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Affects of Elimination: Foundations of Collectivity

Oskar Coltrane Dye-Furstenberg
Bard College, od3340@bard.edu

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Affects of Elimination: Foundations of Collectivity

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

by
Oskar Coltrane Dye-Furstenberg

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

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Thank you to my advisor Gregory Duff Morton for inspiring me with his excitement and vibrancy in thinking, and for his patience in working with me.

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1	4
Chapter 2	34
Chapter 3	60
Conclusion	81
Bibliography	86

Introduction

What is this (the question)?

This paper began with the question, ‘what do people do when the social world excludes them?’ It was my hope to understand and see how people have, currently do, and in the near future will exist within, respond to, and potentially resist a form of world that excludes them. In my efforts to frame a research approach to this topic I first turned to topics surrounding contemporary urban geography and development. By chance, I came across a history of a group of people that struck me with the power of their explicit rejection and resistance to the conditions of externality they faced. I came to understand that the dynamic between these actors and the world they engaged was not so much exclusionary but more so predicated upon their removal, or elimination, and its corollary disappearance.

It then became necessary to ask, ‘How did this happen?’

How should you read it (how I answer the question)?

- Historical dynamics created a commonality between people as well as the conditions of encounter for them to discover, articulate, and mobilize that shared experience within one another.
- People formed themselves collectively to reject elimination, the common force shaping their experiences.
- As a group, they acted politically, combatting the exclusionary ordering of the world and working to instantiate an alternative.

What are the elements you should pay attention to throughout?

This paper handles a diverse set of moments and context, some more directly linked than others. Despite the variance of actors, aims, and immediate terrains of activity, there are direct affinities across the different examples. I most explicitly highlight these by emphasizing specific abstractions and shared histories which are manifested within the various moments and events I discuss throughout. In this paper, these commonalities emerge as core themes and points that are tracked and unraveled:

- The treatment and experience of indigenous persons in a territorially dominant settler society
- The relation between coming together as a group and responding to the experience of violence, injury, or suffering
- The meaning of imagining and working to enact an ‘alternative.’

How do the important elements get taken up chapter by chapter?

Chapter 1: Over a twenty-year period, beginning in 1953, the US federal program of Relocation led tens of thousands of Native American to migrate from reservations to urban areas. This program was part of a broader policy of ‘Termination,’ in which the US government sought to dissolve the separate political nations of indigenous people within its territory via assimilation and dissolution. In Seattle, relocated indigenous migrants from diverse backgrounds resisted socio-cultural and political annihilation. Beginning in the 1960s with organizations and spaces of care and ‘togetherness,’ a pan-Indian collectivity and politics emerged through resistance to

elimination. The action of politics played out on a geographic terrain, expressed most dramatically in the 1970 occupation of Fort Lawton.

Chapter 2: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) is a social movement that politicizes the condition and causation of gendered, indigenous disappearance and vulnerability. The meaning of causation is made complex by indigenous actors and commentators of MMIW who attribute responsibility for gendered violence and disappearance to settler-colonialism in terms of 'structure.' I propose that MMIW becomes political through the combination of attributing responsibility and constituting a group identity. The movement rejects the form of politics implied by finite channels of state governance and impersonal modes of representing their social body and its suffering.

Chapter 3: MMIW forms itself as a collective, a social group which can act politically, through practices which combine intimate feelings, particularly those of loss, with shared knowledge. The relation between these levels of experience, and the preservation of both levels during collective action, constitutes a particular form of power and identity. This form of collective bonds suggests the potential for an alternative to present conditions and social relations. This potential is grounded in practices and future imaginaries of healing, outside of and other than the mode of politics characterized by governance and rule.

Chapter 1

Patrick Wolfe, scholar of settler-colonial history, race, and indigeneity, conceptualizes settler-colonialism as “a structure not an event” and necessarily characterized by its relation to indigeneity in the form of “the logic of elimination.”¹ In this paper I engage in a historical analysis of the tensions between forces of elimination/atomization and indigeneity/collectivity that were present during political mobilizations made by Native Americans in the Pacific Northwest in the 1960s and 70s. Specifically, I explore the role played by land and space in this tension. I make use of and seek to extend Wolfe’s formulation by examining the specificity of a particular moment in which the relation between the settler colonial and indigeneity was made particularly salient. Exploring the particular configuration of the settler colonial structure at this moment serves to make visible how, in interaction, both the logic of elimination and the construction of indigeneity are asserted and opened to the possibility of challenge and reformulation. Considering the stress with which Wolfe emphasizes that the logic of elimination derives from the centrality of land acquisition to the settler colonial project, this paper considers the formulation and use of this object in the encounter, particularly as it is taken up as the ground for struggle those resisting their elimination.

According to Patrick Wolfe’s conceptualization, the logic of elimination is founded upon the drive to acquire ‘territory.’ Settler-colonialism is distinctive in that it seeks to establish itself and its own continuity upon the land it acquires. It is from this feature of establishment and self-perpetuation that the fundamental necessity to eliminate the native arises at the heart of settler-

¹ Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* (December 2006), 387, 402.

society and as a result, in its very formulation it constructs itself as oppositional to indigeneity. With this dependency upon the absence of the native, i.e. a negative necessity, a number of key features emerge. For one, the process of elimination is not temporally restricted to the initial action of dispossession, and it is in this sense that Wolfe writes that settler-colonialism must be understood as “a structure rather than an event.” A second consequence of the eliminatory logic at the core of the settler colonialism is the tendency towards genocide as a possible but not unconditional form by which this structure tends in its temporal and spatial continuity. Wolfe requests, and posits, a careful specificity in retaining the distinction between the two categories of settler-colonialism and genocide so as to avoid conflation and thus enable the attentiveness and dissection of instances in which they occur separately. His composition of settler-colonialism has been briefly laid out above. More will be said of the relevance and specificity of both categories later; however, for now it is pertinent to note that genocide is understood as the annihilation of group-hood and, Wolfe makes clear, this take precedence over the particular destruction of the body. It is not the death of the individual but rather the instantiation of the specific collective that is sought to be eradicated. The line upon which such collectivity is marked, its intricacies and affronts and the ground upon which it is seen and fought, is central to this story.

*"If any of you need alcohol or drugs to get you through this, forget it," He told the crowd. "I don't want to make the same mistakes that were made at Alcatraz. I want to win this one."*²

Lawney Reyes recalls his brother Bernie Whitebear giving this announcement to a diverse group Native American friends, affiliates, organizers and family gathered in Seattle's Filipino Community Hall. Whitebear was referring to the 1969 occupation by indigenous groups of Alcatraz Island in the San Francisco Bay. Following the decommission of the federal prison which had been run on the island for several decades, the occupants laid claim to the land. Whitebear had traveled to San Francisco to partake in the occupation, where he had been inspired to carry the same radical approach back to the city of Seattle where he resided.³ Roughly the same time as the Alcatraz occupation, news had surfaced that the Fort Lawton military base, an 1,100 acre stretch of land running along the water of the Puget Sound to the west and surrounded on its other sides by Seattle's Magnolia neighborhood, was in the process of decommission. This meant that the space would become surplus Federal land eligible to be purchased for anywhere between 0-50% of its market value under the Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965.⁴ Following a rebuffed response by the city to a request for a portion of the land by a Native led organization, Whitebear and others called the gathering, recounted by his brother above, in order to discuss alternate tactics.

² Joseph Madsen, "Bernie Whitebear and the Urban Indian Fight for Land and Justice," The Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, 2013, <https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/whitebear.htm>.

³ Allen Lossom "By Right of Discovery," Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, 2006, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_takeover.htm.

⁴ Bernie Whitebear, "Taking Back Fort Lawton: Meeting the Needs of Seattle's Native American Community Through Conversion," *Race, Poverty & the Environment* 4/5, no. 4/1 (1994): 3-6. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4155277>.

The day after the meeting, March 8th 1970, the two brothers alongside a group of over a hundred circumvented the gates and began to set up a temporary encampment on the Fort Lawton military base. An active military police unit soon encountered the pre-planned protest camp and the occupants announced the reasons for their presence: they were laying claim to this land. Disorder ascended as the protest gave voice to its presence and refused departure. Armed military units and Seattle police arrived to the scene and the conflict heightened as they sought to forcibly remove occupants. Numerous media personnel had been alerted by the occupants the day prior and documented the unfolding events. For the most part, popular newspapers such as the Seattle Post-Intelligencer Seattle and New York Times reported the scene in terms of an “attack” and “invasion” by “Indian Warriors.”⁵ Alternative newspapers and participants own accounts, on the other hand, reported protestors being dragged through blackberry bushes, the use of tear gas to disperse children hiding beneath military barracks’, and the violent beating of occupants detained in holding cells.⁶

Amidst the chaos, Bob Satiacum, one of the nominal leaders of the occupation, began to read aloud the following proclamation which would later be printed in a number of the alternative and Indian run newspapers:

We the native Americans reclaim the land known as Ft. Lawton in the name of all American Indians by right of discovery. We feel that this land of Ft. Lawton is more suitable to pursue an Indian way of life, as determined by our own standards. By this we

⁵ Karen Smith, “United Indians of All Tribes Meets The Press: News Coverage of the 1970 Occupation of Fort Lawton,” Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, 2005, https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_press.htm.

⁶ Ibid, 11. See also: Allen “By Right of Discovery.”

mean — this place does not resemble most Indian reservations. It has potential for modern facilities, adequate sanitation facilities, health care facilities, fresh running water, educational facilities, fisheries, research facilities and transportation.

What use will we make of this land? Since there is no place for Indians to assemble and carry on tribal ways and beliefs here in the white man's city, we therefore, plan to develop: 1. A center for Native American Studies... 2. A great Indian university... 3. An Indian center of ecology... 4. An Indian school... 5. An Indian restaurant...

With this great center we will show the beauty, dignity, and the spirit of our traditional Indian ways. In the name of all Indians, therefore, we re-claim this land for all our Indian nations. For all these reasons, we feel this claim is just and proper, and that this land is rightfully ours for as long as the rivers shall flow and for as long as the sun shall shine.⁷

The various components of this proclamation — the assertion of a claim to self-controlled land, the alienation of Indians in the city, and the positing and goal of reinforcing a general identity — and the historical context of their formulation will be explored in further detail below. What led these occupants to organize in the name of “all Indians” without reference of the numerous tribal affiliates that comprised the group? How did such a self-understanding come to be? To begin exploring potential answers to these questions, it is worth first considering an alternate case.

⁷ Seattle Helix, March 20 1970 - taken from Smith, “United Indians of All Tribes Meets the Press.”



Figure 1.8

SEATTLE
Post-Intelligencer
 THE VOICE OF THE NORTHWEST
 Monday, March 9, 1970
 M4-2500-106
 SUNRISE EDITION

Indians Invade Ft. Lawton

BY RICHARD SIMMONS

The "weekend warriors" and the Indian warriors at Ft. Lawton were attempting to claim a portion of the 110-acre army post for an Indian and Alaska native culture center.

Indian men, wearing headbands and beards, "bladed" the fort from all sides. Some carried their own tools, and others carried tools they had scavenged over fences. And demonstrators' faces glowed with the light of their own campfires.

The Indians were armed with sandwiches, potato chips, sleeping bags and smoking materials.

They were met by the 32nd Military Police Company at the fort for weekend duty.

The major incident happened in a small clearing just inside the fence near W. Lawton Avenue. About 50 protesters were gathered there, and they were ordered to leave and were setting up a camp when they were dispersed by a rising patrol.

The patrol ordered a platoon standing by at the main gate to move forward. The platoon was ordered to move forward to clear the protesters. They moved on the road above the clearing and marched down a narrow muddy trail to the camp.

Protesting Indians attempted to read a proclamation explaining why the Indians were there. But the was drowned out by a sergeant barked orders to the protesters to get up and move.

The MPs rounded up as many as they could and rounded around the base was addressed in "The Great White Father and all his people." It said: "I have heard from you, the one true voice of all American Indians by the right of discovery."

"We feel that this land of Ft. Lawton is more suitable to protect. By this we mean — this place does not resemble most Indian reservations. It has potential for modern facilities, adequate sanitation, education facilities, habitat research facilities and transportation facilities."

The proclamation mentioned nothing about the Indians planned to use the land as a center for native American studies, a great Indian university, center of ecology, a school and a restaurant.

Protesters were told to leave by the military.

Earn 30 days

at Ft. Lawton

INDIAN WOMAN AND CHILD WERE CARRIED INTO FORT LAWTON JAIL
 Both were placed in cells with other Indian demonstrators

Figure 2.9

8 Karen Smith, "United Indians of All Tribes Meets the Press."

9 Ibid.

In her book *Pan Tribal Activism in the Pacific Northwest*, Vera Parham puts forth an argument for locating the genesis of Native American activism and political movements of the 1960's and 70's in the Pacific Northwest and its long history of legal battles over fishing rights, which effervesced starting in the 1950's with the 'fish-ins,' but had precedents that arose soon after the initial treaties between white settlers and native inhabitants of the region.¹⁰ These fish-ins were a blurred composition of explicit protest, making use of media garnering techniques and affiliates, alongside mobilization of everyday practices; both, protest and practice, centered the issue of Northwest Natives' fishing rights relating to area access and share of total catch. The conflict emerged most intensely in the 1960's, as specific tribal members and bodies evoked treaty rights to fishing practices amidst media spectacle drawing support from other non-indigenous political organization as well as participation of the likes of actor Marlon Brando and comedian Dick Gregory.¹¹

The fish-ins concerned the economic practices and social, political and cultural autonomy of various Northwest tribes, although Indian individuals and groups from other tribal affiliations were involved with and supported the effort throughout its duration. The premise of the actions taken, and the ultimate legal decision to which they culminated, drew from asserting the validity of the right to fish based upon treaties made between the first Governor of Washington State, and simultaneous Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Isaac Stevens, and numerous tribal groups of the Northwest. The moral and juridical legitimacy of the conditions upon which the treaties were made are of course stark, involving among many other things the use of one pidgin language for

¹⁰ Vera Parham, *Pan Tribal Activism in the Pacific Northwest*, (Lanham Maryland: Lexington Books, 2018), xxii.

¹¹ Gabriel Chrisman, "The Fish-in Protests at Frank's Landing," Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project, 2007, <https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/fish-ins.htm>.

communication between a number of tribes with various languages. Despite the circumstances of their creation, the treaties played a central role in the court cases that developed from confrontations between fish-in protestors and law enforcement as well as non-indigenous fisherman. Particular attention was drawn to a statement recurrent throughout the various treaties made, which stated ‘The right of taking fish at all usual and accustomed grounds and stations is further secured to said Indians in common with all citizens of the Territory.’¹² In 1974 Judge Boldt upheld that the so called “treaty tribes” were legally guaranteed rights of access to fishing grounds, alongside a fifty percent share of the total regional catch. The long process of eroding indigenous presence from the land had been halted on one front. Through the evocation of juridical claims vested in indigeneity, tribal groups asserted the legitimacy of their own claim to territory contra the force of non-indigenous fishermen, enterprises and state apparatuses that had for so long ignored their claims.

