



Whose Land? Complicating Settler Understandings of Land in Canada

Lauren Kepkiewicz

University of Toronto
lauren.kepkiewicz@ucalgary.ca

Abstract

Indigenous food activists and scholars have encouraged settler peoples to change relationships to land in settler colonial contexts such as Canada. In this paper I examine how settler food activists are responding to these calls by drawing from 25 interviews conducted with settler food activists working to change the dominant Canadian food system. Interviewees' responses indicate a need for settler activists to center Indigenous land struggles, question settler farmer claims to land, challenge the Canadian state and private property regimes, and give land back to Indigenous nations. Based on interviewees' responses, I argue that while some settlers may be beginning to respond to Indigenous calls to change relationships with land, that broader settler food sovereignty movements in Canada have yet to adequately engage with these calls.

Keywords

Food sovereignty; land; settler colonialism; Canada; Indigenous food systems

Introduction

At an event focused on food system change, a non-Indigenous community organizer caught my attention in a hallway between workshops. She was feeling frustrated by a morning workshop – focused on land access for new farmers – in



which several Indigenous activists had asked the group to engage with the ways that the lands in question are Indigenous territories. The non-Indigenous organizer was frustrated because she felt this request meant the conversation was not able to ‘go anywhere.’ She asked for help in working through this frustration so she and I talked about why Indigenous interventions that challenge settler rights to land might occur. We talked about the colonial context of Canada, settler assumptions about our rights to Indigenous lands, and Indigenous food sovereignty movements. By the end of the conversation we were both nodding our heads; by placing this experience within ongoing processes of colonialism and Indigenous resurgence, we were better able to understand the necessity of Indigenous interventions around land as well as the need to interrogate settler land rights. I begin with this story because it demonstrates the need for settlers to pause, listen, and take guidance from Indigenous calls to change relationships to land.

In order to examine how settlers are responding to these calls, I draw from 25 interviews with settler food activists who are working towards food system change and who are invested in strengthening Indigenous-settler collaborations.¹ Within these interviews, several themes arose in relation to land. First, interviewees identified the need to center Indigenous land rights, including how these rights are constrained by settler occupation. At the same time, they explained that many of the food organizations and groups they are involved with are often hesitant to do so, particularly when it comes to questioning settler farmer rights to land. Second, interviewees explained that settler resistance to this kind of questioning is rooted in settler investments in private property and the Canadian state. Finally, interviewees highlighted the importance of questioning settler food activists’ visions for alternative land arrangements and instead called for land repatriation to Indigenous nations.

Drawing from these interview discussions, I use food sovereignty as a framework from which to understand and analyze the ways that settlers are responding to Indigenous calls to change relationships to land. I use food sovereignty because of its potential for creating new ways of being and relationships with one another, the earth, and all beings (Desmarais, 2016, 374). Using food sovereignty also allows me to take a closer look at tensions around land within a movement that advocates for land reform that

guarantees peasants full rights to land, defends and recovers the territories of indigenous peoples, ensures fishing communities’ access and control over their fishing areas and eco-systems, honours access and control over pastoral lands and migratory routes, [and] assures decent jobs with fair remuneration and labour rights for all. (Nyéléni, 2007, 9)

¹ While some of the people I interviewed had deep experiences collaborating with Indigenous communities, others were just beginning to understand how to build Indigenous-settler solidarity.

While Canadian food sovereignty is based in international food sovereignty movements (Desmarais, 2007; Desmarais and Wittman, 2014; Wiebe and Wipf, 2011), it is not always clear how movement advocacy for all food providers' land rights translates within a settler colonial context. Although the Nyéléni Declaration (2007)² demands changes in communities' and states' relations to land, it is also unclear whether it is possible or desirable to guarantee land rights for all food providers in a context where settler land occupation continues to play a key role in dispossessing Indigenous nations of their lands and food systems.

In trying to better understand these tensions, I build on the work of those who have examined how Indigenous food sovereignty complicates settler understandings of food systems and relationships to the Canadian state (Daigle, 2017; Grey and Patel, 2014; Kamal et al., 2015; Morrison, 2011). In doing so, I aim to contribute to scholarship about settler food sovereignty (often just phrased as food sovereignty by settlers) that has yet to adequately engage with the ways that critical Indigenous studies and Indigenous food sovereignty frameworks require settler Canadian food sovereignty narratives and praxis to change. Even the framing of 'food sovereignty' rather than 'settler food sovereignty' suggests a need to interrogate the ways that settler food movements are structurally embedded in the colonial state. While several scholars have greatly enriched understandings of these issues (i.e. Daigle, 2017; Desmarais and Wittman, 2014; Grey and Patel, 2014), there is an absence of research that explores settler responses to Indigenous critiques. With this paper, I begin to respond to Mushkegowuk scholar Michelle Daigle's questions about the complexities of Indigenous-settler relations, including those entwined with food sovereignty. For example, Daigle asks:

How might well-intentioned settler food activists impede Indigenous efforts for land reclamation and self-determination? What do everyday practices of responsibility and accountability look like for settler food actors as they live and work on contested and occupied Indigenous lands? (2017, 16).

In attempting to answer these questions, I argue that settler food activists impede Indigenous movements for land and self-determination through actions that reaffirm settler rights to Indigenous territories, reinforce private property regimes, uphold the Canadian colonial state, and foreground settler futures on Indigenous lands. I also argue that settler food activists living on Indigenous territories have a variety of responsibilities, which include changing settler relationships to land, approaching relationships with uncertainty and humility, and giving land back to Indigenous nations. To set the context for this argument, I begin by providing a brief overview of some of the ways that land and relationships are understood within Indigenous

² This declaration is a key document that outlines an international food sovereignty agenda developed by grassroots food provisioners and activists from over 80 countries.

food sovereignty, critical Indigenous studies, and work on Indigenous-settler solidarity.

Indigenous Food Sovereignty, Critical Indigenous Studies, and Indigenous-Settler Solidarity Scholarship

Critical Indigenous studies and Indigenous food sovereignty frameworks highlight Indigenous relationships to land as central to Indigenous community, identity, and life. Mohawk and Anishinaabe scholar Vanessa Watts (2013) explains that Indigenous peoples are “extensions” of the land (23) emphasizing the ways that “land is alive and thinking,” and stressing the relationality of land and all beings (21). Daigle (2016) talks about her community’s understandings of land as “an animate being, a relative, a food provider, and a teacher of law and governance to whom we are accountable” (266). Similarly, Dene scholar Glen Coulthard (2014) understands land as “a *system of reciprocal relations and obligations* [that] can teach us about living our lives in relation to one another and the natural world in nondominating and nonexploitative terms” (13, emphasis in original). By upholding responsibilities to land through daily actions, Indigenous peoples enact their self-determination and connection to place (Daigle, 2016).

