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Indigenous Feminist Philosophy in Idle No More: Theorizing the Space-Time of Canada's Settler Colonial Politics and Alternative Decolonial Imaginaries

by

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Abstract

In this thesis, I explore Indigenous feminist philosophy from the ground up through a case study of Indigenous women's political organizing through Idle No More (INM). Specifically, I examine the ways in which Indigenous feminist resistance in INM identifies a spatiotemporal configuration of both Canadian settler state politics and decolonial alternatives. To do so, I use state, media, and public responses, rhetoric, and actions that emerged in response to the Idle No More movement, as well as the actions, rhetoric, written works, and Indigenous political orders of the Idle No More protestors. These interventions illustrate that: (1) settler colonialism constitutes the spatiotemporal configuration of Canadian politics, functioning to contain and eliminate Indigenous political life; (2) Idle No More was configured by the spatiotemporal configuration of Indigenous political orders, which express temporal relations that span the past, present, and future, enabling them to create alternative, decolonial imaginaries with novel forms of politics and power. Drawing on Idle No More's political interventions, I theorize new Treaty imaginaries.

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Preface

Tanisi, niwihowin Cara Peacock. I am Néhiyaw (Cree) and Anishinaabe, born and raised in Grande Prairie, Alberta in Treaty 8 territory. On my mom's side I am Néhiyaw with connections to Sawridge First Nation from Treaty 8. On my dad's side I am Anishinaabe and a registered member of Nipissing First Nation from the Robinson Huron Treaty. My communities are located over 3,000 km away from each other, but both are in the northern bush and couched next to lakes, the yahciyiniw sâkahikan (Lesser Slave Lake) and nbisiing (Nipissing Lake). This duality grounds my identity and I hold my Néhiyaw and Anishinaabe identities equally.

My Néhiyaw teachings also ground my research. Néhiyaw governance and law are shaped by Wâhkôhtowin, a Néhiyaw word often translated to "kinship," which recognizes that we are all embedded in complex, relational webs with others (humans, land, more-than-human kin, etc.). But Wâhkôhtowin also involves the responsibilities we bear to those relations, orienting and guiding us to hold space for one another's well-being and to cultivate good relations. Néhiyaw teachings motivate me to be a good relative, prompting me to consider the various relations I am in embedded in and their respective responsibilities. Being a good relative in my research means that I have a responsibility to the different people, scholarly traditions, and knowledges that I engage with, directing me to approach all these relations with care, reciprocity, and respect, whether I am engaging with differing people, traditions, and knowledges or my own. These teachings and practices shape and ground my research engagement.

I wanted to begin by introducing myself in Cree, acknowledging my relationships and communities, and explaining the Cree teachings that outline my relational responsibilities. I do this because this reminds me who I am, where I am from, and who I am accountable to.

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Miigwech to the Indigenous nations in Treaty 7 for letting my call Mohkinsis home for the last two years.

Dedication

—

For my parents Adele Peacock (née Twin) and Wayne Peacock.

After all these years of schooling, you have both still taught me the most important lessons about resisting colonialism and creating joyful Indigenous futures.

Introduction

Context & Approach

The Idle No More movement was founded by four women in the prairies of Saskatchewan in late 2012, Sylvia McAdam, Alex Wilson, Jessica Gordon, and Sheelah McLean (3 Indigenous and 1 non-Indigenous ally). Idle No More sparked protests across Canada and became one of the largest Canada-wide social movements in history. The movement was noteworthy for being largely led and organized by women and the outspoken advocacy for Indigenous women's inclusion in political leadership. Idle No More founders began exchanging e-mails after the then Conservative federal government, headed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, set out two federal budget bills, Bills C-38 (Jobs, Growth, and Long-Term Prosperity Act) and C-45 (Jobs and Growth Act). These bills were intended to facilitate the Conservative government's 'Economic Action Plan' by drastically reducing environmental regulations and providing corporate tax breaks to encourage investment (Duplassie, 2015). Of particular concern to Idle No More founders were how Bill C-45 altered Canada's oldest environmental protections Act, the Navigable Waters Act (1882), decimating the robust protection of over 99% of Canada's lakes and rivers from federal oversight (ibid.). In effect, Bill C-45 opens waters of cultural and ecological significance to be used and devastated by oil and mining companies, further hampering many First Nations in their fight against mining projects and the violation of their Treaty rights. Idle No More also advocated for "rebuilding the nation-to-nation relationship that is the foundation of this country… [by] deepening democracy, respecting Indigenous sovereignty, and protecting the land and waters from further resource extraction without the affected Indigenous Peoples' free, prior, and informed consent" (Idle No More, n.d.).

Janice Makokis, a néhiyaw scholar, notes that Indigenous philosophy cannot be learned through reading books, but rather it involves experiential knowledge acquired through the active embrace and participation in Indigenous ceremonies and teachings (2008). This thesis explores Indigenous feminist philosophy from the ground up, examining how Indigenous women's political organizing through Idle No More elucidates Canada's spatiotemporal configuration of politics and decolonial alternatives. The phrase 'Idle No More' expresses a temporal urgency and imminence, compelling action now to reject the Harper government's violation of Treaty and Indigenous sovereignty, captured by co-founder Sylvia McAdam's description of the movement's impetus: "We're going to get off the couch and we're not going to be idle anymore." (Caven, 2013, n.p.) Richard Gilman-Opalsky argues that the most generative, critical thinking on pressing social and political issues is expressed in revolt, contending that revolt is a philosophy from below, and social movements, like revolts, are manifestations of the same impulse to reject the status quo and are examples of revolts by other means (2016). Idle No More expresses a peaceful revolution that rejects the settler colonial status quo, constituting a revolt by other means. The movement's vision states that "Idle No More calls on all people to join in a peaceful revolution which honours and fulfills Indigenous sovereignty, and which protects the land, the water, and the sky." (Idle No More, n.d.)

The Indian Act imposed gender-based discrimination, the state-mandated governance of band councils, and imposed stated-based criteria for community belonging function to exclude Indigenous women from their communities and from political participation and power. The Idle No More movement sprouts from Indigenous modes of governance that predate the settler colonial state, disrupting the fiction of its history, legitimacy and givenness, consequently exposing the undergirding mechanisms of its colonial heteropatriarchal operation. Additionally,

the movement challenged the colonial heteropatriarchal power of the Canadian state by asserting the continued political authority of Indigenous women through their own political orders. Building on the above considerations, I explore the Idle No More movement as an instance of Indigenous feminist philosophy from the ground up. Idle No More offers multiple philosophical insights: first, the movement expresses a vision of Indigenous political life and Treaty relations in refusal to the settler state's conception of authentic political orders and spaces; second, the movement exposes the operation of the settler state, offering insights into the contiguous machinations of settler statecraft, sovereignty, and legitimation, revealing a temporal logic. These interventions illustrate that both Idle No More and the settler colonial state operate through different spatial and temporal formations, wherein each has a distinctive spatiotemporal configuration of political life.

Operationalizing these insights, my thesis examines the constitutive base for the spatiotemporal configuration of politics within the settler colonial state of Canada and in the resistance of Idle No More. To do this, I use state, media, and public responses and rhetoric that emerged in response to Idle No More, as well as the actions, rhetoric, written works, and Indigenous political orders of Idle No More protestors. First, I trace how settler colonialism constitutes the spatiotemporal configuration of authentic politics within Canada, specifically its configuration of the settler state and of Indigenous political life. Second, I elucidate the constitutive base of the spatiotemporal configuration of Indigenous feminist resistance in Idle No More and its alternative, decolonial imaginary of politics. This analysis further locates generative and decolonial interventions from Idle No More's resistance. Lastly, I operationalize the interventions from Idle No More's spatiotemporal configuration of politics to theorize new Treaty imaginaries.

Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

Drawing on Gilman-Opalsky's theory of revolt, I approach Idle No More's resistance as philosophy from the ground up, which he describes as belonging to the masses, or the many with limited political power, who possess legitimate knowledge but are denied as legitimate knowledge holders and producers (2014). Gilman-Opalsky further recognizes that these theoretical interventions do not simply express a practice, but rather *are* practice (ibid.). Philosophy from the ground up reflects the intellectual thought of the 'masses' as expressed through actions of revolt, upheaval, and protest, such as that exhibited by the Idle No More movement. Philosophy from the ground up also recognizes that theory is practice, like Black feminist theorist bell hooks, who further recognized that theory is a liberatory practice that one can engage in without knowing or possessing the term, just as people can live and act in feminist resistance without using the word feminism (1991). Such framings bear similarity with Indigenous philosophy, which is understood to be learned and embodied through the active participation in ceremonies and teachings, while also grounded in relationship to the land (Turner, 2006; Burkhart, 2019). Indigenous philosophy from below likewise functions as a 'grassroots' philosophy, countering the Western philosophical paradigms that frequently delimit philosophy to written texts or the ivory tower. 'Grassroots' philosophy enables an important epistemological shift, philosophizing political authority and meaning making from the ground up, and exemplifies the political character and participation of many Indigenous political orders. Additionally, Idle No More was not articulated as an Indigenous feminist movement, but instead as a movement led by Indigenous women; however, following hooks, I understand these actions of colonial heteropatriarchal resistance to be practices of Indigenous feminist resistance, even though they are not named explicitly as such. Following these interventions, my theoretical

approach understands the practices of Idle No More's resistance as a site of Indigenous feminist philosophy from the ground up, a critically underexamined domain that constitutes legitimate knowledge and philosophy.

Indigenous feminist and queer theory have exposed colonial heteropatriarchal violence as engineered from a long history that continues in the present, further recognizing that these intellectual projects must also enable something like feminist and queer freedom for Indigenous peoples, beyond a modality of inquiry "bent on diagnosing wounds" but one that is also oriented to "repair and futurity" (Belcourt & Nixon, 2018, n.p.). My theoretical approach understands Idle No More as enabling a deeper diagnosis of the 'wounds' of settler colonialism, but also offering generative interventions to transform the status quo and to enable new futurities. James Tully, in *Political Philosophy as Critical Activity,* explains that political philosophy is the methodological extension and critical clarification of the already reflective and problematized character of historically situated practices of practical reasoning (2002). Practical reasoning involves *all* who engage in political argumentation, requiring an openness from political philosophy towards the subjects of these political orders and/or conceptions, enabling them to have a say and a hand over the construction of political meaning and practices (ibid.). Idle No More is an important site of practical reasoning, for both Canadian and Indigenous politics, explicating the colonial heteropatriarchal nature of the Canadian state's injustices, relations of domination, and forms of subjectivity, and offers both alternative configurations and concrete practices of politics by which these relations could be transformed. Following Tully, my approach seeks to clarify and transform the normative understandings of the present struggles and problems of settler state politics, expounding on the constitutive features of these struggles, problems, and their historical formations, while further situating them within a broader schema of possible ways of thinking

and acting. Specifically, from this broader schema I develop a theoretical framework from Idle No More's organizing to operationalize to theorize new Treaty imaginaries.

To theorize the constitutive base and the features of the spatiotemporal configuration of settle state politics, I draw on various contemporaneous responses to the movement at its height from the state, media, and the Canadian public to understand how settler colonialism operates across various scales of Canadian social and political life. Additionally, this involves examining the rhetoric of this commentary; the word rhetoric originates from the ancient Greek *rhetorike*, meaning the 'art' (techne or skill) of persuasive speech undertaken by a rhetor, or orator (Martin, 2014). Rhetoric, often characterized as persuasion or argumentation, involves political speech, from threats of violence to attempts to come to shared understandings and interpretations. Rhetorical political analysis involves employing rhetorical inquiry to explore how political actors make interventions to control or appropriate situations, or to negotiate the opportunities and constraints of circumstances to achieve certain ends (Ibid.). Rhetorical inquiry understands that ideas and speech are situated in specific contexts and can function to modify situations by actively privileging certain interpretations and diminishing others. Importantly, rhetoric further helps us to understand how political actors try to create agency by refiguring an issue in time and space to further their goals, which I elaborate on further in chapter 1. I engage in rhetorical political analysis to interpret the speech, text, etc. to understand how it fits within the social, political, and historical context and the larger operation of settler colonialism within Canada.

To theorize the constitutive base and the features of the spatiotemporal configuration of the Idle No More Movement, I examine the actions, speech, written works, and Indigenous political orders of the Idle No More protestors. Indigenous scholar Dian Million (2009) asserts that emotion is an embodied and socially embedded knowledge, proposing 'felt theory' as an

expression of this form of knowledge. Million (2009, pg. 54) further explains that Indigenous women through personal narrative and literature:

> "participated in creating new language for communities to address the real multilayered facets of their histories and concerns by insisting on the inclusion of our lived experience, rich with emotional knowledges, of what pain and grief and hope meant or mean now in our pasts and futures. It is also to underline again the importance of felt experiences as community knowledges that interactively inform our positions as Native scholars particularly as Native women scholars."

While the discourse of Idle No More protesters is also a form of political rhetoric, I utilize Million's concept of felt theory to further contextualize the political expression employed by Indigenous peoples, particularly women, during the movement. Million further contends that Indigenous women's expression of their felt experience is an alternative truth and constitutes legitimate knowledge (2009). Additionally, my understanding of Indigenous philosophy is likewise ascertained through my personal participation and experiential knowledge. I interweave personal narrative throughout my thesis because storytelling is both a form of felt theory and Néhiyaw knowledge sharing, serving to affirm my lived experience as legitimate knowledge and to position myself within the relations that I am embedded in. My analysis emerges from my relationship to this knowledge and this research, which I interlace throughout to contextualize the broader project and personal affect of settler state politics.

Storying Experiential Knowledge

During my undergraduate degree I had many opportunities to give lectures, public talks, and engage in generative dialogues both in and outside of university about Indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, and decolonization. I never offered a definitive picture of what

decolonization might materially look like, as it would be complex and need to be developed over time, but I nevertheless asserted that it must involve giving land back and revitalizing Indigenous political and legal orders. I was frequently rebuffed and told that, while my vision of decolonization was noble and passionate, it was ultimately impractical, and that Indigenous communities were unequipped to assume the full parameters of sovereignty as they were, but with 'economic development' they could attain greater self-determination. This refrain alleges that Indigenous peoples could never attain genuine autonomy through their 'traditional' economies, and must necessarily be heralded into the mainstream, Canadian market economy to progress as self-governing political bodies. Additionally, these discussions also frequently implied, though not always outright saying, that Indigenous people's ways of life, while charming and quaint, would be unable to perform within modern political life. Instead, decolonization would have to be a broader, but still deeply limited, expansion of Indigenous political and legal orders within the Canadian state's political and legal institutions, solutions which would ultimately continue to limit their political autonomy, access to land, and subordinate them to the settler state. Every solution ultimately deferred primacy and authority to the political and legal institutions, concepts, and norms of Canadian and Western politics. Even when Indigenous peoples were understood to have meaningful forms of governance, the presumption was that it ought to be assimilated into and/or appropriated by the Canadian state; for example, the Seven Generations teaching was often heralded as something Canadians and their governance ought to learn from and integrate, the commentary largely remiss of restoring the political bodies that proffered the teaching.

These political exchanges illustrated to me that Western constructs of the political configured the conditions of possibility for politics in a settler colonial context like Canada.

Additionally, as I mulled over these various discussions it became apparent to me that the rhetoric employed in these discourses was operating from a specific conception about the form and space of legitimate political bodies and actions, and these spatial conceptions were grounded in a particular temporal logic. I share these experiences, because in many ways, this thesis has been born out of my failed attempts to satisfactorily grapple with these claims, and my desire to understand how these responses fit within the broader politics of settler colonialism. I was left mulling over several questions: What configures the imaginary of Indigenous-state relations within Canada? What would it mean to make decolonization imaginable—as a *real* and *legitimate* possibility?

These questions are not meant to organize the direction or analysis of my thesis, but to provide the context from which this thesis examines the imaginary of the settler state and Treaty politics. I draw out these questions to recognize that my work comes from broader inquiries that I am still mulling over, and plan on exploring in my future intellectual pursuits.

Key Terms

Scholars describe the colonial project of North America as settler colonialism, which is a "distinct political, territorial, and epistemological phenomenon" (Carey & Silverstein, 2020, pg.1). Settler colonialism has been described by Patrick Wolfe as a land centred project, famously described by the phrase: "Settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure, not an event." (2006) Wolfe further explains that settler colonialism destroys to replace and hinges around the elimination of the native, deeming it a structural genocide (ibid.). Additionally, my use of 'settler colonialism' understands it as possessing a racialized hierarchy that privileges whiteness, following Phung (2013) I further acknowledge that racialized settlers benefit from settler colonialism but are still marginalized by their race. Moreover, I utilize Browne's (2019)

definition of the imaginary which describes it as a collective structure that organizes the imagination and the symbolism of the political.

Indigenous feminisms are diverse, and the term is operationalized in many ways, but to contextualize my definition I utilize Joanne Barker's description that frames it as "[emphasizing] territorial-based principles of relationality and the ethics of social responsibility" and "offers the rematriation of the land and governance by Indigenous peoples as an otherwise" (2021, pg. 19). Indigenous feminist scholarship has further illuminated the mutually reinforcing operation of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy, highlighting that colonial gendered violence against Indigenous women is foundational to settler colonialism, and further asserting that decolonization must challenge colonization as a heteropatriarchal structure (Arvin, Tuck, & Morill, 2013; Million; 2014; Pictou, 2020). Drawing on these conceptions, my definition of 'settler colonialism' understands it and 'heteropatriarchy' to be mutually reinforcing. I define heteropatriarchy as the social system in which heterosexuality and patriarchy is naturalised and commonly marked by "heteropatriarchal nuclear-domestic arrangements in which the father is both center and leader/boss" (Arvin, et al. 2013, p. 13). Following Tuck and Yang (2012) and the above considerations, I define decolonization as the rematriation of Indigenous land and governance and the dismantling of colonial, heteropatriarchal relations of power. Lastly, drawing on my definition of decolonization, I understand Indigenous feminist practices to involve working towards decolonization. Moreover, I understand the Idle No More to be broadly involved in practices of Indigenous feminism and decolonization because are they are challenging colonial heteropatriarchy legislation and governance and working towards the rematriation of Indigenous land and governance through the active empowerment of Indigenous women.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 examines how spatiotemporal formations both configure political life and are captured in political rhetoric. I argue that settler colonialism constitutes the spatiotemporal configuration of the Canadian state. The space-time of the settler state further configures the conditions of containment and elimination for Indigenous political life, and, in extension, propels and sustains the heteropatriarchal settler state's sovereignty, statecraft, and legitimation. To attend to this, I examine the rhetoric of state, media, and public responses that emerged in response to Idle No More, as well as the actions and rhetoric of Idle No More protestors. My analysis examines how the conception of authentic politics and political actors operates across space and time, specifically analysing the settler economy and then the gendered configuration of Indigenous and settler state politics. Lastly, this chapter explores how the settler state's spatiotemporal formations likewise organize the social and political imaginary of the settle state politics and Indigenous state-relations.

Chapter 2 examines the policing of the Idle No More movement, analysing how the spatiotemporal configuration of settler state politics operationalizes concerns of security against the 'savage threat' of Indigenous political orders and bodies. This chapter further explores how the policing of Idle No More, which the settler state deemed a threat to nation security, demonstrates the criminalization of Indigenous governance and law. I argue that the settler state security apparatus constructs Indigenous communities as lacking authentic political and legal orders, rendering them lawless spaces and thus criminal, justifying and necessitating the policing, criminalization, and containment of Indigenous political orders and bodies across the various scales of the criminal justice system. This chapter further examines how settler state technologies of security are operationalized against Indigenous women, youth, and children. The

state's policing and fear of the movement demonstrates the significant threat the movement posed and its furtive possibility and capacity for change.

Chapter 3 argues that the Idle No More movement was configured by the spatiotemporal configuration of Indigenous political orders, which express temporal relations that span the past, present, and future, enabling their protests to create ruptures within settler space-time. I examine the political rhetoric and various forms of protesting employed the movement to analyse how Idle No More practices Indigenous governance and law in the Canadian public. The Idle No More movement expressed spatiotemporal configuration prefaced on Indigenous notions of kinship, seeking to reclaim the place of many marginalized actors within political life, namely women, youth, and other-than-human relatives. I then examine how Idle No More challenges the settler state's targeting of Indigenous children and youth, which functions to sever the future of Indigenous political life, reclaiming the place of Indigenous youth as important and agential actors within political life. Lastly, I examine how the Idle No More movement cultivates alternative forms of power and politics at the grassroots. This chapter offers interventions I operationalize in the next chapter to theorize new Treaty imaginaries.

Chapter 4 utilizes the spatiotemporal interventions of the Idle No More movement outlined in chapter three, wherein I analyse the past and present of Treaty relations to theorize new Treaty imaginaries. I argue that the refrain that "we are all Treaty people" cannot be unproblematically true unless we work towards cultivating good Treaty relations and reconfigure our understanding of Treaty in a way that honours Indigenous visions and conceptions. This chapter analyzes the history of Treaty making and relations and its influence on ongoing Treaty politics, theorizing the space-time configuration of contemporary Treaty relations. I argue that the 'Treaty turn' overlooks the radical and necessary shifts required to make this vision possible,

theorizing Treaties as a heteropatriarchal space, wherein authentic political actors within Treaty are understood to be Indigenous and white men, while further positioning Treaty as a historical transaction of land and obscuring its contemporary relevance and generative possibility to reconfigure Indigenous-settler relations. This chapter calls for cultivating Treaty relations beyond the settler colonial state, imploring for a relinquishing of a settler futurity and embrace of Treaty futurity, further theorizing Treaty as an alternative citizenship and political institution to settler state-based institutions and political conceptions.

Chapter 1 – Canada & Idle No More: Theorizing the Space-Time of Settler State Politics

> Prospero, you are the master of illusion.
> Lying is your trademark.
> And you have lied so much to me
> (Lied about the world, lied about me)
> That you have ended by imposing on me
> An image of myself.
> Underdeveloped, you brand me, inferior,
> That's the way you have forced me to see myself
> I detest that image! What's more, it's a lie!
> But now I know you, you old cancer,
> And I know myself as well.
> - 'Caliban' in *A Tempest* by Aimé Césaire. Act III, Scene 5, Line 129 (1969).

Pouring over the media coverage, the political commentary, and the public's reception of Idle No More, I observed familiar spatial and temporal suppositions in the political rhetoric. Replete within the various commentary about the Idle No More movement was a dichotomous configuration: a presumed split between the modern realm of 'authentic' politics (i.e., the settler state) and Indigenous political bodies; the illegitimacy and incompetency of Indigenous political institutions and actors vis-à-vis the legitimacy and efficacy of state, its institutions, and actors; and, the outdated lifestyles and cultures of Indigenous people contra contemporary Canadian culture and social life. The spatial domains of political institutions and land were clearly framed within temporal terms, wherein Indigenous peoples were marked by 'traditional' cultures, economies, and territories, and the Canadian state was definitively modern and contemporary in its political character and claims to territory.