Parham and her interlocutors shed light on this history and specify the circulating participation, ideas and politicization that flowed between the activities of the fish-ins and the emergent pan-Indian movement of the late 60’s and 70’s. Bob Satiacum, who is quoted above reading the proclamation of Fort Lawton’s occupation, was a key figure in the fish-ins, involved in early legal cases over fishing rights in the 50s, organizing the later protests, and originally responsible for bringing Bernie Whitebear into Northwest indigenous struggles through these activities.¹³ Parham asserts the continuity of the regional struggles, writing, “many Pacific Northwest Native Americans viewed the Fort Lawton protest and occupation as a natural

¹² “Treaty with the Quinault,” Jan. 25, 1856, <https://goia.wa.gov/resources/treaties/quinault-treaty-1856>

¹³ Chrisman, “The Fish-in Protests at Frank’s Landing.” See also: Vera Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism in the Pacific Northwest*, 38.

outgrowth of the highly successful fish-ins. Starting with the fish-ins, which focused on *protecting treaty rights* on and off the reservation, and moving on to the Fort Lawton occupation, which focused on urban issues.”¹⁴ While Parham among many others has drawn attention to the emergence of pan-Indianism as a historically specific and contingent form of identity and political mobilization, she doesn’t explore in great depth the distinction between the politics of the fish-ins, which garnered court recognition through the assertion of specific tribal rights guaranteed through treaty, and those of the Fort Lawton protest. The latter was relatively unique by way of its successful deployment of occupation methods founded upon claims grounded neither in the assertion of its members’ specific genealogical link to the land in question nor pre-existing juridical entitlements. It is worth emphasizing and inquiring into this distinction of pathways to, and assertions of, property with regard to different collective identities upon which such claims were founded. In other words, these political mobilizations, which were channeled into legal battles, hinged on different assertions of group *properties* in their making claims to property.

Parham makes a clear point on juridical recognition several times (reference), asserting that protest was, and is, successful primarily with regard to its ability to translate political mobilization and energy into legal verification. In other words, the aim is to achieve mutual recognition between an individual or collective body and the state. The significance and implications of this will be returned to later, as it is in regard to such a conception of political movement that the question of settler-colonial sovereignty becomes pertinent.

¹⁴ Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 105, 106

In Wolfe's account, the incessant drive for territory that requires the elimination of indigeneity is a product of settler-colonialism's feature of replacement and establishment, i.e. the *settlement* of new populations upon dispossessed land. He briefly accounts for this in terms of the centrality of agriculture in establishing such projects, both due its permanence and function as a direct means of population support. However, such a motive would not seem to hold as an explanatory device for understanding the actions of the post-War state. In what has been called 'the termination era,' the drive for territory and elimination of indigenous collectivity bared its teeth in new form. Yet the need to satiate the expansionism of agricultural settlements can no longer be considered the causal factor of an eliminatory project when, on the contrary, the post-War period marked a heightened and novel urbanization process in regions where the original indigenous inhabitants had already for the most part been dispossessed and denied any serious claim to their inhabitation, frequently having been relocated to distant and isolated reservations.

However, Wolfe's framework need not be considered outdated. The value of the model he constructs is precisely in its ability to recognize the continuity of settler-colonialism, even as the state form seemingly shifts and the erasure of indigeneity is softly brushed away so as to relegate it to the ugly underbelly of a history long past: "When invasion is recognized as a structure rather than an event, its history does not stop... when it moves on from the era of frontier homicide. Rather, narrating that history involves charting the continuities, discontinuities, adjustments, and departures."¹⁵ While the motives for elimination were not settlement or agriculturally driven in

¹⁵ Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism," 402.

the post-War period (though interests in resource access and extraction were certainly present), the imperative to acquire *territory* remained of central importance. Settler-colonial political sovereignty asserted itself as fully encompassing and self-justified over the entirety of its domain through the deployment of a range of historically/contemporaneously developing governmental practices. The form this took utilized the particular historical processes and contexts at play, namely a fervent American nationalism and large-scale (sub)urbanization projects, while retaining a fundamentally eliminatory relation to indigeneity.

During this period, specific policies and practices emerged out of a nexus of ways of seeing reservation land. On the one hand, there was the undeniable force of the historically recurrent impetus to take hold of resources seen as inconveniently blocked by the red-tape of tribal entitlements and bureaucracies. On the other hand, another view was formulated following the Navajo-Hopi disaster of 1947 in which intensive government support was needed to ameliorate extreme environmental conditions of starvation and exposure, leading to the subsequent “discovery” of extreme poverty and destitution at place on the reservation.¹⁶ This led to a neo-Malthusian view that saw reservations as suffering from poverty due to population outstripping the support-capacities of the land. Thus, relocation was framed as a means of alleviation to this economic distress, as opposed to pursuing a policy of investment,

¹⁶ Burt, “Roots of the Native American Urban Experience: Relocation Policy in the 1950s,” *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Spring, 1986), 88.

rehabilitation, and development at the tribal-reservation level.¹⁷ Both views echoed the justifications, put forth by European settlers in New England in the 16th and 17th centuries, for making claims to land occupied by native inhabitants on the grounds of their lacking productive development and use of the environment.¹⁸

The policy for dealing with the problem of Indians was explicitly framed as 'termination,' and it was to be fervently pursued by transmuting the location of indigenous people's residence and life activity. The encounter with the new urban landscape and social world was explicitly intended to make use of the city as a force to eradicate the political sovereignty and cultural identity of Indians living within the United States.

Dillon Myer was appointed commissioner of Indian Affairs under the Truman administration, implementing the termination policy known as 'operation relocation.'¹⁹ Kenneth Philip writes, in defense of the relocation policy as a means of promoting and expanding the agency and freedom of indigenous people: "this relocation policy was modeled after the War Relocation Authority. Under Myer's authority the WRA had helped Japanese-Americans, who were *displaced by wartime policy*, find employment and relocate to new communities" [italics

¹⁷ "settler colonialism, is premised on the securing—the obtaining and the maintaining—of territory. This logic certainly requires the elimination of the owners of that territory, but not in any particular way. To this extent, it is a larger category than genocide." (Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism," 402).

Both of the above described lenses for viewing the reservation are consistent with the impetus Wolfe describes. The first exhibits a classic model of the extractive-state, facilitating the expansion and interests of capital. The second requires recognizing that 'territory,' as Wolfe is careful to term the ambrosia of the settler-state, does not describe an inert 'space' but rather specifically implies the vesting of a relation of rule or jurisdiction of a state or sovereign upon a space. Thus, returning to the second lens for seeing the reservation, a Foucauldian view of the governmental-state is an apt description that retains the drive towards "securing... of territory" while recognizing an alternate mode of state power. It seems all the more important upon enunciating this distinction, however, that governmental and extractive ends not be understood as mutually exclusive.

¹⁸ William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1983. And Patrick Wolfe, *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race*, London; New York: Verso, 2016.

¹⁹ Burt, "Roots of the Native American Urban Experience," 88.

added].²⁰ The continuity between the relocation policies for the Japanese held in internment camps and Indians on reservations makes explicit the project of assimilation as one fueled by state anxiety towards internal allegiances to national-sovereignty of an alternate and threatening nature. Both policies sought political pacification by using urban relocation as a means to, alongside further promotion of, cultural disintegration. Emphasizing the logic of elimination's continuity in many forms, Patrick Wolfe describes the transition from frontier to reservation and other structures. The former is a mode characterized by the external drive to seize land, pushing Indians outwards or elsewhere. The latter marks a shift to dealing with the internally sequestered indigenous population: "elimination turned inwards, seeking to penetrate through the tribal surface to the individual Indian below, who was to be co-opted out of the tribe, which would be depleted accordingly, and into White society."²¹ 'Termination' was an explicit attempt to dismantle Native American sovereignty tied to their ability to claim status as independent political nations. Pursuing a policy of fragmentation and dislocation was a fundamental component of the effort to reduce federal recognition and concessions to these bodies. On the surface, relocation was a matter of instigating the separation of individuals physically from reservations, as well as, culturally, socially, and politically from tribal affiliations and official bodies. Yet, it was also a matter of removing individuals from the jurisdiction of the federal government, and disassociating reservation land from the jurisdiction of tribal bodies and members. The removal of Indian rights to land on the basis of their national sovereignty was itself the continuation of a longtime practice by the federal and state governments alike,

²⁰ Kenneth Phillip, "Stride toward Freedom: The Relocation of Indians to Cities, 1952-1960," *Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 2, (Apr., 1985), 179.

²¹ Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism," 399.

characterized in the Dawes Act of 1887 and the Burke Act of 1906 which over the fifty-year period following 1881 transferred 10's of millions of acres away from indigenous entitlement.²²

In 1953, House Concurrent Resolution 108 was passed, which, in the name of Americanization, “initiated the process of removing all federal services to American Indian tribes and attempted to dismantle the [BIA] and revoke numerous treaties with Indian people.”²³ The resolution states: “It is the policy of Congress, to make the individuals within... the United States subject to the same laws and entitled to the same privileges and responsibilities, to end their status as wards of the United States’.”²⁴ The Bureau of Indian Affairs sought to advance relocation from reservations to cities at as high a volume as possible. The primary measures taken were promoting the city as site of possibility for employment and achievement of material gain, advertising acquisition of new widely available consumer products. Lawney Reyes, an active figure in political, cultural and social organizing for Native Americans beginning in the 60s, gave voice to the ways in which many Indians residing on reservations were compelled to move to cities due to the harsh economic decrepitude of reservations,

Indians were having a very difficult time, just surviving. And the reason was a lot of them came from reservations. You know, not only in the State of Washington but sometimes as far away as the Great Plains. And the reason they were leaving the reservation was there was no work, no way to support yourself. And at that time the government the U.S.

²² Ibid, 400.

²³ Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, xxiv.

²⁴ Ibid, 6.

government was also pushing this because they knew if they could get Indians off the reservation they could go after the land and turn it back into an overall public domain.²⁵

While the Federal Government framed the policy in terms of providing economic opportunity and liberty, termination was a direct pivot away from Roosevelt era policies that had favored solutions developed at the level of the various local, tribal authorities, providing the glimpse at an alternate potential — one of reservation development and the independent economic revitalization of Indian communities. The Truman era, with Meyers as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, on the other hand sought to reduce the federal economic provisions and thus, relocation worked both to remove Indians from the responsibility of the BIA as well as provided the opportunity for the type of land acquisition and privatization spoken to by Reyes. The continuity of Meyers' office across the various administrations serves to demonstrate that imperialist motivations remain rooted in the dynamics of the state, and its relations to bodies and titles which implicitly hold a threat of oppositional sovereignty.

It is clear that the policy of relocation tapped into real needs and powerful imaginaries of reservation Indians. In the 1950's 30, 000 were documented as having migrated, and three times that in the 60s and 70s.²⁶ Cornell writes, "From 1950 to 1960, when the urban population of the country rose 29.3 %, the urban Indian population increased 160%. In the following decade it rose 144%, and from 1970 to 1980 it doubled again."²⁷ However, exact numbers are difficult to estimate as the BIA didn't keep follow up data on those who relocated, many who partook in

²⁵ Ibid, 6.

²⁶ Burt, "Roots of the Native American Urban Experience," 85

²⁷ Stephen Cornell, "Crisis and Response in Indian-White Relations: 1960-1984," *Social Problems*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 131.

urban relocation took on a cycle of migration between reservation and city and furthermore, the BIA stopped recording data as a whole in 1957 due to the way it was used to criticize the program's effectiveness.²⁸ Reflecting on the data shown in Table 2, Cornell writes,

It has not been societal demands for Indian workers that has brought Indians to the cities in such numbers. Much of that movement, in fact, has occurred during a period of declining opportunities for unskilled or manual labor in American cities and rising unemployment among urban minority populations. Instead, it has reflected the dismal economic state of most reservations, combined with federal policies intended to solve the reservation economic problems and at the same time reduce the federal role in Indian affairs.²⁹

Table 2. Indian Population Increases, Total and Urban, 1940–80

Year	Total Indian Population	% Increase	Urban Indian Population	% In-crease	Urban Ind. as % of Total Ind.	% In-crease in U.S. Urban Pop.
1940	334,000	—	27,000	—	8.1	—
1950	343,000	2.7	56,000	107.4	16.3	20.6 ^a
1960	524,000	52.8	146,000	160.7	27.9	29.3
1970	792,000	51.1	356,000	143.8	44.9	19.2
1980	1,364,000	72.2	719,000	102.0	52.7	11.9

^a For purposes of comparability, figures using the old definition of *urban* were used in calculating the % increase in U.S. urban population, 1940–50. See Bureau of the Census, *Census of the Population: 1950*, vol. 2: *Characteristics of the Population*, Part 1: U.S. Summary, pp. 1–5, 9–12.

Source: Bureau of the Census, *Census of the Population: 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980*, vol. 2: *Characteristics of the Population*, Part 1: U.S. Summary.

Figure. 3³⁰

²⁸ Phillip, "Stride Toward Freedom," 189.

²⁹ Cornell, "Crisis and Response," 132.

³⁰ Ibid.

The policy's emphasis on cultural assimilation was demonstrated explicitly through practices which sought to induce disintegration of Indian communities as communities. Frequently, relocation placed individuals away from one another and withheld contact information in order to prevent the maintenance of any pre-urban, i.e., Indian, social bonds. Those who migrated through the BIA program were required to sign a document proclaiming their intent to permanently leave reservation.³¹ Assistance was provided only for initial housing and employment, both of which were frequently precarious or partial, and Indians often found themselves at the bottom of the employment ladder. Burt describes the housing situation,

The BIA assisted in locating a person's or a family's first housing, and since accommodations had to fit within the bureau's aid package and Indian incomes, many ended up in lower-class neighborhoods. Tribal leaders frequently received complaints from relocatees or their families about how "most in the first place went to skid row sections" or were moved into "slum areas." Oftentimes the bureau moved Indians into large, high-rise apartment complexes, and many could not adjust to the crowded, confined setting after a life on a much more sparsely-populated, rural reservation.³²

The compulsion towards disintegration was not only enforced in the fragmentary relocation administered by the BIA, but extensively posed through the expectations, in addition to blatant discrimination, embedded within the workplace, landscape, and modes of address of the city. Not only were relocated Indians placed in ghettos and barred from racially exclusive establishments and forms of social organization, but the isolation and impoverishment of

³¹ Phillip, "Stride Toward Freedom," 183.

³² Burt, "Roots of the Native American Urban Experience," 90.

reservations meant the many migrants were equipped with a minimum of the education, language, and general skills and knowledge needed for navigating and participating in urban practices of everyday life, provisioning, and employment.

Though the policy of relocation took on different forms and titles as the explicit framing of ‘termination’ lost political tact, it continued for several decades with 10, 000 migrating a year by 1968. The general conditions of economic precariousness, unemployment, and marginalization did not change significantly; however, the assimilationist policy led, in many ways, to a contrary effect than the one it had aimed towards: producing sites, discourse, and action centered on political and cultural affirmation: “pan-Indian social institutions developed in cities that would eventually serve as the foundation for political activism based on Native American identity.”³³ While the rupture and exclusion experienced as a result of relocation meant that despite poverty, discrimination, and difficulties, “the biggest problem... became the loss of identity,”³⁴ this situation itself formed conditions for the emergence of new structures and sites of being Indian.

Indigenous people living and working in urban environments was not a new phenomenon. In the Pacific Northwest, the city of Seattle formed and grew from complex and

³³ Ibid, 95.