While Indigenous nations are incredibly diverse, Secwepemc activist and food sovereignty visionary Dawn Morrison (2011) outlines some of the ways that Indigenous nations share similar cosmovisions relating to land:

The Indigenous eco-philosophy that underlies the ability of Indigenous peoples to maintain dignified relationships to the land and food systems is in sharp contrast to the Eurocentric belief, inherent in the worldview proposed by European philosopher Rene Descartes, that humans are to dominant and control nature, and therefore seek to “manage” the land that provides us with our food. Indigenous eco-philosophy reinforces the belief that humans do not manage the land, but instead can only manage our behaviours in relation to it. (99)

With this cosmovision, Indigenous food sovereignty emphasizes the particular relationships that Indigenous peoples have with land, water, air, and all beings as a result of responsibilities developed over generations through ceremony, song, dance, language, stories, art, and food provisioning practices (FPP, 2010, 1). This perspective challenges understandings of land as a resource, and instead conceptualizes land as “the source of life itself” (PFPP, 2011, 3; see also: Coté, 2016; ICFSC, 2010; Martens, 2015; Morrison, 2011). The Indigenous Circle, a group of activists and scholars working towards Indigenous food sovereignty in Canada, explain that “lands and food are at the centre of what it is to be indigenous,” describing land as “an extension of the family unit” rather than “a commodity to feed individuals within nuclear family units” (Indigenous Circle, Food Secure Canada [ICFSC], 2011, 3, 4, referencing Fee, 2009).

The Circle also suggests that Indigenous knowledge of and practices relating to land may help settler Canadians understand our responsibilities, including the following maxims:

1. The Earth is Our Mother.
2. Cooperation is the way to survive.
3. Knowledge is powerful, only if it is shared.
4. Responsibility is the best practice.
5. Everything is connected to everything.
6. Place is important.
7. The spiritual world is not distant from the Earth. (2011, 8)

Through this work the Circle invites settler food activists to change relationships with land by learning from Indigenous perspectives. At the same time, they clearly state that not all Indigenous knowledges are meant to be shared with settlers, emphasizing that these knowledges first and foremost support Indigenous ways of life. This emphasis is important within a colonial context in which Indigenous knowledges and practices have been repressed by the Canadian state as well as corresponding settler tendencies to assimilate Indigenous culture and ways of life (Byrd, 2011; Lawrence and Dua, 2005; Tuck and Yang, 2012).

In order for settlers to engage with Indigenous knowledges, Indigenous food sovereignty frameworks emphasize the need for settlers to meaningfully engage with colonial land appropriation (Coté, 2016; ICFSC, 2010; Morrison, 2011). Within the *First Principles Protocol for Building Cross-Cultural Relationships*, the Indigenous Circle asks that all peoples involved in food sovereignty come with an understanding that ongoing colonization continues to perpetuate injustices within Indigenous communities (ICFSC, 2010). Elsewhere, the Circle (2011) describes how when Europeans arrived on Indigenous lands, they claimed these lands were empty. Along with this claim of *terra nullis*, settlers used agriculture to justify the appropriation of Indigenous lands (ICFSC, 2011). In this context, the Indigenous Circle calls for the redistribution of land in accordance with nation-to-nation agreements, such as treaties (PFPP, 2015, 11). It also suggests that “permanent solutions must lie within the domain of inherent sovereignty to our lands and ways of life,” and that it is time for Indigenous nations to take back their lands (ICFSC, 2011, 9).

Critical Indigenous studies scholars also outline the ways that the Canadian state appropriates Indigenous lands by remaking these lands into settler homes, property, and sources of capital (Tuck and Yang, 2012; Waziyatawin, 2012). In doing so, settler colonialism aims to ensure Indigenous nations “disappear as peoples” (Lawrence and Dua, 2005, 123; emphasis in original; see also Coulthard, 2014; Lawrence, 2002; Tuck and Yang, 2012; Wolfe, 2006; Vowel, 2016). Settler colonialism is “a structure not an event” that continues to be facilitated and justified through a variety of methods (Wolfe, 2006, 388). For example, settler states have

justified land appropriation with claims that Indigenous peoples do not know how to use land (King, 2012; Vowel, 2016). Settler states also use private property institutions to define land as a site of capital accumulation and construct spiritual relationships to land as backwards (Tuck and Yang, 2012). In doing so, Osage scholar Jean Dennison (2014) argues that private property “takes a heterogeneous territory and gives it the appearance of uniformity, thereby hiding, not removing, the layers of authority within” (164).

While private property institutions have attempted to sever Indigenous connections to land, Indigenous scholars and activists have argued that rights-based frameworks aimed at restoring these connections “can only take struggles for land reclamation and justice so far” (Corntassel and Bryce, 2012, 152). Frameworks based in state recognition are problematic because they fail to address the inherent coloniality of a state that asserts its sovereignty through a variety of dubious, outdated, and racist claims (Mackey, 2016; Samson, 1999; Vowel, 2016). In contrast to rights-based frameworks that rely on state claims of authority, Indigenous self-determination is based in millennia of Indigenous responsibilities to their homelands (Corntassel, 2012; Corntassel and Bryce, 2012).

For example, Daigle (2016) explains that “Cree self-determination is lived and mobilized from the place of our muskeg lands as opposed to our reserves and treaty territories” (266). It is also enacted through community members and their relationships as they travel to other nations (Daigle, 2016). From this perspective, self-determination is defined by and rooted in the ontologies and lived experiences of Indigenous peoples as well as their relationships with human and non-human nations, rather than colonial state structures (Daigle, 2016; 2017). Within this context both Indigenous activists and academics have called for a move away from rights-based approaches to frameworks that root Indigenous sovereignties in long-standing responsibilities to and relationships with land (Coté, 2016; Corntassel and Bryce, 2012; Morrison, 2011).

In addition to shifting from frameworks that center rights to frameworks that center responsibilities, critical Indigenous studies scholars argue that land repatriation must be central to decolonization (Alfred, 2009; Lawrence and Dua, 2008; Tuck and Yang, 2012). Unangax scholar Eve Tuck and settler scholar Wayne Yang (2012) argue that 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” (1). They underline the necessity of land repatriation in a context where the language of decolonization is increasingly used by settler activists without corresponding changes to material conditions or power relations within the settler state. Drawing from Janet Mawhinney’s work (1998), Tuck and Yang (2012) name the strategies that settlers use to relieve ourselves of guilt while remaining embedded in colonial structures “settler moves to innocence.” These moves allow settlers to feel as if we are working towards decolonization when instead we are imagining futures on Indigenous lands, attempting to reconcile our complicity within the

broader settler project, and/or evading moves that require us to give up land, power, and privilege (Tuck and Yang, 2012).

Tuck and Yang (2012) outline several examples of settler moves to innocence based on settler desires to play Indian including settler re-occupation of land via practices such as homesteading. They argue that the Occupy movement's call to democratically redistribute land to the 99% reifies settler assumptions that "land can be owned by people, and that occupation is a right" (2012, 24). Similarly, social justice movements that use the commons to envision future land relations for *all* peoples in a settler state can reinscribe settler futurity. For example, "claiming land for the Commons and asserting consensus as the rule of the Commons, erases existing, prior, and future Native land rights, decolonial leadership, and forms of self-government" (Tuck and Yang, 2012, 8; see also: Coulthard, 2014). Overall, settler moves to innocence provide examples of how settler colonialism can permeate the actions, frameworks, and ideologies of 'progressive' settler activists, even as we attempt to challenge settler colonialism. Settler moves to innocence highlight settler tendencies to imagine futures on Indigenous lands, a move that allows us to occupy Indigenous lands indeterminately.

