

Land Relations and Implications for Indigenous Health and Food Sovereignty

by
Maggie Ruth Slade

Honors Thesis

Appalachian State University

Submitted to the Department of Sustainable Development
and the Honors College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Science

May 2024

Approved by:

Jacqueline Ignatova, Ph.D., Thesis Director

Jason Lynch, Ph.D., Second Reader

Anatoli Ignatov, Ph.D., Departmental Honors Director

Vicky Klima, Ph.D., Interim Dean, the Honors College

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Acknowledgements	4
Abstract	5
Introduction	6
Land Relations and Implications for Indigenous Health and Food Sovereignty	6
The Land Back Movement, #landback, and Land Acknowledgements	6
Original Peoples and Land Relations	10
Research Questions	12
Overview of Thesis Structure	13
Methods	13
Positionality Statement	15
Conclusion	19
Chapter 1: From land as Property to Grounded Normativity: Understanding the Pluriverse of Relationships to L/land	20
Introduction	20
Whose Truth Counts? Competing Definitions of L/land and Knowledge	22
land as Property	29
Knowledge as Property: Intellectual Property, Biopiracy, and the Exploitation of Indigenous Knowledges	31
To Be a Bay: Knowledge Production and The Language of Animacy	35
A Pluriverse of Pathways and Worlds: The Importance of Place on L/land	40
The Grounded Normativity of the Fourth World	44
Conclusion	50
Chapter 2: The Multiscalar Nature and Coexistence of Indigenous Food Sovereignities	52
Introduction	52
Nutritional Colonialism and Food Apartheid in Indigenous North America	54
Food Security or Dependency? The USDA and Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservations	56
Indigenous Resurgence: Four Tribal Food Sovereignty Movements	59
The Question of Land in National, Transnational, and International Food Sovereignty Organizations	65
UNDRIP, ADRIP, and Indigenous Internationalism: The Changing Regimes of International Human Rights and Treaty Rights	68
Conclusion	79
Conclusion	82
Introduction	82
Land Back Movement as Informing Land Acknowledgements	83

The High Country and #landback	84
Expansion as Counter to Land and Reinforcing land	87
Conclusion	91
Works Cited	98

Acknowledgements

Throughout the thinking, research, writing, and revision stages of this thesis, I have been honored and lucky to have support and guidance from a number of individuals and groups. First, I would like to thank my advisor and first reader on this project, Dr. Jacqueline Ignatova, who has not only challenged me to be a better researcher, writer, thinker, and student, but has been there to support and cheer me on throughout the process. I am grateful for the time, energy, and effort she has put into helping this thesis become a reality. She is not only a brilliant professor and teacher for me, but someone I admire personally.

I would like to thank my second and third readers, Dr. Jason Lynch and Dr. Anatoli Agnatov, who have both invested their time and energy into giving me valuable feedback and insights, meeting with me both in person and online, and encouraging me to think outside of the boxes that I often found myself trapped in. They both not only exemplify expertise in their given fields, but empathy and understanding as mentors.

I would also like to thank Dr. Cody Miller, whose mentorship and conversations with me in the early stages of this thesis encouraged me to seek out questions and research that inspired me and could continue to evolve and change as I did. Further, I am incredibly grateful for the privilege to be a part of the Sustainable Development department at ASU and be constantly inspired by both my professors and peers.

Additionally, I thank my family and friends for their listening ears, their open arms, and their regular encouragement throughout this entire process, which has been beautiful, challenging, and has helped me realize that I am capable of much more than I may originally think I am. I could not have done this without their support.

Abstract

Differing conceptions of Land vs. land are born out of differing epistemologies and ontologies. Land is informed by Indigenous knowledges, and is grounded in relationships with humans and other nonhuman entities. Land is regarded as teacher, strength, and responsibility. Most important, Land is animate and has agency. Conceptions of land are informed by dominant Western epistemology, and are representative of solely physical territory that must be owned and transformed by labor to have value. Several Indigenous organizing ontologies contribute to the production of Land understandings and help one understand its reinforcement or reduction to land. Language is one of these, in which the animacy of Land and relationships with it or attitudes of domination over land are embedded in language itself - verb-based languages (Native languages such as Potawatomi) produce animacy and noun-based languages (English) deanimate. Space vs. place as organizing factors also contribute, with space furthering the separation between humans and land and place facilitating relationships between humans and Land. Land informs not only knowledge creation and production, but also decolonial movement. Food sovereignties are essential to Indigenous sovereignties and are grounded in Land relationships, but food apartheid and nutritional colonialism imposed onto Native populations has impacted not only physical Native health, but spiritual and cultural health. Analyzing multiscalar levels of Indigenous food sovereignties reveals that revitalizing Land relationships via tribal food sovereignty programs and constitutional protection of Land rights is impactful. Achieving Indigenous sovereignties is about more than obtaining territory. Rather, political sovereignty, First Nation or tribal sovereignty, food sovereignty, and Land relationships are not mutually exclusive within Indigenous thought systems. Not only is the Land an animate agent, but the food itself is animate and has rights. The evolution of Indigenous food sovereignty organizations and initiatives must reflect this by being informed by Land itself. In doing this research, I make applications in the context of Appalachian State University to understand how University expansion has impacted Indigenous knowledges and food sovereignties, both grounded in ecology and relationships to Land.

Introduction

Land Relations and Implications for Indigenous Health and Food Sovereignty

The title of this thesis, “Land Relations and Implications for Indigenous Health and Food Sovereignty,” serves to address the overarching themes and points of connection throughout this research and writing. Land relations, or how individuals or groups of people relate to, steward, or reside over the land and natural resources, impact the ways that broader society, epistemology, and ontology are organized and created. When these relations conflict or are counter to each other, there are implications for land access, coexistence, and production of global norms. Throughout this particular thesis, these differing relations are examined in the context of Native American and Euro-Western epistemologies to analyze the broader implications for Indigenous health and food sovereignty.

The Land Back Movement, #landback, and Land Acknowledgements

Cheyenne Bearfoot, a member of the Chiricahua Apache Nation, writes that the Land Back movement is:

An Indigenous-led environmental, cultural and political movement that seeks to place Indigenous land back in Indigenous hands. The concept for this movement began when Colonizers first came into contact with Indigenous tribes over 500 years ago, and tribes fiercely defended their sovereign right over their ancestral territories. However, Land Back as a movement with the power to mobilize not only different Indigenous communities, but non-Indigenous allies in the fight against environmental injustice, was catapulted into broader mainstream consciousness in recent years. #landback began trending on social media during the height of the No Dakota Access Pipeline (#NODAPL) protests on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation between 2016 and 2017, which helped highlight the struggles Indigenous communities were facing. (Bearfoot 2022: 2)

Here, Bearfoot depicts the genealogy of the #landback movement as a resurgence of publicization and mobilization of the longstanding Land Back movement itself, which can be dated all the way back to first contact of Colonizers and Native peoples in 1492.

Following the protests at Mt. Rushmore in July of 2020, the NDN Collective:

...created a formal Land Back campaign that launched later that same year. Although acquiring sovereignty over stolen lands is a key goal, Land Back seeks to heal and reclaim other things that are connected to land reclamation: languages and ceremonies, governmental sovereignty, food, and housing security; equitable access to healthcare and education. (Bearfoot 2022: 2)

NDN Collective's #landback manifesto states that "It is a relationship with Mother Earth that is symbiotic and just, where we have reclaimed stewardship," underlining the importance of relationships and the animacy of Land within Indigenous ontologies (LandBack 2021: 2).

Throughout my research and writing, I engage frequently with this concept of Land, which is contrasted by land. Following the lead of Styres and Zinga (2013) and Liboiron (2021b), capitalized Land refers to Indigenous understandings of Land as a proper noun, indicating a relationship of reciprocity between people and Land. Lowercase land refers to dominant Western and colonial notions of land as solely its physical properties with assumed human ownership and little value without it. This distinction between Land and land is expanded upon further in Chapter 1.

When I first learned about #landback and the broader and longstanding Land Back movement in one of my Sustainable Development (SD) courses at Appalachian State University, the way that it was succinctly described really resonated with me: as a return of Indigenous Lands to Indigenous hands. I have since learned that the Land Back movement encompasses much more than just physical land, but rather places Land at the heart of the movement because, as an animate agent itself, Land informs and governs Indigenous ontologies and livelihoods

(Coulthard 2014, Gilio-Whitaker 2019, Kimmerer 2013, LandBack 2021, Larsen and Johnson 2017, Liboiron 2021, Simpson 2014, TEDx Talks 2014, Watts 2017). Not only is the Land Back movement and its contemporary #landback resurgence significant in the context of Indigenous reclamation and reconciliation, but Land sovereignty also directly impacts food sovereignty, or the right of a community to define and produce their own food systems, including culturally appropriate foods. Because Native foodways are often considered a pillar of Native cultures and are historically different from traditional American diets, this access to Land is not only important for traditional food access and physical health, but cultural continuance via the passing down of food knowledge and practices (Gilio-Whitaker 2019, McKinley and Jernigan 2023, TEDxTalks 2014, White Earth Band of Minnesota Chippewa Tribe 2020). Additionally, criminalization of hunting and fishing practices and ecological degradation due to Euro-Western environmental exploitation, which reinforces conceptions of land, can limit the ability of Indigenous knowledges and food sovereignties, which are grounded in ecology and relationships to Land, to be practiced and sustained.

As I dove deeper into the longstanding Land Back and contemporary #landback movements, it became clear that there were deeper seated structures, policies, institutions, and histories such as failure to recognize treaties preventing the full recognition of the Land Back movement. Following the rise of the contemporary #landback movement, land acknowledgement statements by institutions such as colleges, universities, nonprofits, and museums rose in popularity (Keefe 2019). Land acknowledgement statements are, historically, Indigenous or tribal protocol, serving to recognize the ancestral roots of Land (National Museum of the American Indian 2024). However, there is debate surrounding their impact and intention when done in an institutional setting.

When speaking about the difference in impact of land acknowledgement statements vs. the longstanding Land Back and contemporary #landback movements, Kevin Gover, a citizen of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma and undersecretary for museums and culture at the Smithsonian Institution said “If I hear a land acknowledgement, part of what I’m hearing is this: ‘There used to be Indians here. But now they’re gone. Isn’t that a shame?’ And I don’t wish to feel that way” (Veltman 2023). Alternatively, land acknowledgement statements can be seen as a promise for action, with Cutcha Risling Baldy, a member of the Hoopa Valley Tribe and an associate professor of Native American Studies, saying “The land acknowledgement gets you to that start. Now it's time to think about what that actually means for you or your institution. What are the concrete actions you’re gonna take? What are the ways you’re gonna assist Indigenous peoples in uplifting and upholding their sovereignty and self-determination?” (Veltman 2023). While limited, it seems that there is a crucial role of recognition for institutional land acknowledgement statements, but according to Indigenous peoples, it is even more crucial that they are utilized as a stepping stone for action rather than a sole solution.

Exploring this concept is important to me as a researcher because of my responsibility as an ally, as defined by Indigenous peoples, to “use [my] labor, resources, and skills” to “amplify the voices of First Nation communities” and tribal nations and “do what is within [my] power to dismantle the system and differentiate [myself] from the opponents of these groups” (Amnesty International 2022: 1). Additionally, I must “take special effort to acknowledge the original peoples of the area/region/location in which [I] live, play, and do [my] work” and continually do my own research on “what realities created by systems of oppression look, feel, smell, taste, and sound like, which I seek to do in the context of Watauga County and Appalachian State University and its impact on the Cherokee, Catawba, and other Indigenous peoples, the original

inhabitants of the Land the University now occupies (The Anti-Oppression Network 2011: 1). I attempt to understand the longstanding Land Back and contemporary #landback movements as not only about territory, but about how Indigenous knowledges grounded in Land facilitate Indigenous livelihoods, including food sovereignty, health and cultural continuance. Further, I can use my privileged voice and agency to amplify Indigenous voices and interests in the process.

Original Peoples and Land Relations

Originally, there were two main Indigenous groups who occupied the Land that Appalachian State University now resides on - the Cherokee and Catawba. The Catawba peoples “have lived on their ancestral lands of the banks of the Catawba River dating back at least 6000 years” and “were farmers. They planted crops like corn and squash along the banks of the river. They also fished and hunted. The Catawba’s were a large and powerful group and waged war with neighboring tribes, especially the Cherokee” (Catawba Indian Nation 2024: 1). The Cherokee peoples:

...practiced subsistence-based living; they grew, gathered, and hunted for what they needed for their communities to thrive, not for personal profit or surplus trade. As these practices depended on a flourishing environment, the tribe controlled more land than they lived on. Women gathered edible nuts and plants. Men hunted to supplement food supplies and to provide hides for their clothing and lodging. (Cherokee Nation Businesses 2024: 1)

The Cherokee engaged specifically with the Land by “gathering nuts, seeds, and berries from the general area, and hunted and fished in a perhaps wider radius” (Parins 2012: 14).

The Cherokee and Catawba both display Land relationships and food sovereignties as grounded in relationships with Land¹ in their creation and other stories. The Cherokee recognize *Aniyvdaqualosgi* or *Ani-Yuntikwalaski*, or “storm spirits who live in the sky and command thunder and lightning” (Native Languages of the Americas 2020b: 1) They also speak of *Yunwi Tsundi*, or “a race of small humanoid nature spirits...who frequently help humans” (Native Languages of the Americas 2020: 1). The Cherokee story of the corn mother, in particular, reveals this nature of Land having animacy and agency that informs food sovereignty. The Native History Association (2023: 1) writes that “Cherokee creation stories teach of the First Woman as Selu. She was created from the first corn plant to remedy the bad behavior of the First Man, Kanati, caused by his loneliness and boredom. When she died, as a result of the bad behavior of her children, she used her blood to make sure they would always have plenty to eat.” Here, it becomes evident that Land has agency in that it creates the First Woman, who puts her life back into the food itself, giving it animacy, so that it can continue to sustain life.

This is evident in Catawba stories, too. In Catawba ontology, *Yehasuri* are “mischievous, dwarf-like nature spirits” (Native Languages of the Americas 2020a: 1). Additionally, “Two prominent animal spirits are Bear, the Master of the Woods, and Wolf, the Hunter of the Night. Bear symbolizes stretch, courage, and protection, while the Wolf represents cunning, loyalty, and the bonds of community. These animal spirits serve as guides and protectors for the Catawba people, embodying the wisdom and power of the wilderness” (Mythology Worldwide 2024: 2). The latter story, in particular, depicts this animacy of not only Land and nature as guiding agents for people, but as informing of Catawba ontology itself.

¹ This concept of Indigenous food sovereignties as grounded in relationships with Land is expanded upon further in Chapter 2.

In the 1830s, most of the Cherokee had been forcibly removed via the Trail of Tears to Oklahoma after decades of treaty negotiations with the United States that were widely ignored and violated by settlers (Sumner 2020). The Cherokee Nation (2019: 1) reports that “Some 4,000 Cherokees who were forcibly removed from their homes (about one-fourth of the population) perished in camps or along the Trail of Tears” A few Cherokee tribes were able to escape removal and remained in the east, forming what is now the Eastern Band of Cherokee in the Appalachian mountains (Sumner 2020). The Catawba tribe faced intense pressure to surrender their ancestral Lands during the Removal Period, and negotiated the Treaty at Nations Ford, which “stipulated that the Catawbas relinquish to the State of South Carolina their 144,000 acres of land. In return, South Carolina promised the Nation a new tract of land in a less populated area and to pay the Catawbas money” (Catawba Indian Nation 2024).

Research Questions

By engaging with the previously mentioned concepts of Land and land, the Indigenous ontologies that inform them, and their broader implications for Indigenous food sovereignties, I ask the following questions: How has the legacy of settler colonialism and its reduction of Land into land impacted the ability to practice Indigenous knowledges? How do different forms of Indigenous food sovereignties align with and/or reinforce conceptions of Land vs. land? Finally, I make broader applications for these findings in the context of Appalachian State University and the original inhabitants of its land - the Cherokee, Catawba, and other Indigenous peoples - in the context of the longstanding Land Back and contemporary #landback movements as well as the impacts on Land relationships that University expansion facilitates.

Overview of Thesis Structure

The introduction serves to introduce the connections between the contemporary #landback movement, the broader Land Back movement, and land acknowledgement statements. Additionally, the introduction identifies and recognizes the original inhabitants of Watauga County and Boone, NC, presents core research questions, methods, an overview of main themes, and a statement of positionality. Chapter 1 works to investigate how different conceptions of L/land originated and continue to be reinforced or reduced in settler colonial contexts and explores whether Land and land are mutually exclusive or how they can coexist. Ultimately, this prompts an exploration of what the implications of Land vs. land are for political order, sovereignty, and power relations that define and dictate knowledge production. Chapter 2 builds off of Chapter 1 to investigate Land and land in the context of different forms of food sovereignty, seeking out forms that align with Land in particular. Ultimately, this allows for an analysis on what these different forms say about broader notions of Indigenous sovereignty. Finally, the Conclusion applies these concepts in a more local context of Appalachian State University, discussing the impacts that ecological degradation from University expansion have on Land relationships by reinforcing conceptions of land and domination over it. Additionally, this section revisits Land Back and land acknowledgements in the context of Appalachian State University and synthesizes the major themes of the thesis.

Methods

In order to approach my research questions, I have mainly utilized textual and historical analysis, discourse analysis, and literature review. First, I sought out how different cultures, namely dominant Western Euro-American and North American Indigenous thought systems,

practice distinct epistemologies and ontologies in the context of nature, looking specifically at distinctions between land as an inanimate noun and Land as an animate verb. Here, I read specifically from Indigenous authors to understand not only how these distinctions are tangibly reflected in everyday life, but also how they are produced and reinforced. I compared these epistemologies with that of dominant Euro-American thinkers, such as John Locke, who can be credited with much of dominant Western thought production surrounding domination over land. His work also provided a basis of justification for settler colonialism. Additionally, I analyzed this within historical literature and context to understand not only the history of dispossessions of Indigenous peoples from their land, but also the devaluation of their knowledge systems by dominant Western forces. In conversation with a variety of Indigenous authors and speakers, including Glen Coulthard, Dina Gilio-Whitaker, Robin Wall Kimmerer, Soren C. Larsen, Jay T. Johnson, Max Liboiron, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Valerie Segrest, and Vanessa Watts, I was able to identify basic unifying principles present in Indigenous epistemologies, while noting the importance of not treating them as homogenous.

Next, I underwent textual and discourse analysis in order to determine the historical contexts in which adverse Native American health effects have been facilitated via foodways and distribution, both by colonialism and market forces. I analyzed a variety of programs that seek to address issues of Indigenous sovereignties, food distribution, and cultural and physical health. These include tribal, regional, national (both in the context of the United States and in the context of First Nations), and international efforts with varying levels of efficacy, implementation, global or regional criticism, and implications. I also read Indigenous authors writing about the importance of Native foodways, recounting the physical, spiritual, and cultural impacts of government rations and commodity food programs, and telling stories surrounding the

animacy of food itself within Indigenous ontologies. Finally, I analyzed all of these findings from a combined and broader scope to determine what their importance, implications, and applications were in the context of advancing Indigenous food sovereignties.

Positionality Statement

Below, I've provided a statement of positionality in order to situate myself in the context of these conversations and Indigenous definitions of allyship, explaining who I am, how I arrived in this space along the way, and how my research has been informed by Indigenous expectations of what it means to be a good ally. Really, what I have to say does not matter nearly as much as what Indigenous peoples, themselves, are saying with regard to sovereignty issues and Indigenous agency. But, as a non-Indigenous white student of Sustainable Development at Appalachian State University, I look to Indigenous peoples to inform my understanding of how to be a good ally for Indigenous communities, as discussed previously. In addition to using my labor and resources to amplify Indigenous voices, acknowledging the original peoples in my area, and continually doing my own research on how daily realities of oppression show up, I also must "disrup[t] oppressive spaces by educating others on the realities and histories of marginalized people," and utilize the term ally not as a token identity but a "role within a collective struggle" that looks to Indigenous peoples and voices themselves as leaders (Montreal Indigenous Community Network 2019: 2) As a non-Indigenous white person in a settler colonial state, my voice holds agency and power in ways that others do not unfortunately, and only I can decide how to use that voice - for speaking out, for reinforcing harmful narratives, for facilitating action via the amplification of Indigenous voices and efforts, or for remaining silent.