³⁴ Ibid.

dynamic relations between white settlers and local indigenous groups.³⁵ On the one hand this history challenges a long-standing perspective of indigenous people and communities as ‘non-urban.’ On the other hand, the specificity of Seattle’s past as a site long occupied by indigenous peoples prior to colonial settlement and the continued relation between these tribes and the developing city is a different history than the historical contingency of reservations from which the participants of relocation were largely drawn from. It is important to distinguish between the indigenous origins of Seattle and the later urban experience of migrants who came from a vast array of tribes. To miss the point would be to repeat the fallacy of imagining the existence of a homogenous, unitary ‘American-Indian.’ Parham makes the point that ‘Indian’ as a political, social, and cultural identity category for describing the inhabitants of the continent prior to the arrival of European immigrants, and those that followed or were brought, only emerged out of “their racialization by Europeans and their shared experiences under the rule of European and American powers.”³⁶ While there is a historical continuity in the emergence of pan-Indian identity out of colonial encounter, the particular forms that arise are unfixed and manifold. The history of Seattle is tangled with both supra-tribal formations on the part of Natives and policies enacted by government bodies that homogenized vast arrays of indigenous people by forming homogenous “Indian” policies.³⁷ Furthermore, the industrial urban experience as a site for a general Indian identity is evident prior to relocation, with the emergence of ‘hubs’ and Indian

³⁵ “Though the later settler colonial perspective was to ostracize Indigenous people from the city they built, in the early years Seattle was a joint venture. In the next decades, Seattle remained a town ‘more Indian than white.’” (Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 3.)

³⁶ *Ibid*, 1.

³⁷ For example: The Puget Sound War saw the military unification of several Northwest tribes, the various Stevens’ treaties, the General Allotment Act, the Chemawa Boarding School, the 1865 ordinance calling for the exclusion of indigenous residents from Seattle — all treated and grouped various, diverse tribal groups as a singular entity.

bars amongst migrants, primarily those seeking economic opportunity from wartime industry or passing through to take part in seasonal work such as fish or timber. What was distinct about the relocation era was the scale of migration, as well as the particular constitution of the urban world, in all its aspects, layers and scales, at this point in time.

The urban environments which migrating or relocated Indians happened into during the Relocation era were a product of capital's processes of spatialization at this particular historical juncture. The suburban model of post-War development meant that large swaths of space went unused in the rundown interior of Seattle's downtown, "vacant due to post-WWII population losses due to sub-urban growth and the snaking of Interstate 5 through neighborhoods near downtown."³⁸ In this context, a self-organized, indigenous collectivity developed in large part through urban mechanisms of support based upon creating and configuring space. The particular composition of urban geography and the experience it constructed were integral to the form, and arguably content, of the Pan-Indian political and social movements that would emerge. Central to this story is the isolation experienced by migrants, the discrimination faced in employment and social establishments, and especially the absence of services and assistance for adjusting to and navigating the city.³⁹ The relocation policy and its assimilationist aim were furthered by the fact that the BIA revoked its jurisdiction, and hence any form of provision, over Indians that resided

³⁸ Mary Wright, "Creating Change, Reclaiming Indian Space in Post World-War II Seattle," in *Keeping the Campfires Going: Native Women's Activism in Urban Communities*, ed. Susan A Krouse, and Heather A. Howard, University of Nebraska Press, 2009, 127.

³⁹ "the Bureau of Indian Affairs refused to support [urban Indian populations]," and furthermore, "finding help in the cities could be overwhelming. In particular, [relocated Indians] found the regulations surrounding welfare a great hindrance... Many Native American people either did not have [the necessary] documents, or had not brought them from the reservation." (Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 17.)

off the reservation; once in the city, one was no longer recognized as Indian.⁴⁰ These conditions created needs which in the case of Seattle came to be filled by a new collective identity and the production of ‘place.’ One such response of significant importance was the founding in 1958 of the female led American Indian Women’s Service League (AIWSL).⁴¹

The AIWSL began by hosting social gatherings and cultural events, advocating on behalf of indigenous people to a range of institutions, and especially worked towards helping “the growing number of Indian migrants to find housing, jobs, and community.”⁴² In 1960 the women of the Service League established the Indian Center downtown, just across from the bus station where they would check to see if any of the new arrivals were relocating or migrating Indians who might be in need of assistance finding their way in the city. The center provided a sober space for gathering and holding events. Furthermore, it was established with the vision of being open to Native Americans in general without participation being dependent on any particular tribal affiliation.⁴³ The historical role of the AIWSL and the centrality of cultivating a supra-tribal community is evidenced not only in the diversity of its founders or the inclusivity of the place and services it fostered, but is furthermore made explicit in the concerns and goals that they voiced. In the same year as the Indian Center’s opening, the founders hosted a meeting with

⁴⁰ “In reality, the two federal assistance agencies responsible for administering the trust status and “advocacy” of American Indians, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Indian Health Service (IHS), had developed a policy that in effect meant that “once you left the reservation you were no longer Indian.” A technical translation basically meant that the BIA and IHS restricted their services to Indians who still resided on or near reservation and were under administrative authority and jurisdiction of Tribal Governments.” (Whitebear “Taking Back Fort Lawton,” 3.)

⁴¹ “The women meant the center to be ‘a friendly Indian meeting place’ where those new to the city go for help and medical, educational, or other needed advice or referrals. The Center was a ‘place that would help preserve Pacific Northwest Indian culture’ and bolster Indian identity.” (Wright, “Creating Change,” 127.)

⁴² Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 18.

⁴³ “As [founder] Pearl Warren expressed in an early newsletter, ‘We hope to bring together as many Indians as we can, regardless of where they come from, or the degree of Indian blood.’” (Wright, “Creating Change,” 107)

other indigenous community members and grassroots organizations in which “it was agreed that communication within the broader Native American community was the biggest issue the organizations faced.”⁴⁴ In the context of isolation from former communities and general discrimination by non-indigenous society, indigenous people also came into contact with a vast number of other people partaking in the same policy of relocation.⁴⁵ It was through such interactions with one another, experiences in the city,⁴⁶ and determination of people such as the AISWL founders that a pan-Indian became salient.

The memory of the Indian Center gleaned through the historical archive sheds light onto the way in which it was a space notably distinct from the “urban experience” of Indians as portrayed by much of the other documentation. Other texts cited throughout this paper have emphasized isolation, discrimination, poverty — these compose the city as a force of cultural disintegration detailed above. The act of relocation into the city is presented as an encounter with something hostile, alienating and non-inclusive. Philip and Burt both make evident that the urban relocation policy hinged on urban slums and industrial jobs, and that people’s actual experiences, contrary to the assurances of the BIA, were marked by precarious access and instability.

Furthermore, while the promoters of relocation framed the policy as an attempt by the state to smoothly harness the Indian population’s needs to the industrial escalator of post-War capital,

⁴⁴ Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 19.

⁴⁵ “In Tacoma, on Portland Avenue one day Whitebear was introduced to a Powwow, a culturally important festival to Plateau and Plains Indian tribes. In it, he witnessed not just Plateau and Plains Indians, but Indians from all over the country celebrating in a way that honored their respective cultures and a new pan-Indianism. He saw the power pan-Indian events could have to help remedy the physical and emotional hardships placed on urban Indians. When he moved permanently to Seattle in 1966 to be closer to work, he sought to mobilize the urban Indian community there in a way he had experienced in Tacoma.” (Madsen, “Bernie Whitebear.”)

⁴⁶ ““their diffuse, supra-tribal ethnic consciousness was created by the day to day experiences they shared as outsiders in a hostile, alien, urban, milieu”” (Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 19.)

many have drawn attention to the way in which this policy simultaneously served to liquidate land under Indian ownership and open up reservation resources to capital extraction.⁴⁷ It may be a mistake to accept these narratives as portraying a case of indigenous migrants being accepted or included in the city, rather than these experiences providing an accurate rendering of the city and the features and logics it entails and emanates. In other words, Native Americans weren't excluded from the city, but rather the hostility and exclusion they faced were integral to the social relations which were both provided by and structuring of the urban composition.

The urban experience which relocation fostered coincided with the historical development of the suburban model which implemented an atomization of space in the form of serialized, private home-ownership intended to serve as heralded domain of the individual nuclear family and provide the backbone of consumption. With the growth of these housing development and the the city made accessible through concrete infrastructure, large-scale planning, and widespread automobile ownership, capital investment within formerly densely occupied city centers waned.⁴⁸ Seattle was no exception: 'downtown— particularly Belltown, First Avenue, and Pioneer Square—had become “the place of dead dreams,” populated by the

⁴⁷ In a published account written by Whitebear he explicitly recognizes the policy of relocation a structure of elimination: “In an attempt end trust status and liquidate all tribal assets, the federal government set up relocation programs moving thousands of Indians into cities with promises of better employment and educational opportunities. This was the final injustice to Indian people by the government, after having stolen all but 55 million acres of our land, and presided over the decimation of our culture and religion. The grand planners of the Eisenhower administration saw this as the coup de grace in segregating our people from our last vestiges as a distinct race of people.” (Whitebear, “Taking Back Fort Lawton.” See also: Phillip “Stride Toward Freedom.” And, Burt, “Roots of the Native American Urban Experience.”)

⁴⁸ “Communities began to fragment as large concentrations of workers in proximity with each other across multiple workplaces were broken up. As both waged workers and industry left, what remained in cities were populations pushed further and further to the social and spatial margins, with collapsing incomes and thus collapsing infrastructures and social services. Here we have the successor to the pre-WWII ghetto. The latter was, to be sure, a place of collective isolation, but it was also one rarely outside of capitalist reproduction in one form or another, due to the expanding need for labour in the period from the 19th to the early 20th century. But what came now was a new kind of ghetto, increasingly cut off from more than marginal access to waged labour, and also the object of increasing homogenisation and atomisation.” (Chris Wright, “Its Own Peculiar Decor,” *Endnotes* Vol 4, 2015.)

aging workforce of Old Seattle, which one 1950 memoir called “the discards from the maelstrom of industrial activity.” The streets and run-down hotels of Skid Road were also home to hundreds of Indians. Colville architect Lawney Reyes [brother of Bernie Whitebear], for example, recalled that during those years “if you wanted to see an Indian in Seattle you’d jump in the car and go down to Skid Row.” ... Out in the hinterland, many Indian reservation residents described skid roads as places where people disappeared, almost as if they had died.’⁴⁹

However, it turned out that the hollowed out downtown core which this urbanization process fostered simultaneously introduced the possibility of founding spaces such as the Indian Center. The Indian Center’s location in the heart of this dilapidating environment meant that homeless, recently relocated, and skid row dwelling Indians could easily and freely gather around and pass by this community space throughout their daily traversals of the city landscape. Thus, in the context of relocation, geography served as a key element in the construction of identity. For groups such as the AIWSL, establishing ‘place’ was important to affirming the distinction and existence of indigenous people in relation to the alterity and ambiguity of the city. Post-war urbanization contained forces of disunity and disintegration, which the project of termination sought to wield. In the context of this program of elimination, demarcating space where indigeneity could be affirmed, transformed, and generated was a project with political implications. The effervescence of such a geographic politics burst to national attention in the case of Fort Lawton and Alcatraz, where occupants and supporters articulated an explicitly pan-Indian community and directly confronted the State by claiming space on the colonized lands of the Puget Sound and Bay Area.

⁴⁹ Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place*, University of Washington Press, 2009, 165.

Considering the experience faced by relocated Indians in cities enables a clearer picture of the demands put forth by the Fort Lawton occupation. The original proclamation, read aloud by the occupants (quoted above), emphasized conditions specific to the urban context: proper amenities, self-organized control over resources and provisions as opposed to BIA or other governmental administration, the overall poverty and antagonism of city life, the need for assembly and cultural practice, and the evocation of a general Indian identity over the particularity of tribe. The occupation voiced a demand to reconfigure urban space in a direct counter to the assimilationist forces that the city presented from all angles. Drawing from their experiences, the protesters articulated the exclusion, alterity and hostility of the urban world: “there is no place for Indians to assemble and carry on tribal ways and beliefs here in the white man’s city.”

In the context of settler-colonialism, the city is itself imbued with and structuring of hostile and dominating forces. Chris Wright describes the centrality of separation within capitalist society, and details the spatial expression of this separation in the development of post-War urbanization in the US.⁵⁰ In the post-War period, changes to the form of production and the capital-labor relation played out through and could be read from the form which urbanization

⁵⁰ Wright begins with the following quote from Debord: “‘Urbanism is the mode of appropriation of the natural and human environment by capitalism, which, true to its logical development toward absolute domination, can (and now must) refashion the totality of space into its own peculiar decor.’” (Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Zone 1994), p. 165–9. In, Wright, “Its Own Peculiar Decor” *Endnotes*, Vol 4, October 2015, 226.)’

took.⁵¹ Recognizing that such separation is embedded into space through urbanization enables a comparison with the depiction of the city as a force enacting the logic of elimination.

Through relocation the administrators of the Bureau of Indian Affairs sought to transform indigenous collective identities into atomized, national urban-individuals. The policy was intended to induce ‘termination’ by radiating people away from reservations and out into the eliminatory channel of the city.⁵² A transfiguration was expected, with the outcome of assimilated, industrially-laboring Americans, whose rights were founded on private ownership rather than national political sovereignty. The assimilationists failed to recognize this as a negative identity, what Endnotes terms “unity in separation.”⁵³ The term describes the condition by which the increasing pervasiveness of capitalism produces people who relate to the world primarily through the mediation of the market. Instead of producing a condition of collectivity, as imagined by the workers movement of the 19th and early 20th century, the increasing subsumption of life under the relations of capitalism meant that people were increasingly

⁵¹ “It was increasingly the case that human labour was no longer the main productive force; science — often applied to the worst ends of industrial “development”— took labour’s place. That profoundly affected workers’ self-understanding, their experience of what they did and their place in the world: workers could no longer see themselves as building the world in the name of modernity or a better, more rational way of living. On the contrary, that world was already built, and it was entirely out of their hands. Modernity presented itself as this imposing thing, which workers’ confronted, not as subject, but rather, as an object to be regulated and controlled.

The factory was only one part of this new reality. It was in the total transformation of the environment, both human and ecological, that the fully separated society really came into its own. Society is no longer just the means of production, a set of factories that can be taken over and self-managed by the workers who run them. Those factories, as well as everything else about modern life, rely on a massive infrastructure. One cannot hope that workers will storm the bosses’ offices as if they were so many winter palaces. The bases of social power are now much more dispersed” (“A History of Separation,” *Endnotes*, Vol 4, October 2015, 146-147.)

⁵² Recalling Wolfe’s definition of genocide, the annihilation of a group need not require the physical death of its members. Wolfe acknowledges that this was recognized quite clearly in the philosophy of Richard Pratt, founder of the Carlisle Indian School: “Kill the Indian in him and save the man.” (Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism,” 397.)

⁵³ Such separation is ‘negative’ in that the foundation of said “rights” is not gained through a process of acquisition, but instead depends upon removal: requiring, in this case, a disintegration of indigeneity.

atomized in relation to themselves, one another, and the world — united only in their shared condition of isolation and domination.

In the mid-20th century, relocation intended to impel what Wolfe argues is a genocidal tendency within the logic of elimination. The policy used the atomization of the urban world to facilitate the logic of elimination (alongside other specific governmental practices such as the BIA's intentional separation of people and withholding of contacts, the allotment, citizenship, and blood-quantum laws, as well as assimilationist boarding schools). However, as the case of Seattle makes evident, rather than accept total dissolution into a world of atomistic units connected through dependency and competition via the market, urban Indians resisted total dissolution and sought to create and maintain organizations, practices, and 'place' which affirmed a shared identity, one which sought to maintain sovereignty through its collectivity. "They were not looking for equality within the Constitutional framework of individual rights and freedoms but instead, were reacting against the ideologies like termination which strove to force Native Americans into that Constitutional framework."⁵⁴ The emergence of organizations and places where support was provided and a general pan-Indian identity cultivated gives historical voice to this resistance.

