POLITICS OF COALITION AT STANDING ROCK

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By

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this to all the Water Protectors.

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It has been a privilege and an honor to tell these stories. I have been supported by many on this journey. I am grateful to my doctoral advisor, Rebecca Scott, who helped me gain clarity on my research approach and fine tune my writing and arguments. I appreciate the ongoing support and guidance from my committee members, Joan Hermsen, Wayne Brekhus, and Soren Larsen. My cohort has been a consistent source of community and encouragement and I hold each of you near and dear to my heart, Nathan, Lewis, and Robbie. I am deeply grateful to the P.E.O. Sisterhood for its financial backing during the final year of my research.

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POLITICS OF COALITION
AT STANDING ROCK

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ABSTRACT

My research examines the politics of coalition surrounding the 2016-17 Standing Rock movement, led by Oceti Sakowin Tribal members, on the borders of the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota to stop the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). The movement resisted the pipeline in the name of water protection, Indigenous sovereignty, protection of sacred burial grounds, treaty rights, climate justice, and more. Approximately ten months into the movement, it was halted by the US federal government and the pipeline was installed. This study engages with a range of qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews with activists and content analysis of documents from TigerSwan, a private military and security contractor hired to surveil the movement.

Findings show that for activists in the camps, placework, or place-based protest, strengthened coalition work across social differences, and enacted a "call and response" form of politics, based on shared callings to protect and shared critical responses to settler colonial-capital culture, specifically dispossession of land and property. Challenges in coalition work amongst activists were rooted in US settler colonial-informed racialized hierarchies of power, which perpetuate white supremacy and privilege. Finally, the militarized coalitional responses of public and private forces, specifically the use of racialized ideologies, militarized tactics and operations, and overt violent actions and arrests, was excessive, generated a diffusion of accountability, and inflicted harm and trauma upon activists at Standing Rock.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In early 2016, hundreds of people, led by Oceti Sakowin Tribal members, gathered near the banks of the Cannonball River on the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota to stop the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). Creating the #NoDAPL or “Water is Life” movement, the activists were protesting the placement of a 1,127-mile-long oil pipeline intended to go from Northern North Dakota to Southern Illinois, running under the Missouri River reservoir, Lake Oahe, and over the Ogallala Aquifer. The proposed pipeline posed a potential threat to viable water sources and sacred burial grounds and constituted a violation of treaty rights. Over the course of ten months, the #NoDAPL movement grew into multiple camps, drew national and international media attention, and attracted thousands of people to join the cause. Nearly one year after the movement began, and a temporary suspension of the project by President Obama in 2016, US President Trump, in early 2017, revived the pipeline and ordered a military eviction of the camps by the US National Guard. *The Guardian* reported on February 23, 2017, “Dozens of national guard and law enforcement officers marched into the Dakota Access Pipeline protest encampment on Thursday in a military-style takeover…” (Wong 2017).

Although the camps were evacuated, efforts to stop the pipeline continue, and in 2020 a federal judge ordered the US Army Corps of Engineers to complete a comprehensive environmental impact statement, an order backed by the Supreme Court in 2022 (Lakhani 2022). The Standing Rock movement produced and continues to generate an array of twenty-first century political concerns regarding Indigenous rights,

climate justice, corporate power, fossil fuel reliance, pipeline safety, history, violence, reconciliation, and future possibilities.

The primary interest of this research study are the politics of coalition surrounding the Standing Rock movement (while the movement had many names, this study embraces the place-based title of "Standing Rock," as this the way most interviewees referenced it). One of the most remarkable political attributes of the movement is its mass coalition efforts. More than 300 Indigenous tribes from around the globe hung flags at the camps in support of the cause. People from all over the world, from a variety of ideological, economic, religious, and racial/ethnic backgrounds, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, showed support. Many environmental activists and powerful environmental political groups, such as Greenpeace and Indigenous Environmental Network, were actively involved. Thousands of military veterans and veteran organizations, including Veterans for Peace and Veterans Stand, showed up in support of the cause. It is estimated that at the peak of the protest more than 10,000 people were in the camps (Cuevas, Sidner, and Simon 2017). "Standing Rock had become the largest and most high-profile Native protest in the United States in four decades" (Meyer 2017: para 4). Founded and led by Indigenous activists, Standing Rock represents a significant demonstration of contemporary political coalition efforts in the name of environmental justice and tribal sovereignty. This study seeks to better understand the dynamics of coalition across difference amongst activists who lived and resisted in the camps.

In addition to remarkable internal coalition efforts, the Standing Rock movement generated significant external state and corporate militarized coalitional responses. Numerous public police and military forces worked alongside private military and

security contractors, hired by the owners of the Dakota Access Pipeline, Energy Transfer Partners, a private Texas-based firm, to control and repress the movement. This study seeks to better understand the politics of the public/private military coalitions formed in response to the Standing Rock movement, most importantly the ways it impacted activists and their ability to form alliances. An examination of internal and external coalitional politics surrounding the Standing Rock movement helps to answer the overarching research question of this study: *What can we learn about the politics, possibilities, challenges, and risks for coalitions in US settler-colonial society by examining the Standing Rock movement?*

History, Land, and Water

The primary purpose of the Standing Rock movement was and continues to be to stop the construction of DAPL and demand the US government make good on the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. "There is one essential reason why Indigenous peoples resist, refuse, and contest US rule: land" (Estes 2019:67). The Oceti Sakowin Oyate, or the Nation of the Seven Council Fires, is a political confederacy made up of three tribal groups, the Nakota, Dakota, and Lakota, that originally traversed many regions in the northern and middle areas of North America (Estes 2013; 2019). By the mid 1770's, the three tribal bands were pushed out of their original territories by European settlers and Iroquois tribes and moved to the Black Hills, a 125-mile-long and 65-mile-wide stretch of mountain range across modern day South Dakota and Wyoming (Estes 2019; Dunbar and Deloria Jr. 2013; Lazarus 1991). Expansion of US settler colonialism eventually encroached on this land and disputes and wars erupted, which ultimately led to the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 that "gave" a 32-million-acre tract of land, including another

roughly 40-million-acre hunting ground reserve, to the Lakota and Dakota and relinquished any hold the US government had on Oceti Sakowin lands.

The Oceti Sakowin Nation did not believe the US government had the authority to "give back" land that already belonged to them but regarded this treaty as an agreement between two nations as to how land would be managed (Estes 2019). The treaty stated, "No white person or persons shall be permitted to settle upon or occupy any portion of the territory, or without the consent of the Indians to pass through the same" (Brown 1970:273). Unfortunately, because railroads were still allowed to be built through this territory (according to the treaty) and then gold was discovered in the Black Hills, it did not take long for the agreement to be violated by corporations, gold miners, traders and the US federal government. Later, the Indian Appropriations Act of 1871 launched a new era in US government and tribal relations by ending the practice of forming treaties with tribes as sovereign nations (Guide to Senate Records: Chapter 12, Indian Affairs 1820-1946). The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 was the final major treaty made between the Oceti Sakowin Nation and the US federal government.

The land dispute surrounding DAPL regards an area of land that was originally part of the Oceti Sakowin Nation, as agreed to in the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. In 1980, the US Supreme Court declared that the US government had indeed violated the 1868 treaty and awarded the Oceti Sakowin Nation $17.1 million dollars but did not return the land (*United States v. Sioux Nation of Indians* 1980). The Oceti Sakowin, or Sioux Nation (as written on all US federal documents), refused to take the money demanding return of the land, of which the US government refused. The events at Standing Rock in 2016-17 cannot be understood without putting them into a broader

historical context of ongoing Oceti Sakowin resistance to settler colonialism and fight for return of their land.

In addition to a demand for recognition of violation of treaty rights and return of their lands, the Oceti Sakowin Nation protested the pipeline in the name of protection of water, land, sacred burial grounds, and all human and non-human life. The route of the Dakota Access Pipeline from North Dakota's Bakken fields to Illinois runs under the Missouri River reservoir, Lake Oahe, which is the only water supply to the Standing Rock Reservation. Additionally, DAPL runs over the Ogallala Aquifer, which provides drinking water for 2 million people, 82% of which live in the High Plains area, and provides 30% of the groundwater for agricultural irrigation (Finkel 2018). The argument is that when crude oil pipelines spill into major water sources, pollution devastates water supplies for human and nonhuman life and violently disrupts ecosystems. The US Army Corps of Engineers, which has jurisdiction over pipelines that cross major waterways, approved the pipeline despite objections from the EPA, the Department of the Interior, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) (Finkel 2018). The Oceti Sakowin Nation did not approve of the pipeline and was not formally consulted, which the federal government is obliged to do according to the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 (Estes 2019).

The US holds the record for having the largest network of energy pipelines, with more than 2.5 million miles of pipe (oil and natural gas), including 72,000 miles of crude oil lines that connect regional markets (Finkel 2018). Pipelines are a crucial component for transport of fossil fuels from the source to market. "In the US, 70% of crude oil and petroleum products are carried by pipeline" (Finkel 2018:61). While states are supposed

to oversee pipeline safety within their own borders, federal oversight is also required from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the Department of Transportations' Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). Unfortunately, the safety record for Energy Transfer Partners and its subsidiaries, Sonoco Logistics and Dakota Access LLC, is not good (Finkel 2018; DiSavino and Kelly 2018; Frazier 2022). "Since 2010, the government has fined the company and its subsidiaries more than $22 million for environmental and other violations. Alarmingly, federal records show no company has had more hazardous materials leak in the past decade than Sonoco Logistics" (Finkel 2018:92). Making matters worse, the general emergency plan required by the company did not have to be submitted until one year after the pipeline was built, leaving a dangerous lag time for potential disaster.

The Oceti Sakowin Nation has a long history of being defined by Mnisose, or the Missouri River, and holds a long legacy of fighting for water rights and protection along the river. The 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty declared the Oceti Sakowin Nation's lands to be defined by specific boundaries surrounding a tract that included what is now South Dakota, parts of Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana, and North Dakota (Howe and Young 2019). The Northern boundary began where the Heart River joins the Missouri River, and the Eastern boundary was set at the east bank of the Missouri River along the low-water mark. "Therefore, Mnisose—from the Heart River to the northern border of Nebraska—was stipulated as belonging to Lakota's" (Howe and Young 2019:58). Later in 1877 and 1889, US Congress took more lands from the Oceti Sakowin land base, and designated four reservations, Standing Rock, Cheyenne River, Lower Brule, and Rosebud, with the new Eastern boundary set at the center of the main channel of the Missouri River, instead

of the east bank. Moving forward, when the tribal governments were established in the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe constitution stipulated full jurisdiction over all waterways on the reservation.

Yet, again, in 1944, US Congress encroached on Oceti Sakowin lands through the approval of the Pick-Sloan plan, as part of the Flood Control Act, which called for the construction of dams to provide flood control, regulate crop irrigation, and protect surrounding infrastructure. Through this plan, the Army Corps of Engineers built five dams along the Missouri River (Schneiders 1999). In this process, no Oceti Sakowin tribal government or representative was consulted, and excess tribal lands were relegated for the reservoirs and purchased at very low prices from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (Schneiders 1999). Many reservation towns were flooded, and people were forced to move. In 1985, after water levels stabilized, the Standing Rock Tribe demanded a return of the lands that were not inundated with reservoir waters and were awarded monetary damages.

Moving forward to 2016, in September, after a full investigation of the construction of DAPL and the concerns raised by the Standing Rock Tribe and the Oceti Sakowin Nation, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, called for the US to halt the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline "as it poses a significant risk to the drinking water of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and threatens to destroy their burial grounds and sacred sites" (United Nations Human Rights 2016). Despite such advice, and tens of thousands gathering in protest, the US Army Corps approved DAPL, and it was fully constructed by April 2017, with oil flowing by June (Kickingwoman 2020). When understood in a historical context,

the fight to protect water and land is nothing new for the Oceti Sakowin Nation and their consistent resistance efforts continue to define and shape the nation's politics.

Purpose of the Study

When we consider the implications of an unrestrained fossil fuel industry, a long violent, gendered and raced history of settler colonialism, and the current threats of cataclysmic climate change, an ethical urgency to create new possibilities for a sustainable future on planet Earth become more pressing. Climate scientists tell us that the current rate of fossil fuel usage is leading us to a catastrophic level of global warming and that we need to act now. In 1992, the Union of Concerned Scientists and more than 1700 independent scientists, wrote the "World Scientists' Warning to Humanity" urging the world to curtail environmental destruction. They wrote, "a great change in our stewardship of the Earth and the life on it is required, if vast human misery is to be avoided" (Ripple et al 2017:1). On November 13, 2017, twenty-five years later, they issued a second warning and announced, "Humanity has failed to make sufficient progress in generally solving these foreseen environmental challenges, and alarmingly, most of them are getting far worse" (Ripple et al 2017:1). Indeed, as of 2020, climate science shows the amount of carbon monoxide in the atmosphere has continued to increase and has reached record levels, the earth is 1.2 Celsius degrees hotter than ever in the nineteenth century, and Artic ice caps and northern permafrost continue to melt at faster rates (Gerretson 2021).

Indigenous peoples from all over the world have been sending a similar message. The environmental and social justice coalition efforts at Standing Rock were and are direct responses to the call of scientists and Indigenous messengers and peoples to pay

attention to what is happening to the Earth and to initiate and enact greater stewardship. The diverse narratives that emerge from Standing Rock represent a lively public sphere in which the past, present, and future of humanity and US democracy are addressed and debated. In a political era that could be described as extremely divided by identity politics, an investigation into how coalitions formed, persisted, or failed across differences is interesting and important.

And, while Standing Rock is an example of contemporary Indigenous-led resistance, it also a continuation of nearly 500-years of Indigenous-led social and environmental justice movement and resistance. Leanne Simpson (2011:xiii) says, "little has been written about our political traditions of dissent and mobilization, our individual and collective acts of resistance, and the strategies we have used in creating and maintaining the longest running social movement in Canadian history." Not only has Indigenous resistance often been ignored, it has also historically been met with excessive repression from state and corporations, an ongoing settler colonial tradition that requires special attention in today's post 9/11 context of extensive, legalized domestic surveillance and privatized military.

The actions, political beliefs, and motivations of activists at Standing Rock deserve deep attention and study. This study brings the story of coalition work at Standing Rock to readers as a guide for better understanding the politics, possibilities, challenges, and risks for future alliances in US settler-colonial society in hopes of deepening and broadening democratic principles and strengthening, maybe even healing, our collective sense of place and home.

A few months after the camps were evicted at Standing Rock, on April 22, 2017, the film *Awake: A Dream from Standing Rock*, directed by Myron Dewey, was released. It captures the story of what happened at Standing Rock that "forever changed the fight for clean water, our environment and the future of our planet" (awakethefilm.org). In a review of the film for the academic journal *Environmental History,* Nick Estes (2018:384) describes *Awake* in this way, "the film is about what it means to live with PTSD and ongoing trauma when one's entire world and dreams of freedom are entirely structured by violence, death, and destruction, whether it is visited upon Indigenous communities or upon the earth." Estes (2018:386) goes on to say:

> Obama and his administration could not save the water and refused to halt the pipeline; Trump continued and accelerated Obama-era domestic energy production, and within two weeks in office the remaining resistance camps had been violently evicted; and the police and military, as they have for centuries, will continue to play a mediating role in crushing what are otherwise grassroots and truly democratic climate justice movements, especially those led by Indigenous peoples. This may be cynicism, or it may be just sobering up that this is the challenge ahead for future movements and struggles as the world relentlessly burns. Are you awake yet?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Coalitions are formed when two or more groups or individuals agree to work together temporarily in partnership to achieve a common goal. Coalitions are important for political organizations and groups resisting powerful, transnational corporate and governmental institutions. Bringing together shared resources, ideas, people, and visions in coalition can increase the potential for reaching political goals and creating social change. Coalitions are especially important for Indigenous-led movements because their assertion for treaty rights, decolonization, and sovereignty are often met with backlash from state, corporations, and people who fear losing access to resources (Sealey 2019). But while Indigenous-led and environmental justice movements in the US rely on coalitions, the politics of such alliances, as well as the factors that impact their formation, perpetuation, and dissolution need greater sociological attention.

The following review examines literature on coalition politics surrounding the Standing Rock movement, and within Indigenous-led, feminist, and environmental justice movements more broadly. This review also examines literature on the militarized coalitional responses to Standing Rock specifically and Indigenous-led social movements historically, and the politics of public/private military alliances within the contemporary context of the post 9/11 "War on Terror," neoliberalism, and climate change. A brief review of research on historical violence and trauma is also discussed. Woven throughout are foundational explanations of the major theoretical underpinnings to this research, including place theory, critical settler colonial theory, critical race theory, feminist theory, environmental justice theory, and critical security theory. I situate this study's

research questions throughout the review to articulate where and how they are situated and relevant.

Possibilities for Coalition

What are the possibilities for coalitional alliance across difference? This question has been a topic of interest in Indigenous and feminist studies for decades. Indigenous-led coalition building across difference requires flexible strategies and a commitment to a larger vision of a just world. Smith's (2008) research on fruitful alliances between the Christian Right and Native American groups rethinks the nature of political strategy and solidarity-building, specifically highlighting the potential for unlikely alliances. Smith looks at ethical and political considerations and the politics of both carving and refusing alliance. Smith finds that Indigenous activists are often forced to engage in a politics of re-articulation, or the politics of transforming political allegiances and alliances to accomplish their political and economic goals. A politics of re-articulation often leads to unlikely alliances, or what activist Madonna Thunder Hawk calls "Cowboy and Indian Coalitions" (Smith 2008:201). Grossman (2005; 2012; 2017) has written extensively on the successes of alliance between Native and white communities. In his most recent work, *Unlikely Alliances* (2017), Grossman finds that a common place, purpose, and understanding are the necessary preconditions for effective alliance across difference. Specifically, a shared ethical purpose that seeks larger, more universal issues and social changes that seek to strengthen and support the whole society, are key to successful alliance.

In addition to flexible strategy and common purpose, relationship-building between Indigenous, social, and environmental activists is important for attaining

solidarity (Davis 2010). Individuals and organizations interact from very different concepts of relationship which embody varying power configurations that ultimately build or break coalitional possibilities (Davis 2010). For white settler activists, an honest engagement with internalized, personal settler colonialism is key to supporting Indigenous peoples and decolonizing movements (Barker 2010; Regan 2006). Transformative relationships between Native and settler activists are possible, but require deep reflection, significant action, and acceptance of personal complicity (Vernon 2010). With such efforts, differences can be a source of strength in relationship and coalition building (Reagon 1983; Lorde 1984). "Difference is that raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is forged," and must not be merely tolerated but "seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic" (Lorde 1984:99&101).

Indigenous-led coalitions across difference are strengthened by shared critiques of settler colonial ideologies, contradictions, and hierarchies of division. Lugones's (2014) work proposes two theoretical concepts toward understanding Indigenous-led coalitions: the logic of decolonial feminism and coalitions against multiple oppressions. The logic of decolonial feminism is rooted in a critique of the coloniality of gender, which dichotomizes and hierarchically separates human and non-human, man and woman. Coalitions resisting multiple oppressions is a term to describe how alliances can be formulated in very different places and across differences, based on shared understandings of the historical colonial treatments of humans, nonhumans, and habitats as inferior (Lugones 2014). Anzaldua's (2012) theoretical concept of borderlands describes the actual physical borderlands of the US Southwest/Mexican divide, and the

psychological, sexual, and spiritual borderlands that are present when two cultures edge against each other. She describes a "mestiza consciousness" that arises when people are straddling a border or living in places of contradiction that can create cohesion and unity.

The Standing Rock movement represents a 21st century Indigenous-led coalitional movement that received mass support, alliance, and solidarity from a vast array of individuals, groups, and networks. Sze (2020:21) describes the Standing Rock movement as "an iconic case of contemporary environmental justice activism that makes Native scholars and activists central and foundational to environmental justice theory and practice, and that shows how Native and non-Native solidarity can be made through struggle." Significant environmental threats mobilized solidarity between Indigenous activists and environmental justice activists because their ideologies and frames about environmental risks overlapped (Steinman 2019). Further, the goals of the Black Lives Matter movement (Bruyneel 2019), the Palestinian liberation movement (Dhillon 2019), and other Indigenous movements, including the Kanak Maoli struggles to protect Mauna Kea from the Thirty Meter Telescope (Maile 2019) overlapped and aligned with the Standing Rock movement in a myriad of ways that reveal how those fighting for justice can work together across difference and unify against violence from the settler state without losing the specificities of distinct struggles.

One of the most powerful tools for mobilization across difference at Standing Rock was the movement's engagement with a broad range of digital media platforms, discourses, and images. In addition to the camps near the Cannonball River, public and web-based protests took place around the world in support of the movement that deployed a range of digitized artifacts on the internet that framed injustice through

creative, artistic expression and created an “affective” solidarity and artful resistance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists (Cappelli 2017). Affect was a significant feature of the social justice frame produced by Standing Rock leaders that “operated as ideological counter-discourse through the broadcast of emotional, logical, and ethical appeals” (Cappelli 2017:4). The use of digitized art, affect, and specific social media agenda-setting inspired public attention and support in a way that reached individuals who typically perceive themselves as outsiders to the decision-making process (Hopke, Simis-Wilkinson and Leow 2018). This generated a powerful and diverse coalition.

This study seeks to contribute to the burgeoning research on the Standing Rock movement (Whyte 2017a; Finkel 2018; Estes 2019; Estes and Dhillon 2019; Sze 2020; Todrys 2021) and to research on coalition work across difference, by examining the coalitional possibilities generated in the resistance camps. This study asks: *What can we learn about the possibilities for coalitions in US settler colonial society by studying the Standing Rock movement?*

To study the Standing Rock movement, an understanding of Indigenous conceptions of identity and place is imperative (Barker and Pickerill 2012). Indigenous identity is defined in various personal ways but is always immediately political as it comes with a host of implications entrenched within the legalities and conditions of Indigenous relations to US settler colonial power. While the meaning of the term “Indigenous” is varied and politically contested, one area of continuity is in the understanding that “nations and territories provide the contexts necessary for

understanding the social responsibilities and relationships that inform Indigenous perspectives, political organizing and intellectual theorizing…" (Barker 2017:5–6).

Lakota philosopher Deloria Vine Jr. (1979, 2001) defines Indigenous as meaning "to be of a place" and offers a foundational explanation of Indigenous metaphysics, in which two basic experiential dimensions, place and power, when viewed symbiotically, provide meaning, and define the life force of the world. Place provides an ontological, cosmological, and epistemological framework for understanding reality (Coulthard 2010). In other words, lands and homelands are more than material places where Indigenous peoples are attached, land is a place that provides a way of knowing and relating to the world. Vanessa Watts (2013:21) describes Haudenosaunee and Anishanaabe cosmological understandings of place-thought as "the non-distinctive space where place and thought were never separated because they never could or can be separated. Place-Thought is based on the premise that land is alive and thinking and that humans and non-humans derive agency through the extensions of these thoughts."

In Indigenous cosmologies, ontologies, and epistemologies place has power and agency. Place actively initiates and sustains coexistence or a "being-togetherness," and calls humans and non-humans to encounter, engage, and dialogue (Larsen and Johnson 2017). Place educates humans on reciprocity, "Each person, human or no, is bound to every other in a reciprocal relationship" (Kimmerer 2015:115). Place is personal and political. Place informs Indigenous identity and ethics and thereby, critiques of, and resistance to, settler colonial power relations. Alfred and Corntassel (2005:597) define Indigenous as founded on an "oppositional, place-based existence, along with the consciousness of being in struggle against the dispossessing and demeaning fact of

colonization by foreign peoples." Larsen and Johnson (2017:7) argue, "At the heart of Indigenous activism, then, is the defense of place-based autonomies against settler-state dispossession and oppression." Place thought, place agency, and place-based identity are intimately intertwined with the personality and agency of the land itself and the historical and ongoing colonial violence and trauma inflicted on the land and beings who live there.

The Standing Rock movement was anchored in Indigenous traditions, conceptions, and understandings of place, which is key to understanding why many Indigenous activists, from different tribes, nations, and parts of the world, united. But this study also seeks to understand why non-Indigenous activists engaged in the movement and how well people related across difference. Examining Indigenous/settler relations and alliances from an Indigenous place-based perspective led me to consider US society and culture as place, also dominated by a cosmology, ontology, and epistemology. Place theory, as developed in critical geography and critical colonial studies, explains US settler society as rooted in colonial-capital conceptions and traditions of place that serve as the hegemonic epistemology, or the socially constructed "commonsense" of US culture (Seawright 2014; Moreton-Robinson 2015; Rifkin 2017). US settler colonial-capital logics, beliefs, and assumptions inform peoples conceptions of place through racialized, human-centered, gendered, and classed hierarchies, and enforce traditions, policies, and legal implementations centered on private property, the individual, and the intertwining of state and corporate interests.

The coalition at Standing Rock was rooted in Indigenous place-based ethics in resistance to US settler colonial conceptions and traditions of place. Understanding place from this dual perspective helped me to understand how the movement was continuously

configured by both orientations to place. Indigenous and non-Indigenous people came together in response to an urgent call to protect place and I wanted to know how and why people's relationship with place motivated them to engage politically. I wanted to know: *In what ways did relationship with place foster responsibility, stewardship, and/or protectiveness? How does a sense of belonging to place cultivate reciprocity, cooperation, and/or alliance across difference?*

As described earlier, Standing Rock was an iconic case of contemporary environmental justice (EJ) activism. EJ is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and an enforcement of environmental laws, regulation, and policies (Bullard 2000). EJ movements are "groups with goals to achieve social and economic justice and racial and gender equity, as well as improving or maintaining environmental quality" (Prindeville 2004:103). The EJ movement developed in the 1970s out of a response to environmental racism, a form of discrimination and genocide that targets racial/ethnic minorities and economically disadvantaged communities to bear a disproportionate burden of society's toxic wastes and threatening technologies (Prindeville 2004; Bullard 2000; Taylor 2009), as well as from a critique from people of color of exclusion in mainstream environmental movements (Finney 2014). Since its inception, the EJ movement has consistently sought justice by acting locally and thinking globally. The historic First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991 led to the drafting of what became known as the "Principles of Environmental Justice," which united people on an international level and embraces a synthesis of anti-racism, anti-colonialism, gender equality, and ecological sustainability.

Coalition work within EJ movements has consistently embraced a feminist politics of intersectionality, or the understanding that intersecting forms of oppression interact and influence one another, often creating new and unique forms of oppression or privilege, and in ways that maintain systems of power (Crenshaw 1989; Hill Collins 1998, 2004; Davis 1981; Anzaldua 2012; hooks 1984, 1992; Smith 1983). Historically, EJ movements and coalitions have been led by women who engage in grassroots organizing and informal networking to protect their families and communities. For many women leaders, their roles as mothers, workers, and community members shape and influence their political beliefs, actions, and discourses. Because of this, EJ activists shifted narratives regarding nature and the environment from being an abstract distant place to the everyday places "where we live, work, and play" (Prindeville 2004:102). A gendered component of a 'politics of care' is embedded in EJ movements, particularly Indigenous-led EJ movements, which emphasize traditionally feminine concerns such as health, safety, human relationships, and concerns for the interconnected aspects of environment and personal life (DiChiro 2008; Prindeville 2004, Tronto 1994).

The study of coalition work in EJ movements is immensely important as humanity slowly turns to face the threat of global warming and climate change. Some interdisciplinary scholars of geology, geography, ecology, evolution, and sociology describe this era as the development of a new and dangerous stage in planetary evolution called the Anthropocene (Lewis and Masline 2018; Davison 2015; Angus 2016). In this stage, the earth has left the Holocene geological epoch and is entering a period in which human activities "have become so pervasive and profound that they rival the great forces of Nature and are pushing the Earth into planetary terra incognita. The Earth is rapidly

moving into a less biologically diverse, less forested, much warmer, and probably wetter and stormier state" (Angus 2016:28-29). Angus (2016) argues that the Anthropocene and fossil capitalism are leading to global environmental apartheid.

There are many Indigenous scholarly critiques of the Anthropocene perspective of the climate crisis, including that it is derived from a Western, linear time-based ontology that sits juxtaposed to place-based Indigenous ontologies (Larsen and Johnson 2017; Cajete 2016; Whyte 2017b). A grand, linear, settler colonial temporal view (Rifkin 2017) makes it difficult to see the everyday disruptions of climate change happenings, of which Indigenous peoples are disproportionally exposed. The Anthropocene perspective further focuses on human exceptionalism that places the human species as central to earth history, and is contained within restrictive systems theories, such as evolution (Haraway 2016). Haraway (2016:49) argues that "Revolt needs other forms of action and other stories for solace, inspiration and effectiveness."

Standing Rock was just that: an effective form of action, full of stories of solace and inspiration, in the name of environmental and climate justice. Climate justice, like EJ, focuses on climate change and seeks to make visible the disproportionate impact of global warming on poor and marginalized communities throughout the world (Di Chiro 2008). Also, like EJ movements, climate justice movements seek to reveal the "environmentalism of everyday life," or a more relational idea of humans and nature and seeks to help people to grasp the connection of climate change to their lives and understand the localized effects of a common set of global processes (Di Chiro 2008).

Di Chiro (2008:279) defines coalitional politics in EJ and climate justice movements as "transcommunal alliances and communities of practice forged in the

knowledge that survival depends not on the retreat to the comfort of the 'home' (what some refer to as identity politics), but on the worldly and laborious engagements with the fleshly realities of socio-ecological interdependence." Di Chiro (2008:217-18) asks, "How do we create robust coalition politics and genuine and sustainable cosmopolitics?" and how do the cosmo-vision/politics of Indigenous, Aboriginal, and First Nations peoples help to "remake new, multi-species, multicultural, interdependent, life-enhancing relationships and politics of nature and society, to transform, reshape and dance a new world into being?'"

This study expands upon DiChiro's questions, except I also seek to understand the ways people brought their 'homes,' meaning their race and ethnic identities, as well as their relationships with place together to create robust coalition work and politics at Standing Rock. In other words, this study asks: *In what ways do race/ethnic identities serve as discursive and embodied technologies for place thinking and coalition building? How did people's relationship to place, land, home, and environment shape why they were there and how well they could relate to and coexist with others?*

Challenges for Coalition

While coalitions can be powerful ways to unite and form solidarities across social difference, they can also be sites of discomfort and unstable political spaces (Reo 2017; Smith 2008). Obstacles and challenges within coalitions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples often stem from toxic settler colonial social relations. This study takes a critical settler colonial perspective, which is a form of inquiry that exposes how settler colonial systems, structures, and knowledges are constructed to support asymmetrical systems of power (Scott, Padgett, Grossman forthcoming 2022). Settler

colonialism is defined within critical settler colonial theory as an "inclusive, land-centered project that coordinates a comprehensive range of agencies, from the metropolitan center to the frontier encampment, with a view to eliminating Indigenous societies" (Wolfe 2006:393).

Settler colonialism is a structure not an event (Wolfe 1998, 2006; Kauanui 2016). It seeks to destroy and replace. It is an organizing principle of US society that produces a series of outcomes including an entrenched logic of elimination of Native peoples in the form of genocide, homicide, reservations, Native citizenship, forced assimilation, forced sterilization, resocialization, cultural genocide, rape and sexual violence and other forms of what Wolfes calls "liquidation" of Indigenous cultures and life (Wolfe 2006). In this process, not only is Native culture suppressed, but settler culture is created. Critical settler colonial theory proports that settler colonial logics, or a mode of rationalization underpinned by an excessive interest in reproducing the nation state's sovereignty, ownership, and the economic logic of capital, is the foundation of modernity and every day it must be reasserted (Wolfe 2006, Moreton-Robinson 2015).