In this context, Tuck and Yang (2012) call for solidarities based in incommensurabilities, suggesting that settler attempts at solidarity will not be easy, clear, or comfortable. Settler scholar Eva Mackey (2016) suggests that settlers must embrace uncertainties that disrupt normalized frameworks based in Western ideas of property, state citizenship entitlements, and personhood. As Tuck and Yang (2012) argue, decolonization is not about making settlers comfortable, "rescuing settler normalcy," or "rescuing a settler future," nor does it respond to settlers who want to know what decolonization will look like (35). Rather, answers to settlers who want to know what our futures look like on Indigenous lands "are not fully in view and can't be...the answers will not emerge from friendly understanding, and indeed require a dangerous understanding of uncommonality that un-coalesces coalition politics – moves that may feel very unfriendly" (Tuck and Yang, 2012, 35).

Methods

In order to understand whether and how settler food activists have been responding to Indigenous calls to change settler relationships to land, I draw from a series of 25 interviews conducted between February 2016 and March 2017. For these interviews I spoke with people who are invested in building relationships between Indigenous and settler communities in order to transform the Canadian industrial-colonial food system and/or build food sovereignty. In order to identify people to interview, I attended events, conferences, and workshops focused on food system change in Canada. Spending time in these spaces also helped me determine whether I was capturing necessary themes within the interview conversations. While not everyone used the term food sovereignty to describe their work, everyone was involved in system level change. For me, this focus on systemic transformation lies at the heart of food sovereignty movements and so I have included the responses

from all interviewees in order to inform my understanding and theorizing of settler food sovereignty.

When I began the interviews I had planned to speak with both Indigenous and settler food activists. However, it became clear during the site visits and interview process that it was important for settlers to take on the responsibility of discussing our relationships to and understandings of land in the context of Indigenous critiques and calls for change. Thus, all of the interviews I draw from in this paper were conducted with settler food activists. This focus results from my attempt to place responsibility within settler communities and in recognition of the need for settlers to engage with existing work by Indigenous activists and scholars.

My final interview sample included six farmers, eight community-based practitioners (most of whom work for non-profits and one of whom works for a governmental department), and three program coordinators who were based at a university or college. I also interviewed 10 academics, including graduate students and faculty. While I had not initially planned to interview academics, community-based activists and practitioners repeatedly referred me to various scholars who fit my selection criteria. Generally, the academics I interviewed were either involved in some form of community-based research and/or activism. As a result, I refer to all of the people I interviewed as settler food activists, while at the same time recognizing the different ways the people I interviewed are involved in food system change and come to this work. I now turn to the interviews to unpack some of the ways that settler food activists are responding – or failing to respond – to Indigenous critiques around settler relationships with land.

Questioning Settler Occupation and Settler Farmer Rights to Land

In settler Canadian articulations of food sovereignty, access to land is often framed in relation to farmers' rights. For example, protecting farmers' rights to land is a key tenet of the National Farmers Union (NFU), which is a founding member of La Via Campesina and one of the first Canadian organizations to adopt a food sovereignty framework (Wiebe and Wipf, 2011). The NFU's emphasis on land is apparent in their 2015 report, *Losing Our Grip*, which highlights the ways that family farms in Canada are increasingly threatened by land grabs, land ownership concentration, land speculation, and soaring land prices. Similarly, the Union Paysanne (n.d.), an organization based in Québec that has been instrumental in introducing food sovereignty in Canada, aims to ensure farmers have the ability to access land and to farm that land in a sustainable way as well as advocating for small-scale logging and fishing by "local citizens" (n.d.).

However, when I spoke with settler food activists who were engaged in building relationships with Indigenous peoples, many emphasized the necessity of centering Indigenous rights to land within food movements. Reflecting on strategies for food system transformation, a community-based dietician who works in Indigenous health told me, "I think any change we're going to see is going to come from Indigenous people and their right to land." For me, this comment is significant

because it shifts the focus from small-scale settler food producers to Indigenous peoples as the primary agents of food system change. This is not to say that settlers can sit back and do nothing, but rather suggests we shift focus away from ourselves as food system saviours (often white saviours) with the right to determine what happens on Indigenous lands and instead contribute our energy and actions to Indigenous resurgence movements. This centering is important because it is a beginning step towards honouring the unique knowledges and relationships Indigenous peoples have to land, in which Indigenous self-determination is rooted. This centering also lays a potential foundation for challenging ongoing settler appropriation of Indigenous lands, colonial state claims to sovereignty, and settler entitlement to Indigenous lands.

Many interviewees underlined these different forms of coloniality by emphasizing that Canadian lands are “stolen,” “taken,” and “occupied.” Because the Canadian state relies on the continual erasure of its illegitimate claims to land and sovereignty (Alfred, 1999; Vowel, 2016; Samson, 1999), I believe it is particularly important for settler food movements to center Indigenous relationships to lands (and thus self-determination) and to engage with the ways that the Canadian state unlawfully took (otherwise known as stealing) Indigenous lands. These framings create the possibility for settlers to understand the multiple layers of dispossession occurring across the landscapes on which we live.³

My conversations with interviewees suggest that this understanding is particularly pertinent for settler food activists and agriculturalists because, as long-time food activist Abra Brynne (who has worked to build relationships between the British Columbia Food Systems Network and the Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty) describes:

Agriculture was one of the main tools of the settlers, of the colonizers, to remove land from Indigenous access. And not just to take it but also make it so it couldn't serve the needs from which they [Indigenous peoples] had sourced from the same land base over millennia.

Another B.C.-based activist who has worked with various Indigenous activists at a national level adds to this by underlining the ongoing benefits of settler agriculture (below she refers to small-scale sustainable farming):

Agriculture is often, in Canada, on unceded territory, and is benefiting and growing food - which is necessary and a beautiful thing - but is benefiting at the expense of the people who once lived on that land

³ The “layered nature of Indigenous and settler geographies” was taught to me by Anishinaabe scholar Madeline Whetung, whose work considers “how Indigenous and colonial geographies live in layers in the same places, and how rising up the Indigenous landscape through the dominating layer is integral to the decolonial conversation” (2016, 12).

and the people that can still no longer live on that land because of these iterations of agriculture that continue.

While I may gently question the need to reassert the ‘goodness’ of settler agriculture, this interviewee underlines how the ongoing appropriation of land by settler farmers continues to displace Indigenous nations from their lands, blocking access to their food systems. For example, hunting and gathering on lands cultivated by settler farmers may result in legal penalties, physical violence, or may be impossible altogether depending on the level of cultivation and enclosure. Alarming, Indigenous peoples are murdered by settler farmers for simply being *present* on farmland as in the case of Gerald Stanley’s murder of Colton Boushie in 2016 – an act that was justified through private property regimes and deemed lawful by the Canadian state.

In this context of ongoing violence, I believe it is particularly vital that settler food activists understand, engage with, and challenge the ways that settler agriculture continues to be used as a method of land appropriation and justification for ongoing violence towards Indigenous peoples. However, I also want to underline that this colonial violence is not limited to industrial forms of agriculture or a few ‘bad seeds,’ but extends to small-scale sustainable agriculture. I believe that within settler food sovereignty movements – where there is much focus on the inherent goodness and progressiveness of small-scale sustainable settler farms – that it is necessary for settlers to understand that settler agriculture of many shapes and sizes has and continues to facilitate colonial land appropriation, literally occupying Indigenous lands and food systems.