The story of Fort Lawton did not end with the initial clash between occupants and military. Protest and encampments continued for several weeks until a final occupation of the base accompanied the announcement that the leadership of the occupation would transition to negotiation with city officials. The proceedings were carried out by the newly formed United Indians of All Tribes Foundation (UIATF), headed by Bernie Whitebear, alongside other active

⁵⁴ Parham, *Pan-Tribal Activism*, 34.

indigenous organizers. In the end, a settlement was reached for the establishment of a community center, Daybreak Star, and the allocation of government funds to the organizers and groups who had been involved, such as the AISWL.⁵⁵ The occupation had asserted a claim to land, and articulated self-determination in a range of senses. On the one hand, control over space for its development as a cultural center was explicitly voiced as a means to gain primacy and independence over the provision of services and various mechanisms of community assistance. In other words, claim to space was seen as providing urban residing Indians with both a site for organizing and developing community but also for enabling a means of self-provision for that community, thus wresting power from the state, even if for already relocated Indians this had lain in its negligence more so than its coercion. Parham argues that the occupation of Fort Lawton represented another form of self-determination as well, namely over the construction of indigeneity. This involved claim over means of symbolic production so as to render an identity that was both highly visible and, she argues, subversive of the colonial imagination which relegated Indians to the past, to non-urban ways of life, and to being defeated and gone. The inculcation of such an imagination into the minds and practices of indigenous people comprises a degree of completion to the assimilationist process. This paper has shown that the occupation was a mobilization in response to the particular context of an assimilation project rooted in urbanism. From this point, it can be seen that the development of a pan-Indian collective identity, and its affirmation through place-hood, outwardly refused the attempt to erase the presence of indigeneity in settler-colonial space and rejected the enforcement of this elimination in the experience and self-understanding of indigenous people themselves.

⁵⁵ The center received 20 acres of the decommissioned land with the rest going to the establishment of Discovery Park by the City of Seattle

In its outcome, the political struggle of Fort Lawton took the form of entitlement and administration on the one hand, community and identity on the other. The negotiations were channeled into the discernible achievements of the UIATF's legal entitlement to the land for Daybreak Star, further financial support for Indian-founded organizations, and the jurisdiction of those organizations to provide the services so many Indians had been unable to access upon relocation.⁵⁶ Important to consider is that following the increase in resources and funding bureaucratization, professionalization, and internal strife ensued within the previously grassroots organizations which had provided services, community, and place for Indians in Seattle during the relocation period.⁵⁷ In her work, historian Coll Thrush cites criticism levied against the community center in the following decades and particularly as the process of urban renewal began in downtown Seattle: "Daybreak Star . . . is beautiful," Heap of Birds told one reporter, "but Pioneer Square and Occidental Square are also Indian centers."⁵⁸ The quote points to certain limits internal to the project of establishing a community space. When the city's project of 'renewal' led to the tearing down of housing that had provided their living provisions, organizing and commercial spaces, and general community proximity, the potential for self-determination offered by the cultural center would seem understandably removed. There exists a disjuncture between the collective potential offered in such a space and the continuity of everyday life within the context of the wider settler-colonial structure. Despite resisting the inculcation of the assimilationist project, the forms which the protest was channeled could not

⁵⁶ Whitebear, "Taking Back Fort Lawton."

⁵⁷ Wright, "Creating Change."

⁵⁸ Thrush, "Native Seattle," 174.

provide means to detach entirely and reproduce outside of the world ordered by unity-in-separation.

The protest engaged the structure of settler colonialism by seizing space for the maintenance of collectivity and the establishment of a means for its perpetuation. In this action natives asserted a response to the logic of elimination. Although relocation meant leaving tribally held land of reservations, this led to a different outcome than that which Wolfe describes in regard to those who stayed behind on the Trail of Tears. In Seattle, migrants mobilized so as to claim an indigenous geography. While they staved off the settler-colonial drive to acquire all territory by way of counteraction, the need to convert the demands of the protest into legally recognizable form exemplifies the sovereignty of the settler-state over their conditions and space. The center was not a means to provide total, independent social reproduction and thus, urban Natives remained entrenched in a settler-colonial world which actively imposes an antagonism to their collectivity through both direct hostility and the structural relations of separation.

Chapter 2

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, commonly abbreviated as MMIW, is a referential term which describes disproportionately high rates of violence perpetrated against indigenous women as a demographic. It would be understandable to view MMIW as a shorthand for referencing this demographic fact. However, MMIW is more than the statistics that “one in three native women will be raped in their life time,”⁵⁹ that 86% of sexual violence against native women is perpetrated by non-native men,⁶⁰ and that “Native women experience the highest per capita rate of rape in the nation.”⁶¹ Nor is MMIW the conditions that produce this fact alone. These types of understanding construct the abnormally high degree of murder and rape experienced by Native women within the national spaces of the US and Canada as a phenomenon made accessible through statistical knowledge. This is a restrictive and limited understanding of MMIW.

In this paper I would like to consider MMIW as a loose social movement. It is composed of protests, circulating hashtags, anti-colonial frameworks for analyzing the continuity of settler colonialism, a mobilizing impetus for effecting change to the conditions of indigenous people,

⁵⁹ Amy L. Casselman, *Injustice in Indian Country: Jurisdiction, American Law, and Sexual Violence against Native Women* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2016), [5]. - It is important to note that in nearly every academic text produced by native women I have read, this statistic is referenced to as certainly being an undercount; Casselman quotes Mary Annette Pember: “I and all the Indian women I know want to know, however, who those other two women are who haven’t been assaulted — because we’ve never met them” ‘ (5).

⁶⁰ “According to the US Department of Justice, in at least 86 per cent of the reported cases of rape or sexual assault against American Indian and Alaska Native women, survivors report that the perpetrators are non-Native men.” Amnesty International, “Maze of Injustice,” in *Maze of Injustice: The Failure to Protect Indigenous Women from Sexual Violence in the USA* (New York, USA: Amnesty International USA, 2007), [4].

⁶¹ Sarah Deer, *The Beginning and End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), [4].

and especially the work of the families, friends, and community members who have lost someone to or directly experienced violence against women. This much is said by Roxanne White, an organizer of the 2018 Seattle MMIW Women's March. In a *Seattle Times* short video documentary on the march, she states: "Missing and murdered indigenous women [is] a grassroots movement. We all share the loss of a sister. We all share the tragedies that happen in our communities, and we all share the knowledge that there's no justice system for us."⁶² Roxanne White brings to the fore essential aspects of MMIW that I will highlight in this paper: MMIW is a social movement not a static body of data or collection of phenomena, and this movement contains both a collective affect as well as a critique and experience of the state. The following chapter will delve into the former aspect, while I will focus now on the politics and critique coming from the movement.

Viewing MMIW as a social practice, rather than a collection of knowledge or experiences, opens up the space to see the specific social relations and political challenges the movement is addressing and grappling with. As stated above, various interventions and discourses comprising the movement develop a mode of addressing the murder and disappearance of indigenous women that avoids isolating the issue as either solely a statistical body of knowledge or the amalgamated experiences to which those representations refer. By arguing this I mean to accentuate the effort that has been taken to avoid presenting these conditions and experiences of violence as anomalous. Numerous participants, organizers, and authors have demonstrated that the phenomenon of MMIW is the logical result and expression of

⁶² Corinne Chin, Lauren Frohne, and Bettina Hansen, "Video: Follow three Women through Saturday's Women's March," *The Seattle Times*, last modified January 21, 2018, accessed April 29, 2019, <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/video-follow-three-women-through-saturdays-womens-march/>.

particular processes and relations rooted in history. Furthermore, I will show how many authors argue that these historical currents undergird the societies of settler states as a whole. When actors within the MMIW movement employ these non-anomalous frameworks, they implicate a larger political and social relation than the purely referential statistics are capable of conveying. In this way, the actors politicize MMIW. To do this, they attribute causative responsibility and form a collective actor.

It is important to understand how MMIW as a social practice achieves the feat of politicization. Considering the name itself can help begin the process of explication. The first word, “missing,” stresses disappearance as a crucial aspect of gendered violence against indigenous women. Disappearance, or absence, has become a key focus of parts of the MMIW movement. Absence foregrounds the critique put forth by MMIW advocates in two central ways. One is the absence of judicial protections over native women, the other is absence of data on native women by law enforcement bodies. When these points come together, they emphasize the negligence and silencing which enable conditions for indigenous women to go missing.

The MMIW movement brings together an amalgamation of experiences in order to elucidate the interrelations of elements which risk otherwise being depicted as an array of individual moments, actions, and experiences. Foregrounding these links serves to draw out patterns of effect and causation, which introduces responsibility, and thus politics, into the social world.

In bringing together discrete elements, MMIW also posits an analytical framework for pinpointing two things: 1) responsibility via causation and less explicitly 2), the relational nature, of that cause, which makes the effect a shared experience. To reiterate in further detail, politics

seems to be developed by a *twofold* process. The first is responsibility, as mentioned above. This line of thinking argues that murders and disappearances of indigenous women should not be treated as atomistic, isolated, random cases but seen as stemming from larger causes. Then secondly, politics is grounded by the process in which a social group is annunciated; native women *in general* share a particular experience of violence and indifference towards remedying or acknowledging that violence. This shared condition, the common experience of disappearance, is “proved,” especially to a larger audience, by way of demonstrating it negatively, pointing out missing — or as we will see, deliberately eradicated — capacities, protections, and representation. This negative space is judicial (absence of protections and literal legal representation), and also demographic or in terms of knowledge (i.e. the lack of a national database on missing or murdered native women).

The MMIW movement makes these various disappearances political by demonstrating that they stem from a shared cause that effects indigenous women as a group particularly, thereby annunciating a social body that can demand accountability. In the following chapter I will discuss the practices by which a collectivity emerges as an actor, rather than a social group as a thing. For now, I would like to emphasize that the two sides of politics, responsibility and group-hood, are clearly linked and must both exist for a social movement to occur.

It is important to underscore the political content of MMIW and thus explain its politicization, as I have briefly sketched above, due to the struggle the movement faces in combatting alternative, depoliticizing representations of its subject matter and aims. Politicizing particular sites of absence, by emphasizing their social-historical contingency and thus alluding to responsible agents, the MMIW movement illuminates the larger disappearance which settler-

colonialism strives to inflict upon indigenous people as a whole. Audra Simpson vehemently articulates a rejection, and alternative, to an apolitical presentation of MMIW. She writes:

The “phenomenon” of disappeared women, the murdered and missing Native women in Canada, is not a mystery, is not without explanation... this disappearance, [] is explained by Canada’s dispossession of Indian people from land. This dispossession is raced and gendered, and its violence is still born by the living, the dead, and the disappeared corporealities of Native women. The disappearance of native Indian women now takes on a sturdy sociological appearance: six hundred to nine hundred “missing” in the past decade, gone from their homes, murdered on the now-legendary “Highway of Tears” in Northern British Columbia, off streets or reservations. Indian women “disappear” because they have been deemed killable, able to be raped without repercussion, expendable. Their bodies have *historically* been rendered less valuable because of what they are taken to represent: land, reproduction, Indigenous kinship and governance, an alternative to heteronormative and Victorian rules of descent. Theirs are bodies that carry a symbolic load because they have been conflated with land and are thus contaminating to white, settler social order. So it is that they must be eradicated... Their disappearance thus is not an unexplainable phenomenon; like Oka, it is symptomatic of what administrators have called in Canada (and sometimes in the United States) “the Indian Problem.” This problem is a problem of arms, of smuggling, of disappearing (if you are a woman), of political insinuations (this is mine, not yours), and citizenships of refusal

rather than consent. This problem is the structure, actually, of settler colonialism, It has beneficiaries as well as subjects.⁶³

It is not entirely coincidental that the words of historian Patrick Wolfe — “settler colonialism is a structure not an event”⁶⁴ — seem to reverberate in the passage above. The analytic of ‘structure’ is deeply imbedded in the above quote from Simpson, first indicated with the deliberate quotation of a singular word — “phenomenon” — until gaining a force and momentum that clarifies while simultaneously expanding outwards. A “phenomenon” is something that happens, an occurrence. It perhaps carries a connotation of noteworthiness but is, in and of itself, isolated and unexplained. Thus, to describe the violence enacted against native women as a “phenomenon” paints it as something that just happened, no further explanation needed. Audra Simpson denounces using language such as “crisis” or “exception” for describing the proportionally higher rates of missing and murdered Indian women and girls in comparison to other sociologically demarcated groups because of the same obfuscation that happens with the word phenomenon. As noted above, the articulation of the statistical notability of these high rates, as well as their felt experience, has been cause for alarm, outrage, and a hardening of political determination amongst a variegated and diverse set of actors, activists, and affected communities. While the statistics are powerful, citing them alone enables an understanding of what they represents as something that simply happens in the world, allowing that real world thing to become devoid of causal relations. As Simpson argues forcefully in the passage above,

⁶³ Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 157.

⁶⁴ Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” 387.

the disappearance of native women is connected to specific processes and histories of gendered violence against indigenous people and nations.

In Simpson's book, *Mohawk Interruptus*, she forefronts the contingency of disappearance within a larger discussion that makes a distinction between the eventful and the structural. A central topic of the book is the "Oka crisis," an event in which armed Mohawk Indians participated in supposedly "unreasonable" and "violent" actions such as blocking roads in order to impede a project of land development, and were confronted directly by more than two thousand armed troops. 'Disappearance' of indigenous women and the events of Oka are both recounted as effects of an experience and organization of social relations in which expropriation of indigenous people and land is made acceptable and everyday. Simpson writes: "This was a state of emergency that was not a state of exception for all."⁶⁵ The 'emergency' is a denunciation of circumstances by the State which functions to enable governance by authoritative rule. During conditions of 'emergency' circumstances are painted as exceptional and thus requiring out of the ordinary measures to be taken in response. It has often been pointed out the way in which this mode of response is applied in times of economic "crisis" or as a justification for the increased securitization of national borders construed as under threat. The latter case makes clear that the use of the term "terrorists" to describe the Mohawk nationalists during the Oka crisis, and alongside the qualification of their non-citizenship i.e. non-belonging and hence undeserving personhood, holds a deep resonance with a longstanding development of political rule constructed in response to threat to security or 'the state of emergency.' Simpson develops the political analysis of this mode of governance by arguing that the emergent 'crisis' is a breaking

⁶⁵ Ibid, 153.

point. In her example, and within the larger context of indigenous assertions of sovereignty, native subjects, who face elimination as the *modus operandi* condition of their state of normalcy, produce a rupture by enacting refusal. In response to the structure of elimination, Simpson's book articulates a politics of refusal rather than recognition. An indigenous politics of refusal challenges that which is already deemed done and relegated to the past; 'settled.'⁶⁶

In the case of Oka, the refusal to relegate colonialism to the past meant asserting a collective political will and autonomy that could enunciate an alternative to the normal state of order. The Mohawk's political mobilization at Oka goes beyond refusing to place settlement in the past; it addresses the conflict between settlement and indigeneity in the *contemporary* moment. Thus, the politics of refusal commented on by Simpson brings settler-colonialism and a Native subject of political struggle into the present. The normative, ordering vision of the present is contested by demonstrating the historical contingency of that vision as well as the continued presence of alternative histories.⁶⁷ The concept of 'refusal' helps to elucidate the importance of (contested) temporalit[ies]y to indigenous political contestations of settler-colonialism. Considering the political dimension of temporality helps to frame how the MMIW movement is drawing attention to the continued presence of colonial violence, by re-presenting the eventful crisis of gendered murder and disappearance as the present's logical and intelligible manifestation of historical processes of colonialism. Emphasizing the legibility of causation

⁶⁶ Ibid, 12.