Challenges in coalition work between Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists are often rooted in varying levels of awareness of and critique toward settler colonialism. Most Indigenous social movements hold decolonization as the centralizing motivation of their efforts. As Tuck and Yang (2012) reiterate, decolonization is not a metaphor; it questions the very existence of private property and settler sovereignty and calls for radical and drastic shifts in the way the world and power are currently perceived and arranged. A misunderstanding by many non-Indigenous settlers who try to engage in alliance with Indigenous movements derives from perceiving decolonization as a way to

"re-think" or "improve" the world and this "recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future" (Tuck and Yang 2012:3). Settler anxiety and guilt regarding injustices against Natives pushes settlers to seek innocence through settler nativism, or the inventing of a long-lost Native American ancestor, or fantasizing adoption, in which settlers adopt Indigenous practices, knowledges and ceremonies as a way to become Indigenized (Tuck and Yang 2012). These are merely performances of innocence and sympathy, without any real sacrifice of privilege or power, and often create tensions and division when attempting coalition work.

Another point of contention between Indigenous and non-Indigenous activists seeking alliance is in different understandings of and orientations toward temporality and memory. Rifkin (2017) defines temporal orientation as the unconscious ways people inhabit time. US settler colonial orientations to time are understood as linear series of events that ultimately functions "to distance themselves from the horrific crimes committed against Indigenous peoples and the land" (Estes 2019:14). This is juxtaposed against an Indigenous pluralization of time that facilitates Indigenous people's understandings of reality, place, and memory and is viewed more as a "divergent process of becoming" (Rifkin 2017:2). Rifkin argues for an "Indigenous temporal sovereignty," or envisioning Native becoming and being as non-identical to settler frames. He argues, "Native peoples varied experiences of duration can remain non-identical with respect to the dynamics of settler temporal formations, indicating ways of being-in-time that are not reducible to participation in a singular, given time—a unitary flow—largely contoured by non-native patterns and priorities" (Rifkin 2017:3).

Paternalism, or the practice on the part of people in positions of dominance restricting the freedom and responsibilities of those considered subordinate to them, supposedly in their best interest, is often a problem in alliance work (Davis 2010; Jackman 1993). Non-Indigenous activists sometimes unknowingly take a position of superiority by assuming they "know what is best" for Indigenous people and/or by assuming a protective role, sometimes in the name of "love." A common assumption amongst progressives and liberals is that coalition work can only occur between groups and individuals with strong, likeable, or even loving relationships (Smith 2008). Complicating relations further, Natives are often "romanticized icons in progressive movements" (Smith 2008:222). Stemming from romanticism and/or benevolence, non-Indigenous activists tend to try to exercise paternalistic control over Natives, disrespecting their self-autonomy and personal sovereignty. This research seeks to understand the often complicated and nuanced ways settler colonial relations impacted coalition work during the Standing Rock movement and asks: *What can we learn about challenges for coalitions in US settler colonial society by examining the Standing Rock movement?*

This study specifically seeks to understand the ways race and ethnic differences, as formulated and produced in US settler colonial culture, hinders solidarities. Settler colonialism in the US is built upon a contradictory, racialized entangled triad of settler-native-slave, with the myth of a liberal democratic state that claims to uphold principles of freedom and equality (Wolfe 2006, Tuck and Yang 2012). "American racism is predicated on settler colonialism" (McKay, Vinyeta, and Norgaard 2020:16).

As critical settler and race scholars have noted, Natives, white settlers, and Blacks have been treated very different in the US (Wolfe 2006; Tuck and Yang 2012; Hill Collins 1998; Harris 1993; Moreton-Robinson 2015). Historical discourses of US exceptionalism and religious beliefs, such as Manifest Destiny, that proclaimed God ordained European settlers to conquer North America, shaped views of Native North American peoples as ‘uncivilized savages’ and ‘others’ (Alfred 2005). The racial category of “Indian” was birthed with the publication of Columbus' first letter in Spanish after his return from his first voyage to the “New World” in 1493 (Ife 1992). From this point on, within a context of violence and greed, all Indigenous polities, cultures, groups, and persons were collapsed under one racial category, Indian” (McKay, Vinyeta, and Norgaard 2020:16). Historically, the existence and reproduction of “Indians” obstructed white wealth in the form of land, while Black slavery meant that reproduction supplied white owners’ wealth. This produced US-specific racial classifications with Indianness based on strict blood quantum proof of aboriginality, Blackness defined by the “one drop rule,” and whiteness defined as the norm (Harris 1993; Sturm 2011; Kauanui 2018; Tuck and Yang 2012; Tallbear 2013).

The racialization of Indigenous peoples erodes a focus on Native peoples and cultures as heterogenous sovereign nations and instead translates Indigenous peoples as “normative raced” bodies and citizens of the state (Horner et al. 2022). Racialization thereby shifts responsibility away from recognizing the inherent tribal sovereignty of Indigenous nations and the complicated political implications that come with fully recognizing and working with foreign governments. Today, the US federal government still uses the racial category of “American Indian” in federal policy discourse. Broader

racialized terms such as “Native American” are also problematic because it reduces heterogenous national identities into one simplified, unified category.

Due to these contradictions, critical colonial studies must then, “grapple with the demands of asserting a sovereign, self-determining Indigenous subject without reifying racialized essentialism and authenticities” (Barker 2017:7). At the same time, critical colonial studies must not perpetuate race blindness in the field, or the tendency to ignore racialization and the way it systematically shapes Indigenous people’s lives. Rather, it is crucial to turn the focus onto whiteness and the ways it is discursively and materially produced through political and cultural ideals of citizenship, gender, and property ownership (Harris 1993; Scott 2007; Roediger 2007). Moreton-Robinson (2015) suggests research on the mutual constitution of the white possessive logic, or the racialized mode of rationalization that uses discourse to circulate meanings about power and produces norms. She argues race marks the ownership of possessive logics and historically defines who owns property (whites), who is losing property (Indigenous), and who is property (Blacks).

In addition to racialization, settler colonialism is coproduced and reproduced through the imposition of cisgender, heteropatriarchal, and heteronormative standards and norms (Barman 2011). In other words, the particularities of US heterosexism are predicated on settler colonialism (Morgensen 2011). Settler colonialism deeply impacts gender roles, exerts control over women’s bodies and sexuality, and inflicts and perpetuates sexual violence (Suzak 2011; Smith 2015; Deer 2018). Violence against the land is inextricably linked to violence against Indigenous women, trans peoples, and Two-spirit peoples (Estes 2019). “Epidemic levels of violence, sexual assault,

imprisonment, and cultural and political disempowerment" (Nason 2020:21) demonstrate the ways Indigenous women and girls are targets in patriarchal settler colonialist societies. Structural and symbolic violence of settler colonial misogyny, specifically targeted at Indigenous women, is normalized and saturates all relationships (Coulthard 2017).

Gender and sexuality are inextricably part of Indigenous politics (Barker 2017). Gender and sexuality are co-productive in shaping Indigenous sovereignty and epistemology and gendered and sexed land-based knowledges, cultural practices, relations, legal histories, and discourses, while also concurrently coproduced by and entangled with US settler colonial projects. Barker (2017) argues that gender and sexuality should be given special attention alongside analysis of nation-based and territorially specific engagements. Analysis of coalitions within social movements seeking to decolonize, such as the Standing Rock movement, must address gender inequality and gender-based violence and the ways it intersects with racialization and race inequalities in settler colonialism (Anderson 2011; Cunningham 2006). As Rifkin (2017:172) points out, control over reproduction continues in contemporary US Indian policy that "defines the political dimensions of Native sovereignty through references to reprosexual logic, in which an implicit emphasis on the generational inheritance of biological Indianness despatializes Native identity and, thus translates place-based Indigeneity into a matter of lineage."

Embracing the critiques and insights from scholars mentioned above, this analysis seeks to explore the challenges within coalition politics at Standing Rock by acknowledging heterogenous Indigenous identities and cultures and the ways US settler

colonial culture shapes and informs identities and cultures. Dominant group identities and cultures are relevant to understanding the challenges in coalition work, the cultural and political opposition to the movement, and for understanding the masculinized, militarized corporate responses to Standing Rock. Race, gender, and nature work as a terrain of power and are technologies for the domination of people, land, and natural resources through violence and representational hierarchies that uphold white, masculine authority and superiority (Hill Collins 2004; Moore, Pandian, and Kosek 2003). White masculine interests and cultures are embedded in corporate and military organizations (Nagel 2019) and can even be found in social justice movements. Engaging with critical colonial, race, and feminist theoretical perspectives, this study asks the following questions: *In what ways did race and gender hierarchies serve as hindrances for coalition building? What can we learn about the ways settler colonial culture upholds white supremacy and violence and inhibits solidarities across social difference?*

Risks for Coalition

In addition to understanding the politics of coalition generated by activists in the camps, this study seeks to examine the public/private military forces that aligned in response to the movement. At Standing Rock, federal, state, local and private military aligned to protect state and corporate interests. The coalescing of the federal government with energy corporations to exploit Native American land and resources has a long tradition in the US and is nothing new (Grann 2018; Carley 1997). What makes the particularities of this public/private military coalition and response historically unique are the specificities of the contemporary context: Since the 1980s, the US has embraced neoliberal policies and ideologies and, since 2001, has been engaged in an international

"War on Terror." A new form of corporatized, private military, specializing in counterintelligence and counterterrorism, has grown out of that particular culture (Schotten 2018). Simultaneously, an emerging environmental crisis of climate change threatens economic and social norms.

Militarized responses to Indigenous-led movements defines the U.S. settler project. The U.S. was built on a culture of violent conquest (Dunbar 2014; Smith 2015), genocide, and land theft against Indigenous peoples, backed by federal and state military forces. The "Indian Wars" in the early centuries of this nation's history shaped military discourse, strategy, and method as well as nation-building ideologies, rhetoric, and legal discourse. Kaplan (2006) puts it this way: "Whereas the average American at the dawn of the new millennium found patriotic inspiration in the legacies of the Civil War and World War II, when the evils of slavery and fascism were confronted and vanquished, for many commissioned and noncommissioned officers in the U.S. Army's defining moment was fighting the 'Indians.'" (Kaplan in Dunbar 2014:221). Dunbar (2014) describes "Indian Wars" as the template for the United States approach to imperialism and counterinsurgency wars.

The early American "Indian War" rhetoric primed people for colonial violence and entitlement and established rhetorical exclusion (Murphy and Stuckey 2001), or the intentional and purposeful discursive exclusion of non-European perspectives. The original quest to conquer the "frontier" produced cultural discourse and ideologies that remain persistent and productive. For example, in the past century, the term "Indian Country" was used by the military during the Vietnam War and in the wars in the Middle East to describe enemy territory. It shares the same meaning that it did in centuries prior,

which is that “Indian Country” and its inhabitants are to be annihilated, destroyed, and taken from. In both metaphor, rhetoric, and lived material reality, the “Indian Wars” are not over and many Native interviewees in this study described themselves as “prisoners of war.” Christian and Freeman (2010) describe contemporary Indigenous-led movements repressed by federal and state military as “Modern-day Indian Wars.” Today’s Indigenous identities and communities are shaped and built based on an ongoing resistance to colonialism, just as settler colonial culture is shaped and built by its perpetuation of violence and suppression against Indigenous peoples and social movements.

Byrd (2011:xviii) argues that the psychology of US culture is rooted in a pathology of death, destruction and injustice, “In the United States, the Indian is the original enemy combatant who cannot be grieved.” The premise for her argument includes three major points: 1) Colonization and Indigeneity matters; 2) The US empire has a birthing point, and European colonialist agendas shaped the appropriation of Indigenous lands, knowledges, presences and identities for its own use; and, 3) Indigenous peoples must be central to any theorizations of the conditions of post-coloniality, empire, and death-dealing regimes that arise out of Indigenous lands. “We are long-memoried peoples, and we remember what happened the last time the world was flat” (Byrd 2011:xiv). Byrd (2011) explores how “Indianness” or Indigeneity functions as a transit, or a trajectory of movement that serves as precedent within US imperial history. This transferrable transit/Indianness, or cultural and political modes, allow for continuous US empire expansion in the form of conquest of lands, territories, resources, anti-immigrant ideologies, war on terrorism and more.

Indigenous resistance to settler colonialism in the past century has continued to conjure excessive military responses from the US federal government. In "A Case study of the American Indian Movement," Carley (1997) describes an overview of research on state and federal repression in response to the American Indian Movement (AIM) in the 1960s and 70s. In this article Carley says, "Tilly (1978) argues that the likelihood of repression depends on two factors: the scale of action the movement undertakes, and the power of the group. Groups with minor demands, as well as relatively powerless groups, will be tolerated and, in some cases, even facilitated. Radical organization, if they achieve a certain threshold of power, will be subject to state repression" (Carley 1997:152-153). Carley argues that in order for the state to engage in repression, the group's scale of actions and ideologies must be radically different from the state. The Oceti Sakwoin Nation has consistently resisted settler colonialism and issued demands and espoused ideologies radically different from state and colonial-capital interests, two of the most well-known acts of resistance being Wounded Knee 1890 and 1973. The Standing Rock movement was yet another stand, and it was met by a public and private military coalition of forces that enacted excessive militarized repression.

At Standing Rock, the police, military, and private military were "integral to the settler state's management of the Indian Problem and how state violence against Indigenous bodies works in tandem with state and capitalist exploitation of Indigenous lands" (Estes and Dhillon 2019:8). This study wants to know: *What can we learn about the risks for coalitions in US settler colonial society by examining the Standing Rock movement?*

Emerging from perceived threats of radical Islamic terrorism during the 1990s and the events of 9/11, the US has been engaged in a "War on Terror" since 2001. Engaging with critical settler colonial theories and critical security studies, which analyze and debate the construction of threats and human security and the role of identity and difference in whose security is prioritized, this study takes a critical perspective on the "War on Terror." The efforts to end terrorism in the 21st century can be seen as an extension of what Schotten (2018:64) calls a "civilationist moralism of life and death" that defines the US imperial project, demanding militarization domestically and internationally to sanctify both settlement and empire as morally righteous, and any resistance to it as immoral and the "epitome of savagery" (Schotten 2018:64). The terrorist is the "other" or an infinite spectral whose demise is justified in all ways (Byrd 2011). "The 'terrorist' of today, the contemporary obstacle to empire, is the native of an alleged 'yesterday,' the archaic obstacle to settlement" (Schotten 2018:61). Settler colonialism and US imperialism, as ongoing projects, rely on civiliationist moralism in a biopolitical (Foucault 2004) and necropolitical (Mbembe 2003) nation-state framework. US patriotic pathology (Byrd 2011) at home and Islamaphobic security culture (Schotten 2018) abroad have produced new forms of intense social control including corporatized, privatized military, specializing in counterintelligence, where certain bodies are targeted for surveillance and destruction, and are backed by legal policy, such the Bush-era Patriot Act of 2001.

The growth of private military and security contractors has been on the rise since the end of the Cold War in the US and has significantly boomed since the "War on Terror" Iraq and Afghanistan wars (Stanger and Williams 2006). "The private military

industry consists of profit-maximizing corporations that specialize in a variety of military and security services. These services include strategic advising, intelligence gathering and analysis, military and tactical training, and technical, logistical, and operational assistance" (Stanger and Williams 2006:5). Private military and security firms have become fully integrated into contemporary US government military actions, most especially in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars in the form of "outsourcing" support defense services with nearly 50 percent of armed forces in Iraq and Afghanistan private (McFate 2016). Tasks that were once thought to be governmental are now conducted by private firms. The privatization of the military is so expansive, the Iraq and Afghanistan wars could not have been fought without the use of contracted labor, the first war in US history to be contingent on contracted labor. Private military firms and contractors have become fully integrated into the operations of the US military and normalized through their transactions in the free market.

The privatization of military and use of private military forces is intertwined with contemporary neoliberal economic structures and reasonings. Since the 1970s, the economic and political philosophy of neoliberalism has taken hold as a hegemonic approach to interpreting macro and micro realities in US culture and can be understood as a contemporary settler colonial-capital order of reason (Huber 2013). Neoliberalism originated in the analysis and philosophies of economists Friedrich Hayek (1960) and Milton Friedman (1951; 1955; 1962) in the mid-twentieth century, was enthusiastically embraced by President Reagan's policies in the US in the 1980s and led to what is known as the "Washington Consensus," a set of policy prescriptions adopted by international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund

(Liverman and Vilas 2006). Neoliberalism emphasizes privatization, trade liberalization, deregulation, minimal state intervention, fiscal discipline, and national economies integrated into the global "free market" (Harvey 2005).

Neoliberalism, as a world view, extends into the everyday cultural politics of life (Huber 2013; Lind 2011; Guthman 2011). "Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (Harvey 2005:2). In other words, settler colonial-capital culture, including state and civil society are "economized" and governed by neoliberal orders of value. Neoliberalism has come to shape the beliefs, ideologies, and common sense of US culture that inform peoples conceptions of place that uphold traditions of privatization, commodification, property rights, and the free market. Neoliberalism extends to every institution in the globe, including the military.

The threat of climate change as a national security issue has been engaged in political discourse since the 1990s. National security strategies in both Bill Clinton and George Bush Jr.'s presidencies reveal that environmental issues, specifically climate change, pose as security risks that "could potentially destabilize the geo-political environment" (Angus 2016:182). Crosby and Monaghan argue that a new dynamic of policing has evolved from the "War on Terror" policies called "the security state," or a sprawling array of national security and policing agents, industry and corporate partners, and public bureaucracies that are increasingly integrated through surveillance, intelligence databanks and institutional partnerships in efforts to pre-empt or disrupt

protentional threats. Transnational social actions on domestic lands, such as the Standing Rock movement, taken to address climate change and fossil fuel reliance, have come to require the same tactics used to fight international global terrorist threats to national security.

The use of private military and security in wars has attracted increased attention from scholars of law and foreign relations, but an examination of the use of private military for domestic suppression of protests has not garnered much research attention. The threat of climate change has received increased attention from politicians, scientists, and environmental scholars, and EJ and climate justice movements have drawn significant research, but research is needed to examine the ways that state and corporations respond to EJ and climate justice movements and the impacts this has on civilians. This study seeks to attend to these areas and asks: *What can we learn about settler colonial culture by examining the corporatized and militarized responses to the movement?*

Settler colonialism was and continues to be built upon repeated and ongoing acts of violence and conquest. Research indicates that environments with high levels of historical violence continue to have high levels of inequality, conflict, and violence for many generations after (Loewen 2018; Crowe 2014; O'Connell 2019; McVeigh and Cunningham 2012; McVeigh, Cunningham, and Farrell 2014). Nations like the US that historically inflicted high levels of violence based on racialized, gendered and ethnocentric justifications and ideologies of power create "haunting" legacies that "alter population characteristics, structural and emotional dynamics, and contemporary life

chances" (Ward 2016:575). Two such haunting legacies are historical trauma and racial trauma (Sotero 2006; Williams-Washington 2010).

Historical trauma is understood as the result of violent events targeted at a specific community that has effects across generations through a range of mechanisms, including physical and mental health impacts (Walters et al. 2011). Historical trauma researched amongst Native American communities is linked to traumatic events of colonization and federal policies of removal, segregation, and assimilation (Walters et al. 2011; Brave Heart 2003; Brave Heart, Chase, Elkins, & Altschul 2011; Washburn 1988). Historical trauma in Native American communities and peoples results in historical trauma response, which includes a cluster of symptoms or maladaptive behaviors associated with unresolved historical grief (Brave Heart, Chase, Elkins, & Altschul 2011). Historical trauma has the capacity to be transmitted across generation and is linked with a factor for higher rates of illness in Native American communities (Berg et al., 2012; Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Stumblingbear-Riddle & Romans, 2012).

Racial trauma, or race-based stress, refers to "events of danger related to real or perceived experience of racial discrimination, threats of harm and injury, and humiliating and shaming events, in addition to witnessing harm to other ethnoracial individuals because of real or perceived racism" (Comas-Díaz 2016:249). In 2000, the U.S. Surgeon General reported that racial and ethnic minorities "bear a greater burden from unmet mental health needs" that were likely due to racism (Office of the Surgeon General 2001). A number of empirical studies since then verify that experiences of racism, discrimination, and microagressions impact the mental health of minorities in a range of negative ways, including traumatization and trauma related stress symptoms (Alvarez,

Liang, and Neville 2016; Chou, Asnaani, and Hofmann 2012; Helms, Nicolas, and Green 2012; Williams, Printz, and DeLapp 2018; Aymer 2016). Danzer et al. (2016:354-55) demonstrates that white racism is traumatizing for people of color in the US because it threatens their collective survival and meets the criteria for trauma based on "posttraumatic effects consistent with DSM symptom and vulnerability factors, including inadequate socioeconomic resources, vulnerability to being traumatized again in the future, hypervigilance, re-creation, helplessness, and gender-based considerations."

To study the impacts of historical violence and trauma and ongoing racial violence and trauma, a central focus must be on the ways these processes and experiences are embodied, or the ways people's bodies incorporate experiences (Krieger 2012). Bodies are the primary way that human beings perceive, inhabit, and interact with the social world (Merleau-Ponty 2003). Bodily senses provide somatic and affectual information that create interpretive frameworks and make meaning in our lives (Sekimoto and Brown 2020; Ahmed 2006; 2012). Gravelee (2009:47) finds that racial inequality becomes "embodied-literally-in the biological well-being of racialized groups and individuals." This study seeks to understand the ways that violence and trauma are embodied, and in turn, shaped the beliefs and actions of activists at Standing Rock. This study asks: *How was militarized suppression and violence experienced on the ground by activists and how did it impact coalition work? How do experiences of historical violence and trauma break down relations in practice? And ultimately, how do experiences of historical violence and trauma shape, produce, and reproduce settler colonial culture?*

Conclusion

This research engages with and builds upon a range of works that emerge from Indigenous and feminist studies on coalition work across difference, particularly the strengths and challenges within coalitions built upon a framework and philosophy of decolonization. This study engages with place theory and a range of identity theories that stem from Indigenous studies, feminist theory, and critical race theoretical frameworks to better understand why people came together in spite of difference and how their relationships to place, home, and environment shaped their efforts and alliances. Environmental and climate justice movements are part of a global ecological revolution that seeks racial, economic, and gender-based justice alongside ecological protection and sustainability. This study seeks to understand how these broader political aspirations can be sought after in ways that do not diminish the primary localized goals of the movement and in ways that unite humanity across vast differences.

As prior studies clearly indicate, coalition work can be messy and complicated. This study seeks to contribute to literature that seeks to understand these problems, specifically those rooted in settler colonial-capital logics and practices. Building upon critical settler colonial theories, this study contributes to knowledge on the ways settler colonial-capital hegemonic culture shapes all aspects of everyday life, even individuals and groups who are in resistance to it. Understanding the role of racialization and gender inequality in the founding and perpetuation of settler colonial-capital culture, this study seeks to examine the ways dominant groups uphold power and seek to control and diminish groups who disrupt it.

Settler colonialism cannot be understood without looking directly at violence and trauma. This study fully acknowledges the impact of historical and racial violence and

trauma and seeks to contribute to the literature surrounding its impact on Indigenous peoples and specifically the ways it shapes their political actions, beliefs, and abilities to coalesce. In conclusion, by studying the politics of coalition at Standing Rock, this study seeks to provide insights into future possibilities, challenges, and risks for coalitions in US society.

METHODS

The research design for this study engages with qualitative methods to gain insights into the research questions posed above. Qualitative research seeks to understand people's in-depth beliefs, experiences, attitudes, and interactions in order to provide insights into real-world problems. A qualitative study design must be flexible, inductive, and reflexive (Maxwell 2013). Data collection for this study involved four specific qualitative methods: interviews, content analysis of podcast stories, document analysis, and participatory research and observation.

I wanted my primary source to be activist accounts of their experiences at Standing Rock, and I wanted them in a way that allowed their voices to be distinct and discernable (Ribbens and Edwards 1998). Thereby, I undertook semi-structured and open-ended, in-depth interviews with 27 activists. I also analyzed 13 short stories shared by activists on the *Voices of Standing Rock* podcast. All 40 accounts analyzed in this study came from people who visited or lived in the camps formed in North Dakota near the Cannonball River during Standing Rock movement, ranging in lengths of time from three days to seven months. This approach is hermeneutic, meaning it is an interpretive understanding of stories, behaviors, opinions, attitudes and experiences at a deep level (Spickard 2017). This approach was chosen in order to better understand activist's self-identities, personal feelings, and cultural knowledges and to explore the meanings they attach to their experiences (Dixon and Singleton Jr. 2013). This approach was chosen because this study is less interested in the timeline of specific events that occurred at Standing Rock and more in how events were experienced and interpreted by participants.

Interviews were conducted over the course of two years, 2020 and 2021. Due to safety measures for preventing spread of COVID-19 during this time, all interviews, except one, took place via fully encrypted Zoom meetings or phone calls. Zoom interviews allowed for open interactions with interviewees often introducing me to family members, showing me their houses, belongings, pets, tattoos and more. Zoom provided a convenient medium for interviewees to embed links to news articles, documents, blog sites, and websites they discussed. All interviews, except one, were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis. The exception was an interview with a military veteran who preferred not to share his story via Zoom or phone due to concerns for privacy, but I was allowed to take written notes during our in-person meeting. Original names were muted in recordings before transcription and changed to pseudonyms in data analysis and write-up to protect privacy.

Because some Standing Rock activists were skeptical about being interviewed, for a number of reasons, including ongoing legal disputes and negative experiences regarding infiltration measures incurred at Standing Rock, I engaged in snowball sampling methods to seek interviewees. "'Snowballing' is a widely recognized technique in qualitative research concerned with accessing stigmatized groups" (Miller 1998:63). I started with two activists I met at Standing Rock in December 2016 and came to know personally, who referred me to additional interviewees and allowed the sample to snowball from there. This allowed for a relationship of trust to be established because interviewees were approached by someone they knew first. I also recruited some interviewees through social media by posting a recruitment flyer. In a few cases, I reached out to people in a "cold call" approach through email or social media messaging platforms.

Interviews lasted between one and four hours. Interview questions were semi-structured and respondent centered. In other words, I started with a list of questions, but I also designed as I went, meaning questions developed based on the stories, goals, aspirations, and interests of the subjects (Powell 2018). Almost every interview went off course from my list of questions and I gladly welcomed this process as it created more of a conversation-style experience in which people shared intimate stories and feelings. I let people's stories guide the process. At the end of every interview, I always asked if there was anything else they wanted to share. This often led to interesting stories and experiences that I would not have thought to ask about.

The 13 stories from the *Voices of Standing Rock* (2016) podcast, available on multiple streaming platforms, including Apple Podcasts and YouTube, are "intimate interviews with water protectors at Standing Rock." Each story is between five and twenty minutes in length. These stories are particularly valuable for this study for a number of reasons. First, the data is unobtrusive, meaning participants did not know they were going to be studied (Dixon and Singleton Jr. 2013). In this way, the stories provide diverse truths from the story tellers themselves without conscious awareness of a researcher. Second, they were readily available for analysis. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, technological, economic, and social barriers made finding interviewees somewhat challenging. Some people did not have access to a video platform for interviews, some people, especially essential workers, were working long hours, dealing with sickness, and overall confronting significant social stressors in 2020.

The total sample of people in this study ranged in age from early 20s to early 80s. They came from all over the US, with the majority living in the Midwest and Southwest

portions of the country. Stories came from 16 women and 23 men, and one individual who identified as gender non-binary. Race, ethnic, and tribal identities were not clear-cut, with many people identifying as having multiple identities (see more on identity terminology below).

In addition to in-depth interviews and podcast stories, I engaged in qualitative document analysis of dozens of TigerSwan documents, made up of PowerPoint presentations, security intel updates, and email reports. The documents were leaked by a TigerSwan employee and published online by *Intercept* media in 2017 (Brown, Perrish, and Speri 2017). Like the podcast stories, the documents were recorded without a researcher's interventions or observations. In this way, the documents are "social facts," meaning they were produced, shared, and used in socially organized ways (Atkinson and Coffey 1997 in Bowen 2009). The original purpose of the documents was to share intel information about activists in the camps and is based on firsthand experiences and sources gained by and from TigerSwan employees. These documents are particularly insightful because by November of 2016, Energy Transfer Partners delegated directorship of all private security actions to TigerSwan, who then oversaw and coordinated several other private contractors during its tenure at Standing Rock (Juhasz 2017). The document analysis serves as a complement to my primary method of interviews. The data provided in the documents provides political context and historical insight into the events that occurred at Standing Rock and bolsters interviewee accounts.

The final qualitative method I engaged in was participatory research and participant observation. I participated in a range of activities that allowed for observation and participation in the cultural and social scenes of the movement. This approach

allowed access to multiple layers of experience. As an activist, prior to becoming a researcher, I participated as a supply runner for the Standing Rock movement and visited the camps in late December 2016 through early January 2017. I wrote extensively in my personal journal about these experiences that I later reflected upon during the research process. I also engaged in media analysis of the Standing Rock movement, both during and in the years after, including closely following and analyzing news media and social media sources. I frequently engaged with Standing Rock activists via social media networking, email newsletters, and in 2017 and 2018 hosted an activist, who also became a friend, in my home for three months while she engaged in educational activities in support of the movement. Participatory research and observation helped me to gain an understanding of the culture of the movement and the broader settler colonial cultural responses to it. Rather than simply "studying people" I sought to learn *from* people through engagement, observation, listening, friendship, and relating (Spradley 1980:3).

In all methods discussed above, I engaged in discourse analysis, or the study of language and the "kinds of framing, inclusion, and exclusion of certain points of view" that occur in order to analyze politically motivated discourse and how meanings and identities are expressed (Altheide and Schneider 2013:69). Michel Foucault (1982) first proposed the concept of discourse as "a historically, socially, and institutionally specific structure of statements, terms, categories, and beliefs" that is intimately connected to knowledge and power (Scott 1988:35). This type of analysis is based on analytical realism, or the view that the social world is an interpreted world, always under symbolic construction.

My processes of discourse analysis took several dimensions. First, I listened to all interviews and podcast recordings several times. Second, after transcription, I printed and read accounts while taking handwritten notes. I often did this while sitting outside near water or in a quiet space so I could read slowly and carefully. Third, I uploaded all data, including all transcriptions and TigerSwan documents, into MAXQDA software for more detailed, systematic coding. A combination of inductive versus deductive coding was engaged. I started with a few coding themes based on my research questions but allowed the data to determine the rest of the coding schemes as they emerged. I looked for language, phrasing, stories, and concepts patterned across groups and individuals. External sensitizing coding concept schemes revolved around identity, ideology, and alliance including: past, present, and future experiences of violence, sense of responsibility to self and others, ideas about social justice, any references to gender, race, ethnicity, class, tribal culture, traditions, gender, place, appearance, and nationality, and concepts of difference and similarity amongst activists. I created memos for every interview, story, and document and took note of connecting strategies and contextual relationships across people and groups. I used visual displays and matrices to help me see and facilitate analytic insights.

Ethics

As a non-Indigenous scholar, I stay attuned to the ethics of researching and writing about peoples and cultures of which I am an outsider. Enormous critique has come from Indigenous peoples and communities toward academia's lack of regard for historical acts of injustice through colonialism and violence, exclusion and marginalization of Indigenous ways of knowing, the tendency to reproduce Western

domination practices, and the use of dehumanizing academic discourse. Critics of anthropological and sociological studies insist that attempts to understand Indigenous peoples and cultures be placed in the broader context of colonialism, capitalism, heterosexism, racism, and ethnocentrism. Throughout the research process, I stayed conscious of such critiques and asked myself, "in what ways am I reproducing or perpetuating colonialism?" I turned to Indigenous studies scholars for insights and suggestions on ways to decolonize my mind, and the research and writing processes.