Although interviewees and broader settler food sovereignty narratives also underline the roles that commercial and industrial development play in appropriating Indigenous lands, I highlight land dispossession via settler agriculture as one of the ways that settlers may see ourselves as complicit in colonial land occupation, whether we are farmers or food activists advocating for settler farmer rights. While I in no way want to minimize the role of corporate and industrial development in land appropriation, I believe this focus on settler farmland as a method of colonial dispossession is an issue settler farmers and food activists must address if we wish to respond in a meaningful way to Indigenous calls for decolonization.

In addition to thinking about the role of settler agriculture in colonial land appropriation, many of the people I interviewed underlined the importance of understanding the negative impacts that loss of land has had on Indigenous food sovereignty. For example, Corine Singfield, an Organic Agriculture Researcher (who was also a farmer in Bella Coola, B.C., where she traded foods with her Indigenous neighbours), told me that food sovereignty is often very difficult for the Indigenous communities she works with because:

There’s no more hunting range. There’s still a lot of salmon, but even then, last year, it was really bad. Only a few elders got their food fish. There’s still a few bats. You can’t eat the shellfish.

A graduate student doing research with Indigenous communities in the Northwest Territories also talked about the difficulties Indigenous communities face in accessing food, connecting it to a lack of self-determination: “In both the communities I work in, long-term food insecurity is a symptom of not having any say over their land, which is a food sovereignty issue.” These comments support Indigenous assertions that colonial land appropriation continues to restrict Indigenous access to their lands and food systems and that Indigenous self-determination is a key foundation for creating food sovereignty.

I highlight the above points because they reinforce Indigenous food sovereignty frameworks, and critical Indigenous studies’ theories relating to land, making visible several absences in settler food sovereignty discourses. For example, neither Indigenous jurisdiction over land nor colonial occupation of these lands tend to be meaningfully engaged with in settler food sovereignty narratives. Instead, these discourses often reify settler rights to land in North America, particularly through the continual foregrounding of settler farmers’ right to produce food as well as calls to ensure small-scale settler farmers retain ownership over farmlands. While access to land is a core demand of food sovereignty movements, rematriation of land to Indigenous nations is much less discussed, with the exception of Indigenous food sovereignty. Within settler narratives, appropriation of land is generally understood as corporate appropriation of small-scale settler farmers’ lands, rather than settler appropriation of Indigenous lands.

Questioning Settler Investments in the State and Private Property

Because settler Canadian food sovereignty narratives tend to underline land appropriation by corporations and foreign investors, these narratives often propose ways forward that are based in restricting these actors from buying up land. For example, organizations such as the NFU call for policies that restrict who can own farmland, legislate how much land an individual, corporation, or cooperative can own, set up financial supports so that new farmers are able to access land, and implement restrictions on transferring farmland to non-farm use (2015). With these kinds of policies, settler narratives often focus on the importance of land ownership by the general public while looking to the Canadian state to enforce laws that support Canadian citizens’ rights to own food lands. For instance, the PFPP (2015) calls for a national policy based on the following: “Canadian food land must be owned and controlled, as much as possible, by the citizens who live and work on that soil, with prohibitions enacted on foreign, corporate, investor, and absentee ownership” (16). Within these kinds of visions for food system change, it is clear that settler-dominated food sovereignty groups tend to advocate for state policies that facilitate settler ownership of land without attention to the ways that the state and settler occupation drive the Canadian colonial project. In these narratives, there are no questions about whether settlers are foreigners who now own and control Indigenous lands.

Along with these visions for food system change, the PFPP highlights the need to “recognize Indigenous jurisdiction over traditional lands and waters” (2015, 17). It also calls for increased protection for farm and forestlands, underlining the need to improve land access for small-scale farmers in ways that are “inclusive of traditional food sources including hunting, gathering, fishing, and agriculture” (13). However, I question whether these kinds of statements change settler narratives in ways that challenge colonial land appropriation. For example, settler recognition of Indigenous jurisdiction does not address the reasons why settlers are the ones who have the power to grant this recognition in the first place. Furthermore, calls to ‘include’ Indigenous food systems in settler agrarian systems continue to foreground settler farmers’ ability to decide how land is used and fail to grapple with the ways that this ‘inclusion’ occurs within settler tendencies to assimilate Indigenous practices. While it is important to note that the PFPP also includes a discussion paper on Indigenous food sovereignty written by Indigenous activists and their allies (referenced throughout this paper), the majority of the PFPP overview and remaining discussion papers focus on settler food systems and state policy, without adequate attention to how settler food systems impede Indigenous food sovereignty and struggles for land.

Interviewees also noted this absence of settler attention regarding how settler food systems often interfere with Indigenous access to and jurisdiction of their lands. Referring to the organization she is involved with, an Ontario farmer explained:

When we think of food sovereignty, we think a lot about how farmland needs to remain in the hands of farmers. You know, when we say that, we’re not thinking, ‘As opposed to Indigenous communities,’ we’re thinking, ‘As opposed to absentee investors and development corporations,’ and stuff like that.

Although she adds this is not the case within the entire organization, I want to highlight the reality (and relative normalcy) that a progressive organization dedicated to issues of land and food have generally failed to engage with Indigenous peoples who have lived on that same land for millennia and who continue to play a leading role in both advocating for and putting their bodies on the line for the wellbeing of those lands.⁴

One interviewee noted that even when settlers are aware of Indigenous land rights that they are often resistant to shifting focus away from settler farmers’ land rights. Referring to settler food activists, one of the interviewees who attended the

⁴ It is important to note that during the research for this paper, several groups were beginning to form within predominantly settler-led food organizations with the aim of building Indigenous-settler relations (i.e. the National Farmers Union Indigenous Solidarity Working Group and Meal Exchange’s Decolonizing Book Club). Although the work of these emerging groups is vital, I believe that they have yet to influence broader settler movements in action-oriented ways. While I in no way want to minimize the work of these groups, I believe that my arguments continue to be relevant in relation to overarching settler Canadian food sovereignty narratives and actions.

same food event described in the introduction explained: “I think that people get frustrated when they start to see the conversation move [away] from young farmers or access to farmland. They see that there is a lot of need to focus there and are not ready to look at the food system from another way.” Here, she gestures to a common perception held by settler food sovereignty narratives that it is necessary to center settler farmer land rights, both because settler agriculture is often what settlers understand as food systems and because settlers seem to have difficulty seeing beyond the inequities we experience. In this context, I am interested in further examining why settler farmers and activists, who tend to foreground their connectedness to the land, are often either resistant to or simply do not think about whose lands we draw sustenance from.

Within the interviews, settler farmers – who spent time working with Indigenous activists and/or who have been immersed in more radical activist work – suggested settler resistance to and lack of awareness about Indigenous land jurisdiction is based in settler investments in the Canadian state. For example, a young farmer who identifies as someone with radical leanings told me:

There are [organizational] members that are invested in the current way that Canada is structured... They’re very invested in the Canadian nation-state. Or I should say Canadian state and settler colonial nations. And they’re not, for most members, going to step outside that without a push, if at all... There’s a lot of apparatuses both repressive and ideological that are serving the purpose of legitimizing and enforcing the authority of the state.