⁶⁷ In a recorded panel conversation on Black Lives Matter in 2015, the poet and scholar Fred Moten described the murder of Eric Garner by the NYPD as an instance of broken window policing. Discussing how the police disallowed Garner from exuding/embodying a particular form of activity and mode of being, Moten said: "to fix a broken window is to fix another way of imagining the world." While Moten's discussion is rooted in a conversation on Blackness, which I do not wish to conflate with indigenous refusal, there is an affinity in their shared expression of the lived presence of an alternative order. Critical Resistance, "Do Black Lives Matter?: Robin D.G. Kelley and Fred Moten in Conversation," Vimeo, last modified January 6, 2015, accessed April 30, 2019, <https://vimeo.com/116111740>.

means that allocating responsibility implicates a much larger and more radical demand for transformation.

The distinction made by highlighting structure as opposed to event is thus an incredibly important one, begging the question: What is made possible (futures, actions, ways of being) by rejecting the narrative of suddenness which frames the problem as an occurrence without history? Audra Simpson expands on the point in an acute condemnation of the Canadian government's portrayal and response to MMIW and those seeking to draw attention to it:

But states [] are built upon violence and still act violently, either at a bureaucratic level, at an economic level... or through a violent indifference — which we saw well with that governments unwillingness to launch an inquiry into [MMIW]. This was an unwillingness that is absolutely of a piece with [Prime Minister] Harper's August 19, 2014 statement that the problem of [MMIW] should be understood as a "crime" (rather than sociology). As a crime it appears to have no context no structure animating it, no materiality besides a legal transgression - thus the appearance of death after a murderous act, with a perpetrator, a victim and a clear punishable transgression of a moral and legal code. This is an individuated, judicable act — justice can be served.⁶⁸

The categorization of 'crime' serves as a mechanism which reduces a singular moment of a process to a discrete, isolated action. A victim is affected by a perpetrator who, it is imagined, will be brought to trial and punished for their act of wrongdoing. Why does Simpson suggest instead that such acts be considered as a "sociology?" A possible answer is that "sociology" frames actors within their larger context, enabling a macro perspective that makes larger patterns

⁶⁸ Audra Simpson, "The State Is a Man: Theresa Spence, Loretta Saunders and the Gender of Settler Sovereignty," *Theory & Event* 19, no. 4, Johns Hopkins University Press, (2016): 4.

visible. By invoking the socio- she suggests that these criminal acts exist within something beyond the individual, are in fact manifestations of a larger phenomenon. Alternatively, “crime” isolates in order for punishment to respond, rather than addressing the problem at its root source. It is a society-level, relational scale that Simpson seeks to draw attention to in the above passage and in her previously quoted evocation of Patrick Wolfe.⁶⁹

Considering the problem as structural, and thus ongoing, makes prevention necessary, since isolated adjudications or responses will fail to address perpetration. However, what is the root source and how might an alternative to prosecution, such as prevention or reparation, fit into Simpson’s model? Simpson insinuates that there is causality in the demographic position of the missing and murdered women. Emphasis on positions is made explicit in the earlier quote from Simpson in which she states that settler colonialism is a “structure... with beneficiaries as well as subjects.” Such positions exist within a larger network of interactions, which structure and position them relationally. This perspective perceives isolated actors to be operating within larger categories such as ‘woman’ and ‘indigenous’ or ‘male’ and ‘settler/white,’ which are themselves relational to one another. Any attempt at prevention must consider and transform these relations.

How does one pinpoint the existence of a structure, and subsequent location of these relations, within the chaos of everyday life? Many authors writing on the MMIW movement give a resounding answer by turning to the direction of History, in particular that which is embodied in legal codes.

⁶⁹ Scholar Sarah Deer also employs the terminology of “structure” in her framing of the sexual violence committed against native women. Deer, *The Beginning and End of Rape*, xiv, xvii.

A thorough guide to this legal history is Amy Casselman's *Injustice in Indian Country*. Casselman directly approaches the topic of MMIW, providing an outline which demonstrates a continuity from the initial colonial encounter, defined by acts of expropriation and genocide, and into the ongoing present. The journals of early conquistadors are cited and quoted at length, giving an autobiographical mind to the colonial logic itself. We read shameless accounts of assault, rape and murder perpetrated against indigenous women, and are handed the authorial-colonizer's glasses from which to view these moments and the people they involve. Casselman provides such accounts so as to demonstrate the construal of indigenous women as 'savage,' erotic, dangerous, and lacking any sovereignty over their own bodies so to be deemed "unrapeable" i.e. available to be subjected to rape.⁷⁰ Casselman explains the contemporary, US, context by way of demonstrating that Native women have made 'available,' and exploitable in the contemporary moment due, in large part, to the configuration and legacy of numerous legal statutes enacted by the Federal Government with regard to indigenous people, their communities, governments, and land.

The Major Crimes Act of 1885 gave the federal government legal jurisdiction over 'major crime' cases that occurred in Indian Territory.⁷¹ The Dawes Act of 1887 dismantled the ownership over land held by tribes, concerting collectively held territory into individuated

⁷⁰ Casselman, *Injustice in Indian Country*, 60.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 31.

property.⁷² Audra Simpson discusses the way in which the Dawes Act served as a vessel for implementation of European-modeled patriarchal relations of ownership, inheritance, and membership.⁷³ At the time of its passing, those who in charge of designing and enacting the act openly vocalized that its primary function was to appropriate Indian lands. The effect this had on legal jurisdiction remains viscerally felt, in that the allotment system enabled formerly uniform Native land to become interspersed throughout with settler, state, and federally owned land, a phenomenon dubbed “checkerboarding.”⁷⁴

In 1953, during the Termination Era described in the last chapter, Public Law 280 (PL 280) was passed, giving states criminal jurisdiction despite the fact that “previous legal statutes had guaranteed Native Nations freedom from State jurisdiction.”⁷⁵ PL 280 emerged in part from conditions created by the Major Crimes Act which had given legal authority to the Federal Government, which was distant and unresponsive. Despite the reshuffling of authority granted by PL 280, states received no additional funding when legal jurisdiction was allocated to them.⁷⁶

The last landmark case of the 20th century discussed by Casselman is *Oliphant v. Suquamish Indian Tribe* 1978. In this case a non-native resident was alleged to commit assault against a Native resident. The assailant appealed the initial case to the Supreme Court which ruled that Native Nations did not have the right to arrest or prosecute non-natives.⁷⁷ This was

⁷² Ibid, 34.

⁷³ Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 115-157.

⁷⁴ Casselman, *Injustice in Indian Country*, 34.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 35.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 36.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 37.

ruled despite treaty rights stating the contrary. Casselman quotes Indian Legal scholar Pevar, who writes, “Today, thanks to Oliphant, non-Indians know that practically no-one has criminal jurisdiction over them on the Indian reservations.”⁷⁸ Native authorities are often powerless to adjudicate crime committed by non-natives, and federal courts often dismiss giving such cases attention.⁷⁹

The amalgamation of these laws dictating Indian Nations’ land, people, and criminal authority has produced a condition of vulnerability and negligence in which the process of figuring out jurisdiction over a particular case can take weeks to even months. It is undeniable that these measures have created conditions in which violence can be committed. Giving a portrait of the negligence and disregard created by the legal architecture outlined above, in 2007 Michael Riley wrote in an article for the Denver Post:

“And a sexual-predator profile of [the perpetrator] warned that he should never be allowed to be alone with children, including his own, or live “near places designed for children, such as schools, playgrounds (or) swimming pools.” But Tom was never charged with a felony crime. That’s because here, as on the majority of the country’s nearly 300 Indian reservations, the sole authority to prosecute felony crime lies with the federal government. One hundred fifty miles away in Spokane, an assistant U.S. attorney – faced with a distant case and a 7-year-old witness – simply declined to prosecute, something that crime data show they do in 65 percent of all reservation cases.”⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Ibid, 39.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 56.

⁸⁰ Michael Riely, "Promises, Justice Broken," *The Denver Post*, last modified November 10, 2007, accessed April 29, 2019, <https://www.denverpost.com/2007/11/10/promises-justice-broken/>.

Zooming outwards to emphasize the magnitude at which this disregard occurs: “Between 1997 and 2006, federal prosecutors rejected nearly two-thirds of the reservation cases brought to them by FBI and Bureau of Indian Affairs investigators, more than twice the rejection rate for all federally prosecuted crime.”⁸¹ Essentially, violence and crime occurs with impunity when these local communities are stripped of their capacity to take judicial action.

The Denver Post article on sexual violence against indigenous women and the failure and disregard of existing jurisdictional measure were among some of the earlier reporting I found on this topic, concomitantly with Amnesty International’s 2007 report *Maze of Injustice* and reporting by NPR. It is important to note that as far as I could uncover, major news sources in the US first began using the term MMIW in May of 2016. The term was used earlier in Canada, although I was unable to locate an exact origin. Since then, and particularly over the past two years, there has been a proliferation of local marches held nationally in response to the murder and disappearance of indigenous women, and the topic’s media exposure has rapidly increased. While the term is explicitly linked to current political mobilizations and legislative measures, there was legislation effecting law enforcement and jurisdiction over tribal land prior to the emergence of MMIW as a mass discourse in the US context. Two 21st Century pieces of legislation, the Tribal Law and Order Act (TLOA) passed in 2010 and Title IX of the reauthorized Violence Against Women Act of 2013 (VAWA), followed the mid 2000’s reporting and organizing that drew connections between egregious levels of violence effecting native women and the legal obstacles shaping the crippled capacities of tribal jurisdiction.

⁸¹ Ibid.

The two acts are of significant importance because their introduction was explicitly framed as a means of redress and remedy. Both the content and methods of the reform has been the subject of heated debate. The narratives of promise and progress with which they were introduced is undoubtedly distinct from the previous centuries' legislation described above. This novel presentation is made explicit by Casselman when she opens her discussion of TLOA with an epigraph quoting former US president Barack Obama at the signing of the act: "I know too often, this community has heard grand promises from Washington that turned out to be little more than empty words. And I pledged to you then that you give me a chance, this time would be different."⁸²

The TLOA was drafted with consultation rather than co-authorship of tribal representatives. It expands data collection on sexual violence and reporting on federal declination of cases; however, some have criticized emphasizing data production rather than developing modes of addressing the root cause of jurisdictional inadequacies. Another measure of the act was the creation of an Office of Tribal Justice alongside several liaison positions between federal, state, tribal governments intended to improve communication to remediate lack of coordination, clarity, and responsiveness between agencies. However, this too has been criticized for essentially centering the federal government itself and giving it operational power in response to inefficiencies created by its own past legislative crippling of native jurisdictional authority and powers.⁸³ Lastly, the act proclaims funds available for tribal justice systems, but in the form of grants. Besides lacking an actual guarantee of the availability of this money, applying

⁸² Casselman, *Injustice in Indian Country*, 79.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 83.

for the grants requires accepting standards for their allocation such as that they be received or directed in the form of police weaponry and juvenile detention centers.⁸⁴ Furthermore, the authority it expands for tribal law enforcement is predicated upon their conformity to American legal codes. Prior to the TLOA, judicial capacities were dictated by the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 (ICRA) which limited the length of sentencing and capped the size of fines that tribal justice systems could enact. The TLOA expands these minimums but upon the condition of further conforming measures to state law and court procedures. Casselman argues that this contingency, along with the initial limits, is a direct assault on native sovereignty, which denies tribal governments' and people the authority to practice justice in their communities as independent political nations.

The VAWA expands native law enforcement capacity to penalize under certain conditions, depending on the type of crime (domestic vs. non-domestic) and the relation of the perpetrator to the victim's community ("significant ties" vs. stranger). "Considering that the U.S. Department of Justice's own reports reveal that strangers perpetrate the majority of sexual assault against Native women, using pre-existing relationship status to determine jurisdiction is significantly limiting."⁸⁵ In other words, the act fails to give tribal judicial bodies authority over the group shown to be the most prevalent perpetrator. When 86% of reported rape and sexual assault against native women is committed by non-natives, the measures allowed by VAWA maintain a precedent which specifically provides settler's with impunity, while impelling tribal

⁸⁴ Ibid, 84.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 108.

judicial bodies to enact a US model of punishment and policing upon indigenous community members.

This latter point is exemplified by the fact that the jurisdiction it grants for tribal governments to prosecute non-Natives rests not only on specific circumstances of the crime and the relation between perpetrator and victim, but also requires that tribal governments conform to American juridical standards and procedures. The TLAO and VAWA perpetuate a patronizing relation founded upon the narrative of indigenous wildness, savagery, and irrationality requiring the civilizing hand of the settler state to order, rationalize, and make safe. Building from this critique, Casselman argues that alternative strategies, which do not rest upon the US Federal Governments recognition and patronage, should be sought for protecting Native women from violence. She writes: “Jurisdictional conflicts are rooted in [] colonial violence... anti-violence strategies in Indian country must employ decolonial solutions and cannot come solely from the federal government.”⁸⁶

However, when discussing the TLAO and VAWA, Casselman also argues that the concept of “differential consciousness” is useful for understanding the ways in which activists can be critical of the bill while simultaneously recognizing and supporting the utility it does still offer.⁸⁷ Essentially, differential consciousness rejects a dichotomy of either-or when developing solutions and fighting for change. It is a way to “strategically navigate... seemingly oppositional power structures... not as a ‘quick fix,’ but instead as a framework from which [Native women] can

⁸⁶ Ibid, 117.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 91-92, 118.

base future activism both within *and* outside of existing institutions.”⁸⁸ Casselman argues: “radical solutions that preclude any use of federal policy to address violence in Indian country are themselves deeply marginalizing.”⁸⁹

This discussion gets to the heart of important questions about the nature of colonial violence and how juridical legislation pieces into it. These movements return attention to the points made by the MMIW Women’s March organizer Roxanne White, quoted above: indigenous persons, and most directly women, share a visceral experience of loss and “the knowledge that there’s no justice system for us.”⁹⁰ As the source of this shared understanding, is the “structure” of settler-colonialism and the relation of violence it entails just legal? Where else can a structure be pinpointed and how might MMIW respond to its manifestations beyond legislative and jurisdictional measure? In the following section I will discuss contemporary developments made within the MMIW movement. These steps continue to raise questions of jurisdiction and legislation while moving to address and articulate the structural violence in alternate forms as well.

⁸⁸ Casselman, *Injustice in Indian Country* 91-92
Casselmann credits the concept to Chela Sandoval: Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 91.

⁹⁰ Chin, Frohne, and Hansen, "Video: Follow," *The Seattle Times*.

In March of 2019, A *Seattle Times* report highlighted a connection between an MMIW protest, held in Seattle the same weekend as the third annual Women’s March, and a report published three months prior by the Seattle Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI),⁹¹ which had identified Seattle as the US city with the highest number of missing or murdered indigenous women cases.⁹² Speaking inside city hall to an audience from the MMIW protest, Seattle Councilwoman Kshama Sawant can be heard directly quoting statistics from the report in a video recording from the march tagged #MMIW.⁹³ The UIHI report orients attention on MMIW towards a specific direction, making a noteworthy contribution. The insertion this report makes can be gleaned from its explicit, typographic presentation of the topic. On the opening page of the report, the following title “A Nationwide *Data* Crisis: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls” is written with the word “data” displayed in a different font, scrawled above with an arrow pointing between the words “nationwide” and “crisis.” The effect is to mark an insertion into an existing discourse.