As I progressed in the Sustainable Development (SD) Department at my university, my interest in food-related issues grew, and I invested in more and more food-related classes and conversations. I could write for pages and pages about the issues and barely even scratch the surface. In fact, I *have* written pages and pages of final projects and essays and often become frustrated with picking and choosing what to take out because there's *just so much*. Industrialized agriculture and livestock production, corporate consolidation, environmental injustices pushed onto already marginalized groups, uneven distribution of food, lack of affordability/accessibility of nutritious and healthy foods, areas of food apartheid, mass food waste, the illusion of consumer choice, lack of seasonality, and land disputes are just *some* of the issues, to name a few. The fact that there is more than enough food to feed the world, and yet millions remain food insecure says enough about the functionality and effectiveness of the global food regime, a term that more accurately describes the nature of the global food system. Once you see it, you can't unsee it. Once the veil is removed, it's hard to shop in the same places, hard for food to taste the same, and even harder to keep your mouth shut about it at the family dinner table. So if I've officially removed the veil for you, good. That's often a goal of corporations with unsavory practices, to make sure the secrets don't get out. Let's make sure they do.

While existing food structures, policies, and systems are a huge part of the problem, I also see food as a huge part of the solution. Food does have a unique ability to bring people together, to build community, to forge connections and create memories of love and passion. It's just so often been yielded by the wrong people, the wrong groups. Not only does food build connections between people, but it reinforces the connections between where we all came from - the land, the very ground that we walk on. I took a farming class at our university's SD farm for two semesters, learning hands-on farm training and work from some truly brilliant and

passionate teachers. A good portion of the food that was grown, tended, and harvested by SD students and faculty at the farm was weighed, sold, and transported to the University itself for campus chefs to cook with. Oftentimes, we were allowed to bring home the excess to eat and cook with ourselves. Not only was I connected to the people I cooked with or shared with, but I was connected to the very food itself, the land on which it was grown, and the land that I both came from and will someday return to. This connection to land was what put the very life into the food, which could then be translated to the joys of cooking, flavor, taste, sharing, and community. This is where food sovereignty as a concept came into play, and I began to understand it as a movement grounded in grassroots efforts of community to not only define what they eat, but how it is grown and produced. It also emphasizes the right of community to culturally appropriate foods, which is something I had never considered or dealt with as a privileged white person.

What began as a love of food translated into frustration with the workings of the global food regime, which grew into an understanding of the power of land connections with what you are eating. Interestingly enough, although the University and its land rests on what was once Native American land - Catawba, Cherokee, and other Indigenous peoples - this was never discussed in the farm classes. In fact, I have only had three professors throughout my entire time in college who have not only mentioned this fact, but expanded upon its implications. One cannot honestly speak about or think about claims to land or land use in the United States without then thinking about the Land that was stolen from Native peoples and populations. Indigenous communities in the United States feel a disproportionately high amount of the impacts of the global food regime that I mentioned previously as a result of the systemic oppression and violence committed against them over several centuries. Further, huge amounts

of land loss - or rather, land stolen by white people and government entities, despite Native peoples being the original inhabitants - have rendered them largely unable to maintain food practices and cultures in a truly robust form, resulting in issues of food insecurity, declining Native health, and loss of culture, to name a few. Despite this, several Native food sovereignty projects have emerged, working to regain traditional food practices and food as medicine, reciprocal relationships with the Land, sustainable farming, and internal economic development to sustain these food sovereignty initiatives.

Indigenous food sovereignty is a pillar of cultural continuance and longevity, as traditional foodways are an essential part of Indigenous cultures and can become lost as there is a greater dependence on government rations and food distribution programs. I fully believe that food systems and sovereignty have the potential to be change agents for community mobilization, environmental and human health and vitality, and equity conversations. As a settler white person looking to Indigenous voices to inform my allyship, it is my responsibility to “continuously do my own research on the oppressions experienced by the people [I] seek to work with,” “change [my] own behaviors and be mindful that [I] am not contributing to keeping that system going,” and take responsibility to educate not only myself, but educate others through “amplify[ing] marginalized voices that are too often silenced” (The Anti-Oppression Network 2011: 1, Amnesty International 2022: 1, Montreal Indigenous Community Network 2019: 4). Creating an equitable future will require various forms of reconciliation and reclamation for historically marginalized and oppressed peoples, with Indigenous food sovereignty being one of those. One of the biggest things that I have learned, and what I am trying to write about now, is that you can’t honestly discuss food without discussing L/land. And you can’t honestly discuss L/land without discussing the histories of L/land possession, dispossession, and the systemic

food issues that have been born out of that possession and dispossession for Indigenous populations in the United States.

Conclusion

By piecing together the histories of Western vs. Indigenous knowledges, understandings of L/land, and changing L/land use, I can begin to understand how settler colonialism effectively reduced Land to land, reducing the capacity of Indigenous knowledges and practices as grounded in Land in the process. Building off of this, I come to understand Indigenous food sovereignties as inseparable from Land and ecology, analyzing Indigenous food sovereignty movements and initiatives in the context of their alignment with Land or land. Finally, I can situate these findings in the context of land acknowledgement statements and the Land Back movement, which works to reclaim Indigenous livelihoods, food sovereignties, and cultural vitality as grounded in Land, among other things. I can apply these findings in the context of Appalachian State University, whose expansion effectively reinforces conceptions of land and impacts Land relationships. This enables me to not only be a better ally, but apply my findings in the context and history of my particular institution and the Cherokee, Catawba, and other Indigenous peoples impacted by its development.

Chapter 1: From land as Property to Grounded Normativity: Understanding the Pluriverse of Relationships to L/land

Introduction

In *Pollution is Colonialism* by Max Liboiron, the distinction between Land and land is discussed in full, with Liboiron beautifully narrating that:

Defining Land by typing it out onto a page is like defining your favourite aunt as your mother's sister. True, yes, but your favourite aunt is more than that—she is the host of giant spaghetti meals and countless hours at the kitchen table teaching you how to draw horses. She is the one to tell you not to go with that man because he's no good. She is the promise that someone will take care of you if something happens to your parents. So, too, with Land. (Liboiron 2021b: 42)

Despite genocidal and violent efforts through settler colonialism, Indigenous peoples in North America have survived, and are working through several resurgence movements to reclaim this concept of Land, practice culture and tradition, and work within Indigenous thought systems to resist the structures that reinforce dependency, environmental degradation, cultural destruction, and produce equity issues felt more tangibly by historically marginalized and oppressed communities. The overall questions I seek to answer in this chapter are: How have different conceptions of L/land² originated and how do they continue to be reduced or reinforced in settler colonial contexts? What are their implications for political order, sovereignty, and power relations that define and dictate knowledge production? Are Land and land mutually exclusive, or how do they coexist?

² Following the lead of Styres and Zinga (2013) and Liboiron (2021b), capitalized L refers to Indigenous understandings of Land as a proper noun, indicating a relationship of reciprocity between people and Land. Lowercase land refers to dominant Western and colonial notions of land as solely its physical properties with assumed human ownership and little value without it. This distinction is discussed more in the later sections of this chapter.

Throughout this chapter, I work to understand Indigenous Knowledges (IK), Traditional Ecological Knowledges (TEK), and L/land debates and definitions to situate them within broader discussions of knowledge production, reduction, and reinforcement. I compare and contrast these with dominant Western epistemological paradigms and critique the systems that deem Indigenous and traditional knowledges as less valid. Additionally, I engage with critiques of indigenizing academia, or integrating IK into Western-based academia, as having roots in settler colonialism and its potential for further harm and violence in and on Indigenous communities. Next, I discuss two different western conceptions - land as property and knowledge as property. I trace how Lockean notions of land as property rooted in capitalism and dominant Christian origin story beliefs led to Indigenous dispossession and displacement with loss of Land and food sovereignty as a consequence (Greer 2012, Locke 1689, Watts 2017). I discuss how these conceptions influence property rights and intellectual property, examining biopiracy as an appropriate consequence. Next, I discuss Indigenous concepts and thinking that counter these western conceptions, highlighting the concepts of place-thought (Watts 2017), being-together-in-place (Larsen and Johnson 2017), walking-with (Larsen and Johnson 2017b), pathways of coexistence (Larsen and Johnson 2017b), the grammar of animacy (Kimmerer 2013c), grounded normativity (Coulthard 2014), and land as pedagogy (Simpson 2014). These concepts reinforce the centrality of Land and relationships present in Indigenous ontologies and exemplify how the reduction of Land to land impacts the ability to practice Indigenous knowledges by stripping Land of its agency.

Whose Truth Counts? Competing Definitions of L/and and Knowledge

Traditional knowledge, local knowledge (LK), and Indigenous knowledge are terms that represent place-based knowledges accumulated and transmitted across generations (mainly orally) within specific cultural contexts (Jessen et al. 2022, Kimmerer 2013). When these knowledges are more specifically of ecological nature (not all traditional knowledges are), it is known as traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) (Berkes et al. 2009). With an emphasis on application for the purpose of sustaining both the environment and relationships with it, TEK includes direct observation of the surrounding environment (animals, plants, and ecosystems) while also encompassing cultural and spiritual knowledge (Jessen et al. 2022, Kimmerer 2013, Liboiron 2021b). This knowledge entails a heavy focus on human-environment relationships and reciprocity and allows for flexibility with change both socially and environmentally (Jessen et al. 2022, Styres and Zinga 2013). One example of this is in the Tlingit community of Alaska, in which the maintenance and enhancement of salmon runs, of which livelihoods depend on, are carefully cultivated via social relations and environmental material conditions (Thornton 2015). In order to do this, many aspects are required: intimate local knowledge, regular engagement with the salmon and their surrounding habitats, and conscious fishing practices in accordance with abundance or scarcity that may be occurring, encompassing both human-environment relationships and environmental and social flexibility (Thornton 2015).

In conservation practices, TEK can provide a counter to shifting baseline syndrome, where perspectives on what abundance or other measures are ‘normal’ can shift as environmental degradation continues via dominant Western science’s lack of generational knowledge, resulting in lowered expectations for conservation and sustainability outcomes (Jessen et al. 2022). TEK’s inclusion of passed-down baseline environmental information can inform these goals and

outcomes in a much more accurate way. TEK is a knowledge that sees threads and connections that serve to join rather than divide, and is a way of knowing that enacts all four aspects of being and existence (mind, body, emotion, and spirit) rather than just one or some (Jessen et al. 2022, Kimmerer 2013). TEK enables insight into the history of environmental relationships between communities.

There are key differences between dominant Western epistemologies and Indigenous cosmologies, with Western science-based societies regarded as having simplified ecosystems for management, impairing health, biodiversity, and resilience of ecosystems long term. Scott (1998) expands on this characteristic of Western science having simplified ecosystems through his concept of radical simplification, in which environmental habitats were reduced to their individual parts rather than understood as complex, interdependent, and holistic systems. This Western characteristic of simplification tends to “maximiz[e] the degree of control ‘within a small and highly simplified enclosure’ and ignore the rest” (Scott 1998: 227). While originally done to transform forests as habitats into forests as economic resources, this narrowing of vision had consequences, including the flattening of Land relations into resource relations (Liboiron 2021b, Scott 1998). As a counter to this, IK embodies holism in the context of ecosystems and ecosystem management, with knowledge generated over time by adaptive learning, continuous gradual understanding, and correction of mistakes through lessons learned (Berkes et al. 2009, Jessen et al. 2022). It is important to note that not all ancient societies lived in harmony/interdependence with the environment, and not all current Indigenous societies do either. There are important cautions for making generalizations about Indigenous populations and their knowledge systems, as they are not all the same. However, many do operate under similar relationships with non-human entities and utilize similar practices for cultivating and collecting

knowledge, with the Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC) noting that “The harmonies of man, soil, water, air, vegetation, and wildlife that collectively make-up the American Indian agriculture community, influence our emotional and spiritual well being” (Intertribal Agriculture Council 2023: 1).

There are also important similarities and differences between IK and Western science, which are ultimately based on environmental observations and ordering systems of disorder (Berkes et al. 2009, Jessen et al. 2022). While IK is embodied, having a specific cultural and social context, Western science is disembodied, simplified, and applicable to multiple contexts in the absence of holism (Jessen et al. 2022). IK also has its own rules and methods of processing observations. While Berkes et al. (2009) says that Western science’s rules are rooted in repeatability and quantification, this only accounts for positivist approaches to Western science, and excludes qualitative approaches present in fields such as ethnography and anthropology, for instance. Without obsessive quantification as a goal of IK, Berkes et al. (2009: 8) notes that what many Indigenous populations value in practicing TEK is “the understanding of the environment, how to read and interpret signals from the environment, and the relationships with it, including those involving humans.”

Shiva (1989: 23) characterizes Western science as reductionist, both because it “reduce[s] the capacity of humans to know nature both by excluding other knowers and other ways of knowing, and it reduce[s] the capacity of nature to creatively regenerate and renew itself and fragmented matter.” Here, Shiva is commenting both on the disembodied simplification of nature in Western science as well as the exclusion of any other knowledge systems being deemed valid by claiming they are ‘not scientific.’ Additionally, this concept of reductionist science applies in the context of Land, as settler colonialism’s reduction of Land to solely its physical properties

rather than its interconnectedness and agency has, in part, facilitated conceptions of land. This is not only specific to Indigenous knowledges, but to women as holders of Indigenous knowledges, with Shiva (1989: 14-5) noting that “modern reductionist science, like development, turns out to be a patriarchal project, which has excluded women as experts, and has simultaneously excluded ecological and holistic ways of knowing which understand and respect nature’s processes and interconnectedness *as science*.”

Indigenous knowledges are often deemed as less valid epistemologies than Western science, on the basis of Western science, however different methods of processing observations should not equate to dismissal of validity. Additionally, this is a highly Eurocentric measure of validity that reduces knowledge to that of purely Western epistemologies, as expanded upon earlier by Shiva (1989). Berkes et al. exemplifies this by writing that:

Indigenous knowledge holders accumulate such information as a result of many years of observations (analogous to extensive sampling), the sharing of knowledge with other hunters and fishers (data pooling), and forming a collective mental model of what healthy animals would look like. Their ‘data’ on animal health and abnormalities are language-based, rather than numbers based. (Berkes et al. 2009: 8)

Here, Berkes et al. (2009) equates different IK processing methods to that of Western science’s processing methods to confirm their validity, as Western paradigms are often regarded as the norm, noting that both systems involve methods of observation/sampling, data pooling, and characterization/conclusion based on data. While this is a helpful comparison for the sake of increasing acceptance of IK as a valid way of knowing, Nadasdy (2007: 26) explains how it can also be harmful toward Indigenous communities, writing that “we must acknowledge that they are not just cultural constructions and accept instead the possibility that they may be actually (as well as metaphorically) valid.” Nadasdy (2007) emphasizes the importance of recognizing Indigenous ontologies as valid and true rather than purely symbolic and metaphorical, pointing

out that IK should not seek validation on terms established by Western science, but on terms defined by its own epistemologies. This affects Indigenous access to land and resource management in the following way: to suggest that Indigenous ontologies are *not* true and valid perpetuates violence as it can be used as a political tool to exclude Indigenous communities from land access and management.

Additionally, while Berkes et al. (2009) uses a positivist approach with Eurocentric measurements of validity for IK, Jessen et al. (2022) says that Eurocentric measurements of IK's validity are unnecessary. Rather, IK is embodied and is valid because it *is* valid, with Jessen et al. writing that:

...despite the validity of IK within its society of provenance, the veracity and/or legitimacy of IK is frequently called into question until it is 'confirmed' by Western science. There is often an assumption that IK must be subsumed within Western scientific frameworks of knowledge, which can force Indigenous peoples to express themselves in ways potentially contradictory to their own values and belief systems. This practice can distort the accuracy and applicability of IK, and is harmful to Indigenous ways of being. (Jessen et al. 2022: 99)

Here, Jessen et al. (2022) is reinforcing Nadasy's (2007) assertion that Indigenous knowledges need only to seek validation on terms defined by their own epistemologies. So, how important is this legitimization of IK by Western science, and how does this lend to conversations surrounding L/land? It seems that the legitimization of IK reinforces narratives of Eurocentrism and Western epistemologies (consistent with land understandings) while downplaying the validity of IK (consistent with Land understandings). In doing this, understandings of Land become illegitimate unless validated in the context of Western science, which undermines and inhibits the ability of associated practices or Land rights to be enjoyed or practiced fully.

Liboiron (2021a) discusses the overlap between Indigenous and Western science, noting that some argue that there is significant overlap and potential for integration, while others think

their separation is key, even in instances of collaboration. Liboiron (2021a: 125) makes the claim that academia is not a place in which IK should work, as academia “remains hostile to other ways of knowing, except as a source of cultural capital, curiosity, and value for extraction. It remains a Resource relation.” Liboiron (2021a: 125) comments further on this nature of resource extraction and exploitation, explaining that “the emerging drive in academia to capture, incorporate, use, and eat up Traditional Knowledge as a Resource is often another expression of colonialism and the settler and colonial entitlement to Indigenous Land (now with more knowledge!).” It is with this significant point in mind that I work to define and understand different conceptions of L/land in the following sections.

Rather than integrating IK into Western-based academia (otherwise known as ‘indigenizing the academy’) as this reinforces settler colonialism through extraction, exploitation, and appropriation, I work to seek pathways of coexistence outside of the current political economies and cultural frameworks that serve to further these harmful and violent narratives. This includes reading from and highlighting of Indigenous voices themselves, with a focus on the previously mentioned authors. Exploring these concepts together highlights the idea that thinking is not always just cognitive, and in IK, it is embedded in ecology. The key connection between these is that they are all Land-based - they accentuate not only the centrality but the *agency* of Land and nature as active producers of knowledge.

There are significant differences between colonial and Western understandings of land and Indigenous understandings of Land, including distinctions between land and Land (with a capital L). While land from the colonial perspective is representative of the fixed physical or geographical space one might be in, Land is grounded in relationships, spirituality, interdependence, and carries with it both the ideas of identity and journeying (Kimmerer 2013,

Liboiron 2021b, Styres and Zinga 2013). Styres and Zinga (2013: 300) expand upon this by writing that “Land is a spiritually infused place grounded in interconnected and interdependent relationships, cultural positioning, and is highly contextualized.” Land from the Indigenous perspective is a verb; rather, it is an ever-changing, alive, never-settling physicality (of landscape, water, soil, plants, air, and more) that lives in relationships with “histories, spirits, events, kinships, accountabilities, and other people that aren’t human” (Liboiron 2021b: 43). In understandings of Land, there is no hierarchy that places humans above or below it; instead, the Land exists in the same realm and way that families, friends, bodies of water, mountains, cows, or other beings exist (Liboiron 2021b). Contrary to colonial and Lockean notions of land, Land belongs to itself. It has agency, rather than being a commodity, and can never be bought or sold, with Kimmerer (2013: 17) writing that “In the settler mind, land was property, real estate, capital, or natural resources. But to our people, it was everything: identity, the connection to our ancestors, the home of our nonhuman kinfolk, our pharmacy, our library, the source of all that sustained us...It belonged to itself; it was a gift, not a commodity, so it could never be bought or sold.” Throughout my research and writing, I plan to engage regularly with the L/land distinction that highlights these differences.