By far, the most influential Indigenous writer on my journey is Vine Deloria Jr. (1979; 1980; 1991; 2001; 2012) who provides an array of critiques regarding misrepresentations of Indigenous history, peoples, and communities in academic scholarship. He highly critiques the self-oriented intentions and motivations of non-Native scholars who, often despite good intentions, perpetuate settler colonial epistemologies that reduce knowledge into hierarchical and limited organization of ideas, and promotes dichotomous thinking and simplistic solutions. Instead, he encourages social scientists to develop overarching and integrative understandings of reality. Deloria Jr. (1980:271) says, "Examining the presuppositions of social science and recommending a drastic change in assumptions and methodologies requires the various disciplines to conceive of themselves as contributing to a larger whole, or allowing themselves to introduce a philosophical dimension which would place them at the center of a synthesizing of human knowledge." Wildcat (2005:420) describes Deloria's own methodological approach as informed by an Indigenous epistemological position in which "knowledge resides in the construction of meaning found in the process of living in the world." Deloria Jr.'s suggestions to take Indigenous knowledges and experiences

seriously and to introduce a philosophical dimension to methodology, in order to better synthesize human knowledges, is my starting point.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) argues for the decolonization of research methods by embracing a proponent of respect and social justice. Tuhiwai Smith suggests avoiding colonialist style language, or the "new language of imperialism," as it is merely a discourse that masks older power relations, including terms such as globalization, economic independence, and progress. "Territories are called markets, interesting little backwaters are untapped potentials, and tribal variations of culture and language are examples of diversity" (Smith 2012:101). Smith emphasizes the use of stories to represent diversities of truth, and as deep connections to knowing, and to use stories to search for meanings. She also suggests the use of imagination as a critical tool for research. The use of creativity and imagination have traditionally been looked down upon in research because it is "inherently uncontrollable" (Smith 2012:203). She argues the cycle of colonization is inherently anti-emancipatory and that the use of a "language of possibility" reveals an alternative, oppositional way of knowing.

Donald Fixico (1998) suggests non-Indigenous academics seek to deliberately remove ethnocentrism, consider differing Native viewpoints, and embrace an ethic of open-mindedness. Larsen and Johnson's (2017) research on Indigenous place-based struggles reveals the production and renewal of a variety of transition discourses (Escobar 2011), or discourses regarding a world in "epochal transition" as it confronts crisis. This new discourse speaks to a pluriverse, or world within worlds, transitioning human and nonhuman communities toward forms of direct action and mutual care (Soren and Johnson 2017). They suggest a "kitchen table" approach to learning about such worlds,

an approach that supports being-together-in-place, as opposed to the "hall of mirrors" approach which engages in academic discourse that refers endlessly to itself.

Most of the Indigenous people I interviewed agreed to talk to me only because an "insider" had given them the "okay" that I could be trusted. In the few cases I tried to reach out to Indigenous folks without an insider connection, my invitations were refused. In one instance, I was asked by an Indigenous woman to state my intentions for the research. She clearly expressed that if my intentions were not going to directly benefit Indigenous communities she did not want to participate. Her concerns are corroborated by many Indigenous critics of academic research, due to "the indifferent way in which data were collected and published, and that resulted in little benefit to the host Indian community" (Champagne 1998:183). Her skepticism helped me to clarify my goals and shape my research ethics and I am deeply appreciative of our interaction, even though at the time I struggled with difficult feelings.

Reagon (2011) suggests "unsettling the settler within" through honest engagement with internal, personal settler colonialism. Adam Barker (2010: 322) writes, "In order to ask the question honestly, settler people must come to understand the colonization is motivated by an implicit individualism, functionally similar to selfishness: colonial settler actions, even when not intended as such, can appear as greed for power and privilege, insulation from conflict or fear, and the freedom to completely ignore problematic 'others' as well as the effects of individual actions." Barker (2010:324) suggests a method of "radical experimentation" to examine problems in the context of imperial domination, by engaging in a dual self-reflective, groundless process that undertakes each new attempt or interaction with self-consciousness, free of ego.

Throughout the study, I sought to deliberately stay aware of and dismantle my own internal implicit individualism and ethnocentrism. I hold strong values of keeping my word, having integrity, seeing integrity in all humans and nonhuman life, and treating people with respect and kindness. In the writing process, I heightened my awareness of language and made choices accordingly. As Visweswaran (1994:31) suggests, I "examine[d] the way in which the scientific voice is…patriarchal." As Smith suggest, when possible, I used the direct language of the people I spoke with and embraced stories as the primary source of knowledge. As Larsen and Johnson suggest, I approached interviews, like sitting at a kitchen table, relaxed and open. I listened. I took what people had to say seriously and related and connected with each person in a unique way during our time together. The rewards were deeply transforming. In an effort to understand coalition work, I also embraced relating and writing "coalitionally," or from the perspective of people coming together, in relation, inhabiting tensions and releases, recognizing some social realities of which I can relate and some of which I cannot (Lugones 2003). Over and over, I sought to embrace a sense of possibility and an aspiration for social justice.

I am a social justice activist before and alongside being an academic. Before my training in sociology, in the early 2000s, I attained a graduate degree in feminist research and methodology. As a feminist qualitative researcher and activist, I engage in reflexivity as a both a methodological and personal practice. "Reflexivity means reflecting upon and understanding our own personal, political and intellectual autobiographies as researchers and making explicit where we are located in relation to our research respondents" (Mauthner and Doucet 1998:121). I am a white, formerly poverty/working class, now

lower middle class, Midwestern, single mother, settler descendent woman. Through consistent journaling, I consistently seek self-reflection upon my position in the power matrix. With all interviewees, I clearly stated my social positionality and spoke from a place of deep honesty and reflexivity, as much as possible.

I engaged in feminist intersectional analysis throughout this study. Intersectionality starts with the understanding that subjects occupy multiple social locations and then seeks to give voice to their complex positionalities, while also pointing out how interlocking oppressions take embedded, structural, and institutional forms in society that dominant group members often do not see (Crenshaw 1989; McIntosh 1989; Lorde 1983, 1984; May 2012). In the early years of intersectional insight, some feminists attempted to re-conceptualize the problem of intersectional analysis by "adding" race, class, gender etc. to their analysis. Many critiqued the additive approach for relying on dichotomous thinking and thereby unable to hold multiple, contradictory and paradoxical realities (Hill Collins 1991; Spelman 1982). Instead of "adding" identity to the analysis, this study weaves together nuances and multiple dimensions of lived experiences to better understand how identity and complex subjectivity operates, survives, and connects with others within a complex system of domination and power (Hill Collins 1991, 1998, 2000; Davis 1981, Anzaldua 1999; 2012, hooks 1992, Smith 1983).

By taking an intersectional feminist approach and considering lived experience and story as criterions of meaning, this work exposes how normative ideas of knowing can be questioned while also helping marginalized groups and individuals articulate experience and oppositional consciousness, and ultimately lends this approach to social justice efforts (May 2012; Sandoval 1991). "Because intersectional work validates the

lives and stories of previously ignored groups of people, it is seen as a tool that can be used to help empower communities and the people in them" (Dill and Zambrana 2017:191). Looking at complex subjectivities opens up analysis for how institutional and structural systems operate in a complex matrix of domination of power that must be addressed simultaneously (Hill Colllins 2000).

Lastly, I want to address the emotional aspects of this research and the impact it has had on shaping my research and personal ethics. There is a perception of academic research as one that often evokes order, rationality, objectivity, and, as already stated, for many Indigenous people, exploitation. Something I did not expect during this research process was the immense levels of emotional expression and transfer between myself and the people I talked to. Everyone I interviewed cried at some point during our talk, from either joy, anger, or sadness, and sometimes tears turned into weeping. Every time, I also cried in response to their heartfelt emotions and stories. These moments created a feeling of deep connection and empathy toward people based on the level of vulnerability and openness shared.

Snyman (2011) suggests a "hermeneutics of vulnerability," or an ethic of interpretation in which the consideration of impact is encouraged. "Recognizing vulnerability in oneself and in others can lead to a further unmasking of privileged positions which the former political dispensation produced and which need to be foregrounded for the sake of reconciliation. In other words, the old prevalent colonial power relationships need to be unmasked in what has become the new 'empire'" (Snyman 2011: 2). I was pleasantly surprised by the level of emotion stirred in the "unmasked" spaces cocreated during interviews. I truly felt a reciprocal exchange of

sensitivity, connection, and openness to multi-layered knowledges and experiences during every interview experience.

My Conceptions of Place

My own conceptions of place are shaped by intersecting identities of geography, race, class, and gender and by a feminist and social justice consciousness. Born a child to poor-white, teenage parents, both wrecked by family histories of abuse and alcoholism, in an economically ravished rural town in Missouri, population 300, shaped my understandings of land, property, gender, and power. Both my parent's families share histories as settler-colonial immigrants who eventually became land-owning farmers. But my mother's side lost their land in the depression era, to what my grandmother said was "gambling and greed" and my father lost his land in the 80s due to inheritance disputes between in-fighting family members. My dad learned the welding trade, which gained him access to union membership, despite his multiple felonies and off-and-on prison time. While my beginnings were in rural Missouri, and it is the place we always returned to, my childhood existed of constant moving following welding work on oil pipelines across the Midwest, including North Dakota. My father inflicted years of domestic terror and abuse on our family which shaped my own understandings of trauma and violence, and informed my later development of a feminist and social justice consciousness. My mom eventually divorced my dad and married another alcoholic who moved us to Oklahoma. I spent my teen years in the contested land of Broken Arrow, a place I recall as haunted.

I returned to Missouri as a recovering addict and teen mother, and, against all odds and advice, started college in Columbia, Missouri. I raised my two kids here.

Almost all of my family of origin still live in the same rural town and I still consider it home in many ways. The town sits less than ten miles from the banks of the Missouri river. I grew up eating fish from the smaller rivers and creeks that surround the Big Muddy. My conceptions of place, while informed by human-based conflict and tragedy, were also conceived of by the beauty, freedom and nourishment that came from the land and the river. Emotional geography theory describes emotional connection to place, and specifically how rural 'practices of speaking and silence' and 'discourse of resilience and recovery' shape identity (Power, Norman, and Dupre 2014). My identity is very much shaped by my emotional connections to the river in my childhood, teen years, and as an adult. These are emotional based connections to place, in contrast to Indigenous conceptions of place which emphasize place thought, animation, personality, and agency. While I cannot relate to directly to Indigenous conceptions of place, I have now been informed of them and this knowledge now shapes my understandings of place. Adam Barker (2010) encourages activists and researchers who are seeking to work with Indigenous peoples to look at things in a new way, but in a way that compliments, not replicates, Indigenous peoples and cultures. I, in no way, want to replicate or appropriate Indigenous understandings of place. I am a white, settler. And, white settler ways very much inform my understandings of place, and my sense of responsibility to it.

I felt called to go to Standing Rock in 2016 and 2017 because I felt compelled to support the Water Protectors, and also because emotionally I felt like I could relate to the vulnerability of the river. I know intimately the abusive nature of some of the men who were quite literally placing the pipeline underneath the river. Paradoxically, I also know the beauty and power of the river because of and through the eyes of those same men, as

it was my dad and uncles (also pipeliners) who took me to the river as a child, not my mother or aunts. These contradictions and tensions formed a complex personal politic that centers around relationships of gender, kinship, land, water, abuse, healing, justice, and protection for me. Kaiser and Miller (2004) explore ways women respond to sexism and gender-based abuses, and found that many, especially ones with an optimistic outlook, seek confrontation with their perpetrators. In my case, for safety reasons, my confrontation is transferred to a larger structural conglomerate of power: the pipeline itself. Estes (2019:257) asks, "What does water want from us? What does the earth want from us?" I am not sure the answers to those questions, but I do know that my personal stories of place and home inform me of my responsibilities toward protecting self and others, including humans, non-humans, water, and land. "In teaching us how to take responsibility for our degrees of autonomy we share in relationship with others, place helps ensure that experimentation will not lead to mutual harm but will help us care for and live with one another in life-supportive ways" (Larsen and Johnson 2017:196).

Terminology: Words Matter

This study seeks to understand the ways race and ethnicity shapes people's experiences, behaviors, and relationships with people and place. It also seeks to highlight and emphasize heterogenous tribal cultures and identities within North America. Rather than taking an endogenous approach to this analysis, or solely focusing on the culture and identity of Indigenous peoples, this analysis takes an exogenous approach, that seeks to understand how racialization and colonial logics and practices are mutually constituted in the lives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (Moreton-Robinson 2015). Because of these analytical foci and intentions, I opted to use the self-identified descriptors provided

by interviewees when I asked them to describe their race, ethnicity, and/or tribal nationality or affiliation. I provide this descriptor in parenthesis after their pseudonym in the writing.

As discussed in the literature review, the meaning of Indigeneity is complex. Many Native American interviewees identified as Indigenous, but others did not. For this reason, I use both terms “Native” and “Indigenous” to describe activists in this study. While many people called themselves and referred to activists at Standing Rock as “Water Protectors,” many of the people I spoke with did not identify with this title. This issue is intimately tied up in identity and relationship to place (see Chapter Two). For this reason, I refer to all people in this study as activists.

There were many different names for the Standing Rock movement, such as “NoDAPL” and the “Water is Life” movement, and it was a multi-sited movement, including camps in Iowa, protests in cities worldwide, and an array of digital protests and artworks. This study seeks to examine the site of the Standing Rock movement that occurred on the ground in the camps surrounding the Cannonball River in North Dakota. When I refer to “Standing Rock” or the “Standing Rock movement,” that is what and where I am referring to.

Finally, it is my goal to write in a way that is accessible to non-academic readers. Academic writing is a skill that is learned through many years of training in higher education. There is a certain tone and style that is often expected that is not always accessible to non-academics. While I do not want to limit my vocabulary or creative expression in any way, I also do not want to recreate class hierarchy by writing in ways

only academics can or want to read. Therefore, as a guiding force, I try to write in my natural voice and to minimize academic flair as much as possible.

Outline

One of the first lessons I gained in this research process was the understanding that the coalition dynamics, experiences, and politics at Standing Rock cannot and should not be reduced or simplified. People did not have clear-cut, binary, good/bad experiences of alliance. Rather, people in this study shared very messy, complex, often contradictory, nuanced stories that revealed both positive and negative experiences, sometimes cooccurring at the same time. I found that across the board, despite race, ethnic, or gender distinctions, the longer people stayed in the camps the more critiques they had about working with people across difference and those who stayed less amount of time were generally more positive. It makes sense that the more experiences and time spent in the camps, the more chances for messy, human, and negative encounters.

However, despite length of stay, I came to understand early in the interview process, because it was stated many times, by many people, that they did not want to give an overall bad impression of the movement by sharing too many negative experiences and emphasized the importance of sharing the positive. As Kik (Muskogee/Creek) clearly requests,

> I just want you to know that you should portray the camp as a community. Don't put all the bad into it. A lot of people talk about the bad. People need to also know that there were good times, that there was laughter…It was literally like a war or a battle where you go one day to fight, but you come home, and you relax, and you enjoy yourself. Not too much, but you have fun, you laugh, you joke. You do communal things. All the stories that I'm seeing about Standing Rock, all talk about the bad. I don't want my grandchildren to see Standing Rock as a bad thing or as something that was just about the bad, because I don't want them to be prevented from going to another Standing Rock. You know what I mean? Our

> story also has positivity, and I think that's really important because-- I don't know. I feel like if it portrays too much bad, it's not going to be believable.

In an effort to be accountable to the people I interviewed, I designed the layout of my findings based on their requests (Powell 2018). Thereby, I dedicated Chapter Two, “Home is at the Heart of Place: Coalition Possibilities at Standing Rock”, the longest chapter in this study, to an in-depth investigation of the possibilities, strengths, and positive dynamics that occurred within coalition work at Standing Rock. This chapter engages with place-based theories to examine the ways that placework, or place-based protest, shaped and influenced coalition work across difference. Further, it studies people’s relationships with the specific place of the Missouri River to examine the ways it motivated their efforts at Standing Rock and generated coalitional possibilities. Finally, this chapter offers an in-depth analysis of the encampments formed on the banks of the Cannonball River to better understand the ways activists engaged with and co-created with place to form a robust and diverse coalition.

Chapter Three, “Shadows and Blindness: Coalition Challenges at Standing Rock,” explores the challenges in coalition work, but with the goals and aspirations of the activists in mind. Meaning, I consistently sought ways to understand the challenges without diminishing the overall positive and powerful impact the movement had on people and to highlight ways that future coalition work could be made stronger and more effective. This chapter engages with critical colonial, race, and feminist theories to examine the ways that race, and gender hierarchies of power created problems within coalition work at Standing Rock. With a specific focus on whiteness and white supremacy, this chapter looks at the impacts of privilege on the erosion of social trust in

alliances and takes an intersectional approach to understanding the ways race, class, and gender interact and prohibit effective solidarity.

Chapter Four, "'It Was a War Zone': Impacts of Military Suppression and Violence at Standing Rock," studies the risks posed by the external military coalitions formed in response to the movement. An in-depth investigation of the ideologies, tactics, and operations is taken in order to understand the militarized impact on activists personally and collectively. Historical and contemporary militarized violence and trauma is the central focus of this chapter, and the ways it puts human health at risk and challenges our ability to form strong democratic, coalitional social movements. I conclude this study with a discussion on the overarching findings, limitations of the study, and suggestions for activists and policy makers.

Finally, I want to emphasize that academic work is personal and political. As previously mentioned, more than an academic, I am also an environmental justice activist that acted as a supply runner in the Standing Rock movement, and I remain a deep supporter of their efforts. In December of 2016, I went to Standing Rock to deliver firewood and winter supplies. While I was there, I personally witnessed the prayer-based peaceful efforts of the Water Protectors and activists. Living conditions were brutal. It was bitterly cold with temperatures dropping to 30 degrees below zero. I sat in teepees with people who were suffering from the "DAPL cough," a persistent deep lung congestion accompanied by severe fatigue and discomfort, who had been away from their homes and families for months. I witnessed the military presence that surrounded the camps, flew helicopters overhead, and shown flood lights on the camps all night, every night. I knew that what I was witnessing was one of the most significant social

movements in American history and that it would profoundly change the direction of my life.

While there, I befriended a Lakota woman who ran one of the kitchens in the Oceti Sakowin camp and we stayed in touch after I left Standing Rock. She ultimately ended up visiting my home state in Missouri, speaking at the college I taught at, inviting me to attend a sacred Sun Dance ritual led by a Blackfeet healer in Montana, and, later, living with me in my home for many months. She and I had many personal differences, ranging from cultural to personality, and there were many bumps on our journey to get to know each other and find common ground, but we shared the bond of having been to Standing Rock and having stood together, side by side, against corporate dominance in the name of water protection. It was our unique friendship that led me to dedicate my dissertation research to understanding coalitions across difference at Standing Rock. I offer the findings of this research as a gesture of friendship to humanity and hope it can offer insights for future coalitional movements seeking social change and environmental justice.

CHAPTER 2
HOME IS AT THE HEART OF PLACE: COALITION POSSIBILITIES AT STANDING ROCK

Indigenous identities, cultures, and customs have a long tradition of being developed from and inspired by the places in which they live. Lakota philosopher Vine Deloria Jr. (1979; 2001) describes Indigenous cosmology (ways of relating to spirit), ontology (ways of being and becoming), and epistemology (ways of knowing) (which together formulate a genealogy of ethics, logics, and ideologies of a culture) as rooted in place-based conceptions and traditions. An explicit understanding of Indigenous conceptions and traditions of place and how it shapes a place-based ethic is key to understanding the motivations, beliefs, and worldviews of the leaders and activists that shaped the Standing Rock movement. Indigenous place-based knowledge is a deep spatial attentiveness and awareness of place as alive and animated with personality and power (Deloria and Wildcat 2001). Place is a diverse state of beingness in which humans and non-humans relate, engage, live. Place is home, an interrelated web of life. Land and water are the basis for all life relationships and "place presides over relationships" (Larsen and Johnson 2017:26). Place has agency, and as Soren Larsen and Jay Johnson (2017:1) describe it, place "calls." Place calls for acknowledgement of reciprocal relationships within the living world and for responsibilities, stewardship, and guardianship (Kimmerer 2015).

Wildcat (2009:137) says Mother Earth has been issuing a "Red Alert," a call for help from humans and non-human relatives and that "Indigenous peoples, those exercising the most attentiveness, have been echoing this alert for a very long time." In 2016, the call of the Missouri River, Mni Sose, came for Oceti Sakowin peoples, but also

many other peoples, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to come into dialogue, encounter each other's worlds, and to protect. Larsen and Johnson (2016:149) describe Indigenous contemporary activism as placework, or an assertion for and interaction with place, that "articulates a more-than-human geographical self whose subjectivities are grounded in, and accountable to, land-based relationships and knowledges." Placework creates a coexistence, or a bringing together of relationships, to face each other and shared challenges. The Standing Rock movement was placework, or a place-based, reciprocal response from Oceti Sakowin peoples, Indigenous peoples from all over the world, and non-Indigenous activists to the *call* of land, water, human beings, and non-human beings.

Taking a place-based perspective means examining US society and culture as place, also dominated by a cosmology, ontology, and epistemology, which together formulates a genealogy of its ethics, logics, and ideologies. US settler society is rooted in colonial-capital conceptions and traditions that serve as the hegemonic epistemology, or the socially constructed "commonsense" of US culture (Seawright 2014; Moreton-Robinson 2015; Rifkin 2017). Hegemony is a concept developed by Gramsci (1987) to describe the discursive-material facets of social power, "[Hegemony] is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world…A lived hegemony is always a process" (Raymond Williams in Huber 2013:8). US hegemonic settler colonial-capital logics, beliefs, and assumptions inform peoples conceptions of place through racialized, human-centered, gendered, and classed hierarchies, and enforce traditions, policies, and legal implementations centered on private property, the individual, and the intertwining of state and corporate interests. While the Standing Rock movement was

anchored in Indigenous traditions and conceptions of place, a wide array of people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, came together because of a *shared critical response* to settler colonial traditions and conceptions of place.

Engaging with place-based theoretical perspectives, this chapter describes the ways relationship with place and place-based thinking strengthened coalition work and solidarity in the Standing Rock movement. The primary research questions for this chapter are: *In what ways did relationship with place foster responsibility, stewardship, and/or protectiveness? How does a sense of belonging to place cultivate reciprocity, cooperation, and/or alliance across difference? In what ways do race/ethnic identities serve as discursive and embodied technologies for place thinking and coalition building? How did people's relationship to place, land, home, and environment shape why they were there and how well they could relate to and coexist with others?*

The findings in this chapter argue that placework, or place-based protest, strengthened coalition work across social differences and enacted a "call and response" form of politics, based on shared callings to protect and shared critical responses to settler colonial-capital culture, specifically dispossession of land and property. An in-depth analysis of two activists and their entangled, embodied, and racialized relationships with the Missouri River reveals the ways place generates coalitional possibilities. Finally, a place-based analysis of the Water Protector camps formed on the borders of the Standing Rock Reservation finds a "sociality of ceremonial opposition," anchored in Indigenous place-based conceptions and traditions of prayer, nonviolence, interdependency, and reciprocity that bolstered coalition efforts.

For everyone I spoke with in this study, it was their relationship to "home" that shaped their motivations, sense of belonging or lack thereof, and strengthened their willingness to coalesce across difference. "Home" is a complex term. While the concept of "home" is often connected to positive emotions of safety, joy, and comfort, experiences of home can also be abusive, negative, and harmful. Like place, concepts of home are heterogenous, malleable, and varied; it glides across geography and time. For the purpose of clarity, I am borrowing a definition of home from geographer and place theorist Edward Relph (2016: para. 1) who describes home as "the foundation of our identity as individuals and members of a community, the dwelling-place of being. Home is not just the house you happen to live in, but an irreplaceable center of significance." Home is at the heart of place. For activists at Standing Rock, I found their relationships with home, their longings for home, and their hope for a new and safer future home was at the heart of all place relations, actions, and thinking.

My intention in this chapter is three-fold: first, to demonstrate how Indigenous place-based cosmology, ontology, and epistemology informed and anchored the movement; second, to reveal how a myriad of peoples came together in coalition, coexisted, and resisted despite of, and perhaps because of, difference; third, demonstrate how the identities of activists and the shape of the movement itself was consistently configured in relationship and response to settler colonial-capital traditions and conceptions of place; and, finally, to reveal how coalition work was strengthened because of relationship to, protection of, and responses to their understandings of home.

You are the vessel
You are the sun of all of your ancestors prayers

You must go.
(where a black snake lies coiled
currying a strike
spitting rubber bullets
and breathing tear gas)
I told my mother I had been *Called*
-"The Calling" by MG Salazar, Striking the Black Snake: Poems from Standing Rock (2017)

Shared Calling to Protect: Indigenous Place Based Ethics

While the term "Indigenous" is contested, one area of continuity is in the understanding that "nations and territories provide the contexts necessary for understanding the social responsibilities and relationships that inform Indigenous perspectives, political organizing and intellectual theorizing…" (Barker 2017:5–6). Identifying as Indigenous inextricably ties a person to the struggles of Indigenous peoples and places. All people who identified as Indigenous in this study shared stories and experiences of deep and profound "callings" to protect, rooted in Indigenous conceptions of place and responsibility. To be "called" by place is to be summoned (Larsen and Johnson 2017). As Chelon (Thaki Sac and Fox/Ioway) described it, there was a "deep welling up inside of me to go…It's my obligation, my responsibility, my commission to be a keeper of the land." Simone (Ponca/Lakota) was called to support and empower Indigenous peoples and Mother Earth and expressed a desire to protect clean drinking water for her child's future. Ava (Mexican Indigenous) described the call to protect sacred burial sites. Clara (Plains Cree/Saulteaux) sought to protect and preserve Indigenous cultures, languages, and sovereignty. Bee (Métis/Anishinaabe/white) was called from an "internal community imperative" to support Native people. The recurring sentiment with each calling was a desire to *protect.*

To protect is to keep safe from harm or injury. The interviewees in this study were called, in a variety of ways, to become protectors. To become a protector is to transform from a mode of self-preservation to an other-than-self protector, knowing the two are deeply dependent on the other. Protection is similar to Larsen and Johnson's (2017) concept of "reciprocal guardianship," a term to describe Indigenous epistemological relationship with place in which a life-supportive relationship exists both toward and *with* place. A reciprocal guardianship is about investing in place and learning from place. Kimmerer (2013), in her essay on the "Epiphany in the Beans," describes an Indigenous epistemological understanding of the reciprocal relationship of edible plants in her garden as one in which the plant offers nourishment, and she offers nurturing in return. In this way, love and responsibility, including acts of nurturing, generosity, interdependence, sacrifice, creation, and protection from harm, imbue the human/plant relationship (Kimmerer 2013). To protect is to love and be responsible toward. In this way, to protect is to assert an ethical position. Indigenous conceptions of place as animate, alive, and in relationship with—and also in the way of harm—led people to embrace and embody an Indigenous-informed ethic of protection. A shared calling rooted in Indigenous place-based ethics created coalitions across vast tribal and cultural differences.

More than Water Protectors

Every call is unique because of the distinct positionality of each subject and their relationship to place. For many Indigenous people I interviewed, cosmological understandings of the earth as Mother called them to protect. Moses (Diné) describes the Diné relationship to Mother Earth as one of reverence, "We're always honoring Mother Earth in prayers. Every morning we always give reverence to Mother Earth, to the water,

the sun, to the wind, you know, to the air. We try to live within the balance of the earth itself. I guess you would put it that way. Even to the animals, you know, we're grateful for that." For Moses it was the correlation between the mistreatment of Mother Earth and the mistreatment of women activists at Standing Rock he saw on the news that called him to protect. He recalls hearing a woman describe how she was stripped naked, her body searched, and put into a "dog kennel" by police. He says,

> Thing is, we don't treat our women that way. In our culture, in the Diné culture, women are very, we revere them as powerful…we have to take care of them…Overall, you don't be disrespectful to the women. It doesn't matter what culture they came from, what language they spoke, you respect them, you know, because they hold the power. They hold everything in life.

The sacred relationship between land and woman is prominent throughout many Indigenous cultures and this gendered framework provides an understanding for how and why many Indigenous people organize politically and philosophically. As Watts (2013:25 & 32) says, "Land is female and she thinks." and "To disengage with essentialism means we run the risk of disengaging from the land." Earth as kin, earth as mother, and earth as alive summoned Moses, and many others, to protect.

While many Standing Rock activists embraced the title "Water Protector," and this term was used widely in media discourses and representations, when I asked interviewees if they identified with the title, an array of complicated responses were shared. Many Indigenous people used the title, but said it was too limiting to encompass the full range of meaning and purpose for their actions in the movement. Moses describes the limits of the title in this way, "Water Protector puts blinds on you like a horse. You just see in that direction. You're a protector. I'm not just a Water Protector. I'm, this is the whole world we are protecting. My job as a Native veteran was to protect people. And

I will protect the young, the old, the babies, if need be." Like Moses, Moti (Muskogee/Cherokee) went to Standing Rock in the name of Mother Earth and protection of people. When I asked if he identified with the title "Water Protector" he says this,

> So, yes, I see, and saw myself as a Water Protector. But it also was much bigger than that. Uh, it was a protector of the planet. It was a protector of the sacred Mother Earth. It was a protector of her people. And so, the caretaking, the compassionate caretaking that was in my spirit went well beyond just protecting the water. It was far more uh, far more reaching. Obviously, that was the main reason we were there was to protect the water. But my role in the Medic Healer Counsel, extended that to protect the people.

Supporting this sentiment, Kik (Muskogee/Creek) also defined the title very broadly as, "Someone that actually stands for the culture, stands for the water. Not only just the elements, but actually protects the people, like the culture, the ceremonies, the women and children, the men, the elders, that actually follows the whole teaching of culture, of our culture, and also Mother Earth. Most importantly, Mother Earth."

For many Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, the title was too limiting because of their deep sense of responsibility toward protecting nonhuman life. Rana (white) described a relationship he has with frogs that began in childhood and led to a lifetime of studying and protecting them. As he says, "As a friend of little green frogs here in Iowa I must speak out – Water is Life!" Simone (Ponca/Lakota) describes her political choices and work toward interspecies justice in this way,

> I think our highest calling as humans is to protect those that are, that have no voice in the way that we do as humans and understanding our space within a greater ecosystem. And that every life deserves respect and dignity so, I'm vegetarian because of that. Um, so, yeah, making, the clean water isn't just for humans and our children and grandchildren, it's for the animals as well. The, you know, we're all connected and that's at the core of most Indigenous knowledge.

The majority of white people in this study did not identify with the title of "Water Protector" because they felt it was an Indigenous term that did not represent their

positionality in the movement. When I asked Alice (white) if she called herself a Water Protector she said, "I did when we were fighting the pipeline. I felt that it was um, uh, an identity that was being shared with us in our collaboration and solidarity with Indigenous people. Um, so, I, I do a lot of work in protection of water, but I would feel in a white space that maybe that's not a word I would use, you know?" Similarly, Bill (white/Jewish) says that he felt the title was "unbelievably courageous," and that he did not call himself a Water Protector because he did not feel he had earned it. He said the term was inspiring, but that it belonged to Indigenous people and the ethics guiding their movement and that he was primarily there to support them. To identify with that title "would have been an expropriation of a very important title that I did not earn. I would never in a million years say I'm a Water Protector."

Activists at Standing Rock were more than Water Protectors. While the title was embraced by many, it was also believed to be too limiting. For some Indigenous people, it did not encompass the full range of what they felt they were protecting, and for many white activists, the term was specifically recognized as Indigenous-based and only meant to be shared as a form of solidarity with the movement.