The report contributes to MMIW discourse by expanding on ‘disappearance’ in order to emphasize three aspects in which Native women and girls are missing: from life, data, and media. In particular, it emphasizes a lack of systemacity in police methods of classifying Native people and the failure of any law enforcement body to enter missing Native women into national records of missing persons. The report attributes the omission of Native women from national

⁹¹ Annita Lucchesi and Abigail Echo-Hawk, "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls," *Urban Indian Health Institute*, last modified February 28, 2019, accessed April 29,

⁹² Bettina Hansen, "Seattle Marchers Call for Justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women," *The Seattle Times*, last modified January 20, 2019, accessed March 4, 2019, <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/seattle-womens-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-march/>.

⁹³ <https://www.facebook.com/emmapeel.washington/videos/2259121074368773/>

databases to discriminatory and negligent attitudes towards Native women. It is posited that from the perspective of these attitudes, disappearance is unworthy of attention due to a *belief* that MMIW categorically belong to a group which can be expected to normally engage in “high risk” behavior. Indigenous women slipping through cracks, being hard to locate, is thus viewed as typical, i.e. unexceptional, and this is manifested in official judicial and governmental practices.

Elsewhere, the subject matter of MMIW has been brought up in media directly addressing the topic of data collection and disappearance:

We are also being murdered by those who are charged with protecting us, as natives are killed by police at a higher rate than any other racial or ethnic group, according to statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention... While the path to ending the epidemic of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls is not clear-cut, there are things we can do, and you can help. Encourage your senators and congresspeople to pass legislation that closes the legal loopholes that allow perpetrators to roam free and prey on native women and to push for increases in funding and database access for tribes to help fight the problem on the ground.⁹⁴

Evidently, visibility is an important subject taken up in the responses to and vocalization of MMIW. As the above quote indicates by its reference to “legal loopholes,” disappearance is the outcome of a history of jurisdictional limits placed on tribal governments and larger affronts against indigenous sovereignty. Recently, a piece of legislation known as The Savanna’s Act was introduced in order to expand and develop law enforcement procedures of data classification,

⁹⁴ Ruth Hopkins, "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Need Your Support," *Teen Vogue*, last modified January 20, 2018, accessed April 30, 2019, <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/murder-and-missing-indigenous-women-need-your-support>.

entry, and communication so as to promote a more comprehensive and accessible collection of data on Native people, especially women. In 2018 the Savanna's Act was introduced and passed through the US Senate but halted in the House of Representatives.⁹⁵ Specifically, the act contains measures intended to improve tribal access to "local, regional, State, and Federal crime information databases and criminal justice information systems," as well as improve the incorporation of Tribal enrollment classification into data entry systems, and develop standardized guidelines for law enforcement's responses to missing and murdered Indian women.⁹⁶ The demands put forth in the UIHI report and the Savanna's Act call for practices which make disappearance visible through data, while calling attention to the jurisdictional and legislative sources of these conditions of absence and neglect.

It is clear that there is great momentum behind the framing of MMIW in terms of jurisdictional inadequacy and indigenous sovereignty. These diagnoses have at times lent themselves to calls for expanding the judicial, penal, and data collection capacities of governing authorities, both tribal and Federal. The lines of recourse developed in Savanna's Act have been supported and pushed forward by many involved with the MMIW movement. However, in the breath of MMIW, some of those involved or in dialogue are resistant to the search for juridical responses to violence against Native women. In her book *Conquest*, Andrea Smith is one of many who vocalizes a critique of judicial and penal based solution to this issue. She writes:

"There is a contradiction, however, in relying upon the state to solve problems it is responsible

⁹⁵ "[Goodlatte] removed all grant-related incentives in the "compliance" section and removed the stipulation that the U.S. Attorney General's office would "disclose and publish" the law enforcement agencies that did not adhere to the guidelines found in Savanna's Act." Nick Martin, "Savanna's Act Is Back," *Splinter News*, last modified January 28, 2019, accessed April 30, 2019, <https://splinternews.com/savannas-act-is-back-1832124293>.

⁹⁶ U.S. Congress, Senate, Savanna's Act, S. 227, 116th Cong., 1st sess., introduced in Senate January 25, 2019, <https://www.congress.gov/116/bills/s227/BILLS-116s227is.pdf>.

for creating.”⁹⁷ Lending to Smith’s criticism of legal solutions to violence against native women is her historical analysis of gratuitous violence which forms her argument for the centrality of gendered violence to colonization. In *Johnson vs. McIntosh*, Chief Justice John Marshall ruled that native people were incapable of owning land and similarly, Smith argues, colonization perpetuated a treatment of Native women as unrapable due to their lack of sovereignty over their own bodies.

While Smith’s critique is without a doubt apt and necessary, I would like to think carefully about particular MMIW activities in order to consider whether they may fit Casselman’s frame of “differential consciousness.” The MMIW Women’s March protest in Seattle, and the report affiliated with it, crystalize an ongoing and larger field of conversation and action, giving voice to distinct framings and directing responses to the issue at hand towards precise lines of focus. The emphasis on data is itself a particular point of attention to frame and share the experiences which comprise MMIW as a ‘topic,’ ‘issue,’ or ‘phenomenon.’ The data sets and practices of collection serve as a microcosm, not just a lens, because the production, and not only content, of the data is shaped by the conditions it seeks to address. In other words, describing the forces that shape the dataset articulates the forces that shape the social landscape it is meant to represent. Rather than simply narrowing the scope of attention (from nationwide scope to specific datasets), a critical and reflexive account of knowledge production can serve to disambiguate and articulate the complex composition of the topic. Recognizing this possibility enables us to see that the data can make visible the historically architected structure of tribal legal jurisdiction and the processes of indigenous elimination. The perspective it provides goes

⁹⁷ Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (n.p.: Duke University Press, 2015), 139.

beyond the judicial critique in order to illuminate the colonial legacy and nature of sexual violence against native women. For example, the UIHI report brings to light the ideological biases of law enforcement bodies who ignore cases of indigenous women, giving contemporary resonance to Smith's emphasis on objectification and dehumanization. The Denver Post article provides similar evidence with the data on the negligence of juridical bodies to even address cases. In essence, the data framing and mode of addressing the larger topic explicitly posits a form of politics. It allows for responsibility to be attributed in an open way. When founded upon the frame of structural causation, political action cannot be limited to, but is capable of addressing legal, judicial codes.

In *The Beginning and End of Rape* Sarah Deer directly discusses the collection of data and statistics relating to the experience of rape and domestic violence amongst Native women, (conceived as a singular group). Her commentary takes stock of both the content and place of these practices within a larger landscape of responses to sexual violence in Native communities. She addresses the recently heightened attention given to the abnormal rates and forms of sexual violence, as well as the accompanying propagation of responses that critique, question, and dismiss those measurements. While the statistics are consistent in their portrayal of high degrees of sexual violence, which she amongst many others notes is certainly an undercount, her intention is not to defend empirical validity. Quoting Dr. Ronet Bachman, a statistician who has done extensive work related to national studies on violence against Native women, Deer writes, "The limited resources that are available would be better invested in developing intervention and prevention programs."⁹⁸ Deer further gives voice to the limits of a quantitative handling of the

⁹⁸ Deer, *The Beginning and End of Rape*, 9.

situation, arguing that National-scale statistics don't offer much in the way of specific, usable knowledge for individual communities and tribal governments to understand and respond to their local contexts. She expresses frustration with the favoring of 'the quantitative' in the amplification of political voice, and further addresses the shortcomings of such ways of knowing in regard to the context at hand: "It is, of course, impossible for statistics themselves to convey the incredible amount of pain and trauma experienced by survivors of rape."⁹⁹

This critique is one I find well-founded; it gets to the heart of many of the problems I have covered and criticized with regard to legislation such as TLAO, which expands federal involvement yet fails to remove the obstacles created by the federal government that limit local native communities from governing themselves. However, with all due respect to Deer, I would like to argue that she is criticizing a specific *use* of data; it is a use that fits into a model of politics which conceives, and attempts to conduct, its activity as governmental rule. Deer emphasizes the incomplete and impersonal relation to experience that such a method imposes. I argue this is not necessarily derivative of one particular method of action or representation, but rather articulates a dissatisfaction with the divided, top-down relationship between governance and governed that circumscribes the application of that method. I would like to explore the possibility that the MMIW movement I have discussed provides an alternative form and use of politics and data that goes beyond the limitations raised by both Smith and Deer: the legislative trap which inflates techniques of administrative governances, and the problem of impersonal representation — data's incapacity as a medium to address the intimacy and intensity of

⁹⁹ Ibid, 11.

violence. I hope to consider the alternative that methodological technologies do not necessarily define the form and social constitution of the practice they create.

My arrival to this last point began with arguing that politics involves responsibility and collectivity. In this chapter I have used Audra Simpson's discussion of violence against indigenous women to articulate MMIW's politicization and its implication of structural causation. In order to outline how structure has been grounded and demonstrated, I gave one example through Amy Casselman's history of the legal and judicial obstruction of tribal nations. I then considered Andrea Smith and Sarah Deer's criticisms of MMIW tactics and solutions based in government legislation and technical, demographic knowledge. I argued that their criticisms are better understood as responses to a politics that takes the form of autocratic governance, rather than dismissals or refutations of specific methods and practices.

Data collection holds the possibility to contain both senses of politicization with which I originally described the MMIW movement: responsibility and collectivity. Responsibility is political not simply because it implies a relation of wrongdoing, retribution, or duty; rather, its political content derives from it inherently insisting upon a relation between person and world, and this relation then imposing an influence or structure upon future action. In this chapter I have demonstrated how responsibility is attributed through the concept of "structure." Participants within the MMIW movement developed and applied this frame, even if un-explicitly, in their rejections of both 'legislating over' (rather than overturning) and impersonal representation. Their insistence upon responsibility for the disappearance of native women, and their unwillingness to settle for limited framings of causation, shifts action and imagination away from governance to mutual acknowledgement and collective participation. In the following chapter I

will examine MMIW's alternative to politics as governmental rule through a close analysis of how the second aspect of politics I posited above — collective action — has been formulated and enacted in the movement.

Chapter 3

The corner of Cal Anderson Park snaps into focus with the start of the video livestream. It's typical January weather in Seattle. The camera can't pick up any visible rain but the gray sky emanates its winter haze and every surface is dark and damp. The camera view turns as the person filming walks onto the slick turf soccer field and into a maze of huddled groups. Voices and laughter call out and conversations bubble into audibility then sink back into the murmur of the crowd. Most protesters are wearing sweatshirts or wind breakers over red hoods, scarves, or shirts. Several women wear red dresses beneath their coats. The red pieces of clothing are an established symbol of acknowledgement, solidarity, and honoring of the missing and murdered indigenous women whom the gathering is for.¹⁰⁰ The camera moves to an opening where a massive sign lays on the ground, reading in large red letters: "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Washington #MMIW."

The person filming moves onward, drifting over to woman in a red dress. She is speaking to what is only visible as an outstretched disembodied arm holding a microphone and a woman's voice asking questions. The woman in the dress answers saying:¹⁰¹

"My name is Roxanne White and I'm one of the organizers for this march... today we're representing MMIW and we're coming together in solidarity to raise awareness..."

¹⁰⁰ "The Red Dress has been used for years in Canada as a symbol of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. For many Nations and tribes, the color red is also a sacred one." Marykate Jasper, "Why Marchers Wore Red for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women at the 2018 Women's March," *The Mary Sue*, last modified January 21, 2018, accessed April 30, 2019, <https://www.themarysue.com/indigenous-mmiw-womens-march-2018/>. Also see: Lauren Gambino, "REDress Exhibit Highlights Epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women," *The Guardian*, last modified March 7, 2019, accessed April 30, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/07/redress-exhibit-dc-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women>.

¹⁰¹ I have edited and cut the following dialogue

“Many people think that this is a situation that is-- missing and murdered indigenous women came like to national awareness in Canada, but it's also here in the United States. We don't have a database system setup here. We don't have a lot of support from the system on the state level, federal level, city any of those levels because jurisdictional reasons... It's like we don't exist”

Near the end of the exchange, the interviewer asks: “Anything else you'd like to say?”

“This is about the families. This has never been about anyone else than the families and those that are still looking for their loved ones and still waiting to hear and get services and help from the state and the county and the system itself that has pushed us aside like we don't exist”

The interview ends and the outstretched arm is now speaking to a woman who identifies herself as Mellissa Kicking Woman. She is holding a poster with a picture of a woman and the printed words: “Ashley Heavy Runner Losing/Missing since June 2017/Blackfeet Tribe Montana”

Q: “what is it like to get it out there, there is a problem?”

A: “My heart's racing right now thinking about it. I want to get it out there because you know it's a feeling you don't want. You don't want it in your own home. And to get it out there for her [Ashley] and for all these people, it's the greatest feeling”

Q: Did you participate in any of the marches in Montana last year

A: “No, no we didn't, because I guess we didn't see it then. Now we see it

Q: What does it feel like to do this?

A: It feels really good and it's heartbreaking. I feel like I might breakdown. I feel really good that we're here and we get to do this in honor of her [Ashley]

A song is sung during which several drums are played, afterwards cough drops are passed around. A P.A. system gets set up and Roxanne White calls the crowd to gather. On the edge of the field a group of organizers and families have carved out an opening between themselves and the crowd. The large sign formerly seen laying on the ground now stands upright and above the group.

Roxanne White speaks into a mic: "All the families right here, we want you to know that you are the reason we're here. Please center yourselves right here.... I want to say forgive us. We're trying to do this in a very respectful way." Pointing past the gathering and over the fence, "They start up, they're giving us the mic in fifteen minutes. But because we have ceremonial stuff, we're going to start right now, because that's what we need to do. We came here and we have ceremonies to begin with so can I please get our Duwamish grandmother Cecil Hansen?

"I can't get a hold of her"

"Can you do it then?"

"Yeah"

"Okay, so —"

"I'm not gonna use the mic though"

"Okay —"

"Yeah, I'm not gonna use the mic"

[Begins by speaking to crowd in another language, about 20 seconds]

“To all you people, out there, my name is Kwata Kwo [approximation]...I am Duwamish and I live in Seattle. My grandmother is Cecil Hansen. She wanted to make it today to-to thank everyone, for being here. To honor the families that are missing loved one... because we know. WE KNOW What THAT FEELS LIKE. WE KNOW... THE WOMAN. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WOMAN. WE KNOW. AND IT ANGERS ME... [White wiping eyes] I didn’t want to speak today, but I have to. And I’m sorry. I have to speak today. Because our women are important. Our families are important and we shouldn’t have To WORRY about LOSING them like this... [Pausing for several seconds turns to gathered families raises hands. A sign is attached to the back of his sweatshirt that reads “LISTEN TO WOMEN.” Voices call out and a drum beats] I want to welcome everyone here on behalf of the Duwamish people. I want to thank everyone for being here on behalf of the Duwamish people. No matter where you’re at, if you can hear me way back there or not I welcome you here. I’m here... to support and stand in solidarity with the women that walk this earth. Especially the indigenous women that were HERE FIRST. These are my sisters, my aunts, my grandmothers. I was raised by woman. My son will be raised by woman. His kids will be raised by woman. These are our teaching these are our ways so I’m here to support of them. This is all. [Turning to Roxanne White] I apologize.”