There are also a number of spiritual and sacred dimensions of Land from the Indigenous perspective. Land is a teacher, informing Indigenous life lessons and community decisions. An example of this is in the chapter “The Council of Pecans” from *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teaching of Plants*, in which Kimmerer (2013) recalls the pecan trees fruiting as a collective. This behavior of the pecan trees, or the ‘Council of Pecans,’ was representative of the power of community, informing the people to behave accordingly under the assumption that “all flourishing is mutual” (Kimmerer 2013: 15). Land is also regarded

as a responsibility, with Kimmerer (2013: 17) noting that “Our lands were where our responsibility to the world was enacted, sacred ground.” Land is also treated as a source of strength, especially when Indigenous peoples were (and continue to be) forcefully removed and displaced from their ancient homelands. Despite the physical land that was held by people (new or old), “Land held in common gave people strength; it gave them something to fight for” (Kimmerer 2013: 17).

land as Property

Shifting relationships to land coincided with the shift toward capitalism, and land as property was a foundational idea within capitalist ideology. John Locke was a major proponent of this idea, proclaiming that human relationship to land should be one of property and ownership. In this view, or Locke’s theory of value, land that is not used for humans, human gain, or cultivation is considered wasted or useless, with Locke (1689: Chapter V, paragraph 42) noting that “land that is left wholly to nature, that hath no improvement of pasturage, tillage, or planting, is called, as indeed it is, waste” (Greer 2012, Shattuck et al. 2023). Locke’s theory of value surrounds the idea that labor has to transform land in order for it to hold value, which greatly contrasts with Indigenous epistemologies surrounding the intrinsic value and animacy of land. Furthermore, not only *should* land be used in this way, but rather it was given to man for this purpose and this purpose only (exploitation), with Locke (1689: Chapter V, paragraph 34) writing that “God gave the world to men in common; but since he gave it to them for their benefit, and the greatest conveniences of life they were capable to draw from it, and it cannot be supposed he meant it should always remain common and uncultivated. He gave it to the use of the industrious and rational (and *labour* was to be his *title* to it).” Here, Locke emphasizes that

land should be both enclosed and cultivated in order to truly be possessed, although it was originally a common inheritance from God. Additionally, the Christian origin story, a part of the dominant Euro-Western religion, is another reason for these shifting relations as humans became positioned in a way to reside over nature (stewardship over creation) while simultaneously resolving communication with nature as it had previously dangerous and disastrous effects within the Garden of Eden (Watts 2017).

This can have important implications for Indigenous access to or management of land as differing ontological interpretations of L/land could serve as justification for exclusion. Locke defines property in such a way that Indigenous Land use does not count as legitimate property, and relegates them in his system to an earlier “state of nature,” where European people are presented as being in a later “state of rationality.” Exclusion of access or ownership can also be perpetuated by lack of recognition for the validity of Indigenous ontologies and beliefs regarding land (Greer 2012, Nadasdy 2007). These differing understandings of L/land are directly influenced by fundamental differences in understandings of property rights and ownership as well as dispossession via laws (Bratspies 2007, Greer 2012, Nichols 2020).

Locke’s notions of land did more than provide a basis for capitalism, however. This introduction into society of land as property resulted in a process of gradual Indigenous dispossession due to Locke’s insistence on ontological divisions between Native and European populations (Greer 2012, Locke 1689). In “civilized” communities, land could be owned individually or communally, but in “uncivilized” communities, Land was open access for everyone. There are key differences between open-access resources and particular commons, but by blurring the lines between these two, Locke categorized Native peoples as uncivilized and effectively made them ineligible for colonial understandings of property rights and ownership

(Greer 2012, Locke 1689). This was a colonial armature of dispossession, allowing the colonial State to say “Well, you can’t manage this land, so we’ll manage it for you!” Furthermore, the idea that Native populations were uncivilized allowed for a more easy assimilation of Locke’s colonial ideas as colonial forms of imposition and European property were viewed as improvements (both in the sense of agricultural development and in a more general sense of Eurocentrism).

Knowledge as Property: Intellectual Property, Biopiracy, and the Exploitation of Indigenous Knowledges

There are also fundamental differences in understandings of property rights and ownership that play into these distinct relationships with L/land (Bratspies 2007). Self-determination of Indigenous leaders and their communities is greatly contrasted by typical State sovereignty over territory. Bratspies (2007: 2) explains this by writing that “Rather than as an aspect of state sovereignty over territory, or the fruits of private invention, indigenous leaders conceive of these resources as an aspect of self-determination - as a recognition of their fundamental rights to property and culture.” In other words, Indigenous self-determination focuses on fundamental rights to Land in relation to the fundamental right to culture, while state sovereignty focuses on private ownership over resources (Bratspies 2007). Property is generally held in common, in contrast to Western ideas of individual property or State-governed areas (Bratspies 2007). Bratspies (2007) also makes important notes about forced removal of Indigenous peoples and communities from their Land, which reduces Indigenous access to important cultural resources and sacraments while allowing for the exploitation and appropriation of these resources by the Western world. Additionally, the Western world develops

and patents products with IK cultivated through Land and plant management (often considered to be in the informal knowledge sector or “global commons,” and therefore unprotected by intellectual property rights (IPRs)), further reducing Indigenous access to resources and failing to compensate for resources or knowledge exploited (Bratspies 2007: 326). This is just one way in which differing understandings of L/land, complicated by understandings of both physical and intellectual property, reconstruct and reinforce the cycles of dependency and exploitation facilitated by colonialism. By exploiting this knowledge via justification by Western intellectual property standards, Indigenous access is reduced as the rights for said knowledge are allotted to settlers in the Western world. Additionally, IPRs facilitate a corollary process of commodification of resources and land through the reinforcement of Western epistemology that creates land conceptions by focusing on its ultimate domination and exploitation.

One example of this is in insect-resistant Cowpea in Nigeria, developed by local farmers. Because they did not officially publish their creation in a ‘reputable journal’ reviewed by ‘peers’ (consistent with Western intellectual property views and ways of knowing), Angharad Gatehouse, a scientist at the University of Durban, obtained seeds and “using “formal” techniques, he identified in “scientific language” the genetic mechanism that causes the locally developed cowpeas to be insect resistant,” obtaining a patent for the Nigerian farmers’ invention (Mgbeoji 2006: 14). In this situation, the Nigerian farmers were short changed due to their lack of publication, not lack of knowledge, and their access to these cowpeas was consequently reduced.

An illustration of these differing understandings in intellectual property is the production of intellectual property rights (IPRs), or protection given to commercially valuable knowledge. IPRs have significant impacts on Indigenous sovereignty and issues of cultural survivance, or the

ability of a community to maintain and practice its customs, beliefs, foodways, and traditions in a truly robust form (Gilio-Whitaker 2019). Regulated by the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) agreement, IPRs enable patents of products and processes, as long as they are considered novel, non-obvious, and applicable at a commercial or industrial level (Bratspies 2007). The creation of IPRs is said to be justified by the following reasons: the “creator” of an invention or patented product can regain their input funds during the 20-year monopoly right, the “creation” will not be “copied,” and technology transfer will be facilitated (Bratspies 2007). However, whether or not this rationale is true or right is a different story. Shiva (2001) also critiques the role of IPRs, contending that they contribute to widening global inequities as Indigenous plant use is recognized as commercially valuable, promoting its commodification and driving overharvesting by nonindigenous peoples. Shiva (2001: 7) expands upon this by writing that “Such intellectual property rights are in fact intellectual piracy rights. To avoid such piracy, it is essential that the collective innovation of Third World communities be recognized.” Shiva (2001) specifically points out biopiracy, discussed later, as an illustration of these widening inequities.

There is incompatibility between Indigenous and Western understandings of property and ownership in the context of knowledge, with Indigenous knowledges being “consigned to the global commons” while Western knowledge is “considered property and eligible for...full protections” (Bratspies 2007: 13). With Western notions of property rights and intellectual property, it is easy to say that something is not common knowledge because it is not written down, reinforcing Western ideas as the dominant global paradigm by not acknowledging oral knowledge passing as a formal or protected way of knowing information. As noted by Mgbeoji, there is “an overwhelming asymmetry in the way major intellectual property systems - especially

patents - protect the intellectual property of industrialized countries while ignoring, and in some cases appropriating, the intellectual creations of Third World peoples and cultures” (Mgbeoji 2006: 11). This enables the privatization of TK, as it is seen to be there for the taking in the “global commons” (Bratspies 2007: 326). In this way, colonial reduction of Land to land not only decreases the ability to practice Indigenous knowledges and facilitates the corollary processes of commodification of land and resources, but also reinforces these systems by protecting Western knowledge and leaving traditional ecological knowledge as unprotected and therefore vulnerable to exploitation.

Biopiracy is one illustration of the violence that IPRs can facilitate. Biopiracy is “the unauthorized commercial use of biological resources and/or associated traditional knowledge, or the patenting of spurious inventions based on such knowledge, without compensation. Biopiracy also refers to the asymmetrical and unrequired movement of plants and TKUP (traditional knowledge of the uses of plants) from the South to the North through the process of international institutions and the patent system” (Mgbeoji 2006: 13). The term biopiracy was created as a kind of counter attack strategy to Western owners of intellectual property who were accusing many Third World States of “pirating” or “appropriating” their patents and copyrights. Biopiracy emerged as a way to fight back against this and recognize the patenting of Indigenous peoples’ biocultural resources (without prior informed consent) to create these profitable inventions (Mgbeoji 2006: 12). This is illustrated by Graham Dutfield, who says that the term was devised as:

...part of a counter attack strategy on behalf of developing countries that had been accused by developed countries of condoning or supporting ‘intellectual piracy,’ but who felt they were hardly as piratical as corporations which acquire resources and traditional knowledge from their countries, use them in their research and development programs, and acquire patents and other intellectual property rights - all without compensating the provider countries and communities. (Mgbeoji 2006: 12)

The New Discovery Doctrine is one of the major ways in which biopiracy is enabled. In the same way that discovering the “New World” was inaccurate because it was not new (people were already there), this “new knowledge” of plants is not new; rather, it has been there for centuries (Bratspies 2007: 333). What *is* new is these patents, claims to ownership, and profiting off of them. When biopiracy occurs and a plant or food item used by Indigenous people becomes a commodity, it affects Indigenous access to said resource, disrupting food, Land, and tribal sovereignty. Because IPRs enable exclusive access to a knowledge or biodiversity resource and promote the commodification of land and nature, this biopirated resource becomes both more expensive and less available for Indigenous access, disrupting both traditional medicine practices and traditional foodways. An example of this is the Hoodia plant in Kalahari, used by the San people for thousands of years to stave off hunger and thirst on long hunting trips (Bratspies 2007). Sold to Pfizer for \$32 million for its appetite-suppression properties and the creation of diet pills, this created huge barriers for Indigenous access to the plant, seriously disrupting hunting practices and therefore food sovereignty.

To Be a Bay: Knowledge Production and The Language of Animacy

Unlike the treatment of the Hoodia plant as an exploited resource, Kimmerer (2013c) describes that plants, nature, and Land all have agency embedded into Indigenous languages themselves. *Puhpowee*, which translates to “the force which causes mushrooms to push up from the earth overnight” in Potawatomi, is just one example in which it is clear that the way one speaks about nature, the Hoodia plant included, allow for either the resistance or encouragement of its commodification (Kimmerer 2013c: 49). Kimmerer (2013c) situates my conversations surrounding differing understandings of and relationships to Land within language, specifically

through learning the grammar of animacy. While English is a noun-based language, consistent with its anthropogenic tendencies to treat all non-human things/beings/entities as inanimate objects, Native languages (specifically Potawatomi) provides a different way of speaking about the world in which all living things have animacy (Kimmerer 2013c). One example of this in the Potawatomi language is the verb *wiikwegamaa* - to be a bay - which is contrasted by the noun *bay* in the English language. Kimmerer (2013c: 55) notes that “A bay is a noun only if the water is dead...to be a bay holds the wonder that, for this moment, the living water has decided to shelter itself between these shores, conversing with cedar roots and a flock of baby mergansers,” illuminating that the observations of and relationships with forces of the natural world exhibited by so many Native cultures are largely a product of how they are spoken about - Land included. Kimmerer (2013c: 56) furthers this notion by writing that “the language reminds us, in every sentence, of our kinship with all of the animate world.” The importance of language and the grammar of animacy are also discussed in the context of the Ojibway people. Winona LaDuke (*Anishinaabeg*) of the White Earth Land Recovery Project states that *Nishnabe akin* “means ‘the land to which the people belong’ . This implies an entirely separate paradigm for property rights from that contained in the discussions held in the U.S. courts” (Mander and Tauli-Corpuz 2005: 23). Similarly, LaDuke says that *dinawaymaaganinaadog* means ‘all our relatives’ in Ojibway culture. This includes not only people, but “also those with four legs, or wings, or fins.” (Mander and Tauli-Corpuz 2005: 23). This, too, gives animacy to non-human entities that are often referred to as ‘it’ in the English language, rather than ‘he’ or ‘she.’ Additionally, it gives animacy and agency to non-human entities with the notion that they can teach and inform humans how to govern themselves and engage with others on a daily basis.

The dominant global language, English, holds important implications for humanity's relationship with L/land. In general, English does not facilitate this grammar of animacy, providing two binary categories - you are either a human or a thing. This creates barriers of separation between humans and the natural world, and thus "absolv[es] ourselves of moral responsibility and open[s] the door to exploitation" (Kimmerer 2013c: 57). Here, Land becomes land, transforming into an inanimate object rather than an entity with agency. By treating every nonhuman thing, being, or entity as an *it*, embedded into the very language one speaks, it becomes easier to pick up a chainsaw, drill into the ground, or destroy biodiversity (Kimmerer 2013c). In exploring ways in which different understandings of L/land can not only coexist, but compromise, this idea of learning the grammar of animacy within the dominant English language becomes imperative. Additionally, it allows one to understand Indigenous relationships with and understandings of the non-human world not just as beliefs, but as ways of life and communication embedded within the very language.

Watts (2017: 1) introduces the concept of "place-thought" in the context of Indigenous Land relations, or "the nondescript space where place and thought were never separated because they never could or can be separated" that is "based upon the premise that land is alive and thinking and that humans and non-humans derive agency through the extensions of these thoughts." Watts (2017) also emphasizes that while "modern" society often views Indigenous ways of knowing and origin stories as myths and lore, they are in fact real and valid, in conversation with Nadasdy (2007). In this way, Watts (2017: 1) writes that "colonization is not solely an attack on peoples and lands; rather, this attack is accomplished in part through purposeful and ignorant misrepresentations of Indigenous cosmologies." She emphasizes that colonization is also an attack on thought categories, exemplifying epistemic violence, and it

works to intentionally misrepresent and misconstrue Indigenous cosmologies in a way that renders Western paradigms as dominant, leaving settlers and the settler-colonial State as permanent beneficiaries of Eurocentrism.

Watts (2017) provides a simple depiction of the crucial and basic differences between most Indigenous and Western epistemologies, with Indigenous cosmology being a representation of a circular system consisting of “spirit → place-thought → determines agency within creation → societies and systems become extensions → obligation to communicate → spirit” (Watts 2017: 1). Euro-Western epistemology “can contribute to colonization of these Indigenous cosmologies,” and is represented by a linear system beginning with the “epistemology-ontology divide → separates constituents of the world from how the world is understood → limits agency to humans → exclusionary relationship with nature” (Watts 2017: 1). Watts (2017: 1) further reinforces the animacy of Land by writing that the circular system “describes the animate nature of the land. To be animate goes beyond being alive or acting, it is to be full of thought, desire, contemplation and will.” This is consistent too with Kimmerer’s (2013c) discussions surrounding the grammar of animacy, and depicts not only the animacy of Land, but the ways in which Euro-Western epistemology furthers the colonization not only of peoples and lands, but of the animacy of Land itself as central to Indigenous ontologies.

In analyzing these concepts and combining the work of Kimmerer (2013c), Watts (2017), and Mander and Tauli-Corpuz (2005), it becomes apparent that language is crucial in the process of Land making. Because English deanimates land, it produces objectified conceptions of land. This is also evident in the context of Locke’s theory of value, in which Locke does not see the soil as alive, or as having its own animacy, but instead as belonging to “men in common...for their benefit” (Locke 1689: Chapter V, paragraph 43). As discussed earlier, this facilitates a

certain kind of treatment toward land, nature, and resources - one of exploitation and domination, centered around the prospect of human gain. These very conceptions are based within the English language itself. Not only does this instill the idea that land has no agency and one can separate themselves from the exploitation and dominion over land, but it enables the commodification of knowledge, IPRs, and more. Alternatively, it becomes clear that language has potential as a tool to rework conceptions of L/land, with intentionality in both how relationships are portrayed between nature and people and what part of speech is being used (*to be a bay* vs. *bay*).

It seems that the unifying force of these knowledges is the way that relationships exist and shape knowledge systems, in which the concepts of “place-thought” and the grammar of animacy are indeed evident (Kimmerer 2013c, Watts 2017). Here, Winona LaDuke (*Anishinaabeg*) says that “the concept of ‘relationship’ is...central to our philosophy in the broadest sense” (Mander and Tauli-Corpuz 2005: 24). In the same way that these concepts are crucial in the process of Land-making, so too are they in the processes of the building and maintenance of Indigenous cultures, knowledge systems, and the relationships that are embedded and embodied in them.

The grammar of animacy and the concept of “place-thought” facilitate this unifying force of relationality through reinforcing the concept of Land having *agency* (Kimmerer 2013, Watts 2017). This agency allows for the animacy of nature to inform everyday Indigenous thought systems through relationships with the people. For example, as discussed previously in Ojibway cultures, Winona LaDuke says that “Our teachings are filled with stories about *dinawaymaaganinaadog*, such as how the bears taught us medicine or how the wolves taught us child-rearing” (Mander and Tauli-Corpuz 2005: 23). Similarly, Kimmerer (2013) discusses the

Council of Pecans, in which the behavior of the pecan trees informs the people to behave accordingly. This relationship is implicit, with LaDuke noting that “...our relationship to the land is just that - a relationship. Not a bargaining of rights versus responsibilities” (Mander and Tauli-Corpuz 2005: 23).

A Pluriverse of Pathways and Worlds: The Importance of Place on L/land

Both the grammar of animacy and Watts' notion of place-thought identify the centrality of place in Land. Similarly, Larsen and Johnson (2017: 3) introduce the concept of “being-together-in-place,” in which being Indigenous means “to be of a place,” to teach the responsibility of Land, and where place has agency. Larsen and Johnson write that:

... in this pluriverse, place has agency. Place is not just a site of forced engagement, but is actively initiating and sustaining coexistence struggles in lands that have been exploited and degraded but that are still claimed by the Indigenous peoples who assert their belonging, guardianship, and sovereignty. Place is forcing these coexistence to acknowledge one another, however reluctantly or awkwardly, often in dialogue and relationship born of conflict, protest, and activism, calling humans and nonhumans to their inevitable, ongoing entanglement in these lands and making their struggle for coexistence at once a political and spiritual issue. The agency of place expresses the intrinsic value of their being-together, engaging them in the life-supportive responsibilities of this more-than-human coexistence. (Larsen and Johnson 2017: 1)

Place is continuously and actively initiating and sustaining issues of and struggles for coexistence on physical lands where Indigenous peoples have been historically and repeatedly dispossessed. Place has agency as it forces the coexistence of multiple grounds of people with different agendas - those of exploitation and degradation or those of Indigenous peoples asserting their belonging, guardianship, and sovereignty over places (Larsen and Johnson 2017).

Being-together-in-place signifies a decolonial approach to coexist despite struggles with other peoples or groups, and it represents the notion that “our collective survival on this planet

will ultimately depend not on our ability to co-occupy the same space, but rather to coexist through our mutual entanglements in, and active relationships with, place” (Larsen and Johnson 2017: 22). This is significant in the context of the question: Are Land and land mutually exclusive, or how do they coexist? Larsen and Johnson make it clear that it is not a problem of simply co-occupying the same physical spaces and maintaining divides. Instead, it is an issue of understanding place through active relationship with it, coexisting through mutual entanglements, and engaging in cosmopolitical dialogues that can foster protocols for renewed relationship with both place and people (Larsen and Johnson 2017).

Additionally, Coulthard continues to refine understandings of Euro-Western worldviews by noting that *time* (Western), rather than *place* (Indigenous), is the central organizing factor of knowledge and being (Coulthard 2014). The implication here, discussed later, is the disembodiment and deamination that is created in non-place organizing factors, contributing to L/land making and subsequent objectification of nature. Coulthard (2014: 60) includes a quote regarding this phenomenon from the late Lakota philosopher Vine Deloria Jr., who says that “When one group is concerned with the philosophical problem of space and the other with the philosophical problem of time, then the statements of either group do not make much sense when transferred from one context to the other without the proper consideration of what is taking place.” This quote reinforces the idea that while Euro-Western worldviews are organized by the concept of time, Indigenous worldviews are organized by the concept of place, presenting a clear disconnect between the two. While they coexist parallel to each other, communication or compromise between the two worldviews must take into consideration these organizing differences. This holds important implications for radical transformation of society, addressing dispossession and displacement, and land recognition, as groups walking in different

philosophical planes cannot truly coexist in transformative ways. One way of combating this issue could be through hodology (or the study of pathways) and the inclusion of “walking-with,” creating pathways of coexistence in conversation with place-thought and being-together-in-place (Larsen and Johnson 2017b: 29).