Mark Rifkin asserts that that while settler colonialism is a structure, there remains the further need to examine how the settler colonial state comes to be lived as the self-evident condition of possibility for subjectivity (2014, pg. xvi). Rifkin's intervention highlights that the theoretical engagements with settler colonialism ought to extend beyond its iterations in state or institutional structures, as the settler consciousness does not merely materialise from state policy

or legislation. Scholars further contend that if settler colonial theory is to have any decolonial capacity, it must be in conversation with Indigenous scholarship and decolonial efforts (Snelgrove et al., 2014; Kauanui, 2016). Building on these considerations, this chapter examines the spatiotemporal configuration of the Canadian state, and to do this I take up the role of rhetoric in modern Indigenous-state political relations generally, with specific focus on the Idle No More movement as it is particularly useful in illustrating the machinations of settler sovereignty, statecraft, and legitimation. To foreground this chapter, I ask: *how does settler colonialism constitute the spatiotemporal configuration of authentic politics within Canada?*

I argue that the spatiotemporal configurations of settler colonialism configure the conditions of containment and elimination for Indigenous political life, and, in extension, propel and sustain the heteropatriarchal settler state's sovereignty, statecraft, and legitimacy. I utilize state, media, and public responses and rhetoric that emerged in response to the Idle No More movement, as well as the political actions and rhetoric employed by Idle No More protestors, as both offer important insights into the space-time of the settler state. This involves the examination of how the spatiotemporal configuration of settler colonialism operates to both create the state and to sustain its legitimacy and sovereignty. This chapter sets the stage for understanding how spatiotemporal formations both configure political life and are captured in political rhetoric, and more specifically, how and why spatiotemporal configurations are operationalized within the Idle No More movement, the politics of Treaty, and Indigenous politics more broadly, which I examine in further detail in the preceding chapters. Additionally, the settler state's spatiotemporal formations likewise organize the social and political imaginary of the settler society and of Indigenous state-relations more broadly, which delimits our capacity to think beyond structures of settler colonial state power and to imagine decolonial alternatives.

This chapter is broken down into three different sections that examine different domains of Indigenous-state relations, analysing how different, colonial logics operate across space and time. The first section delineates how settler politics and political rhetoric operate through notions of temporality, then moves to examine how temporality is operationalized concomitantly with spatiality to configure politics within the settler state. The second section examines how the capitalist logic of productivity invokes a particular temporal schema that works to delegitimize Indigenous political authority, conceal the settler state's violence, and dispossess Indigenous peoples of land. The last section undertakes a gendered analysis of the settler state to contextualize how heteropatriarchal settler state politics are structured across space and time.

Mapping the Space and Time of Settler Politics

The protesting of the Idle No More movement focused heavily on the historical and ongoing injustices of colonization, centring the Canadian state's unilateral decision-making, the ecological destruction enacted by industry, and the violation of Treaty and Indigenous rights. However, public response and commentary frequently deemed the Canadian state's authority to decide the nature and parameters of Indigenous-state relations as both apropos and a legitimate exercise of its power, rhetoric which positions the state and its governing mechanisms as the legitimate and effectual solution to the myriad of problems Indigenous peoples face, despite their mis-governance often being the originator of these problems. These contradictory interpretations of the state's actions and of the movement rely on fundamentally different conceptions of not just history, but of time and temporality, and its relationship to politics. The spatial dimension of settler colonialism has featured centrally within analysis of Indigenous-state relations, wherein the dispossession of land and elimination of Indigenous political structures and life are understood as central features of settler colonialism. Other scholars have examined the

relationship between temporality and settler colonialism, noting how settler colonialism works to position Indigenous peoples as backwards and stuck in the past, working to omit, and undercut the contemporary presence and relevance of Indigenous peoples and their political orders (Coulthard, 2014b). However, there remains a need to further examine the structuring of political life and institutions across both time and space within the context of settler colonialism, specifically within Canada.

The Idle No More movement levelled various charges against the Canadian state, which effectively reveal and point to a broader spatiotemporal schema of the settler state. Neither time nor space are objective or neutral categories, rather they are understood and operationalized by disparate groups of political actors, in a diverse set of ways, and for myriad ends. This section examines how conceptions of space and time configure the domain of authentic politics within the settler colonial context of Canada, specifically focusing on how these demarcations are captured and reproduced within political rhetoric. The first subsection delineates the relationship between time and politics, and how it manifests within the political rhetoric that emerged out of Idle No more. The last subsection examines how notions of temporality necessarily relate and map onto spatiality, configuring the politics of the settler state.

Settler Politics of Time

In *Politics, Language, and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (1971), Pocock asserts that political language and rhetoric includes "a structure of implications about time", effectively espousing what he calls a "politics of time" (pg. 30) that generates concepts about a particular group's existence in time and its significance for political meaning making (pg. 80). Pocock's work demonstrates that political rhetoric necessarily grounds itself within a temporal framework, specifically illustrating how "alternative visions of the past" can be

invoked to substantiate present political claims (pg. 256). Other scholars have taken up similar points of analysis within the study of collective or "public memory", which Brown (1995) describes as "a shared sense of the past, fashioned from the symbolic resources of community and subject to its particular history, hierarchies, and aspirations" (pg. 248), while also noting that rhetorical processes enable public memory to be legitimized as cultural knowledge (p. 238). Brown and Pocock demonstrate how political language and rhetoric are imbued with temporal suppositions that are often invoked to substantiate political claims and aspirations, specifically denoting how assertions of the past can be both shaped by existing political structures and visions, while simultaneously working to ground both. Brown and Pocock's analyses relate to the broader 'politics of memory', which Brandese defines as "the power relations that shape what is available to be remembered, who is permitted to remember, and the practices, occasions, and timing of remembering and forgetting" (2014, pg. 2). Brandese contextualizes how the assertions and expressions of the past must necessarily be considered alongside political relations of power, which work to produce the collective memories and the broader political terrain of memory. Moreover, this contextual framework is necessary to understand how temporality gets invoked by the settler colonial state of Canada and Idle No More, particularly how each imparts a different rhetoric that is informed by colonial relations of power that seek to affirm differing political visions.

Bruyneel takes up this relationship between collective memory, the politics of memory, and settler colonialism to examine the constitutive absence of Indigeneity and settler colonialism that persists in discourse, politics, and popular culture within North America (2020). Bruyneel advances "settler memory" to describe the process in which "settler society habitually reproduces memories of Indigenous people's history and of settler colonial violence and dispossession and

in the same moment undercuts the political relevance of this memory by disavowing the presence of Indigenous people as contemporary agents and of settler colonialism as a persistent shaping force" (2020, pg. xiii). Elsewhere, Bruyneel examines this tension as it manifests within the various portrayals of Louis Riel, Métis leader of the Red River and North-West Resistances, that are put forth by the Canadian state in legislation and public statues (2010). Bruyneel notes that the 2004 Louis Riel Act sought to "publicly acknowledge Louis Riel's contributions as a Métis patriot and Canadian hero" (Bill S-29, 2004, as cited in Bruyneel, 2010, pg. xx). Bruyneel argues that these attempts to reconcile Riel, the Métis people, and Canada's historical relationship serve as a means for Canada to revise its political history (ibid.). Instead of Canada meaningfully acknowledging their violent dispossession of land and displacement of Métis life and politics, or the violent exile and execution of Riel, or the failure to follow through on the promises of the Manitoba Act, they instead construct a narrative and statue of Louis Riel as "founding father" where "he is made to stand as an author of the Canadian political system", "authorizing without being permitted to exist within [it]" (ibid., n.p.). This narrative seeks to restory Riel into the project of Canadian nation building, paradoxically so, despite his leadership of two resistance movements that sought to challenge the encroachment of the Canadian state and its governance. Bruyneel's interventions demonstrate how the politics of time and collective memory within Canada must necessarily be contextualized within the colonial relations of power in which they are embedded. Additionally, Bruyneel demonstrates how Canada's collective memory works to legitimate its settlement and statecraft as well as obscure its colonial violence, while also delineating how temporal politics manifest within Canada's contemporary narratives of its westward expansion onto the prairies, where the Idle No More movement emerges from. Moreover, the place of Indigenous political authority becomes reduced to its affirmation and

authorization of the Canadian state, while the breadth and complexity of Indigenous governance and law that challenges this vision is not merely ignored but erased.

Nomi Lazar defines temporality as the place, sequence, and synchronicity of historical events in the shape of time and contends that time can only be experienced through marks and measures, such as the rising sun, a calendar, a clock, etc., and altering these marks and measures reshapes our experience of time (2019). Politics and time fundamentally depend on the meaning invoked through the temporal pattern that is drawn out by the event sequence(s), and thus altering the experience of time by changing marks and measures is an important tool of political rhetoric and legitimation. Temporal marks and measures introduced through colonialism, such as the Gregorian calendar and the 24-hour clock, demonstrate the broader, Western conception of the flow of time—a single, linear temporality, reducing the experience of to time to discrete events along a unidirectional axis (Rifkin, 2017). Eriel Deranger, Idle No More organizer and Indigenous activist, highlights the temporal rhetoric invoked regarding Indigenous people's governance practices and relationship to land, in which they are reduced to being "old and outdated", not "modern lifestyles", and therefore not worth protecting or upholding (AB FedLabour, 2013, 9:18-9:23). Effectively reducing Indigenous governance and culture to mere 'tradition' and outdated practices, thus incapable of mediating or responding to 'modern' questions, lifestyles, or politics, denying their contemporary relevance.

Fasolt, in *The Limits of History,* argues that the study of history not only makes highly political assumptions about free will and the relationship between the past and the present, but presupposes a meaning and pattern of time, and that "change over time can be explained by historical development" (2004, pg. 231). Fasolt contextualizes how notions of history frequently are employed with presupposed temporalities, and while the advocacy for a history properly

understood is paramount to Idle No More's protesting and resistance, temporal analysis cannot be reduced to the competing claims about the contents of history and its relationship to the present.[1] Notably, an 1898 manual of British historical studies declared "no documents, no history", asserting that a lack of written documentation represented a "critical absence of data" rendering prehistory or "the deep history of humanity methodologically unthinkable" (Shryock, Smail, & Earle, 2012, pg. 7). Many Indigenous communities relied on oral history, and as a result, were labelled as possessing 'no history' since their method of historical collection was deemed illegitimate, which likewise worked to delegitimize them as authentic knowledge producers.[2] Importantly, the concept of 'prehistory' and 'deep history' possess overlap, wherein they are both defined as a lack of written records and are understood as emblematic of some ancient epoch; additionally, deep is defined as "extending far from some surface or area" and "having a specified extension in an implied direction usually downward or backward" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Such framing positions Indigenous peoples as not only backwards and in the past, but as in the 'deep' and far-reaching chasm of the unknowable past, such that they presumably cannot emerge. This framing further works to position Indigenous people's past as a history that cannot be retrieved outside the span of colonization, rendering the history of the settler state and its origins as the only remembered history, and thus the only thinkable history. The erasure of

[1] Notions of history and historicity (i.e., whose accounts of the past get to be rigorous, accurate, and thus authentically 'historical') are significant to the broader questions of political temporality, such that it is important to briefly contextualize the question of 'history' and 'historicity' here. In a survey conducted by the American Historical Association, two-thirds of those polled from the American public described history as "facts about what happened in the past"; however, when historians and other professionals were polled, nobody opted for "facts", instead describing their work as "interpretations" and "explanations of the past" not meant to be a "mastery of factual material" (n.d., para. 2). I draw out this tension to demonstrate how questions of the past, temporality, and politics cannot be reduced to turning to a "neutral" or "objective" historical record, as all historical analysis and interpretation are necessarily grounded in and imbued by their specific cultural and political contexts.

[2] Oral history is, however, now considered to be an authentic historiographical method of historical collection. Additionally, it is worth noting that many Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island did have writing and written, historical documents.

Indigenous people's histories, and their capacity to create historical knowledge, is a calculated move to eliminate their future possibility, rendering their political orders as already bygone, and thus unthinkable within the modern world.

Many within the Idle No More movement asserted that Harper's policies and legislation were not novel, but rather emerged from a deep-rooted history of assimilatory policies that seek to undermine and exterminate Indigenous rights and sovereignty (Coulthard, 2014a; Diabo, 2013). Instead, Bills C-38 and C-45 are instances of the ongoing and systemic marginalization of colonialism, which Idle No More protestors felt had escalated with Stephen Harper as Prime Minister. In 2007, Canada, while under the Harper government, would vote against adopting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) to the dismay of many (Graveline, 2012). As Glen Coulthard notes Harper's apology to the survivors of Indian Residential School survivors in 2008 was characterized as heralding in a "new chapter" of Indigenous-State relations (pg. 105). However, this apology was not accompanied by actions that reflected the Canadian state's promise of a "new relationship" based on "partnership" and "respect", instead Indigenous peoples were left waiting and sidelined (Graveline, 2012, pg. 294). Additionally, the following year at the G20 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Harper would go on to claim that Canada "has no history of colonialism", in what many would dub an incredulous act of "amnesia" (Coulthard, 2014b, pg. 106; Graveline, 2012, pg. 294). Coulthard notes that the temporal framing of Harper's apology and the politics of Reconciliation more broadly, purports the end of the historical chapter of asymmetrical power relations while functioning to render Indigenous peoples' continued resistance and expressions of anger as "a pathological inability" to get over the past (pg. 126), wherein their "memory" is a "festering wound" that precludes their ability to heal and "*get on with life*" (2014b, pg. 111). This temporal framework works to

legitimize Canadian state sovereignty and settlement by obscuring its enduring colonial project, while delegitimizing Indigenous people's resistance and responses of anger as another instance of their inability to orient themselves towards the present and future, instead further positing them as hopelessly backwards looking and stuck in the past.

Mapping Settler Time onto Space

The temporal framing of Harper's apology and Reconciliation discourse additionally obscures settler colonialism as a structure that is "*territorially acquisitive in perpetuity*" wherein "invasion is a structure, not an event" (Coulthard, 2014b, pg. 125). Despite Harper's ostensible disavowal of Canadian colonialism (historically or in the present), settler colonialism has continuously structured the Canadian state's relationship with Indigenous peoples. Moreover, detailed notes taken from the Prime Minister's meeting with First Nation leaders on January 11, 2013, show that Harper emphasized the "negative public reaction" the protests garnered, while remaining unapologetic about the unilateral changes made to the Indian Act and other legislation that affected Indigenous rights as outlined by Treaties and UNDRIP (Barrera, 2013, n.p.). Harper's temporal rhetoric occurs alongside invocations of space, both as concrete delineations of geographical territory (i.e., disavowal of Canada as a settler colonial state) and as abstract assertions about the proper space of politics (e.g., the unilateral decision making made about land and Indigenous-state relations by the Canadian government). Temporality must necessarily be considered alongside spatiality, as any experience of time occurs both within space and the experience of it; this is expressly captured by Indigenous ontologies, wherein place and land animate temporality, and conceptions of the flow of time are learned from relations with land and our more than human relatives (Deloria Jr, 1972; Awâsis, 2020). Moreover, the settler colonial imperative to eliminate Indigenous life and governance works to continuously affirm and

legitimate Canadian state sovereignty and its territorial acquisition of land, and to also secure a settler futurity.

As Phillipa Levine notes, in *Anthropology, Colonialism, and Eugenics,* the definition and measure of civilization, and its absence, was of key importance for the justification of imperialism; civilization was outlined as upward, progressive, and beneficent, diametrically opposed to the world of the savage, who was primitive, regressive, and thus rendered unmodern and incompetent (2010). James Cowles Prichard (1786-1848), a British anthropologist and critic of colonial practices, asserted that "wherever Europeans have settled, their arrival has been the harbinger of extermination to the native tribes" (as cited in ibid., pg. 45). The notion of the 'savage' functions to determine the criteria for modernity and civilization, acting as the backdrop from which the imperial forces construct themselves against, and, as Levine notes, was an ultimately an illusory and fictitious category that was nevertheless purposed for fundamentally eugenic discussions about whether the native possessed the "fitness and capacity for civilization" (ibid., pg. 46). Levine's explanation of the function of the category of 'savage' bears important insights to settler colonial statecraft, noting that colonization requires the temporal demarcations of 'civilization' and 'savage' to justify and naturalize its spatial settlement, while also rendering it as a natural and inevitable feature of progress. Levine further identifies that eugenic thinking is inherent to settler colonization, necessarily constructing the savage as unfit to inherit or inhabit modern civilization, thus fated to die and disappear (ibid.); this logic works to conceal the violence of the settler state, instead the squalor and death of the 'savage' is the unfortunate but inevitable and evolutionary trajectory of the unfit. As Levine further explains, the narrative of the savage's inevitable demise was portrayed by colonists as resulting from their own violent and defective cultures, further portraying the settlers as innocent (2010). The temporal rhetoric that

frames Indigenous peoples as stuck in the past and outside modernity works to legitimize and naturalize the violence of settler statecraft, rendering their displacement and death as certain, and the settler state's future as inevitable.

Journalist Jeffrey Simpson (2013) decries Idle No More's notion of a nation-to-nation relationship as being wrongly informed by a "mythology" of Indigenous people having a sacred link to the land (para. 7) and a lofty desire to return to "a dream palace of *memory*" (emphasis mine, para. 12). Simpson casts Idle No More's accounts of the historical relationship between Indigenous peoples and the state as mere 'memory' (i.e., personal, biased, and thus faulty and not rigorous), demonstrating a temporal-rhetorical technique to dismiss the broader, political legitimacy of Idle No More protests and their claims (2013). Tom Flanagan disparaged Idle No More as a misinformed movement, divorced from the historical and present reality of Treaty and Indigenous-state relations, asserting that the Canadian state's actions towards First Nations have in fact been overly generous (CBC, 2013). Simson and Flanagan's rhetoric invokes a particular spatiotemporal framework, wherein Idle No More's assertions of nationhood and Treaty relationship are irreconcilable with the historical and contemporary 'reality' of politics, entrenched in a romantic vision of the past that fails to understand the 'truth' of their history and present circumstances. In effect, these commentaries function to delegitimize the claims of Idle No More by portraying Indigenous communities and people as ultimately delusional, effectively denying them as legitimate knowledge producers and, conversely, positioning the state as the authoritative site of epistemological and political authority. R.B.J. Walker notes that modern political life rests on the assumption that whatever the diversity of accounts of politics in a demarcated territory might be, ultimately, they are all subsidiary to the nation state, and its privileged account of politics that constitutes a monopoly on legitimate authority over that

territory (2016). The colonial state apparatus assumes this monopolizing logic of the modern nation state, and its condemnation of Indigenous political expression serves to legitimatize its sovereignty.

Space and Time in the Settler Economy

Settler colonial statecraft does not operate in isolation from the market economy, nor is the settler economy's imperatives and functioning a merely neutral domain, but rather both forces are interwoven and mutually reinforcing. Co-founder Sheelah McLean notes that her journey to Idle No More involved unlearning Canada's myths of nation building that portrayed its statecraft as founded on democracy, freedom, multiculturalism, and benevolence (2014). Additionally, McLean questioned the stories she had been told that portrayed her and her family's success as primarily rooted in their work ethic, wherein they "built a life from nothing… [but] hard work", instead she further learned that state policies had privileged her white settler family through various rights and advantages that Indigenous peoples and other racialized peoples had historically been denied (ibid., pg. 93). In effect, such rhetoric frames Canadian life as a meritocracy founded on nothing more than individual work ethic and, by extension, casts poverty as a problem of laziness and ultimately is a personal, moral failing, and not a systemic one. The capitalist logic of productivity and its reproduction within the rhetoric of Canadian political and social life plays a foundational role within settler colonial statecraft, working to legitimize the ongoing dispossession of land, and the colonial violence and oppression levelled against Indigenous political bodies and people.

The fiction of capitalist meritocracy naturalizes the squalor and abject conditions of Indigenous communities and peoples as rooted within a racial or cultural defect. Such rhetoric further constructs Indigenous peoples as financial dependently on the Canadian state, and as

unemployed, lazy, not paying taxes, and instead leeching off the money of hard-working Canadian taxpayers. Of course, absented from this rhetoric is the recognition that the Canadian state itself purposefully created this paternalistic, dependent relationship, while also ignoring the historical marginalization and policies that have sought to systemically hinder the economic success of Indigenous communities and the containment of their economic autonomy (Manuel, 2017; Joseph, 2018). As Erin Morton notes, white settlers have instituted a structure of violence that appears placid to those who created it, appearing as nothing more than a common-sense model of liberal private property and capitalist productivity, rendering violent actions by the state and settlers as defensible and even just (2019, para. 1). Morton's commentary highlights the important interrelation of capitalist logics and settler colonial statecraft and settlement, wherein the logics of productivity are interwoven within settler social norms and the state's political structures, such that its violence is not merely obscured or permissible but is instead common, justified, and necessary, both as a political and moral actions.

The preceding literature highlights the relationship between capitalist logics and rhetoric and the spatiotemporal demarcations of Indigenous political life and the settler colonial state. I argue that this relationship works to dispossess Indigenous peoples of land and political autonomy through violent state mechanisms, while further functioning to contain Indigenous visions of political and economic autonomy. The first subsection examines how the rhetoric of economic development is operationalized against Idle No More to curtail their political autonomy and expression. The second subsection examines how the spatiotemporal configurations of economic development are employed by the settler state to further its own ends of capitalist extraction and production. The last subsection offers a brief examination of how this

myopic spatiotemporal purview creates devastating effects of Indigenous peoples, the land, and for Canadians.

Space-Time of Economic Development

In early January of 2013 an Idle No More protest blockaded Portage Ave., Winnipeg's busiest road and the main route to Western Canada, disrupting and stalling the flow of traffic. One of the driver's remarked that the protestors "are not any more special than me… I can't do something like that, neither can they", and admitted that while he did not know the purpose of the rally, ultimately "it doesn't matter." (Piapot, 2013, n.p.) His wife added, "*we* bear the brunt of paying tax money that is allowing them to live in this country and not work… *we* are paying taxes for these roads that they are barricading and not allowing *us* to use" (emphasis mine, ibid.). Implicit in these comments is that the public roads and spaces, purportedly paid for by non-Indigenous Canadian's tax dollars and not by Indigenous peoples, are spaces rightfully occupied and utilized by these same 'productive' Canadians. Moreover, Jeffrey Simpson (2013) quipped that these protests stand only to "inconvenience others" and "dissipate support" (para. 6), positing that First Nations would benefit more from the direct exploitation of the natural resources near their communities instead (para. 11). These assertions from non-Indigenous Canadians work to delegitimize the presence of Indigenous political expression by condemning their occupation of both public and political space, while asserting that legitimate and effective political expression corresponds with economic productivity and development. In effect, these responses assert that if Indigenous people want to redress their regretful conditions, they ought to get a job and that Indigenous sovereignty is best achieved through economic development.

The temporal framing of economic development falls within broader, global relations of power that produce a "technoscientific discourse of development and progress", temporally

constructing the nations and communities that fall outside of the states of the so-called West, or Global North, into the past of these purportedly 'developed' and 'modern' nations (Wilk, 2003, pg. 94). This temporal rhetoric assumes a unidirectional flow of time, a linear trajectory of progress and economic development and growth, while also positioning Canada, and Western countries within the Global North more generally, as the aspirational model and telos of economic and political activity. While this rhetoric is frequently directed towards nation-states, Indigenous peoples and their struggles remain largely contained within larger settler states and are likewise frequently subjected to the imperatives of economic development. The rhetoric of economic development works to further entrench Indigenous peoples as 'backwards' and 'stuck in the past', failing to integrate into the modes and orders of modern life, thereby understood as 'unproductive' and thus undeserving of political subjectivity, authority, or land since they would fail to effectually wield and employ any of these means.