The Call of Native Prophesy

For many Indigenous activists in this study, the call to protect came through prophetic insights that articulated their accountability toward land-based relationships and poly-temporal orientations to Indigenous self-determination (polytemporal meaning "what has come before is not contained in the past, but is continually erupting" [McMillan 2015:13]). Kik (Muskogee/Creek) had been having dreams a few years prior to going to Standing Rock about men in black riot gear and he did not know why or what

the dreams meant. After listening to Clyde Bellecourt (Ojibwa), one of the original founders of the American Indian Movement (AIM), speak publicly about the issues at Standing Rock, and after witnessing police brutality on the news, he realized the dreams were visions of his future and it was a sign that he needed to go and be a “future changer.” Indigenous temporal sovereignty is a vision or way of experiencing time that differs from settler colonial conceptions of time and informs ways of being that are not reducible to participation in a singular moment (Rifkin 2017). Kik’s dreams provided temporal orientation to the potential divergent processes of his future. His call to protect came for him years before Standing Rock in unconscious dreams that he allowed to shape his inclinations.

At ten years old, Arin (Oglala Dakota/white) was told by his great grandmother (Lakota) that he would be involved with protecting the water when he was older. Combining life experience, the practice of prophetic insight, and a poly temporal orientation, she foretold a time when water would not be free and that control over water would become a serious issue. In his late forties, when he went to Standing Rock, it seemed like “just yesterday when she said those things.” The role of prophesy and prophetic insight has long been a tool for cultural survival, reaffirmation of rights, and serves to validate cultural pasts and formulate potential futures for Native peoples (Irwin 2000). Rather than perceiving time as an abstract measure of reality moving on a singular axis, Kik, Arin, and Arin’s great grandmother understood time as both the past and the future, oriented before, around, and past settlement.

In the year prior to Standing Rock, Moti (Muskogee/Cherokee) went on a 6,000-mile vision quest in which he camped out every night alone in prayer and ceremony. In

this quest, he shared that Creator showed him that his life mission was to minister and guide the Seventh Generation. He came home from this vision quest and opened a 501C3 non-profit church based on Native American traditional knowledges and spiritual traditions. It was not long after the church opened that he was called to Standing Rock. Moti refers to Crazy Horse's prophesy of the Seventh Generation and how it connects to his church and the Standing Rock movement in this way,

> He [Crazy Horse] foresaw a time of seven generations when all colors of people will come together and stand around the sacred hoop and the sacred hoop will be restored again. White man will come, the Black man will come, the yellow man will come, the red man will come, and we will stand in unity. And the tree of life, which grew at the center will live again…So, those kids, that Indigenous Youth Counsel, that showed up out there in May to start this thing, they were that Seventh Generation.

Many interviewees referred to the prophesies of the Seventh Generation and the Black Snake and explained both as the amalgamation of several Native American prophesies. The Black Snake Prophesy describes a deadly black snake that brings destruction to the land and a Seventh Generation that rises to stop it. In the 1890s, Lakota spiritual leader, Black Elk, prophesized that in seven generations, Native American nations would be called to unite to save the Earth. Another Lakota legend is that of the "Zuzeca Snake" or a black snake that would threaten the world (Woolf 2016). Prophetic accounts regarding the role of the seventh generation as key actors in the future of life on North America, can be found in Onkwehonwe, Membertou, Mohawk and Hopi traditions, among others. The Anishinaabe Prophesy of the Seventh Fires is a time when human beings will have two paths to choose from, "one is *miikina* path, which is well worn, but scorched, and another path which is green" (honorearth.org). Activist and scholar Winona LaDuke started her speech at the No Tar Sands Summit in Madison, Wisconsin in 2016

with, “There are prophesies in our territory, in Lakota and Anishinaabe country, about the coming of the black snake” (LaDuke 2016).

For many at Standing Rock, DAPL came to represent the black snake, and the activists the Seventh Generation. Native prophesy has been a cultural tool of resistance for hundreds of years. The Ghost Dance prophetic religion of the late 1800s emerged among many tribes across North America during the atrocities of settler colonial genocide and land dispossession. Wovoka, a Paiute from Nevada, prophesized the coming of a Native American paradise in which European settlers would be removed from Native lands (LaDuke 2005). The Ghost Dance religion advised followers to perform a ritual ghost dance and to pray and fast in order to prepare for the new world. It offered hope and quickly spread through many tribes, becoming especially popular with the Lakota. Indian agents, or Indian police, on the Lakota reservation banned the Ghost Dance religion and used the US military to enforce the ban. Sitting Bull, one of Lakota’s most renowned chiefs and holy men, refused to enforce the ban and was subsequently assassinated on December 15, 1890, by the Eighth Cavalry of US federal military, at the Standing Rock Reservation (LaDuke 2005). His death caused considerable unrest amongst the Lakota. Prior battles such as the Battle of Little Bighorn and mounting tensions between the Lakota and US military ultimately instigated the Wounded Knee Massacre, or Big Foot Massacre, a few weeks later. This massacre was inflicted by the US federal military and caused the loss of hundreds of Lakota, including the elderly, women, and children (Dept. of Interior, Office of Indian Affairs 1890; LaDuke 2005).

The Ghost Dance religion was recalled and revitalized nearly a century later in the Wounded Knee protest in 1973, a 71-day standoff with government agents where two

hundred Lakota, along with diverse tribal members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) occupied Wounded Knee, South Dakota. The main goal was to demand that the US government make good on the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 and draw attention to the accusations of corruption toward tribal chair Dick Wilson and the dire conditions on the Pine Ridge Reservation (Rich 2004). The event was staged at the place of Wounded Knee intentionally to bring attention to the historical 1890 massacre, to address ongoing patterns of abuses by the US government, and to proclaim ongoing Native resistance to colonization. Morris and Wander (1990:186) describe the use of the Ghost Dance in 1973 as a way to recreate an "ethos capable of generating a rhetorical synthesis. Believing themselves to be trapped and enslaved by a dominant society that, at best, disregarded and, at worst, sought to destroy their ways of life, the protestors turned to that ethos in their efforts to develop a rhetoric consistent with diverse cultural values and interests." Less about a desire to return to an idealized past, the Ghost Dance was revitalized in the 70s as a way to activate the capacity to connect with place, synthesize ethics, and generate different futures (Rifkin 2017).

Like the Ghost Dance religion, the Black Snake and Seventh Generation prophesies called to a wide array of Indigenous peoples from diverse tribal backgrounds to Standing Rock, to honor the prophesies of the past, and protect future of life on the planet. As Estes (2017:14) describes the Black Snake Prophesy, it serves as a "revolutionary theory, or a way to help us think about our relationships to land, to other humans and other-than-humans, and to history and time." Prophesy serves as a form of temporal sovereignty, an Indigenous orientation to time and place, that stands outside settler structures, and one that calls people into a new way of being (Rifkin 2017).

Prophesy provides collective memory. Harvey (1996:309) refers to place as the "locus of collective memory," and argues that place with historical meaning that provides continuity across generations can be considered a home. The examples above reveal that for many Indigenous activists the calling to protect place and home was anchored in Indigenous cosmology, polytemporality, and traditions of prophesy. The sense of a shared calling to protect created deep alliances and strengthened coalition work across tribal differences.

Call and Response: Coalition Building Around Shared Critical Responses

Thus far, this chapter has primarily demonstrated the ways that Indigenous peoples across tribal differences were called to Standing Rock, anchored in Indigenous place-based knowledges, traditions, and ethics. This is important because, first and foremost, the Indigenous perspective is paramount to understanding the ideologies that structured the movement. But this study also seeks to understand how and why non-Indigenous peoples came to align with a movement grounded in Indigenous foundations; specifically, this study seeks to understand coalitional alignment across differences and from a place-based perspective.

Many Indigenous studies and critical settler colonial theorists have questioned whether the "call of place" for settlers is simply a desire for emplacement, or the desire to resolve the sense of dislocation that comes with living on stolen land (Tuck, McKenzie, McCoy 2014; Morgensen 2009). In other words, is the "call of place" for settlers a way to forge connections with dispossessed Indigenous lands, eliminate guilt surrounding historical acts of injustice, and feel good about coexisting with Indigenous peoples? If so, this is problematic for coalition work because Indigenous social movements hold

decolonization as the centralizing motivation of their efforts (Tuck and Wang 2012) and settler emplacement merely seeks to secure Indigenous replacement and settler futurity (Rifkin 2017).

This study finds that the "call of place" for many settler activists stemmed from an array of deeply critical responses to settler colonial conceptions and traditions of place. As described earlier, taking a place-based perspective means examining US society and culture as place, dominated by a cosmology, ontology, and epistemology, which together formulates a genealogy of its ethics, logics, and ideologies. US settler society is rooted in colonial-capital conceptions and traditions that serve as the hegemonic epistemology, or the socially constructed "commonsense" of US culture (Seawright 2014; Moreton-Robinson 2015; Rifkin 2017). Instead of reducing the question down to whether the call of place for settlers is a form of emplacement or decolonization, this study seeks to theorize and explore complicated relationships with settler colonial conceptions of place.

What I found is that when settler colonial conceptions and traditions of place create harm, violence, and division, it calls for a critical response. It was shared critical responses to the dominant US conceptions of place for Indigenous *and* non-Indigenous, despite racial, ethnic, class, gender, sexuality, and religious differences, that brought people together. Specifically, as I will demonstrate, it was shared critiques of the logics and practices of dispossession.

What does it mean to *respond* to settler colonial conceptions and traditions of place? To respond is the practice of turning toward and facing a situation or living being; response creates "response-ability" *toward* (Haraway 2016). Response is a political practice. It is

"staying with the trouble," or learning to be truly present in the "myriad of unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meaning" (Haraway 2016:1). Critical response is unsettling and disruptive. In the context of settler colonialism, in which Indigenous placed based knowledge has been erased and settler traditions often exploit, contaminate, and desecrate land, water, and earth-based relations, to respond with criticism is unsettling and disruptive. To respond with a mode of protection is poignantly political. Response, or willingness to respond, is intimately tied to a subject's relationship to place and home because it is the very thing that compels them to pay attention. When place alienates and dispossesses, albeit disproportionately, it has the potential to inspire and ignite resistance across difference.

Relph (1976) describes the core lived sense of place to the human experience as one that offers a deep, unselfconscious immersion, or an "existential insideness." Insideness is a sense of home and community. Insideness offers an acute awareness of place that can lead to seeing when and how home might be threatened or threatening. Relph also describes "existential outsideness," as a sense of strangeness and alienation to place, "such as that often felt by newcomers to a place or by people who, having been away from their birth place, return to feel strangers because the place is no longer what it was when they knew it earlier" (Seamon and Sowers 2008:48). For people in this study, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, it is the core lived sense of both existential insideness and outsideness that inspired their willingness to respond and form alliances across difference.

Settler Colonial-Capital Dispossession

Repeatedly in interviews with activists, I heard personal stories and experiences of loss of land, property, communal land, community, and a sense of home, that taken together, can be understood as shared critical responses to settler colonial-capital logics and practices of dispossession. In the context of socio-economic theory, the term dispossession can be traced to Marx's concept of "so-called primitive accumulation," as explained in the first volume of *Capital* (1867; 1977), in which he explains the rise of capitalism in England as a series of processes in which labor (means of livelihood) and land (including water, forests, and all natural resources) were commodified and stolen from pre-capitalist producers. Primitive accumulation is the precondition for capitalism, a system that arranges relationships to the means of production in a way that divides the producer from the subsistence produced through exploitive wage labor, to accumulate capital.

While primitive accumulation is a term that refers to capital's pre-historical and early events, accumulation is an ongoing process, as capitalism is produced and reproduced in economic and political structures and transformations. Harvey's (2007) expanded definition, "accumulation by dispossession," is a term that emerged from his analysis of neoliberal capitalism, or the predominate economic-political set of practices and ideologies of capitalism since the 1970s. Harvey argues accumulation by dispossession has become the primary mode of capitalism as global markets deal with overaccumulation and lack of profitable outlets for commodity surpluses. Harvey argues that dispossession in capital today largely occurs through market exchange and trading of asset values. He argues this newer version of dispossession is intertwined with American imperialism and ongoing global free market expansion, with dispossession occurring in

fragmented and particular ways, “a privatization here, an environmental degradation there, a financial crisis of indebtedness somewhere else…Dispossession entails the loss of rights” (Harvey 2005:178).

Both Marx and Harvey have been critiqued for ignoring how the processes of accumulation and dispossession were initiated through systems of settler colonialism and legal and political race-based systems that reinforce/d white supremacy (Byrd 2011; Issar 2021). Issar (2021:23) suggests a new analytic framework called “racial/colonial primitive accumulation” that highlights how colonialism and anti-Black racism “configure the material infrastructure upon which the capital relation is based.” This approach builds off Marx and Harvey to encompass historical phases of US capitalism and situates accumulation in the contemporary context, to understand how dispossession factors disproportionately across different populations. Racial/colonial primitive accumulation emphasizes that race and colonial exploitation existed prior to and helped define US culture. As Nichols (2020:13) describes it,

> The colonial world is not simply an interesting ‘case study’ for a general theory of dispossession. Rather alongside and in conjunction with the critique of European feudalism, it is the most significant context to frame the development of original debates over dispossession and appropriation. In short, the colonial world is not an *example* to which the concept applies but a context out of which it arose.

In my analysis, I engage with the term dispossession within the framework of Issar’s racial/colonial primitive accumulation because it adds to the thinking about the messy and fraught relationship within Indigenous and non-Indigenous solidarities. Particularly when “the continued reproduction of racial capitalism hinges on a cross-class alliance between capitalists and workers that is forged by a commitment to white supremacy” (Issar 2021:39). Rather than taking an endogenous approach to this analysis,

or solely focusing on the culture and identity of Indigenous peoples, this analysis takes an exogenous approach, that seeks to understand how racialization and colonial logics and practices are mutually constituted in the lives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (Moreton-Robinson 2015). This study seeks to complicate the neat and orderly divisions of settler/Native/slave triad and point to the complexity of our entangled relationships with identity, place, home, emplacement and displacement.

Thereby, I define settler colonial-capital dispossession as a system of hegemonic beliefs, traditions, and structures that were formulated by both private and public forces in the colonial robbery of Indigenous land, the privatization of commons, development of ongoing antagonistic class, gender, and race relations, and the redistribution of wealth upward toward a privatized, corporate elite. Settler colonial-capital dispossession is both a set of material practices and cultural logics. For Indigenous peoples, settlers, and arrivants, it inherently leads to disproportionate and wide-ranging experiences of both existential insideness and outsideness in relations to a sense of home and place, as it takes, divides, settles, and displaces. Further, it is adaptable and reproductive.

Interviewees, across vast differences in identity, shared an array of critical responses to various forms of US settler colonial-capital dispossession. They shared intimate and multi-cultured stories regarding relationships to place, home, community, history, identity, and injustice that overlapped and entangled in unique and powerful ways. By listening to people's stories, I found that mutual, or shared critical responses to dispossession, albeit disproportional, united people across racial, ethnic, and class differences. What I found is that most activists were longing for a sense of home, either one lost from their personal or ancestral past, or for a new home in the future. The act of

responding to this longing and loss is a form of taking root; it is a pause, a hunker down, a refusal to carry on with the way things are. It is the beginning of a long-arced embrace toward sovereignty.

The following examples provide insight into the ways people's relationship to place and home, across vast geographical regions in the US, shaped their critical responses to settler colonial-capital dispossession and ultimately fostered a sense of response-ability and protectiveness toward place and home. By examining historical-geographical specificity, or the specific state/region, this analysis offers a place-based understanding of dispossession as it happens locally and nationally (Hodkinson 2015).

Experiences of dispossession came in a variety of forms. Those discussed here include experiences of historical and ongoing theft of Native lands and forced displacement of Native peoples, and negative experiences with eminent domain laws, urban gentrification, and the military and agricultural farming industries. A shared critical response, or practice of turning toward the trouble, called them to engage and unite, across differences, in protective political actions at Standing Rock. I will demonstrate how this dynamic created a "call and response" coalitional placework, rooted in Indigenous place-based *callings* and supported by shared critical *responses* to settler colonial-capital dispossession.

Critical Responses to Dispossession

Many Native activists I spoke with referred to nineteenth century US governmental-enforced land theft and removal and displacement policies, backed by colonial-capital interests, and the ways such dispossession impacted their lives, both historically and in the present. Chelon (Thaki Sac and Fox/Ioway) grew up in Oklahoma

where 39 tribes were forced to live near each other. He says, regarding the benefits of colonial-forced, cross-cultural entanglements,

> Growing up in Oklahoma, my mother was a traditional cook and seamstress. Um, so that took us all around the state of Oklahoma. So, within those 39 Tribes, I probably know or have what I call relations or family to probably every one of those. And then some. I was fortunate to know different cultures, different ways. I went to ceremony in, you know, some Cheyenne Arapahoe ceremonies. I went to Kiowa ceremonies. I've been, I was raised in Osage ceremonies. Um, on down the line, Pawnees, Kaw, you know, and they all vary because we were all from different parts of Turtle Island, and we were all put in Oklahoma.

Chelon describes himself as a "hybrid" because his parents were originally from enemy tribes, his mother is from the Thaki tribe and his father Oto, but because of relocation they were forced to live "bordered against one another and things were fucked up." He said he was conceived because his parents went "teepee creeping" across enemy lines. Poststructural theories emphasize that identity is an interactional, disjointed process; identities are "coalitional, partial, fragmented, and located in history" (Scott 2010:16). Chelon's identity as a hybrid Indigenous subject, immersed in many different tribal cultures, prepared him for cross-tribal coalition building that occurred at Standing Rock.

Oklahoma is well known for being the site of one of the most inhumane settler colonial dispossession policy implementations in US history, the 1831 Trail of Tears, where more than 16,000 members of the Cherokee Nation were forced to walk thousands of miles from their homelands in the southeastern region to what is known as "Indian Territory." Nearly 4,000 Cherokee people died along the way. The Cherokee are one of 39 tribes that were dispossessed and forcibly removed from their homes to start new lives in an unknown environment. Each tribe experienced their own trail of tears that is shared through intergenerational relationships, stories, knowledges, and traditions. Across the entire continent, US settler colonial government enacted legislations and policies that

stole lands and forced many tribes into new territories, while others, like the Oceti Sakowin nation, were not completely removed, but displaced and forced to live on smaller reserves within their homelands. Dispossession, displacement, and forced relocation produces multiple contexts that shape heterogenous Indigenous subjectivities that remain positioned in relation to historical, ontological relationships to land, even when they are not in their original homelands anymore (Alfred and Corntassel 2005; Coulthard 2014; Moreton-Robinson 2015).

Moreton-Robinson (2015) describes a marginality and centering that occurs for Natives as a result of land dispossession, forced removal, and displacement. Marginalization occurs due to the placement of Natives at the edges of dominant settler (white) culture and centering occurs as a result of continuing ontological and cultural protocols between and amongst Indigenous peoples wherever they are. Shared experiences of marginalization and centering, both results of dispossession, opens the capacity for connection for Indigenous peoples based on shared collective memory and experiences. Chelon was able to pull strength from experiences of marginalization and centering to unite with people across difference in powerful ways, both in his youth in Oklahoma and as an adult at Standing Rock.

Chelon struggled with a sense of not belonging in Oklahoma and ended up leaving at the age of 18. He stayed away for thirty years. He decided to go back only after his engagement at Standing Rock, where he was confronted with the question of what "home" means to him. He said he was moved by the powerful relationship of the Oceti Sakowin tribe to their sense of home and place. He believed they were able to engage in such an immensely powerful movement of resistance because they had not been

completely removed from their homelands and their spiritual connection to the land. He says, "For the Lakota, that's their home. That's their homeland…that's power, that's a whole other level of strength and security…They were able to stay in contact with their spiritual connection with their homeland. When you are moved off your sacred place, it is really difficult." After Standing Rock, Chelon went back to Oklahoma and had a profound spiritual experience there in which he saw visions and received messages from ancestors about his purpose in life to be an activist for Indigenous and anti-capitalist causes. His "hybrid" tribal identity, his centering experiences at Standing Rock, and finally his visions in Oklahoma ultimately led him to the belief that home is not a specific place, but simply a state of being, or what he describes as "where one is, at any given time." He found a sense of insideness everywhere he goes. Settler colonial-capital dispossession remains an ongoing condition for capitalist accumulation in the United States and his rejection of this "common sense" helped him to relate to others from many different "home places" who share similar stories and experiences.

Wildcat and Deloria Jr. (2001) describe Indigenous people's "ancient deep spatial knowledge" as foundational for Indigenous environmental activism. They argue that spatial knowledge, in part, develops from experiences of three forms of spatial removal: geographic, social, and psychocultural. Chelon drew from and responded to tribal histories of geographic, social, and psychocultural removal, displacement, and dispossession as a source of knowledge for connecting cross-culturally and engaging in coalition-based resistance. As he summed it up, "We're a team. We're different Indigenous peoples from different regions of Turtle Island, but we're a team, you know. If you fuck with one of us, you fuck with all of us." Chelon responded to settler colonial

traditions and conceptions of place by redefining the meaning of home for himself, forming alliances across tribal differences, and taking a stand of resistance.

Many people I interviewed in this study were keenly aware of twenty-first century logics and practices of settler colonial-capital dispossession and the ways they are upheld through laws and in the name of economic "progress." Moti (Muskogee/Cherokee) shared an impactful story from his childhood that reveals how early responses to contradictions within capital-colonial logics of dispossession later shaped his political actions and participation at Standing Rock. When he was a child, under eminent domain laws, the Colonial Pipeline Corporation laid pipeline underground his family-owned private property in Georgia. He recalls the confusion his family felt regarding property ownership and land rights and his father saying, "But I pay taxes on the whole thing. It's on my property." Moti and his brother were ready to "go to war" for their land rights and confronted the pipeline workers on multiple occasions when they tried to begin construction. He says,

> And then, fast forward, here's the same thing happening out there at Standing Rock.
> So, I felt a little camaraderie, a little more connection at that point from that experience of what was going on out there. And uh, I don't know, maybe a certain ego that said Well, by golly, I couldn't stop it in my front yard, so maybe I can go out there and help stop it out there.

Eminent domain is the right to expropriate private property for public use, with payment of compensation. Eminent domain laws evolved from European parliamentary monarchies in the seventeenth century and were transplanted to the US, as part of the settler colonial project. Eminent domain "frequently appears to be in conflict with the sacrosanct rights of individual property ownership that define American national identity" (Scott, Padgett, Grossman forthcoming 2022). The law is justified as a

necessary component to social infrastructure as it offers public benefit. However, for landowners in the way of pipelines, "that benefit is far from clear; rather they see the inexplicable destruction of their property and the environment in service of the private gain of the gas and pipeline companies" (Scott, Padgett, Grossman forthcoming 2022). Eminent domain, a right protected by the state, is a form of colonial-capital dispossession for landowners.

Bee's (Métis/Anishinaabe/white) home state of Montana has experienced significant "growth" in corporate investments and in-migration of middle-class populations in the past decade that has resulted in increasing rural gentrification, urbanization, and rising property prices that contributes to cumulative displacement (Ghose 2013). Bee shared a critical response to the gentrification and urban development she witnessed in her hometown community,

> I spent a lot of time [in childhood] on the land, in the woods, all that stuff. And it has become gentrified as fuck in the last 10 years with like, all of these somebodies coming in with money and not understanding like, the culture or land of the place and pushing people, like my family, like out of that area…I had a very strong reaction just to this idea and feeling of like, displacement. Um, from a place that means something to me and to my family, to, you know, being on the margins of that. And that has, I mean, I would say it has less to do with being Native, but I mean, I feel like everything has to do with colonialism.

Gentrification is often associated with dispossession, not only in terms of material lived realities such as the displacement of people, relocation of homes and businesses, but in terms of community, or cultural displacement. "The growth of infrastructure, the development of a city—the capital production that makes a place more capital rich—occurs through a process in which the promise of profit makes parties, at best, indifferent to the value lost by parties in the transfer of resources necessary to initiate building project, whether an apartment complex, a stadium, a new shopping district, or the city

itself" (Park 2018: para. 11). Changes in a neighborhood or city can lead to essentially the loss of a sense of home—of family and favorite spots in the woods, and ultimately, a reduced sense of belonging to humans, community, and place.

Property relations and legal structures of displacement and dispossession that underpin settler logics impact everyone living in a settler colonial society. People, like Bee and Moti, who experience transgressions, such as the gentrification of their community or eminent domain infringement on their property, responded to the conscripting dominant logic with strong emotions that inspired them to question their own ethics. It is in this "epistemic friction" and ethical questioning that people transform their politics into actions and unite (Seawright 2014). "Epistemic friction is contained in those uncomfortable moments in which our taken-for-granted assumptions about the world begin to crack. These moments can be transformative and catalyze critical consciousness to imagine and hopefully actualize an alternative epistemology" (Seawright 2014:557). Moti and Bee's identities as Indigenous *and* citizens in a colonial-capital state created a response to dispossession rooted in the understanding of the ways settler colonialism is an ongoing project. The intersection of a dually informed Indigenous/citizen identity, combined with direct experiences of the contradictions with settler logics, shifted their politics toward one of critical response and collective action.

Many white activists I interviewed referred to a psychocultural disconnect to identity, people, place, and purpose implicated by large settler colonial-capital structures and systems, such as the military and industrial agriculture, that uphold and perpetuate dispossession. Rana (white) grew up in a military family that moved often. He describes his childhood as having "no roots, no long-term relationships with people." As an adult,

he lived on the banks of the Des Moines River for 17 years, without running water or electricity, to immerse in wildness as much as possible and to "try to relate to where I live." He formed a “Re-Wilding” group with the purpose of exploring with others what it means to be wild, sustainable, and to restore and protect land and water. His desires to form this community came from frustrations over witnessing what he saw as people’s “disconnection to the land.” He says, “You have no idea where you are. You have no idea where you live. You have no idea what you’re standing on…See, that’s what ties me back to Standing Rock.” For many years, he worked as the Trails Coordinator for the Department of Natural Resources in the state of Iowa, which he described as “the most biologically altered state in North America.” He witnessed the bureaucratic and financial challenges involved with trying to build a trail in the state park and published an editorial that argued it was easier to get bureaucratic approval for a pipeline than to build a trail.

For Rana, experiences of growing up in a military family oriented him toward a feeling of disconnect to place and community, or existential outsideness. The military is an obvious extension of settler colonial-capital dispossession, as it has played a significant role in the historical and ongoing securing and promoting of conditions for colonialism and capital accumulation to occur (Smith 2015; Dunbar-Oritz 2014). The military is the central backing and brute force behind settler colonial projects that seek to “destroy to replace” both historically and in ongoing imperial projects (Wolfe 2006). The military is structurally embedded into settler colonial culture and interacts with corporate and political facets of society in multifaceted modalities. Layered into the expected violence of military culture is the assumed sacrifices made by US soldiers and their families, who experience a number of stressors, including deployment, injury, and, for

active-duty military members, relocation every few years (Briggs et al. 2020). Relocation, for Rana, led to a sense of disconnection from place and community, that ultimately led to a desire and longing for relationship to place. It was a combination of a sense of disconnection, critique of oil companies in his line of work, and longing for place that called him to take action at Standing Rock.

Alice (white) was also born and raised in Iowa but left the state for college. She had always considered her home state in the past tense, "Like it has been destroyed. Corporate intensive agriculture decimated my town and my community and it just was always like *past tense*." She described visiting home and feeling "stuck in this system surrounded by thousands of miles of soy, corn, hogs all in containers." When she decided to move back for graduate school, she went with a purpose to become involved in activism that could possibly create change and a positive future for the state. Through engagement in an environmental justice coalition, she began to "fall in love with the place." Instead of feeling nostalgic and sad about the environmental destruction of her home, she began to recognize and claim it as a "powerful place." She sought to transform a sense of outsideness with insideness.

Later when the coalition joined forces with Standing Rock, she says she feels like DAPL and ETT were surprised by the resistance coming from her agriculture-based home state because she feels they rely on a disconnect of people from their lands. She believes the modern economy expects people to move anywhere for school or work and that the more precarious and less rooted the workforce and population, the less likely they will coalesce and resist, and essentially the less powerful they are. She poignantly argued

that without community, or a sense of responsibility, or connection with the land, industry can take advantage of land and resources with less resistance.

Both from Iowa, Alice and Rana experienced first-hand the ways settler colonial-capital systems of dispossession shaped industrial agriculture in their Midwestern state. Seawright (2014:560) describes industrial agricultural as “the byproduct of the dominant Western epistemology that has normalized and rationalized the aggressive accumulation of massive amounts of lands and other properties. This remains the norm despite the fact that the actions result from this knowledge system have displaced, dispossessed, and exploited many.” Industrial agriculture is a term to describe the shift in farming in the 1970s toward the reliance on chemical pesticides and fertilizers, large-scale machinery, and factory livestock farming. This shift led to large yields and severe social and environmental consequences such as soil erosion, high levels of methane gases from livestock, and by the 1980s, overproduction, which ultimately led to a farm crisis, in which land prices collapsed and many small farmers lost their lands. For Alice and Rana, witnessing this kind of destruction and dispossession, ultimately led them to seek re-connection and find a renewed relationship with place and home.

Historically, whites in the US have not experienced near the same level of dispossession as Natives, such as mass stolen lands, genocide, forced assimilation, and overt militarized and police violence. In fact, quite the opposite, as critical race legal scholars demonstrate, racial whiteness emerged and was constructed in American law on the basis of racialized privilege that became ratified and legitimated as a form of status property. Cheryl Harris (1993) argues the origins of property rights are rooted in the parallel systems of racial and economic domination of Native American and Black

peoples. Seizure and settlement of Native land supported white privilege through a system of property rights in which Natives were rendered invisible, and slavery, as a system of property justified through legal and economic logics, further facilitated the merger of whiteness and property (Harris 1993). Entangled settler systems of domination, colonialism, and racialization legitimated a legal and social understanding of whiteness as a form of property, with the right to exclude, and whiteness as superior, with the right to dominate (see Chapter Three for more on white privilege).

Yet, shared critical responses to various logics and practices of settler colonial-capital dispossession helped to "chip away at the legitimacy" of such structures despite disproportionate experiences. Conceptions of and relationships with place, and a sense of home, impact the possibilities of place-based responses. For the people in this study, despite differences, shared critical responses inspired resistance and an embodied mode of protection.

Call and Response Coalitional Placework

Each story above is unique in detail, but similar in their proximity to experiences of feelings of marginalization, displacement, and disconnection that come from living in places shaped and exploited by US settler colonial-capitalist dispossession. Each unique story reveals the ways in which people responded to colonial-capital imperatives and logics and how it shifted their consciousness toward one of protection. Placework, or an assertion for and interaction with place, at Standing Rock involved the coming together of various, complex stories of both "callings" and "responses." For Indigenous activists, the callings were primarily *anchored* in Indigenous conceptions of place and for everyone

the responses were *toward* settler colonial conceptions of place. I call this place-based form of coalition work, "call and response" placework.

"Call and response" is typically a term used to describe a form of communication. It requires at least two people, with the first introducing an idea and the second finishing it, repeating it, or responding to it. "Call and response" can be found in music or song around the world, most commonly in Indigenous cultures. It is often improvised and has a number of functions, including unifying groups. Engaging with this concept as metaphor, at Standing Rock, a coalitional place-based dynamic of "call and response" was enacted. A myriad of calls went out, and a myriad of responses were enacted. A call and response song was generated, calling everyone home, or to the heart of place.

The "call and response" dynamic shifted people's consciousness from the personal and subjective to the collective. It unified the movement despite, and perhaps because of informed awareness of disproportionate experiences of oppression and dispossession. "Forms of consciousness are power structures. When one worldview is challenged and replaced by another during a scientific or ecological revolution, power over society, nature, and space is at stake" (Merchant 1989). While Indigenous conceptions of place guided the movement, what was shared amongst many was a sense that they were being called to protect in response to pervasive settler capital-colonial forces that threaten place. It was a combination of relationship to place and home, seeking relationship to place and home, and the awareness of disruptive forces to relationship with place and home that called many to unite.