Similar to knowledge production via language, what is at stake in these distinctions is, again, the production of objectification of land as opposed to Land. These distinctions are important in the contexts of L/land making. In looking at areas as spaces, land becomes deanimated and disembodied, and one can remove themselves from what is happening *to* a space. In contrast, place requires active relationships, in which something is happening *in* a place, and in turn, impacting *people*³. Place, too, reinforces the idea that Land has agency and can be used as a tool to rework conceptions of L/land.

Larsen and Johnson (2017: 5) also discuss the concept of sovereignty as a function of the settler-colonial State that could provide potential harm toward Indigenous peoples as it “violently rejects the relationships of land.” Larsen and Johnson (2017: 4) further explain this concept by writing that “Sovereignty discourse underwrites settler colonialism’s desire to uproot and destroy the place-based autonomies of Indigenous peoples in the relentless acquisition of ever more land and resources.” Alternatively, Larsen and Johnson (2017: 5) suggest that the term “peoplehood,” or the “embrac[ing of] the more-than-human communities whose autonomies are entangled in place,” has been more meaningful and appropriate for protecting and restoring forms of Indigenous governance as they often reject the systems of hierarchy and absolute authorities so often found in Western governance systems associated with sovereignty. Larsen and Johnson (2017: 5) utilize this term throughout their book and writing as peoplehood “helps us focus our

³ Many of my thoughts surrounding people and place have been informed by conversations with and lectures by Cody Miller, one of the brilliant professors in the Sustainable Development Department at Appalachian State University.

attention on the embodied scales of coexistence where humans and nonhumans are engaged in different kinds of dialogue, struggle, and relationship” with place.

In addition to the concept of being-together-in-place, Larsen and Johnson (2017b) speak on pathways that foster more inclusive, equitable, and respectful ways of coexisting on the land. There is an emphasis on the importance of trails or paths, commenting on the hodological nature of knowledge in which trails and stories were some of the first tools used to produce and organize knowledge. In this way, knowledge was regarded as an “embodied, more-than-human movement along the ‘trails’ or ‘paths’ of lifeworld” (Larsen and Johnson 2017b: 27). Through the implementation of Enlightenment ideologies, the emergence of spatialized and disembodied knowledge perpetuated settler colonialism and thus the dispossession and displacement of Indigenous peoples (Larsen and Johnson 2017b). Larsen and Johnson (2017b: 28) note that while it can be tempting to strip this Enlightenment thinking from dominant paradigms of spatially organized and disembodied knowledge, it is more important to recognize the world as a pluriverse, full of “multiple pathways, multiple worlds, multiple ontologies” in order to create an environment of coexistence grounded in the concept of being-together-in-place.

One way in which to achieve this kind of coexistence is through the practice of “walking-with,” in which walking has become a decolonial method of thinking about place as one can move across land in an embodied and participatory way (Larsen and Johnson 2017b: 29). In this practice of being-together-in-place through walking-with, it is important to note that the pathways of coexistence do not need to converge or come together in order to be meaningful or effective. Rather, “paths may run parallel, as when two parties act autonomously but in solidarity...partially connected, paths may even diverge” (Larsen and Johnson 2017b: 41). This

practice focuses on coexistence through respect, relationship, and inclusivity rather than total consensus or compromise.

The Grounded Normativity of the Fourth World

The Indigenous ontologies previously discussed all work together to solidify Coulthard's (2014) and Simpson's (2014) concepts of grounded normativity and land as pedagogy. Coulthard (2014: 53) introduces the concept of "grounded normativity" in the context of the Dene Nation, which he defines as "the ethical framework provided by...place-based practices and associated forms of knowledge." Grounded normativity is developed through an analysis of Indigenous versus Western engagement with anticolonialism and anticapitalism. Coulthard expands upon this in the context of the differences between Indigenous anticolonialism/anticapitalism and Marxism, writing that:

Indigenous struggles against capitalist imperialism are best understood as struggles oriented around the question of *land*—struggles not only *for* land, but also deeply *informed* by what the land as a mode of reciprocal *relationship* (which is itself informed by place-based practices and associated form of knowledge) ought to teach us about living our lives in relation to one another and our surroundings in a respectful, nondominating and nonexploitative way. (Coulthard 2014: 60)

While Western radical traditions of anticolonialism and anticapitalism are approached from materialist viewpoints of political economy, they are still grounded in Euro-Western thought (Coulthard 2014). Instead, Indigenous struggles against colonialism and capitalism are both grounded in and informed by Land, with a focus on living in a reciprocal relationship with both people and place (Coulthard 2014). In this way, Coulthard (2014: 52) writes that "transformative" models of redistribution are those that seek to correct unjust distributions of power and resources at their source; that is, they not only seek to alter "the content of current

modes of domination and exploitation, but also the forms that give rise to them.” In other words, anticolonial and anticapitalist rebellion through Marxist ideology serves to break down injustice by changing its impacts, where anticolonial and anticapitalist rebellion through Indigenous ideology is informed by grounded normativity and Land relations, working outside the framework that produces injustice to combat the source directly. In a more tangible sense, grounded normativity is not just abstract and thought-based, it is *political*.

Simpson (2014) concurs with Coulthard in her discussion of the concept of land as pedagogy, centering the concepts of the previously discussed Indigenous ontologies in the context of Nishnaabeg thought systems. Simpson (2014: 7) defines land as pedagogy by writing that:

... it takes place in the context of family, community and relations. It lacks overt coercion and authority, values so normalized within mainstream western pedagogy that they are rarely ever critiqued. The land, aki, is both context and process. The process of coming to know is learner-led and profoundly spiritual in nature. Coming to know is the pursuit of whole body intelligence practiced in the context of freedom, and when realized collectively it generates generations of loving, creative, innovative, self-determining, inter-dependent and self-regulating community minded individuals. It creates communities of individuals with the capacity to uphold and move forward our political traditions and systems of governance. (Simpson 2014: 7)

Simpson (2014) relates the concepts of IK and Land, noting that the Land is both the context of and the process in which bodies of knowledge are created, nurtured, and upheld. She also emphasizes the importance of relationships, spirituality, and community in the context of centering land as pedagogy. This relates to Coulthard’s grounded normativity as it, too, requires a break from Western systems that seek to further oppression. Instead of working to address the symptoms and impacts of colonialism, it works to address the source itself by “requiring a radical break from state education systems - systems that are primarily designed to produce communities of individuals willing to uphold settler colonialism” (Simpson 2014: 1). Simpson

(2014: 7) contests general understandings of the term “theory,” usually meaning an explanation of a phenomenon, saying that within Nishnaabeg thought, theories are generated through embodied practice of communities/generations, are “woven with kinetics, spiritual presence and emotion,” and allow for individuals to explore their personal responsibilities. Most importantly, though, theories are not just for academics; rather, they are for everyone (Simpson 2014). This is expressed, too, in Larsen and Johnson’s (2017b) concepts of pathways of coexistence and walking-with.

Simpson (2014) emphasizes the importance of effective Indigenous education, noting that it does not come from true intellectual traditions if it does not come through the Land. Additionally, Simpson (2014: 13) warns of a critical task by saying that “if we do not create a generation of people attached to the land and committed to living in our culturally inherent ways of coming to know, we risk losing what it means to be Nishnaabeg within our own thought systems.” Radical transformation cannot come from indigenizing the academy. Instead, continuation of a decolonial movement involves creating “land based, community based intellectuals and cultural producers who are accountable to our nations and whose life work is concerned with the regeneration of these systems” (Simpson 2014: 13).

So, how do these concepts - the grammar of animacy, place-thought, being-together-in-place, place vs. time, grounded normativity, and land as pedagogy - relate to and inform one another in the context of this research? It has become clear that these concepts relate to and inform one another through their centering of Land, both through relationships *with* Land as an animate agent and also as knowledge systems and ontologies being grounded in and informed *by* Land. In this way, the legacy of settler colonialism and its reduction of Land to land impacts the ability to practice Indigenous knowledges by stripping Land of its agency - both its

agency to be in relationship with humans and nonhumans and its agency to inform knowledge systems themselves.

Connecting the concepts of Indigenous resurgence, anticapitalism, and Indigenous ways of knowing and being within the context of Nishnaabeg peoples, Simpson (2017) explores Nishnaabeg thought as a source of hope for the future. It is important to note that in the same way indigeneity is not homogenous, not all Indigenous knowledges, cultures, or communities are fundamentally anticapitalist. One example of this is the Navajo Nation and its participation in extractivism with the coal industry as a strategic path toward energy sovereignty (Curley 2023). Rather than being anticapitalist, IK is relationship based. However, some Indigenous communities and knowledge systems, as exemplified by Simpson and the Nishnaabeg peoples, are fundamentally anticapitalist and are utilized as movements of resistance and transformation against colonial and capitalist systems that historically seek to oppress them.

Simpson (2017: 76) writes that she “can’t see or think of a system that is more counter to Nishnaabeg thought than capitalism,” saying that Nishnaabeg cosmologies, epistemologies, and ontologies are fundamentally anticapitalist, but not due to a lack of ability or intelligence. Here, Simpson says that:

My ancestors didn’t accumulate capital, they accumulated networks of meaningful, deep, fluid, intimate collective and individual relationships of trust. In times of hardship, we did not rely to any degree on accumulated capital or individualism but on the strength of our relationships with others...In daily life, greed, or the accumulation of capital, was seen as an assault against the collective because it offended the spirits of the plant and animal nations that made up our peopled cosmos, and therefore put Nishnaabeg at risk. (Simpson 2017: 77)

In Nishnaabeg thought, the strength of relationships with people, place, and plant and animal nations greatly outweigh the centrality of capital accumulation within its ontology. Rather, “we had the ethics and knowledge within grounded normativity to not develop this system, because to

do so would have violated our fundamental values and ethics regarding how we relate to each other and the natural world” (Simpson 2017: 78). Additionally, Simpson (2017) notes that accumulating capital is contrary to collective networks, relationships of trust and reciprocity, and redistribution of wealth throughout community to vulnerable members, which are all pillars of Nishnaabeg thought and practice (and common in other Indigenous cosmologies, as well). Resources as capital come with serious consequences outside of misaligned cultural values including “the collapse of our local ecosystems, the loss of prairies and rice, the loss of salmon, eels, caribou, the loss of our weather,” and more (Simpson 2017: 77). Biopiracy is just one example of this phenomenon, in which misaligned cultural values facilitate enclosure, which enable the commodification and appropriation of resources, leading to the loss of food and medicine access for Indigenous communities.

Simpson further reiterates and expands upon the lack of private property present in Nishnaabeg and other Indigenous thought systems by writing that:

...we don't have this idea of private property or 'the commons.' We practice life over a territory with boundaries that were overlapping areas of increased international Indigenous presence, maintained by more intense ceremonial and diplomatic relationship, but not necessarily by police, armies, and violence, although under great threate we mobilized to protect what was meaningful to us. Our authority was grounded and confirmed to our own body and the relationships that make up our body, not as a mechanism for controlling other bodies or mechanisms of production but as structures and practices that are the very practices of Nishnaabeg life. (Simpson 2017: 78)

Instead of these bounds being protected via systems of violent rules and regulations, they are formed and maintained via reciprocity, relationship, and informed by the Land itself. In the context of Indigenous resurgence, Simpson (2017: 80) comments that “this holds a lot of hope for me in creating alternative economies and ways of living,” as being Nishnaabeg itself is a form of anticapitalist rebellion functioning outside the boundaries of capitalism. The question

that arises from this notion of Nishnaabeg society as fundamentally anticapitalist is this: If one truly believes that Nishnaabeg society is fundamentally anticapitalist, and there is recognition that this can and should be practiced in its fullest form, can there be a coexistence of noncapitalist and capitalist economies? How do you go about achieving this?

Manuel and Posluns engage with the concept of the Fourth World, which they define by writing that it is a concept that:

...emerges as each people develops customs and practices that wed it to the land as the forest is to the soil, and as people stop expecting that there is some unnamed thing that grows equally well from sea to sea. As each of our underdeveloped nations begin to mature, we may learn to share this common bed without persisting in a relationship of violence and abduction. Such mutuality can come only as each respects the wholeness of the other, and also acknowledges his own roots. (Manuel and Posluns 1974: 7)

This concept is rooted in the idea that each people is able to develop a unique relationship with L/land as well as respect and understanding for each peoples' unique relationship. Manuel and Posluns (1974) say that the vision of the Fourth World is a vision of the future for North America, the Indian peoples, and Aboriginal peoples all across the globe. Histories of colonization permeate all corners of the globe, and the histories of European colonization and Native American development and survival are inseparable. Further, much of this inseparable history has been influenced by European insistence on separations from the land, which has also prevented European colonizers and North Americans from "developing their own identity in terms of the land so that they can be happy and secure in the knowledge of that identity" (Manuel and Posluns 1974: 12).

Additionally, Manuel and Posluns (1974) point out that while homogenizing indigeneity can be problematic for a number of reasons as IK is a highly place-based knowledge and cosmology, it is also important to recognize the consistent and similar historical contexts of

violence and colonization that have plagued most Indigenous communities in North America. They are not separate histories, and in fact, they represent a standard of truth for Indigenous populations in the context of resurgence and survival. Finally, when considering what the Fourth World means in the context of future community and other development (and/or restructuring of society in more equitable ways), it is noted that:

We do not need to re-create the exact forms by which our grandfather lived their lives—the clothes, the houses, the political systems, or the means of travel. We do need to create new forms that will allow the future generations to inherit the values, the strengths, and the basic spiritual beliefs—the way of understanding the world—that is the fruit of a thousand generations' cultivation of North American soil by Indian people. (Manuel and Posluns 1974: 4)

In other words, there is not a need to recreate a pre-colonial world complete with pre-colonial Indigenous systems, structures, and epistemologies. Rather, there is a need for postcolonial reevaluation of how to reconstruct and revive Indigenous systems, structures, and epistemologies that are informed by the same values. At the same time, there is a need to rethink and reimagine the world in a way where these systems are coexisting, simultaneously and parallel to, dominant societal structures.

Conclusion

Despite the dominant forces of settler colonialism and Euro-Western thought and epistemology, Native communities and Indigenous cosmologies have persisted and survived amidst violent efforts for removal. Indigenous knowledges and traditional ecological knowledges are deemed less valid in the global scheme of knowledge, but are sources of transformation in the contexts of cultural survivance, anticapitalist rebellion, and environmental resurgence. L/land distinctions are embedded into both Native languages and the English language, reinforcing

these relationships with L/land and calling for the need to learn the grammar of animacy present in Potawatomi and other Native cultures. While there are important cautions surrounding indigenizing the academy and extraction or appropriation of IK, it is also imperative to understand distinctions between Western and Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, and cosmologies. Special attention should be given to the many nuances and place-based nature of IK, including foundational Indigenous ontologies that distinguish between noun/verb and space/place organizing. Several Native cultural practices, such as the ones described by Simpson (2017) in Nishnaabeg thought, can be credited as fundamentally anticapitalist and looked to as sources of transformation for current economic, ecological, political, and social systems and structures that permeate every corner of the globe and reinforce systems of injustice. Finally, the concept of the Fourth World is imperative when moving toward transformative action, as it not only creates space for Indigenous resurgence and survival, but for European North Americans to recreate and reinvent their relationships with land outside of the histories of colonization, genocide, and dispossession/displacement.

Chapter 2: The Multiscalar Nature and Coexistence of Indigenous Food Sovereignities

Introduction

As seen in the previous chapter, a unifying force of Indigenous knowledge systems and epistemologies is relationships - relationships both between people and between people and nonhuman entities such as animals and Land. Additionally, another unifying source of significance for tribal communities and First Nations is that of sovereignty - political sovereignty, economic sovereignty, Land sovereignty, and food sovereignty. Political sovereignty and relationships with Land facilitate Indigenous food sovereignty, providing pathways toward both increases in Native health and cultural continuance via increases in traditional foodways. The overall questions I seek to answer in this chapter are: Why is Indigenous food sovereignty important? What are the different forms that Indigenous food sovereignities take? Which forms align with Land? How does this impact broader Indigenous sovereignty? Exploration of these questions reveals the multiscalar nature of Indigenous food sovereignty. Not only is Indigenous food sovereignty multiscalar in terms of local, national, international, and transnational impact, but it is multifaceted in terms of legal or juridical sovereignty, economic sovereignty, political sovereignty, and everyday sovereignty.

Sovereignty holds a huge significant value in tribal and Indigenous contexts. It is what upholds Indigenous rights to produce their own cultures, and at the core of tribal sovereignty is food sovereignty (TEDx Talks 2014). Food sovereignty was first defined by La Via Campesina (2013: 2) as “the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods and their right to define their food and agriculture systems.” It represents the right of a community to define its own diet and therefore shape its

own food system, and it requires the mobilization of people to become change agents within their own food systems. Traditional foods are an essential part of Indigenous food sovereignties, which provides a link between people and the Land and fosters notions of reciprocity, with Valerie Segrest saying in her TED Talk that “I remember that when we take better care of the land, we are ultimately taking better care of ourselves” (TEDx Talks 2014).

Additionally, food is a defining characteristic of cultures, with food sovereignty being a pillar of cultural vitality and longevity. Gilio-Whitaker explains this connection, writing that:

All over the world food is a defining characteristic of cultures, and for Native people whose roots have been established in particular geographical regions for thousands of years, physical bodies became adapted to those places from where their food derives. Food is the conduit between people and place that ensures cultural longevity and personal physical vitality. When those food sources are disrupted, health and culture are disrupted, triggering a cascade of sociological repercussions. (Gilio-Whitaker 2019: 75)

In other words, Native foodways are essential to not only tribal sovereignty, but to cultural, physical, and spiritual health and survival. As Gilio-Whitaker (2019: 85) says, “there is no Indigenous group in the US whose relationships to ancestral foods has not been severely impacted, if not completely disrupted,” which holds important implications for both Native American health and cultural survivance. Gilio-Whitaker (2019: 90) defines cultural survivance as “a matter of Native ingenuity aided by allies and accomplices working against the genocidal impulse of the State—sometimes within the State governmental structure itself but often outside of it—in support of tribal self-determination.” Especially as pollution continues to increase on Native reservation lands, specifically throughout the western United States, this concept is particularly important. Exposure to pollutants such as low-level inorganic arsenic in well water create barriers to transmission of traditional knowledge from older to younger generations as exposure to such pollutants has been linked to impaired neuropsychological functioning in

American Indian elders (Gilio-Whitaker 2019).

Nutritional Colonialism and Food Apartheid in Indigenous North America

Both food insecurity rates and health issues are high within Indigenous communities all across the United States, with death rates from diabetes for Native Americans being three times the national average and obesity as an epidemic within Indigenous populations (often referred to by Native Americans as the “commod bod,” as a play on words referencing the physical impacts commodity foods have had on Native American bodies) (Aguilar 2023, Gilio-Whitaker 2019: 89, White Earth Band of Minnesota Chippewa Tribe 2020). This is mostly due to loss of access to traditional and culturally-appropriate foods, the dependency on government rations/commodity foods high in calories and fat and low in fiber and nutritional value, criminalization of hunting/fishing practices, and the sudden transition of Native peoples from a hunter-gatherer lifestyle to a highly sedentary lifestyle (Gilio-Whitaker 2019, TEDx Talks 2014). An additional and specific reason for these adverse health issues is the starvation of Native peoples when the reservation concept began (McKinley and Jernigan 2023). Sometimes rations did not come in, and oftentimes if they did come in, the food was rotted. So whenever people did have a chance to eat, they were encouraged to eat as much as they could stomach. McKinley and Jernigan (2023: 52) write that “The threat of not having food caused people to overeat for fear of not having enough and changed their belief systems and relationships with food,” resulting in “a shift from preparing and eating only what was needed to overeating in recent times.” McKinley and Jernigan (2023) point to two major federal policies that have undermined tribal sovereignty and therefore food sovereignty - the Removal Act (1831) and the Indian Appropriations Act (1850). The Removal Act (1831) “began with the Choctaw removal to the West on an over 500-mile

journey on the Trail of Tears,” and the Indian Appropriations Act “restricted tribal members to reservations” (McKinley and Jernigan 2023: 45). These policies depict the rapid diet transitions of Indigenous peoples as cultural genocide due to foodways being integral to culture.