The colonial, spatiotemporal logics of economic development are captured by the rhetoric that routinely characterized the oil sands "as the engine of economic growth for Canada", which was employed by Harper, his ministers, and the Alberta provincial government (McCarthy, 2014, n.p.). The efficacy of this rhetoric meant that the majority of Canadians overestimated the oil sand's contribution to the economy to be between 6 and 24 times higher than its actual impact (ibid.). Additionally, Harper in his address to the Canada-UK Chamber of Commerce in 2006 asserts that Canada is an "emerging energy superpower", "currently the fifth largest energy producer in the world… [and] that's just the beginning" (2007, para. 1). Harper would go on further to say:

> "An ocean of oil-soaked sand lies under the muskeg of northern Alberta–my home province. The oil sands are the second largest oil deposit in the world,

> bigger than Iraq, Iran or Russia; exceeded only by Saudi Arabia. Digging the bitumen out of the ground, squeezing out the oil and converting it in into synthetic crude is a monumental challenge. It requires vast amounts of capital, Brobdingnagian technology, and an army of skilled workers. In short, it is an enterprise of epic proportions, akin to the building of the pyramids or China's Great Wall. Only bigger." (Harper, 2007, para. 2-3)

Harper portrays the oil sands development in northern Alberta as a feat of human ingenuity, technological innovation, scientific progress, and business prowess, while also configuring the immense scale of this ecologically devastating project as akin to the great wonders of the world. The oil sands became a site for Canada's political imaginary, a fertile landscape for the state to become an energy and economic powerhouse through the promise of "continental energy security", positioning Canada to be a "stable, reliable producer in a volatile, unpredictable world" (Harper, 2007, para. 5). This rhetoric takes up important racialized logics, portraying the Canadian state as a source of stability against the backdrop of the volatile and conflict-ridden oil production of the Middle East and South America. These racialized logics are further taken up in the rhetoric of "ethical oil", which portrays Alberta oil sands development as the ideal oil producer to the socially backward, corrupt, oppressive, and more environmentally damaging alternatives, like those of Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Venezuela (Levant, 2010). By extension, the rhetoric of progress, technological advancement, and scientific innovation coalesces alongside notions of economic development and growth. To resist the development of the oil sands would be construed as stilting stability, security, and the economy and its growth, and, by extension, the development, progress, and flourishing of Canada and its position as a global political actor.

At the height of Idle No More in 2013, the oil sands development was the world's largest industrial project, and home to two of the world largest dams[3] which contain toxic tailing ponds, comprised of the waste from the bitumen mining process (Winton, 2014). Eriel Deranger works to create awareness about the detrimental effects of the Alberta Tar Sands and implores all levels of government and the private sector to fully implement the rights her people, the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, hold as described by Treaty 8 and UNDRIP (ibid.). Deranger also criticizes the Omnibus Bill C-45 for its gutting of environmental protections and changes to First Nations land rights, while also highlighting the 30 percent increase in cancer rates in the surrounding Indigenous communities, which are linked to the toxic substances released into the air by bitumen mining activities (ibid.). Notably, Deranger insisted that her community's resistance to the harm and destruction of the oil sands development is not because they are averse to "progress", but rather they are looking for opportunities which prioritize respect for land, water, and culture (ibid.). Despite the frequent assertions that Indigenous communities stand to benefit economically from resource development projects like the oil sands, Melissa Laboucan-Massimo asserts that since 1978 over 14 billion dollars have been taken out of the traditional territory of her community, the Lubicon Cree First Nation, and yet her family still goes without running water (Walia, 2013). Indigenous peoples have been historically displaced from the political decision-making process and the benefits of economic development, instead this rhetoric works to assimilate Indigenous peoples into the mainstream economy to facilitate the exploitation of their land and resources for Canadian and corporate capital accumulation, all while undermining Indigenous people's aspirations for self-government and political autonomy (Castro-Rea & Altamirano-Jimenez, 2007).

[3] Syncrude's Mildred Lake Settling Basin and Southwest Sand Storage.

Not Just an 'Indian Problem'

Crystal Lameman, a member of Beaver Creek Cree Nation, further notes that the issue of oil sands development is not just "an 'Indian' problem", but it concerns all who breathe air and drink water and encourages others to join the battle to protect the boreal forest, one of the world's most important carbon sinks (2015, para. 9). The damage of the oil sands cannot be reduced to its violation of Treaty and Indigenous rights, or its degradation of the environment, it also signals a blight against the democratic processes of the state and poses a very real financial burden to federal and provincial governments. While the focus of this chapter is on the spatiotemporal politics of the Canadian settler colonial state and its relationship with Indigenous peoples, the protesting of Idle No More rightfully highlights how government action regarding resource development, such as the oil sands, reveals a broader failure of Canadian governance. While scholarship on the relationship between oil dependency and the decline in democracy has largely focused on states within the Global South, various scholars have asserted that the Alberta provincial government is emblematic of a Petro-state, wherein the increasing economic dependency on oil has produced serious democratic deficits, such as the undermining of environmental and labour regulations, and the capture of state agencies, boards and commissions, and social policy by oil industry interests (Adkin, 2016; Shrivastava, Stefanick, & Acuna, 2017; Shrivastava & Stefanick, 2012). Moreover, the cost of cleaning up the Alberta oil patch is estimated to be between $58-260 billion dollars; however, the government has only collected $1.6 billion dollars of liability security from industry as of 2018 (De Souza, 2018). Rob Wadsworth, vice-president of closure and liability for the Alberta Energy Regulator, dubs the industrial oversight a flawed system as the current rules are so feeble that companies can delay setting aside money to cover cleanup costs until they are out of business and can no longer afford

to pay, wherein the financial liabilities will be passed onto Albertans (ibid.). Despite this gaping oversight, Canada continues to provide the most public financial support for fossil fuels and the least financial support for renewable energy out of any G20 country (Tucker & DeAngelis, 2021). While it is outside the scope of this chapter to offer a comprehensive overview of the environmental, democratic, and economic failings of the Alberta oil sands, this brief examination reveals how the truncated temporality of Canadian governance hinders the state's capacity to meaningful consider the future implications of its short-sighted policies and live out its responsibilities towards to not only Indigenous peoples, but to present and future generations of Canadians.

Gendered Space-Time in the Settler State

Idle No More was a movement that was largely founded and led by Indigenous women who sought to challenge the underhanded and inequitable actions of settler state governance, a domain primarily occupied by white settler men. Issues of Indigenous rights and governance have been frequently understood as phenomenon outside of gendered political structures and consequently the current approaches to Indigenous sovereignty and nationhood, while thought to represent all Indigenous peoples, are structurally masculine frameworks (Kuokkanen, 2019). But Idle No More's political organizing highlights how gendered violence and oppression are bound up within broader questions of land and sovereignty, recognizing how colonialism requires the displacement of Indigenous women from political decision-making and life. Idle No More founders assert that Indigenous women face a dual form of oppression based on their race and gender and contend that only through the exclusion of women from political roles and decision making was the introduction of this omnibus budget bill possible (John, 2015). The previous sections have provided a broad overview of how the spatiotemporal schema of settler

colonialism configures different domains of the Canadian governance, but to further contextualize settler sovereignty requires a gendered analysis of the state apparatus and its colonial, heteropatriarchal relations of power. This section examines how Idle No More exposes the gendered oppression of settler state rule, and how it operates to contain and eliminate the lives and political threat of Indigenous women.

Idle No More protestors contended that resource development projects not only detrimentally effect Indigenous communities, Eriel Deranger further notes that women are especially impacted, and not just by the oil sands development, but also by the overarching settler colonial project such that "women lost their rights, women lost their identities, and patriarchy was forced upon [Indigenous] people" (Walia, 2013, n.p.). Deranger further highlights how Indigenous women and their bodies have been inextricably tied to the degradation and exploitation of land and resources since the beginning of colonization, such that they are the "most impacted by the interlinked systems of colonialism, criminalization, environmental degradation, poverty, inequality, and family separation" (ibid, n.p.). Thus, it is no coincidence that Indigenous women are at the forefront of Idle No More, since assertions of Indigenous sovereignty and nationhood and the struggle for Indigenous land rights are understood as inseparable from Indigenous women's assertions of sovereignty over their own bodies. The concerns of gendered violence and oppression were interwoven with broader concerns of Indigenous rights and environmental protection, with protestors emphasizing the interrelation of colonialism and heteropatriarchy.

The Idle No More movement also rallied against the racialized and gendered violence of the Canadian state, imploring the Harper government to form a national inquiry into the violence against Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Audra Simpson notes the settler-

colonial nation state of Canada has a white, heteropatriarchal character that seeks to "eliminate, contain, hide and in other ways 'disappear' what fundamentally challenges its legitimacy: Indigenous political orders" (Introduction, para. 3), thus requiring the deaths of Indigenous women as they represent the inverse of white, settler colonial governance by signifying an alternative political order that directly threatens colonial settlement and legitimacy (2016). Sherene Razack further notes that portrayals of Indigenous women and girls constructs them as licentious, presumed always available for sexualized violence in whatever space they occupy, a logic intimately tied to dispossession, enabling Indigenous populations to be considered as primitive, barbaric, and thus unfit owners of the land (2016). Razack asserts that violence against Indigenous women is also violence against Indigenous communities more broadly, while also functioning to affirm white men's right to the occupation of bodies and the lands of the colonized and reaffirms his place in a colonial, heteropatriarchal order (2016, pg. 295). The preceding literature demonstrates that Indigenous women and girls, as well as those who fall outside heteropatriarchal models of gender and sexuality, are marked as disposable and thus made vulnerable to racialized, physical, and sexualized violence and other forms of social marginalization; they are not merely absented from the modes and orders of political life but are instead marked as threats to be eliminated.

Megan Scribe explains that the Canadian state's racialized discourses frame Indigenous women and girls as responsible for the colonial, gendered violence they experience, asserting that "they are unwilling to dispense with dysfunctional relationships that are killing them" and because of "so-called high-risk lifestyles and dysfunctional cultures" (2018, p. 53). Effectively, gendered violence is likewise rendered a product of the violent, degenerate cultures of Indigenous peoples, functioning to move the settler state to a place of innocence. Nevertheless,

the Canadian settler-colonial state operationalizes Indigenous women's concerns as a means of delegitimizing broader Indigenous struggles, setting Indigenous women's rights in opposition to collective rights, and thus positioning themselves as the best means of protecting and emancipating Indigenous women and elevating their political and social subjectivity. In effect, the state utilizes the gendered violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls, which it both enables and produces, to further entrench political decision making within its folds.

Chief Spence was subjected to a litany of racist and sexist vitriol by the Canadian media and public, quickly condemned as a liar, fraud, and criminal; but the reaction to the Chief and her protest was inextricably shaped by both the racialized and gendered logics of elimination produced by the colonial, heteropatriarchal state. A Sun News Network contest asked people to describe Therese Spence, Chief of Attawapiskat First Nation, in one word; some of the submissions included were "fat, oink, garbage, chief two chins, and hippo" and others simply put "stop sucking Lysol" (Piapot, 2012, n.p.). Audra Simpson notes that the Canadian public's fixation on her body, her weight especially, signalled an anger at the continued presence and occupation of Indigenous women's life and expression of political authority; in effect, Chief Spence's body was seen "as a stubborn, resolute, and sovereign refusal to die, staying alive to have that conversation about Crown obligations, about housing and about historical obligations—it was read as a failure to do what it was supposed to do—perish" (2016, Flesh and Sovereignty, para. 3). Indigenous women and girl's bodies become marked as criminal, disposable, and an affront to the project of settler Canadian statecraft and legitimation. This racialized and gendered logic not only sanctions the gendered violence experienced, wielded by the state or other actors, but also contributes to their disproportionate criminalization and containment within prisons and other state mechanisms.

Indigenous women are not simply excluded from the political domain of the Canadian state, but also face exclusion within Indigenous political life. Indigenous feminist scholars assert that Indigenous women's exclusion from the realm of politics has been indelibly shaped by the imposition of colonial heteropatriarchy, which positions women's concerns as personal and belonging to the private/domestic sphere (Starblanket & Stark, 2018; Kuokkanen, 2019). Indigenous movements and political leadership have been historically male-centric and male-dominated, lacking recognition for women's experiences, concerns, and leadership. Sarah Hunt notes that there is a tendency within Indigenous communities and politics to understand the macro political issues of sovereignty, land claims, and land defence as politically significant, whereas grassroots organizing (like that of Idle No More)—work primarily done by women, Two-Spirit, and Indigiqueer people—is often viewed as less politically significant (2015). Moreover, their concerns have been historically marked as threat to the vitality and strength of the larger Indigenous sovereignty and nationhood movements (Green, 1993; Barker, 2017). Rauna Kuokkanen (2019) further notes that Indigenous women's contributions and input have been systematically excluded from formulating visions of sovereignty and nationhood, particularly in Indigenous self-governance discourse that has been formalized in international law and national legislation (pg. 1). In effect, the space of political life becomes produced as masculine, constraining the space of women's concerns to the domestic, private sphere. In effect, the heteropatriarchal relations of power of the settler-colonial nation state are often internalized and reproduced within Indigenous politics, governance, and political organizing in a myriad of oppressive and violent ways.

The gendered, hierarchal structuring of politics constructs authority and agency within the narrow echelon of 'masculine' state governance, further constructing the linear progression

of time as having a white, heteropatriarchal character. The burden of heralding Indigenous peoples into modernity falls to the expertise and responsibility of white male governance, constructing Indigenous peoples, particularly women, as dependent and incapable. Scholars further note that the political normative horizon generated by the primary locus of the nation state, and the social norms and practices that are often supposed as a differentiated domain, belong to the political imaginary of Western democratic states; this political imaginary underpins individuals' attachment to political institutions and facilitates the reassertion of political hierarchy (Diehl, 2019; Browne, 2019). The settler state's hierarchal organization of politics and of political power is reproduced across various scales of social and political life, containing the imagination of settler politics and society, and functioning to preclude the possibility of otherwise formations of politics.

Conclusion

The condemnation of the Idle No More movement, and its expressions of Indigenous governance and law, employs rhetoric that tacitly advances that the legitimate practices of governance, law, and civic duty, are only rightfully enacted by the narrow terrain and myopic purview of the colonial, heteropatriarchal state, which seeks to affirm its monopolizing, sovereign powers. This rhetoric fundamentally relies on temporal iterations that function to position Indigenous peoples and their political bodies as stuck in the past, illegitimate, and unfit, thus incapable of effectual political autonomy and participation. Settler state space-time functions to justify its ongoing violence, dispossession of land, and subordination of Indigenous political orders and seeks to disqualify them from conceptions of authentic, political life and forums once and for all. The settler-colonial state of Canada further requires the disposability of Indigenous women through various colonial, gendered logics to maintain and secure its

governance and settlement, and, by extension, systematically excludes Indigenous women's concerns, contributions, and knowledges from conceptions of governance, sovereignty, and decolonization across various scales of political life. Indigenous political orders have nevertheless endured and the settler state's desire to contain the spectre of this spread reveals their generative and fecund possibility, as well as the state's technologies of containment and security. Building on this insight, chapter 2 examines the operation of settler colonial security and its relation to statecraft, legitimation, and sovereignty.

Chapter 2 - Policing Idle No More & Settler State Technologies of Security

When I began to plan and formulate the vision of my thesis, I knew that I wanted to examine Indigenous woman's political organizing but struggled to choose a movement or group to focus on. I knew that I wanted a movement that included Indigenous women from Alberta and from Treaty 8 and wanted to further understand how Indigenous women within the province and from my Treaty contest the colonial, heteropatriarchal state. My sister had told me a story from when she was a middle school teacher about a police officer who came to her class to give a presentation on hate groups to her students. Her class was made up of all Indigenous students, and when the police officer was discussing and presenting on groups that were considered a threat to national security, they had included Idle No More on the list. My sister remarked that the police officer awkwardly and quickly glossed over it, but she further commented that she was shocked that they would not only include Idle No More but that they would tell this to a bunch of native kids. This story took place several years after the height of the Idle No More movement, but nevertheless the movement had retained its spectre of violence to the police and the settler state. This story brought me to Idle No More, because not only did it meet my desired criteria, but it also offered a generative site to further understand the operation of the settler colonial state and its conception of politics.

Notions of national security presuppose whose security is at risk (i.e., who belongs to the legitimate citizenry of Canada that ought to be protected), under what conditions, and who or what exactly poses that risk (i.e., what is the citizenry being secured from). Walker (2016) asserts that the understanding of the subject of security rests on the "claim of the modern sovereign state to be able to define what and where the political must be", assuming the authority

to outline the spatiotemporal demarcations of legitimate political identity and authority (pg. 87), such that "state sovereignty defines what peace can be and where peace can be secured: the unitary community within the autonomous [state]" (2016, pg. 91). In extension, state sovereignty also outlines the place where neither peace nor security is possible for very long, within "the non-community of contingencies" and other relations that exist outside the state; this framing is accomplished by the claim that "only through the state is it possible to resolve all contradictions—between universality and particularity, space and time, them and us—in a politically plausible manner" (2016, pg. 91). Those marked as outside the realm of where the political must be, stripped of authentic political authority and character, are rendered sites without peace and incapable of effecting any stability for themselves without the involvement of the nation state. Walker's analysis demonstrates the relationship between security, sovereignty, statecraft, and legitimation. Building on Walker's analysis, this chapter examines how the Canadian state's technologies of security operate across time and space to legitimize settler colonial statecraft and sovereignty.

I argue that the settler state's actions of denying legitimacy and authenticity to Indigenous political orders functions to mark them as ungoverned, lawless, and therefore criminal, requiring the stabilizing forces of settler colonial governance and policing. The first section examines how the construction of Indigenous peoples as a 'savage threat' functions to legitimize settler colonial statecraft and sovereignty as natural, justifiable, and certain. The second section examines the policing and surveillance of Idle No More, which sought to contain and sequester the movement by rendering the expressions of Indigenous governance and law criminal. The third section examines the criminalization of Indigenous bodies, such as Chief Theresa Spence's, which are marked as criminal, subjected to violent policing and carceral

systems, and operate through gendered logics that disproportionately target Indigenous women, and by extension, Indigenous children and youth. In the last section I examine how the settler state operates to marginalize Indigenous children and youth within political life, while exposing them to violence and premature death, working to quell the future of Indigenous political life. This chapter contextualizes the analysis undertaken in chapter 3, which examines how Idle No More's resistance disrupts settler political space-time through the reclamation of political participation and authority of marginalized political actors within Indigenous political life.

Settler State Security & the 'State of Nature'

The Canadian state's claims about national security ought to be read as an attempt to outline a spatial boundary between a historical politics inside and a merely contingent, non-politics outside, effectively an expression of its legitimation practices. Walker asserts that this notion of the modern state is indelibly shaped by the insights of English philosopher Thomas Hobbes, who theorizes our modern state as a 'security dilemma', juxtaposing the security of a sovereign against the fraught and insecure 'state of nature' (2016). The Hobbesian 'state of nature' is temporally situated 'back then' in time and spatially located in pre-colonial America in its 'savage societies', which were comprised of Indigenous peoples. The concept of the 'state of nature' is a history and geography produced as both a negation and invention of the present (Walker, 2016). The modern state of Canada, and its accompanying notions of security, are grounded in the spatiotemporal configuration of Indigenous political life as a 'state of nature' and 'anarchy', deemed absent of stabilizing political and legal orders. This framing constructs Indigenous political orders as disorderly and lawless, effectively rendered incapable of legitimate and stable government, thus requiring a modern state to provide stability to 'peaceably settle' its anarchy. In effect, the settler colonial state is constructed against the fiction of Indigenous

political orders as a 'state of nature', functionally an 'anarchy' (i.e., devoid of authentic political and legal structures, thus lawless spaces), and 'savage' (regressive, unmodern, violent, and degenerate).

Walker further explains that the 'state of nature' likewise comprises the land, water, and other-than-human beings, wherein the 'modern man' is instantiated as modern precisely because "he is a subject cut adrift from the objective world of nature" (2016, pg. 98). Instead, power and legitimacy are understood as embedded in either a supernatural (i.e., the divine) or a human source (e.g., social contract, treaties, etc.), disjointing political forums and subjects from relation to land. In effect, settler state visions of environmental protection operate from this distorted and severed relation to land, instead creating the demarcated boundary of national parks as a container for a 'pristine' wilderness, initially conceived of by the budding the conservationist movement as a place where "the 'red man' might walk again" (Merchant, 2003, pg. 381) and as a site to preserve "the life of the Plains Indians" (Hughes & Swan, 1986, pg. 251). Within this schema, Indigenous peoples are positioned as part of the other-than-human world, both thought to possess a primeval[4] character, untouched by the forces of civilization, lacking authentic political orders, and thus requiring the civilizing forces of the settler colonial state. Additionally, a sustainable relationality with land then becomes understood as one where the anthro-colonial and other-than-human worlds are necessarily syphoned off from one another, compartmentalized within discrete and dichotomous containers. The Canadian state's myopic purview of governance

[4] primeval meaning to be "ancient" or "existing at… a very early time" or to be "prehistoric" (*Cambridge Dictionary,* 2022, n.p.). Following my analysis within chapter 1, this likewise understands Indigenous people and the other-than-human world as incapable of producing legitimate historical knowledge, instead understood as emblematic of some ancient epoch, and requiring settler rule to be heralded into modernity. Additionally, as previously detailed within the last chapter, the act of obscuring or eliding a political actor's history functions to delegitimize their present and future political claims, rendering their politicality unthinkable outside of the historical narrative and temporal rhetoric of the settler colonial state apparatus.

and law is constrained to the anthro-political domain of settlers, positioning the land as a mere resource to be extracted within a demarcated geographical territory contained by its sovereign jurisdiction. The land and more-than-human relatives are rendered as things to be governed and owned in service of the settler state apparatus, barred from shaping, and participating in political life beyond this container.

The settler state's subordination of land and other-than-human relatives positions its governance as the rightful and ultimate authority, and political expressions outside this framing are rendered threats to sovereignty and rule of law, and thus criminal and needing to be policed. The Idle No More movement challenged settler state conceptions of other-than-human relatives as mere property or a demarcated territory under Canadian sovereign jurisdiction, posing a threat to the settler state's political and juridical norms and dominion. The wildfire spread of the movement and solidarity demonstrations raised alarms bells to various national security agencies within the Canadian state, and by early December of 2012 settler colonial authorities labelled Idle No More as a criminal and national security threat, while also commencing extensive surveillance of the movement (Crosby & Monaghan, 2016). The policing of Idle No More demonstrates the ongoing practices of the settler colonial state apparatus, which seek to contain and eliminate the threat of Indigenous political orders, while also revealing a broader relationship between settler colonial state statecraft, legitimization, and claims on 'what' and 'where' legitimate politics occurs.

"The Natives are Restless!"

While the police's interactions with protestors at Idle No More demonstrations were largely peaceful and amicable, the behind-the-scenes actions of Canadian security agencies betrayed this façade. Internal documents from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

Canada (AANDC) show that by mid-December there was a push for systematic monitoring, and by late December AANDC had produced an extensive report of the movement which noted that "Idle No More has been able to do something that other movements in the past have not been able to do or manage to sustain" (Crosby & Monaghan, 2016, p. 43). This report included a map of North American demonstrations and a global map of the twitter posts related to Idle No More and their origins, highlighting the international attention garnered and the number of "international 'hot spots' on the map"; Crosby and Monaghan note that use of the term 'hot spots' works "to categorize groups or regions as threats… [and] confers a label onto communities that challenge the normalcy of setter colonialism" (2016, p. 44). Moreover, the surveillance intelligence gathered on prospective Idle No More demonstrations in early January of 2013 was shared between the AANDC, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), Transport Canada, Canadian Border Services Agency, and the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP); this matrix of surveillance emerges from the Canadian state's deep fear of Indigenous protest and resistance, and as an AANDC report notes, "First Nations have the ability to paralyze this country, by shutting down travel and trade routes" (ibid., pg. 48). On December 24, 2012, RCMP Corporal Wayne Russet in an e-mail to Inspector Mike LeSage, then acting director general for National Aboriginal Policing, characterized the Idle No More movement as a "'bacteria' that [has] spread across the country carrying with it the potential for an outbreak of violence" (Barerra, 2015, para. 1). Crosby and Monaghan note that the Canadian state's actions betrayed the message that "the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) are not in the business of spying on Canadians" as various units routinely provided reports on Idle No More (2016, pg. 48). Ultimately, while the interactions between Idle No More protestors and police were ostensibly friendly, the behind-the-scenes operation demonstrate a marked hostility

that characterized Idle No More as a violent threat to the security, integrity, and well-being of the Canadian state, enabling the state's extensive policing of the movement.

