by the logics of colonialism? 5. Can we struggle for a global commons within a framework of decolonization? Is it more important to foster the emergence of multiple and polyphonous commons based on relationality and accountability with specific territories and peoples? Is the concept of the undercommons (as the struggle against both enclosures and settlement) one way to help non-Indigenous people re-imagine the commons within a decolonial framework?

These are some of the lingering questions that emerge out of this research. I am excited

by the great numbers of scholars and radicals (Indigenous and non- Indigenous) who are working collective to wrestle with many of these questions. Since the start of this dissertation, there has been the emergence of scholarly journals, various workshops, zines, podcasts, books, and most importantly tangible grassroots actions that have grappled with many of the questions in this paper (and many more beyond its scope). These are important times of transformation and I hope that they are signs that we are in the beginning stages of the Eighth Fire of the Nishinaabeg prophecy. If we are to contribute to this important process of decolonization, we must commit to refusing the logics of settler colonialism that dominate our politics. And while we cannot expect the bulk of settler society to join us in this process, we must endeavour to expand our movements outside of our small subcultures through mass-based organizing. I hope that this dissertation is a small contribution along this pathway.

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