Valerie Segrest expands upon the loss of traditional foods in her TEDTalk, saying that “It’s a loss of land, a loss of rights, a loss of knowledge, environmental toxins, cultural oppression, and a modern lifestyle that impedes our access to our traditional foods,” succinctly summing up the complexity of drivers behind this loss of traditional food access (TEDx Talks 2014). She also speaks to what can be done through expanding upon her work in the Muckleshoot Food Sovereignty Project, which attempts to overcome barriers to increase access to traditional foods, uses community foods and medicines as organizing tools, holds edible educational workshops, creates platforms for tribal members to come together and share their gift of food knowledge, works with tribal cooks to develop healthy food protocols that can be implemented into community (via daycares, senior centers, etc.), creates menus inspired by local seasonal availability, and prioritizes purchasing from community food producers like tribal fishermen (TEDx Talks 2014).

Additionally, it is argued that food insecurity has been “manufactured” by settler colonialism “as a means of hegemonic political control,” allowing me to be in conversation with the term food apartheid (McKinley and Jernigan 2023: 46). The term food desert implies that there is no human manufacturing and that, rather, food deserts are simply a function of nature (Sevilla 2021). However, in the same way that food insecurity has been “manufactured” by settler colonialism for means of political control, food apartheid has been manufactured by means of the structures reinforcing colonial and racist narratives and food policies. McKinley and Jernigan (2023: 47) also allow me to engage with the term *nutritional colonialism*, defined

by Lindholm (2019) as “the restriction of subsistence and physical activity, cultural suppression, impairment of food sovereignty and food security, imposed dependence on governmental food sources, and disrupted value systems around foodways that have led to chronic health issues,” as evidenced in the previous sections. An example of this phenomenon would be in the case of the Karuk people, where the dispossession and displacement of land coupled with criminalization of traditional hunting and fishing practices led people to rely on commodity foods, resulting in adverse health and cultural impacts (Sowerine et al. 2019).

This manufacturing of food insecurity by settler colonialism is also an example of a larger colonial modality of power - that of separating and reducing things to their individual parts, rather than providing a holistic picture. For example, by the colonial State saying “we’re giving Native populations enough numeric calories,” there is a reinforcement that this is an acceptable state of affairs and the problem is “solved.” The terms *nutritional colonialism* and *food apartheid* allow for a more holistic view of the underlying structures and policies at work that enable deeper health and cultural issues beyond that of having enough physical calories.

Food Security or Dependency? The USDA and Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservations

The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) is an alternative to SNAP for those living on or near reservations with limited grocery access, and it is the primary food source for 88,600 people monthly (Fisher 2018). While tribal leaders are supposed to be consulted prior to any changes made by the USDA (who funds the FDPIR program) regarding food package contents, this does not always happen, resulting in even less tribal say in Indigenous foodways. Although Indigenous foodways are highly diverse, the USDA treats them

as any other federal food program, which is inconsistent with the reasoning of its creation in the first place - to operate as a food program specific to the needs of Indigenous populations. This reinforces Indigenous dependence on the government and its rations while demoting food sovereignty programs within Native communities. Rather than working to transform and improve food systems, national health, and access issues, Fisher (2018: 145) notes that “Our nation’s food assistance programs are an accomplice in this vicious cycle... They have been designed to fit into the structure of the nation’s industrial food system, placing few demands on changing the way food is produced, distributed, and sold. They reinforce the ills of the marketplace rather than seek to transform them.” This is highly evident in the functioning of FDPIR, which the USDA spends \$100 million per year on (Fisher 2018). Rather than giving this money directly to Indigenous communities to promote food security, food sovereignty, and Indigenous self-determination, this money is used to reinforce tribal dependence on the government while furthering the global food regime and industrialization of the food system. This furthering of the industrial food system is evidenced by the U.S. Farm Bill, which subsidizes commodity food programs like FDPIR, making them inexpensive and accessible (Fisher 2018). This facilitates a structural dependency on industrial food systems over traditional food systems for Indigenous populations, making colonialism *and* market forces partnering culprits in the matter.

The FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Project is a new “\$3.5-million effort focused on seven food distribution pilot projects in eight tribal nations,” including the Lummi Nation of Washington State, Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma, Mississippi Band of Choctaw, Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, and Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin, under FDPIR and launched in November of 2021 (Goodluck 2022: 2). Contrary to typical FDPIR food packages filled with “commodity foods,” this pilot program gives some agency and power back to these tribes to buy

food directly from commercial producers and vendors, oftentimes from inside their own communities or neighboring tribes (Goodluck 2022). FDPIR was created to acknowledge that tribal food needs were different from that of other food needs in the United States, and this is one of the first showings that the program actually believes that, as previously they distributed food packages completely inconsistent with both the specific cultural and nutritional needs of tribal communities.

Additionally, this is one of FDPIR's first showings of truly embodied tribal sovereignty. For example, the program has always insisted that food packages can only be changed with tribal approval, however this did not always happen. For example, butter was replaced with a 'butter substitute' in 2010 with no tribal consultation, representative of an inauthentic and disembodied tribal sovereignty (Fisher 2018). The goal of the FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Project is to "permanently allow food procurement policies for small-batch Native producers...and expand the list of tribal-specific Indigenous foods in the FDPIR program" (Goodluck 2022: 3). This would also require FDPIR and the USDA to not homogenize indigeneity and recognize that each tribe has different cultural and nutritional needs, something unfamiliar to them as evidenced by the commodity foods packages distributed across the country.

One of the reasons the FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Project is crucial is that FDPIR was created in 1977, and its last program evaluation was conducted in the late 1980s (Goodluck 2022). This is extremely problematic as generations of health issues and cultural genocide have gone unchecked amidst the food apartheid of FDPIR's commodity food packages. One major flaw in this program, as noted by multiple tribes involved in the pilot, is that:

...the contracts only allow for replacing pre-listed USDA foods with those same foods, but locally grown. True 'self-governance'...would allow for authority and flexibility to revise the foods on the list, which could include more traditional foods like maple syrup

and allow tribes to adapt to unpredictable food production challenges, like shorter growing seasons and changing environmental conditions. (Goodluck 2022: 10)

This kind of self-governance would be consistent with the definition of food sovereignty. While the program certainly gives selected tribes more agency and purchasing power, it neglects to give full sovereignty and decision-making power to tribes regarding both *what* they are eating and *where* it comes from.

Most importantly, though, tribes across the country hope for this program to become a permanent part of the USDA and FDPIR, which is a huge first step in achieving Indigenous food sovereignties (Goodluck 2022). This program gives insights into the overlaps of governmental and tribal participation, showing what can happen when tribal voices, actors, and interests are protected by governing entities. Perhaps both are necessary in order to secure protections for these rights and programs, however it seems necessary that the agency and power is in the hands of the people themselves, operating at a smaller and more local scale but being funded and ensured by larger scale entities.

Indigenous Resurgence: Four Tribal Food Sovereignty Movements

Several tribal food sovereignty movements are working to regain traditional food practices and food as medicine, reciprocal relationships with the Land, sustainable farming, and internal economic development to sustain these food sovereignty initiatives. By analyzing all of these movements and their individual goals and action plans together, one can better understand the major needs and interests of tribes in their efforts toward sustainable food sovereignties. Additionally, while Indigenous nations vary in their approach and specific needs, each plan can serve as policy and resolution development models for others while decreasing the need for non-Indigenous resources.

The Gitigaanike Foods Initiative (GFI), is part of an entrepreneurial program set up in 2012 in the Red Lake Nation (Donahue 2020). Called the 4-Directions Development (4DD) nonprofit, its Indigenous leader Sharon James says they are all about “supporting a wide variety of entrepreneurs - new farmers, artists, retailers and more...Our work is about helping develop the Tribe’s local economy, and to keep dollars and resources circulating here” (Donahue 2020: 1). 4DD includes the GFI, which works to train emerging Native farmers and incubate food business. The larger goals of the GFI include “decreasing diet-related health issues, increasing access to local healthy foods, and developing a local foods economy in Red Lake” (Donahue 2020: 2).

This particular project underlines the importance of Indigenous food sovereignty projects having the right people, partners, and funding to work toward the long-term sustainability and longevity of projects. For example, researchers from University of Minnesota Crookston and the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI) have worked with Red Lake Nation to help determine the effectiveness of organic fertilizer from the byproducts of Red Lake Nation Fishery (Donahue 2020). While originally used to improve soil in their own gardens utilizing traditional ecological knowledge, Red Lake Nation is now developing a fertilizer recipe that could generate internal revenue to keep the food initiative going and sustained over time. Additionally, this source highlights the importance of local partnerships for improved Indigenous allyship. Sharon James emphasizes that:

Years ago, agencies and institutions like the University of Minnesota didn’t have the understanding that each tribal community is different and that there are different ways of working with our communities...I see that changing and moving along well, where partners interact and work with us and our unique traditions. There is always more to learn of course, but there is a greater willingness to work with our approach and our boundaries and beliefs as a tribal community. (Donahue 2020: 4)

Overall, it seems that increasing these partnerships has resulted in noticeable differences in community engagement: nonindigenous participants further understand that each tribal community is different and have a greater willingness to work within and put effort toward understanding Indigenous approaches and knowledge systems (Donahue 2020).

The Oneida Nation Food Sovereignty Strategic Plan, presents a direct action plan for achieving food sovereignty via a “strong self-sufficient interconnected food system capable of nourishing our community and enhancing the overall health of our Oneida people” within the Oneida Nation (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin 2023: 2). While Indigenous nations vary in their approaches and specific needs, the Oneida Nation says that “Our aspiration is to provide a model that may also be used by other tribal nations in their own food sovereignty and wellness journeys, recognizing that while we are all connected by our indigenous strengths, we also have unique needs that must be addressed by our own specific approaches” (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin 2023: 2). Not only does this plan provide a model for policies and resolution, but it seeks to decrease the need for external, State, or settler resources (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin 2023).

This specific plan is broken down into main goals, objectives, and specifics regarding how to achieve them. The first goal, or “a food system that is adaptable, resilient, and responsive to our community needs,” recognizes that tribal peoples suffer disproportionately more from health conditions, epidemics, pandemics, and climate change and outlines that a sustainable food system must withstand the impacts of these challenges (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin 2023: 4). Strategies include evaluating ecological systems and processes, creating a three-year plan responsive to environmental changes, and strengthening self-governance through the decreasing of external funding and resources (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin 2023). The second goal works to

“recognize our food systems as being an integral part of a comprehensive approach to enhancing the overall wellness of our community” (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin 2023: 5). Strategies include collaborating with other Nation areas and collaborating with cultural leaders for education opportunities and programs (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin 2023). The third goal focuses on “strengthen[ing] and expand[ing] the community’s food system networks, increasing production and processing capacity and making it more efficient” (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin 2023: 6). Strategies include utilizing technology, integrating a “grass rooted community network of individual harvesters, growers, producers, processors, and entrepreneurs,” and assessing the Nation’s facilities for necessary changes/upgrades/modifications (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin 2023: 6). The fourth goal focuses on “serv[ing] as a model for other tribal nations in their food sovereignty efforts” (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin 2023: 7). Strategies include making tribal contributions to academic research and assessing the need for policy or law implementation necessary for advancing previous goals (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin 2023).

The Wozupi (Shakopee) Gardens is a unique Indigenous food sovereignty project because it does not rely on external funding due to the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC) status as the wealthiest tribe in America, stemming from the Little Six Bingo Palace, the Mystic Lake Casino, convenience stores, an RV park, and a hotel (Hoover 2015). After becoming more aware of food-related access and health issues, Lori Watso (a tribal healthcare provider for the SMSC) became determined to improve Indigenous health statistics through food as medicine after moving to San Francisco and returning to the reservation. Now, Wozupi (the program name) encompasses a number of programs:

...the gardens to produce food for sale in the community via 3 farmers markets and the Tribally Supported Agriculture program (TSA, instead of CSA); the heritage seed garden; youth programming (including a youth garden and cooking classes); chickens; a maple sugar bush and sugar shack; apiaries and a honey house; the orchard; and a series of

classes to better educate the community about raising and preparing food. (Hoover 2015: 5)

The youth class chef, Jason Champagne, is from the Red Lake Chippewa, highlighting the importance of tribal and community connections. Additionally, Wozupi works to funnel money and resources back into its community, as well as other surrounding Indigenous communities, increasing tribal agency and power (Hoover 2015). Hoover (2015: 23) expands upon this wealth distribution by writing that “from 1996-2012 they donated \$258.2 million and gave \$509.2 million in loans” to “less fortunate tribes and community organizations” while also “creat[ing] a \$5 million endowment at University of MN for scholarships for Native students.” While SMSC is in a unique position as a wealthy tribe, it also serves as a model for Indigenous food sovereignty and makes efforts to distribute this wealth equitably among tribal members as well as other tribes around the area and country (Hoover 2015).

Diné Introspective Incorporated, “a Shiprock-based, nonprofit, Native-led organization with a mission to strengthen communities” is working to grow a sustainable food system that incorporates Diné values and beliefs through engaging the youth, purchasing Indigenous produce, assisting farmers, providing food demonstrations and workshops for culturally-appropriate recipes, and reactivating/reclaiming farmland with young farmers to create a more innovative Native agricultural sector (Aguilar 2023: 2). In the Diné communities of the Navajo Nation, where food insecurity rates are at 76.7 percent, Diné Introspective Incorporated is working to foster relationships between Diné elders and youth to promote community and traditional knowledge exchange (Aguilar 2023). The entire program is reciprocal and in-line with Diné values as “The members of Diné Introspective live in the community they serve, which ensures that its designs and measures are culturally appropriate and responsive. The same members are the beneficiaries of the program services and have the most to gain from cultural

and Traditional Knowledge that will inform the improvement of services needed” (Aguilar 2023: 7). Moving forward, Diné Introspective plans to continue reactivating hundreds of acres of farmland at a time, restoring re-generational wealth and increasing Indigenous control over their food systems and natural resources. All of these tribal efforts in which I have discussed seem to be much more immediately effective and culturally appropriate than the top-down approaches I will discuss later, such as the IAC, however there may be a need for both in order to have ensured government protection for these tribal movements, as discussed previously in the context of the FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Project. Alternatively, this need for government funding could be seen as undermining true tribal sovereignty or counterintuitive to promoting sovereignty from the settler colonial State.

In looking at all of these initiatives together, they all bring a different focus to the table. The Gitigaanike Foods Initiative emphasizes the importance of local partnerships for facilitating broader understandings of tribal needs and Indigenous knowledges and allyship (Donahue 2020). The Oneida Nation Food Sovereignty Strategic Plan serves as a model for policies and resolution as it is broken down into main goals, objectives, and specifics for how to achieve them (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin 2023). The Wozupi (Shakopee) Gardens focuses on wealth redistribution by not only funneling wealth back into its own community, but surrounding tribes as well (Hoover 2015). Finally, Diné Introspective Incorporated focuses on traditional ecological knowledge exchange and cultural continuance by engaging the youth in culturally-appropriate recipes and reactivating/reclaiming farmland with young farmers (Aguilar 2023: 2). Additionally, all of these initiatives utilize food as medicine principles, allowing for the reclamation and reinstallment of relationships with Land. This is not only important to Indigenous knowledge systems themselves as relationships are seen as a unifying force, but it becomes a clear goal of tribal food

sovereignty movements. By analyzing these different tribal movements together, the major needs and interests of tribal food sovereignty movements become clear in order to achieve sustainable success: partnerships and allyship, a strategic plan model, attention to wealth redistribution, and an overall focus on cultural continuance via traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) exchange. All of these work together to facilitate Land relationships within broader political and economic structures that promote conceptions of land and its domination.

The Question of Land in National, Transnational, and International Food Sovereignty

Organizations

In contrast to these tribal efforts, the Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC) was created in response to the 1980's farming crisis which disproportionately affected Native American tribes (Intertribal Agriculture Council 2023). The IAC includes "legal and policy development, USDA technical assistance, natural resources management, domestic and international marketing support, and Native youth in food and agriculture leadership development" and seeks to "address systemic inequities to better serve Native producers and Indian Country as a whole" (Intertribal Agriculture Council 2023: 1). The American Indian Foods (AIF) program began in 1998 as a partnership between the IAC and the USDA Foreign Agriculture service with a goal to create a global platform for American Indian Food businesses (Intertribal Agriculture Council 2023). This includes the American Indian Trademark program, which labels products from federally-recognized tribes and increases Indigenous economy, and the Native Food Connection, which supports more effective marketing of products and increases market access for Indigenous communities (Intertribal Agriculture Council 2023). While this greatly increases the ability to grow Indigenous economy, I wonder if this top-down approach is less effective and more

culturally harmful toward Indigenous people as it works within a traditional capitalist framework that operates under colonial understandings of land and has historically oppressed tribal nations. Alternatively, it could be seen as a reclamation of power and agency within a system that has been historically oppressive.

Looking more transnationally, the Declaration of Nyéléni (2007: 1) is a pillar of the food sovereignty movement. Originally forming in 2007 in Nyéléni Village, Sélingué, Mali, it serves to fight against the systems and nature of the global “food regime” that oppress and silence “organizations of peasants/family farmers, artisanal fisher-folk, indigenous peoples, landless peoples, rural workers, migrants, pastoralists, forest communities, women, youth, consumers, [and] environmental and urban movements.” It aims to put producers and farmers directly at the center of food policies and systems rather than what they so often are - recipients of consequences, violence, and harm facilitated by the nature of international and corporate food markets and systems. The World Forum on Food Sovereignty was the catalyst for this Declaration, which brought together the following groups: La Via Campesina, the World March of Women, Friends of the Earth International, the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty, fisherfolk, pastoralists, and Indigenous peoples from around the globe (Medina 2017). Along with reaffirming food sovereignty as an international goal, the declaration also adopted the following rights: food, use and management of land and territory, water and seeds, livestock and biodiversity.

The Declaration of Nyéléni, clear in both its intentions and alliances, declares the right to use and management of land and territory as one of its main pillars. However, this may reinforce conceptions of land as solely its physical properties and domination/sovereignty over it. One thing that may be useful to this claim is a more clearly defined justification for why these lands

and territories are important for particular peoples outside of dominant Euro-Western ideals, which are historically shaped by Locke's notions of land as property and its value dictated by how labor transforms it (Locke 1689). While it does claim to fight for the protection of peoples to make decisions about their "spiritual heritage," there is no explicit language connecting this with Land or nature specifically (Declaration of Nyéléni 2007: 2). As discussed in the previous chapter, it seems that one of the unifying themes surrounding different Indigenous knowledge and thought systems is that of relationships with people, place, and nature. This emphasizes the animacy of Land and its intrinsic value outside of cultivation or associated human gain. Perhaps this could be useful in the context of communicating this right on a broader international scale, while being cautious of how these Land understandings may differ across peoples and communities.

An example of these written and protected Land rights and understandings is in The Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador. Published in 2008, it is a national constitution that includes the rights of Nature herself. Title III (Constitutional Guarantees), Chapter Seven (Rights of nature), Article 71, states that "Nature, or Pacha Mama, where life is reproduced and occurs, has the right to integral respect for its existence and for the maintenance and regeneration of its life cycles, structure, functions and evolutionary processes" (Republic of Ecuador 2008: 19). While Ecuadorian conceptions of Nature and Native American conceptions of Land are not homogenous, there are similarities in the *agency* of both, where dominant Eurocentric conceptions treat such concepts in an objective way (people have agency, and things can only be done *to* nature or land *by* people). This is an interesting document to analyze because it exemplifies not only the acknowledgement of this agency of and relationship to Nature, but also a protection of those things embedded into the very constitution. Perhaps the recognition and

protection of Land agency, in the United States, by the United States, based on Indigenous conceptions of Land, could be meaningful and create tangible impacts. However, there remains the concern of State involvement as a source of further tensions, as evidenced in later conversations surrounding the inclusion of the State in documents such as UNDRIP and The Declaration of Nyéléni.