Policing Indigenous peoples involves drawing from the overflowing well of colonial mythology that constructs Indigenous peoples as a lawless, savage threat requiring the Canadian state's peaceable settlement through its 'stabilizing' governance and law. The Canadian state's response to the protests of Idle No More demonstrate how the criminal justice system operates against Indigenous people at every level, working to position the state, and its various mechanisms (i.e., legal codes, courts, police, etc.), as the legitimate and most effective expression of governance and law. Journalist Christie Blatchford, in two National Post op-eds, critiqued the blockade of the Canadian National (CN) railway line that ran through Aamjiwnaang First Nation by Idle No More protestors, as well as the failure of the Sarnia Police and the OPP forces to enforce the court ordered injunction against this blockade (2013a; 2013b). Blatchford criticized the OPP for forgoing aggressive action to enforce the injunction instead deigning to negotiate with protestors, with the local Sheriff claiming it was "too dangerous" and the Commissioner stating that he was not going to "tell a young OPP widow that her deceased police husband gave his life to open the track" (2013a, n.p.). Blatchford commends Judge David Brown, the judge who issued the injunction, for his 'brave' defence of the court order in the face of previous, purportedly *"violent"* blockades by Indigenous protestors (emphasis mine, 2013b, n.p.). Moreover, Blatchford notes that a poster present at the stockade of Chief Therese Spence's fast proclaimed, "zero tolerance to all forms of violence", critically noting that the security guards barring the gate "did not look like they'd be dogmatic about the principle" (2013b, n.p.), implying a proclivity for violence. While police expressed concern over incurring violence or death on either side, nevertheless the characterizations by Blatchford and police quickly

configured the Indigenous protestors as predilect for violence and dangerous, despite their express condemnation of violence and their calm and diplomatic engagements with police and others.

Judge Brown further noted that without "Canadians sharing a public expectation of obeying the law, the rule of law will shatter", meaning citizens must "cede the use of force to public government agencies"; Blatchford claims that the 'rule of law' must be enforced, lest court orders become "toothless", wherein Indigenous protests will not even need to bother with the "ruse of feigning a land claim" for their blockades (2013b, n.p.). The comments by Blatchford and Judge Brown demonstrate that the Canadian criminal justice system requires both a monopoly on the exercise of law and, by extension, violence to govern, as well as the condemnation of Indigenous people's expressions of law and governance as unlawful and illegal activity. Moreover, Blatchford's comments not only criticize Indigenous protests as unlawful and illegal, but as a nefarious "ruse", further condemning them as immoral and reflective of a broader Indigenous degeneracy. Judge Brown's comments further configure Indigenous protest as a threat to the integrity and operation of Canadian state, requiring Indigenous conformity to Canadian governance and law, lest the fabric of the state be unravelled. Moreover, this characterization of Indigenous protestors and the call for their hasty removal, despite being on First Nations reserve land, works to both delegitimize their political expression and presence and to legitimize the violent force used to ensure their removal.

Blatchford in *Helpless: Caledonia's Nightmare of Fear and Anarchy and How the Law Failed All of Us* (2011), details the supposed failures of policing and law regarding the Six Nations lands claim in Caledonia in 2006. This book contextualizes the broader state and police responses to Indigenous protests and demonstrations, as the responses from the public, police,

and Blatchford to Idle No More stand firmly in relation to this broader historical relationship. Blatchford contends that the Caledonia residents felt abandoned by the police, living in fear, and forced to pass through the Indigenous barricades where they were made to feel like criminals (2011). Moreover, Douglas Bland, a Queen's University military studies professors, notes that a "situation like Caledonia cannot be treated purely as a criminal matter because it carries heavy political and historical baggage" and that police "have to act more like UN Peacekeepers because things could easily spread across the country" (Barrera, 2010, n.p.). The fear of the 'spread' of Indigenous protest and solidarity presupposes the need to 'contain', invoking the logics of containment, elimination, and of biopolitical power[5]. Blatchford's book, as well as her National Post op-eds, work to reproduce the enduring, colonial narrative of a hapless, well-to-do Canadian populace that is at the mercy of an ever-present, savage, Indigenous threat. In effect, Indigenous protests loom over the broader Canadian public as always already violent and criminal, signifying a threat to the integrity and application of the rule of law, and, by extension, the fabric that undergirds the security of the Canadian nation state. This narrative is fundamental to the Canadian state's colonizing project of the prairies especially, producing the myth that the Western frontier was "peaceably settled" by the North West Mounted Police (NWMP), who provided law and order to the purportedly "wild west" which lacked authentic legal and governing structures (Harring, 2014, pg. 94). This narrative serves the project of Canadian state legitimation by configuring Indigenous polities as lawless and disorderly, and thus already criminal spaces, requiring the stabilizing forces of colonial law and governance to bring 'peace' and 'stability'. In extension, through these narratives the Canadian state can position its actions

[5] A concept advanced by Michel Foucault, which delineates how the state's governing structure allows it to exert political power over all aspects of human life (2007). Specifically, the ever-present need to contain Indigenous political expression demonstrates the settler state's wielding of biopolitical power over Indigenous life.

as ‘lawful’ and ‘civilizing’ and thus obscure the violence of its colonial statecraft, while also criminalizing Indigenous political and legal orders. Moreover, I argue that this narrative functions to instill fear in the Canadian populace that if Indigenous peoples gain political power and agency, they will use it to submit white Canadians to the same historical treatment they have subjected Indigenous peoples to.

The Canadian state’s response to the Idle No More protester’s blockade of the CN rail crossing located on Aamjiwnaang First Nation demonstrates how settler colonial state legitimacy relies on the containment of Indigenous governance, criminalizing any expressions of political autonomy that challenges its hegemony. Rob Plain, a member of Aamjiwnaang First Nation, became the spokesperson for the Sarnia blockade and was one of the only protestors to face legal consequences for his role in Idle No More (Cox, 2014). Plain appeared in court on January 2, 2013, along with his band chief, and produced over 250 pages of government documents which demonstrated that the tracks are there illegally and noted that this “isn’t a land claim issue—in a land claim there is a dispute over ownership, here there is no dispute… the crossing [is] illegal” (Cox, 2014, pg. 208). CN Railway offered to drop the charges if Plain signed an agreement to never again block any tracks, but Plain rejected their offer and stated that if “my community decides to the block the tracks, I will stand with my community” (Cox, pg. 209). Plain, as well as the other members of Aamjiwnaang First Nation who participated in the blockade, exercised their right to govern themselves and their own land through the blockade which was quickly condemned by the various mechanisms of the state (i.e., courts, police, and corporation). While Aamjiwnaang First Nation condemns the crossing as illegal, I nevertheless argue that the blockades of CN rail simultaneously function as an economic sanction—the Treaty relationship has been violated and Aamjiwnaang First Nation is exercising its governance to impose financial

penalties against Canada for this violation. I have already detailed how the narrow constraints of economic development become configured as the best mechanism to ensure autonomy for Indigenous peoples, functioning to open Indigenous lands for Canadian and corporate capital accumulation, but it also necessarily condemns any expression of Indigenous economic autonomy that challenge the settler state's imperatives as illegal and criminal.

Policing Indigenous Bodies

Indigenous bodies, like their broader communities and political orders, are likewise constructed as criminal spaces requiring policing, surveillance, containment, and elimination by and within various settler state mechanisms. Ruth Wilson Gilmore argues that the imperatives of the criminal justice system are advanced by racialized and gendered logics that construct certain bodies as "permanently criminalized people" and "ineligible for personhood", and thus made vulnerable to premature death by carceral state violence and settler colonialism (2002, pg. 16). Moreover, Lisa Marie Cacho further contends that groups ineligible for personhood are "subjected to laws but refused the legal means to contest those laws as well as denied both the political legitimacy and moral credibility necessary to question them" (2012, pg. 6). Blatchford, in another article published in late December of 2012, condemned the hunger strike of Chief Spence, characterizing the "action as one of intimidation, if not terrorism: she is, after all, holding the state hostage to vaguely articulated demands" (n.p.). Other conservative commentary likewise condemned Chief Spence as a liar, fraud, and criminal, likening her hunger strike to an act of terror while lobbing racist and sexist epithets at her, all while Chief Spence returned none of the vitriol (Kinsella, 2013). Chief Spence's non-violent act of political resistance becomes immediately cast as criminal and fraudulent, as an act of deceit and unlawful hostage-holding and terrorism, while also denied meaningful recourse to redress the sordid conditions of her

community, Attawapiskat First Nation, which can trace its poverty and squalor to the unrelenting repression of Canadian state colonialism. Chief Spence's body, like the bodies of Indigenous protesters peacefully occupying public streets and malls, are met with assumptions of criminality and moral deficit by a paternalistic state that assumes the legal, political, and moral authority to 'peaceably settle' this state of criminality. Moreover, this rhetoric of Indigenous criminality naturalizes the discourse of white innocence and of Indigenous degeneracy, not merely working to delegitimize the governing capacities of Chief Spence and other Indigenous leadership, but also rooting the poverty and myriad of social issues faced by Indigenous peoples in the inherit deficit of their cultures and communities.

The carceral space of the Canadian federal prison is operationalized to control, destroy, and assimilate Indigenous peoples within Canada, women especially. Indigenous women are vastly overrepresented in carceral systems in Canada, making up half of the federal prison population despite making up only 5% the female population, and represent the fastest growing prison population (Sheffman, 2022). Indigenous women's expendability and presumed criminality is foundational to their disposability, and their bodies are the site where colonial, heteropatriarchal power is inscribed. Indigenous scholar Shelly Johnson directly links the welfare of children with the safety of women, asserting that when Indigenous mothers are not safe neither are their children, wherein both are vulnerable to interpersonal and state-based colonial heteropatriarchal violence (2012). Thus, the violent containment and incarceration of Indigenous women reflects the broader strategy of disrupting the traditional kinship structures and well-being of Indigenous communities. The safety of Indigenous women and children are indelibly interconnected, with children and youth embodying the future of Indigenous communities, meaning that gendered violence foundationally shapes community welfare and the broader

politics of Indigenous decolonization. In the next section I examine how the settler state operates to marginalize Indigenous children and youth within political life, while exposing them to violence and premature death.

Settler State Death Drives—Indigenous Children & Youth

Indigenous children and youth are vastly overrepresented in Canada's justice and correctional systems, as well as child protective services and foster care. Woolford and Gacek (2016) define genocidal carcerality as "spaces enlisted towards the elimination of a targeted group, either for purposes of exterminating or transforming the group so that it no longer persists", further describing Canadian residential schools, foster care systems, and imprisonment as demonstrative of this genocidal carceral logic and oriented to the physical, biological, and cultural destruction of Indigenous communities (pg. 401). The control, containment, and incarceration of Indigenous children and youth demonstrates the genocidal caracerality that undergirds the Canadian state, functioning as a technology of settler state security to disrupt and destabilize Indigenous kinship structures and communities, as well as sequester the future of Indigenous political life. A defining feature of the Idle No More movement was the significant involvement and participation of Indigenous youth. This section examines how the spatiotemporal configuration of settler state politics operates to marginalize Indigenous communities, youth, and children, which contextualizes the next chapter's examination of Idle No More's resistance to settler political space-time through the political inclusion and participation of Indigenous youth.

Western conceptions of politics position children and youth outside of the realm of politics, which describes spaces understood as where the presence of human relations is organised by power, instead the lived worlds of children and youth are typically approached as

social and cultural environments (Kallio & Häkli, 2013). For instance, Hannah Arendt asserts that children ought to be safely sheltered and brought up within the private sphere, before engaging with the public realm, further contending that political agency is rational intentional action regarding collective matters recognised to have political relevance and practised by actors who are capable of understanding and acting on the issues at stake through formal political channels (1958, pg. 24). Additionally, Henri Lefebvre similarly contends that childhood originates from where "the 'private' realm asserts itself, albeit more or less vigorously, and always in a conflictual way, against the public one" (1991, pg. 362), such that childhood functions as a phase of 'becoming', necessarily grounding, and preceding the adult and authentically political life. In effect, the political participation and agency of children and youth is obscured, presumed to not yet be political actors and not yet capable of political decision making. The question of children and youth's political life is considered most frequently in the context of state institutions, wherein they are typically seen as dominated by institutions that subject and direct them through practices of power, whereas their competence to act self-sufficiently and as agential actors is often overlooked (Kallio & Häkli, 2013). This framing reproduces the state and other large structural forces as the foci of their social and political life, restricting our gazes to the state and institutions, while also eliding the political agency of children and youth.

Michael Hanchard asserts that the politics of colonial states position the "subaltern" as being "childlike, cunning perhaps, but certainly not rational", as rationality is a purported hallmark of modernity; this characterization works to construct the subaltern as "willing dupes of their own subordination" (2004, pg. 7). Within this colonial schema of politics, Indigenous peoples are likened to the condition of children, both slotted as 'irrational', thus incapable of

being legitimate political actors. This notion is expressly captured in the 1876 Department of Indian Affairs report, which states that "Indian legislation generally rests on the principle, that the aborigines are to be kept in a condition of tutelage and treated as wards or children of the State", wherein "every effort should be made to aid the Red man in lifting himself out of his condition of tutelage and dependence… through education and every other means, to prepare him for a higher civilization by encouraging him to assume the privileges and responsibilities of full citizenship" (Department of the Interior, p. xiv). This characterization of Indigenous political subjectivity bears important parallels to the political status of children, wherein both are needing a proper upbringing and education to prepare them for 'adulthood', i.e., when they will assume the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship and enter the Canadian body politic. The state assumes a paternalistic legal relationship to Indigenous peoples, constructing them as incapable political actors that are unable to manage their own affairs and govern themselves, thus requiring the governance of the Canadian state to enable maturation and development. Additionally, despite status Indians having since been granted full citizenship and its accompanying rights (e.g., voting.), the paternalistic relationship nevertheless remains. Jean Chretien, former PM and Minister of Indian Affairs, testified in the 2006 court case of Ermineskin Indian Band and Nation v. Canada, admitting that the federal government acts as a trustee for First Nations (i.e., assumes fiduciary responsibility) and notes that as "a trustee you have to act as a good *father*" (emphasis mine, Barnsley, 2004). This paternalistic relationship denies Indigenous peoples as being capable and agential political actors, while also further obscuring and degrading the political roles and agency of Indigenous children and youth.

As previously noted, childhood is portrayed as a stage preceding the adult and authentically politically life but is also understood as a 'primitive' stage of human development,

wherein children, like savages, are likewise understood as needing the nurturing of civilization to be properly brought up[6] into adulthood. Akhil Gupta notes that in the West the distinction between childhood and adulthood presumes that 'life' has a trajectory which positions adulthood as its peak, with childhood framed by teleology and historicity, producing the relationship between the child as forebear of the adult and the primitive man as the forebear of civilization (Gupta, 2010). Gupta further notes:

> Conversely, theories of development consistently portray nations and economies in terms of their movement along a line that mimics the human life cycle. Thus, we have the language of markets being 'immature,' or 'young' or 'not fully formed'; economies as 'growing,' 'having a lot of potential,' 'undeveloped,' etc.: such metaphoric transactions between childhood and the primitive go around with such dizzying speed that it becomes impossible to determine any direction of influence… [The] time and temporality that structure our understanding of the age classes that so shape the experience of childhood in the West are neither natural nor universal. (2010, pg. 51-52)

Gupta's analysis contextualizes how notions of childhood, Indigeneity, and authentic politics are configured by the spatiotemporal premises of imperialism, working to further constitute Indigenous peoples as regressive, undeveloped, and needing the settler state to foster and herald them into modernity. Additionally, such a framing further marginalizes Indigenous children and youth, rendering them as the primitive stage of a primitive race and stripped even further of

[6] The notion of 'upbringing' to describe childhood and youth parallels the 'lifting' of Indians into 'higher' civilization. Additionally, as detailed in chapter 1, the phrases 'prehistory' and 'deep history' denote something 'behind' or 'below'. Of course, this presumes that Indigenous people's need to be 'lifted' into modernity by colonization. I draw this out to explicate how temporal rhetoric imbues language in subtle ways.

credibility and agency, and thus positioned as in dire need of the settler state's 'condition of tutelage'.

Indigenous children and youth are at the center of many violent state mechanisms of genocidal caracerality that seek to control, contain, and eliminate the threat of Indigenous political life. Historically, the process of assimilating Indigenous children and youth occurred within Indian Residential Schools (IRS), which functioned to eradicate their languages, cultures, traditions, and knowledges (i.e., the basis of Indigenous legal and governance structures) to assimilate them, thus preparing them for authentic participation in the Canadian body politic. Residential Schools, which ran from the 1870s-1996, involved the forced removal of children from their parents and communities, and many children suffered violent physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, as well as death; the legacy of IRS continues to have long-lasting, intergenerational effects on the physical and mental well-being of Indigenous peoples and their communities (Wilk, Maltby, & Cooke, 2017). However, despite the formal closure of IRS, it is estimated that 3 times as many Indigenous children are currently in the care of the state than there were at the peak of residential schools (McKenzie, Varcoe, Browne, & Day, 2016). Additionally, Indigenous youth comprise approximately 7% of the Canadian youth population (those aged between 12-17 years old) but are 39% of the younger offenders in custody nationally (Greenberg, Grekul, & Nelson, 2016), with Indigenous offenders receiving harsher sentencing than their non-Indigenous counterparts (Owusu-Bempah et al., 2014). Indigenous peoples are also more likely to be the victims of violent crime, with 47% of Indigenous victims being between the ages of 15 and 24 years old (Greenberg, Grekul, & Nelson, 2016). These staggering statistics demonstrate that the Canadian state continues to forcibly remove Indigenous children

and youth from their families and communities, controlling and containing them within various genocidal carceral system, rendering them vulnerable to violence and premature death.

The settler state operationalizes both racialized and gendered logics against Indigenous children and youth, with state discourse on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) positioning Indigenous girls as outside the realm of 'girlhood', instead constructed "as a promiscuous female adult whose behavior and culture predispose her to sexual forms of violence, murder, or disappearance" (Scribe, 2018, pg. 48). Furthermore, Indigenous girls account for 44% of female youth admitted to the corrections system, whereas Indigenous boys accounted for 29% of male youth admitted (Statistics Canada, 2016). In Saskatchewan 98% percent of girls in youth jails are Indigenous, despite the fact the Indigenous women only make-up 5% of Canada's total female population (Shefman, 2022). Thus, while Indigenous children and youth are precluded from political life and decision making within the Canadian state through various colonial logics, they are nevertheless old enough to bear the brunt of violent displacement, genocidal carceral systems, gendered violence, and state enabled death.

Conclusion

I am not surprised that police officers would give presentations to youth, Indigenous or non-Indigenous, that condemns the Idle No More Movement as criminal and dangerous. The settler state was deeply disturbed and unsettled by the movement's success, spread, and capacity to move Indigenous peoples, and a concerning amount of non-Indigenous supporters, to collective and direct action. The settler state's response alone demonstrates that the Idle No More movement accomplished something enormous, something that they must continuously work to contain and sequester, lest it cause another outbreak and unsettle the stability of the settler state and law, throwing into question the inevitability and futurity of its unitary sovereignty. Idle No

More's success further demonstrates the essential knowledge and creative force of Indigenous women's resistance and political leadership, offering a critical site of decolonial possibility. Building on this insight, chapter 3 examines the interventions of the Indigenous feminist resistance of Idle No More in and theorizes its alternative, decolonial imaginary of political life.

Chapter 3 – The Space-Time of Idle No More's Indigenous Feminist Political Imaginaries

While Idle No More is understood as a national security threat, demonstrating the threat and angst that it poses to the settler state, is important to further consider the resonance the movement holds within Indigenous political life and within the political consciousness of Indigenous peoples. I chose to focus on the political organizing of Indigenous women through the Idle No More movement because of its continued significance it holds for Indigenous peoples. When I began my thesis research, in a rather serendipitous incident, I was told a story that would convey the movement's strongly held and ongoing importance. A friend of mine, an Indigenous man, told me the story of when he was walking and crossed paths with a stranger, another Indigenous man, who upon seeing my friend put his fist into the air and shouted, "Idle No More!" My friend, surprised but supportive, returned the gesture and, without saying another word, they continued walking in separate directions. This story took place in 2021, close to a decade after the height of the movement. Despite the predictions of some that the movement was fated to accomplish little and fizzle into obscurity, Idle No More has clearly maintained a strong salience, not only to the settler state, but also—and more importantly—to Indigenous peoples. This story demonstrates the strong and continued presence of Idle No More within the collective consciousness of Indigenous peoples. This story compelled me to consider how Idle No More, while being unable to turn over the omnibus bills, nevertheless incited very real and important political change. I realized that notions of political impact have likewise been restrained by the delimiting conception of politics put forth by the settler state, and, as a result, does not adequately consider the substantial change generated within Indigenous political life and political consciousness.

The public and political domain of the settler state is constructed as a space that is rightfully occupied by its own modes and subjects but Idle No More challenges the delimiting nature of settler state governance and political life. As briefly delineated in the chapter 1 and 2, a conventional method for differentiating between social and political life emerges from the public/private divide where the social, private realm organizes around the home and the family, and the political, public realm is located at the community and the state level. This schema positions the concerns and contributions of marginalized peoples, such as racialized groups, women, 2SLGBT+, youth, children, and non-humans, outside the space of authentic politics. As Michael Hanchard further notes, the conventional methods of identifying political behaviour largely locate authentic political action and expression as belonging to the formalized politics that take place at the state level, and as a result misunderstand and ignore the politics of the Black diaspora, as well as the politics of subaltern groups generally (2006). Hanchard's work further takes up the informal modes of political articulation of those within the Black diaspora, contending that the modalities of subaltern struggles against white supremacy constitute genuine forms of political engagement and expression, despite falling outside of the conventional frameworks of political science (2006). Hanchard's interventions recognize that subaltern struggles constitute legitimate forms of politics that disrupt established categories of political life, while further highlighting the necessity to take seriously these domains within political analysis. Taking up Hanchard's interventions, this chapter asks: *how does Idle No More's Indigenous feminist resistance to the settler state emerge from an alternative, decolonial imaginary of political life?*

This chapter utilizes news articles, the forms of protesting employed, and the written works of Idle No More protestors to examine the spatiotemporal configurations that undergird

the political expressions advanced by the movement to unsettle the restrictive space-time of the settler state. I argue that the spatiotemporal formations of Indigenous political orders configure the resistance of Idle No More, expressing an unbroken continuity of Indigenous political life that transcends colonization, and facilitates a non-hierarchal, grassroots politics that enables an alternative space-time of politics and power. This chapter explicates an alternative, decolonial political imaginary that is operationalized in chapter 4 to theorize new Treaty imaginaries. This chapter is organized into three different sections. The first section examines how the political refusals of Idle No More are shaped by Indigenous feminist epistemologies, and the important interventions they provide to challenging the heteropatriarchal settler state. The second section examines how Idle No More's protesting works to recover and reclaim the foundational roles and contributions of both other-than-human relatives and Indigenous children and youth, resisting their marginalization and disposability under settler state governance. The third section examines how Idle No More's resistance ruptures the space-time of settler state politics, creating and outlining an alternative spatiotemporal framework for resistance and decolonization, and its cultivation of alternative political forums and conceptions of political power.