"We drove down to the Missouri river and over to my left is where they're putting in the black snake. All of these machines and all the equipment and all of the lights over there to our left. And then, down below is the reservoir of Lake Oahe. Now if you're familiar with the pipeline, it was intended to be beneath the Missouri river. Just a half mile or so from Lake Oahe which was dammed up on the Missouri river and provided the only source of water to the Cannonball reservation. And ironically the casino up there on the hill. So, if you can imagine it's not a matter of these pipelines uh, are going to leak or not going to leak, it's a matter of when they're going to leak. And can you imagine 250,000 gallons of oil being spilled in the Missouri river, one and a half mile north of that reservoir and how it would affect and devastate those people there? Let alone, eighteen million people downstream. So, I sat there and stood there on the banks of the Missouri River, and she began to sing to me, and I heard her voice and I hear her song and that song stuck with me in my mind. I had the melody, I had the emotion of it and the very night I got back to my home, I picked up my guitar and played it from beginning to end and the song was called "Mni Wiconi" [Water is Life.] And Kandice, I tell you when I play that for people, they're drawn to tears when I tell the story.
-Moti (Muskogee/Cherokee), activist at Standing Rock

Intrinsic Relationships with the River: Place and Race, Blood and Water

The Oceti Sakowin nation has fought for access to and safety of Mni Sose, or the Missouri River, for decades in the name of treaty rights and reciprocal relationship. Mni Sose essentially offers one of the most defining relationships to place for the nation. "In Oceti Sakowin cosmology, Mni Sose begins everywhere the water falls from the sky to touch the earth and trickle into one of these waterways" (Estes 2019:40). Language gives meaning and shapes realities (Foucault 1982), and as Estes (2019) points out, historian Joesphine Waggoner's etymological interpretation of Mni Sose is that mni is a combination of the word mi (referring to "I") and ni (referring to "being"), affirming the ontological awareness that the river is alive and interconnected to all human and non-human beings. Mni sose is considered a nonhuman relative of the Mni Oyate, the Water

Nation, and is alive, with personality, power, and agency, and cannot be owned (Estes 2019). In 2016, Mni Sose called for the Oceti Sakowin Nation to be in relationship and to recognize mutual coexistence (Larsen and Johnson 2017). For the Oceti Sakowin Nation, if the Dakota Access pipeline that runs beneath Mni Sose leaks, it contaminates a living being and impacts all its relations. The movement, which established its camps along the Cannonball River near where it flows into Mni Sose, was placed there by the desire to protect the water and all living beings.

While the movement was anchored in Oceti Sakowin cosmological, ontological, and epistemological traditions and conceptions of the river, many people, who are not Oceti Sakowin tribal members supported the movement. In a white dominated settler colonial-capital society "deeply shaped by histories of race-based exploitation and racial distinctions" (Scott 2010:29), this study seeks to understand the ways relationship with place compelled people to form coalition across racial, ethnic, and cultural differences. Interviews revealed that US hegemonic structures of race and colonial histories permeated people's relationship with the Missouri River in complicated ways. In the following section, I elaborate on two examples that reveal the complexities of people's entangled, embodied, and racialized relationships with the river and the ways they reconfigured identity to strengthen their purpose and motivation for participating at Standing Rock and found ways to politically align across difference.

Chelon

As described earlier, Chelon (Thaki Sac and Fox/Ioway) grew up in Oklahoma but spent many years as an adult in Missouri. He described a deeply respectful and reciprocal relationship with the Missouri River and describes it as a "beautiful body of water that

spoke to him." Referring to a profound spiritual experience he had on a creek that congregates with the Missouri River, Chelon describes how his DNA recalled flashes of images that his ancestors witnessed and experienced in that specific place. He describes it in this way, "I was already equipped with a genetic leaning, or DNA or, or, you know, my blood quantum or whatever, I was already equipped to live like my ancestors…and so when I felt those things at the river, I remembered we do have the capability [to connect with water]. We've just forgotten how. We need to remember how to be a part of creation again." Chelon recalled the place on the Missouri River because of genetic memory, or inherited ancestral memory (Tallbear 2013). Chelon speaks of his DNA as a "more-than-biological substance" imbued with the capacity to recall and offer knowledge (Tallbear 2013:8). He embodied a bio-genetic sense of "having been there before" because of his ancestors' historical experiences in that specific place.

Tallbear (2013) argues that to understand Native American perceptions of genetics, DNA, and blood quantum requires understanding how gene discourse and scientific practices are entangled in ongoing colonialisms. In her analysis of DNA politics, Tallbear (2013) engages two concepts in her framework: coproduction and articulation. Coproduction is a science and technology studies term to explain how natural and social orders are coproduced. "Rather than being a discrete category where one determines the other in a linear model of cause and effect, 'science' and 'society' are mutually constitutive—meaning one loops back in to reinforce, shape, or disrupt the actions of the other, although it should be understood that, because power is held unevenly, such multidirectional influences do not happen evenly" (2013:11). Articulation, a concept developed from cultural studies, is the idea of conjoining parts together in a way that is

neither traditional nor completely new. It is the idea that cultural knowledge is often borrowed, interpreted, and reconfigured. “Like coproduction, the articulation framework complicates overly dichotomous views of phenomena as either essentially determined or overly constructed or invented, thereby implying a lack of ‘realness’ (2013:13).” Coproduction and articulation reveal how perceptions of Native DNA are constantly emerging and constructed.

Conceptions of Native American DNA, or blood politics, are coproduced through scientific and societal meanings founded in US race categories, Euro-American settler colonial practices, and race-based laws, policy, and science (Tallbear 2013). And while “genomics promises a cosmopolitan antiracist world,” (Reardon and Tallbear 2012:234) ultimately racist science practices and views in the nineteenth century shaped genetic science into what it is today and ideas of race, tribal identity, and political-historical relations shaped the category of Native American DNA. Federal and tribal government blood rules such a “blood quantum” helped to constitute ideas about what it means to be an Indian and to be in a tribe. “Where the federal policy project of the nineteenth century was to detribalize, what has happened in effect is a rearticulated tribalization of Native Americans in blood fractions and through bloodlines” (Tallbear 2013:47). DNA and blood quantum scientific narratives reveal how nature can be used to both unite and divide Native peoples, and how in recent decades it has been used to de-integrate and divide tribes.

Chelon’s discourse around DNA is coproduced within racialized, colonial, social and scientific systems that continuously disempower, exploit, ignore, and divide Native Americans, yet, in his articulation he reconfigures it as a source of power, insight, and

inherited advantage. This is a form of protest and survival. For Chelon, growing up in Oklahoma where 39 tribes were relocated, he experienced rich tribal integration, which brought with it learned skills on how to connect cross-culturally. For him, Native DNA is a broad category. He re-integrates tribal identities by claiming all Native DNA as imbued or equipped with qualities that allow Natives to live like their ancestors. In this way, he transmutes DNA discourse to empower tribal solidarity across difference.

Blood rules have long been used to structure categories and laws that manage bodies and races. Blood has a material-semiotic power in the American racial imagination (Tallbear 2013). "Indian blood" was historically considered a hinderance to becoming fully "civilized," as poignantly demonstrated in the nineteenth century assimilation language, "Kill the Indian, save the man." Through boarding schools, criminalization of Native religions, and displacement through forced removal and reservations, the US sought to dilute Native blood as a project of assimilation. Chelon referred to the saying "Kill the Indian, save the man" and says that for many Natives he knows, this initiative was successful. He critiques Natives "on the rolls" who do not identify with being Indigenous first, but instead place Christianity or US citizenship as more important markers of their identity. By referring to his DNA and ancestral memory, this is his way of putting Indigeneity as the baseline of his identity.

In the 1960s and 70s, Native American rights, civil rights, and feminist movements politically influenced and reformulated discourses and imagery surrounding US national identity. Images and rhetoric of Native Americans as the original "Americans" became embraced. Traditional Native American identity, culture, and values of gender equity, democracy, environmental stewardship, and original relationship to the land became

romanticized, objectified, and desired. To have “Native blood” became glorified. This was in part a way to revise the nation’s origin story (Byrd 2011) and justify and legitimize historical atrocities and abuses against Native Americans. It was also a form of appropriation to fill cultural voids and longings for deeper personal and cultural connections (Sturm 2011). Native spirituality, traditions, and ceremonies offered semiotic communal ritual experiences that provided a sense of connection to the land and other racialized bodies, as well as a sense of community belonging to remedy anomic individualism of white US culture (Sturm 2011). Hobson (1979) coined the term “white shamanism” to describe the growing number of New Age poets engaging in Native cultural appropriation in the 1970s. (The ways “white shamanism” and white supremacy created challenges in coalition work at Standing Rock is described in detail in Chapter Three).

Chelon’s reconfiguration and articulation of Native DNA, blood, and identity offers him insights into broader perceptions of US racialized culture and the possibilities for the ways “Indian blood” is perceived, embodied, and enacted. He acknowledges cultural voids in dominant white US culture, such as lack of connection in relationships and critiqued the American family unit as “not what it needs to be…not healthy for future generations.” He believes that Standing Rock was an example of the ways Native culture can influence white settler culture in ways that fills spiritual and cultural voids, educates on Native traditions, and that inspires alliance and solidarity across difference. During the Standing Rock movement, when he was not in the camps, he taught about Native history, traditions, and values in his primarily white-dominated community. He fully recognizes that many aspects of Native culture are appropriated by white people who are “high on

flower power and think that because they went to a seminar with a supposed shaman, that they can burn sage." Yet, he continuously referred to "white shamans" as people in a state of longing and spoke about them compassionately (Sturm 2011).

Chelon connects modern scientific meanings with older meanings of blood in Native discourses. Older meanings in Native traditions describe blood as a substance of inheritance, a metaphor for lineage, descent, kinship—imagined and embodied as a "shared biogenetic substance that links"—the bearer of Indigenous identity and culture (Sturm 2011:7; Tallbear 2013). Biological, material, fleshy bodies are historical representations that are culturally inscripted; the body, blood, and genome are the "stuff" of subjectivity (Foucault 1991; Grosz 1994). "Bodies are not inert; they function interactively and productively. They act and react. They generate what is new, surprising, unpredictable" (Grosz 1994:xi). Embodiment shapes identity and thereby political engagement. Foucault (1990) emphasizes the body is the object, target, and instrument of power. Power operates in a multitude of ways, including micro-level interrelations and macro-level global regimes, and it uses both pleasure and pain to create knowledge, truths, and disciplinary control. In *Ethics* (1997), Foucault encourages an ethos for subjects seeking freedom called "practices of freedom" (1997:284), a term inspired by the ancient Greek ethical philosophy of self-care, and which involves care of mental and physical states of being. Foucault claims that the body is directly involved in political power relations and thereby when an individual confronts such relations and expresses bodily signals and rearticulations that goes against norms, personal freedom can be found.

Chelon engages with an embodied perspective, blending older Native meanings of blood with newer scientific explanation of genes, as the centering of his subjectivity, identity, and intrinsic relationship with the river. His body, physical biogenetic substances, such as blood and DNA, are agents in a relational power matrix that interprets and embraces a hybridity of Native meanings of blood and genetic scientific perspectives that offer him practices of freedom in colonial society. Taking it even broader he explains that he believes all human DNA holds within it the ability to attain relationship with the spirit world and freedom from the constraints of society. "The spirit world is real…the possibility to connect to it is real. Those possibilities are out there and that's what I'm trying to get back too, and I think a lot of us are. And not even just Indigenous people, but people, their DNA, they're inherent. It's in us and it's, you know, it's fighting to be corrected."

Shepard

Shepard (white/Melungeon) also describes a deep and sincere respect of the Missouri River. He says, "Everything about, you know, my love of the river is why I went [to Standing Rock]. Man, it is my life, it's life. I understand. You know, I truly, I live by that. It's life." Shepard lives in a Missouri city that sits on the Missouri River and prides himself on knowing its vital functionality when he says, "I make a cup of coffee and I know exactly where my river is. There's only two outlets that bring all the water to my city and most of the surrounding municipalities. I know exactly where it's at. Two pikes. And those two pikes are connected to every other little pike that connects water. So, I'm always connected. When I'm taking a piss, I'm even more connected." He refers to the river as deeply connected to his ancestral and racial identity when he says, "It's

like, I tell folks, yeah, my grandpa's, you know, the European ones, the French ones have been taking to that street that I live right beside for like 400 years… And so I love the fucking river. It's my grandpa. My grandpas are there [laughs]."

Admittedly presenting as "white passing," Shepard claims a biracial identity, specifically white and Melungeon. Melungeons are a complex historical group of "non-white" people described as "tri-racial isolates," or people of mixed European, African, and Native American ancestry tied to the Appalachian region (Schrift 2013). Based on DNA ancestral testing and genealogy studies, he says his maternal family ancestry extends back to Varday Collins, one of the original patriarchs of the Melungeon line. He found freedom papers, dated in 1832, for one of his grandmothers who had previously been owned as a slave by a riverboat captain. The papers listed her as "Mulatto," meaning that because of the "one drop rule" she had African ancestry and was considered Black, but described her physical features as having "red hair, green eyes, and light tanned Mediterranean skin tone." He claims to have traced when his family "turned white" in the early 1800s. Speaking of his paternal family ancestry, he describes them as French and English and, in reference to colonialism in the US, as "the bastards that were in control."

Melungeons do not exist as a formal social group today, but exist more as a lost historical racial and ethnic identity that has been revitalized in recent decades. The regional folklore and stories surrounding the Melungeons tell of racial discrimination, segregation, and a complexity of relationships in the early colonial years specific to the historical context of the Appalachian South (Stachowicz 2018). Melungeons complicate rigid understandings of race relations in the US, which are often viewed in terms of

"black and white." Although originally, they existed in a "space of racial ambiguity and freedom," eighteenth and nineteenth century race-based laws "probably led to their absorption into strictly enforced legal categories that gave some of them rights to their land and expropriated others" (Scott 2010:32). Discourse around Melungeons is part myth and part scientific – particularly when it comes to Native DNA claims as DNA genetic testing shows Melungeon ancestry to have primarily European and African origins and very little Native American (Estes et al. 2012). Yet, many folkloric stories of the Melungeons claim Native blood. Similar to Chelon, Shepard's discourse around DNA is entangled in ongoing colonialisms. It is coproduced within a racialized system, and, like Chelon, he reconfigures and articulates his DNA as something that provides him with power and insight.

As described earlier, in the context of US national identity, blood rules, such as the "one drop rule" and ideas surrounding what it means to have "Indian blood," have historically inflicted disadvantage and violent sanctions, but with the advent of genetic science, blood meanings are being rewritten, particularly for those in advantaged positions (Sturm 2011). There are a number of possible explanations for this. As mentioned earlier, a shifting national identity that includes the romanticization of Native Americans has been on the rise since the 1960s and 70s. Sturm's (2011) research on "racial shifters," or white people who identify as Native on the US census because of the discovery of Native DNA and ancestry, argues this phenomenon is a result of white people seeking to fulfill a cultural void for racial belonging. Specifically looking at the phenomenon of whites who create new Cherokee tribes she says, "…new Cherokee tribes offer local spiritual community as an antidote to the excesses of American individualism,

secularism, and anomie that racial shifters seem to have been experiencing with particular intensity under neoliberalism" (Sturm 2011:85). For people who identify as Melungeon, Schrift (2013) argues it is "is less about the origins and lived meaning of a particular folk group than it is about the emergence of an attractive and easily obtainable ethnic badge to be displayed within the contemporary racial politics of the United States." White people who identity as Melungeon can then construct a memory of being on the "right side of history," or as an ethnic underdog. Schrift (2013:111) critiques this as "ethnic grazing" and argues it only strengthens racial hierarchies.

Tallbear argues that DNA and the knowledge surrounding it are forms of property, or new natural resources that, can be appropriated by the modern subject to control the meaning of group identity, or race. Genetics allows for in-group inheritance in which the person inherits biological property that determines their group membership. White people can further identify as Native to sanitize the historical violence and atrocities of colonization by showing how whites evolved alongside, or mixed in with, Natives into modern "Americans" (Tallbear 2013:137). While this type of identification can be viewed as a form of social power, insulated by the privileges of whiteness, when a subject, like Shepard, politicizes the identity and uses it to support Native tribal sovereignty and governance rights by participating in political movements such as Standing Rock, how can this be explained? Tallbear (2013:135) says when whites who discover they have Native DNA and ancestry also have "good research skills" and are "persistent genealogists" they tend to talk about having Native American ancestry in terms of a political designation and as Native Americanness in terms of "race."

Shepard is a complicated example of a white American who does good research and genealogy, who claims his ancestral and racial roots as a source of identity, perhaps for some of the social benefits that come from being able to identity as an underdog, but also to become politically engaged on a more subjective level. By identifying as Melungeon, he is able to transform his political actions from helping "the other" to "helping his own." Melungeon identity helps him to imagine a historically diverse racial map in which his family was situated in a disadvantaged position in order to identify with and become emotionally charged about ongoing contemporary racial inequalities and tribal injustices. These are not merely imaginations; they are founded on his good research skills and scientific findings. Like Chelon, Shepard borrows and reconfigures the positionality of his DNA as an inherited advantage and form of protest. Different from Chelon, Shepard is insulated and protected by the privilege of whiteness.

Shepard's racialized identity politicized his actions before and after Standing Rock in a variety of ways, particularly regarding his relationship with the river. For many years, he participated in Missouri River "clean-up's," organized by a local non-profit organization. In these actions, Shepard and other volunteers take boats out onto the river and spend days, sometimes weeks, physically dragging trash out of the river. He describes a particularly potent memory from one clean-up, "When I reached down my arm and as far as I could go, about 3 foot deep, and I made a fist, and I pulled it back up and 90% of what was in my fist full of shit was little styrene pellets. That fucking made me cry. It fucked me up and made me take a much more active part of my responsibility again." He later describes taking people out on boat rides on the Missouri River and

showing them the beauty of the river, but also the pollution and human caused devastation. He says of this,

> Instead of avoiding that [trash], I took everybody out for this beautiful day on the river and as we're going back in, you know, where's the last thing I take you to? To show you the trash [laughs]. And then we ride home in the sunset thinking about that shit. You know, and it seemed to be working. I really got to the point where I was like, I can't keep this a fucking secret. I gotta get a lot more people to fall in love with this river. The only way I'm going to get them to fall in love is to take them out here. You know, and so the guys I cleaned up trash with, we all deeply bonded and such. You know, we share that very deeply. Uh, so that's what drove me, you know, to go to Standing Rock.

Shepard articulated his genetic and genealogical research to explain his relationship with the river, connections with multiple racialized ancestors, and engage with an embodied perspective that centers his subjective and political identity. Melungeon identity reconfigures his position in the US racial hierarchy as historically disadvantaged and contemporarily advantaged, particularly in the context of being "white passing," but with a sense of relatability to racial and ethnic minorities. Like Chelon, Shepard's relationship with the river is based on an intrinsic sense of connection to it through ancestors, blood, and genetics and his political actions to protect it are produced through embodied knowledges and experiences.

Identity + Embodiment + Place = Coalitional Possibilities

As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, Indigenous place-based ethics brought together heterogeneous tribal ontologies and experiences to form multiple motivations for resistance, all rooted in a shared calling to protect. Non-Indigenous and Indigenous people also participated rooted in shared critical responses to settler colonial-capital projects and logics of dispossession. Political consciousness does not develop in a vacuum; it develops within the structures of domination, including racial hierarchies and

subsequent violent, material racialized realities. In order to avoid a settler/Indigenous racialized binary in this analysis, the people in this study compelled me to look at race/ethnic identity through a complicated lens that included blood politics, genetic science, and the role of embodiment in political identity formation and coalition work. By centering Indigenous narratives and people who claim multiple ancestries within the settler/Indigenous/arrivant triad, alongside their relationships to place, we see a unique solidarity of consciousness emerge.

Political science theories that examine the relationship of identity with social movement participation state that membership in a social group with deep cultural, linguistic, historical, and ontological meaning often forms the foundation for a person's political beliefs and actions (Hochschild 2003; Klandermans 2014). In other words, people must know who they are and where they come from to articulate political demands, commit to the actions and energies required to organize, and stay committed over time. They must be clear on their identity, or their sense of place and home, to become engaged politically. Yet, at the same time, post structural theories of identity emphasize that identity is an interactional, fragmented, coalitional process. Complicating this discussion, identity is also experienced as a form of embodiment. For Chelon, Shepherd, and many others, racial/ethnic identity is understood and articulated as inherited, genetic, embodied, and essential. "Identity politics is often contrasted with coalitional politics in that the former is viewed as a kind of separatism based on sameness while the latter depends on alliances built across differences" (Carastathis 2013:941). Contrasting both the identity/coalition binary understandings of social movements and the post structuralist/essentialist binary understandings of identity, findings in this study

show how identity centered on identity + body + place creates possibilities for a politicized, pluralistic, collective solidarity of consciousness. If identity is experienced as both essential and in flux, embodied and socially constructed, it has the potential to be transformative at the transcorporeal subjective and intercorporeal levels.

Similar to Relph's "existential insideness," Alaimo (2016) describes transcorporeal subjectivity as an experience of embodiment that enmeshes body, substance, and place and is both a private and public affair. Transcorporeal subjectivity is immersed in a matrix of discursive systems (Butler 1990), insists the subject is not separate from networks of intra-active material agencies (Barad 2007), and cannot ignore the quandaries of risk society (Beck 1992). It denies human exceptionalism and considers all life as enmeshed. It is "a mode of ecomaterialism that discourages fantasies of transcendence and imperviousness that render environmentalism a merely elective and external enterprise" (Alaimo 2016:113). Intercorporeality is the experience of embodiment as it engages others, that is "never a private affair, but is always already mediated by our continual interactions with other human and non-human bodies" (Alaimo 2016:29). Existential insideness, transcorporeal subjectivity, and intercorporeality are Western academic versions of describing Indigenous epistemological and cosmological understandings of interrelatedness and interdependency (see more on this later in this chapter).

Where is specific place in this formulation? Chelon and Shepard's embodied explanations of race and genetics have "geographic substance," in other words, they define who they are based on the geographical locations of their ancestors, or where their genes specifically come from (Lynch 2008). Scientific gene research merges genealogical

and geographical elements that inform embodied knowledges about identity and place and transform political actions and ideologies. Racialized and scientific narratives, based on blood politics designed to divide, segregate, and rank, can lead to a coalition of the united, specifically when centered on embodied, intercorporeal, and/or interconnected relationships with self, humans, non-humans, and place. Place-based activism that occurred at Standing Rock reveals how social identity was embedded and immersed with the Missouri River and served as discursive and embodied technologies for place thinking and coalition building. When place is home, or the foundation of identity and the dwelling place of being, possibilities for connection are infinite.

Environmental justice activist and theorists have long pointed out the problems with conventional environmental studies approaches that separate nature from culture (Stein 2004; Di Chiro 2008; Latour 1993) and new understandings of humans and the ways their bodies and environments interact are emerging. This work contributes to the framework that bodies, lived experiences, and identity are not separate from environment or place, but very much informed and transformed by it. The stories of enmeshment of body, identity, and intrinsic relationship to place for activists at Standing Rock offers insights into the ways coalition politics can form robust and genuine relationships across difference and generate shared visions for a new collective home.

> *"It was really inspiring when you see all of the flags of the Nations there that were represented. Um, and my friend, she, when she saw it, she cried, and she screamed, 'It's the city of the future.' Um, because it was like true collective action and people wanting to help…it was really a beautiful sight to see people showing up knowing that we were not there to be violent. We were there for Mother Earth and that prayer is so sacred…I think that collective energy has gotten us through, like, our current, the race issues and like, the George Floyd*

> *protests and, and I especially love seeing the Black and Indigenous solidarity there, and I'm doing some work here that's centered on that with ongoing programming for youth and really that's the way of the future. And that 'city of the future' really shown a light on it. It was like a little universe there, you know?"*
> -Simone (Ponca/Lakota), activist at Standing Rock

City of the Future: Standing Rock Camps as Place

Nearly everyone I spoke to in this study described the unique place, or diverse state of beingness, of the camps at edges of the Standing Rock reservation in North Dakota, as offering one of the most powerful and transformative experiences of their lives. Many described driving to the camps from various places around the US, across vast Dakota landscapes, and spoke of the powerfully strong winds cutting across the buffalo grass and the wide-open spaces of the Great Plains. Nearly everyone described their first impressions of the camps as a profound experience and spoke of seeing rows of teepees and of driving down the "Flag Road" entrance with hundreds of flags from Native nations around the globe flying in the wind. Bee (Métis/Anishinaabe/white) describes her impression in this way,

> I mean, so the first impression I had, like, very initially, the very first thing I saw were all of the flags. All of the Tribal Nation flags. And those have been images that have been reproduced a lot since then. But that was like, I had like, an experience that was like, sent chills down my spine where I was oh! These are like, sovereign nations gathering here in an attempt to like, stop this conglomerate fucking thing from happening. And the impact it had on me was a deeper understanding honestly, of like tribal sovereignty. And, and that was directly from arriving at the camp and like, seeing these flags being flown where I was like, oh! That's sort of how it got like, connected in my mind and in like my felt sense of it.

Remembering when the camps first set up, Dean (Dakota/Yankton Sioux/Ho-Chunk) recalls what it looked like, "What we know as the Oceti Sakowin Camp, the birth of that, I remember seeing the birth of it. It was one teepee. It was a yellow teepee. It was one

teepee out in that field…It just looked like it was 2-300 years ago.” And then he describes when he came back in early November, he describes his first impression after waking up in the camps in this way,

> It was awesome, incredible. I remember getting up and flipping open that teepee flap and everything was frosted. It was cold enough, it frosted everything. And everything looked like somebody put glitter everywhere. Everything sparkled, the grass, the horses, the, the, all the teepees. Everything was sparkling. And I was like, that was my first night where, where I knew I was going to stay there. That was what I had seen the next morning and I was like, ‘WOW!’ and you could hear them over the intercom, you know, ‘Get up! Time to get up!’ The announcers, ‘Sun Dancers load your Chanupas! Dust off your Bibles!’ Right? You know, it’s uh, and then they were having the uh, uh, water, the blessing in the morning to the water. They would walk to the water and pray, put out prayers on the water. And I remember going and being a part of that and man! That was medicine! Whoo! But I also knew that the medicine is in preparation for something.

Many described a feeling of being welcomed home and a feeling of peace and acceptance.

Sam (white/Jewish) describes it in this way,

> The whole experience was positive. I remember maybe the first time when I was there and left camp and came back, probably ran up to the casino for a shower or something. When I drove back into camp, the guard at the gate said, ‘Welcome home, brother.’ It still sends shivers up my spine, you know? It was so beautiful. I just loved that deep exposure to Native American wisdom and culture.

Alliah (Native Ecuadorian) describes it in this way,

> It’s kind of like a homecoming almost…that’s one thing they would say when you came through the gates, um, at the camp, was ‘welcome home.’ That was kind of, wow. I did feel like that too. It was like I felt like, partly like, I was like, this is kind of like why I was born, you know, was to be here at this moment, at this intersection in time of these people and this process happening, unfolding, you know. It’s like, I felt like I was born to be there.

Sociality of Ceremonial Opposition

The resistance camps formed near the Standing Rock Reservation created what Simone (Poncah/Lakota), in the quote above, describes as a “city of the future,” in which

diverse peoples from all over the US and the globe came together to resist a powerful corporation in the name of water protection. The city of the future formed a unique community, home, and, in many ways, a little universe. Stories in this study indicate that the camps created a "sociality of ceremonial opposition," anchored in Indigenous place-based conceptions and traditions of nonviolence, interdependency, and reciprocity that generated a powerful, robust, and diverse coalition. What do I mean by "sociality of ceremonial opposition"? "Sociality" is the art of living together in place, in an organized way, it is the assembling of individuals in communities, often in intimate, pleasurable, and complicated ways. The word "ceremonial" means formal acts performed "to preserve ancient teachings and serve important social and spiritual functions" (Kainai Board of Education 2004:97). Indigenous-led ceremony "draws together past, present, and future into a space in which personal and collective transformations occur. The focus is on balance and harmony among a vast network of relationships" (Walker 2019:21). The term "opposition," is used by Indigenous scholars and activists to define Indigenous identity, as founded on an "oppositional, place-based existence, along with the consciousness of being in struggle against the dispossessing and demeaning fact of colonization by foreign peoples" (Alfred and Corntassel 2005:597).

Indigenous traditions of prayer, ritual, and ceremony were a central part of each day in the camps during the Standing Rock movement. As Dean described in the passage above, almost every morning during the duration of the camps existence, people from all over the world, with varied cultural and religious backgrounds, beliefs, and spiritual ideologies, would gather for "water ceremony" at the banks of the Cannonball River. Oceti Sakowin understandings of water as alive, sentient, and imbued with "a distinct

expression of life force or 'spirit,' referred to as wakan tanka" guided the protocols, while also remaining dynamic and open to adapting to the needs of the diverse community who gathered there (Praxis 2019:253). A wide range of tribal prayer ceremonies were enacted. The daily water ceremony provided a spiritual pathway and ritual dimension to the protests. The activists were praying for protection of the water and the water provided sustenance to the people in a reciprocal relationship that was transformative. Many people brought water from all over the world to put in the river and many people drank the river water. As Ava (Mexican Indigenous) described in one of the water ceremonies, "I did drink some of the Missouri waters near the Cannonball waters. All of us did. The whole group. We became part of the water, the water became part of us, and that is when I vowed to protect that water. And I take that very seriously."

Prayerful relationships were formed with water that dissolved difference and united peoples on the shared understanding of water as sacred. As Moses (Diné) describes it,

> But it was all about prayer. The thing that held us together and kept us from, um, you know, just like losing it, was prayer. Every day was prayer. We started with prayer, noon time was prayer then the evening time was prayer. Everything was a prayer. The songs that sang, everything about prayer, about Mother Earth, about Universe, about peace. How are we gonna, it was, it was, you know, I'm amazed by how so many people of different countries, different states, different nationalities can come together, you know, and live within that community.

Standing Rock politics and prayer were informed by Lakota, Dakota and Nakota values, as is evident in people's references to Oceti Sakowin traditional prayers, songs, and foundational understandings of relationships taught in the camps. Marshall III (2001) describes the twelve core qualities that are crucial to the Lakota way of life: bravery, fortitude, generosity, wisdom, respect, honor, perseverance, love, humility, sacrifice,

truth, and compassion. Lily (Dakota, Nakota, Lakota), a cook in the Standing Rock camps for six months, described the Lakota values of respect for elders and describes making food for the elders in the camps,

> I went to Standing Rock to be a prayer warrior. As a diabetic, I must eat good breakfast. Eat a good breakfast then I have light lunch and finish around 7:00pm. One night after supper, I walked up to the sacred fire and there were many elderly people sitting around there all waiting to be fed which didn't happen until 9:30 or ten o'clock. I heard few of them complaining about it so the next day. I decided to cook and give them whatever I had of my leftovers. I had my friends help carry my pots and pans and bowls up there to feed the elders. I started out feeding the elders. That was my main goal. I started doing that every evening and then I got a kitchen and I cooked until Feb. 2017.

Audre Lorde (1984:113) says, “In a world of possibility for us all, our personal visions help lay the groundwork for political action.” In this case, in a world of possibility, Oceti Sakowin visions laid the groundwork for political action and both personal and collective prayers, visions, and ethics built a powerful coalition.