UNDRIP, ADRIP, and Indigenous Internationalism: The Changing Regimes of International Human Rights and Treaty Rights

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, or UNDRIP, underlines a list of proclaimed rights for Indigenous peoples and State protocols for prevention or reparations. In *Guaranteeing Indigenous People's Rights in Latin America*, Popolo et al. writes that:

The steadfast resistance of indigenous peoples is currently focused on establishing new political and territorial status quo and on building new kinds of institutional relationships between States and indigenous peoples. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples emerged from the latter's long struggle and sets out the international standard that is binding on States and provides an explicit public policy framework. And while this report notes indisputable progress in the implementation of these rights, it also notes that gaps remain and inequalities still run deep. (Popolo et al. 2014: 5)

In other words, while declarations such as UNDRIP are certainly limited in their efficacy and implementation, they represent significant efforts of global Indigenous mobilization and serve to further the evolution of human rights laws and rights for Indigenous peoples internationally. With this in mind, there are two key issues seen regarding this document as well as the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: a) the settler colonial State often fails to recognize or uphold these rights for Indigenous populations and instead reinforces its own sovereign systems that historically oppress and dispossess Indigenous peoples further; and b) this

lack of recognition by settler colonial States reinforces land conceptions rather than Land conceptions.

Additionally, there are clear tensions as UNDRIP continues to be framed as a State-centric approach with the State being expected to uphold and recognize these rights, inconsistent with its historical tendencies to undermine treaties and other agreements with Indigenous peoples. Indigenous groups recount these tensions, with the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Regional Chief Terry Teegee commenting on Canada's Action Plan for implementing UNDRIP and saying that:

We are aware of the lack of progress made by this government on other important issues... We will hold the government accountable to ensure the work on this plan does not take a similar pace. It is essential that we establish clear accountability mechanisms and take tangible steps to ensure the implementation of this plan into meaningful change for First Nations. (Assembly of First Nations 2023: 1)

While Teegee makes clear acknowledgement for the years of Indigenous negotiation and activism that have taken place to ensure the drafting of UNDRIP, he says that “this is only the beginning,” warning of a critical task - for States to facilitate concrete implementation rather than a continuation of historical failure to recognize rights and uphold treaties (Assembly of First Nations 2023: 1). It is important to reiterate, too, when discussing this document, that the U.S. and Canada's failure to recognize and uphold rights and treaties is not a recent issue - it has been a function of settler colonialism for centuries. One example of this is the Homestead Act of 1862, in which Indigenous peoples were told they had the right to homestead in the United States, but only if they abandoned their cultures (Nichols 2020). While Indigenous peoples had the right to homestead, this right would not be recognized in its fullest and most robust form without submitting to settler colonial rule, which ultimately produces and reinforces conceptions of land.

Something else to consider when discussing UNDRIP is the complex layers of

transnational organization that foster different kinds of support, mobilization, awareness, action, and also facilitate different kinds of Indigenous power: power in numbers, power in coming together, power in experiencing similar forms of colonial oppression and dependence, and more. Brysk (2000: 69) explains this in the context of South America by noting that “the transnational indigenous rights *movement*...mobilize[s] primarily to improve the position, autonomy, and participation of Indians in their societies in the international system. Although the movement is increasingly global, regional clusters of organizations and activists have more dense links, goal coherence, and overlapping campaigns.” Additionally, Brysk (2000: 69) suggests that, in fact, these transnational, international, and national movements *do* have impact at the local level, as “this global movement then returns to the tribal village as one of the new international agents mobilizing local Indian communities.”

Looking into specific UNDRIP articles to analyze State recognition or failure to recognize rights, Article 3 of UNDRIP proclaims that “Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination” and while Indigenous peoples have this right, States often do not recognize or uphold it. If treaties were recognized and upheld, both currently and historically, the right to self-determination would be much more accessible. Specifically in the context of food sovereignty, Indigenous communities may have the right to culturally-appropriate foods, but the imposition of colonial diets onto Indigenous communities with little resource access for traditional foodways is a feature of food apartheid, or a function of power dynamics and systemic oppression through racist and colonial policies that render areas with limited access to healthy, affordable, and nutritious foods (Gilio-Whitaker 2019, Sevilla 2021).

Article 8 says that “Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture,” but the food apartheid experienced by

Indigenous communities at large in North America are evidence of both forced assimilation and destruction of culture (United Nations 2007: 10). The second part of Article 8 says that States shall provide effective mechanisms for prevention of or reparations for forced assimilation or deprived integrity as distinct peoples; however, differing understandings of L/land are not addressed here (How could the State possibly address and reconcile these differences?).

Article 25 states that “Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard” (United Nations 2007: 19). While it seems these differing relations with Land are recognized, they are still excluded from “normal” economic systems and widespread perspectives of L/land, ultimately reinforcing land conceptions as the dominant understanding.

Article 26 states that:

Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use...States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect of the customs, traditions, and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.
(United Nations 2007: 19)

While this might be happening in other areas around the world, the United States has given little right, legal recognition, or protection of these lands for Indigenous peoples. Additionally, little efforts have been made to understand or recognize the land tenure systems of the “indigenous peoples concerned,” which in the United States, would often include understandings and histories of L/land (United Nations 2007: 19).

Finally, Article 23, which states that “Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and

develop their priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health,” does seem to be actually happening in many of the tribal food sovereignty movements that I have previously explored, which is one positive indicator of the recognition of rights addressed in UNDRIP.

There may also be important implications for the lack of language specific to hunting and harvesting within UNDRIP. With statements like that of Article 11, which asserts that “Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs,” harvesting and hunting rights can become included and lumped into the term “customs” (United Nations 2007: 11). However, by not specifically using the terms “harvesting” or “hunting,” there can be a justifiable exclusion of recognition by States. This relates to the earlier discussed case of the Karuk peoples along the Klamath River channel in California. Prior to settler colonial rule, “access to food was ensured by the social import placed on sharing foods...Kinship relationships within families inform social networks of native food procurement, exchange and knowledge transference with clearly defined rights to gathering, hunting, and fishing sites” (Sowerwine et al. 2019: 587). Settler colonialism devastated these traditional kinship systems, removed peoples from the land, and criminalized their traditional foodways. Although UNDRIP is representative of global Indigenous mobilization and significant improvement in the evolution of international human rights laws, its lack of exclusive language could provide a colonial armature of dispossession by justifying the exclusion of hunting and harvesting rights via non-exclusive language or protection of those things. This presents broader concerns about the potential for protected food sovereignty for tribal nations, as harvesting and hunting are so often a part of Indigenous and Native foodways and traditional food systems.

Failure to recognize UNDRIP’s rights as they pertain to hunting and harvesting is also evidenced in the case of an Indigenous person of the Gitxsan Nation of Canada (Legal Aid BC 2023). This particular member of the Gitxsan Nation (along the Skeena River of northwestern British Columbia) was out on his Aunt’s territory hunting traditionally, as it is one way of ensuring that his people survive and maintaining relationships between Land and humans (we take care of it, and it provides for us) (Legal Aid BC 2023). He and three others were checking snares on the trap lines and he had bought his rifle. Not having any luck with the traps, they decided to track a moose. However, a Conservation Officer (CO) found them and said that he was violating the rules, even though he was operating within the rules of his people and territory. Historically, tribal hunting and harvesting laws were very strict and hugely significant (Legal Aid BC 2023). If, for example, someone wounded an animal and it went into another tribe’s territory, they had to go get permission from that territory’s chief to collect that animal, and failure to do so had severe consequences. In this specific case, he had to ask his Aunt (the head chief) if he could hunt, letting her know exactly where he wanted to go. Once she gave the okay, they were good to hunt, and if they brought anything home, the best part of the meat goes back to her. Instead, the CO said that he couldn’t go where his tribe’s laws said that he could go, and although these communities have been engaging in these laws and practices for thousands of years, he had to go to court just to defend these rights (Legal Aid BC 2023).

This is inconsistent with UNDRIP, specifically Articles 11, 24, and 27, which state that “Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalise their cultural traditions and customs,” “conserv[e] their vital medicinal plants, animals, and minerals,” and that States shall “giv[e] due recognition to Indigenous peoples’ laws, traditions, customs, and land tenure systems, to recognize and adjudicate the rights of Indigenous peoples pertaining to their lands,

territories, and resources,” respectively (United Nations 2007: 11, 18, 20). Although this is a single person’s story, it is indicative of broader concerns about State recognition of hunting rights, harvesting rights, and other traditional foodways. The Gitksan Nation is arguing that treaty rights *are* harvesting rights, and that there is, in fact, continuity between political sovereignty, First Nation (Canada) or tribal (U.S.) sovereignty, food sovereignty, and Land. This is a critical piece that is missing from the implementation and recognition of declarations of rights such as UNDRIP and ADRIP. While UNDRIP’s intentions are very focused and specific on paper, it is clear that they are not wholly recognized and implemented in practice, specifically in Canada and the United States. This is likely partly due to Canada and the United States’ original opposition to its adoption (along with Australia and New Zealand), all of which later reversed their positions (United Nations 2007, United States Agency for International Development 2023).

When UNDRIP was originally adopted by the General Assembly in 2007, there were 144 states in favor, 11 absentions, and 4 opposing states, including the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (United Nations 2007, United States Agency for International Development 2023). Although these states retroactively changed their votes after UNDRIP’s adoption (years later) due to increased international pressure, it is obvious that these initial votes hold significance in the context of these 4 entities’ belief in the declaration’s validity and necessity. This is especially clear now, in the United States, as USAID stated in early 2023 that while the declaration “carries moral force” and the United States has agreed to support it, “UNDRIP is not legally binding on States and does not impose legal obligations on governments” (United States Agency for International Development 2023: 1). This verbal support is meaningless and has no basis in fact if not backed by the State’s obligation to

recognize and uphold its statements. Additionally, USAID's statement holds significance as it provides a justification or rationale for ignoring when the declaration's rights are clearly violated and remaining within a social and political structure that continues to systematically undermine these rights and perpetuate offenses.

Looking further into the United States' original opposition to the signing of UNDRIP, it is clear that colonialism is embedded into the history and very structure of the United States, as well as the other non signatories. Because of this, these entities argued that "the level of autonomy recognized for Indigenous peoples in the UNDRIP was problematic and would undermine the sovereignty of their own states, particularly in the context of land disputes and natural resources extraction" (Hanson 2011: 2). Given that the autonomy and sovereignty of Indigenous peoples was undermined first via colonialism, UNDRIP seems to behave more like a compromise or reclamation of power. Statements such as these make it very clear that while these entities may formally "acknowledge" the sovereignty, autonomy, or rights of Indigenous peoples, they do not believe in their full recognition or implementation, likely because they deem it would inconvenience them and the pleasures *they* enjoy via colonialism. This is like efforts to do land acknowledgement statements, which acknowledge that land is stolen but contrast greatly from the tangible implementation and action of the broader Land Back movement.

These four nations also criticized other States for their lack of upholding the minimum standards of UNDRIP despite their signatures, however the lack of signature whatsoever speaks volumes. Sherly Lightfood, an Ojibwe political scientist, observes this phenomenon further, observing that "such compliance is often concentrated in 'soft rights,' such as rights to language and culture, while systematically denying 'hard rights,' such as rights to land" (Hanson 2011: 2). These four nations also attempted to claim that signing UNDRIP could "override existing human

rights obligations, even though the document itself explicitly gives precedence to international human rights” in Article 46 (Hanson 2011: 2, United Nations 2007). Such attempts at escaping accountability are irrational, and illuminate the desperation of such States to resist decolonial methods and practices at the expense of Indigenous peoples. Even after the reversal of opposition toward UNDRIP (due to international pressure), there is little commitment to the cause overall. Sheryl Lightfood comments on this phenomenon, too, pointing out “the frequency of terms like ‘aspirational’ and ‘non-binding’ in these governments’ official announcements, and cautions that by using these terms the governments in question seek to exempt themselves from any legal responsibility to the UNDRIP” (Hanson 2011: 2).

The American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (ADRIP) was published in 2016, nine years after the creation of UNDRIP. This document was created to address regionally specific United States issues that may not have been covered in UNDRIP. Within this document, several of the articles, statements, and proclamations come directly from that of UNDRIP. However, there are also statements unique to this document. Article X (Rejection of assimilation), states that “1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, express, and freely develop their identity in all respects, free from any external attempt at assimilation; 2. The States shall not carry out, adopt, support, or favor any policy to assimilate the indigenous peoples or to destroy their cultures” (Organization of American States 2016: 5-6). Similar to my analysis of UNDRIP, Indigenous food apartheid via food distribution programs such as FDPIR have contributed both to assimilation and destruction of culture in the form of non-culturally appropriate foods and lack of access to culturally appropriate foods. However, it does seem that recent additions to FDPIR, such as the FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Project, are utilizing State power to counteract such narratives. Alternatively, the imposition of State power

within these programs still may be counterintuitive of proclamations of Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty.

Article XIII (Right to cultural identity and integrity) describes rights to the protection of “collective continuity,” recognizing the importance of cultural survivance as discussed by Gilio-Whitaker (2019) (Organization of American States 2016: 6). This article also states that “Indigenous people have the right to the recognition and respect for all their ways of life, world views, spirituality, uses and customs, [and] norms and traditions,” which, if genuinely intended, would encompass recognition and respect for Land understandings (Organization of American States: 6). However, in a similar way that UNDRIP’s exclusion of language specific to harvesting and hunting could provide justification for lack of State recognition, so too could ADRIP’s exclusion of language specific to Land relationships provide justification for lack of State recognition. Additionally, while ADRIP acknowledges this right, the United States has not created the structures or institutions in which it can be freely practiced, and therefore does not recognize or uphold it.

Article XVIII (Health) proclaims that “Indigenous peoples have the collective and individual right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical, mental, and spiritual health” (Organization of American States 2016: 8). This is a crucial right, however the United States makes no efforts to recognize this right by taking accountability for the impacts that historical traumas and policies (done *by* the State) have made on Indigenous populations (including the physical, mental, and spiritual symptoms of depression, anxiety, isolation, loss of sleep, anger, discomfort around white people, shame, fear and distrust, loss of concentration, substance abuse, violence, suicide, heart disease, obesity, or diabetes), nor do they make any promises to right these wrongs (BadSoldier Snow 2021).

Article XXV (Traditional forms of property and cultural survival. Right to land, territory, and resources) states that “2. Indigenous peoples have the right to lands, territories, and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired,” but the State has not recognized this right by setting up systems to ensure people access to traditionally or historically owned territories (Organization of American States 2016: 11)? How do Indigenous peoples acquire those not currently in their possession? Article XXV later notes that “4. States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned,” which would require broader understandings and acceptance of Land understandings, including differing approaches to property and ownership (Organization of American States 2016: 11). Article XXV goes on to state that this must be done “in accordance with the legal system of each State and the relevant international instruments,” which highlights the tensions in State recognition of this right, as Indigenous land tenure systems and United States land tenure systems are not always synonymous (Organization of American States 2016: 11). This becomes further complicated with regard to unrecognized treaties, in which the State may have originally recognized Indigenous land tenure but has since disregarded and violated that tenure for its own gain or benefit.

Finally, similar to UNDRIP, Article XXIX of ADRIP (Right to development) states that “Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and determine their own priorities with respect to their political, economic, social, and cultural development in conformity with their own world view. They also have the right to be guaranteed the enjoyment of their own means of subsistence and development, and to engage freely in all their economic activities,” which does seem to be

happening via tribal food sovereignty and other movements (Organization of American States 2016: 13).

Although it is clear that States such as the U.S. and Canada do not uphold or protect these rights in their fullest forms, declarations like UNDRIP and ADRIP do serve to further the evolution of international human rights laws and are representative of years of global Indigenous negotiation and activism. Even though they are certainly not perfect or enough, the concepts and rights enshrined within them are still effective in the sense that they are a response to the current doings of settler colonial States. While they do not encompass or address concepts such as Land as the Constitution of Ecuador might, evolutions of international human rights declarations such as UNDRIP and ADRIP create more and more openings to talk about and implement these concepts within political contexts.

Conclusion

When thinking about the implications of the multiscale forms of Indigenous food sovereignties, it is about more than just obtaining territory or maintaining a treaty. As seen in the case of the Gitksan Nation with the assertion that treaty rights *are* harvesting rights, there is continuity between political sovereignty, First Nation (Canada) or tribal (U.S.) sovereignty, food sovereignty, and Land. They are not mutually exclusive within Indigenous thought systems. Relationship with Land is imperative and inseparable from Indigenous food sovereignty. John Borrows (2010) expands upon this in the context of natural law, which is a form of Indigenous law that draws upon interactions and relationships between humans and animals, animals and animals, and the behaviors and interactions of natural structures such as watersheds, rivers, or

mountains to inform legal actions. Here, Borrows reflects on a meeting in which non-natives were concerned that his people would deplete fisheries, writing that:

As the meeting began, Elder Basil Johnston took the floor for most of the morning...After some time, he came to the matter at hand: the right to fish. He spoke about how whitefish had been central to our society for generations. He referred to these fish by their Anishinabek name, *adigmeg*, which translated means ‘caribou of the sea.’ He then told us a story about them. He said the fish would roam where they wanted, and would fail to live in the adjoining waters if they were offended by our overuse or if we desecrated their underwater homes. (Borrows 2010: 40-1)

It is clear in this example that not only do conversations surrounding sovereignty hold both political and food sovereignty implications, but are reflective of broader Land understandings. Not only is the Land an animate agent, but the food itself is animate and has rights. In this particular example, *adigmeg* intentionally roamed where they wanted, and would make themselves unavailable to the people if they felt offended by overuse or if their environments were degraded.

Similarly, Simpson (2011: 111) expands upon this notion in the context of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg territory, in which the Nishnaabeg peoples have relationships with the moose nation, the deer nation, the caribou nation, and the fish nation that are “treaty relationship[s] like any other, and all the parties involved have both rights and responsibilities in terms of maintaining the agreement.” This, too, is reflective of broader Land understandings. Food is, again, an animate agent with rights and relationships with not only people, but with other nonhuman entities. Simpson explains this further, noting that:

The Deer clan, or nation...has power, agency, and influence...There is an assumption on the part of the Nishnaabeg that the deer have language, thought, and spirit—intellect, and that intellect is different from the intellect of the Nishnaabeg because they live in the world in a different manner than the Nishnaabeg, and they therefore generate different meaning. (Simpson 2017: 61)

This is important in the context of understanding sovereignty, because it means that in Indigenous food sovereignty movements, initiatives, organizations, and documents outlining human rights, there is an additional element within Indigenous sovereignties where the Land and nonhuman entities *themselves* have sovereignty, rights, and agency. In order for this to be implemented and meaningful, it must be reflected within these movements, initiatives, organizations, and documents outlining human rights. Simpson drives this point home by stating that:

A fundamental difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous concepts of internationalism is that for Indigenous peoples, internationalism takes place within grounded normativity...It is a series of radiating relationships with plant nations, animal nations, insects, bodies of water, air, soil, and spiritual beings in addition to the Indigenous nations with whom we share parts of our territory. (Simpson 2017: 58)

Here, Simpson is asserting that treaties, both with humans and nonhumans, are based in and informed by Land itself. This means that sovereignty is multifaceted and multiscalar in the context of Indigenous food sovereignties, and there is a distinct continuity between political sovereignty, First Nation (Canada) and tribal (U.S.) sovereignty, food sovereignty, and Land itself that must inform the evolution of food sovereignty organizations and initiatives.

Conclusion

Introduction

The contemporary #landback movement, as discussed in the introduction, is a recent publicization of the longstanding Land Back movement. Greene expands upon this genealogy by writing that in the aftermath of the Standing Rock and Dakota Access Pipeline protests:

a Canadian member of the Kainai tribe of the Blackfeet Confederacy known as Aaron Tailfeathers began attracting attention with a series of 2018 social media posts criticizing the Canadian federal government for claiming a commitment to harmonious Indigenous relations while also working to build oil pipelines across traditional Indigenous territories. The posts quickly evolved into a decentralized campaign that used the #landback hashtag to increase its online visibility. Commentators widely remark these events as the formal beginning of the contemporary Land Back movement. (Greene 2023: 1)

However, Greene (2023: 1) makes an important point that “The contemporary Land Back movement continues centuries of Indigenous efforts to reclaim sovereignty, self-governance, and stewardship of traditional Indigenous lands” amidst colonial stealing of land, mass genocides of Indigenous populations, and land treaties that were “heavily lopsided in favor of the United States and Canadian federal government interests, generally to the detriment of Indigenous peoples.”