Indigenous Feminist Refusals

The work of the Idle No More movement offers important critiques of the constraining binaries of micro/macro, private/public that shape settler state politics, while also providing alternative interventions that are shaped by Indigenous feminist epistemologies. In January of 2013, Idle No More articulated that the vision for their movement hinged around "Indigenous ways of knowing rooted in Indigenous sovereignty to protect water, air, land and all creation for future generations" (n.d., n.p..). Many prominent voices within Idle No More emphasised the importance and significance of the movement being led by women, acknowledging that women's

knowledges and teachings are central to its vision and practices. In the initial stages of Idle No More, co-founder Sylvia McAdam met with Elders in Maskwacis in Treaty 6 territory, where they offered support and prayer for the burgeoning movement, while also instructing her to invoke *nâtamâwasowin*, one of the most sacred and peaceful laws carried by the nêhiyaw people in times of threat and crisis. *nâtamâwasowin* means to defend all children of the world as well as future generations, meaning the children of all humans, animals, plants, water, and the winged ones—everything in creation that has a spirit (McAdam, 2015, pg. 5). Co-founder Sylvia McAdam notes that the call to defend the children spoke more to women than to men (John, 2015), highlighting the gendered conceptions of social and political roles. Additionally, Indigenous feminist scholars further note that the responsibility for defending and protecting the land has often disproportionately burdened Indigenous women, since land is frequently positioned as belonging to the gendered domain and responsibilities of women (Altamirano-Jiménez & Kermoal, 2016). The Idle No More movement could be read as an instance of these gendered relations of power being reproduced, however I argue that Idle No More emphasized the importance of women's insights and inclusion, not as an attempt to reify heteropatriarchal formulations of women's roles and responsibilities, but to instead expose the limited conception of politics employed by both the settler state and Indigenous political bodies. The emphasis on protecting the land, all children, and Indigenous rights was clearly understood and expressed as politically important and relevant to *everyone*, not just Indigenous peoples, nor Canadians, but to all those who inhabit the planet. However, further contextualizing gendered relations of power within Indigenous communities and politics is important to understanding the insights and interventions of the Idle No More movement.

Indigenous women are frequently positioned as being the bearers and protectors of culture, understood as nurturers and care takers, and thus responsible for upholding the 'private' realm and managing the interpersonal relations and well-being of the community. However, this characterization is indelibly shaped by gendered divisions of social and political labour, wherein some issues "naturally fall" to Indigenous women because Indigenous men are "too busy", while also expecting women to pick up the pieces, and women simply cannot afford to ignore the immediate and critical issues pertaining to family life, welfare, and personal survival (Kuokkanen, 2019, pg. 161). Kuokkanen notes that in North America notions of traditional Indigenous womanhood are commonly understood through the social and sacred values of motherhood, characterizing them as being the mothers of their nations, but such framing reduces their political roles to a social citizenship that domesticates them to the private sphere, even when holding public office (Kuokkanen, 2019). Moreover, such rhetoric is rarely accompanied by the prioritization of issues that pertain to the welfare and safety of women and children, such as housing or gendered violence. Gendered relations of power, both in and outside of Indigenous politics, frequently restrict women's political participation through the restrictive lens of 'motherhood', or other biologically essentialist norms of gender and gender roles. A lens which men in political forums are not similarly subjected to, enabling them to bear a political role and citizenship that is not limited through heteropatriarchal formations of social and political life.

Understanding how gendered relations of power structure Indigenous women's political participation is important, particularly since Idle No More was heavily marked by the leadership of women, many of whom openly expressed that they were mothers or that their protesting came from a commitment to their children. Indigenous feminist scholars have noted that many Indigenous women have operationalized motherhood for political ends, understanding their

mothering and motherhood as political, and many perceive their roles as political actors and mothers as mutually reinforcing (Nickel, 2017; Kuokkanen, 2019). There is nothing wrong with Indigenous women drawing on their motherhood within their political expression, however it is problematic when it functions to exclude Indigenous women from politics and restricts them to heteropatriarchal gender roles. Additionally, the conflation of Indigenous womanhood with motherhood was at times reproduced within the rhetoric of Idle No More. We can see this gendered logic taken up within Wanda Nanabush's assertion:

> "I choose to care for strangers. I choose to set aside my own desires for the larger picture… These tenets, if you will, are women's teachings that they bring to the movement and affect how it operates. The earth, for us, is considered a mother; mothering and creation is grounded in our identity." (2014, pg. 343)

While I disagree with Nanabush's claim that mothering must necessarily be grounded within Indigenous women's identities, she nevertheless offers an important consideration, later asserting that patriarchal models of politics have not silenced Indigenous women and that there "is a strength derived from the attempted silencing in their closeness to the community, ceremony, children, and creativity" (2014, pg. 343). Nanabush recognizes that Indigenous women's exclusion from political life has often forced them to bear the brunt of caring for and sustaining their community's well-being, but nevertheless provides them with essential connections, knowledge, and creative power. However, I also contend that the positive affirmation of Indigenous motherhood is important and necessary, especially within the eye of the Canadian public, because many Indigenous mothers are treated with scrutiny, subjected to racism, presumed to be less competent or unfit as mothers, and fear the unfair intervention of child protective services.

Indigenous women possess important knowledge and interventions that are essential for decolonization and challenging structures of colonial, heteropatriarchal state power. The Idle No More movement was espoused by protestors as importantly founded and led by mostly women. Additionally, the recognition of gendered discrimination within the history of colonization, such as the codification of women's exclusions from political roles and leadership within the Indian Act, featured centrally within the movement. The movement offered political visions shaped by Indigenous feminist epistemologies, wherein Indigenous women put forth interventions that have been shaped by their lived experiences and roles within their family and community life, offering a decisively distinct and alternative imaginary of politics. I have highlighted how gendered conceptions of social and political labour have restricted the political participation and contributions of Indigenous women, but I also want to emphasize that their political refusals of heteropatriarchal state oppression and power have always existed, even when formally excluded, and are essential to the politics of decolonization. This chapter examines Idle No More's important political refusals and the alternative imaginary of politics outlined, which chapter 4 operationalizes to theorize new Treaty imaginaries.

Whither Indigenous Political Life?

While I have already provided a brief gendered analysis of Canadian settler state sovereignty in chapter 1, it is important to further flesh out the place of political actors who are likewise displaced by this colonial, gendered hierarchy and binary. This section analyses the spatiotemporal configurations of Indigenous politics ground the political resistance of Idle No More, and, in doing so, recover the place of political actors who have been obscured, namely other-than-human relatives and Indigenous children and youth. The first sub-section examines the alternative understanding of land and more-than-human relatives within political life

espoused by Idle No More protesting. The last sub-section examines how Indigenous youth's inclusion in Idle No More reflects the revival of Indigenous political orders.

Governance from the Grassroots

A central concern of Idle No more protesters was the cumulative, ecological impacts of industrial development and its deleteriously effects on Indigenous communities and the land. Leanne Simpson, Indigenous scholar and Idle No More organizer, notes that Indigenous peoples have lived through environmental collapse on local and regional levels since the onset of colonization, highlighting the interrelated violence lobbed against both the land and Indigenous bodies (Klein, 2013). As Indigenous scholar Kim Tallbear further notes:

> But [colonization] is not strictly an issue of racially disparate treatment of human beings. Bravebull Allard ties the fate of Indigenous peoples to the fate of the land and to nonhumans: "The land they claimed to take back was cleared of our relatives and the buffalo nation so that white ranchers like the Bundy's could graze their cattle there." In earlier centuries, and still today, the… tied oppressions and fates of Indigenous peoples and our other-than-human relations is a key ethic, undergirding both Standing Rock's and Idle No More's actions. (2016, para. 3)

Simpson and Tallbear's comments highlight the interrelated violence of Indigenous peoples and the land, further demonstrating that other-than-human relatives are likewise subject to the unilateral governance and the accompanying violence, elimination, and displacement of settler rule. Allard refers to the buffaloes as a "nation", a common way of denoting other-than-human beings, which recognizes that they likewise possess political autonomy and agency. Tallbear also highlights this relationship as an "ethic", illustrating that reciprocity is an important feature of Indigenous relational ethics and understands the that we bear responsibilities to all our kin,

human and non-human. Indigenous political life is understood as wedded with the non-human political orders of those they share the world with, compelling their resistance to embody this reciprocity and relational responsibility.

The notion that Indigenous people are hopelessly backwards looking or are regressively pining for a pre-contact way of life, misunderstands both the endurance of colonization and the metaphysics of their cultures and practices.[7] Neal McLeod, in *Cree Narrative Memory,* notes that Nehiyaw collective memory emerges from our living stories that are rooted in a specific location and relationship to land, both spatially and temporally (2007). McLeod further notes that telling and participating in traditional stories requires understanding it through the lens of those who originally experienced it and is usually accompanied by personal narratives to produce a personal knowledge and understanding of one's place in creation, functioning as a means of "bridging the eternity of the past and the forever of the future with the infinity of the moment" (pg. 55). As Awâsis further notes, Anishinaabe temporalities are expansive and open-ended, meaning that clans would sit and deliberate political decisions for weeks, months, or as long they needed to, operating from their responsibility to seven generations before and after themselves, drawing on their ancestral knowledge in the present to consider how their actions will impact the future (2020). Additionally, Anishinaabe decision making recognizes relationship to land as foundational, wherein understandings of kinship extend beyond the notion of the nuclear family, but rather emerge from the land-up (Awâsis, 2020). Indigenous traditional stories are intended to speak and provide insight to Indigenous peoples across different spatiotemporal settings, while maintaining the continuity of their community's past, present, and future in way that does not

[7] I use the term 'Indigenous metaphysics' here quite broadly, and, in doing so, I recognize that this flattens very real and important nuances between disparate groups of Indigenous peoples. However, it is outside the scope of this thesis to contextualize these differences in a way that would do them justice, but likewise recognize that there are metaphysical commonalities shared amongst Indigenous peoples.

center colonization. Additionally, Indigenous metaphysics are fundamentally rooted in a relationship to the land, wherein the land gives form to our onto-epistemologies, and, by extension, that spatiotemporal formations that configure our political orders and histories. While colonial logics have sought to conceal the history and agency of Indigenous peoples and other-than-human beings, Indigenous spatiotemporal formations conversely understand the land as bearing our teachings, histories, and political orders.

Leanne Simpson stressed the importance of standing up in defense of the land "because everything we have of meaning comes from the land—our political systems, our intellectual systems, our health care, food security, language and our spiritual sustenance and our moral fortitude" (Klein, 2012, n.p.). Indigenous legal scholar, Darcy Lindberg, further notes that the Canadian state has an impoverished view of law, failing to recognize that the internal logic of Indigenous laws differs from that of the Western juridical tradition, which works to diminish and degrade the legitimacy of Indigenous legal orders and meanings rooted in the land or from natural origins (2018, pg. 53). Moreover, Canadian practices of law reduce legal meaning to written legal texts, the practice of law to the formal arenas of legal adjudication (e.g., court rooms), and requires law to be described within the vocabulary of European-based languages (Lindberg, 2014). However, Indigenous governance and legal orders affirm the primacy of land within political life, recognizing it as an agential, political actor who we are in relationship with and bear responsibilities to, and as foundational to their political bodies and community well-being. Simpson further contends that elders have been decrying the unsustainability of settler society for generations, resisting its extractive practices that render Indigenous people's more-than-human relatives and sources of knowledge as resources to be stolen and exploited without consent or consideration for the long-term ramifications (Klein, 2013). The act of extraction

eradicates the relationships that undergird and give meaning to the 'resource' being extracted, effectively stripping it of agency and, by extension, remitting the Canadian state's relational responsibilities to that which is denied political agency.

Sylvia McAdam notes that when she returned to her home territory it had to be done "through the eyes and words of [her] people's history and ceremony", while further noting that her journey with Idle No More emerged from a protective love for her ancestral lands and began when she was awoken in the middle of the night by the sound of logging trucks, remarking that they were "hauling out trees from my people's territory as fast as they can like thieves in the night" (2014, pg 65). McAdam notes that her involvement in the movement began with her love and concern for her ancestral lands, highlighting how her relationship to the land emerges from her ancestors, and must be understood in relation to them. Through this rhetoric McAdam is linking her relationship and responsibilities to the land across temporalities, the past, the present, and the future. McAdam's political action is configured by Nehiyaw spatiotemporal conceptions, situating her across various temporal relations, and spatially located in an ancestral relation to land. Moreover, McAdam notes that "Idle No More resistance began long before in different names, different locations through the generations since the arrival of Europeans" (2014, pg. 65). McAdams's framing of her journey recognizes the temporal overlap of Idle No More and other instances of Indigenous resistance, positioning the movement firmly within the continuity of Indigenous political orders and resistance, a temporal rhetoric that is embedded in Nehiyaw notions of time. Idle No More was replete with the acknowledgement that the movement was not a 'new' moment for Indigenous resistance, as such a framing would divorce the movement from its relation to past resistance, which cuts against the spatiotemporal relationality that undergirds Indigenous political expression. McAdam further notes that Indigenous peoples continue their

ceremonies, lodges, and prayers for the healing of the lands and waters, asserting that "it is in the lands and waters that Indigenous people's history is written" and that "our history is still unfolding; it's led by our song and drums" (2014, pg. 67). McAdam's rhetoric temporally links Indigenous political orders with the land, further highlighting that Indigenous futurity also goes hand in hand the futurity of our other-than-human relatives.

Can the Young Subaltern Speak?

The settler state apparatus works to control, contain, and eliminate Indigenous children and youth's lives in attempt to sever the future of Indigenous political life. However, while the settler state's spatiotemporal configurations of political life preclude the agency and participation of Indigenous children and youth, this schema is neither natural nor inevitable. Aimée Craft explains that the earth is understood a mother to the Anishinaabe, further noting that the mother-child relationship was the basis for Treaty with the Queen, wherein both English commissioners and the Anishinaabe spoke about the relationship with the Queen as a mother (2013). However, the Anishinaabe understanding of this relationship operated from different underlying legal and normative concepts, where the mother-child relationship is prefaced on love, kindness, care, and promoting autonomy, contra to European conceptions configured by hierarchy and subordination (2013). I draw out Craft's analysis to highlight Indigenous political and legal norms understand children and youth to be autonomous and capable, and their relationship to adults are not marked by a stringent hierarchy. Additionally, Craft's commentary further highlights that humans are also the children of their mother earth, dependent on other-than-human relatives for their well-being. The Idle No Movement reflects this conception of politics, advocating for children and fostering their political engagement because they are recognized as important participants and actors within political life.

Wanda Nanabush asserts that "children and their well-being is the first and last question" and that children ought to be "at the center of the community life [and] ultimately, of all political decision-making" (Kuokkanen, 2019, pg. 223). Nanabush's comments highlight the importance of including Indigenous youth and children within the structures and processes of political decision making, since children will also be affected by these decisions, and they represent the future of Indigenous communities. Indigenous scholar Jacquie Green notes, "we can be doing all of this work, but if we're not paying attention to children and community, we're not going to have children to take on those rights that we fought for" (Kuokkanen, 2019, pg. 224). The comments from Nanabush and Green assert the importance of attending to the well-being of children and community, prioritizing them within politics and practices of decolonization. This rhetoric is not a demand to politicize the private, rather this framing recognizes that the supposed domains of social and political life are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, instead cutting against myopic visions of Canadian governance that have been reproduced within their communities and orienting Indigenous politics to return to a more wholistic purview of political life. In effect, the Idle No More movement cut against the delimiting boundaries of private/public, macro/micro, instead highlighting the necessary porosity and interrelation of these various domains of life.

The Idle No More movement enabled Indigenous youth to play an important role in Indigenous resistance and political life, proffering an alternative political imaginary that is rooted within Indigenous political orders. McAdam notes that the nêhiyaw word for children is *awâsisak*, meaning "glowing sacred flames", wherein future generations are sacred flames that must be protected, loved, and nurtured (2015, pg. 5). Many understood Idle No More as fundamentally a "youth movement", noting that children and youth are where "the fires of

change are kindled", recognizing that they offer important insights, skills, and can build connections that transform the political consciousness, even the most jaded ones (Wesley-Esquimaux, 2013). The political participation of Indigenous youth is understood as deeply important as they bring important insights that are essential for both the transformation and vitality of Indigenous political life. Moreover, the inclusion of youth further recognized the intergenerational responsibilities of Indigenous political orders to work towards the well-being of future generations, both the young generation immediately before us and those to come.

Chief Theresa Spence explained that she decided to protest because the "pain became too heavy… [and] this generation is facing the same pain we felt at resident schools", she further advocates for a "life of freedom and not a life of pain and fear for this generation" (Caven, 2013, n.p.). The pain of colonization is a constant thread that runs through the lives of Indigenous people across generations, and the significance of youth participation and voices demonstrates a desire to sever this chain, to imagine a different future for younger and future generations. Idle No More was seen as a means for youth "to express everything they have been aching to say for seven generations" (Wesley-Esquimaux, 2013, n.p.), which recognized the deep interconnection between the struggles of Indigenous youth of past and present, which is the continual demand and affirmation of a future where the earth and Indigenous lives will flourish. Additionally, the participation of Indigenous children and youth in Idle No More demonstrations provided them with an important opportunity to learn firsthand, alongside knowledge holders, important teachings and practices "that have not been depoliticized so as to be appetizing to a Canadian body politic" (Friedel, pg. 886). Participation in the direct-actions of Indigenous resistance serves as land-based learning, enabling children and youth to teach and learn with other generations. Indigenous children and youth are thus connected to their history of asserting rights,

taking up relational responsibilities, and upholding Indigenous governance and law, thereby learning through their participation in political practices that span space and time.

Ryan Duplassie notes that Idle No More was likely so appealing to youth because "both are deeply about water—and both are about our future" (2014, pg. 300). Duplassie recounts a project undertaken alongside youth from the Anishinaabe First Nation of Grassy Narrows, inspired by the Idle No More movement, where they built a trapper's cabin on a local family's trapline, reclaiming their place and relationship to the land, while also learning about the history of resource development policy in the region and its impact on navigable waters for Grassy Narrows citizens (2014). Duplassie further notes that this activity allows the youth to "gain a closeness with the land that teaches them that it is sacred in its relationship with us" and that the "Earth is our protector and our life-giver… also [teaching] us the importance of politics", while actions like clear-cutting and other destructive development can sever this relationship (2014, pg. 301). Indigenous legal scholar John Borrows notes that Anishinaabe law is found in "dreams, dances, art, the land and nature, and [is] found in how people live their lives" (as recounted in Friedland, 2012). Duplassie further stresses that water is a source of life, while also teaching and demonstrating purpose through its flow, such that it "is all around us—it is *us"*, and we "must take care it to take care of each other" (Duplassie, pg. 302). Duplassie's emphasis on being in good relation with the land reflects the importance of reciprocity, wherein water and land give life to both the Anishinabek people and their sovereignty; the Anishinaabe people cannot exist outside of their relationship to water, nor can their governance, law, and teachings, which emerge from within this relational dialectic. Additionally, this political framework recognises the land and water as essential features of political life—as relatives that are not only alive and who we bear responsibilities to, but also as agential political actors, teaching us and bearing our laws and

governance. As Duplassie notes, “Idle No More is also about building and revitalizing community” (2014, pg. 300), and the life and vitality of Indigenous political orders requires learning from both the water, land, and youth and a shared cultivation of good relations.

Indigenous ceremonial practices, which are frequently truncated within Canadian political and juridical systems to mere ‘cultural’ practices and rights, are often intended be a direct participation in and the physical expression of law and governance (Lindberg, 2018; McAdam, 2015). A crucial dimension of Idle No More was the embodiment of Indigenous people’ diverse traditions through the round dance, which was done in streets, malls, and highways across Turtle Island (The Kino-nda-niimi Collective, 2014). Cree Elder John Cuthand recounts the story of the creation of the round dance:

> The story goes there was a woman who loved her mother very much. The daughter never married and refused to leave her mother’s side. Many years later the mother now very old passed away. The daughter’s grief was unending. One day as she was walking alone on the prairie her thoughts filled with pain. As she walked she saw a figure standing alone upon a hill. She came closer and saw that it was her mother. As she ran toward her she could see her mother’s feet did not touch the ground. Her mother spoke and told her she could not touch her. “I cannot find peace in the other world so long as you grieve,” she said, “I bring something from the other world to help the people grieve in a good way.” She taught her ceremony and the songs that went with it. “Tell the people that when this circle is made we the ancestors will be dancing with you and we will be as one.” The daughter returned and taught the people the round dance ceremony. (The Kino-nda-niimi Collective, 2014, pg 24)

The round dance has a deep and varied significance, meant to honour to those who have passed, and to physically embody and express healing and the relationship between diverse groups and generations of Indigenous peoples and their ancestors, the land and more-than-human relatives, and non-Indigenous people who join in. The round dance involves a braiding of various, differing spatiotemporalities embedded in relation to land: a diversity of Indigenous peoples and their ancestors come together as one, across space and time, working with one another to create healing and a renewed, future possibility for their kin; Indigenous and non-Indigenous people likewise come together to heal, imagine, and create otherwise ways of being in relation together. Idle No More's use of the round dance functions as an assertion of the unbroken chain of Indigenous political life and joy, the unremitting continuity of Indigenous governance, law, and relation to the land across space and time, and a refusal of the eliminatory project of the settler state apparatus. The round dance enables community healing and well-being across generations, across space and time, and in this world and beyond, while also highlighting the significance of rebuilding relations and healing communities. In extension, the inclusion of Indigenous youth within the round dance and as prominent actors within the movement serves to both affirm the future of Indigenous political life, and to reclaim their traditional place within structures of Indigenous governance and law.

Indigenous Feminist Political Imaginaries

Wanda Nanabush notes that Indigenous women's leadership has always been at the grassroots level, having historically been denied roles of political leadership through Indian Act based gendered discrimination until 1952 (2014). Idle No More was understood by many protestors to speak to the deep frustration that was commonly felt by Indigenous people across generations, not just women, offering an important forum for political dialogue and engagement.

Many protestors further felt that Idle No More represented an important transformation of Indigenous political life, offering a more generative and egalitarian expression of politics that was not mired through the state, one that Indigenous people had been long waiting for. Idle No More was multi-faceted, comprised of protests, blockades, teach-ins, round dances, and much more, challenging the limited imagination that constrains how the political is constituted. Idle No More puzzled many Canadians, often perceived as merely a celebration of culture that lacked a decisive political thrust, however the demonstrations of new forms of political expression nevertheless enabled a new political consciousness for many. In doing so, Idle No More has been able to transform the imaginary that organizes the vision and the symbolism of the political, orienting us towards a decolonial alternative.

Rupturing the Settler Space-Time Continuum

The feminist intervention to politicize the 'private' has challenged the delimiting binary of politics, instead asserting that sites such as the body, sexuality, family, and interpersonal relationship are important domains of political analysis. However, Black feminists have critiqued the framing of public/private as delimiting categories to make sense of racialized and poor women's experiences, since it often equates the private with home and the public with work, relying on the model of the "archetypal white, middle-class nuclear family" (Collins, 1991, pg. 46). Another vital critique questions the division of public/private for its devaluation of the private realm; Black feminist theorist bell hooks contends that the household or home holds "a radical political dimension" against the violence of racial oppression and where "one's homeplace was the one site where one could freely confront the issue of humanization, where one could resist" (1990, pg. 42). I draw out these critiques to recognize that when racialized women, Indigenous women specifically, voice concerns around the supposed private realm of

family and community well-being, they do not understand these issues to be simply 'private' or 'personal', but rather conceive of them as an essential domain of decolonization.

Indigenous scholar Sarah Hunt, in *Violence, Law and the Everyday Politics of Recognition,* asserts that colonial, heteropatriarchal epistemologies give form to this division of the macro/micro and public/private political spheres (2015). Hunt offers an important intervention to Coulthard's analysis, asserting that just "as reconciliation discourse requires us to create a *temporal* divide between past wrongs and current colonial realities, [micro/macro] framing creates a *scalar* division which positions everyday legal and state violence out of view", wherein gendered violence, death of kids in care, police brutality, and the willful negligence of Indigenous communities is rendered less politically insignificant (2015, pg. 4). Hunt's analysis highlights that settler state violence operates across various scales of politics, and by narrowing our focus to state mechanisms, we ignore other important sites of colonial relations of power. Hanchard also notes that "racist violence, whether meted out by the state or by racist individuals, explodes the public/private distinctions" (pg. 58), instead offering a theory of quotidian politics as a speculative tool meant to help make sense of phenomena often excluded from the category and conceptualization of 'the political' in state and materialist accounts of power and politics (2006, pg. 66). Hunt and Hanchard's conceptions contextualize how systems of power sublimate everyday living within its folds, wherein the everyday or the quotidian offers an important disruption to the private/public, social/political, and micro/macro divides. Indigenous scholar Jacquie Green further asserts that questions of Indigenous sovereignty are too preoccupied with the formal arenas of state politics, but instead asserts that communities must prioritize their internal practices of decolonization, and asks "how do we unravel and unpack colonialism in our lives and in our own communities… [and] the hand of the Indian Act in our *everyday* living?"