After embracing one another, White speaks into the mic: “Thank you — so, as you can see this is very personal to many of us and um I want to introduce myself in my traditional way...”

Following the moments transcribed above, a song was performed then the group moved to a main stage nearby in order to speak to the full crowd. Likely because of poor wireless coverage, the footage begins to cut out and skip following the first speaker. In a way, it serves as a strange rendition of what a memory of a protest might be; the beginning and ends of speeches and different speakers jump from one to the next. Without the moment of initiation captured, the crowd is suddenly moving through the city streets, the background of bodies and buildings and pavement jumping several city-blocks at a time, almost unnoticeably. The trajectory remains unclear, seemingly fragmented, but the consistent buzz of emotion is still tangible even through a computer a screen over a year later.

The march described above happened in 2018. As indicated in the dialogue, the MMIW movement was only recently coming to awareness for participants such as Mellissa Kicking Woman, and organizers such as Roxanne White were bringing up the absence of a national database in the US. One year after the events depicted above, the Facebook page description of the Seattle Women's MMIW March 2019 explicitly mentioned the absence of a comprehensive national database on missing or murdered indigenous people. Furthermore, it included a reference to the MMIWG database [described below], as well as the findings from the UIHI report described in the last chapter, and listed Abigail Echo-Hawk, the report's coauthor, as a featured speaker. Clearly, the physical gathering of the MMIW movement was taking seriously the absence of national data collection as they came together to articulate and address violence against indigenous women.

The previous chapter explored the ways in which the source of this violence was articulated in terms of ‘structure.’ This conceptual move raises the question: how can a group, political movement, or theorist demonstrate the existence of a structure and furthermore illustrate that it acts as a causal force upon their experience? I discussed how some have located structure in a legible form by way of legal history, while perhaps recognizing that such an identification discerns only one emergent property amongst many. This emphasis on law is criticized by some because of the limitations it implies for the agency and orientation of political action. Concurrent to the legal facing side of the movement, MMIW advocates are developing practices of data collection. I began to discuss the functions and significances these might hold. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the absence of a national database on MMIW in some ways serves as a catalyst to articulate indigenous women as a collective subject in the context of a particular shared struggle.

Roxanne White recapitulates the last point during the interview captured in the archived Facebook live video from 2018, when she tells her interviewer about the absence of a national database in the US. Simultaneously, she urges that the march is first and foremost about honoring the families whose loved ones were missing or murdered. Thus, within the MMIW women’s marches there exists both the programmatic call for data collection alongside an emphasis on the felt experience of violence. The latter is made explicit by the depiction of the march and the MMIW movement as the formation of a collectivity to acknowledge and honor the loss this violence produces. By tracing the movement from protest to database in my analysis, I demonstrate that felt experience serves as the basis for knowledge production (in this case), and

that retaining this form of production generates and maintains the unification and action of this collective.

In the previous chapter, I outlined Sarah Deer's criticism of empirical approaches to redressing the mass scale at which indigenous women are murdered and go missing. Deer's skepticism about impersonal representations raises an important question for the MMIW movement. Her condemnation of representational distance suggests that there is a tension when the protest organizers emphasize and promote practices of data collection. Yet, it is clear that they also acknowledge and participate in the felt experience, emotion, and suffering of MMIW. How can the raw emotion of Kwata Kwo, when he yells "we know" to the crowd, be transferred to a call for a database?

These words, "we know," are transmitted out to the crowd (and camera) through a voice emanating an intensity of emotion that is difficult to translate from sound and sight into words. The meaning of the words affirms not only a collectivity through the use of "we," but also a shared knowledge, which is furthermore compounded with, and perhaps exists as, a feeling: "we know what that feels like. We know." Kwata Kwo also provides evidence to that feeling by grounding his experience personally: "I was raised by woman. My son will be raised by woman." Separately, Melissa Kicking Woman describes the feeling she, or the more inclusive subject pronoun "you," experiences as a result of the murder and disappearance of her loved ones. In her speech there is a movement from the private to the inclusive, from the particular to the general, just as with Kwata Kwo's: "*My heart's racing right now thinking about it. I want to get it out there because you know it's a feeling you don't want. You don't want it in your own home [emphasis added].*" She narrates her experiences through her individual self and also grounds

them in terms of emotion, an inherently personal experience. Yet, this is not a politics bounded to solipsism. Her use of “my” and “I” provides grounds which lead to collective knowledge. The articulation of affect through the pronoun “I” creates a bridge which leads to a knowledge that can be held by “you,” and hence by ‘us.’

Moreover, Kicking Woman reveals not only the difficult burden of bearing this feeling privately, but furthermore maintains that the feeling better belongs in public, and that in fact bringing it to this plane provides some form of catharsis: “You don’t want it in your own home. And to get it out there for her [Ashley] and for all these people, it’s the greatest feeling.” However, gathering at the march is not only a release of private feeling. This feeling is also conceptualized and located so as to be, it would seem, hopefully quelled or at least prevented from spreading further. When Kwata Kwo says, “we shouldn’t have To WORRY about LOSING them [our families] like this...” he is emphasizing the wrongness of this feeling, suggesting the need to prevent its continuity and perpetuation. In other words, he asserts that murder and disappearance must be prevented. This helps to avoid a misinterpretation of Kicking Woman’s words that would view the march as an end in and of itself. The nature of the feeling itself indicates the wrongness of its causal source which should thus be curbed. Making it shared knowledge produces a collective subject to pursue this project.

Recognizing the coexistence of catharsis and mobilization provides a bigger picture for viewing the MMIW movement’s motion from protest march to other actions. How can action be pursued by this collectivity without threatening the integrity of the personal which generates the basis for its unity? Recognizing this danger make some of the difficulties MMIW encounters more vivid, especially those it confronts when it moves its course of action into the US judicial

realm. Collective action is pursued in response to a shared understanding of experience, but that experience is made sharable at the personal level. Thus, handing the problem over to those who aren't part of the "we" threatens to dissolve the basis upon which the problem is known. The risks of this are apparent without even getting into the problematic of which actors are deemed responsible for creating the problem.

I now turn to an alternate articulation of MMIW collectivity, continuing to deal with the relationship between experience and knowledge through the form of shared affect. A particularly relevant example can be drawn out by exploring the work of Annita Lucchesi (Southern Cheyenne descendent) who is the second coauthor of the MMIW report published by the Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI), alongside Abigail Echo-Hawk (Pawnee), the featured speaker of the 2019 MMIW Women's March. Echo-Hawk reached out to Lucchesi about collaborating on the report after seeing the work she had done setting up her own MMIW database independently. Lucchesi began the database as a doctoral student when she was looking for information and numbers on MMIW. Speaking to the press, she discussed her initial experience of trying to make sense of what she could find: "The more numbers you try to find, none of them match," ... While databases exist, she said, "they all collect different kinds of things and so if you're trying

to make sense of this issue, you're going to look at 50 different places (and) the more confused you're going to get.”¹⁰²

This experience led Lucchesi to focus on the data itself as an inadequacy to be addressed in combatting the problem of missing and murdered indigenous women.¹⁰³ She moved forward with this through her own work in two ways. First, she started her own national database and secondly, began a project of map making, cartography being her trained profession.

Lucchesi’s creation of a national database and her map production distinguishes itself from the calls for expanding existing measurement procedures, such as the Savanna’s Act discussed in the previous chapter. Although Lucchesi may be in support of such measures, she takes care in her own work to develop practices that are distinct from those being introduced in US Federal and State government. Describing her own work, it would seem that Lucchesi experienced a reaction to data collection similar to Sarah Deer: ““reducing peoples very real experience of violence into data points alone felt gross.”¹⁰⁴ However, she sought to navigate a path that could employ data’s utility, while simultaneously avoiding the detached, impersonal reductionism of quantification. This returns us to the question of tension I raised with regard to Kwata Kwo, how do MMIW actors and practices move between expressing emotion to producing knowledge?

¹⁰² Patrick Reilly, "Researcher Discusses Importance of Data for Missing, Murdered Native Women," *Missoulian*, last modified March 25, 2019, accessed April 30, 2019, https://missoulian.com/news/local/researcher-discusses-importance-of-data-for-missing-murdered-native-women/article_d5c412e1-7a0e-5dcb-90ea-6455c6b540a2.html.

¹⁰³ “There’s broad consensus that improving data access is vital to helping law enforcement solve cold cases. Existing studies have shown Native women face far higher rates of violence than their non-Native counterparts, a problem that’s been variously attributed to racism, insufficient resources, jurisdictional gaps between law enforcement agencies, and other factors. But as Lucchesi began researching this issue while a master’s student at Washington State University, she found the underlying data lacking.” Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Mary Pember, "Mapping out Missing and Murdered Native Women: 'I Would Want My Story to Have Meaning,'" *rewire.news*, last modified April 27, 2018, accessed April 30, 2019, <https://rewire.news/article/2018/04/27/mapping-missing-murdered-native-women-want-story-meaning/>.

Piecing together Lucchesi's work and her path of arrival to it, it would seem that she sought to develop a national scope with personal depth. In certain ways it appears as a means of garnering attention so as to move into a public realm of accountability, shedding light upon the particular collective experience of native women as a subject-category, perhaps with the hope of identifying its cause:

Lucchesi says she's shocked at how much data is missing. "And really, it's not just data," she says. "That's someone's relative that's collecting dust somewhere and no one is being held accountable to remember or honor the violence that was perpetrated against her."¹⁰⁵

For MMIW, data is not just important as a means for acquiring proper, reputable scientific measurements. It is first and foremost a basis for developing an understanding that is expansive and deep. It can capture the scope of the issue yet also remain grounded in an attentiveness to the intimate and personal nature of the objects of its representation. In doing so, Lucchesi's praxis are an example of using data that ends the negligent disregard for the missing and murdered.

For many, it might seem that the primary task of a database on violence is to demonstrate the reality of indigenous women's vulnerability, with the aim of constituting this condition as an "issue": "'We already know this is a crisis," he [Ivan MacDonald, cousin of Ashley Loring, missing indigenous woman from Blackfoot tribe] says. "And we don't need statistics to legitimize it for us. We need statistics to legitimize it for everyone that isn't us."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Nate Hegyi, "Doctoral Student Compiles Database of Indigenous Women Who've Gone Missing," *National Public Radio, Inc (US)*, last modified July 21, 2018, accessed April 30, 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2018/07/21/627567789/doctoral-student-compiles-database-of-indigenous-women-who-ve-gone-missing>.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

While Lucchesi frequently speaks publicly about her work so as to gain exposure amongst uninformed audiences, her project is primarily for those directly affected. Her database is not intended to merely “legitimize” the existence of a problem but is more so grounded upon her commitment to addressing the experiential, intimately personal level that the issue operates on. This is exemplified by her choice to keep the data private, making it available only upon request and after further conversation about how it will be used. She has listed the groups that she intends it to be used by as “those who need it most; community members, service providers, tribal governments.”¹⁰⁷ In other word, she seeks to recognize and incorporate the affective knowledge and intensity implied by MMIW into a project that preferences and supports local indigenous communities’ own decisions about how to seek accountability or redress.

One step in overcoming the criticism leveled by Sarah Deer, namely the concern with impersonal representation, occurs methodologically, by including a much more expansive range of information in the database than other metrics provide: “We track everything the community tells us to track, and that changes constantly.”¹⁰⁸ While her database collects typical information such as location, name, type of violence and information about the perpetrator, it also includes tribal affiliation, more detailed information about the victim, whether or not they have family members who are also missing or murdered indigenous women, and it “includes how law enforcement and the court system handled cases; “bureaucratic violence” such as remains being

¹⁰⁷ Native American Student Development Office, ed., "Indigenous United Podcast S:3 Ep:2. Annita Lucchesi: MMIW Database," Soundcloud, last modified February 1, 2019, accessed April 30, 2019, <https://soundcloud.com/user-358151180/indigenous-united-podcast-s-3-ep-2-annita-lucchesi-mmiw-database>. [Interview with UC Berkeley students]

¹⁰⁸ Pember, "Mapping out Missing," rewire.news.

improperly withheld from a victim's family, and whether the victim had children... [And] when community accounts differ from the official record."¹⁰⁹

Lucchesi is cautious of the positivistic reduction of violence and grief that Deer mentions, not only because of the immediate limitations it poses, but also for the contextual and historical implications such a mode of understanding carries. A part of what informs her decision to keep the data closed to the public is the history of academics, researchers, and governments cataloging information on indigenous people so as to "tell us who we are."¹¹⁰ Thus, she takes steps to treat this work with respect:

For Lucchesi, navigating the material is a ceremony. "I think of navigating the data as prayer. Like ceremony, I have attached protocol in its use," she said. "I don't consider myself an owner of this information, but rather a caretaker. I want to ensure that women will be honored by the use of their data."¹¹¹

Lucchesi's self-described relation to the data helps to build a greater understanding of the function and effects of the database's restricted accessibility. She has also documented her rejection of a Canadian federal administrative body that requested access. On a Facebook page dedicated to her work and a small group of collaborators, she posted a screenshot of an email reply sent to a representative from the Canadian Department for Women and Gender Equality. The email she sent reads: "We do not provide any raw data to colonial agencies." In this case the cumulative knowledge produced about MMIW is firmly restricted. As Lucchesi makes clear, it is

¹⁰⁹ Reilly, "Researcher Discusses," *Missoulian*.

¹¹⁰ Native American Student Development Office, "Indigenous United," Soundcloud.

¹¹¹ Pember, "Mapping out Missing," *rewire.news*.

considered sacred because of the fact that it is founded upon deeply felt experiences. What I would like to draw attention to is that the subject of this knowing is a collective, articulated in terms of a “we,” acting as bearer and allocator of knowledge. It is in fact through the production and aggregation of knowledge that private and personal feeling can be transcended, and a social subject constituted. Rather than an erasure, a bridge is constructed between those deeply personal experiences that are felt by individual persons. Furthermore, the sacredness of the data, the sanctity of that bridge, is preserved by maintaining boundaries around that subject of knowing.

A peculiar corollary can be drawn from a case presented by Timothy Mitchell, despite the dynamics being reversed. In his book *The Rule of Experts*, Mitchell makes an argument for the historical transformation of governmental rule with the emergence of the economy as the “new object” of politics during the British colonization of Egypt in the 20th Century.¹¹² As the British sought to bolster their administrative rule and extract wealth from the Egyptian land holding system they grappled with numerous problems of calculation and classification. How were land plots divided? What was the price of food stuffs? How was labor distributed and managed?

The colonial officials’ administrative solutions generated further complications. Problems and setbacks emerged in the form of a cycle of spiraling bureaucratization, specialized technological methods of calculation, and the frustrating inability to produce a total, divorced model which could be held up so as to perfectly represent the real. Much as the officials insisted on the great accuracy and limitless capacities of representation and calculation, their methods were rooted in very real material and social practices. Their practices of “pure” calculation

¹¹² Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-politics, Modernity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012), 26.

altered the reality it claimed to represent and unable to accurately understand and predict the ongoings of production and circulation in Egypt.

First, although economic and statistical knowledge claim... to map this sphere [the economy] with great precision, we should notice what those involved actually do... we should not be misled by their claims into thinking the novelty and usefulness of this knowledge lay in its accuracy. Once more the cadastral survey can illuminate the point.