Overall, the objective of the Land Back movement is the decolonization of the Land (Bender 2022). This includes not only physical land, but language, ceremony, food, education, housing, healthcare, governance, medicine, and kinship (LandBack 2021). This is reflective, too, of Liboiron’s (2021b: 43) distinction between Land and land, with Land being “about relationships between material aspects some people might think of as landscapes...and histories, spirits, events, kinships, accountabilities, and other people that aren’t human.” This distinction, as well as the longstanding Land Back and contemporary #landback movements, place Land at

the center because, as an animate agent itself, Land informs and governs Indigenous ontologies and livelihoods. The Land Back movement is essential in the context of Land sovereignty, which directly impacts food sovereignties, Native health, and cultural vitality.

Land Back Movement as Informing Land Acknowledgements

Historically, land acknowledgements have been traditionally used for centuries by Native nations and communities in order to recognize the ancestral roots of the Land (National Museum of the American Indian 2024). Appalachian State University (2024b: 2) notes this on its land acknowledgement statement site, created in collaboration with federally recognized tribes and Indigenous community organizations, writing that “Acknowledging the land is...Indigenous/tribal protocol and therefore a respectful routine that helps establish a practice of supporting reconciliation.” In the United States, land acknowledgements became more popular following the No Dakota Access Pipeline (#NODAPL) protests on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation and subsequent resurgence of the contemporary #landback movement, with early champions of them including colleges and universities, nonprofit organizations, and museums (Keefe 2019). As these institutional land acknowledgements came about largely as a response to the contemporary #landback movement, their presence can be attributed to the mobilization and organization of Indigenous activism in the broader Land Back movement itself. A number of debates exist surrounding the efficacy and intentions behind institutional land back acknowledgements. While the character of land acknowledgements were historically grounded in Indigenous conceptions of Land and recognition of ancestral Land roots, their character can be seen as having shifted to that of tokenism and performative action as more institutions such as universities adopt them with little to no follow through (Veltman 2023). However, similarly to

discussions surrounding UNDRIP and ADRIP in Chapter 2, although land acknowledgement statements by institutions may be limited, they are still representative of much broader and significant Indigenous efforts, mobilization, and organization for land recognition.

The High Country and #landback

Appalachian State University's Land Acknowledgement Statement is a document/statement affecting the Indigenous tribes in my area, mainly the Cherokee and Catawba. The statement recognizes that the University itself sits on stolen Land that was previously occupied by Cherokee, Catawba, and other Indigenous peoples. It also acknowledges that members of these tribes and those of all eight of North Carolina's tribal nations - "the Coharie, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, the Haliwa-Saponi, the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, the Meherrin, the Saponi, the Occaneechi Band of Saponi Nation and the Waccamaw Siouan," live in the region and are impacted daily by settler-colonial policies and practices that "attempt to disenfranchise, remove, and eradicate Indigenous peoples and their way of life" (Appalachian State University 2024b: 2).

This land acknowledgement is a culmination of years of local Indigenous efforts, with the working group inviting "state and federally recognized tribes in the area, as well as several Indigenous community organizations, to provide feedback on recommendations for support" (Appalachian State University 2024b: 2). Additionally, "The statement was reviewed by our Indigenous campus community" and "vetted by surrounding Indigenous community leaders" (Appalachian State University 2024b: 2). Allen Bryant, Cherokee Native and director of Indigenous communities at ASU says that while he is proud of App State's plan of action and guidelines and was "pleasantly surprised" at the University's process, "the question Native

people are going to have is ‘OK, what comes next?’” (Patterson and Adams 2023). It becomes clear that while ASU’s land acknowledgement statement is certainly limited, it represents years of Indigenous mobilization and efforts as well as a significant step forward in reconciliation.

Similarly, the raising of the Lumbee tribal flag in the Plemmons Student Union in 2023, following the raising of the Eastern Band of Cherokee flag in 2017, is a meaningful act of recognition by the University, led by Indigenous groups, students, and faculty (Oakes 2023). While limited in its reach of action, Dr. Seth Grooms, Lumbee tribal member and assistant professor of anthropology says that:

When I see this flag, it reminds me of home, of the Carolina Piedmont and the Lumber River, and the feeling I get when I’m around longleaf pines. That feeling of rootedness and knowing who you are and where you come from. This flag symbolizes pride in our heritage. It symbolizes self-determination and perseverance. This flag reminds me of our fight for political sovereignty and our fight for our own schools. (Oakes 2023)

This act is felt as significant to Lumbee members themselves as a huge step toward reconciliation and reclamation of heritage. Grooms also says that “This flag also means that App State sees us... And while we honor our ancestors, and we remember our past, it’s important for people to realize that we’re a modern and dynamic community with our eyes on the future,” illustrating that while an imperfect solution, the raising of the flag (and similarly, land back acknowledgements) are a first step toward taking concrete and tangible action against systemic oppression.

In analyzing the efficacy of ASU’s land acknowledgement statement in the context of the Land Back movement, I first looked to examples of other U.S colleges and universities, learning that in 2023, “Michigan’s Oakland University [was] the only campus in the country to actually return land to the Native community,” supporting Anishinaabe food sovereignty in the process (Goral 2023: 2). This initiative was led by OU assistant professor Megan Peiser, who is affiliated

with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and discusses the U.S. treaties with the Anishinaabe that were not upheld. As a result, “the loss of their land, along with 1950s and 60s Native relocation programs, have contributed to high rates of diabetes, malnourishment...and more,” with the health issues stemming from “relocation programs that moved Native Americans to land with infertile soil, and to cities where they could grow their own food, leaving them to buy less nutritious options” (Goral 2023: 4)⁴. This is not unique to the Anishinaabe tribe, as the chronic health issues from relocation and land dispossession and consequential loss of Native food sovereignties are felt throughout tribes and First Nations in the United States and Canada. Oakland University declared the returned land a heritage site, with Goral (2023: 3) writing that “if the land is still listed as belonging to OU, the university could repeat history by redeveloping the land in the future - so, the land was instead declared a heritage site. Peiser says this means OU can never make decisions about the land again, and OU has ‘given that power over to the Indigenous community.’”

While this Oakland University example is helpful in the context of understanding Anishinaabe interests, I was unable to produce empirical evidence based on Boone and Watauga County Indigenous voices to inform a conclusion on the efficacy of ASU’s land acknowledgement statement in the context of the Land Back movement. However, several discussions in circulation became apparent. For example, in the context of the movement, who should the land be returned to? How does one address this question in a town like Boone, where so far there is no record of permanent settlement by any one Indigenous society, and instead the area has a history of Cherokee, Catawba, and other Indigenous groups in the area? I gesture to these questions as I hope for myself or another researcher to return to these and engage with

⁴ Discussions surrounding how colonialism and relocation of Native populations in the United States facilitated a variety of adverse health issues are discussed further in Chapter 2.

Indigenous research, students, professors, and community members in searching for answers. Instead, I was able to focus my research applications on the empirical evidence surrounding Appalachian State University's constant expansion as reinforcing of land conceptions and counter to Land relationships that inform Indigenous ontologies.

Expansion as Counter to Land and Reinforcing land

While working to connect all of my research and key questions, one thing became empirically clear in the context of Appalachian State University - the University shows evidence of constant expansion and consequent ecological degradation, which has furthered State reduction of Land to land and contributes to the lessening of Indigenous knowledges and food sovereignties, both grounded in relationships to Land, to be practiced. University expansion is leading to a number of ecological disturbances, including deforestation (Global Forest Watch 2022), less permeable surfaces (N.C. Department of Environmental Quality 2018), and increased pollution (MountainTrue 2021). For example, the Global Forest Watch (2020) reports that "From 2001 to 2022, Watauga lost 1.86 kha of tree cover," and from 2013 to 2022, "100% of tree cover loss in Watauga occurred within natural forest." Additionally, "As of 2000, 75% of Watauga land cover was >30% tree cover," but "In 2020, Watauga had 0.00 ha of land above 10% tree cover, extending over 0% of its land area" (Global Forest Watch 2022). The N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (2018: 3) expands upon this natural alteration, noting that "as land is cleared, rain and melting snow (stormwater) pick up eroded sediments, pesticides, fertilizers, and road salt and carry them to streams and rivers," with less permeable construction surfaces found on Appalachian State University's campus further exacerbating this issue. While there were discussions in 2019 surrounding daylighting Boone Creek on ASU's campus, which would

improve stormwater management in the middle of campus, this project is still awaiting future funding decisions (Appalachian State University 2024a). Further, expansion of student housing has contributed to mass amounts of pollution, with the Cottages of Boone “discharg[ing] tens of thousands of gallons of sewage and untreated wastewater into Laurel Creek, which flows into the Watauga River” (MountainTrue 2021: 1).

This kind of expansion by the University is not only a function of previous years, but a plan for the future. Appalachian State University has put out a Master Plan 2025, in which more than 40 specific expansion and development projects are taking place over the next 15 years (Appalachian State University 2017a). These include renovations of existing buildings, building of more housing, schooling, and parking infrastructure, and acquiring land within Boone for University purposes to account for the exponentially growing number of accepted students every year. The overarching goals of this Master Plan include “creat[ing] a sense of place and a central gateway,” “enhanc[ing] Rivers Street,” “unit[ing] the two halves of campus,” “foster[ing] community and mixed-use partnerships in west campus and the athletics neighborhood,” and “support[ing] innovation and collaboration at the bookends of campus” (Appalachian State University 2017a: 41-2). Additionally, ASU has expanded outside of Boone, NC and has opened a campus in Hickory, NC. They are also seeking to open new campuses in other areas of North Carolina.

The maps and keys from the Master Plan 2025 specify at least 13 new construction projects that Appalachian State University will begin or be completed in the next year alone, including: New Academic buildings or New Alternative Ecological Garden in Sanford Mall/Academic Core (proposed on pages 59-62), New Parking Deck in River Street/River Walk (proposed on page 65), New Parking Deck at Holmes Convocation Center (proposed on page

71), New Surface Parking with Storm Water Management System in the Eco-District and Arts Walk (proposed on page 79), 2 New Faculty Offices and New Academic Research and Events Venue in the King Street Events and Conference Center (proposed on page 81), New Surface Parking with Storm Water Management System and New Wrapped Parking Deck in the Broyhill Innovation District (proposed on page 94), New Mixed-Use Athletics Facility and New Stadium Parking Deck in the Recreational Village (proposed on page 96), and/or the acquired property situated “between Coffey and College Streets to the west and east and King and West Howard Streets to the north and south” (Appalachian State University 2017a: 117). This expansion will contribute to even more ecological impact via increased pollution, erosion, poor stormwater management, and disrupting ecosystems. This, in turn, promotes the domination and exploitation of land as resources, reinforcing broader conceptions of land and subsequent treatment of nature. While the reduction of Land to land was originally a function of the State, the University’s ceaseless growth continues this trend by being counter to the ontologies of peoples who were here before and committing further ecological destruction that weakens or severs relationships with Land.

This is particularly evident when looking at the creation stories and relationships with Land present in both Catawba and Cherokee ontologies, both exemplified in the Introduction of this thesis. Another example of this is in the Cherokee creation story of medicine, in which the humans started hunting animals, and the animals felt revengeful and created diseases that plagued the humans. After this disease creation, Mooney recounts that:

When the Plants, who were friendly to Man, heard what had been done by the animals, they were determined to defeat the latters’ evil design. Each Tree, Shrub, and Herb, down even to the Grasses and Mosses, agreed to furnish a cure for some one of the diseases named and each said ‘I shall appear to help Man when he calls upon me in his need.’ Thus came medicine, and the plants, every one of which has its use if only we knew, furnish the remedy to counteract the evil wrought by the revengefull animals. Even weeds

were made for some good purpose, which we must find for ourselves. When the doctor does not know what medicine to use for a sick man the spirit of the plant tells him. (Mooney 2022: 4)

In Cherokee creation stories such as this one, it becomes clear that Land and food both have animacy and agency within Cherokee ontology. A counter to these Land relationships, Appalachian State University's expansion reinforces conceptions of land through its domination over and consequent objectification of nature as resources, stripping Land of its animacy and agency in the process.

Additionally, its commitment to growth disconnects people from place, which is both counterintuitive to Indigenous ontologies and the University's Master Plan 2025 itself, which includes a goal of “creat[ing] a sense of place and a central gateway” (Appalachian State University 2022: 3). Further, its constant expansion is counterintuitive to its own Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), entitled “Pathways to Resilience,” which focuses primarily on the climate crisis and zeroes in on three major foundational ideas - responses, agency, and collaboration (Appalachian State University 2024c). While relationships with Land would and do facilitate pathways to resilience and better treatment of Land and nature, the University has sustained the reduction of Land to land through its domination and objectification of nature as resources. By reinforcing conceptions of land through its expansion and consequent ecological destruction, the University is not only acting as counter to the ontologies of the peoples who were here before - the Cherokee, Catawba, and other Indigenous groups - but to its own commitments of centering place and creating a campus that is socially and ecologically resilient in the face of climate change. Overall, Appalachian State University has furthered State reduction of Land to land by stripping it of its agency and instead claiming dominion over it, simultaneously disconnecting people from place and limiting the ability of Indigenous

knowledges and food sovereignties, both grounded in ecology and relationship to Land, to be practiced and sustained.

Conclusion

In answering my key research questions - How has the legacy of settler colonialism and its reduction of Land to land impacted the ability to practice Indigenous knowledges? How do different forms of Indigenous food sovereignties align and/or reinforce conceptions of Land vs. land? - a number of key takeaways become apparent and inform my conclusion that the University's constant expansion and consequent ecological impacts have impacted Indigenous ontologies and relationships to Land.

First, there are important distinctions between Land and land conceptions. Land (with a capital L) is informed by Indigenous knowledges, which, while not homogeneous, are often place-based, embodied, holistic, encompass cultural and spiritual knowledge, and have a heavy focus on human to non-human relationships and reciprocity. Land is grounded in relationships, spirituality, interdependence, and carries with it both the ideas of identity and journeying. It lives in relationships with "histories, spirits, events, kinships, accountabilities, and other people that aren't human" (Liboiron 2021b: 43). Land also has a number of spiritual and sacred dimensions, with Land regarded as a teacher, a responsibility, and source of strength within Indigenous epistemology (Kimmerer 2013: 17). Most importantly, Land is *animate* and has *agency*. In contrast, land (with a lowercase l) is representative of the fixed geographical space one might be in, and is informed by Western Epistemology, which is typically disembodied, simplified, and applicable to multiple contexts in the absence of holism. This conception of land centers around the foundational idea that land is property, and it must be transformed by labor in order for it to

hold value. It is not intrinsically valuable, and it has no agency or relationships. This definition of land not only enables objectification, domination, and exploitation of land and treatment of nature as resources, but it utilizes Eurocentrism to exclude Indigenous peoples from ownership.

Second, there are a number of Indigenous organizing ontologies and concepts that contrast with that of Western ontologies and concepts, contributing to the production of Land vs. land. Robin Wall Kimmerer and Vanessa Watts situate these understandings in the context of language through the concepts of the grammar of animacy and place-thought. These Indigenous concepts illustrate the objectification of land vs. relationship with Land by demonstrating both the animacy of Land and the fundamental grammatical differences between English, the dominant global language, and Native languages such as a Potawatomi. The specific example I reference in Chapter 1 is that of *wiikwegamaa*, which in Potawatomi means *to be a bay* and is contrasted by the noun *bay* in the English language. In contrast to English, where the binary categories of *human* or *thing* allow for the objectification and deanimation of land, Native languages “remin[d] us, in every sentence, of our kinship with all of the animate world,” producing and reinforcing conceptions of Land (Kimmerer 2013c: 56). Similarly, Watts (2017: 1) reminds us that place-thought is “based on the premise that land is alive and thinking and that humans and non-humans derive agency through the extensions of these thoughts,” again reinforcing the agency and animacy of Land, in contrast to barriers of separation between humans and non-human entities produced and embedded into the English language itself.

Additionally, Glen Coulthard continues to refine these organizing ontological differences that produce conceptions of L/land by noting that *time/space*, rather than *place*, is the central organizing factor of knowledge and being in Western vs. Indigenous ontologies. In a similar way that nouns vs. verbs facilitate animation or deanimation of L/land, time/space as organizing

factors create disembodiment and deanimation of land, while place organizing factors facilitate relationship with Land. In looking at areas as spaces, one can remove themselves from what is happening *to* a space, furthering its separation from humans and promoting conceptions of land. In contrast, place requires active relationships, in which something is happening *in* a place, and therefore impacts *people*. Thinking about these different organizing ontologies allows one to examine not only the production of L/land conceptions, but also their reinforcement in everyday life and subsequent treatment of nature - either as nurturing or as degrading.

Third, not only is the concept of Land present in and produced by Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies, but knowledge creation, practice, and decolonial movements are grounded in Land itself. Grounded normativity is “the ethical framework provided by...place-based practices and associated forms of knowledge” in the context of the Dene Nation (Coulthard 2014: 53). Grounded normativity informs decolonial movements as being grounded in Land relationships, and it seeks to break down injustice by changing not only the impacts of colonialism, but utilizing Land relations to change the sources of injustice themselves. Grounded normativity exemplifies that not only do the implications of the agency and animacy of Land show up in treatment of nature in an abstract or thought-based way, but in a tangible and political way in the context of decolonial rebellion. Similarly, land as pedagogy “creates communities of individuals with the capacity to uphold and move forward our political traditions and systems of governance” by asserting that “land, aki, is both context and process” in Nishnaabeg thought (Simpson 2014: 7). This, too, is not just abstract but political. It requires a break from dominant Western systems in the form of Indigenous education to combat oppression from the source itself - education systems designed to ultimately uphold settler colonialism.

Fourth, food sovereignty represents the right of a community to define its own diet and therefore shape its own food system, and it requires the mobilization of people to become change agents within their own food systems. Traditional foods are an essential part of Indigenous food sovereignties, which reinforce conceptions of Land by strengthening relationships of reciprocity between people and Land. Food is a defining characteristic of cultures, specifically for Native peoples whose roots have been established in particular places for thousands of years. Native foodways and Indigenous food sovereignties are essential to not only tribal sovereignty, but to Gilio-Whitaker's (2019: 90) concept of cultural survivance, or "a matter of Native ingenuity aided by allies and accomplices working against the genocidal impulse of the State—sometimes within the State governmental structure itself but often outside of it—in support of tribal self-determination." Not only have Indigenous food sovereignties been diminished, but food insecurity rates and health issues among Native American communities are high, with obesity as an epidemic and diabetes as three times the national average. There are a number of reasons for this historically: loss of access to traditional foodways, dependency on government rations and commodity foods, sudden transition from hunter-gatherer lifestyles to sedentary lifestyles, criminalization of hunting/fishing practices, and the threat of not having food causing people to overeat when the reservation concept began.

Fifth, when discussing Indigenous food sovereignties, food insecurity, and associated adverse health impacts, two major terms are useful: *food apartheid* and *nutritional colonialism*. While the term food desert implies that food insecurity is a function of nature, the term food apartheid provides a more transparent depiction of what is happening and has happened: the structures reinforcing colonial and racist narratives and food policies are producing and reinforcing food insecurity and adverse health impacts among Native populations. Similarly,

nutritional colonialism is defined by Lindholm (2019) as “the restriction of subsistence and physical activity, cultural suppression, impairment of food sovereignty and food security, imposed dependence on governmental food sources, and disrupted value systems around foodways that have led to chronic health issues” (McKinley and Jernigan 2023: 47). Settler colonialism has manufactured food insecurity amongst Native populations, representing a larger colonial modality of power of separating and reducing things to their individual parts. By engaging with the terms *food apartheid* and *nutritional colonialism*, a more holistic picture comes into view - one that illuminates the underlying structures and policies at work that enable deeper health and cultural issues beyond that of having enough physical calories.