(emphasis mine, Kuokkanen, 2019, pg. 119) The preceding interventions recognize that the categories of public/private and macro/micro obscure the important sites of not just colonial violence, but also of decolonization, offering the everyday as an important, temporal site of political expression.

The phrase 'Idle No More' expresses an explicit temporality, calling for action *now,* to stand up the long-standing transgressions against Indigenous nations, Canadians, land, and water, and say, "Enough is Enough!" (Graveline, 2012, pg. 294). In effect, the framing demands a refusal of the status quo, instead shifting political concerns and actions to a temporal imminence, accompanied by a sense of "urgency and possibility" (Alfred & Rollo, pg. 314). This temporal rhetorical shift to the present and the now is a calculated move by Idle No More protesters to convey that "the shameful injustices and human rights deprivations continue and are reproduced *every day*", such that they are "part of *everyday* Canadian life" (emphasis mine, BCCLA, 2013). Idle No More organizers emphasized the continuation of colonial oppression within the everyday life of Indigenous peoples, highlighting the quotidian violence of the settler state, and refusing the spatiotemporal constrictions which seek to deny the contemporary reality of colonization. Additionally, Niigaan Sinclair notes, "we are more than… [what] we have inherited", further highlighting that learning history can enable the creation of new paths and political configurations (2014, pg. 275). The Idle No More movement was understood by many to be a reckoning of Canada's colonial past, unsettling the country's "romanticized longing for a history that never was", prompting a temporal shift wherein Canada's history is "catching up" with it at last (Fielle, 2013, para. 2), indicating a spatiotemporal rupturing. The rupturing process involves the interweaving of everyday life, space, time, and the unexpected (Bassett 2008, pg. 907), meaning not just a re-reading of the past, but also functioning as the potential to challenge and

re-configure existing meanings. By challenging Canada's collective memory of the past, Idle No More prompts a shift in the Canadian political imaginary by challenging its historical narrative that denies Indigenous political orders both a historical and contemporary relevance.

The movement positioned the realm of political action within the 'everyday' or the quotidian through their demonstrations, such as the disruption of the everyday activities of Canadians by protesting on roads, public squares, in malls, through blockades, and teach-ins with youth and the public. Lefebvre notes that the 'everyday' has a mythical dimension and asserts that the "most extraordinary things are also the everyday" (1991, pg. 13), with Gardiner further noting that the 'everyday' is "simultaneously an alienated and potentially liberated state" (2000, pg. 17). Idle No More participants noted that resistance to colonization is lived out in the everyday with "daily acts of creation and resurgence" (Ritskes, 2014, pg 26), and that the only way for settlers to "challenge complicity with ongoing settler colonialism is active day-to-day opposition to it" (McLean, 2014, pg. 93). Despite the frequent assertion that the macro-politics of revolution, revolt, and protest are not translatable to the politics of everyday life, such that the realms of macro and micro political life are thought to be mutually exclusive, Idle No More refuses this modality and frames their everyday political expression and disruptions as a "peaceful revolution". Moreover, the act of expressing Indigenous political authority—governance, law, and Treaty—in these every day spaces is an assertion of Indigenous governance in the space-time of the quotidian, no longer delimited to band councils, the Assembly of First Nations, or other formal political arenas outside the purview of everyday Canadian life nor limited to a temporality of the past. Idle No More thus challenges the certainty of settler sovereignty and futurity by rendering the modes and orders of Indigenous political life as 'thinkable', and actively expressing them as alternatives to the political status quo.

Pam Palmater described Idle No More as "a responsibility—a responsibility to live up to the sacrifices of our ancestors, to the duty we have as guardians of the earth, and to the expectations that our children and grandchildren have of us to protect them" (2013, n.p.). Palmater's description of Idle No More demonstrates the fluidity of the movement, wherein it is not restrained to formal protests and demonstrations, but rather is embodied through a diversity of expressions that affirm Indigenous sovereignty and revival. Participants at the Idle No More Women's Townhall discussed the importance of language revitalization, and some shared their experiences of "language nests", which involves young children acquiring language naturally in immersion settings, learning from community members such as Elders, parents, and grandparents (âpihtawikosisân, 2013). The blog post ends with the section titled, "Stop asking permission and just do!", which details actions of self-determination and awareness raising shared at the town hall, such as Listuguj Mi'gmaq First Nation who created and enforced its own Fishery Law, and Fred Metallic, from Listuguj, who defended his PhD thesis in his own language (âpihtawikosisân, 2013). Another participant asserted that the "true revolution happens at home… [by] making sure our families are healthy and supported wherever they go" (âpihtawikosisân, 2013, n.p.). The Town Hall demonstrates how Idle No More was undertaken as a continual, imminent responsibility to be lived out within the various domains of everyday life, and not simply constrained to formal political mechanisms or ostensibly political actions.

Idle No More, along with other instances of Indigenous protest, have been described as a culmination of Indigenous resistance against the longstanding oppression and violence of colonialism; this framing expresses a decisive continuity and reciprocity with the political past, wherein present protests are indebted to previous resistance, continuing to take up the same struggle, and are further understood as living out a responsibility to ancestors. Anishinaabe

writer Lesley Belleau deems the movement "an awakening that will forever progress" (pg. 354), likening it to spring emerging from winter, and a newly sprouting plant that is held by the ancestor's memory and bearing new seeds (2014). These framings emerge from Indigenous spatiotemporal formations, recognizing the concomitance of the past, present, and future, wherein the present Idle No More protests were interwoven with both past action and new, future possibility. Idle No More's resistance cut against the delimiting spatiotemporal formation of the state, challenging notions of linearity, growth, and development that espouse a temporal discontinuity. Idle No More draws on a temporal schema absented of origin, which disarrays a temporality that assumes a linear trajectory of teleological directionality. Idle No More's framing expresses the revival[8] and change that has been created by the movement in a way that does not flatten it, instead advancing a transfiguration which emphasizes continuity and an extant form.

Felt Power and Cultivating Alternative Politics

Idle No More evolved beyond the omnibus bills to further protest and highlight other colonial policies and injustices, while also providing a transformative vision of decolonization, one oriented to re-imagining nationhood beyond the truncated models of colonial governance and law. Catherine Whittaker builds on Million's notion of 'felt theory', introducing the concept of 'felt power', which helps to "make Indigenous women's strength and alternative forms of power legible in academic writing, but it also helps to render visible the ways Indigenous women have considerable impact in male-dominated economic and political arenas, which social analysts are perhaps more accustomed to thinking of as power" (2020, pg. 289). Whittaker's

[8] Revival is described as: "to come or bring back to life or consciousness", and "to resuscitate to come or bring back to a healthy, vigorous, or flourishing condition after a decline" (Collins Dictionary, n.d.); these definitions express both renewal and healing, concepts that are both emphasized within the Idle No More movement.

intervention recognizes that while Indigenous women are frequently barred from conventional domains of social and political power, they nevertheless possess and utilize alternative forms of empowerment that enable them to influence decision making and enact meaningful change.

Many criticized Idle No More for its seemingly disorganized protesting and lack of clearly defined goals, labelled as an ineffective movement that failed to captivate public attention and approval, and as a result quickly fizzled out; others relegated Idle No More's fate to that of the Occupy Movement, destined to have little effect and lasting impact (Coates, 2014). However, while Idle No More was not successful in challenging it initial goal of overturning the set of omnibus bills introduced by the Harper government, it nevertheless possesses a lasting resonance within Indigenous communities and other activist organizing. Idle No More represented an important moment for Indigenous resistance as it brought together a large swath of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people across the globe in solidarity, while also providing a platform for Indigenous peoples to organize under and to create and express alternative forms of political power. As Sheelah McLean notes, the movement is about "re-storying Canada", actively "retelling stories which have been silenced, minimized, and denied" (2014, pg. 93), because we live by and within stories, but we can change these stories so that we might transform the future (pg. 95). The settler state relies on its monopoly of storytelling, positioning itself as the authentic narrator of its history, its relationship to Indigenous peoples, and the future of political life. The act of telling alternative stories that challenge this account offers an important disruption to the settler state narrative, while also offering a platform to those who have long felt silenced and ignored. Moreover, while many Canadians did not fully comprehend the impetus for Idle No More, with many expressing confusion and disbelief at the contemporary relevance of Treaty, it

nevertheless forced these concerns into the public eye, making it a contemporary political issue of discussion, even if only to be readily dismissed as a bygone land transaction.

Idle No More emphasized the sharedness of Canadian and Indigenous people's spatiotemporal narratives, noting the shared present and future urgency of climate change, as well as the shared promise of Indigenous political orders as a means of challenging environmental damage and democratic deficits. Idle No More protestors further emphasized the importance of sharing the land, along with its resources and the wealth it generates, while drawing on the shared history of partnership as a prompt. As Pam Palmater asserts, "We fought for your rights in 1812 fight for ours." (2013, n.p.) Palmater further notes that Canadians are relying on Indigenous peoples once again, just like in the early days of contact when settlers needed help to survive harsh winters and unfamiliar land (2013). Despite Canada's attempts to obscure this shared history, putting forth a vision of nation-building that portrays itself as having two founding peoples—the English and the French, protestors within Idle No More challenged their rejection from this historical narrative to remind them that Canada's well-being, survival, and creation would not be possible without Indigenous political orders. Palmater's commentary further reflects that settlers once relied on Indigenous peoples, learning from them and trusting them to not only survive, but to adapt, and to live well on this land. Such commentary recognizes that Indigenous peoples and settlers have been in good relation once before, and it is possible to inhabit good relations once again, but it requires reciprocity and a return to a shared sense of well-being, respect, and, importantly, land.

Idle No More enabled many Indigenous participants to address more than state-based frustration, but also enabled them to grapple with personal pain. As Febna Caven notes, the "leaders and spokespersons of the movement have no hesitation linking the political to the

personal, as the personal is very much a part of the movement" (2013, n.p.). The co-founders of the movement, as well as many prominent figures like Chief Spence, openly addressed their personal pain and experiences; Spence explained that the alienation and pain she feels stems from her years in residential schools, which has brought her to her act of protest (Caven, 2013). Idle No More co-founders and other prominent voices openly sharing personal experiences and speaking in a way that others could readily understand prompted an important shift, reimagining political dialogue beyond the constraints of mere policy, legislation, governance, or law. Despite some recognition by the Canadian state for its wrongdoings, such as the IRS apology, the importance and need for healing, on an individual and communal level, has nevertheless been neglected. Prior to the IRS apology, many Canadians professed to have had little to no knowledge of the government's atrocities, however this apology was expected by many to gloss over this long festering wound and to create a fresh start. Idle No More protesting recognized that addressing the longstanding hurt and pain of colonial violence is essential to decolonization, especially since apologies alone do not redress the years of trauma and intergenerational devastation incurred, and instead we must work to ensure our collective healing and well-being. Idle No More protestors during its height, and many times since, have conducted healing walks which are meant to provide an "opportunity for people from all walks of life to organize healing actions that focus on healing the land and the people who are suffering from environmental destruction and pollution" (Idle No More, 2013, n.p.). The emphasis on healing across generations is recurrent throughout Idle No More demonstrations, emphasizing that despite Canada's want and desire to imagine the past as a closed chapter, the past cannot be divorced from the present, instead we have a responsibility to attend to it.

Idle No More provided an alternative means of engaging in political dialogue, for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike, cutting against the delimiting forms of political engagement that are typically available, such as voting, writing an MLA, etc. Pam Palmater described the Idle No More as a movement "purposefully distanced from political and corporate influence" and possessing "no elected leader, no paid Executive Director, and no bureaucracy or hierarchy which determines what any person or First Nation can and can't do" (2013, n.p.). Palmater further notes that the movement connects very closely to the traditional governance of Indigenous peoples, where the governing power lies with the community and the leaders act as spokespeople who represent the views and decisions of the community (2013). Additionally, the movement is not meant to be in competition with other First Nation political organizations or elected leaders, but rather the movement is a rallying against critical issues that affect all Indigenous peoples, instead reflecting an alternative and additional means of political redress (Palmater, 2013). The decentralized nature of the movement meant that anyone could organize under the banner of Idle No More, enabling a myriad of demonstrations to sprout up in solidarity across the country and the globe. However, Idle No More faced criticism for its lack of discernible leadership, leading many to condemn the movement to a fleeting transience and fated to accomplish nothing. But Idle No More emphasized the importance of listening to grassroots voices, and co-founder Sheelah McLean openly invited others to bring their specific concerns to the table, asking: "What do you think needs to be done… [and] how can we help you reach your goals?" (2013, n.p.) Additionally, Lynn Gehl, Idle No More participant and Indigenous scholar, notes that "we need to follow the turtle or the most oppressed in any movement forward" and asserts that the movement provided an important shift in thought (De Cicco, para. 10, 2013). Despite the state's inability to meaningfully accommodate the voices and political decision-

making of Indigenous communities, Idle No More fostered generative discussions, practices, and other modes of being in relation with one another to empower and strengthen Indigenous peoples, their communities, and settler Canadians.

Idle No More protests quickly spread to south of the border, with Indigenous peoples within the United States likewise rallying against the ongoing violations of Treaty, destructive resource development, and the other myriad expressions of colonial oppression. At an Idle No More rally in Oakland, California, Lakota Harden, an Indigenous activist and organizer, recalls how her great-great-grandmother would tell her stories of life before European invasion, before Indigenous peoples were fettered by colonialism, and told her of a time coming when the ancestors would return to them and the young people would start rising up (Woodward, 2013). Harden's story highlights the intergenerational resistance of colonialism that transcends space and time, while also serving as a remember that Indigenous life, governance, and law once thrived, and it can thrive again. Harden draws on the stories of her great-great grandmother, not as mere past events or as history, but as an invocation of an alternative, political future; by recounting this story and its promise of the revival of Indigenous nations and peoples, particularly the revival of Indigenous youth within Indigenous politics, Harden and other Idle No More demonstrators are refusing the repressive, spatiotemporal demarcations of settler state which works to restrain the futurity of Indigenous political life. In extension, Idle No More protests were not merely an abstract imagining of another world where Indigenous polities and Indigenous communities might flourish, but rather represented an active affirmation and co-creation of a decolonial, Indigenous futurity.

Conclusion

The Idle No More movement was configured by the spatiotemporal form of Indigenous political orders, refusing the settler's states attempt to eliminate and contain them, and creating ruptures within its space-time. Indigenous revival and vitality require a continued cultivation of *all* our relations—past, present, and future—which Idle No More continuously emphasized within its protesting. Idle No More's protesting sought to reclaim the place of many marginalized actors within political life, imploring the settler state to reimagine the form, space, and structures of its politics. Additionally, the movement offers several important insights for theorizing new Treaty imaginaries: first, Idle No More outlines a deliberative process that looks to past relations and ancestors to retrieve insights for the present and future; second, Idle No More cultivates alternative forms of power and politics at the grassroots; lastly, the Idle No More movement offers Treaty as an important mechanism to address political difference, democratic deficits, and Indigenous-state relations.

Chapter 4 – We Are Not All Treaty People: Towards New Treaty Imaginaries

Idle No More's protesting hinged around restoring the Treaty relationship, not only for the sake of Indigenous peoples but for all Canadians, highlighting the democratic deficits of contemporary Canadian governance and political life. The movement implored the shared urgency, relevance, and hope that Indigenous political orders represent for Canada and global climate change, further contending that Canada must address the longstanding standing violations and implement Treaties and the sharing of lands. Idle No More's protesting hinged around a return to Treaty, its original spirit and intent, which involves the sharing of lands, mutual respect and cooperation, and facilitates both peoples to govern themselves and in their own way. Treaty serves as a mechanism to help disparate groups live together well and is frequently understand by Indigenous nations as bringing others into one's family or kinship network (Johnson, 2007; McAdam, 2015). Despite all the failings of the settler state apparatus to take seriously Indigenous political orders, instead actively working to contain and eliminate them, Idle No More protestors prompt us to return to an otherwise mode of being in relation together, offering Treaty as a generative site to reimagine our present and future path together. Drawing on the spatiotemporal interventions put forth by the Idle No More movement in chapter two, I analyse the past, present, and future of Treaty relations. This chapter examines the contemporary 'Treaty turn' by analysing the refrain that "we are all Treaty people", exploring both the veracity of this claim and analysing what constitutes good Treaty relations, which I argue is required to unproblematically be all Treaty people. This chapter examines various instances of Treaty making and relations within the historical and contemporary record, which grounds my analysis of the space-time of Treaty politics.

I argue that the 'Treaty turn' overlooks the radical and necessary shifts required to make this vision possible, theorize Treaties as a space for being in good relations beyond the settler colonial state, imploring for a Treaty futurity and a relinquishing of a settler futurity. This chapter takes up Idle No More's demands of restoring Treaty relationships and creating a genuine nation-to-nation relationship, examining what insights and visions the movement's protesting offers for new Treaty imaginaries. In the first section I utilize personal narrative to detail my experiential knowledge and journey with Treaty, and to implore the importance of making Treaty personal. The second section examines historical and contemporary Treaty making and relations, turning to the past to understand the nature of Indigenous-state relations and to locate generative interventions for the futural imagining of Treaty. The section then examines the configuration of contemporary Treaty relations, which grounds the analysis for theorizing the Treaty imaginal. The final section utilizes Idle No More's interventions to imagine new Treaty imaginaries, theorizing the confluence of Indigenous feminist resistance and Treaty imaginaries.

Locating Myself in Treaty

Idle No More protestors shared the stories that brought them to the movement, highlighting their own histories of colonialism, while also revealing how it shapes their present resistance and their hopes for the future. I believe the act of revisiting the past and contemplating what it offers the 'now' is an important practice of Treaty as well, because I did not simply become a Treaty person nor a 'Treaty status Indian' out of nowhere, the past has brought me here. Treaty is not merely an abstract political institution, it also necessarily accompanied by and understood through the story of its creation, and the agreement and responsibilities that were originally outlined. Indigenous storytelling is not meant to be understood in a singular, definitive

way, but rather can imbued with new personal understandings and change over time, intended to offer new insights and guidance across different spaces and times. Treaty is likewise understood to be living and adaptable, a tool to help us navigate difference and conflict, not static and unchangeable. I share my own story about my relationship with Treaty to flesh out my place in this political institution to implore its personal imminence. My Nehiyaw teachings motivate me to be a good relative and I find myself continuously asking, "what does it mean to be a good relative and how will I know if I am being a bad one?" I still do not have an answer to that question. Life and Treaty both necessarily change over time and likewise require us to revisit and reaffirm our relationships and responsibilities. Political life is full of flux, and I do not always trust myself to have good answers, but a lack of answers does not require a lack of action. In this narrative I offer Treaty contemplation as a practice to take seriously and personally the relationship and responsibility of being a Treaty person and creating good Treaty relations.

I was born and raised in Grande Prairie, located in Treaty 8 territory in northern Alberta. As a kid, my Indigenous identity was stitched together with the lose threads of knowledge that I possessed. My mom was Cree, my dad was Anishinaabe, and I was Cree and Anishinaabe, but ultimately, we were all Indians. I assumed that being Cree and Anishinaabe was the same as being an Indian. I was born without Treaty Indian status, but still, I was born an Indian. Both of my parents were also born without Treaty Indian status, but they too were nevertheless born Indians. My mom has been without status her entire life, when her grandpa took her dad out of residential schools it required them to relinquish their Indian status and membership with Sawridge First Nation. My grandpa, Lawrence Twin, would die when my mom was eight, further complicating the process of her attaining status later in life. I would later learn that my maternal great-great granny (who we called Big Granny) had lost her status when she married a Metis

man. As a result, my maternal grannies have always been without Treaty Indian status, and I know very little about my maternal grandpas. My dad was non-status until 1985 when Bill C-31 would be passed, which revised Indian status to address gender discrimination; his mom, an Anishinaabekwe from Nipissing First Nation, lost her status when she married my grandpa, a non-Indigenous man. I would not personally gain status until I was an adult, at 18 years old, and I would join my dad's band because I was unable to join my mom's. Despite formally becoming a member of Nipissing First Nation and attaining a 'Treaty card', my understanding of my Treaty rights, my responsibilities, and my own history was severely limited. On my journey to becoming a Treaty status Indian, not once did I think about Treaty.

I still remember the first time I heard a land acknowledgement. I was attending a conference at my undergraduate alma mater in Edmonton, Alberta[9] and the land acknowledgement followed the generic formula of "we acknowledge that we are located on Treaty 6, the traditional territory of the Cree, Nakota Sioux, Blackfoot, Métis, and many other Indigenous peoples who have called this land home since time immemorial." At this time, I was rather impressed as I had never witnessed an acknowledgement of this relationship before. I would also begin to hear non-Indigenous Canadians call themselves "settlers", also acknowledging that settlers get to call Edmonton and Canada home because of Treaty 6 and remarking that we are all Treaty people. I am a bit embarrassed to admit this, but prior to this moment, I had no concept of Treaty, nor did I even know what Treaty territory my family and ancestors were a part of. While I had always known that I was Cree and Anishinaabe, the specificities of my ancestry were obscure to me.

[9] Amiskwaciwâskahikan in Nêhiyawêwin.

During my second year of my undergrad a professor asked the class how Canada might go about rectifying its relationship with Indigenous peoples. I was no expert on Indigenous politics then, nor am I confident that I am one now, but I faithfully repeated what I had heard other Indigenous people say: honour the Treaties. My professor seemed to approve of that answer, but quickly followed up with, "what would it mean to honour the Treaties?" Unfortunately, I had exhausted all the talking points I had memorized, and I had no clue, my knowledge of Treaty was very limited. This class was the first time I would learn about the "original intent and spirt" of Treaty and that it was intended to last "as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the river flows." Treaty 6 has been frequently understood as a written document, ignoring the oral histories and Indigenous understandings of the Treaty, which was in many ways meant to be an extension of the positive relationship Indigenous peoples had with Europeans settlers at the time of its signing in 1876, wherein the notion of miyo-wicihitowin (helping each other out in a good way) was the core of this relationship (McLeod, 2007). Treaties were not a ceding of land, rather they were intended to outline the sharing of land and resources and diplomatic cohabitation, while Elders further emphasize that Indigenous ways of life were to be maintained, such as hunting, trapping, and fishing (McLeod, 2007). This professor later said that rectifying the relationship with Indigenous peoples won't be easy, it would require work, and it would certainly be painful for settlers at times, requiring them to give up things. I still revisit this comment every now and again, contemplating this 'pain' of making things right.

The positive impression of land acknowledgements would be short lived. As my understanding of Treaty and its countless violations grew, so did my frustrations with Treaty and its possibility as a liberatory mechanism to overcome settler colonial state violence and oppression. Indigenous peoples signed Treaty 8 for reasons of peace and friendship, with Elders

further explaining Indigenous parties hold the well-being of their grandchildren and future generations as a central concern. However, unbeknownst to Headman Charles Neesotasis (Twin), a representative for the Lesser Slave Lake region in Treaty 8, the assurance of his grandchildren's well-being and future would not be upheld. David George Twin, Charle's grandson, would end up relinquishing his 'Treaty rights'[10] after his son, Lawrence Twin, was taken to Residential Schools, preventing his other children from having to endure the school's abuse. My grandpa Lawrence Twin never regained his Treaty rights, nor did my mom or us kids. My grannies and parents had also been displaced from their nations and Treaties through the Indian Act's gendered discrimination and even though the legislation has been amended, community disconnection nevertheless remains in many ways. Coupled with my frustrating political exchanges about Treaty and decolonization that deferred primacy and superiority to the Canadian state, I was ready to turn on this Treaty turn. I was fairly new to this whole Treaty thing, but it became readily apparent to me that it was not made for me, especially as an Indigenous woman. I never needed Treaty rights and Indian status to know I was Cree and Anishinaabe, neither did my mom or my grannies, so why would I need Treaty to do Indigenous politics? At the end of my undergrad, I made a silent oath that I was never going to focus my research on Treaty politics, because Treaty didn't want me, and I didn't want it either.