As we saw, the attraction of the use of mapping was that from now on information about landholding would be contained on the map. To calculate the rate of a holding it was no longer necessary to measure with rods or chains on the ground. Thanks to the accuracy of the map, one could read the measurement from the surface of the map. The site of control and calculation had been transplanted from the field to the office.¹¹³

Mitchell demonstrates in the example of colonial Egypt that the British state's governance did not consist of developing more advanced or competent capacities; the map itself was materially fragile and fallible and the methods of measuring it imprecise. Rather, the significant change consisted of bracketing and relocating the collection, production, and exercise of knowledge so as to accord with their mode of rule.

In the case of the MMIW database, Lucchesi is acting preemptively against this dynamic, recognizing the transference of power that is involved in possession of knowledge. Part of the power that she is refusing to relinquish resides in the social practices embedded into her mode of knowledge production. Mitchell describes the difference between laying rods and chains along the perimeter of farm plots as opposed to measuring a map. With Lucchesi, the difference is

¹¹³ Ibid.

between “track[ing] everything the communities tell us to track” and a US governmental body requesting law enforcement to collect and share criminological data. MMIW wields a power through the social practices that form the foundation of Lucchesi’s methodology and content. It is not just about gathering a different set of knowledge, but the fact that the methodology (what I refer to as “social practices” above) founds MMIW knowledge in feeling. It’s these practices which link feeling and knowledge that make the movement a collective. Restricting the data is thus about how power is used, experienced, and shared — it is a means of preventing the state from subsuming or seizing people’s means to act, which through collectivity exists with some potential independence when organized autonomously.

Given the example from Mitchell, it is fitting that the second component of Lucchesi’s work is an atlas which will compile records of missing and murdered indigenous women into the form of maps. The project is collaborative, employing local communities’ knowledge for each case, and involves giving training to those communities so they can make their own. She describes the project as a means of honoring those who have experienced that loss, “by offering skills with which they can build the work themselves.”¹¹⁴ While the project is a chance to provide an expansive geographical view, broadening the range of knowledge and the capacity to conceptualize the issue, it is also essentially directed at acknowledging and responding to that affect which Kicking Woman and Kwata Kwo present, documented in the recording of the women’s march. The maps incorporate dealing with intimate loss into the project of unifying knowledge. “Mapping can be a healing process; it can be a process of reclaiming and reiterating

¹¹⁴ Pember, "Mapping out Missing," rewire.news.

sovereignty and it can be a really powerful way to tell stories about violence,” said Lucchesi¹¹⁵
 "It's time to start telling stories in a way that heals or empowers or mobilizes us.”¹¹⁶

Building this type of understanding, which makes use of epistemologies such as cartography, fits on the one hand into a progressive political framework: acquiring knowledge about a problem in order to increase its legibility and make an informed intervention. I have already discussed how these knowledge practices contribute to the articulation of a social group which can take action, i.e. a collective, by making shared experiences visible or aggregately tangible. However, I would suggest that founding these bodies of knowledge (maps, databases) upon the affect of loss and mourning goes beyond collectivity formation and challenges a limited notion of what action should be. MMIW seeks an alternative to governance-from-afar, and this complicates the ‘the intervention’ mode of politics by providing a more complicated sense of resolution.¹¹⁷ Lucchesi centers the feeling which derives from loss in the knowledge she works to produce and in the subsequent action it informs. In making this affect central, she posits a straightforward critique of legislative solutions: loved ones and community members remain absent even if the legal architecture is shifted. As an alternative, her work diffuses generative knowledge into communities involved and effected by murder and disappearance. This dissemination promotes the potential for decentralized action founded upon the oscillation between personal and collective. While for some the exteriority may appear as a hindrance to the

¹¹⁵ Anya Zoledziowski, "Indigenous PhD Student to 'Map Loss' through Atlas of Missing Women and Girls," *The Star*, last modified August 17, 2018, accessed April 30, 2019, <https://www.thestar.com/calgary/2018/08/17/indigenous-phd-student-to-map-loss-through-atlas-of-missing-women-and-girls.html>.

¹¹⁶ Rosanna Deerchild, "Mapping MMIWG," *cbc.ca*, last modified January 20, 2019, accessed April 30, 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/redrawing-the-lines-1.4973363/mapping-mmiwg-cartographer-calls-workshops-a-healing-tool-for-communities-1.4973369>.

¹¹⁷ ‘The intervention’ considers solving the issue it faces to be a matter of proper administration.

movement, it also suggests a renunciation of finite channels and solutions; this expands, rather than limits, the potential actions and terrain MMIW can cross.

Lucchesi's projects are a step towards developing social practice beyond the constitution of a group. Both her work and the march include the relay factor (between personal and collective, feeling and knowledge), and the novelty of her data techniques is in its developing a continued national-scale mode of action founded upon the personal. The power of retaining the personal is that, in this instance, it is the source of knowledge through which the collective is formed. Nonetheless, how can a feeling, i.e. an inherently personal experience, be shared knowledge? One answer is in many ways intuitive. It appears that it comes from pointing to a patterned experience, understanding that there is shared source of causation; Kwata Kwo say's "we know," and it is understood that he means "we' indigenous people know because we are experiencing the same things happening to us and our communities. What I demonstrated in the previous chapter was that many indigenous members of MMIW movement recognize that it is the corollary to indigeneity — settlement — that structures the violence which is also recognized as shared. Thus, the movement from personal feeling to shared knowledge comes from the near-ubiquitous, territorializing history and force of the settler-state and the way it racializes and rationalizes heterogeneous groups as classifiable, homogenous populations. The legal practices discussed last chapter exemplify this mode of governance, whereby legislation is passed at the level of the nation state in order to regulate and structure 'Indians' in total. Different groups find themselves under the same banner, without regard to their variegated histories or own choices. Arjun Appadurai discusses the nature and effects of this dynamic:

where local identities and identifications often were far more important... modern state-level forces tend to generate large-scale identities (such as Latino, Scheduled Caste, and Serb), which become significant imagined affiliations for large numbers of persons, many of whom reside across large social, spatial, and political divides.¹¹⁸

Appadurai argues that the disjuncture between these categories produced by the nation-state and historically “local identities” creates an instability, which emerges, under the conditions of global capitalism, in the form of mass ethnic violence. The grotesque bodily mutilation which is inflicted during these conflicts, what he terms vivisection, is an attempt at realizing, making “graspable,” those abstract labels that are otherwise arbitrary and unreliable. Thus, bodily violence is used to make the fabricated and impersonal ethnic identity into something personal and intimate. It is essential that Appadurai recognizes this enactment of violence as an unsatisfactory end to the search for identity, “these forms of violence... offer temporary ways to render these abstractions graspable, to make these numbers sensuous, to make labels that are potentially overwhelming, for a moment, personal.”¹¹⁹ “Ethnic” violence in the form of vivisection is a means of producing people, creating identity, and grounding labels that are otherwise intangible. Generalizing from this point would suggest that identity is created when it becomes physically, bodily recognizable. However, Appadurai acknowledges that his focus on the specific contexts and circumstances that create “these horrible counterperformances,” does

¹¹⁸ Arjun Appadurai, “Dead Certainty: Ethnic Violence in the Era of Globalization,” *Public Culture* 1 May 1998; 10 (2): 227

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 240.

not admit other processes of group making or suggest alternative responses to identity uncertainty.¹²⁰

The dynamics of his example are (again) reversed in my own, in which an alternate means to group-personhood may indeed be present. Appadurai discusses the infliction of violence as a desire to assert an intimacy with those group identities which are uncertain. In the case of MMIW, I have discussed how group identity is constituted through *sharing* personal, intimate feelings produced by violence. While group identity in MMIW is introduced upon the basis of violence, the mediation of this violence through feeling, then shared understanding, enables novel bonds of collectivity.

The MMIW Women's March exemplified the movement between personal feeling and shared knowledge, demonstrating the catharsis which can occur through this. The mapping and data collection processes are built upon this same oscillation. These practices open the possibility for those involved, as the producers and holders of that knowledge, to develop responses to MMIW at an intimate and local level. The formation of a collectivity grounded in affect and shared knowledge brings into life a form and activity of politics contra the normative channels of State governance. The privacy of the knowledge preserves the power to retain authorship over its use and thus maintain personal affect when devising and conducting political action, whether this take place independent of or in direct relation to other practices developed by or with the State.

The collective that is formed is oriented towards restoration, healing, and generativity. Its practices are not affirmative, in that they deal with, rather than celebrate, the experience and identity formed by murder and disappearance. They seek newness and heterogeneity rather than

¹²⁰ Ibid, 241.

the fixity (the “realization” of identity categories) which Appadurai proposes is the aim of vivisection. Identity is formed and attached to intimate affect, without the demand of violence or bodily identification posited by Appadurai, and operates via a closed circuit of knowledge which functions to prevent a syphoning into state modes of governance. It is too early to say where this movement will orient its action or what the outcomes will be. At this point I can only speak as to the particularity and novelty of its form. As to how this potential will be directed, and to what ends, remains to be seen.

Conclusion

This paper has examined group identities in supra-national, American Indian political mobilizations. To understand the causes and emergences of these movements, the tactics with they engaged, and the possibilities they dreamed, it is essential to understand how the categories and bonds of identity function politically.

This point of focus has much in common with the Combahee River Collective's (CRC) call to take identity-based experience of oppression as the basis for politicization and political action.¹²¹ In this paper, I have followed groups who take their shared intimate and historical experiences of elimination and disappearance as the basis for collective political action. For obvious reasons, they take action which rejects the violent foundation upon which their group identity came to coalesce, thus demonstrating their affinity to the CRC's call to overcome those categories.

This paper has thus focused on the formation of identity that emerges out of the experience of injury and affront. As a basis for understanding, this model contains a rich history; however, my method and understanding differs from other well-known approaches such as the psychoanalytical phenomenology of race provided by Franz Fanon:

Sealed into that crushing objecthood, I turned beseechingly to others. Their attention was a liberation, running over my body suddenly abraded into nonbeing, endowing me once more with an agility that I had thought lost, and by taking me out of the world, restoring

¹²¹ Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2017), 15-27.

me to it. But just as I reached the other side, I stumbled, and the movements, the attitudes, the glances of the other fixed me there, in the sense in which a chemical solution is fixed by a dye. I was indignant; I demanded an explanation.

Nothing happened. I burst apart. Now the fragments have been put together again by another self.¹²²

Fanon too gives an account of experience, though his is rooted in the perspective of psychic reflection and interpretation, emphasizing the accompanying reactions of pride, anger, despair, and renewal. For Fanon, the link between identity and injury meant that the prospect for escaping the debility caused by the latter was through overcoming the former. By grounding my research in an account of lived practices, I have been able to show that injury need not mean that people define their relation to that identity, and thus themselves, in terms of lack, exclusion, or incompleteness. For the subjects of this paper, injury gives cause to organize but they are not trying to overcome indigeneity, while recognizing this as the target of infliction. Rather, they are able to generate modes of *iteration*, forms of social being and self-identification rooted in an, at least potential, exteriority to affront.

Each of the chapters in this paper followed a given moment in time when subjects gathered and shared their reflections and experiences of injury. Through these exchanges, pan-Indian protesters and MMIW advocates articulated themselves as collectives that were capable of responding to those shared experiences of harm. By coming together upon this basis, these groups oriented their action towards combatting and rejecting their sites of injury, the very source of their unification. Viewed from such a level of abstract, simplified motives and

¹²² Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 82.

concepts, this appears as paradoxical. However, these groups did not form so as to pursue a momentary strategy for conglomerate liberation, i.e. a collection of discrete elements that would intend to dissolve their association following success. Rather, in the cases I examine, when people achieved a unity by formulating themselves as a collective, they directed their imagination and effort towards perpetuating their bonds and providing relations of care, beginning with the injury they experienced. Care has not been the explicit focus of my chapters; however, it is an impetus and project central to the stories I have told. It is necessary to foreground in order to understand the formation and forward orientation of the political moments and actors I have discussed. The centrality of care raises the question of how collectives use group identities as a source of generativity when those identity categories emerge in order to articulate a common site of injury — what maintains their bond if wounds are healed?

This is not a question I have tried to answer by tracking the “outcomes” of these movements. Instead, my aim is to demonstrate that these collectives escape from this apparent tension because of the specific ways in which they relate to identity and political action, encapsulated by the futurity implied in healing. Care and healing are not a matter of repairing some past damage but of beginning relations to one another that hold the potential for a different way of living and being in the world together. The actions of these collectives have not just been about repairing but also a celebration and chance for a social life not dominated by exclusion. Alongside the suffering and rejection that accompanies these cases of identity formation, there is also passion, solidarity, respect, and intensity. These affective motives and actions are all the more important when we recognize that a meaningful identity, capable of connecting a group, is not given but rather constructed.

The creative act of construction happens in historically contingent moments of encounter and through techniques of organization. This has far-reaching relevance to anyone seeking an alternative and looking for compatriots with whom to unite in struggling against a world where separation and hostility dominate, and violent instability is immanent. In the latter half of the 20th century, a group of native women in Seattle took it upon themselves to carve out a space in the city, find those in need, and offer a place to be together and provide for one another. In doing so they sowed the seeds for a sense of unity, giving root to capacities with which to oppose an exclusionary and violently eliminatory social order. When we look back upon the act of occupation it strikes us with its spectacularity, force, and radicalism. However, the embodiment of contestation that coalesced in the Fort Lawton occupation cannot be separated from the actions and feelings of care and mutual aid done in response to the alienation of assimilation.

In both the case of Fort Lawton and MMIW, the indigenous actors developed and sought to instantiate similar aims. When responding to their situations, they rejected the liberal order's form of power as it is expressed in the governance mode of politics. They did so by claiming exterior space within a city that made "no place for Indians." They did so by developing bottom up communication and knowledge about the murders and disappearances of native women, when the biases, negligence, and assaults of the American judicial system ignore and perpetuate that violence. Their projects were not subsumed by, nor set as their endpoint, seeking protection through the State — i.e. safety from power — but rather they imagined and attempted to promote a greater sharing of power. They articulated their rejections of elimination and disappearance, founded upon the incapacity and undesirability of liberal inclusion, by claiming and developing independent alternatives upon which their collectives can act for and upon themselves.

This is important because native people are still being eliminated and their actions of response, resistance, and renewal are ongoing. We cannot afford to treat their political struggle as overly particular or criticize it for being grounding in experience.

It is valuable to look at the moments of resistance and social fashioning that I have described in this paper. They are examples of the possibility to reject ubiquitous conditions of hostility and socio-cultural hegemony. In researching these movements and attempting to get close enough to them to build an understanding, I found myself again and again impressed, stricken, and inspired by the clarity, determination, and consideration for one another with which they rejected the violence and disregard done unto them, and by their creative will to instantiate an alternative whereby they could prosper. If anything, it is my hope that in this paper I have conveyed some of the power and importance of their activities.

Many people, certainly counting myself among them, seem to find themselves trapped in recursive loops when confronting and imagining their political and social worlds. Dissuaded by the seeming infeasibility of attempts to escape or resist we imagine that nothing but some earth-shattering reset can provide a way out. Looking closely with those who decided they could not afford to wait for an alternative to come, but instead began building one together, I have come to appreciate that reclaiming life and imagination is not the miraculous arrival of some epic event, but rather begins, grows, and already exists with the small acts of care and commitment. It is by weaving the threads we hold between one another that a tapestry of another world may be sewn. It is a delicate thing no doubt. We must move with attentiveness, but know that by earnestly keeping hold of these animate fibers we can make every stitch decisively and with definite grandeur.

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