While interviewees did not delve into the specifics of why settlers are often attached to the Canadian state, various scholars who have written on the topic give us an idea of what this attachment is rooted in. For example, Mi’kmaq scholar Bonita Lawrence (2002) explains that in order for Canadians to maintain an understanding of ourselves as a “‘decent’ people,” we must avoid/erase any record of how the nation-state was designed to effect the “total disappearance” of Indigenous peoples (23). In Mackey’s research (2016), she describes settler farmers’ entitlement to ‘their’ land, explaining that this entitlement is rooted in private property regimes, Western ontologies that rely on dualities of certainty and uncertainty, and “hierarchical and racialized categories of personhood” (33). She explains that farmers feel their claims to land have gained traction as they have worked to ‘improve’ the soil, and in doing so have contributed to building the Canadian state.

Several interviewees also talked about settler investment in private property, relating this to hard work and settler investment in land. An interviewee who had farmed for many years, explained that her organic farm community feels connected to the land in part because of “how hard they’ve worked to get it and what they’ve sacrificed in order to be able to pay for it.” She explained that giving away land – even to other farmers – was a difficult idea for many of the organic farmers she knows:

There's many of them [who say], 'Why should we give this land to [aspiring farmers] for free? Why should they have an undue advantage in the marketplace over those of us who had to buy our land and it was really hard to do that? There were a lot of sacrifices made and now we own it.'

She told me she was surprised that organic farmers would be so attached to private property models because for her, "I can see so well that land, particularly land from which we get our sustenance, is not meant to be owned privately."

An organic farmer and activist, Ayla Fenton, who is actively involved in the National Farmers Union as well as La Via Campesina, also talked about the need to question land ownership, including how she came to this questioning through an awareness of Indigenous land issues. She queries:

Who should have access to and control of land and [does] that necessarily mean that you should be owning it? I think that's something that becoming more aware of Indigenous issues has really challenged my ideas of what land ownership means and stewardship... Even when I started farming I was like, 'Oh it would be so lovely to own my own little farm,' and kind of had this feeling of, 'then I would have control over this land or I could do what I want on this land.' And I think that's shifted to realizing that maybe land shouldn't belong to any of us.

Ayla's above comments express settler farmers' desires to own land as well as the potential for moving beyond land ownership regimes. Within our interview conversations, several settler farmers suggested that this desire for ownership is based in the idea that owning land enables them to farm in a sustainable and economically viable way. They explained that ownership gives farmers assurance that what they invest in the land (i.e. building up the soil) will not be taken away from them. From this perspective, private property is seen as a way to ensure that land will continue to be farmed in an ecologically sustainable manner, so that surrounding communities can access organic produce (at least those who can afford it). This attachment to owning land suggests the embeddedness of private property regimes among settler farmers, including small-scale organic farmers who see themselves as working towards food system change.

Lastly, my conversations with numerous interviewees highlighted how settler farmer resistance to Indigenous jurisdiction of land is also based in the material implications settlers may face if colonial land appropriation is meaningfully addressed. For example, the radical-leaning farmer quoted previously explained that some members of his organization "would be really resistant to Indigenous liberation and Indigenous food sovereignty if it was actualized in terms of giving Indigenous nations access to land and land claims and treaties." He adds: "their material interests in terms of maintaining Canada as it stands are pretty directly opposed to questions of national liberation for Indigenous peoples." In light of previous interviewee

comments, this resistance may be particularly pertinent when it comes to farmers who depend on the land for their livelihoods and who feel they have an intimate relationship with the lands on which they work.

Overall, interviewee responses suggest that ideas about how to move forward within settler Canadian food sovereignty movements often remain rooted in the Canadian state and private ownership regimes. For me, this is problematic as it fails to respond to Indigenous calls to challenge private property and the Canadian state as colonial institutions that continue to dispossess Indigenous nations (i.e. Dennison, 2014; Tuck and Yang, 2012). While several interviewees called for the need to question these institutions, they acknowledged that there was either resistance to this kind of questioning or an absence of it altogether within their settler food organizations. This resistance/absence is also reflected in broader settler Canadian food sovereignty discourses, which tend to focus on ‘foreign’ and corporate land appropriation. When Indigenous jurisdiction of land is acknowledged by settler food movements, there is generally little engagement with how these actions might challenge settler land ownership; instead, documents such as the PFPP (2011; 2015) call for settler food systems to be “more inclusive” of Indigenous food systems rather than highlighting how settler food systems need to radically transform in order to support Indigenous food sovereignty (i.e. by giving land back to Indigenous nations).

Questioning Settler Visions for Alternative Land Arrangements

While many of the ways forward proposed by settler food sovereignty movements rely on private property frameworks, these movements have also offered solutions based in alternative land arrangements that attempt to subvert private land ownership models. For example, both the NFU (2015) and PFPP have proposed community-owned land trusts as mechanisms “to ensure food production by local farmers” (NFU, 2015, 32). Within the interviews, several farmers and community-based organizers also talked about the potential for alternative land arrangements to safeguard land for food provisioning. At the same time, they noted their uncertainty regarding how these arrangements might meaningfully support Indigenous food sovereignty.

For example, Heather Pritchard, an organic farmer and program manager for the Foodlands Trust Project in British Columbia, talked about the potential of land trusts as a way to remove land from the private market so that it is not affected by speculation or increasing land values and instead remains as food land. Heather was particularly interested in thinking about land trust models that might contribute to protecting food lands while respecting Indigenous food systems. Speaking about land trusts, she asked:

So what does it look like for [Indigenous] values to be recognized and to be respected? We’re still in dialogue about that. I don’t know what that looks like. You know, it could look like: this land is put in a trust and there are Indigenous people on the trust board. When land comes into trust, you’d look at the land itself. There may be potential for

hunting, gathering, medicine, and whatever, and that potential needs to be recognized and that needs to be part of what is protected.

At the same time she talked about her unease as to whether land trusts are appropriate on Indigenous territories:

The whole idea of land as unceded territory - how do we relate to that? Even the idea that we can take something in trust which is not ours? It's hard to know and yet in terms of the Canadian government there is an ownership that happens. I still don't know how to resolve what that looks like.

Here, Heather underlines the tension of land models developed and controlled primarily by settlers that do not meaningfully address land as Indigenous territory.

In addition to land trust models, Heather spoke about the potential of framing land as commons. Citing potential commonalities, she explained, "Even in Indigenous languages the commons is an important concept, right? [However], it comes out of Britain. It's closer but it's a division, if you know what I mean." Here, she suggests that while the commons may have the potential to resonate with both Indigenous and settler communities, it remains a European framework. In this context of thinking about how to move forward, Heather explains that process is vital:

As we move forward in respect and dialogue and relationship and common experience with each other, there may be something that emerges and I don't want to project what that would be because then that would be me forcing my projection and ideology on [Indigenous] systems.

While this comment leaves open the possibility of mutually acceptable land arrangements, Heather suggests that these arrangements cannot be imagined or solely proposed by settlers. Rather, as she suggests, frameworks that emerge must be based in respect, dialogue, and relationship. From my perspective, to do otherwise as settlers would be to make decisions about food and land systems that are not ours to determine. Similarly, another interviewee spoke about the importance for her food-based organization to learn "how to be supportive but not directive" in relation to Indigenous food initiatives. For me, these conversations hint at the tensions between the ways that settlers might contribute to creating food sovereignty while at the same time challenging settler tendencies to "rescue settler futurity" (Tuck and Yang, 2012, 3).