Of course, this silly little oath would be quickly broken as I would get job as a Treaty researcher after I graduated. As much as I wanted to escape Treaties with the Crown and their bad relations, I was reminded of their importance when I heard Elders talk about how Treaties were never a ceding of land or authority, and we could not let Canada teach our kids that it was, instead they needed to learn about Indigenous conceptions of Treaty. My Treaty research had me

[10] My mom tells me that it was often referred to as 'selling their Treaty rights' as they would receive money for relinquishing Treaty Indian status.

perusing archives for pictures of Indigenous women involved in Treaty making, but I quickly came up with almost nothing. I broadened my search to pictures of Indigenous women that were simply named in the description, but, once again, I found very little. Finding evidence of Indigenous women with names in Canadian historical records, let alone in Treaty, felt impossible. I eventually came across Sylvia McAdam's book, *Nationhood Interrupted*, which discussed the political authority of Indigenous women and their exclusion from Treaty 6, and it was a much needed breathe of fresh air. When I later chose Idle No More as the focus of my thesis, I had forgotten the movement's emphasis on restoring Treaty relations. Without trying, I kept coming back to Treaty, especially to Indigenous visions of Treaty. I knew I had a responsibility to ensure future generations of Indigenous people understood their own political institutions beyond the myopic formulations of the settler colonial state. I also knew that I could not have our sacred, longstanding political institutions emptied of their meaning to act as a smokescreen for settler colonial state oppression and violence.

From Treaty Rights to Treaty Wrongs

Idle No More demanded Canada to uphold Indigenous Treaty rights and to restore a genuine Treaty relationship, and since the onset of the movement there has been considerable and significant shifts within Canadian and Indigenous state relations. During the height of the movement, Justin Trudeau, a then Liberal leadership hopeful, expressed his support of the cause and even met with Chief Theresa Spence during her fast, further stating the need for meaningful engagement with Indigenous leaders by the Canadian state. The current Liberal government, headed by Justin Trudeau as Prime Minister, expresses a commitment to cultivate a new nation-to-nation relationship, the state defining Treaties as agreements made between the Government of Canada and Indigenous groups that involve and define "ongoing rights and obligations on all

sides" (Government of Canada, n.d., n.p.). The expression that 'we are all Treaty people' is a relatively common refrain within Canadian political and social life, serving to recognize the foundational role of Treaty within the nation-building of Canada and to dispel the notion that Treaties only benefit or affect Indigenous peoples. The current Liberal government has taken a markedly different approach to Indigenous issues than its predecessor, the Conservative government led by Stephen Harper. This political rhetoric highlights the significant shifts that have taken place within the settler state and society, which contextualizes the analysis undertaken in this chapter to theorize new Treaty imaginaries.

The significant shift in state rhetoric and action ostensibly indicates that the demands of Indigenous people were taken seriously by many Canadians, enabling this noteworthy change in Indigenous and Canadian state relations. However, this section is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of the current Canadian government's claims, but rather this discursive shift in settler state rhetoric highlights the settler state's 'Treaty turn'. Roger Epp, in *We Are All Treaty People,* contends that the numbered Treaties still define the relationships between all prairie peoples, as individual and communities, to the land and to each other (2008). However, Epp further asserts that liberal politics based on individuality requires us to forget history so that we can achieve progress, which unfairly burdens Indigenous peoples to forget the very real historical and ongoing violence of colonialism (Epp, 2008). Epp's commentary rightfully notes that we must contend with the history of colonization, but this examination must likewise extend to the colonial history of Treaty. If we are to take seriously the claim that 'we are all Treaty people', then we must also ask: what is Treaty, who negotiated it, and who is it for? The first subsection briefly analyses historical Treaty making, then takes up Idle No More's interventions to examine what Treaty history offers new Treaty imaginaries. The second subsection examines

contemporary Treaty politics, examining the contemporary settler state's implementation of Treaty. The analysis and conceptualization of current Treaty politics within Canada is necessary to ground the theoretical engagement with new Treaty imaginaries in the next section.

History of Treaty Making, or Making Treaty History

There is a long and complex history of Treaty making within Canada, with Treaties occurring both before and after confederation. Prior to confederation notable eras of Treaty making occurred, such as the Peace and Friendship Treaties of 1725-1752, the Robinson Treaties of 1850, and the Douglas Treaties of 1850-1854. In 1763 the Royal Proclamation was issued, prohibiting settlement beyond a line drawn along the Appalachian Mountain range, and recognized that Indigenous title to the land existed and it would be considered Indigenous land unless ceded through Treaty; it was also the first legal recognition of Indigenous rights and title by the British crown (Borrows, 1997).[11] Post-Confederation Treaty making took the form of the 11 Numbered Treaties, which occurred between 1871 and 1921, and the modern Treaties, which have taken place from 1975 to present. The process of Treaty making has occurred through an uneven and varied application across Canada. Treaties involve numerous and dissimilar Indigenous nations who possess varied visions of the Treaty relationship and have made Treaty under very different circumstances. However, the settler state's Indian policy and legislation has historically flattened the diversity of Indigenous political orders into a uniform mould, disregarding the distinct relationships, histories, and needs of Indigenous nations in favour of a one-size-fits-all approach. This subsection is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of historical Treaties, but rather serves as an examination of the haphazard and potentially

[11] However, this recognition of Indigenous rights and title is not what gives form to them nor what legitimizes them, rather Indigenous political order are legitimate in and of themselves.

generative ways in which Treaty has been applied throughout Canada's history, hinging around occurrences that are important to understand the contemporary context and alternative imaginaries of Treaty. This subsection contextualizes the analysis of current Treaty politics that occurs in the succeeding subsections. Following the interventions of Idle No more outlined in chapter three, the subsection examines the insights of the historical Treaty relations to inform new Treaty imaginaries.

Historical Treaties signed before 1975 did not encompass the entire geographical territory of Canada, which means that Canada has settled and occupied a vast portion of its land mass without bothering to negotiate Treaties or attain consent from the First Nations beforehand. Canada's failure to do so not only defies the Royal Proclamation of 1763, but also violates the governance and jurisdiction of the Indigenous polities it has colonized and displaced with its settlement. The absence of Treaty making is important for understanding the modern Treaties process detailed in the subsequent subsection. Moreover, Indigenous peoples have consistently highlighted the treachery and deceit of the Crown and Canada's political engagement with First Nations, specifically within the Treaty making process and its ensuing relationship. For instance, during the negotiations, Crown representatives would deliberately avoid discussing the land surrender clause written in the Treaty text, beginning this strategic deception with Treaty 1, and employing it throughout the rest of the Numbered Treaties. Sheldon Krasowski further explains that the calculated evasiveness around the land surrender clause during negotiations was a cornerstone of Canada's Treaty negotiation process (2019). While it is outside the scope of this section to highlight the full breadth of the settler state's underhandedness in Treaty negotiations, I draw out this instance to illustrate the Crown's bad faith engagements in Treaty making and, importantly, that Indigenous parties to Treaty were not agreeing to surrender or cede their land.

Canada's Treaty narratives have nevertheless positioned them as historical land cessions that are codified through the Canadian state's written documents of Treaty drafted by the Crown's negotiators. The written document has historically been privileged by the settler state as the authoritative interpretation and the definitive political and legal enumeration of the stipulations of Treaty. While Canada has acknowledged the contested character and divergent interpretations of Treaty, they nevertheless have historically ignored Indigenous people's understanding of these agreements in favour of their own interests in land and capital (Dickson & Wotherspoon, 1992). Canada's framing and implementation of Treaty rendered it a historical land transaction, appended by several delegated rights and provisions, and an imposed form of marginal self-government. However, Canada's narrative has always been disputed by Indigenous peoples who understand Treaty to be a vastly different political arrangement that likewise has a different expression within their own governance and legal orders (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000). Treaty has been a longstanding political institution of Indigenous political life and has been employed across Turtle Island since pre-colonization. Indigenous oral histories and conceptions of Treaty understood the Treaties as establishing the sharing of land and a political framework meant to facilitate the collective existence of multiple governing bodies (Venne, 1997; McAdam, 2015; Bohaker, 2020). The tensions highlight how historical Treaty has been unilaterally interpreted and implement by the settler state and has often emerged from bad faith political agreements and subsequent abuses by the settler state. Moreover, by limiting Treaty to a historical document, the settler state delimits the relationship to a narrow juncture of a past and fixed articulation, hindering its capacity to respond to political difference or to translate across temporalities.

My community, Nipissing First Nation, was party to the 1850 Robinson Huron Treaty, but the history of Anishinaabe-Crown Treaty making extends back to 1764 with the Treaty at Niagara. Sir William Johnson would hold a council fire at Niagara where he would present the Great Covenant Chain Wampum Belt to the Anishinaabe, telling them, "you will fix one end of it [at Baawating] whilst the other end remain at my house." (Sharp & Corbiere, pg. 24).[12] Baawating would likewise be the location for making the Robinson-Huron Treaty, signifying the continuation of the relationship that had been established with the Treaty at Niagara in 1764. Pictured below in figure 1, from left to right, is Chief Nebenaigoching, Chief Shingwaukonse, and Treaty commissioner William Robinson.[13] Robinson not only created personal relationships with the Anishinaabe, but he was also familiar with the Anishinaabemowin language, and is pictured (on the left in fig. 1) wearing traditional Anishinaabe garb. This history of Anishinaabe-Crown relations illustrates a Treaty relationship grounded on greater respect and reciprocity, as demonstrated by Robinson's embrace of the Anishinaabe language and dress within his diplomacy. The Anishinaabe had previously fought alongside the Crown in the war of 1812, acting as important allies and fighting alongside the British Crown, demonstrating a shared sense of responsibility and good. The Crown's initial honouring of the Treaty at Niagara facilitated a sustained relationship of greater respect and reciprocity, notably accompanied by concrete expressions that affirmed the Treaty relationship.

[12] During Pontiac's war, after the Anishinaabe and other nations expelled British troops and settlers from most of the region, the Royal Proclamation was passed by the Crown. After conflict ended there was a renewed alliance, reflected in the Covenant Chain, the Royal Proclamation, and the Treaty of Niagara.

[13] Chief Shingwaukonse, who fought as an Anishinaabe warrior in the war of 1812, also acted as a diplomat, establishing relationships with Crown representatives, and played significant role in making Treaty in 1850 (pictured in the middle, fig. 1). Chief Nebenaigoching, was given the war medals of his father who fought and died in the war of 1812 at 8 years old by British representatives, which he is pictured wearing below (left, fig. 1), affirming once again this sustained relationship.

Figure 1. Picture of Chief Nebenaigoching (right), Chief Shingwaukonse (middle), and Treaty commissioner William Robinson (left), (Sharp & Corbiere, pg. 24).

Chief Shingwaukonse also fought for the land rights of both the Anishinaabe and Métis at the Mica Bay Incident in 1849 and, at the Robinson Huron Treaty in 1850, where he demanded large land grants for the Métis, but Robinson would ultimately not follow through with these land claims (Chute, 1998). The making of the Robinson Huron Treaty exemplifies that the Anishinabek hold relationships with other political orders beyond the settler state, who they likewise bear responsibilities to, and are also important to understanding the spirit and intent of Treaty. Chief Shingwaukonse implored the Crown to uphold its responsibility to the Métis, advocating for other Indigenous political orders as part of making of the Robinson Huron Treaty, and I argue this advocacy continues to be an important part of honouring the spirit and intent of Treaty today. Our visions of Treaty cannot be flattened to the Indigenous and Canadian state relationship, as this narrow understanding can only obscure the breadth of our political responsibilities and commitments within Treaty, which requires our continued commitment to these other political orders and a refusal to allow Canada's past failures to redress Indigenous land claims or recognize Indigenous political orders to continue unchallenged.

A clear Canadianisation of 'Indian' Policy occurred after confederation in 1867, departing from the past nature of Crown-Indigenous relations. After decades of state suppression against the Haudenosaunee Confederacy's attempts to contest the settler state's invasion and to join the League of Nations, in 1924 Canada mandated and imposed Indian Act elected band councils and decreed the longstanding Haudenosaunee Confederacy Council illegitimate (Woo, 2003). Woo further explains that Canada operated from a clandestine strategy to prevent public scrutiny, further noting:

> It was not until 1931 with the Statute of Westminster that Canada and the other dominions achieved parity with Britain in the British Empire—a level of independence somewhat *inferior* to that claimed by the Haudenosaunee in relation to Britain throughout the post-contact centuries. And though the Six Nations had a defined territory, a population, a government and a proven, centuries-old history of diplomatic relations with other nations, it was another decade before the nature of a state was defined in international law. By then the department of Indian Affairs was able to point comfortably at its self-imposed band council to claim that the traditional Haudenosaunee Confederacy council, which still continued to meet, did not represent the Six Nations people. (emphasis mine, ibid., n.p.)

Woo's analysis of the Canadian state's relationship to Indigenous peoples offers several important insights for contextualizing Treaty, establishing that Canada diverged significantly from the relationship that the British Crown historically maintained with Indigenous people, and instead assumed an authoritative, violent, and increasingly devious stance. Second, this analysis highlights that the settler state understood the threat of the sophistication and parity held by Indigenous political orders, and actively concealed its calculated attempts to terminate those

orders and the people within them, both from the Canadian public and the international stage. Additionally, the Indian Act functioned to consolidate Canadian sovereignty through an eliminatory design that directly criminalized Indigenous political and legal orders. Lastly, this incident, alongside Canada achieving parity with Britain, occurred within the last one hundred years and is simply not that long ago.[14] Despite the settler state's attempts to relegate Indigenous political life to a deep past, it is not only very recent, but it has also never ended.[15]

Contemporary Treaty Politics & The Same Old Problems

This subsection briefly analyses contemporary Treaty relations and politics, setting the stage for theorizing new Treaty imaginaries. Toby Rollo, in *The Winter We Danced,* notes the Idle No More movement's emphasis on Treaties left many Canadians wondering what possible, contemporary relevance Treaties could hold (2013). Rollo explains that Treaties enable Canada to claim legitimacy as a nation and that his identity as "a Canadian as opposed to a mere occupier or colonizer was dependent on the status of those treaties" (2013, pg. 227). Rollo further contends that the continued violation of Treaty likewise means the violation of the 1763 Royal Proclamation, UNDRIP, and section 35(1) of 1982 Constitution Act, while also implicating non-Indigenous Canadians in this criminal neglect (2013). However, while Rollo's commentary

[14] To briefly contextualize this statement, the settler colonial temporality presumes a linear trajectory of progress, including 'social' or 'moral' progress. Instances of past transgressions of Canadian state oppression like this are often glossed over as being a 'product of the time', nullifying the possibility of meaningful redress through the tacit endorsement of the notion that, 'that's just how things were done then, and we cannot judge the past too harshly with our modern sensibilities'. In effect, this presumes that we ought to judge these actions with less severity, or simply move on, while ignoring its relationship to the present. Such presumptions, however, are not uniformly applied the past, such as with characterizations of the world wars, which fall around this timeline, that portray and understand them as possessing a modern political relevance, significance, character, and profoundly moral horror. Sentiments that are not equally held for settler state violence.

[15] This is also reflected in the deep-seated and persistent settler state hostility towards the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. As detailed briefly in chapter one, Blatchford and the settler state employ racist, colonial characterizations of the Caledonia blockade as a violent, savage threat. The RCMP deposed the traditional government in 1924 and seized sacred wampum belts, and the settler state continues to violently police the Haudenosaunee's defence of their land and their contestation of the state's violation of the Haldimand Treaty.

provides important insights, it nevertheless paints a hasty and incomplete picture. Modern Treaties and Self-Government Agreements since 1975 encompass the northern geographical territory of Canada and include a handful of First Nations within British Columbia, but still does not wholly account for all First Nations within the province. As such, the notion that all Canadians are Treaty people is false insofar that Treaty making has not always taken place and does not define Indigenous-state relations across the entirety of the country. The notion that 'we are all Treaty people' and that Treaty affirms Canada's right to settle, share land, and form its own government on this land cannot gloss over the breadth of Indigenous and Canadian state relations and history. Additionally, the desire to be all Treaty people cannot ignore the diversity of Indigenous state-relations across Canada, and haphazard conceptions that do not take seriously the historical and ongoing violations of Indigenous political orders, with or without Treaty.

I briefly examine modern Treaty making within the context of British Columbia as there is a continued absence of Treaty for many First Nations, and thus there are limitations for Treaty as a remedying mechanism within the context of B.C., particularly within its modern iterations. Canada's settlement and occupation of British Columbia largely occurred without the process of making Treaty, but with the landmark *Calder* and *Delgamuukw* cases of the 70s, the Supreme Court of Canada would recognize that 'Aboriginal title' to land had not been extinguished despite the B.C. provincial government and Canadian state assuming jurisdiction and sovereignty over these lands (Pratt, 2004). [16] With this ruling the Canadian state further delimited Indigenous governing and legal orders through the restrictive legal concept of 'Aboriginal title', while also subordinating it to Crown sovereignty. The history of colonization in British Columbia was a

[16] Barring the Douglas Treaties of Vancouver and Treaty 8, which comprises the northeastern corner of the province.

continual process of refusing Indigenous nations as genuine political orders and denying them meaningful recourse through Treaty, that is until the early 1990s when the B.C. Treaty Commission was launched. This example further emphasises the very distinctive contexts and sets of relations that undergird the settler state and its claims to sovereignty and illustrates that hasty and careless appeals to Treaty and Reconciliation can obscure these complex histories in favour of limited solutions proffered by the settler state.

The B.C. Treaty commission has been heavily criticized, because while negotiations typically provide a greater land base for First Nations, they nevertheless lose their reserve lands, i.e., the legal status of Crown lands reserved for use by Indians, instead becoming fee simple, a form of private property (Manuel, 2006). Additionally, Phil Lancaster asserts that while many criticized the 2000 Nisga'a Treaty agreement, it nevertheless functioned as an act of decolonization, providing a space to recuperate and prepare for renewed struggle, further asserting that:

> What is most shocking is that we non-Aboriginal [people] who have benefited so much from the taking of First Nations land and the attempted destruction of their nationhood allow [the process of colonization to continue] … and [that we] continue to reap always more benefits. (Lancaster, 2000, pg. 11)

Many have criticized modern treaties, alongside Canada's broader approach to Indigenous-state relations, for the reinforcement, rather than challenge, of the racist and colonial assumptions upon which the country's existence is based (Pratt, 2004). Ultimately, the Canadian state's modern Treaty agreements reflect an unchanged practice of Treaty making and implementation, still ignoring Indigenous notions of Treaty, and instead operationalizing them as land cessions and relinquishments of political authority. Additionally, while the current Liberal government

touts a ‘nation-to-nation’ relationship with Indigenous people, such rhetoric conveniently glosses over the historical and ongoing subordination of Indigenous political orders and claims to land. Instead, the state falsely postures as taking seriously Indigenous nationhood while continuing to only offer paltry methods of redress that do not challenge its sovereignty nor claims to territory, but instead work to further dispossess Indigenous peoples of their land and political agency.

Indigenous legal scholar John Borrows problematizes Canada’s assertions of sovereignty and title to these lands by highlighting that Indigenous people have never given their consent to this arrangement, instead asserting that colonial domination continues to rely on the racist fiction that Indigenous peoples have inferior legal orders (2017). Indigenous political orders and thought have been largely excluded from Canada’s formulation of governance and law, both within the settler state’s political apparatus, but also in the state prescribed governance imposed on First Nations. Gina Starblanket further notes that Canada mythologizes Treaties as the consensual ceding of land and a relinquishing of political authority, further contending that despite the settler’s state assertion that Treaties are being implemented, functionally the settler state continues to distort, contain, and restrain the rights and autonomy of Indigenous peoples (2019). In effect, despite the Canadian government expressing a ‘nation-to-nation’ relationship, the settler colonial state continues to operationalize a one-sided and limiting vision of Treaty, falsely posturing as honouring the Treaties without relinquishing any political authority or giving land back. This rhetoric purports that the settler state is heralding in a ‘new’ chapter of Treaty relations, temporally shifting Canada’s ‘Treaty wrongs’ to the bygone past, painting a veneer of good faith engagement that functions to elides its continued violations. Additionally, this rhetoric weaves First Nations into the settler state’s nation-building mythos, a calculated move that consolidates settler sovereignty at the continued expense of Indigenous political orders. Just as

Louis Riel's statue was made to stand as a founding father of Canadian state, the same system that had exiled and executed him, contemporary iterations of Treaty prop up Indigenous political orders as the unwitting authors of settler state legitimacy and sovereignty, while still denying them meaningful expression and existence.

Canada's contemporary engagement with Treaties reflects a continued dismissal of Indigenous political legitimacy, while further circumscribing Treaty politics within the narrow parameters of Canadian state interpretation. The sustained rebuff of Indigenous political and legal configurations of Treaty further demonstrates that the settler state maintains First Nations as effectively 'lawless', better served and governed by Canadian political and juridical orders. The narrow interpretation of Treaty rights has involved the Canadian court's construction of a "culturalist criteria such as those outlined in Van der Peet, which limit constitutional protection to select practices perceived as integral to the cultural distinctiveness of Indigenous peoples" (Starblanket, 2019, n.p.). This ruling has likewise resulted in what is known as the Van der Peet test, which has ten criteria, but most notable is number four which asserts that the "practices, customs and traditions which constitute Aboriginal rights are those which have continuity with the practices, customs and traditions that existed prior to contact" (Supreme Court of Canada v. Van der Peet, 1996, para. 9). This ruling conceptualizes Aboriginal rights as having to possess a continuity with a "prior to contact" way of life, effectively entrenching Indigenous cultures and traditions as static, fixed, and located in the past, denying Indigenous peoples the capacity to change and evolve over time, as all communities naturally and necessarily do. The process of rendering Indigenous political and legal orders as merely instances of 'culture', further functioning to strip them of their political character (Green, 2000).

Indigenous peoples have highlighted the treachery, trickery, and deceit of the Treaty relationship with Canada, but scholars note that such framings can limit agency to the state and its actors, redirecting Canada's implementation of Treaty to the narrow domain of policy instead of attending to the Treaty relationship itself (St. Germain, 2009; Asch, 2014). The settler colonial state's misappropriation of Treaty has been a persistent and powerful force, indelibly shaping Canadian legal and political institutions and processes, but also broader Canadian social life. As Tara Williamson stories in *The Winter We Danced,* the cops were called on her and her cousins who were engaging in ceremony with a fire in the city, noting that "having a fire in the middle of a city constitutes revolution" (2014, pg. 381). However, Williamson dismissed the Canadians who told her that she cannot have a fire in the city by reminding them that, "Actually, yes, I can. This is my land. I am a treaty Indian." (2014, pg. 381). Many Canadians do not have a material understanding of Treaty rights for Indigenous peoples or themselves, instead Treaty is often understood as an abstract agreement which operates at the state level, its implementation and interpretation only relevant for formal legislation and policy. However, Williamson's story illustrates that Treaty is a part of everyday life, not merely rights and relationships enacted at the state level but conveys the personal imminence of Treaty. By restricting the scope of Treaty relations to the narrow parameters of state-based legislation and policy, we obscure how settler state Treaty politics operates within the domain of everyday life, as well as the potential of non-state-based Treaty politics. This analysis of contemporary Treaty politics grounds the next section, wherein I theorize new Treaty imaginaries beyond the settler state.