The camps at Standing Rock formed a sociality of ceremonial opposition through a place-based call and response form of coalitional politics in which people responded to both the call for protection from the land and water and to critiques of settler colonial-capital traditions. A wide range of calls and responses led people to come together in place, to practice ceremony and prayer, and to embody and enact principles that go in direct opposition to hegemonic US settler colonial-capital culture. Placework strengthened coalition work and a sense of belonging and solidarity amongst activists by creating a place-based sociality of ceremonial opposition in the camps, anchored in epistemic and embodied Indigenous practices and principles of non-violence, interdependency, and reciprocity. The following sections explain the ways each principle

was enacted and how, together, they formed cohesive connections amongst diverse groups and individuals.

Nonviolence

Upon arriving at the main Oceti Sakowin Camp, activists were required to participate in a non-violent direct action (NVDA) training class and there were additional workshops for white activists on how to be supportive allies, including lessons on observing Oceti Sakowin cultural etiquette. Nonviolence, as a personal practice and a form of protest, was emphasized in the training and teachings from elders every day. As Jewel (white) explains it,

> Because the message was that we don't need more violence here. We don't need more hatred. We don't need more people screaming at each other, bringing weapons up in there, disrespecting each other. What we need is peace. What we need are prayers. What we need are wood and water, you know, like, what we need are people that are going to come help. And the elders spoke that time and time again that learn to hold your anger. Use it, transmute it, move it, let it move you and then move in peace. Move in a safer, move in a good way as we all have heard Indigenous people speak to.

People in the camps, guided by Oceti Sakowin elders and teachers, demonstrated "an extraordinary amount of discipline and non-violence," as Bill (white/Jewish) describes it, "and it was no question, um, you know, the Lakota were completely in command of this value system permeated everything." It was clear in all of the internal messaging that, as Luke (white) puts it, "violence would not be accepted in any form, in any way." No weapons were allowed in camps, as Moses (Diné) recalls, "Specifically they said no weapons. No knives. No nothing…weapons were strictly prohibited. It's supposed to be peaceful and we, we kept it that way. And that's, and again, going back to that is the beauty of it. Everybody was just like free!"

One of the primary teachings in the NVDA trainings was how to protect Indigenous and Native activists from potential violence enacted by the police and military, by building human shields. As Simone (Poncah/Lakota) describes it, these actions were consciously directed at protecting Native activists:

> Human shields were to protect Native people that might be directly, like, singled out or attacked by law enforcement, stuff like that. And how to protect your face and internal organs or um, yeah, to lessen the bodily harm of their tactics. It was all like, um, how to defend your body really. And to try to stay as a solid unit within a group because of course, as you know, it was um, a space of ceremony so there's no weapons. We're all unarmed so, yeah, how do we use peaceful protest and still protect ourselves against these tools of violence.

An emphasis on group formations, communications, getting people to safety, stopping instigators, and learning safety measures, such as identifying when someone needs basic first aid, were all emphasized.

The NVDA trainings were taught by volunteers in the camp who had prior training in the tactics and principles, including leaders from the Indigenous People's Power Network (IP3), a non-profit Indigenous-led organization "created to answer the urgent need for Nonviolent Direct Action strategies as a response to the challenges many Indigenous communities experience and a tactic to protect Indigenous land, water, air, and our inherent right to self-determination" (Indigenous People's Power Project 2021). IP3 was in the Standing Rock camps from August 2016 to January 2017 and facilitated NVDA training to over 5,000 people (Indigenous People's Power Project 2021). IP3 emphasizes several key themes in their training, including how to be a good relative and ally. An important message in their training is to teach people how to be in a supportive role, not a leadership role, or to "know who the leadership is and follow Indigenous

leadership at all times" (Indigenous People's Power Project 2021). Bee (Métis/Anishinaabe/white) remembers this lesson in her training in this way,

> One of the things I remember is during the non-violent direct-action training, it was being um, led by a Black woman and a Native Hawaiian man. And those were the folks that were leading it. And then the people that were like, in the training with me, were all different races and ethnicities. Like, I don't, I don't know specifics of course, but I remember just visually, like there were a whole bunch of different sorts of folks in that training. And the folks that were leading it, the woman and the man, they were very explicit um, about anyone who was non-Native and then further anyone who wasn't Standing Rock Lakota, making sure that like, we/they occupied um, like a supporting role. And we're not under any circumstances, like, intended to be making decisions and like, going rogue. Um, because we were there to support Standing Rock Lakota Nation, um, and their sort of fight in this, um, thing, and the protection of water. So, um, anyway, so that, one of the reasons that stuck out to me as like a really power space is because there was conversation about them.

IP3 emphasizes that allies "know the ground rules or common values of the camp or action that you are going into and follow those" (Indigenous People's Power Project 2021). Bee recalls conversations during the training that involved discussions about power dynamics and questions about specific ways to be supportive across cultural barriers. She describes it,

> People asked questions, like, oh, well, you know, there were some very, very ignorant people. Like, some people are like 'why do we have to follow the Standing Rock Lakota? Like, where are they?' And people would like, check them and be like, you know, they would educate, check them. Be like, this is how it is, why it is, how it is. And then there were other people that would be like, okay, so say this is the circumstance, like, what do we do, like, what if there's no one to ask? And so, it was very much like a dialogic conversational space across so many different um, like identities and lived experiences of people.

IP3 teaches that "conflicts are an opportunity for growth, when you're able to resolve conflict in a relationship, it builds trust. You can feel secure knowing your relationship can survive challenges and disagreements" (Indigenous People's Power Project 2021). Learning to hold space, create peaceful dialogue, and be accountable for your words and

actions were profound lessons taught to everyone who showed up at Standing Rock and established a value system in which peace was interwoven into the opposition efforts. Intentional and conscious nonviolent practices created a sense of trust, safety, and security.

Interdependency

Interdependency is key to Indigenous epistemology and cosmology and provides a source of identity and orientation to the world (Kimmerer 2015). Estes (2019:15) describes the Lakota and Dakota philosophy of Mitakuye Oyasin, meaning "all my relations," as the idea that all living beings are kin and in relationship. Making kin and kinship is perhaps one of the most powerful attributes of Indigenous coalition and relationship making (Estes 2019). Interviewee Moti (Muskogee/Cherokee) explains Mitakuye Oyasin as the heart of Lakota spirituality and the belief in this way, "Creator spoke breath into the tree people and the people of the air and the people of the fish, the grass people, the four-legged, the people of the water, the people of the rocks, that same breath was that breath that said let us make man in our own image. And so, by the same breath of the Creator, Mitakuye Oyasin, we are all related." Interrelatedness infers interdependency. Mitakuye Oyasin and interdependency were grounding epistemological foundations of the Oceti Sakowin movement.

The Indigenous episteme of interrelatedness and interdependency stands outside the margins, or on the borders, of hegemonic settler colonial-capital and liberal democratic modern ideals that declare profit and individual and personal liberty as universal and revered. Barker (2010) argues modernity, intertwined with imperial colonialism and capitalist logics, creates hyper-individualism, functionally similar to

selfishness. Interdependency and interrelatedness disrupt the US racialized hierarchy which promotes white supremacy, US nationalism, and reifies racial and ethnic differences. Interdependency is a form of "critical border thinking," an epistemological position that is grounded in the experience of the colonized and provides knowledge denied by imperial expansion (Anzaldua 1987; Mignolo and Tlostanova 2006). To embrace, enact, and embody interdependence is to reject the core mechanisms of the colonial project.

The Standing Rock coalition engaged with critical border thinking and embodied interdependency in ways that united people across the permeable borders of separation and disrupted and decolonized the settler project. "Coalition is a radical deepening of that permeability through learning others' ways of living, their spiritual and social relations and longings, their knowledges, their economies, their ecologies towards liberation. It is a moving together defying colonial cartographies, seeking autonomy from the nation state, enriching the communal senses of self, designing practices of self-government that place all members at the place of deliberation and decision making and accord each the power to participate" (Lugones 2014:3). Critical border thinking and coalition making is a process. It is an unfolding. It requires adaptation, integration, rejection, and openness. In critical border thinking, there is a shift to the geo and body-politics of knowledge and colonial violence and wounds are often brought into the forefront (see Chapter Three and Chapter Four). Coalition building is a space for encounter, shifting of perceptions, and deepening of understandings.

Lily's (Lakota, Dakota, Nakota) story offers a subjective experience of critical border thinking founded in an epistemic understanding and embodied experience of interdependence.

In her late 50s, Lily, mentioned above, went to Standing Rock to "feed the elders and be a prayer warrior," lived in Oceti Sakowin Camp for six months, and was a head cook in one of the main kitchens. Lily describes the range of tribal differences in the camp coalition in this way,

> When people did start coming, the best thing was this was the first time in over 500 years that all Indian nations came together. All of them came together. They put all their bad things to the side. The Crow Indians and the Sioux Indians, we never ever got along. I'll be darned the Crow Indians were the first ones to stand behind the Sioux during this. That means a lot. That means a whole lot. Let bygones be bygones and stand up and help one another. That was amazing. Not even that, we're talking about Indigenous people came from all over the world, like Brazil and Peru and Guatemala, and Hawaii and Japan, and all over. They came from all over Africa, you name it. They came from all over.

She only served on the frontlines a few times, but in one experience she was pepper sprayed by police and had to "run for her life" to escape further violence. She and a small group of activists ran so far into the woods to escape the police that it took hours for them to find their way back to camp. She compared the experience to the Wounded Knee incident of 1890, in which approximately 300 Lakota were attacked and murdered by federal militia. She said she felt what her ancestors must have felt during that attack. While running away she was convinced the military was going to kill her. Before running, when the police were deploying tactics to stop activists, she describes a profound moment for her in which the binary of settler/Native difference was disrupted:

> I just heard a crack, and I turned around and looked to my right. There was a non-Native lady. She was a white, a Caucasian lady and her husband, and they were both being beaten with a baton. I seen blood just splatter and they were just crying. From that time on it really changed my life. I realized then that we were

> all in this together. It wasn't just the Natives. It wasn't just one certain group. It was everybody standing up and fighting for our water rights, for our climate, for our earth. Before all this happened, I had a lot of negative feelings towards any non-Native, anyone, but this is what really changed me because it made me stop and realize how could those people do that to their own people? How could they? It was just uncalled for. I've never seen something like that happen. That really changed a lot.

Lily's experience intimately reveals how knowledges and relations are shaped by settler colonial racialized and divisive ideologies. Her negative feelings toward historical tribal rivals and non-Native people were shifted through critical border thinking and from standing side by side, despite differences, on the frontlines of the coalitional resistance movement. Lily came to recognize the interdependence of people across difference based on shared critical responses to US settler colonial culture and mutual callings to protect water (Mignolo and Tlostanova 2006). As stated earlier in this chapter, rather than taking an endogenous approach to this analysis, or solely focusing on the culture and identity of Indigenous peoples, this analysis takes an exogenous approach, that seeks to understand how racialization and colonial logics are mutually constituted in the lives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (Moreton-Robinson 2015). Colonial difference is continuously produced and reproduced via the operationalization of capital logics and racialization. When those logics are questioned and resisted, difference becomes less objectified and more of a possible source of connection and creativity.

The embodied practice of interdependence leads to surprising connections and the giving and receiving of support from unexpected places. Sam (white/Jewish) describes a surprising and "incredible connection" he forged with a Native man in camp while working in the Medic Healer Counsel, "Here was this Native American guy from Georgia. Here I am, a Jewish Sufi originally from New York and we clicked like

brothers." Moti (Muskogee Cherokee), a pastor and leader of the Medic Healer Counsel in Oceti Sakowin camp, shared a story of a young white girl who offered him light healing work as medicine. Although reluctant at first, he decided to try it because he was exhausted and mentally drained from offering mental health care in the camps. He recalls, "…before it was over, I was weeping. It was just so healing and restorative to me." He describes the experience as a "surrender," and says,

> It was reversal of roles there. I became the parishioner, and she became the pastor. And her medicine and magic were overwhelming. I mean, I was laying on that cot just boo-hooing. I don't know. Something just opened up inside of me and all the angst and all of that energy began to come out of me, and I was not ashamed of it. She encouraged, you know, me to feel all of it and to deal with all of it and release it all.

They never lost touch after this experience, and he says he now considers her his adopted daughter and one of his dearest friends. Interdependency, in practice, decolonizes. In an essay on friendship and allyship amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, Dorothy Christian (2010) describes the dysfunctional relationship between Indigenous peoples and settler peoples of North American as "walking on eggshells around each other because at any given moment violence may erupt." She describes a "pregnant pause" that often sits between the two, or a "very LOUD silence" (2010:382). The experience Moti shares reveals his willingness for reconciliation and a transition to a relationship of mutuality and healing. It led him to personal and political transformation.

The array of class, gender, race, ethnic, religious, and nationality differences of peoples in the camps was apparent to everyone I spoke to. Moses (Diné) describes the movement in this way, "We had the world. We brought in the world. I've seen so many nationalities there. It was a beautiful thing…" He recalls meeting activists from China,

Samoa, Israel, and Palestine. He describes many Native American tribal-identified camps, such as the Crow, Cheyenne, and Southwest camps. Arin (Oglala Dakota/white) describes the diversity of Natives in this way,

> I had never been around a gathering like that with so many Native people from so many different places. And, you know, growing up on a reservation is pretty rough and tumble kind of place, you know. And so, I never really had experience around, you know, 'Urban Natives'…I mean like thousands and thousands of people in camp from every imaginable experience. You know, it was mind blowing to me.

Ava (Mexican Indigenous) describes being surprised to meet Wiccan people, hippies, and businesspeople in camp. Across vast differences, a sociality of ceremonial opposition, was woven at Standing Rock, with a shared purpose that Moses (Diné) describes clearly, "But the thing about it, we spoke different languages, but we had one thing in common, is that, that desire to protect Mother Earth…You know, it was one reason. It was just a camaraderie of men and women for a good cause."

It is apparent from people's stories of interactions with people in the camps, that difference served as a site of energy and connection to fulfill a shared purpose. As Lorde (1984:111) says, "Difference must be not merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic. Only then does the necessity for interdependency become unthreatening." In the beginning of the movement, large numbers of support, especially in the form of people showing up to camp, was viewed as necessary to reach the movement's goal to stop the pipeline, as Lily (Lakota, Dakota, Nakota) says, "The word got put out all over the world…and everybody started coming…we didn't care what color you were, we didn't care where you came from. We just wanted you to stand with us because we were standing for the water of

everybody in the world, not just North Dakota, not just for our people, we're talking about everybody all over the world that shares sacred waters."

While some people in the movement expressed frustration about certain behaviors from the people showing up (see Chapter Three), most I spoke to were uplifted by the show of support. Interviewees described many encounters between Indigenous and settlers that destabilized difference and dysfunctional settler colonial dynamics. Interdependency became necessary, especially for a coalition movement whose home base was large outdoor camps with no running water or electricity. It was a central tenant to the survival of the movement, both in an epistemological and in embodied, lived everyday practice. Interdependency, an Indigenous traditional form of knowledge and a form of critical border thinking, helped weave a sociality of ceremonial opposition that disrupted the colonial project and made difference a site of energy rather than an object of tension.

Reciprocity

The Standing Rock movement was rooted in land-based claims and resisted the very foundation of capitalist domination: control over energy resources (Smith 2008; Moreton-Robinson 2015; LaDuke 2005). "Natives cannot preserve their culture without calling for a fundamental restructuring of the global economy" (Smith 2008:218). The Standing Rock movement was not only the culmination of centuries-long resistance to settler colonialism, it created a global network of tribes, people, and groups in resistance to the impact of global capitalist exploitation (Whyte 2017). One way the movement resisted hegemonic settler colonial capitalist logics and projects was by embodying and

practicing an anti-capitalist gift economy and a communal, material system of reciprocity in the camps. This process created a profound sense of solidarity.

Gift economy is a cashless economic system based on reciprocity, or the practice of exchanging things with others for mutual benefit. There was no exchange of money in the camps. All goods and services were offered freely or traded (Robinson 2017). As Grace (Ottawa) explains it, “It was on a barter system. Medicines were exchanged, there was a lot of positives. If you got tobacco, then you gave tobacco, if you didn't have tobacco, then you gave a thing of water and those were the riches. I came back with so much material, little medicines, little packs, pens, or this or that, jewelry.” Gift economy is inherently counter capitalist as capitalism seeks monetary profit in all exchange of goods and services. Supplies and donations often came from outside the camps and provided many basic needs. This created a profound sense of support that bolstered solidarity. For example, Grace’s tribal band donated supplies and money to her and the movement. This made her feel supported materially and emotionally in a way she said she had never experienced before. Services, such as food and supplies, were offered freely. Moti (Muskogee/Cherokee) describes meeting a young man from his same tribe on his first day in camp. The young man said to him, “Grandfather, I will take care of you while you’re here.” And every night after, for over six weeks, he brough him firewood, food, and water. He said, “that kid served me impeccably.”

Many expressed that living within a gift-based, reciprocal system was simpler, less chaotic, and more meaningful than “normal society.” The constant pressure to be successful was temporarily lifted. As Maritz (Taos Pueblo/Diné/Latinx) states about living in camp versus normal society, “I’m not just flailing around like I am in normal

society. Like, 'Oh, am I supposed to do this job? Then I hate it and they pay me money. Then I buy shit I don't need.' What's the fucking point? [At Standing Rock] you know that you're in a collective and you know you're working towards the greater good. It's more fulfilling than almost anything else I've ever done." Capitalist mode of life can be described as "a mode of living ensconced in what Moise Postone refers to as forms of 'abstract domination' rooted in the commodification of labor power and the dependence on generalized relations of commodity exchange" (Huber 2013:9). The hegemonic structures of capitalism rely on consent and "common sense" embedded into ordinary life. The camps at Standing Rock created material practices that directly countered wider cultural forms of power and domination. It was in this collective resistance to consent that people found meaning, relationship, and a sense of home and belonging.

Free healthcare was an important component to the reciprocal culture created in the camps. There were first aid and basic healthcare tents and a mental health care tent. The mental health care tent had its own Mental Health Council that was made up of mental health care professionals, designed to attend to the mental well-being of activists in the camps.

Moti (Muskogee/Cherokee), a mental health care practitioner, describes the tent,

> We would have certain people come in, some were able to stay awhile, some were able to stay for just a few days, but we put together a very beautiful counsel of very qualified men and women who would be able to respond to any of the needs that people may bring into the counsel, be it PTSD from their being attacked during the actions or just general stuff that was going on emotionally at Standing Rock.

Many physicians, nurses, and alternative medicine healers volunteered in the camps. As Moses (Diné) describes it, "The mental health team, the health compound, was amazing. There was Western medicine, there were naturopaths. There were all sorts of energy

workers, Reiki and Craniosacral. That camp was astonishing, and most of all, there was such a sense of love there." Two of my interviewees were physicians who volunteered at Standing Rock to provide basic medical care and described the incredible level of skill and competency that many volunteers exhibited. Amanda (white) describes the health care tent she worked in as a system that went in direct opposition to traditional Western health care approaches in this way,

> It was very non-hierarchical, like as a physician, I was not there to tell everybody else what to do, which was great. That was so thrilling, exciting, and I really liked that part…Um, so, as a physician, one of the things that really is a limitation in my work, is a limitation to other people's ability to do their work. So, you know, for example, my patients can't see a physical therapist in Missouri unless I write an order for it and make the referral. Um, and it seems like it's a waste of my time and energy and the time and energy of the patient. So, to work in, whenever I work in a setting like Standing Rock where people just recognize that people have skills and the people that have the skills do the work and you know, then we all work together to support each other rather than there being this hierarchy and limitation. Um, then a lot of energy gets taken up in egos and concerns about scope of practice and who is going to be in charge and who gets to bill the bill for it and get the money and get the power. Um, so, yeah. Uh, it's, it's just such a delight to see, to witness and to observe and to be a part of supporting people who um, have big, have great skills and um, a heart for their work. Um, and who it seems like the system is often set up to really limit them, reign them in, remind them they're not, they don't really have all that they need to undermine their confidence. Um, uh, and especially in that setting, where it was um, often Native people taking care of Native people and then if I could just be supportive, then that could happen in some really beautiful ways. Um, with way more, I don't know, just a whole more cultural richness to the interactions than what I could provide not being a member of that community.

Moreton-Robinson (2015) describes the possessive logic of patriarchal white sovereignty in nation-states, such as the US, that reproduces the nation's power through discursive and material reproductions of ownership. "Possessive logics" is a mode of rationalization that is underpinned by an excessive interest in reproducing the nation state's power, ownership, and domination (Moreton-Robinson 2015:xii). The possessive logic uses discourse to circulate meanings about power of the nation and what it owns in

order to create norms that appear to be common sense and inform decision making and views on what is normal. Possessive logics "discursively disavow and dispossess the Indigenous subject of an ontology that exists outside the logic of capital by always demanding our inclusion within modernity on terms that it defines" (Moreton-Robinson 2015: 191). Moreton-Robinson argues white supremacy is anchored in capitalist economies that required the possession of Indigenous lands to anchor its power and that the possessive logic is performatively gendered, as white property owners are typically male and with national rights to bear arms embodied through masculinized regimes of police, army, and security firms.

The gift-based economy and reciprocal community formed at Standing Rock stood in direct opposition to colonial-capitalist possessive logics. I suggest it demonstrated "anti-possessive logics," or a mode of rationalization defined by an interest in ceasing and resisting corporate and nation state's power, ownership, and domination. As described earlier in this chapter, many interviewees shared critiques of capitalist culture and challenged broad assumptions about the economy. As Bee (Métis/Anishinaabe/white) expressed, "That was something that I immediately like, emotionally plugged in to when I started learning about Standing Rock, was just this idea of um, corporations and people with money that have specific ideas about what should be done in the service of capitalism. Um, at the expense of the people who are actually living like, in said place that has significance and meaning attached to that place."

Arin (Oglala Dakota/white) describes the possessive logics versus anti-possessive logics in this way:

> Like as they say in corporate production. Like, here is our 6 core values you know. And ultimately return on shareholder value for a company is always one of

> their top priorities. They gotta do that if they're publicly owned company which ultimately means that every single decision will ultimately be couched by how much money does it make. And so, even these companies that try to behave in an ethical manner, they've got it built into their very structure that ethics have almost nothing to do with their decision-making processes. I mean, you know, they'll be concerned about it if you know, if it's going to cause enough bad PR, if it's going to cause enough political trouble that there's going to be a change in the law. Or there's going to be political pushback you know. So, they're very aware of like the PR aspect of like, presenting an ethical face, but ultimately, every single decision is just based on does it make the buck?

Arin articulates his awareness that Indigenous culture and resistance movements directly counter this approach by embracing an ethics grounded in interdependency and reciprocity, and that it has the potential to create unlikely alliances, "And when you put that kind of value system up against people who are like literally, 'these are our homelands where we believe in communal living, and we would never poison our neighbor's well.' Which ironically enough, most of your, you know, a hundred percent European farmers and ranchers actually have the same ethics right?" Olivia (white) bolsters this point when she reflected on what she learned at Standing Rock, "It is about just really being awake to that and aware…Like, the conscious consuming. Like, that's the biggest way we can stay awake and stay aware. Who are we supporting? You know, are we supporting a community right down the road? Or are we supporting like, companies that are trying to stick it to these people? And rape their land and destroy their culture or industry."

The camps at Standing Rock formed a place-based sociality of ceremonial opposition in which the principles of nonviolence, interdependence, and reciprocity were enacted and embodied. People united through a place-based call and response form of coalitional politics and created a "city of the future" that embraced what Hern and Johan (2018) call the sweetness of living, or an approach that views resistance as an alternative

logic to domination, one that synthesizes worldviews to shape and articulate transformative power. The “city of the future” inspired what Audre Lorde (1984) calls the “yes” that exists deep within ourselves: the yes to connection and relationship; the yes to safety and reciprocity; the yes to justice and accountability; the yes to creating a new future home, together.

Conclusion

Anchored in Indigenous placed-based ethics, alliance at Standing Rock was successful because it enacted a “call and response” form of coalitional politics in which people responded to a myriad of calls for protection of the land and water and to a variety of critiques of settler colonial-capital conceptions and traditions of place. The “call and response” political melody brought together a myriad of peoples to coexist and resist, despite differences, because of relationships to place, land, home, and environment. Shared experiences of both existential insideness and outsideness broadened and reconfigured people’s understandings of identity and home, as the dwelling place of being, whether that be where they grew up, the camps they lived and protested in, or the future home they sought to co-create.

Entangled, embodied, and racialized relationships with the Missouri River reveal the ways place generates coalitional possibilities, specifically when identity + embodiment + place is made conscious and politicized. A sense of belonging to place, rooted in ancestry and blood, cultivated and fostered stewardship and protectiveness and fostered alliance across vast difference. Finally, a “sociality of ceremonial opposition” created in the Standing Rocks camps, anchored in Indigenous place-based conceptions and traditions of prayer, nonviolence, interdependency, and reciprocity, bolstered

coalition efforts and sparked possibilities for what a future, collective vision of home can look and feel like.

In the Standing Rock camps, the Oceti Sakowin Nation and delegates from the Seven Council Fires ceremoniously lit a sacred fire and established the “Horn” of the nation, a camp layout with seven teepees in a circular formation. Sharing a common sacred fire is a traditional symbol of unity amongst the Nakota, Dakota, and Lakota-speaking nations. Historically, when the tribes traveled, coals from the previous council fire were preserved and used to rekindle fires at the new locations (Estes 2019). In many ways, the sacred fire at Standing Rock was lit as a symbol of unity of the Ocetie Sakowin Nations, as well as all nations and peoples of the earth. And while it was physically put out, the coals and embers were carried home in the hearts of thousands and then relit in their home circles. As Chelon (Thaki Sac and Fox/Ioway) summed it up,

> That’s what happened. Yeah, they might have put that big fire out, the initial fire, but those embers spread all over the world. All those people that came from many nations across what we call earth, that’s where all the fires went. And now those people, you know, some of them let their coals go out, but there was a lot of them that tended to that little bitty ember and put more tinder on it and fed it and fed it and fed it. And what you have now is people, all over the world, they are waking up.

CHAPTER 3
SHADOWS AND BLINDNESS:
COALITION CHALLENGES AT STANDING ROCK

Chapter Two describes the strengths of coalition work in the Standing Rock camps from a place-based theoretical perspective. This chapter analyzes the challenges experienced in coalition work from critical colonial, race, class, and gender theoretical perspectives. Most activists in this study described deeply transformative and positive experiences of coalition work in the camps, and many were reluctant to discuss the challenges and problems. However, this research seeks to understand the challenges of coalition work across social difference and thereby the conflicts, problems, and tensions that arose are of great interest. My data finds that the longer people lived in the camps, the more tensions and conflicts they were willing to discuss in interviews. As Dean (Dakota/Yankton Sioux/Ho-Chunk), who served as a Headsman in the Oceti Sakowin camp for three months, describes it, "I don't profess a paradise. I don't profess an Indigenous paradise because I dealt hands on with all the bullshit, everyone's bullshit."

Most internal coalitional problems described by interviewees in this study stemmed from race, class, and gender relations, rooted in US hegemonic settler colonial structures, systems, discourses, and ideologies that uphold racialized, classed, and gendered hierarchies. As discussed in the literature review, settler colonialism is a structure not an event, and it must be continuously produced and reproduced, and is entrenched in the logic of elimination of Native cultures and communities. Settler colonialism predicates racism and shapes racial classification systems, historically rooted in the triad of settler-slave-Native relations and discourses. Settler colonialism also predicates sexism and heterosexism and shapes gender and sex classification systems,

historically rooted in Judeo-Christian informed patriarchal relations and discourses. Settler colonial racial classifications, gender binary systems, and control of sexuality are built upon centuries of discourses and ideologies that assert hierarchy, privilege, and inequality and are entrenched in politics that justify subjugation of human beings and secure white male dominance through property, notions of self and identity, and temporality. Race, class, and gender are produced, ascribed, embodied, performed, and perpetuated in US culture as settler colonial strategies of power and control and racist, sexist, classist, and sexual violence are tools that advance conquest of lands and bodies.

The primary research questions for this chapter are: *In what ways do settler colonial-informed race, class, and gender hierarchies serve as hindrances for coalition building? What can we learn about the ways settler colonial culture upholds white supremacy and violence and inhibits solidarities across social difference?* I engage in critical colonial, race, class, and gender theoretical analyses in order to answer these questions and better understand the ways colonialism, racialization, class, gender roles and expectations, and racist and sexist violence hindered coalition work. Most complaints came from Indigenous people and the majority of the issues discussed in this chapter are from Indigenous perspectives. The significant problems that arose largely stemmed from Indigenous people's experiences with white people, past experiences of racist violence and trauma, and sexual and gender violence, both historical and contemporary.

Thereby, first, this chapter takes a critical analysis of whiteness, white supremacy, and privilege as it was observed and experienced by Indigenous activists in the camps. I chose to examine whiteness, because as interviewee Clara (Plains Cree/Saulteaux) points out, that is "where most of the problem lies." Racialized structures

and practices that perpetuate white supremacy and privilege are generally taken for granted because many were formulated hundreds of years ago and provide the foundational framework for US culture and society. One of the most damaging aspects of white privilege is its perpetuation of almost complete historical aphasia of the conquest of Indigenous peoples and, ironically, its blame of racialization as the causes of historical violence. "Under this paradigm, American Indian national assertions of sovereignty, self-determination, and land rights disappear into US territoriality as indigenous identity becomes a racial identity and citizens of colonized indigenous nations become internal ethnic minorities within the colonizing nation-state" (Byrd 2011:xxiv). This chapter explores whiteness and the implications of the racialization of Indigenous peoples within coalition work at Standing Rock to better understand the ways dominant groups perpetuate settler colonial hegemonic norms of inequality and marginalization of the 'other.' Further, an analysis of the intersection of whiteness and class relations is examined to understand the ways that race is intimately intertwined with economic advantages and disadvantages in ways that deeply impact solidarity efforts.

To examine whiteness, white supremacy, and privilege is to "look head-on at a site of dominance" (Frankenburg 1993:6). Accordingly, I then take my observations into the role of historical racist violence and trauma for Indigenous peoples and the ways such experiences hindered their ability and willingness to ally with whites. Historical, social, political, and cultural dominance and violence has been and continues to be inflicted upon Indigenous peoples to maintain power and perpetuate a racial hierarchy in which whites are dominant. This is followed by an examination of gender and sexual violence, in which first I explore gender roles and expectations in the camps, including the ways

gendered Indigenous performativity, US colonial hegemonic masculinity, and Lakota warrior masculinity intersect with race, ethnicity, class, feminism, and other social identities and are entangled with colonial and imperial projects. Then the chapter concludes with an examination of sexual violence, both inside and outside the camps, and its historical and contemporary function as a tool of sexual colonization.

This study finds that challenges in coalition work at Standing Rock are rooted in US settler colonial-informed racial, gendered, and classed hierarchies of power, which perpetuate white supremacy and privilege, and a subjective "white blindness," or inability to see privileges and advantages. Historical and contemporary expressions of racism, gender inequality, and sexual violence, rooted in settler colonial-capital logics of elimination and minimization of Indigenous sovereignty, further eroded Indigenous activists social trust and hindered alliances across difference. It is divisions and dominance and "blindness and shadows" that ultimately weaken and destroy coalitions.