An academic, who has worked with Indigenous communities in Canada and food sovereignty movements internationally, explicitly questioned the ability of settler-proposed alternative land arrangements to challenge colonial land appropriation. Reflecting on her work in a Canadian context she explained:

We're not starting from a blank slate. We're not starting from an unoccupied territory, so that really complicates the notion of land

reform and makes us wonder, ‘Are we just talking about colonization? A different form of more progressive colonization?’ I think we have to be really careful and I think one of the things I’ve seen happen in B.C. over the last ten years is a really deep conversation about these things and not a lot of resolution.

By highlighting the potential for land reforms to reify colonial relations, this interviewee echoes Indigenous calls for settlers to engage with Indigenous land jurisdiction and understand the colonial contexts in which we live. While she underlines that important conversations are occurring, she also highlights an absence of settler actions to address settler land occupation. This ties back into Tuck and Yang’s (2012) argument that if we are to think about land in the context of decolonization, we must address settler land appropriation, and approach relations with land in ways that are “accountable to Indigenous sovereignty and futurity” (35).

Although future land arrangements, and what this means for settlers, remained unresolved within the interview conversations, multiple interviewees emphasized that perhaps this unknowing is precisely the point. Rather than coming up with settler frameworks for future land use, numerous interviewees suggested that giving land back to Indigenous nations will encourage a process in which settlers cede control and support Indigenous nations’ ability to determine future relationships with land. For example, a graduate student activist who works with both local and global food sovereignty movements told me:

Ultimately, we settler Canadians need to respect the treaties and original lands need to be returned. Then Indigenous communities can decide what happens on it. Maybe they want settlers to continue farming if they do so in a way that’s consistent with the values of that community. I really don’t know.

A farmer based in Ontario also stressed the necessity of giving land back to Indigenous peoples, and that the process of doing so will have material impacts, particularly in relation to farmers. He told me:

If we really take national liberation seriously in a tangible sense, in terms that we’re actually giving land back, that’s going to be farmland. There’s going to be people who are going to have to move, or who are going to have new neighbours, or options to buy land is going to get taken away from them. I mean, I think that’s a correct political line to take. That’s the correct action to take but that’s not a neutral thing. That has a detrimental effect on [farmers] as individuals at least in the short term.

With these comments, both interviewees suggest that Indigenous communities, rather than settlers, should determine what future land arrangements look like. These comments also suggest that doing so will involve uncertainty for settlers. Mackay (2016) expresses a similar sentiment in her research, proposing that settlers allow ourselves to become unsettled by uncertain futures; she argues we can

do this by shifting our epistemologies through listening, hearing, knowing, and acting differently. For Tuck and Yang (2012), uncertainty is key; they note that questions regarding settler futures on Indigenous lands “need not, and perhaps cannot, be answered in order for decolonization to exist as a framework” (35).

Overall, interviewees’ comments underlined the importance of thinking about how alternative land arrangements proposed by settlers may continue to reproduce colonial dispossession. Rather than developing frameworks based on continuing settler futures on Indigenous lands, several interviewees suggested that moving towards food sovereignty will require settlers to return land to Indigenous nations. This echoes Indigenous scholars and activists who argue that decolonization requires settlers to cede land, power, and privilege (i.e. Tuck and Yang, 2012). Interviewees also suggested that settler uncertainty about our futures on Indigenous lands is a necessary part of moving forward, building on arguments that decolonization is not accountable to settlers but to Indigenous futures and sovereignty (Tuck and Yang, 2012).

Responsibilities and Relationships: Discussion and a Few Thoughts in Conclusion

In reflecting on this paper, I want to go back to Daigle’s (2017, 16) questions of how settler food activists might impede Indigenous movements for land and self-determination and what responsibilities settler activists have to Indigenous nations and their lands. In responding to these questions, I consider how my conversations with interviewees as well as settler food sovereignty narratives more broadly respond to – or struggle to respond to – Indigenous calls to change settler relationships to land and support Indigenous resurgence movements.

Responding to Daigle’s first question, I argue that one way that settler food activists impede Indigenous land and sovereignty movements occurs when we reaffirm settler rights to Indigenous territories. From the interviews, it is clear that many settler food organizations are either ignorant of Indigenous jurisdiction of land or aware of this jurisdiction but resistant to shifting away from settler farmers’ rights to land. A scan of broader settler Canadian food sovereignty narratives also suggests a heavy focus on settler farmers’ land rights as well as ensuring that Canadians have the right to determine how land is used. While this assertion of rights is generally made in relation to land appropriation in the interests of capital, it fails to engage with questions like: What happens when the rights of settler and Indigenous food provisioners stand in contrast to, restrict, and/or impede the food sovereignty of one another? How can settlers have rights to Indigenous lands that were stolen, never ceded, and/or were subsumed into the Canadian nation state through misinterpreted and/or dubious treaties?

Furthermore, the language of rights that was often used throughout the interviews, and which is a staple of settler food sovereignty narratives more generally, fails to address Indigenous critiques of rights-based frameworks. For example, Corntassel and Bryce (2012) argue that rights discourses fail to engage with

the deep and long-standing relationships Indigenous nations have with the land, including Indigenous self-determination that is rooted in that land. Instead, rights-based frameworks reaffirm the Canadian state as a legitimate governing structure that decides whose food sovereignty takes precedence. Although settler Canadian calls for Indigenous rights to land may seem progressive, I suggest that these calls may, as Watts (2013) has argued in relation to settler use of Indigenous ceremonies, act as “just another function of multiculturalism, a cultural right to be *allowed* by the state rather than serving as a basis for independent societies” (161). I suggest that continuing to use rights as a primary way of framing food sovereignty impedes our ability to interrogate nation-state claims to authority while at the same time delegitimizing Indigenous laws and governance structures that have guided relationships with land and beings for millennia.

Second, building on the above points about settler land rights, I argue that settler food activists impede Indigenous movements when we frame land dispossession in relation to corporate and foreign appropriation but not settler appropriation. One interviewee talked about how their food-related organization focuses on land appropriation by absentee investors and the development industry but not land appropriation experienced by Indigenous peoples. Similarly, settler Canadian food sovereignty organizations often focus on land appropriation by large corporations and land speculators, while failing to mention settler appropriation of Indigenous lands. Tuck and Yang (2012) might call this focus (or focused refusal) a settler move to innocence in which settler food sovereignty narratives highlight one area of oppression (i.e. land appropriation by multinational corporations) but not others (i.e. land appropriation by settler farmers and the settler state). From my perspective, this move denies settler complicity in land appropriation by shifting the gaze, and in doing so, frames settlers primarily as victims rather than colonizers.

Third, I argue that settler food sovereignty movements impede Indigenous land and sovereignty struggles when settlers fail to interrogate private property regimes and the Canadian state. Several interviewees talked about settler investments in both these institutions, while broader food sovereignty movements call for state policies to forward food sovereignty in Canada (i.e. such as legislating how much land individuals or corporations can own). If settlers are to learn from Indigenous scholars and activists, I suggest we reject the state as a key actor who will facilitate food sovereignty over the long-term and as a permanent structure that is here to stay. We need to learn from groups such as the Indigenous Circle who explain that settler state policies and support for food programs are “short-term solutions” while long-term solutions need to be found in Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination (ICFSC, 2011, 9).