Theorizing the Imaginal of Treaty

Drawing on Idle No More's recognition that women are essential to the political decision-making process, this subsection undertakes a brief, gendered analysis of Indigenous-

state Treaty relations, examining Treaty narratives and the formal politics of Treaty. However, this analysis is further operationalized through an intersectional lens, analysing how Treaty politics restricts other marginalized actors, while centring the crux of the analysis on the exclusion of Indigenous women. Sylvia McAdam explains that the *okihcitâwiskwêwak,* a group of warrior women/clan mothers/lawkeepers, possess jurisdiction over the land, air, and water, an authority which has never been extinguished, despite the attempts of the Canadian government to do so through legislation like the Indian Act (2015). McAdam further notes that *nêhiyaw* women were excluded from Treaty 6, with Treaty commissioners and European women refusing to speak with them, but women nevertheless bear authority over the land and without their assent the *nêhiyaw* political body could have never ceded or surrendered it (2015). Women within many Indigenous political orders possess political authority and jurisdiction over the land, meaning that settler state narratives of Treaty are also configured by heteropatriarchy, fundamentally relying on Indigenous women's exclusion and subordination. The exclusion of women as Treaty actors has become an enduring feature of its application, and is readily reproduced through the images, histories, and political arenas of Treaty politics.

Aimée Craft explains that the refusal of the Treaty commissioners to deal with the entire political body of the Indigenous nations, instead constraining discussion to a few select, male actors, defies the Anishinaabe governance structures of the time and illustrates the formation of patriarchy within their political orders (2013). Indigenous Treaty politics typically had involved the entire community being present, as well as participating in the deliberations, but after imposition of colonial politics Indigenous women describe being "shut out of treaty" (Perdue, 1998, pg. 24) and that Treaty is now a "closed-door politics" (Kuokkanen, 2019, pg. 117). The rhetoric employed illustrates the very exclusionary practices of Treaty politics, a political arena

that actively forces women out and closes the door on them, excluding them from an active role in decision making or political leadership. Additionally, while the settler state employs heteropatriarchal policies that systematically exclude Indigenous women, that does not mean Indigenous political bodies and conceptions and structures of Treaty, historical or contemporary, are blameless. Indigenous feminist scholars assert that heteropatriarchy has been a structuring force of political life for many Indigenous communities, rejecting portrayals that understand it to be only a product of colonization (Green, 1993; Starblanket, 2018). Emily Snyder further notes that the book *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan* relies primarily on the accounts of men, a phenomenon that she also observes across various public resources regarding Cree law, which obscures the authority of women while positioning "men's knowledge and subjectivity as universally authoritative" (2018, pg. 95). The exclusion of Indigenous women is a pervasive phenomenon in contemporary Treaty politics, wherein Treaty is effectively a 'boys club' that is actively hostile and exclusionary, while taking place behind closed doors in formal political arenas and no longer alongside their communities.

While many First Nations in British Columbia do not have Treaties with the settler state, their political structures are still influenced by heteropatriarchy. Sarah Nickel notes that the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) was exclusionary to women while privileging men, at times harshly condemning the interests of women as threats to Indigenous sovereignty (2019). Additionally, the relevance of colonial, heteropatriarchy on Treaty making is not simply a historical issue, but rather continues to shape the modern Treaty agreements in B.C. In 1999 the B.C. Treaty Commission noticed that Indigenous women were underrepresented in the Treaty making process and brought together a group of women from different regions of the province to participate in talking circles. The women expressed concern that Treaty making is a male

dominated process, and as such, overlooks the crucial concerns that Indigenous women have, such as families, health, and child welfare (Archetype Productions, 2004). The group further noted that meetings are male dominated, making it difficult for women to talk and express their views, and when they do their contributions are often glossed over or overpowered (ibid.). The preceding commentary highlights that Indigenous political bodies within B.C. still reproduce heteropatriarchal oppression and violence, constructing Indigenous state-relations as masculine spaces best occupied by men and thus configured by the interests of men. While a deeper examination is outside the scope of this chapter, it is important to recognize that entrenched structures of heteropatriarchy, both in and outside of Indigenous political bodies, will continue to limit Indigenous women's political participation and influence within modern Treaty making.

Figure 2. Treaty No. 6 Medallion. From "Amiskwaciwâskahikan Ostêsimâwasinahikan Nikotwâsik", by R. Houle, 2019, https://citymuseumedmonton.ca/2016/10/04/amiskwaciwaskahikan-ostesimawasinahikan-nikotwasik/

The famous Treaty Medallion (pictured in figure. 2), which features a handshake between a white man, the representative of the Crown, and an Indigenous man, the representative of Indigenous nations, is replete with in the collective consciousness of Indigenous-state Treaty relations. The handshake medallion was commissioned by the Crown in 1873, designed in

London by an engraver who had never been to Turtle Island nor met a Treaty Chief, and was used through many of the Numbered Treaties (Matthews, 2021). Additionally, Chiari Bottici defines the 'imaginal' as meaning embedded in the image, further explaining that "politics, understood as whatever pertains to the polis, to the life in common, is imaginal because we need an image of the public to make it exist" (2014, pg. 100). This medallion characterizes the political imaginal of Treaty, epitomizing the image of its historical and contemporary politics, and thus constraining the conception of what, and who, pertains to the Treaty polis. Within this imaginal Treaty is understood as a pan-Indigenous political institution pertinent to the past, reflected in the historical dress and the depiction of a bare-chested, feather skirted Chief, even though most photos from the Numbered Treaties picture Indigenous men wearing suits. This imaginal further configures the authentic political actors of negotiation and implementation as being between the political 'leaders' of these nations, which are understood to be men, with the Canadian polis specifically symbolized by a white man. Moreover, images of Treaty that feature women, whether photos or illustrations, are rare.[17] Configuring a Treaty relationship or politics outside of this imaginal is difficult because of its persistent reproduction in various domains of Indigenous state-relations, working to continuous flatten and truncate Treaty as a heteropatriarchal political institution.

The domain of Treaty relations is continuously depicted as largely absent of Indigenous women, instead portraying Treaty making and implementation as a masculine space that is limited to male leaders, and within formal political arenas. We can see this formulation within contemporary Indigenous-state politics, as reflected by the Assembly of First Nations, a political body of mostly Indigenous men, and the Canadian Parliamentary Government, a political body

[17] "Conference with First Nation Chiefs During Manitoba-First Nations Treaty, 1871." Glenbow Archives NA 1406-72. Depicts Indigenous women on the fringes of negotiation.

of mostly white men. However, it is important to further acknowledge that the colonial heteropatriarchal state is also a hostile space for many other marginalized identities and, for the purposes of this chapter, it is important to stress that is a space that privileges whiteness and marginalizes other racialized peoples. Indigenous people's renderings of Treaty can likewise reproduce this exclusionary conception of Treaty, characterizing settlers and the settler state as overly European and white (e.g., Johnson, 2007). While the settler state certainly possesses a white, heteropatriarchal character, Canadians are racially diverse and such iterations reproduce a historical and static vision of Treaty, flattening settler state oppression and reifying harmful conceptions that work to exclude other racialized peoples.

New Treaty Imaginaries

Various scholars have emphasized that superficial invocations of Treaty within political discourses continue to circumscribe and contain Indigenous visions of Treaty, precluding its emancipatory and transformative potential (Snelgrove, 2022; Starblanket, 2019; Stark, 2017). The imaginal of Treaty politics has been constructed it as a masculine space, constrained to formal political arenas, effectively limiting our imaginary of Treaty relations and new Treaty possibilities. A defining aspect of the Idle No More movement was the act of Indigenous women taking up their traditional roles of political leadership against a political system that has made every attempt to refuse them power. The Idle No More movement's emphasis on Treaty rights and the absence of women from political decision making further stresses the failures of Treaty politics within Canadian political life. Indigenous women in the movement recognized that colonial, heteropatriarchy's configuration of Treaty has played a fundamental role in settler colonial statecraft, dispossession of land and political authority, and further enables heteropatriarchal violence and oppression. However, Idle No More co-founders and

demonstrators still readily invoke the historical Treaties as necessary and generative frameworks to remedy the relationship between Indigenous peoples, the Canadian state and its citizens, and our other-than-human relatives. Building on the analysis of chapter two, this section examines how the interventions of the Idle No More can inform new Treaty imaginaries.

Grassroots Treaty Refusals and Feminisms

As previously detailed in chapter two, the Idle No Movement cultivated alternative, grassroots politics, and expressions of political power outside of settler state mechanisms and formal arenas of politics. Contending with Treaty relations and politics at the settler state level is important but narrowing our gaze to the state also obscures the other possible spatiotemporal configurations for engaging in Treaty. While the settler state has certainly sought to dispossess Indigenous peoples of their political legitimacy and authority, they have nevertheless miserably failed, and Indigenous political institutions and practices retain their capacity to challenge existing structures and disrupt the settler colonial project. The Idle No More movement's expression of a grassroots politics points to the possibility of grassroots Treaty relations, an alternative spatiotemporal configuration of Treaty politics that possesses radical and transformative potential. This subsection examines how the Treaty politics of refusal can enable an alternative forms of Treaty relations, challenging colonial heteropatriarchal structures, and facilitate the political participation of marginalized actors within Treaty.

Audra Simpson, in *Mohawk Interruptus*, critiques the delimited politics of recognition that circumscribe Indigenous political orders and their rights and further outlines the alternative politics of refusal, a political and ethical stance that rejects the aspiration of having one's culture and people recognized by the state (2014). Simpson describes how the Kahnawà:ke resistance challenged settler state legitimacy and enabled new forms and expressions of sovereignty,

belonging, citizenship, and means of realizing liberation (2014). Simpson's conceptual framework of political refusal and its generative possibilities for alternative politics offers an important theoretical lens to further contextualize the practices of resistance within the Idle No More movement. Idle No More emerged as a grassroots movement from the work of women who were seeking to uphold Treaty rights and to establish a genuine Treaty relationship. The heteropatriarchal structure of formal Treaty politics has systematically excluded women, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, but the Idle No More founders refused the settler state's exclusionary and hierarchal forms of governance and pursued alternative avenues of honouring Treaty relations and engaging in its politics.

The phrase 'Idle No More' reflects a rejection of the settler-state status quo, and articulates an otherwise imaginary of Treaty politics, one that operates from diverse sovereignties. Treaty facilitates the co-existence of multiple governing bodies, conveying the ability of multiple political orders to exist and share space, and thus provides a ready-made framework to articulate alternative visions of sovereignty beyond the nation state. Treaty likewise facilitates diverse expressions of sovereignty and across various scales of political life. Many protestors came to the Idle No Movement as a refusal of the Indian Act imposed governments, understanding their political resistance as an alternative form of political authority and power. However, there were also many Indian Act elected chiefs who figured prominently within the movement and utilized formal channels of the settler-state to effect political change. This example illustrates that Idle No More movement facilitated the expression of multiple forms of Indigenous governance and law, across various domains, and in ways that often overlapped, even in contradictory ways. These acts of resistance draw on Indigenous political configurations that understand Treaty politics and political authority as embedded in the entire community,

meaning that individual Indigenous people rallying against the violations of the settler state likewise constitutes an expression of their political participation and authority in governance. Settler state politics has sought to delimit the breadth of Indigenous politics orders, but Idle No More inspired the revival of Treaty politics from the community up, which is reflected in the diversity of Indigenous peoples across generations who participated in the movement. Additionally, grassroots Treaty politics enables the political participation of Indigenous peoples who have been systematically excluded through gendered discrimination from their communities and political bodies.

Simpson outlines refusal as rejecting the desire for state-based recognition, but the politics of refusal does not require the wholesale rejection of state-based political engagement but can also involve the refusal of state-based configurations of Treaty, politics, and rights. The act of refusal can also manifest as the redirection of political expression and can be a strong assertion of sovereignty, one that challenges colonial conceptions of sovereignty wedded to the nation-state. Idle No More refused the continued exclusion of women from Treaty and political life, instead creating alternative forms of political expression of Treaty, one that was primarily led and organized by women. Despite the settler state's attempts to strip Indigenous women of political authority and power, excluding them from formal politics and the imaginal of Treaty, they have nevertheless cultivated alternative expressions of their continued political authority and sovereignty. This expression of resistance, in the face of the settler state's gendered violence and oppression, is a profound assertion of sovereignty. The expression of alternative Treaty politics was the embodiment of the settler state's fears of Indigenous women, as they were understood as bearing the dangerous possibility of creating "other sovereignties, other forms of political will" (2016, Flesh and Sovereignty, para. 3). To reiterate Audra Simpson's words once

again, it was the "stubborn, resolute, and sovereign refusal to die, staying alive to have that conversation about Crown obligations" (2016, Flesh and Sovereignty, para. 3). Idle No More being marked as a national security threat is further unsurprising considering the dangerous possibilities it both signified and engendered, while further reminding the settler state that despite its attempts to cast Indigenous people's way of life as static and in the past, their political will and institutions were resilient, adaptable, and would continue to carve new paths.

New Treaty Futurities

Simpson notes that the armed resistance of the Kahnawà:ke crisis and its challenge to settler state legitimacy enabled new forms of alternative, Indigenous citizenship beyond state-based definitions of the Indian Act (2014). Building on Simpson's intervention, this subsection examines the interventions of the Idle No Movement and their potential to facilitate other configurations of Treaty relations and political formations. As outlined in the last section, the imaginal of Treaty is a colonial heteropatriarchal space that marginalizes the political participation of racialized people within its schema. James Youngblood Henderson asserts that Canadian citizenship threatens to undermine the sovereignty of First Nations and transforms their sacred homelands in service settler state legitimation, all under the veneer of multiculturalism that ultimately maintains colonial relations of power (2002). However, Treaty offers a ready-made mechanism to reimagine belonging on this land, to re-make and renew relations, and offers important possibilities for imagining politics beyond the nation-state and beyond global relations of power shaped by colonization. The Idle No More movement's rallying to restore the Treaty relationship signalled a design to move beyond normative conceptions of the nation-state, and its concomitant colonial, patriarchal governance. Indigenous formulations of Treaty and sovereignty

possess the capacity to both challenge settler state sovereignty and to facilitate a different form of political citizenship.

While the understanding of Treaty and colonial oppression is frequently truncated into the binary of Indigenous peoples and white European settlers, this framing ignores the historical and ongoing presence of other racialized peoples, who are likewise marginalized by the settler state. Malissa Phung explains that early 20th century was marked by the portrayals of Indigenous peoples as a vanishing and dying race, fueled by the white settler desire to omit Indigenous peoples from the national imaginary and constructed instead a labour narrative of hard work to self-indigenize settlers (2013). This narrative further functions to position racialized settlers as perpetually foreign or alien, as unsettled settlers who pose an invasive threat to the livelihoods of 'Indigenized' white settlers, the authentic Canadian political citizen. Phung's analysis further highlights how the spatiotemporal political formation of the settler state likewise implicates other racialized peoples, also hindering their inclusion in the Canadian body politic, and positions them as a racialized threat to the well-to-do white settler populace (ibid.). Phung's commentary importantly emphasises the limitations of Treaty configurations that too hastily articulate a flattened native/settler binary, as not all settlers are equal because not all Canadians are equal. If we hope to create good Treaty relations, we must attend to the responsibilities that we bear to all of those within Treaty, and we must especially consider those who are likewise marginalized by settler state politics. As Harsha Walia notes, decolonization requires us "to locate ourselves within the context of colonization in complicated ways, often as simultaneously oppressed and complicit" (2014, pg. 50). Walia offers an important practice to better understand the broader configurations of settler state oppression, which is to consider our position within the political locus of overlapping systems of colonization. In doing so, we can ascertain the various complex

relations of colonialism we are embedded in, within the settler state and beyond, and thus better understand our relational responsibilities to others. Indigenous and non-Indigenous formulations of Treaty relations must necessarily attend to these other intersections of oppression and must integrate them into our formulations of good Treaty relations.

Sehdev, in *People of Colour in Treaty,* asserts the furtive possibility of Treaty to challenge continued colonial oppression, explaining that people of color belong on this land because of Treaty and because Indigenous nations permitted settler governance, not because of Canada (2017). Sehdev further implores people of color in Canada to identify as Treaty citizens and to refuse the smokescreen of Canadian multiculturalism and other liberal strategies of tolerance and inclusion (ibid.). Sehdev's commentary offers an important intervention to imagine Treaty beyond the settler state and its delimiting political forms. Treaty citizenship offers an important mechanism to challenge settler state legitimacy, to honour Treaty relations and Indigenous governance, and enables alternative political relations beyond the colonial, heteropatriarchal state. Additionally, while the imaginal of Treaty has sought to reproduce a historical, fixed, and restrictive formulation of Treaty, such an intervention allows us to recover the place of marginalized actors within Treaty politics. If the settler state is structured by racialized and other hierarchies, then Treaty offers a potential site to imagine politics outside of this hierarchical schema, and to create different forms of belonging. Treaty provides a framework to restore bad relations and orients us to keeping and cultivating good relations, emphasizing our responsibilities to one another and not simply our rights. Treaty facilitates a collective, political forum to reimagine and rebuild a shared future.

As described in the previous section, honouring Treaties requires us to stand in solidary with other Indigenous political orders and to actively challenge settler state oppression and

dispossession of land. Treaty offers a mechanism to directly participate in politics, enabling other expressions of political dialogue and engagement for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and communities. Cultivating good Treaty relations can manifest as advocating for Indigenous peoples to the settler state, or as living out responsibilities to Indigenous nations as communities and individuals. The various Treaties that have been signed between Indigenous peoples and the Crown emerge from complex histories and sets of relations, but we have a responsibility to sincerely engage with the Treaty we are a part of and its history, if we have one. Treaty is not an abstract domain merely codified in Canadian legislation, but rather is an active, participatory political institution that ought to undergird our political participation and relations. Treaty is also not merely a set of rights for citizens, with responsibilities undertaken by the state, but rather Treaty outlines a relationship with responsibilities that involves all Treaty partners and citizens. Cultivating good Treaty relations requires understanding the Treaty that one is embedded in, as well as the governance of other parties we are in Treaty with. Good relations require reflecting on the past, understanding the events that lead to Treaty making, the original spirit and intent, its historical and ongoing violations, and knowing who was involved in Treaty and who was excluded. However, these considerations are a starting place, not an exhaustive list. Treaty expresses a practice of keeping good relations, meaning we must revisit and reaffirm our Treaty relations, and continuously reassess our responsibilities. Experiential knowledge is a cornerstone of Cree governance and making Treaty personal enables one to better understand their place within it, offering insights into upholding the responsibilities of the various relationships it encompasses. Treaty is a habitual practice, and it can, and should, take place outside of formal political domains.

Many Indigenous peoples made Treaty with the Crown based on the relationships they had formed with the British, but the Crown is now embodied by the Canadian state, and as this has involved a significant deviation from British governance. A relationship of greater respect and reciprocity once configured many Indigenous-Crown relations, demonstrating that good relations are possible, but they require taking seriously the responsible of Treaty, reaffirming the Treaty relationship, and engaging with Indigenous political orders on their own terms. Restoring Treaty relations also means embracing to the messiness of political life, being willing to let go of the status quo, and to imagine radically different ways of being in relation. Restoring Treaty also requires sharing the land and the wealth that it has produced, which requires us to reimagine the forms and expressions of authentic politics and governance. If we ever hope to all be Treaty people, which we can never be under the status quo, then we must relinquish our visions of an inevitable Canadian or settler future and instead imagine and cultivate a Treaty future. This section is not meant to offer a definitive outline of a Treaty future, instead this is an outline of how Treaty can be taken up beyond the settler state, and the important political fulcrum that Treaty offers. Lastly, I want to stress that the governance of the Crown, both in name and in structure, has transformed and shifted over time in its Treaty relationship to Indigenous nations, meaning that it can do so again—the British Crown became Canada, and Canada can—and should—become something else.

Conclusion

This chapter operationalizes the spatiotemporal interventions of the Idle No More movement to theorize new Treaty imaginaries. Through the analysis of historical and contemporary Treaty making and relations, I theorize the space-time configuration of contemporary Treaty politics. I argue that the settler state positions Treaty as a heteropatriarchal

domain and historical transaction of land, further obscuring Indigenous visions and the contemporary relevance and character of Treaty. Cultivating good Treaty relations requires imagining politics beyond the settler colonial state, the relinquishing of a settler futurity, and an embrace of a Treaty futurity. Treaty offers an alternative form of belonging and citizenship, providing the space and framework to navigate difference and conflict, and enabling an alternative political imaginary of good Treaty relations. Idle No More's protesting demonstrated the possibility and the power of Treaty at the grassroots, highlighting the capacity of Treaty to transform the space-time and imaginary of political life.

Conclusion

This thesis utilizes Indigenous conceptions of philosophy to understand the theoretical interventions of Indigenous feminist political organizing, both to theorize back at the settler colonial state, and to approach longstanding and sacred political institutions like Treaty from a new frame of analysis. I analyse the Idle No More movement as an instance of Indigenous feminist philosophy from the ground up, drawing on Indigenous women's political organizing to theorize the spatiotemporal configuration of settler state politics and decolonial alternatives. The condemnation of the Idle No More movement, and its expressions of Indigenous governance and law, employs rhetoric that tacitly advances that the legitimate practices of governance, law, and civic duty, are only rightfully enacted by the narrow terrain of the colonial, heteropatriarchal state. Settler colonialism constitutes the spatiotemporal configuration of Canadian state politics, advancing that the legitimate practices of governance, law, and civic duty, are only rightfully enacted by the narrow echelon of colonial, heteropatriarchal governance. Technologies of settler state security construct Indigenous communities and bodies as criminal, naturalizing and justifying the policing, surveillance, and containment of Indigenous political orders. The condemnation of the Idle No More movement and their expressions of Indigenous governance and law reveal the settler state's myopic purview of legitimate politics and authority, precluding the possibility of alternative, decolonial political imaginaries. Idle No More's protesting sought to reclaim the place of many marginalized actors within political life, outlining an alternative, decolonial imaginary to reconceptualize the form, space-time, and structure of politics. Idle No More draws on the deliberative process of Indigenous political orders, which looks to past relations and ancestors to retrieve insights for the present and future, while also cultivating alternative forms of power and politics at the grassroots. Despite the settler state's

circumscription of Indigenous visions of governance and Treaty, Idle No More creates otherwise forms of Treaty politics while expressing the unbroken continuity of Indigenous political orders and institutions. Good Treaty relations requires us to imagine politics and sovereignty beyond the settler colonial state, the relinquishing of a settler futurity, and an embrace of Treaty futurity. Treaty provides alternative relations of power and forms of belonging, providing a framework to transform our current political imaginary and cultivate good relations.

Further Exploration

Indigenous feminist political resistance offers important philosophical insights to reimagine Treaty and the politics of decolonization, offering insights into alternative modes of governance and law beyond the colonial, heteropatriarchal state. Idle No More demonstrates the importance of Indigenous women's political participation in Treaty across various scales of political life, highlighting the need to further engage Treaty political theory through the lens of Indigenous feminisms. The movement stresses that a Treaty order governance would enable significant redress against the gendered violence experienced by Indigenous women, better facilitating their political participation and agency. The settler state's imaginal of Treaty exemplifies the delimiting schema allotted to the political institution, marginalizing and obscuring the role of those who fall outside of its masculine framework and its binary of native/white settler, further eliding the full scope of colonial state oppression. While the decolonial potential of Treaty has largely focused on Indigenous liberation, Treaty offers an important site to reimagine other colonial relations of power, offering an alternative political framework to redress these other forms of colonial, heteropatriarchal violence. I plan to further conceptualize the concomitant operation of differing forms and operations of heteropatriarchal

racialization in North America, while further examining the decolonial possibilities of Treaty to advance decolonial feminist liberation.

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