> *"Because Lakota are very open with their culture and their identities and they welcome people into their communities more easy than other people do, I think it allowed for, unfortunately, for a lot of um, white saviors and hippies, like, that kind of uh, you know, population to enter the space um, when a lot of Natives there were like, 'oh hell no.' You know? Like, um, and we ended up getting very inundated with a rather large white uh, population, or non-Natives. And um, you know, it kind of, it kind of ruined things. You know. Um, that's why I left in December and never wanted to go back. Uh, many Natives were just so disappointed because when we first got there, you know, it was a Native thing and then by the end so many white people were there kind of running things, doing things. Bringing all their resources and because they bring their resources, then they feel like they have to have a say in things. You know?"*
> -Clara (Plains Cree/Saulteaux), activist at Standing Rock

White Supremacy, Privilege, and Blindness

White supremacy and privilege inform white engagement in social movements. Whiteness is theorized in critical race theory as the unnamed, unexamined, unmarked all-pervasive power structure in US culture (Rothenberg 2016). Whiteness, like all race, is a social construction, meaning what it means to be white and who is considered white changes over time and varies across geographical locations (Omi and Winant 1986; 1994). In US society whiteness is everywhere, always centered, and always assumed. Whiteness comes with its own "invisible weightless knapsack" of privileges, unearned advantages, and conferred dominance (McIntosh 2016). Whiteness creates the US in its own image, meaning it informs values, cultural messages, institutions, social structures, relations, policies, and laws that socially reproduce white privilege. In critical race theory, white supremacy is defined as the persistent social condition whereupon white people are given "precedence over the interests of other groups through political, social, economic and cultural structures and practices that have evolved over centuries and are maintained and continually recreated by these structures and through individual actors and actions (conscious and unconscious)" (Walton 2020:80).

While whiteness is theorized as the unnamed, unexamined, and unmarked, for many Indigenous people, "white possession is not unmarked, unnamed, or invisible; it is hypervisible" (Moreton-Robinson 2015:xiii). Many Indigenous activists I interviewed described hypervisible white privilege in the camps. As Maritz (Taos Pueblo/Diné/Latinx) described it, "There were a lot of interruptions, people not understanding white men you talk last, and the speaking order and how that went. We were really not supposed to agitate the police at all, saw a lot of white people do that

anyway." There were repeated stories about white people trying to dominate, lead actions, and make decisions in the movement. As Bee (Métis/Anishinaabe/white) recalls, "it was very clear there were like, white people in those spaces that had very particular ideas about what they would do to solve the problem. And, I mean, you know how white people talk. They talk like, they're entitled to know what's best for that space, for those people, and their solution should be like [laughs], picked up on, you know?" Lynne Davis (2010) argues that individuals interact from very different concepts of relationship which embody varying power configurations that can create problems in desired alliances. Whiteness configures privilege and is intimately intertwined with settler colonial-capital culture, creating a complicated power dynamic with unconscious assumptions.

Similar to McIntosh's (2016) "invisible weightless knapsack" concept, based on the findings in this study, I argue that the US colonial racialized hierarchy formulates a subjective experience of "white blindness," meaning whites often do not see and/or acknowledge their own privileges and advantageous social positionalities. "Part of white privilege involves the treatment of white people as individuals, without their actions being attributed to their membership in a racial group" (Fitzgerald 2014:45). White blindness is a conceptual tool that builds upon Mills' (1997) theory that the US is governed by a "racial contract" that contains an inverted epistemological provision, or an epistemology of ignorance. This episteme "requires whites engage in a significant degree of misunderstanding and misinterpretation on matters related to race" (Mills 1997 in Martinez 2020:510). Conceptually, white blindness also builds upon other contributions to critical race theory and whiteness studies, such as DiAngelo's (2018) research on "white fragility," or the tendency for white people to have strong emotional reactions to

even the slightest reminders of racism. It also accords with Ahmed's (2007:159) suggestion to describe the production of whiteness as a "straightening device" that then "gets reproduced through acts of alignment, which are forgotten when we receive its line" (Rifkin 2017:181). White blindness runs parallel to colorblindness, the racial ideology that espouses that the best way to end discrimination is to not see color or difference. In the case of white blindness, it is not so much that whites do not see color and difference in others, but that they are blind to their own difference, or privileged status in the racial hierarchy, or the ways whiteness impacts their subjectivity, social experiences, and relationships. To make light of the issue, they are blinded by the white.

I combine three theoretical positionalities to explain and analyze white blindness behaviors demonstrated in coalition efforts at Standing Rock. First, foundational to understanding white blindness is the critical race theoretical understanding that race is a social and cultural structure and discourse that shapes interactions and upholds white supremacy (Delgado 1995; Duncan 2002). Second, I engage with the post-structural theoretical understanding that identity is an unfixed, unstable, and interactional process (Butler 1990; West and Zimmerman 1987; West and Fenstermaker 1995). Identity performativity theory, developed originally to explain gender (Butler 1990), assumes identity to be lacking in essential subjectivity and to be an ongoing interactional accomplishment (West and Festermaker 1996). While post-structural identity performativity theory bolsters that race is not essential, "it is also not whimsical" (Warren 2001:96). Racial production and performativity are constructed and reproduced through patterns of difference and dominance (Hall 1996), and are coalitional, interactional, relational and located in history (Butler 1990, Scott 2010). White identity specifically is

produced and performed as a series of repeated interactive actions and discourses that become reified in ways that blind people to its construction (Warren 2001).

Third, this analysis pulls from white racial identity development theory that examines personal attitudes about racial identity (Sabnani, Ponterotto, and Borodovsky 1991). Three prominent models of white racial identity development emerged in the 1980s that understand white identity as a progression of stages for individuals (Helms 1984; Hardiman 1982; Ponterotto 1988). In all three models, the stages are characterized by similar attributes. The first stage is "characterized as a lack of awareness of self as a racial being" (Sabnani, Ponterotto, and Borodovsky 1991:71). This stage is disrupted by knowledge and interactions with minorities that lead to stage two, involving awareness of race and inequality and often leads to feelings of guilt and sometimes depression. Stage three leads to taking a prominent stance on race to alleviate uncomfortable feelings, stage four involves retreating into white culture out of fear or anger, and stage five involves reintegration and redefinition of self as white (Sabnani, Ponterotto, and Borodovsky 1991).

In this study, critiques of white behaviors in coalition work at Standing Rock primarily came from Indigenous people and are observations of whiteness from an outside perspective. I decided to take the Indigenous perspective because as Mills (1997) explains, "[H]egemonic groups characteristically have experiences that foster illusory perceptions about society's functioning whereas subordinate groups characteristically have experiences that (at least potentially) give rise to more adequate conceptualizations" (Martinez 2020:510). Almost all Indigenous critiques shared in interviews centered on observations of white people behaving as if they were in the first stage of white identity

development, or lacking awareness of self as white and the privileges it confers. Although there were some examples of whites behaving similar to the other stages, such as demonstrating feelings of guilt, it was the seemingly lack of racial awareness that was most discussed and problematic. Engaging with and overlapping critical race, post structural identity, and white racial identity development theories helps explain white blindness behaviors at Standing Rock, as the lack of ability to see whiteness in the full social context in which one relates and the ways it perpetuates white privilege and superiority.

White Hippies and New Agers

Reoccurring complaints from Indigenous people in this study regarding white privilege, superiority, and blindness were primarily directed toward white "hippies" and "New Agers" that came to the Standing Rock camps. The hippies were often referred to as the "Woodstock people," as Moti (Muskogee/Cherokee) clearly articulates, "There were a lot of people there, we call them festival people or Burning Man people, you know, or the Woodstock people. They were there for the party. They were there for the experience. I hold no judgment about that, but that's not what we came here for." While the term "hippie" was used to describe a wide range of people, including environmentalists and festival goers, across the board, the term always referred to white people. The term "hippie" stems from the primarily white middle class American counterculture movement of the 1960s and 70s that engaged in environmental activism, anti-war protests, the Civil Rights movements, and espoused ideologies such as free love, drug use, self-expression, and communal living (Rorabaugh 2015).

Although the Standing Rock movement took place over half a century after the original hippie movement, the hippies that arrived often demonstrated behaviors and expressed ideas about nature, the environment, and environmental activism that stemmed from the 1960s and 70s, an era of environmentalism dominated by whites (Kline 2000, King and McCarthy 2009, Finney 2014). White-informed environmental discourses from the 60s include concepts such as "wilderness conquest, Romanticism, Transcendentalism, and the belief that humans can either control or destroy Nature with technology" (Finney 2014:28). In the 1980s and 90s, the homogenization of participants and agenda in the environmental movement helped usher the environmental justice movement, which challenged mainstream environmental organizations to look at how race shapes practices (Finney 2014; Bullard 2000). However, whiteness continues to inform environmental movements and discourses, ideas about bodies and nature, and representations of race in the environment that often marginalize, make invisible, or glorify nonwhite people (Finney 2014).

Whiteness intertwines with cultural representations, economic factors, and views of nature that shape the "discursive structuring of their subjectivity" (Scott 2010:17) and, thereby, political actions, interactions, and relationships. For example, some white "hippies" that came to Standing Rock demonstrated behaviors that exemplified romanticized ideas about nature and the body that simultaneously undermined the purpose of the movement. Clara (Plains Cree Santouax) recalls an example:

> Yeah. There's one [example] that sticks out. It was this white [hippie] guy that was running around camp in December barefoot and that pissed me off because a lot of people looked at me and looked at each other in distress. Like, what's going on, why is this guy doing that? And I have to go speak with him and say like, if you don't take care of yourself then the community has to take care of you. So,

> you're just a burden. And like, I don't think a lot of them understand that. So, they were doing stupid shit like that left and right, you know? Um, and that kind of stuff just like angered me.

The hippie's decision to go barefoot in December can be explained as an example of white privilege and blindness. He is engaging in white identity performativity, meaning his identity is a negotiated reaction to social norms and is the effect of discourses and practices that are historically and socially constructed that are then performed or acted out, unwittingly, in social situations (Warren 2001; West and Fenstermaker 1995; Butler 1990.) In this case, he is embodying and performing whiteness and hippieness based on historical and socially constructed ideas about what it means to be white and a hippie. Hippies in the 1960s romanticized nudity and naturalness and rejected conventional norms like wearing shoes (Rorabaugh 2015). While the barefoot hippie might have perceived his decision to not wear shoes as countercultural, rebellious, or as a display of his naturalness or connection to the earth, in the context of a political movement organized in outdoor winter encampments, it was viewed as reckless and irresponsible by Indigenous political activists around him who have much more at stake.

His actions reveal white privilege and a lack of awareness of his racial positionality. This is problematic because it can lead to a lack of awareness to multicultural concerns, contexts, and etiquette, and thereby empathy, or the ability to sense other people's emotions or imagine what people around him might be thinking (Rogers 1959 in Krol and Barz 2021:1). Empathy is crucial in coalition work between whites and marginalized groups because it creates a bridge that allows for connection and allows for genuine support (Cartabuke et al. 2017). The physical body and nature work as terrains of power (Moore, Pandian, and Kosek 2003; Hill Collins 2004). Race and the

body provide a medium for nature to form political representations, reproduce hierarchies, and authorize dominance (Braun 2003). White privilege and structures of white supremacy allowed for his barefoot performance and lack of acknowledgment, or blindness, toward how his body and actions were viewed by the community around him.

Whiteness is inextricably bound by and co-produced with colonial capital structures, systems, and ideologies. Many Indigenous people were frustrated by the contradictory behaviors of white hippie and New Age activists who were willing to resist corporate resource extraction alongside an Indigenous-led movement, but unable to accept that Indigenous culture was not available for exploitation and appropriation. As Dean (Dakota, Yankton Sioux, Hochunka) states, "I don't know how many times we had to squash uh, New Age people from trying to appropriate our stuff." "New Age" is a term to describe an eclectic spiritual movement that emerged in the 1970s that pulls from a wide range of religious traditions, conceptions, and rituals and that often emphasizes spiritual authority and development of the self. Often overlapping with the hippie movement, the New Age movement is mostly comprised of white middle class Americans "seeking a sense of identity and unity" and that take interest in the 'other' (Krogmeier 2017:4). Notions and discourses of Indian-ness or Native-ness as the cultural 'other' is often appropriated by New Age spiritualists who then "play Indian" or "go Native" by recreating Native ceremonies and rituals, such as sweat lodge ceremonies, and purchasing items relevant to Native religions, such as feathers and stones (Deloria 1998; Taylor 2013; Krogmeier 2017). These acts can function to serve white New Agers as gate keepers to defining Indian-ness and offers agency for whites to become the 'other' temporarily to meet spiritual or psychological needs.

Clara (Plains Cree Santouax) recalls an example of cultural appropriation that reveals the complexity of white identity performativity in the modern global settler colonial-capital context,

> We're trying to do a round dance and um, in the dome, and this like, hippie woman is trying to do like yoga, like, right in the line and then she gets stepped on and angry. And you know, she's doing sexy yoga too, not just like yoga. She was doing it for attention. And so, like, that pissed me off. You know, just things like that. Um, just you know, I just couldn't handle it.

The sexy yoga performance Clara describes is an example of race, gender, and cultural identity performativity. In other words, the sexy yoga woman was embodying and performing race, gender, and culture based on historical and socially constructed ideas about what it means to be white, a woman, "sexy," and "spiritual." This can also be explained as an example of Orientalism, a practice in which the Orient, or the Far East or Middle East, is defined and embraced as the 'other' against which the West identifies and constitutes itself (Said 1978). Orientalism is rife with stereotypes, imagination, and fantasy and serves as a self-referential practice for Westerners. The 'other' functions as a strategic location for power available for Westerners to appropriate, identify, and express subjectivity, while ignoring or justifying unequal power relations (Said 1978). Yoga functions as a form of somatic Orientalism in which a racialized dynamic is cultivated through a range of sensory experiences (Putcha 2020). US yoga culture is rooted in "a history of white supremacy and paternalism, stemming from British imperialism and colonialism in South Asia" (Putcha 2020:8).

Dominant US settler colonial discourses construct whiteness by producing "an unmarked, apparently autonomous white/Western self, in contrast with the marked, Other racial and cultural categories with which the racially and culturally dominant category is

co-constructed" (Frankenburg 1993:17). In this example, the 'othering' is multi-colonially layered. The white sexy yoga woman is othering Eastern *and* Native American cultures. Her behaviors reveal how difference is constructed and understood in relation to whiteness. Her white gendered identity performativity relies on and somatically embodies generalizations and stereotypes about the 'other.' It is an example of the ways imperialism and colonialism are entangled and co-constructed for US whites that perpetuate white privilege and blinds them to the ways their positionality and actions impact people around them.

Many Indigenous activists described the challenge of having to contend with white "hippie" liberal, Civil Rights political discourses about race that simplify the racial hierarchy as a "Black and white" issue. In this simplistic understanding of race, Indigenous peoples are often ignored, trivialized, and made invisible regarding the ways racism and racialization creates inequalities (Moreton-Robinson 2015). Clara describes her feelings on Indigenous invisibility and power dynamics in this way,

> Like, if you're not Black, then you don't matter in the race war, or the race whatever you want to call it. The race fight. Um, so, like we have the highest rate of murder, the highest rate of suicide, the highest rate of missing and murdered people. But like, there's no uprisings happening for us around the country. You know. Like, um, and this isn't like a dig at all. I like the black movement. I'm happy that they're doing what they're doing. I'm just saying that from a historical perspective, our history has been very white-washed and that's purposeful because we are the people with some actual power in this country. Because we have sovereignty, because we have land bases, because we know the land, because we um, basically have our basic fundamental like, leanings are complete opposite of like, you know, Christian, colonial Christian ideologies. And of course, they don't want us to like, speak up because, you know, we are like, antithesis of what they want to be. And so, um, you know, our story, our, our like, fights, even in movement spaces themselves, is like, very overlooked, very underfunded. Um, and no matter how hard we fight and cry, um, it's just not going to be seen and heard in the same way that it is with like, within the Black community or the Latino/Latina perhaps. Um, Standing Rock was massive, right.

> Has it even gotten like 1/10th of the type of like, um, media that the BLM movement has gotten? Or like traction? I mean, the BLM movement is like, everywhere you know? And I'm so happy that it is because I want them, you know, burn it all down. That's how I feel, right. Um, but, um, you know, I'm just like, it's just a very poignant, the poignant part I'm trying to point I'm trying to make is that it's purposeful. You know? It isn't the fault of Black folks at all.

The tension described by Clara is addressed by Byrd (2011), in what she describes as the "post-colonial liberal agenda" that produces "internally contradictory quagmires where human rights, equal rights, and recognitions are predicated on the very systems that propagate and maintain the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from the common good of the world" (2011:xix). Tensions regarding how to discuss race, inequality, and differences at Standing Rock often resorted to discussing cultural differences instead of addressing whiteness or white supremacy, privilege, or blindness. This perpetuates the ways "production of knowledge about cultural specificity is complicit with state requirements for manageable forms of difference that are racially configured through whiteness" (Moreton-Robinson 2015:xvii).

White privilege, supremacy, and blindness created challenges in coalition work at Standing Rock, most specifically demonstrated by some white hippies and New Ager's, in the form of lack of awareness of power differentials and the ways behaviors impact the larger community, cultural appropriation and othering, and whiteness informed discourses about environment and race.

Lack of Etiquette

Many complaints came from Indigenous activists about white blindness in the form of lack of awareness of or attunement toward Lakota cultural etiquette. Chelon (Thaki Sac&Fox/Ioway) put in this way,

> I think as far as like non-Native people, um, of course there were some of them that were just blatantly didn't know what the fuck they were doing, like why are you doing that? Let's get rid of them. Um, there were those people. Some people, for the most part, were just trying to do what they thought was best, but we have etiquette. We have etiquette, we have protocol.

Grace (Ottawa) explained how she saw white people behaving in ways that were disrespectful of Lakota culture. She said,

> You wait for them to talk. If they hand you something, you have to eat it, whether you spit it out later, you know what I mean? I'd seen a lot of that, and I heard them calling them white people, 'They don't need to be here, they need to go home.' You could hear them talking but for me, I blended in well. I didn't have any problem with Lakota's or whatever tribe I met…I was very respectful. I already know I'm not Lakota, I'm in their territory, and I respect that.

Bee (Métis/Anishinaabe/white) described an experience in which she had to ask a white woman to stop video recording Natives singing around the sacred fire, "I'm like, I mean I know it probably sounds like music and singing, but they're praying! That would be like walking into a Catholic church and just like recording the priest and the choir." Kik (Muskogee/Creek) experienced many examples of entitled white hippies, who were not only completely unaware, but offended by Native cultural etiquette. He described an experience in which a Native man kindly asked a white "hippie" woman to take her dog away from the sacred fire, where he was burning herbs and praying, explaining that in his cultural tradition, dogs are viewed as innocent and therefore inhibit the power of a sacred fire. The woman "freaked out on him and said, 'how dare you?'" Kik said it was mainly

because of the white hippies and the problems they brought to camp that the decision was made by leaders in December 2016 to request people go home. He says, "they were really kind of ruining the sacredness of the movement."

If whites cannot fully and consistently see how structural systems uphold whiteness and the ways it creates privileges, advantages, and opportunities in their subjective and interactional lives, they are lacking in awareness, and thereby the ability to empathize or attune to people around them, especially nonwhite people who experience discrimination and inequality in ways whites do not. As described in Chapter Two, identity in social movements plays an important role, and is most effective for coalition work when identity + embodiment + place is made conscious and politicized. However, when racial identity/performativity is not consciously recognized to its fullest structural, interpersonal, and political extent, including how performativity shapes personal behaviors and impacts those around you, coalition work becomes challenging.

Whiteness and Class

Many challenges to coalition building at Standing Rock pertained to concerns about people's motivations for being there that intersected with class and racial status. While most people came with good and honest intentions, some did not. There were many cases of theft and blatant lies told in the camps. Many stories were told with an awareness of how poverty and racial status contributed to such behaviors. Grace (Ottawa) describes several incidents and compares economic privilege between Native and white thieves,

> I met a guy and a girl [Native] and they were ripping off the camp. We had to humble that. You look at the area with these houses and housing, aware of all that

> poverty. Of course, they're going to take two extra coffees. That's like a million bucks to them. Of course, they're going to take five cans of milk. I don't have no judgment on that, taking the donations like that. They didn't take all of it and kept going over there. I know some people, some white people were there running the whole bus and saying they're cleaning, going through the camps. Here they were bussing it out and selling the shit.

According to US Census Bureau (2017) data, the highest poverty rate by race/ethnicity in the nation is among American Indian and Alaska Native Americans, at 26.2%. (It should be noted that the U.S. Census Bureau collects information on race following the guidance ofthe U.S. Office of Management and Budget's 1997 *Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity*, which defines American Indian or Alaska Native as a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America [including Central America] and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment [US Census Bureau 2012]). Native Americans and Alaska Natives have the lowest labor participation rate at 60.3% (US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2018), the highest unemployment rate at 7.8% (US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2018), and low educational attainment rates, with 17% attaining a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 33% for whites (Krogstad 2014). Challenges regarding food and housing security abound in Native communities. In 2012, the Standing Rock reservation had a poverty rate of 43.2%, nearly triple national averages (Krogstad 2014). It is no surprise, with this staggering level of poverty that some Native people might have taken advantage of the free food, donations, housing, and healthcare services offered in the Standing Rock camps.

Class is theorized as having lived, material, geographical and historical rootedness (Marx 1867,1983; Marx and Engles 1848, 1983; Glenn 1985; Davis 1981, 1993; Smith

2009). Like race and gender, Bettie (2003) argues class is a performative identity, or series of repeated and interactional actions, learned through class culture, such as experiences with private and public factors in life, like family relations, leisure and consumption practices, and peer relations outside to one's position in the labor force. For example, Bettie (2003:13) defines white "hard-living" families as supported by low-paying, less stable occupations that lack health care benefits and make home ownership impossible—self-employed work, non-union labor, service work—and have lifestyles that are chaotic and unpredictable."

In Nick Estes' (2019:7) account of his experience at Standing Rock he writes,

> Political elites and corporate media have frequently depicted poor whites and poor Natives as irreconcilable enemies, without common ground competing for scarce resources in economically depressed rural areas. Yet, the defense of Native land, water, and treaties brought us together. Although not perfect, Oceti Sakowin camp was a home to many for months. And the bonds were long lasting, despite the horrific histories working against them.

It appears from Estes' account and stories in this study that white activists who grew up in poor or "hard living" families were well suited for the chaotic and unpredictable life of outdoor camp political activism and had more successful solidarity experiences across racial/ethnic difference. Most class/race-based challenges in this study of coalition work at Standing Rock did not stem from relations between poor white and poor Native people.

Stories about Native people who stole from the camps, like the examples Grace describes above, were mostly tolerated. There were two in-depth stories told by interviewees regarding Natives who demonstrated what appeared to them as poverty-oriented dysfunctional behaviors, but I was asked in both cases, to not share the story.

One story involved elder neglect and the other involved lies about the prevalence of weapons in the camps. In both stories, the interviewees suspected infiltration measures, or that the people involved were being paid by private military companies to create chaos in the camps (see more on military infiltration in Chapter Four). I chose not to share these stories out of respect for my interviewees. I interpreted their requests of silence as a form of compassion toward the complicated ways that poverty can induce negative behaviors rooted in survival. As Dean (Dakota/Yankton Sioux/Ho-Chunk) describes it, "I see a lot of dysfunction in our Nation. A lot of dysfunction." The combination of statistically higher levels of poverty amongst Native populations, highly prevalent infiltration measures, and the chaos that naturally occurs when thousands of people come together led to an atmosphere of distrust for many. As Grace (Ottawa) describes it, "Even our own people would say, 'watch your own people.'"

Most class/race critiques came in regard to wealthy white celebrities and politicians who showed up briefly to Standing Rock. John (white) described them as "grand standers and people looking for sound bites and publicity," or there to get what Simone (Poncah/Lakota) calls their "Girl Scout Badge" so they could "brag about it." Clara (Plains Cree/Saulteaux) describes her shock when Jane Fonda brought Thanksgiving dinner to the camps in this way,

> Jane Fonda coming and serving Thanksgiving fucking like, dinner. Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving dinner at Oceti Sakowin camp. Like, I have no words for that. No words. Um, and she keeps showing up all over the place and getting all this attention. Um, you know, for issues that are clearly ours. Um, does she really need it? I mean, she's freaking famous as it is, right? And people say, well she's famous and she's bringing attention to the movement. I'm just like, you know, I don't really give a shit. Like, I just don't care. Um, so, that's the kind of stuff that was really hard to see.

Fonda's actions exemplify the intersection of white blindness and class privilege and the ways it can perpetuate an almost complete historical aphasia of the conquest of Indigenous peoples and the ways colonialism continues to impact communities in the form of socioeconomic disadvantages and inequalities. White blindness includes the inability to see one's race-based historical and ongoing advantages, as well as class privilege, economic power, and access to resources. Clara describes this form of blindness and structural perpetuation of historical aphasia a form of "whitewashing" and said she would prefer if Thanksgiving would become a national tradition of "truthgiving" instead.

Clara expressed anger toward many white wealthy people she encountered because she said they did not realize the power they have to offer Indigenous causes, such as financial support and other material resources, and instead wasted people's time and energy by unintentionally disrespecting, appropriating, or trying to "save" Native culture. She referred to a zine titled, "Accomplices not Allies: Abolishing the Ally Industrial Complex, an Indigenous Perspective" (2014), published online by indigenousaction.org. This 6-page manual describes the tensions found in Indigenous/non-Indigenous alliances that are "counter-liberatory" and that feed the "ally industrial complex," a term to describe efforts established by activists whose nonprofit capitalist careers depend on the "struggles they ostensibly support" (Accomplices not Allies 2014:2). The zine describes an ally as someone who provides support on a temporary basis and thereby shares much less risk and sacrifice than an accomplice.

The zine critiques allies who act as saviors because they see people as victims and tokens and "too often carry romantic notions of oppressed folks they wish to 'help'" (Accomplices not Allies 2014:2). The zine describes the "white savior complex" as a characteristic that creates abusive relationships and codependent relationships in coalition work and critiques allies who exploit and co-opt Indigenous movements for their own self-interest. Arin (Oglala Dakota/white) critiqued the self-interested motivations of primarily white non-profit organizations that participated at Standing Rock in this way,

> I think a lot of these non-profits don't even, I don't even think a lot of these people as non-profits have any idea what they're doing. You know, they're just like, you know, yeah, I'm coming in to help people do this and do that. And then they come in and they're like, there's an 80-year history of leadership in this community that you just entirely supplanted and sucked all the oxygen out of the entire movement. You know, and I, sometimes I think they don't care. Sometimes I think they're just ignorant at what they're doing. Sometimes I think uh, you know, they're not operating in good faith.

Clara (Plains Cree/Saulteaux) explained why she felt white savior activists are predatory and explains how wealthy whites can be the most helpful in this way,

> I mean, white people can do amazing things, um, in their own communities because that's actually where the problem lies. That's where the pervasiveness is and you know, everybody is trying to come into Indigenous communities, Black, Latino/Latina communities and they think that by coming into our communities they're solving the problem but they're really just dealing with the symptom right? Because the problem is actually colonial capitalism. The heart of colonial capitalism lies within suburbia, lies within governmental buildings. It lies within like, corporate conglomerates. And that's where white people have like, major access. And like, that's, that's the actual problem…we need to be um, dismantling these like, supremacists, these white supremacist structures instead of continuously trying to go into Indigenous people's lands, which again, um, is invasive and it's predatory…Um, it creates um, it creates uh, uh, it's a, uh, chaos in our communities. Um, and I don't think they would want it to happen in their own and when do we see it happening in their own? I mean, really, besides occupy Wallstreet, when do you see somebody setting up in a suburb, or gated community, or a white supremacist compound. Um, you know, uh, any type of

> corporate conglomerate. You see strikes, I mean, but that's not, you know, that's not it.

Whiteness and settler colonialism are co-constituted and deeply shape relations in coalition work. Whiteness is intimately intertwined with capital economy and finds ways to convert nature, relations, and even activism into commodities, performances, or productive uses. George Lipsitz (2018) describes white hegemony as "possessive investment" where whiteness has actual monetary value in the housing marketing, labor sphere, and education. He argues possessive investment is influenced by its origins in a racialized US history of conquest, settler colonialism, slavery, and segregation. Whiteness has a possessive nature in that whites becomes possessed by whiteness as it relates to asset accumulation. As described earlier, Moreton-Robinson (2015) describes the "white possessive" as white supremacy anchored in capitalist economies that required the possession of Indigenous lands to construct its power. White blindness can be understood as unacknowledged white possessive investment. White blindness led many white activists to believe that showing up to temporarily, with minimal threat to their personal lives, assets, or investments, to "rescue" Natives was the most helpful action they could take.

> *"I've had a few times where I've told [white] people that I was Native American and instantly a hundred- and eighty-degree change in their attitude for the worst. I've had other [white] people that were just like, okay, cool with it. And other [white] people that like, lectured me about my own family history. Like, basically look at me and speak over me. And these are people with no heritage whatsoever. And they'll speak over me and I'm like, you know you're literally talking about my relatives. Like, literally you're talking about my great grandma right now. Really? And, you know, and they just don't get it. And they just have no idea."*
> - Arin (Oglala Dakota/white), activist at Standing Rock

Historical and Contemporary Racism, Violence, and Trauma

McKay (2019) argues that overt racism against Native Americans has been legitimized through centuries of racist discourse created and perpetuated by hegemonic power structures that uphold settler colonial projects of land dispossession and Native elimination. Almost every Indigenous person in this study described experiences of racial discrimination in their lives prior to going to Standing Rock. Many described experiences of racism in childhood that caused significant pain and that later shaped their political beliefs and actions. As Clara (Plains Cree Santouax) describes,

> I was just very attacked my whole life, you know, for being Native. Called all the names. Um, Squaw, dirty Indian, um, lazy, all those things. So, you know, I kind of have a chip on my shoulder. I don't like, well, but like, it's a good chip. I, I don't think it's a defect, you know. I look at it as um, a good, a good reason to move forward and want to stop this kind of bullshit. Um, particularly because it hurt me really bad to see them like, speak badly to my father, who I'm very close to. He was a good person, and I couldn't believe that they would speak like that to him or treat him that way.

Kik (Muskogee/Creek) recalled the first time he realized he was not white. He was a young child in school and a white classmate asked him why his skin was dirty. He said he tried to scrub his skin "clean" until he bled, to try to become white. Chelon (Thaki Sac&Fox/Ioway) describes being called a "wagon burner" by white children in elementary school and said, "I didn't have any idea what they were talking about, I just knew it was bad."

Overt racist discrimination also came in the form of unequal treatment by authorities, bullying, and violence. Chelon (Thaki Sac&Fox/Ioway) recalls being beaten

on his hands in elementary school by a teacher who also made racist comments to him. He says there were multiple times when he stayed out on the streets after dark and got beaten up by white teens for being Native, and "then had to play football or run track with the same mother fuckers." Grace (Ottawa) was adopted by a white family and was the only Native in her school. She described years of racist bullying, teasing, and violence that was so difficult it impacted her grades and ultimately led to her dropping out of school in the tenth grade. She recalls the terror she experienced, "from elementary to junior high, you got six hours, and then you got a bus ride. I actually had to quit riding the bus. They were pulling my hair and teasing me and punching me…the kids were just downright evil."

Experiences of overt racism can lead to racial trauma, or race-based stress, meaning "events of danger related to real or perceived experience of racial discrimination, threats of harm and injury, and humiliating and shaming events, in addition to witnessing harm to other ethnoracial individuals because of real or perceived racism" (Comas-Díaz 2016:249). Studies on race-based stress and trauma in countries with colonial histories led to the development of the term postcolonization stress disorder, which results from experiences of discrimination and oppression from a dominant culture that perpetuates attitudes and beliefs of superiority (Comas-Diaz 2021). Race-based and postcolonization stress can induce psychological effects that include depression, shame, and rage (Comas-Diaz 2021).

Racial discrimination, stress, and trauma are the most important determinants of social trust (Smith 2010). "Social trust refers to a person's belief that another person or a collective will perform actions (including providing information) that will prove helpful

or at least not detrimental to him or her, thus permitting the establishment of a cooperative relationship (Gambetta 1988:217 in Valencia, Cohen, and Hermosilla 2010:61-62)." Social trust is crucial to coalition work (Doll et al. 2012). The combination of white privilege, supremacy, and blindness demonstrated by some white activists with the racial trauma experienced by Indigenous activists created challenges for trust building in coalition work at Standing Rock.