In addition to settler investments in the Canadian state, several interviewees pointed out settler attachments to private property. They explained that settler farmers are often invested in private ownership because they feel this secures their investment in the lands they farm. Similarly, broader Canadian food sovereignty narratives generally do not engage with the ways that western understandings of land

and private property are an essential part of settler occupation. However, several interviewees also articulated the problematics of land ownership, echoing Indigenous scholars and activists who theorize private property regimes as a key tool of settler occupation (i.e. Osage, 2014).

Fourth, even when settler Canadian food sovereignty movements' future visions move beyond individual property ownership to imaginings of alternative land arrangements, I suggest these can also impede Indigenous resurgence movements. For example, several interviewees pointed out the tensions in settler Canadian proposals for alternative land arrangements such as land trusts and commons, with one person explaining that these have the potential to reproduce colonial land occupation. This critique echoes Tuck and Yang's (2012) argument that frameworks such as the commons, which turn land into space for *all* peoples, erases settler appropriation of Indigenous lands and thus denies Indigenous sovereignties. Furthermore, Tuck and Yang (2012) might compare moves to incorporate Indigenous peoples into settler-directed land trusts or settler commons to moves that render "Indigenous people (a 0.9% 'super-minority') completely invisible and absorbed, just an asterisk group to be subsumed into the legion of occupiers" (24).

Fifth, I argue that settler food movements impede Indigenous struggles for land and self-determination when we advocate for settler agrarian food systems to include Indigenous food systems. Calls for inclusion are problematic because they continue to center settler agrarian food systems, rather than supporting diverse Indigenous food systems which may not 'fit within' settler food systems. Moreover, these calls for inclusion fail to transform broader colonial institutions and structures that aim to prevent Indigenous food provisioning practices in the first place. These calls are particularly problematic within the broader settler colonial project which continually seeks to assimilate (and thus disappear) Indigenous peoples in order to legitimate settler occupation and claims of settler rootedness. Thus, calls for inclusion must be understood in relation to settler tendencies to assimilate select parts of Indigenous cultures and practices in ways that erase Indigenous sovereignties and ways of belonging to the land (Tuck and Yang, 2012).

Sixth, I suggest that settlers may also impede Indigenous movements for land and sovereignty when we highlight our connections to land without attention to how these connections are made possible by colonization. For example, several interviewees talked about how settler farmers consider themselves to be connected with the land. Settler Canadian food sovereignty discourses have also tended to underline the importance of farmers' connections to land, with statements that understand food providers, whether Indigenous or settler, as "people of the land" (i.e. Wiebe in Desmarais, 2002, 98). But what does it mean to give settler farmers these kinds of titles/attributes? My worry is that by positioning settler farmers as those who are among the most connected to and capable of taking care of land, settler food sovereignty narratives position these farmers closer to Indigenous rather than settler legacies. Furthermore, while Mackey (2016) talks about settler farmers as justifying their occupation of Indigenous lands through hard work and state-building, settler

Canadian food sovereignty narratives often suggest that settler farmers' land rights are justified not only by hard work but through connectedness to land and ability to 'positively' contribute to the soil and local food systems. But what does this positioning accomplish? Does it make settlers feel more comfortable and secure (at least we are 'good' settlers) or does it make us uncertain about our relationships and futures on Indigenous lands?

In order to begin to address Daigle's second question, I argue that settler food activists have responsibilities that involve identifying, questioning, and challenging the ways that settler food sovereignty movements impede Indigenous movements for change, including those mentioned above: settler land rights and corresponding investments in settler private property regimes and the Canadian state. I also suggest that it is important to question settler imaginings of our futures on Indigenous lands, including settler proposals for alternative land arrangements that fail to challenge settler land occupation as well as settler calls for 'inclusion' of Indigenous food systems. Additionally, I argue that it is important to question settler articulations of our connections to land without attention to the ways that these connections are made possible through colonial occupation.

My hope is that this kind of questioning will prompt settlers to radically reimagine our relationships to land. Necessarily, this reimagining will be guided by Indigenous peoples who have offered advice to settler food activists. For example, the Indigenous Circle (2010) outlines several ways that Indigenous knowledges might help settlers understand our responsibilities to land. They encourage settlers to approach relationships to land and one another through cooperation and sharing as well as understanding that everything is connected, place matters, and the earth is family. They also encourage settlers to approach relationships with land through sacred and spiritual connections. At the same time, the Circle cautions that Indigenous knowledges are not for everyone, suggesting that settlers cannot and should not have the same connections to land as Indigenous peoples. Rather, through learning about responsibilities to land, our relationships and ways of being will differ depending on our positionality and lived experiences. Part of understanding these differences will involve settlers arriving with an understanding of how we are complicit in settler colonialism, a learning that the Circle has requested settlers engage with before approaching relationship-building with Indigenous communities.

Settler food sovereignty movements can also learn from Indigenous activists and scholars who argue for a shift from frameworks based in rights to those based in responsibilities (Corntassel, 2012; Corntassel and Bryce, 2012; Coté, 2016). I argue that this shift would change settler food sovereignty narratives, which currently call for ensuring people's rights to land, to calls that ensure people have the ability to engage with their responsibilities and relationships to land. This shift would create a framework in which settlers are encouraged to interrogate our histories and current connections with land. Importantly, frameworks based in relationships and responsibilities are grounded in Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty (i.e. governance systems and protocols), rather than settler state authority. Lastly, this

shift to responsibilities suggests that moving forward in a settler colonial context necessarily involves settlers giving back land. As several interviewees suggested, land rematriation will be an uncomfortable and uncertain process for settlers.

Throughout this process of learning about and attempting to enact settler responsibilities, I think it is necessary for settlers to approach this process with uncertainty, humility, and a willingness to listen and hear. Interviewees underlined this need for uncertainty as have multiple scholars (i.e. Mackay, 2016; Tuck and Yang, 2012). While engaging with Indigenous calls to return land are clearly difficult for settler food activists and settler farmers, I believe there is space for us to engage with deeper understandings and actions relating to the multiple layers of dispossession occurring on the land, including settler complicity within these layers. I suggest this not with the aim of championing a common experience of dispossession nor the adoption of a framework based on a hierarchy of oppressions, but rather to indicate the potential spaces that settlers might begin to enter into solidarity with Indigenous peoples, in ways that are incommensurable, uncomfortable, and uncertain rather than common. Tuck and Yang (2012) have argued that settlers need to understand and challenge how and when we make ‘moves to innocence,’ unsettle our futures on Indigenous lands, and approach Indigenous-settler solidarity with ‘an ethic of incommensurability.’ This includes not knowing whether settlers will be asked to leave these lands and letting go of settler desires to highlight and embrace commonalities in ways that obscure or disappear differences. For me this not-knowing is particularly important in food spaces where, in my experience, settlers are often quick to jump at the notion of sharing land (i.e. through settler approaches such as the commons).

Rather than assuming solidarities between Indigenous and settler food activists may begin with land sharing, I believe it is necessary for settlers to let go of our need to safeguard our futures on Indigenous lands, and instead approach solidarities with the understanding that we will likely be asked to do unknown and difficult things. While these may almost certainly involve ceding settler land, power, and futurity, it remains necessarily unclear what this will look like on the ground. As Tuck and Yang (2012) argue: “The Native futures, the lives to be lived once the settler nation is gone – these are the unwritten possibilities made possible by an ethic of incommensurability.... Decolonization is not an “and”. It is an elsewhere” (Tuck and Yang, 2012, 36).