Sixth, I explore four main tribal food sovereignty movements - the Gitigaanike Foods Initiative, the Oneida Nation Food Sovereignty Strategic Plan, Diné Introspective Incorporated, and Wozupi (Shakopee) Gardens - to better understand the major needs and interests of tribes in their efforts toward sustainable food sovereignties. These movements are working to regain traditional food practices and food as medicine, reciprocal relationships with Land, sustainable farming, and internal economic development to sustain their operations. Analyzing these movements together reveals the major interests of tribal food sovereignty movements for sustainable success: partnerships and allyship, a strategic plan model, attention to wealth redistribution, and an overall focus on cultural continuance via traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) exchange. All of these work together to facilitate Land relationships within broader political and economic structures that promote conceptions of land.

I also discuss the intricacies of federal, international, and transnational food sovereignty movements, organizations, policies, and declarations. Overall, tribal food sovereignty movements seem to be the most impactful and important due to their centering of Land and

addressing of individual tribal needs rather than homogenous general statements or programming. Many of the multiscale organizations I discuss neglect true sovereignty by making decisions on behalf of Indigenous communities rather than giving them agency or purchasing power. Additionally, national and international declarations represent significant global Indigenous mobilization, but are limited in that States often fail to recognize or uphold Indigenous rights and instead reinforce their own sovereign systems that promote conceptions of land. Looking at the multiscale nature of Indigenous food sovereignties also illustrates the multiscale levels of solutions, with revitalizing Land relations as a huge piece. Tribal food sovereignty movements such as these are just one example. Another could include constitutional protection of Land rights, with the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador as an example that includes the rights of Nature herself and reinforces the concept of Land having agency.

Seventh, when thinking about the implications of the multiscale forms of Indigenous sovereignties, one thing becomes clear - it is about more than just obtaining territory or maintaining a treaty. Political sovereignty, First Nation or tribal sovereignty, food sovereignty, and Land relationships are not mutually exclusive within Indigenous through systems. Rather, Land relationships are imperative, inseparable, and intertwined within Indigenous food sovereignties. Not only is the Land an animate agent in Indigenous food sovereignties, but the food itself is animate and has rights. There is an additional element within Indigenous food sovereignty movements, initiatives, organizations, and documents outlining human rights that is important to include and recognize - that the Land and nonhuman entities *themselves* have sovereignty, rights, and agency. Treaties, both with humans and nonhumans, are based in and informed by Land itself. This means that not only is sovereignty multiscale and multifaceted in the context of Indigenous food sovereignties, but that the evolution of food sovereignty

organizations and initiatives must be informed by and grounded in relationships with Land and food as animate agents.

Finally, Ecological degradation via University expansion has furthered State reduction of Land to land, impacting the ability of Indigenous knowledges and food sovereignties, both grounded in relationship to Land, to be practiced. Increased deforestation, less permeable surfaces, and increased pollution are just some of the ecological disturbances that have resulted from constant University expansion. The ceaseless growth exemplified by the University is representative of conceptions of land, which promote domination over land and exploitation/degradation of nature as resources. This is clearly seen in the domination over University property via expansion that has resulted in ecological destruction. In turn, this lessens the ability of Indigenous knowledges and Indigenous food sovereignties, which are grounded in and informed by relationships with Land, to be practiced. While the reduction of Land to land was originally a function of the State, the University's constant growth continues this trend by being counter to the ontologies of peoples who were here before and committing further ecological destruction that weakens or severs relationships with Land. Additionally, its commitment to growth disconnects people from place, which is both counterintuitive to Indigenous ontologies and the University's Master Plan 2025 itself, which includes a goal of "creat[ing] a sense of place and a central gateway" (Appalachian State University 2022: 3) Overall, through its constant expansion and consequential ecological destruction, Appalachian State University furthers the reduction of Land to land by promoting its domination and stripping it of its agency, disconnecting people from place and disrupting the ability of Indigenous knowledges and food sovereignties to be practiced as grounded in ecology and non-human relationships.

Works Cited

- Aguilar, Veronica. 2023. "Reestablishing Diné Food Sovereignty through Farming Traditions." www.culturalsurvival.org. March 15, 2023.
<https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/reestablishing-dine-food-sovereignty-through-farming>.
- Appalachian State University. 2017a. "Master Plan 2025 | Building Physical Infrastructure | Appalachian's Future." Www.appstate.edu. 2017.
<https://www.appstate.edu/appalachians-future/building-physical-infrastructure/master-plan/>.
- Appalachian State University. 2022. "Strategic Plan 2022-2027." Www.appstate.edu. 2022.
<https://www.appstate.edu/about/strategic-plan/>.
- Appalachian State University. 2024a. "Boone Creek Daylighting | Building Physical Infrastructure." Www.appstate.edu. 2024.
<https://www.appstate.edu/appalachians-future/building-physical-infrastructure/boone-creek/>.
- Appalachian State University. 2024b. "Land Acknowledgement." Diversity and Inclusion at App State. 2024. <https://diversity.appstate.edu/resources/land-acknowledgement/>.
- Appalachian State University. 2024c. "What Is 'Pathways to Resilience?'" Quality Enhancement Plan: Pathways to Resilience. 2024. <https://resilience.appstate.edu/about/>.
- Assembly of First Nations. 2023. "Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Acknowledges the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Action Plan and Calls for Concrete Implementations." Assembly of First Nations. June 21, 2023.
<https://afn.ca/all-news/press-releases/assembly-of-first-nations-afn-acknowledges-the-un->

declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples-undrip-action-plan-and-calls-for-concrete-implementation/.

BadSoldier Snow, Stephanie Aditea. 2021. "Iowa Stories: Coming Home: Food Sovereignty and Healing Trauma." [Www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpCiVLvNnVc). November 18, 2021.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpCiVLvNnVc>.

Bender, Albert. 2022. "The LandBack Movement Is Decolonizing Indigenous Land across the Americas." *People's World*. January 21, 2022.

<https://peoplesworld.org/article/the-landback-movement-is-decolonizing-indigenous-land-across-the-americas/>.

Berkes, Fikret, and Mina Kislalioglu Berkes. 2009. "Ecological Complexity, Fuzzy Logic, and Holism in Indigenous Knowledge." *Futures* 41 (1): 6-12. Doi:

10.1016/j.futures.2008.07.003

Borrows, John. 2010. *Canada's Indigenous Constitution*. Toronto: University Of Toronto Press.

Bratspies, Rebecca M. 2007. "The New Discovery Doctrine: Some Thoughts on Property Rights and Traditional Knowledge," *American Indian Law Review*.

Brysk, Alison. 2000. *From Tribal Village to Global Village*. Stanford University Press.

Catawba Indian Nation. 2024. "The Catawba Nation - History." [Www.catawba.com](http://www.catawba.com). 2024.

<https://www.catawba.com/about-the-nation>.

Cherokee Nation. 2019. "Cherokee Nation History." Cherokee Nation History. June 4, 2019.

<https://www.cherokee.org/about-the-nation/history/>.

Cherokee Nation Businesses. 2024. "Pre-Contact Cherokee Lifestyle." [Visitcherokeemuseum.com](http://visitcherokeemuseum.com). 2024.

<https://visitcherokeeanation.com/culture-and-history/pre-contact-chokeee-lifestyle#:~:text=While%20Cherokee%20towns%20were%20independent.>

Coulthard, Glen. 2014. "For the Land: The Dene Nation's Struggle for Self-Determination." In *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. University of Minnesota Press.

Curley, Andrew. 2023. *Carbon Sovereignty*. University of Arizona Press.

Donahue, Marie. 2020. "Entrepreneurship and Partnership Strengthen Food Sovereignty in Red Lake." Extension.umn.edu. November 17, 2020.

<https://extension.umn.edu/rsdp-happenings/entrepreneurship-and-partnership-strengthen-food-sovereignty-red-lake>.

Fisher, Andy. 2018. "Economic Democracy through Federal Food Programs." In *Big Hunger: The Unholy Alliance between Corporate American and Anti-Hunger Groups*. MIT Press.

Gilio-Whitaker, Dina. 2019. *As Long as the Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock*. S.L.: Beacon.

Global Forest Watch. 2022. "Watauga, North Carolina, United States Deforestation Rates & Statistics." www.globalforestwatch.org. 2022.

<https://www.globalforestwatch.org/dashboards/country/USA/34/95/?category=land-cover&location=WyJjb3VudHJ5IiwVNBliwiMzQiLCI5NSJd&map=eyJjYW5Cb3VuZCI6dHJ1ZX0%3D>.

Goodluck, Kalen. 2022. "This Pilot Program Is Supporting Tribal Food Sovereignty with Federal Dollars." Civil Eats. July 5, 2022.

<https://civileats.com/2022/07/05/indigenous-foodways-tribal-food-sovereignty-fdpir-usda-commodity-foods-health-nutrition-access/>.

- Goral, Joseph. 2023. "Oakland University Becomes 1st US Campus to Return Land Use to Native American Community." WDIV. May 25, 2023.
<https://www.clickondetroit.com/news/local/2023/05/25/oakland-university-becomes-first-us-campus-to-return-land-to-native-american-community/>.
- Greer, A. 2012. Commons and Enclosure in the Colonization of North America. *The American Historical Review*, 117(2), 365–386.
- Hamilton, Jennifer A. 2021. "Reindeer and Woolly Mammoths: The Imperial Transit of Frozen Meat from the North American Arctic," from *Meat! a transnational analysis*, edited by Sushmita Chatterjee and Banu Subramaniam. Duke University Press.
- Hanson, Erin. 2011. "UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples."
Indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca. 2011.
https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/un_declaration_on_the_rights_of_indigenous_peoples/#:~:text=Canada%2C%20the%20United%20States%2C%20Australia.
- Hoover, Elizabeth. 2015. "Mdewakanton Wozupi, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, MN." From Garden Warriors to Good Seeds: Indigenizing the Local Food Movement. January 8, 2015.
<https://gardenwarriorsgoodseeds.com/2015/01/07/mdewakanton-wozupi-shakopee-mdewakanton-sioux-community-mn/>.
- Intertribal Agriculture Council. 2023. "Intertribal Agriculture Council Native Indian Ag Food Billings." IAC. 2023. <https://www.indianag.org/>.
- Jessen, T. D., Ban, N. C., Xemtoltw Claxton, N., & Darimont, C. T. 2022. *Contributions of Indigenous Knowledge to ecological and evolutionary understanding*.
<https://doi-org.proxy006.nclive.org/10.1002/fee.2435>

- Keefe, Thomas. 2019. "Land Acknowledgement: A Trend in Higher Education and Nonprofit Organizations." *ResearchGate* 10 (13).
- Kimmerer, Robin Wall. 2013. "The Council of Pecans." In *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teaching of Plants*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Milkweed Editions.
- Kimmerer, Robin Wall. 2013b. "Asters and Goldenrod." In *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teaching of Plants*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Milkweed Editions.
- Kimmerer, Robin Wall. 2013c. "Learning the Grammar of Animacy." In *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teaching of Plants*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Milkweed Editions.
- Krings, Mike. 2023. "Site Documents Return of Land to Indigenous Owners." KU News. November 8, 2023.
<https://news.ku.edu/news/article/2023/11/08/professors-launch-site-documenting-supporting-landback-return-land-indigenous-owners>.
- La Via Campesina. 2013. "Via Campesina English." Via Campesina English. 2013.
<https://viacampesina.org/en/>.
- LandBack. 2021. "LandBack Manifesto." LandBack. 2021. <https://landback.org/manifesto/>.
- Larsen, Soren C and Jay T. Johnson. 2017. "Being Together in Place." In *Being Together in Place: Indigenous Coexistence in a More than Human World*. University of Minnesota Press.

- Larsen, Soren C and Jay T. Johnson. 2017b. "Pathways of Coexistence." In *Being Together in Place: Indigenous Coexistence in a More than Human World*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Legal Aid BC. 2023. "Harvesting Rights | Aboriginal Legal Aid in BC."
Aboriginal.legalaid.bc.ca. 2023.
<https://aboriginal.legalaid.bc.ca/courts-criminal-cases/harvesting-rights>.
- Liboiron, Max. 2021a. "An Anticolonial Pollution Science." In *Pollution Is Colonialism*. Duke University Press.
- Liboiron, Max. 2021b. "Land, Nature, Resource, Property." In *Pollution Is Colonialism*. Duke University Press.
- Locke, J. 1632-1704. 1952. *The second treatise of government*. Bobbs-Merrill.
- Mander, Jerry, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, and International Forum On Globalization. Committee On Indigenous Peoples. 2005. *Paradigm Wars : Indigenous Peoples' Resistance to Economic Globalization : A Special Report of the International Forum on Globalization, Committee on Indigenous Peoples*. San Francisco, Calif.: International Forum On Globalization.
- Manuel, George, and Michael Posluns. 1974. "Does Indians Have Feelings?." In *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality*. University of Minnesota Press.
- McKinley, Catherine E., and Valarie Blue Bird Jernigan. 2023. "I Don't Remember Any of Us ... Having Diabetes or Cancer': How Historical Oppression Undermines Indigenous Foodways, Health, and Wellness." *Food and Foodways* 31 (1): 43-65.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07409710.2023.2172795>.

- Medina, Mabel. 2017. "Nyeleni Commemorates Tenth Anniversary : Via Campesina." La via Campesina - EN. October 12, 2017.
<https://viacampesina.org/en/nyeleni-commemorates-tenth-anniversary/>.
- Mgbeoji, Ikechi. 2006. *Global Biopiracy : Patents, Plants, and Indigenous Knowledge*. Ithaca, Ny Cornell Univ. Press.
- Mooney, James. 2022. "Origin of Disease and Medicine." Cherokee Nation. 2022.
<https://www.northerncherokeestation.com/origin-of-disease-and-medicine.html>.
- MountainTrue. 2021. "Tell DEQ to Clean up the Cottages of Boone." MountainTrue. December 7, 2021.
<https://mountaintrue.org/tell-deq-to-clean-up-the-cottages-of-boone/#:~:text=The%20Cottages%20of%20Boone%20has>.
- Mythology Worldwide. 2024. "The Mythology of the Catawba Nation." MythologyWorldwide. March 4, 2024.
<https://mythologyworldwide.com/the-mythology-of-the-catawba-nation-2/>.
- N.C. Department of Environmental Quality. 2018. "Watauga River Basin." Discover Your Ecological Address. 2018.
<https://files.nc.gov/deqee/documents/files/watauga-river-basin.pdf>.
- Nadasdy, P. 2007. *The gift of the animal: The ontology of hunting and human-animal sociality*. American Ethnologist.
- National Museum of the American Indian. 2024. "Honoring Original Indigenous Inhabitants: Land Acknowledgment." Smithsonian. 2024.
<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/informational/land-acknowledgment>.

- Native History Association. 2023. "Selu - the First Woman." Nativehistoryassociation.org. 2023.
<https://nativehistoryassociation.org/selu.php>.
- Native Languages of the Americas. 2020a. "Catawba Legends (Folklore, Myths, and Traditional Indian Stories)." Wwww.native-Languages.org. 2020.
<https://www.native-languages.org/catawba-legends.htm>.
- Native Languages of the Americas. 2020b. "Cherokee Legends, Myths, and Traditional Indian Stories (Tsalagi)." Wwww.native-Languages.org. 2020.
<https://www.native-languages.org/cherokee-legends.htm>.
- Nichols, Robert. 2020. *Theft Is Property! : Dispossession and Critical Theory*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Nyéleni Village, Sélingué, Mali. 2007. "Declaration of Nyéleni."
<https://nyeleni.org/IMG/pdf/DeclNyeleni-en.pdf>.
- Oakes, Anna. 2023. "Lumbee Tribal Flag Now Hangs in App State's Student Union."
Today.appstate.edu. March 3, 2023. <https://today.appstate.edu/2023/03/03/lumbee>.
- Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. 2023. "Oneida Nation Food Sovereignty Strategic Plan." Oneida Nation. 2023.
<https://oneida-nsn.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Food-Sovereignty-Strategic-Plan-GOALS-anbd-Objectives.pdf>.
- Organization of American States. 2016. "American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples." U.S. Agency for International Development. June 15, 2016.
<https://www.usaid.gov/indigenous-peoples-0>.
- Parins, James W. 2012. "The Shifting Map of Cherokee Land Use Practices in Indian Territory." *ELOHI*, no. 1 (January): 13–19. <https://doi.org/10.4000/elohi.197>.

- Patterson, Siri, and Ella Adams. 2023. ““What Comes Next?”: Stakeholders Consider University Land Acknowledgments.” *The Appalachian*. November 15, 2023.
<https://theappalachianonline.com/what-comes-next-stakeholders-consider-university-land-acknowledgments/>.
- Popolo, Fabiana del, Dirk Jaspers, and CELADE. 2014. *Guaranteeing Indigenous People’s Rights in Latin America*. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Republic of Ecuador. 2008. “Ecuador: 2008 Constitution in English.” [Pdba.georgetown.edu](https://pdba.georgetown.edu). 2008. <https://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Ecuador/english08.html>.
- Scott, James C. 1998. *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Sevilla, Nina. 2021. “Food Apartheid: Racialized Access to Healthy Affordable Food.” [Www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org). April 2, 2021.
<https://www.nrdc.org/bio/nina-sevilla/food-apartheid-racialized-access-healthy-affordable-food>.
- Shattuck, A., Grajales, J., Jacobs, R., Sauer, S., Galvin, S. S., & Hall, R. 2023. Life on the land: new lives for agrarian questions. *Journal of Peasant Studies*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2023.2174859>
- Shiva, Vandana. 1989. “Science, Nature and Gender.” In *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development*. Zed Books.
- Shiva, Vandana. 2001. *Protect or Plunder? : Understanding Intellectual Property Rights*. London: Zed Books.
- Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. 2011. *Dancing on Our Turtle’s Back : Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence*. Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Pub.

- Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. 2014. "Land as Pedagogy: Nishnaabeg Intelligence and Rebellious Transformation." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society; Vol 3 No 3 (2014)* ; 1929-8692, January.
- Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. 2017. In *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Sowerwine, Jennifer, Megan Mucioki, Daniel Sarna-Wojcicki, and Lisa Hillman. 2019. "Reframing Food Security by and for Native American Communities: A Case Study among Tribes in the Klamath River Basin of Oregon and California." *Food Security* 11 (3): 579–607. doi:10.1007/s12571-019-00925-y.
- Styres, Sandra, and Dawn Zinga. 2013. "The Community-First Land-Centred Theoretical Framework: Bringing a 'Good Mind' to Indigenous Education Research?" *Canadian Journal of Education / Revue Canadienne de l'éducation* 36 (2): 284–313.
<https://search-ebshost-com.proxy006.nclive.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsjsr&AN=edsjsr.canajeducrevucan.36.2.284&site=eds-live&scope=site>.
- Sumner, Jim. 2020. "The Cherokees' and Catawbas' Stance in the Revolutionary War." www.ncpedia.org. 2020.
<https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/cherokees-and-catawbas#:~:text=In%20the%201830s%20C%20most%20of>.
- TEDx Talks. 2014. "Food Sovereignty: Valerie Segrest at TEDxRainier." *Youtube*.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGkWI7c74oo>.
- Thornton, Thomas F. 2015. *Being and Place among the Tlingit*. Seattle: University Of Washington Press.

United Nations. 2007. “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

Human Quarterly 33 (3). <https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.2011.0040>.

United States Agency for International Development. 2023. “Indigenous Peoples.” U.S. Agency for International Development. March 17, 2023.

<https://www.usaid.gov/indigenous-peoples-0>.

Veltman, Chloe. 2023. “So You Began Your Event with an Indigenous Land Acknowledgment. Now What?” NPR. March 15, 2023.

<https://www.npr.org/2023/03/15/1160204144/indigenous-land-acknowledgments>.

Watts, Vanessa. 2017. “Indigenous Place-Thought & Agency amongst Humans and Non-Humans (First Woman and Sky Woman Go on a European World Tour!).” *Re-Visiones* 7.

White Earth Band of Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. 2020. “White Earth Food Sovereignty

Initiative Plan.” whiteearth.com. 2020.

<https://whiteearth.com/assets/files/natural%20resources/2020WEFSI-StrategicPlan.pdf>