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Indigenous and non-Indigenous food activists who are engaged in grassroots work and who inspired this work. Thank you to all those interviewees who generously shared their thoughts and experiences. Thank you to my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Sarah Wakefield, who read many copies of this paper and provided invaluable comments, as well as FEAST and Adam Linnard for their ongoing insights. Thank you to my doctoral committee, Dr. Martin Cannon, Dr. Ken

MacDonald, and Dr. Martha Stiegman, as well as my external examiners, Dr. Lynne Davis and Dr. Bonnie McElhinny, who provided important feedback for my doctoral dissertation, upon which this paper is based. Many thanks also to the anonymous reviewers who gave incredibly thoughtful feedback. Lastly, thank you to the ACME editors who were generous with a flexible timeline for revisions while I was having a baby and to Bryn, who gave me space to reflect. This work was supported by the Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship program and SSHRC Insight Grant #76166-‘Unsettling Perspectives and Contested Spaces: Building Equity and Justice in Canadian Food Activism.’

References

- Alfred, Taiaiake. 2009. Restitution is the real pathway to justice for Indigenous peoples. In, Gregory Younging, Jonathan Dewar and Mike DeGagné (eds.), *Response, responsibility, and renewal: Canada's truth and reconciliation journey*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation. pp. 179-190.
- Byrd, Jodi. 2011. *The transit of empire: Indigenous critiques of colonialism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Corntassel, Jeff. 2012. Re-envisioning resurgence: Indigenous pathways to decolonization and sustainable self-determination. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1), 86-101.
- Corntassel, Jeff and Cheryl Bryce. 2012. Practicing sustainable self-determination: Indigenous approaches to cultural restoration and revitalization. *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, XVII(II), 151-162.
- Coté, Charlotte. 2016. “Indigenizing” food sovereignty. Revitalizing Indigenous food practices and ecological knowledges in Canada and the United States. *Humanities*, 5(57), 1-14.
- Coulthard, Glen Sean. 2014. *Red skin white masks: Rejecting the colonial politics of recognition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Daigle, Michelle. 2017. Tracing the terrain of Indigenous food sovereignties. *Journal of Peasant Studies*. doi: 10.1080/03066150.2017.1324423
- Daigle, Michelle. 2016. Awawanenitakik: The spatial politics of recognition and relational geographies of Indigenous self-determination. *The Canadian Geographer*, 60(2), 259-269.
- Dennison, Jean. 2014. White Indigenous Oklahoma and Chicano Arizona: 21st-century legal mechanisms of settlement. *Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, 37(1), 162-180.
- Desmarais, Annette Aurélie and Hannah Wittman. 2014. Farmers, foodies and First Nations: Getting to food sovereignty in Canada. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 41(6), 1153–1173.

- Desmarais, Annette Aurélie. 2002. The Via Campesina: Consolidating an international peasant and farm movements. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 29(2), 91-124.
- Desmarais, Annette Aurélie. 2007. *La Via Campesina: Globalization and the power of peasants*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.
- Grey, Sam and Raj Patel. 2014. Food sovereignty as decolonization: Some contributions from Indigenous movements to food system and development politics. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 32(3), 431-444. doi:10.1007/s10460-014-9548-9
- Indigenous Circle, Food Secure Canada. 2011. *Indigenous food sovereignty: Discussion paper 1, People's Food Policy Project*. Retrieved from https://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/DP1_Indigenous_Food_Sovereignty.pdf
- Indigenous Circle, Food Secure Canada. 2010. *First principles protocol for building cross-cultural relationships*. Retrieved from https://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/First_Principles_July_2010.pdf
- Kamal, Asfia Gulrukh, Rene Linklater, Shirley Thompson, Joseph Dipple and Ithinto Mechisowin Committee. 2015. A recipe for change: Reclamation of Indigenous food sovereignty in O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation for decolonization, resource sharing, and cultural restoration. *Globalizations*, 12(4), 559-575
- King, Thomas. 2012. *The inconvenient Indian: A curious account of Native people in North America*. Toronto: Doubleday Canada.
- Lawrence, Bonita. 2002. Rewriting histories of the land: Colonization and Indigenous resistance in eastern Canada. In S. H. Razack (Ed.), *Race, space, and the law: Unmapping a white settler society*. Toronto: Between the Lines.
- Lawrence, Bonita and Ena Dua. 2005. Decolonizing anti-racism. *Social Justice*, 32(4), 120-143.
- Mackey, Eva. 2016. *Unsettled expectations: Uncertainty, land and settler decolonization*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.
- Martens, Tabitha. 2015. Good news in food: Understanding the value and promise of Indigenous food sovereignty in western Canada (Master's thesis, University of Manitoba). Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/1993/30825>
- Morrison, Dawn. 2011. Indigenous food sovereignty: A model for social learning. In, Hannah Wittman, Annette Aurélie Desmarais and Nettie Wiebe (eds.), *Food sovereignty in Canada: Creating just and sustainable food systems*. Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing. pp. 97-113.
- National Farmers Union. 2015, March. *Losing our grip, 2015 update: How corporate farmland buy-up, rising farm debt, and agribusiness financing of*

- inputs threaten family farms*. Retrieved from <http://www.nfu.ca/issues/losing-our-grip-2015-update>
- Nyéleni. 2007, February. *Forum for food sovereignty*. Nyéleni Village, Sélingué, Mali. Retrieved from https://nyeleni.org/DOWNLOADS/Nyeleni_EN.pdf
- People's Food Policy Project. 2015. *Resetting the table: A people's food policy for Canada* (2nd Ed.). Montreal: Food Secure Canada. Retrieved from https://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/fsc-resetting-2015_web.pdf
- People's Food Policy Project. 2011. *Resetting the table: A people's food policy for Canada*. Montreal: Food Secure Canada. Retrieved from <http://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/default/files/fsc-resetting2012-8half11-lowres-en.pdf>
- Samson, Colin. 1999. The dispossession of the Innu and the colonial magic of Canadian Liberalism. *Citizenship Studies*, 3(1), 5-25.
- Tuck, Eve and Wayne K. Yang. 2012. Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1), 1-40.
- Vowel, Chelsea. 2016. *Indigenous writes: A guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit issues in Canada*. Winnipeg: HighWater.
- Watts, Vanessa. 2013. Indigenous place-thought and agency amongst humans and non-humans (First Woman and Sky Woman go on a European world tour!). *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 2(1), 20-34.
- Waziyatawin. 2012. The paradox of Indigenous resurgence at the end of empire. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1), 68-85.
- Wiebe, Nettie and Kevin Wipf. 2011. Nurturing food sovereignty in Canada. In, Hannah Wittman, Annette Aurélie Desmarais and Nettie Wiebe (eds.), *Food sovereignty in Canada: Creating just and sustainable food systems*. Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing. pp. 1-19.
- Whetung, Madeline. 2016. *Nishnaabeg Encounters: Living Indigenous Landscapes* (Master's thesis, University of Toronto). Retrieved from: https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/76189/3/Whetung_Madeline_201611_MA_thesis.pdf
- Wolfe, Patrick. Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8(4), 387-409.