Racism comes in the form of personal prejudice and is embedded in systemic and structural institutions and policies. Prior to coming to Standing Rock, many Indigenous activists had endured some form of institutional racism and violence or felt the impact from a close relative who experienced it. Many Indigenous people in this study referred to the historical and racial trauma of forced participation in boarding schools. As part of the Civilization Fund Act, passed in 1819, the US created a range of assimilation policies, including the formation of boarding schools that forced countless Native American children to attend, where they were often discriminated against, neglected, abused, and sometimes killed (Treuer 2019; Starblanket 2018). Moses (Navajo) is still haunted by his boarding school experiences and shared intense emotions regarding the abuse he endured. He says,

> I went through my trauma going through boarding school. I carry that trauma, to me, it angers me today. You know, and looking back at what we went through, even the statements of you know, 'kill the Indian, save the man,' you know. We're struggling right now because you know, we are losing our language, we are losing our prayers, we're losing our goals, we're losing our focus, we're losing the respect for Mother Nature.

Simone (Ponca/Lakota) was also negatively impacted by the boarding school policy. She says, "I know the circle of people I was with [at Standing Rock] have that same connection in their own lives or their upbringing. Like, my family was sent to the boarding schools. My grandmother had eight children and um, the disconnect of forced removal generally created a lot of the drug and alcohol abuse and a lot of disconnect, um, with our traditions."

Historical trauma is understood as the result of violent events targeted at a specific community that has effects across generations through a range of mechanisms, including physical and mental health impacts (Walters et al. 2011). Research on the prevalence and impact of historical violence and trauma in Native American communities reveals it to be problematic in a number of significant ways including high rates of depression, substance abuse, and suicide (Braveheart et al. 2011; Myrah et al. 2011). Historical violence specifically targeted at Indigenous peoples, is racially, economically and politically motivated, as the treatment is rooted in US capital-colonial justifications for land theft and elimination of Native populations and deliberately enacted to negate tribal sovereignty. Historical violence and trauma undoubtedly led to challenges in coalition work at Standing Rock because, like racial trauma, historical trauma erodes social trust in institutions and people (see more on historical violence and trauma in Chapter Four).

For people in this study who identified as biracial, specifically Indigenous and white, experiences of racial discrimination, violence, and trauma were complicated. Many felt excluded from both white and Native communities because of their liminal racial status. Bee (Métis/Anishinaabe/white) describes feeling "not Indian enough"

because she is not enrolled in the tribe her relatives belong to, due to blood quantum restrictions. "According to settler colonial impositions of race, a person with a 100% Native mother and white father would qualify as having 50% blood quantum, thereby being 'half' Native. Blood quantum was deployed (and continues to be) as a way to measure 'Nativeness' through a construct of race" (Horner et al. 2022).

Bee says that because "my grandmother faced such severe discrimination and racism during her lifetime that she quite literally tried to sort of beat the Indianness out of like, my mother and my aunties and uncles." Bee self-describes as "white passing" and believes her grandmother tried to protect her from discrimination by telling her "You are white. You are not Indian. Do not tell people you're Indian. Do not go out there acting Indian, this would not be good for you." While these messages were overt, at the same time, she felt there was a lack of openness about racialization and the way it operates. She says, "Nobody talked about whiteness. Nobody talked about race." Bee calls herself a "reconnecting Native person" and has actively sought out education to better understand why her grandmother and family members rejected their Indianness. She says,

> So, I have introduced, like, got back to the Rez where my grandma grew up and like met relatives who are still there and so I've been very intentionally like, plugging back into these things that got severed during my grandmother's generation. So, all of this is just a long way to sort of describe it. Then when I arrive in a place like Standing Rock, I have a bunch of insecurity that comes up because I know that there are a lot of people there who were raised on the rez's all over who were imbedded in their culture from the time they were born until present. And because of settler colonialism, I didn't get a lot of that. I got a hell of a lot of trauma that came into my home and family as a result of being Indian people. But these um, experiences of songs and dance and ways of knowing and um, that kind of thing didn't get passed through as much. So, I often have to combat this feeling of feeling less Native than other people do I imagine. Though, I'm sure some people feel the same as I do too.

Like Bee, Arin (Oglala Dakota/white) also felt conflicting feelings at Standing Rock based on his biracial status. He describes how being in camp made him feel accepted after a lifetime of being excluded by both whites and Natives. He says,

> It was like, it gets dark at night and I'm walking around and hanging out with people and they're just like, you know, they just fully accepted me. And I, it's, I didn't realize like, how much culturally that it influenced me growing up. Because like, growing up everyone is like, half of the Native people I know are like, ah, you're really white. And then half of, you know, white people are like, you're not Native, you know. And they're just, everyone is telling us that we're not that and then I go up there and I'm like, I feel totally in place here. There's like all this stuff I don't have to explain. Like, we all understand. It just blew my mind.

At the same time, he says historical trauma was triggered for him at Standing Rock. He grew up in a Midwestern town that was heavily influenced by Indigenous activism and politics in the 1970s and had relatives in conflicting groups, the American Indian Movement (AIM), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and Guardians of the Oglala Nation "GOON" squad, a private paramilitary group established in 1972 by the elected tribal chairman, Dick Wilson, funded by US federal money, to protect BIA facilities "allegedly from AIM" (Scott n.d.). He witnessed a series of confrontations between AIM and local authorities in his hometown that involved significant levels of violence and death. He recalls, "my dad came home a couple times with bullet holes in the side of his vehicle, you know. We had a cousin that committed, we don't know if he committed suicide or if he was murdered, but he was a BIA cop." The violence he witnessed in his childhood was triggered by the military presence and responses he witnessed at Standing Rock saying, "this was nothing new" (see more on excessive military responses in Chapter Four).

Historical violence came in many forms for Arin. His Oglala great grandmother had been raised in an Episcopalian orphanage and then sent to an assimilationist boarding school. He says she felt trepidatious about practicing traditional ceremonies because of her Christian upbringing and because of the Religious Crimes Code of 1883, which made the practice of many Native religious practices and medicines illegal. He says she feared both whites and other Natives because, as he said, "she got it [discrimination] from both sides." He says the passing of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act in 1978 significantly changed dynamics in his family and community. After centuries of illegalization, this act "protects the rights of Native Americans to exercise their traditional religions by ensuring access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites" (42 U.S.C. § 1996). He says,

> It was a really big deal for my grandma, my great grandma because I mean, they were getting threatened to get basically busted by both sides, you know. A lot of the very traditional or very [Native] presenting people, kind of, you know, there was a lot of lateral oppression, you know, because it's like, who deserves to present themselves as Native or not? It's like, well, you know, I mean, to me, I've never had to grow up being identifiable, so I'm kind of like, you know, we used to joke. We're the member of the SIA. People would be like, SIA, what is that? Secret Indian's Agency, you know. But, you know, it, it, so, you know, she would have to worry about are more of my traditional people going to be upset thinking I'm appropriating my beliefs and turn me into the feds? Or a lot of the, you know, there is so, mistrust all the way around and like, all of a sudden in 1978, it was like, just seeing that legal concern removed from them, it was like all of a sudden, they were free to like, present as what they were.

Arin and his great grandmother experienced what he calls lateral oppression, or discrimination from Natives who had internalized racism, or the internalized negative messages against one's own racial or ethnic group. Arin's experiences reveal the ways

racialization creates both overt systemic racism in the form of laws that restrict religious freedoms *and* internal conflicts that generate distrust and fear.

Lack of social trust rooted in historical and racial trauma, proved challenging for Indigenous activists who tried to relate to the thousands of US military veterans that arrived in November 2016. Oceti Sakowin elders and leaders made an official call for US military veterans to come to camp to assist in their efforts to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline, but many were concerned about the motivations of those who arrived. Dean (Dakota, Yankton Sioux, Hochunka), a prominent leader in the Oceti Sakowin camp, explains his concern regarding their intentions in this way,

> How do you vet a vet? Whose side are they on? How do we know? You took an oath and just because you're done with your service doesn't mean that uh, you're absolved of that oath. Matter of fact in Indian country we, we try to hold that to people a little bit more. Well, you took that oath, right? And we got infiltrated um, the infiltration, it was night and day. The infiltrations that happened before were one thing, but now, with the flood of 20,000 veterans coming in to camp within, that's just the veterans!

A repeated complaint about the veterans was that they were still in the mindset of being in the service, meaning they were not showing up as civilians, but as soldiers. Matt (white), a US military veteran, described what he called "Old Sergeants Syndrome," a term commonly used during the Vietnam War to describe old sergeants who had been through so much trauma that they could not relate or get along with younger soldiers new to war. He said he saw this amongst many Indigenous activists who had been fighting for land rights and sovereignty for so long that they had trouble relating to white veterans just showing up to the fight and whom they suspected might be trying to take credit for work they had not really done.

Clara (Plains Cree/Saulteaux) explains that she never trusted the veterans and had a hard time working with them or forming alliance. She explains her reasoning in this way,

> I didn't trust them. I mean, I did, and I didn't because I had some homies come through that were veterans, right, but I, I mean, they're veterans, like what? They're the enemy in essence. They're the enemy, they're the colonizers of the world. So, why are we going to trust them in our territory? I mean, like, they're responsible for massacres to Indigenous people all over. I understand that it was a different army back in the day. It was an imperialist regime, right? But is it really not anymore? I don't know I don't think so. [laughs] I mean, I don't know. They're still doing the same thing in other countries. And technically they are still doing the same thing here. They're still enforcing, I mean, there were, there was um, you know, army and all those people on the other side of this, you know. Intelligence agencies. Same people that those veterans worked for. Um, also trying to like, uh, uh, you know, stop the whole thing, right? And so, but there's also the idea that these are a lot of veterans that had gone to war, that had served, um, in the Army or the Marine Corp or whatever, that were like, you know, screw this, like, this is, why did we do this? They had awakenings where they realized that what they were doing was bullshit, right. So, I don't know. It's a complicated um, situation. Um, I don't, I don't think anything there was like, you know, easy.

Erosion of social trust based on experiences of historical settler colonial-informed racism, violence, and trauma created challenges in coalition work. While many agreed that Standing Rock was a healing experience, healing trauma was also not the purpose of the movement, and it created tensions. As Dean (Dakota/Yankton Sioux/Ho-Chunk) explains it, "Yeah. A lot of that trauma came and, people, I'd like to think that I'd like to think that uh, people that had those traumas, they came and got the medicine that they needed. At the same time, that's not what we were there for!" Historical racism and violence experienced by Indigenous activists exacerbated challenges due to trauma induced lack of social trust. The following section examines the ways gender and sexual inequality and violence further complicated coalition work at Standing Rock.

Gender Roles: Ribbons and Shadows

Concerns regarding gender roles and leadership within activist movements are crucial for many Indigenous women and can lead to tensions and problems when attempting to form coalitions. Indigenous women were active leaders in the Standing Rock movement and led many of the prayers and daily rituals, ran most of the kitchens, served as medics, including midwives for pregnant women, and stood on the front lines against police and private military forces. But as Clara (Plains Cree/Saulteaux) explains it, "Yeah, women had a big role at camp. But uh, so did men because Lakota people are patriarchal, so I mean, they had like the Headsmen, they made all the decisions. Um, women were somewhat involved but uh, they, yeah, it's complicated. It's very complicated."

Dean (Dakota/Yankton Sioux/Ho-Chunk) was a male headsman who encountered accusations of gender bias, particularly surrounding debates regarding women's clothing in the camps. Many Indigenous women leaders at Standing Rock wore traditional ribbon skirts and requested Indigenous women in the camps wear them too. The traditional ribbon skirt is common among many Native American cultures, but most heavily influenced by Plains tribes' traditions. In the latter part of the 18th century, silk ribbons were brought to North America by French traders and were adopted as a common appliqué to many Native women's skirts (History of American Indian Ribbonwork 2022). By that point in post-European contact, Native women's skirts had replaced the traditional animal hide material for cotton and the painted lines with the newly traded ribbon (History of American Indian Ribbonwork 2022).

Myra Laramee (Cree) shares on *CBC Radio: Unreserved* (2017) the spiritual significance of the ribbon skirt. She says the silhouette of the skirt itself comes from a sacred place, as it follows the outline of the Mikiiwaap (Cree), or Teepee (Dakota). She describes how the bottom of the traditional hide dress skirts used to have fringes that would touch the earth's medicines, and as the women walked, "Mother Earth would always know who it was that was making their presence felt on her back" and thereby answer that woman's prayers (Laramee 2017). She says that "those of us who know the teaching and cherish the ways of the old people, we choose to honor ourselves as women by putting that skirt on" (Laramee 2017:1:55). Women at Standing Rock were advised to wear ribbon skirts because of the spiritual and ceremonial nature of the gathering and to honor Indigenous women's traditions.

Wearing the ribbon skirt at Standing Rock can be understood as a form of gendered Indigenous identity performativity. Indigeneity, as explained in Chapter Two, is a placed-based political identity. Indigeneity gained political traction during the mid to late twentieth century, when concerns about the impacts of environmental degradation and the emergence of human rights discourses proliferated. Globalization and hegemonic liberal and neoliberal economic projects began to shift the assimilation and homogenization principles of the older modernization project toward acceptance of and understanding the value of diversity and heterogeneity (Graham and Penny 2014). The rise of Indigenous perspectives, positionalities, concerns, and arguments "about the value and validity of their distinct cultures, lifeways, and knowledge gained unprecedented political traction (Graham and Penny 2014:5)." For many Indigenous groups and individuals, engaging in Indigenous performativity, or expressing ethnicity, identity, and

culture in the form of cultural markers, such as dress, is way of "gaining political recognition and cultural authority that could be used to resist or shape economic, social, and cultural transformations" (Graham and Penny 2014:2). Perley (2014) describes "critical Indigeneity" an engagement with politics of identity based on "contingencies of emergence," or as a negotiation of self in the context of social relations, discourse, actions/interactions, and as a process of constantly shifting, recalibrating, and intuitively responding to interactions.

At Standing Rock, wearing the ribbon skirt was a form of critical gendered Indigenous performativity. It was a symbol of both Indigenous women's connection to Mother Earth and traditional culture, and resistance to colonial-capital resource extraction. It was a representation of self as honorable and as a form of resistance to settler colonial gendered and sexual violence. The ribbon skirt defied expectations of women as sexual objects, as the skirts are long and non-fitting to the body, and challenge colonial assumptions that women's bodies should be available for the male gaze (Mulvey 1999). Lily (Dakota, Nakota, Lakota) complained about scantily dressed white hippie women and how their skimpy clothing was insensitive to Lakota culture in this way,

> We would tell them, 'You can't be walking around like that. Your girls need to put on long skirts or something.' They were wearing these little bikini pants and stuff. 'We don't do that here. Cover yourself up.' They were showing a little bit too much, but they didn't really care. They really didn't care to adhere to some of the things that we asked because we asked, when people come into this camp, to please show respect for our ways. A lot of them didn't.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, lack of awareness of cultural etiquette created challenges in building trust and solidarity. Lily's complaint above reveals the way

dress code etiquette created tensions between Indigenous women and some white hippie women. But problems regarding dress code also arose between Indigenous men and women who disagreed on the functionality of the ribbon skirt for women serving on the front lines.

Many Indigenous women served on the front lines of the movement and were valued for both their physical and emotional support. As Moses (Diné) describes it,

> I don't know how, but the ladies kept it together. I mean, when we, when we did our march to the front lines, it was, it was a bunch of ladies that formed the line like this, and they, they were arm locked like this. And men wanted to push, but the ladies kept yelling, 'Hold the line. Hold the line'...It was very tense though. It was tense. The tenseness was there but I give a lot of credit to the women, you know. I'm sure they carried a lot of that emotion for us men. I'm sure they're prayers were answered.

Dean (Dakota/Yankton Sioux/Ho-Chunk), the headsman mentioned earlier, recalls one evening in ceremony when he realized that all of the women that had been injured on the frontlines that day had been wearing ribbon skirts. He recalls,

> The Spirit said, 'No more women to the front line with skirts on. The women should be prepared to be treated like men. So, no more skirts.' That was a message that we were going to share with the rest of the camp. Here is what the Spirit said. And then at the end of it we're like, how are we going to tell the women in camp THAT?

When he shared this message, many women became upset, accused him of gender bias, and refused to stop wearing the ribbon skirt. As a result, he argues many women continued to be injured. Instead of blaming the women, Dean felt the issue more so revealed problems regarding men's behaviors and gendered expectations overall. He argued that on the front lines, in the face of violence, men are not prepared to witness

women getting hurt because of traditional ideas about gender roles, specifically many Native gendered expectations that men should protect women. He puts it this way,

> What it leads me to realize is how undisciplined our young men are. Because if you're at a protest and a woman next to you gets her arm freaking blown off, as a young man, what are you going to do? Because on the other side of that line, those police officers are all ex-military. Most of them are ex-military. They're trained to step over dead bodies and keep moving forward. And they probably have. They probably have stepped over their best friend's body on the battlefield and kept moving forward and didn't look back. They had to keep looking forward. And then here we are getting, getting blown to bits and then our men are 'ahhhhhhh! They did that to a woman!' Then all hell would break loose because we don't provide that discipline and, and the suppression of our emotions. And um, that's a hard topic. That's a really hard topic because I love and respect those women that took that hit, but I can't help what I experienced. I experienced a ceremony and then I experienced another ceremony and from that information, there's a consequence that happened. And that's what, I might be wrong but, but so far in my reflections, I can see, I'm not blaming the girls and I'm not blaming the men, but I can see how things can get really out of hand.

Dean's observations reveal the complicated entanglements of gendered expression and behavior for Indigenous men and women and the insidious ways settler colonialism disrupts and contorts traditional Indigenous gender systems and values. And, because of the diverse heterogeneity of traditional Native cultures, there is no single or universal traditional gender code to specifically analyze or compare and contrast to hegemonic US cultural norms.

To attain density on the subject, a brief analysis of US military masculinity and Lakota warrior masculinity proves helpful toward understanding the ribbon skirt dilemma. As Dean clearly described, hegemonic masculinity is an expected attribute of US military soldiers and police personnel, and is characterized by self-discipline, emotional control, and strong, aggressive, dominant, and risk-taking behaviors (Shields

2017). An abject identity is also expected, meaning a part of the self must be denied and rejected, usually any expression or feeling of emotion, and put on the "shadow side of self" (Shields 2017). US hegemonic masculine military identity contrasts Lakota masculine warrior identity, in which emotional expression is viewed as strength. Settler colonial and imperial masculine subjectivities have been formulated in ways that emasculate and disempower Indigenous men (Tengan 2008). Frank (Lakota) describes the ways Lakota masculine warrior identity was given more precedence than US military masculinity for his father and the teachings he passed on to him,

> My father, who was in the Korean conflict, um, the 82nd Airborne, a very strong individual told me it took a man to cry. Uh, because men have tears too, you know. They have emotions too. So, why would you hide such a thing when it's so important. A real warrior is somebody who is in touch with his emotions. Somebody who is not afraid to show no matter who is around them that they have tears.

By articulating these cultural lessons, he says crying makes him "feel like a man" and that,

> I tell people that when you deny those tears as a man, and you're too out of touch to cry, that you're actually denying to Tunkashila (Grandfather) something he has gifted you with in this world because tears do heal people. They help you learn. They help you move on, you know. Because when you stand up and you wipe those tears away, then you can make a vow to yourself right then and there that you're not going to be knocked back down by what may have put you down.

US military masculine identity expectations are similar to US colonial gendered expectations in general, in that the ideal has a shadow side, or parts of self that get denied. But what are the gendered expectations for non-violent, direct-action, men and women fighting for decolonization who come face-to-face with military soldiers? In line

with colonial, binary cisgender expectations, in many ways, women were expected to carry the emotions, as Moses describes, and men were expected to aggressively push the boundaries of tension. When discussions arose regarding Indigenous women being "prepared to be treated like men" on the front lines, Indigenous women resisted, and as Dean believes, this inhibited their safety. Indigenous women on the frontlines refused to abject certain expressions of self into the shadows and instead chose to resist patriarchal settler colonial conceptions of what a woman warrior should look and act like. Similarly, Indigenous men were unwilling to adopt the hegemonic US masculine military abjection of emotional reactions to witnessing women being injured, also a form of resistance.

Dean's attempts as a headsman to protect women called for a breakdown of gender roles and expected behaviors, as well as abjection of Indigenous critical performativity and expression. Nason (2020:21) asks leaders to "think about what it means for men, on the one hand, to publicly profess an obligation 'to protect our women' and, on the other, take leadership positions that uphold patriarchal forms of governance or otherwise ignore the contributions and sovereignty of the women, Indigenous or not." Simpson (2011) emphasizes that Indigenous peoples engage with their unique cultural teachings in how they resist state oppression. Gendered contradictions described here brought to surface the ways traditional Indigenous and settler colonial gender roles overlap and clash, particularly in direct action, war-zone-like contexts. The tensions that arose between men and women regarding appropriate gendered behaviors, dress code, and the most effective forms of resistance created challenges in coalition work that reveal the complicated ways gender is entangled with and coproduced by settler colonial ideologies and structures.

Feminist Shadows

For Indigenous women in this study, complaints and problems regarding gender roles and expectations did not center on feminist ideologies and principles, but more so on cultural traditions and differences. While Anderson (2011) argues for the centrality of an Indigenous feminism in women's movements and Barman (2011) argues that Indigenous women's behaviors prior to and at the time of colonial contact are consistent with feminist principles and should be embraced, feminist discourse was only discussed and engaged with by white women in this study. The conceptualization of an Indigenous feminism has been controversial for a number of reasons. Firstly, the US feminist movement has historically been a means to primarily address the problems of white, middle-class women. For Indigenous women, their marginalization is compounded by colonial patriarchal sexist social structures. Secondly, Indigenous women who engage with the discourse of feminism or work toward gender equality are often viewed as opposing traditional Indigenous practices and forms of social organization (Suzak 2011). Thirdly, activism by Native American women in environmental justice movements is different from most feminist movements because the leaders "are mobilized to political action by a desire to empower their communities, preserve their cultures, and achieve racial, ethnic, and gender equality, in addition to conserving the environment" (Prindevill 2004:93).

Some self-described feminist white women in this study expressed conflicting views regarding how to address gender roles and expectations in the camps. Alice (white) says she refrained from overtly discussing feminism because "We were aware of the problems with white eco-feminism and just white feminism in general" and "We

were like, let's just try to see if we can hold this space and um and so I think in collaborating we were always very careful, respectful, like asking, you know, rather than trying to assume." However, some women like Jewel (white) described feeling disappointed by the sexism she witnessed within Lakota patriarchy. She told an interesting story that reveals her lack of cultural knowledge, and the ways white feminism makes assumptions about sexism that are not applicable to all women.

She recalls being invited to a sweat lodge ceremony in camp but was told she could not attend because she was menstruating. She says she was very disappointed but was told by an elder that there was a separate sweat lodge for women while on their periods called a "moon lodge." She says she looked everywhere for the moon lodge but could not find one anywhere in the camps. She says, "I thought that was really strange for a culture that spoke so highly of women, how much they revered women, all of this, that women didn't even have their own sacred space or moon lodge there." She says she was relieved to find a white woman who was "holding a goddess circle kind of thing and she was calling it a moon lodge or women's circle out of respect for the Indigenous because we felt similarly in that circle. I met some beautiful women there that I'm still connected to. Um, and that helped ease the pain of not finding a sacred space for women there."

The sweat lodge ceremony is common among many Native American tribes. Called *Inipi* in Lakota, it functions as a purification ritual and place of spiritual encounter (Bucko 1998), and it was ceremoniously practiced on a regular basis in the Standing Rock camps. Led by a traditional healer, it takes place in a womb-like, dome lodge, where water is poured on hot stones to create steam, and song, prayers, and healing are enacted. There is a general prohibition of menstruating women's participation in *Inipi*

(Bucko 1998) because menstruation is understood as sacred and powerful (Mello 2004) and viewed to inhibit the healing potential of the sweat lodge. Western anthropological analysis of Lakota traditions and views surrounding menstruation traditionally offer biased interpretations associated with taboo, defilement, degradation, and impurity (Powers 1980). However, these views are inaccurate and sorely biased. In traditional Oglala culture, a girl's puberty rite at menstruation, *Isnati Awicalowanpi*, is ceremoniously announced and celebrated with the Buffalo ceremony. At start of first menstruation the young woman is isolated in a menstrual hut and ten days later, a separate lodge is erected, and a ceremony is enacted that marks the rite of passage from the asexual world into the world of sexuality (Powers 1980).

While Jewel claims an elder told her about a moon lodge, there is no scholarly literature that describes a moon lodge in Lakota tradition, and outside of the initial Buffalo ceremony at puberty, most published sources, and the anecdotal wisdom from Lakota people in this study, indicate that menstruating women are prohibited from participating in most sacred ceremonies. Yet, Jewel insisted on the importance of having a moon lodge, or an equivalent sacred space for menstruating women to the traditional sweat lodge. She says she was so disappointed that,

> My heart was stirring and everything in me was stirring, and I was coming back saying we need to get a teepee, I want to get a teepee, I want to set up a moon lodge. And I felt so called and moved to do that and didn't because I'm white. And I don't know if that was right or wrong, and I can't go re-do it now. But what was heartbreaking is I made that decision because I felt like it wasn't my place and I felt like, you know, let them lead, let them do it, even though they hadn't done it yet, and hadn't prioritized that.

Jewel's expectations of a moon lodge are an example of white, feminist colonial expectations and biases placed upon gender roles in Indigenous culture. Jewel's

expectations reveal a lack of awareness of colonialism and the ways it frames Indigenous women's experiences of oppression and equality. Moreton-Robinson (2000:xviii) finds that "white feminist discourse on 'difference' continues to be underpinned by a deracialized but gendered universal subject." For many Indigenous women, the distinctive history of gender roles in their traditional cultures, explain why "equality is not our starting point" (Monture-Angus 1995:179). The mainstream feminist movement often asserts demands that reflect "well intentioned paternalism that assumes a desire on the part of Indigenous women for equality on white (male) terms" (D'Arcangelis 2015:10). Jewel's longing to set up a moon lodge is a form of white feminist paternalism and white blindness that assumes what is best for Indigenous women, perpetuates the white savior ally approach, and does not actually engage in actions or address issues that perpetuate solidarity or actual support toward the purpose of the movement, which was to stop the pipeline.

Despite her critiques of what she perceived as sexism, Jewel admits that she witnessed more egalitarian gender relations at Standing Rock than she ever had, at any time, in US mainstream culture. Research indicates that contemporary Lakota gender relations are primarily egalitarian (Mello 2004). She says, "I don't mean to say that there was no regard or reverence for women whatsoever in the Lakota/Dakota culture um, because that was shown to me too. However, there is this shadow side of what we speak about and it's in every culture I've met so far, you know. Or looked at." While she has a point, which is that every culture has a shadow side of sexism, her discourse around the moon lodge also reveals her lack of knowledge regarding Lakota cultural traditions, and

more so, the shadow side of white feminism, which seeks an ideal of equality that negates diverse women's perspectives on what that means.

Masculine Shadows

Shadows came in many forms at Standing Rock. Shadows also appeared for men who struggled with dominant and controlling behaviors toward women in the camps. Moti (Muskogee/Cherokee), a leader in the Medic Healer Counsel and mental health care practitioner in Oceti Sakowin camp, describes working with men who were confronted by their "shadow men." He explains that in the camps men and women were working and cohabitating in close quarters, such as lodges, teepees, or dome houses, and for some men this constant and close gendered contact revealed sexist behaviors and attitudes they had learned from their fathers. Moti explains,

> They found themselves behaving towards these women in manners that their fathers had been behaving to their mothers or their women. And um, they found themselves being pulled back into that kind of behavior of abuse and uh, uh sexual indiscretions and just with that um, classical male superiority, male dominant attitude over women. And yet, at some point in their spirit, they were broken over that because they didn't want to be like their father. And so, they would come and say these things we're doing, and we don't know why we're doing it and don't want to do it. The shadow man is on me and making me do things that I ordinarily wouldn't do.

Moti counseled men regarding their "shadow men" and said the most difficult aspect was dealing with men's overinflated egos but felt overall these issues were resolved well in therapy, of which he refrained from going into detail about to protect privacy.

Several white men in this study described the ways gender inequality was lessened by working alongside women in the movement. Rana (white), age 74, described

feeling as though he was treated with more respect from women because of his older age. He explains,

> The activists, especially young women, actually gave me a good feeling about being a male privileged, white guy [laughs]. I could be that and it wasn't threatening to them [because of my age]. And there was some kind of trust and understanding and that was the most rewarding thing in a way. And I almost feel like it's, it's almost like wanting to be an Indian [laughs]. You know, it's like, oh wait, I just want to be accepted. I don't want you afraid of me. I want to be a feminist. I want, I want you to know that I'm a feminist. And I worked at that for years. But at the same time, you know, I'm not out there to prompt that to the forefront, I just believe it, you know [laughs].

Rana's admission of feelings of wanting to be an Indian and a feminist, while problematic, reveals his honest desire to be accepted, despite difference, and recognizes the historical relevance of violence inflicted upon marginalized groups and women. Sam (white/Jewish) explains that he fights for women's rights because "as a man living under this patriarchal system I suffer too. The ideal world that I want to live in is populated by strong, independent women, with their own power and voice. I mean, that's what I want for myself. I want to live in that world." Both men reveal the way political identity shifts based on context and is both self and socially contingent. For all the men described above, the need to be accepted and/or the need to break gendered political gridlocks of inequality serve the needs of both self and the collective. Bavel and Packer's (2021) research reveal how a sense of shared identity increases cooperation and shared harmony. In the case of gender at Standing Rock, shared and differing identities, including race and age, worked to both increase cooperation and hinder it.

"There's a disproportionate amount of Indigenous women that are missing because they don't have access to justice. They don't have access to police force that's willing to look for them, or to do an investigation that's going to find them. And so, you see a lot of women missing. Whereas other women, the police would still be looking for them. Canadians become fatigued to see another report of a missing woman or a murdered indigenous woman, but those communities live with that grief for years. I know women that are missing. I know women that have been murdered, so what I do is advocate for policy and programming and responses that's going to end systemic violence against Indigenous women. That's a really strong way that I can support the self determination of my nation and support the self determination of other indigenous nations. You know the strength of indigenous cultures is dependent on the health of women and how children are raised."- S (Indigenous), activist at Standing Rock

Sexual Colonization and Violence

The shadow side of gender was most clearly revealed through acts of gender-based sexual violence and assault that occurred in and around the camps. To understand gender and sexual assault at Standing Rock, it must be viewed through the lens of settler colonialism. Settler colonialism is sexual colonization, or sexual violence enacted through the conquest of land and bodies that advances heteropatriarchal rule over Indigenous peoples (Smith 2015; Deer 2018). Heteropatriarchy was and is a settler colonial method for isolating, dispersing, and eliminating Indigenous peoples, including the internalization of violence (Morgensen 2011; Anderson 2011). Because traditional Native societies were often not patriarchal, colonizers had to instill patriarchy, hierarchy, and domination on the bodies of the colonized in what Smith (2015) calls a process of patriarchal gendered violence. This was committed in a variety of ways, including the use of masculinized, state, and military violence as well as sexual violence. "If sexual

violence is not simply a tool of patriarchy but also a tool of colonialism and racism, then entire communities of color are victims of sexual violence" (Smith 2015:8).

The legacy of rape and conquest over Indigenous women's bodies is ongoing and remains a constant threat. The "Research Agenda for Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women: Toward the Development of Strength-Based and Resilience Interventions" (Yuan et al. 2014), reported that American Indian women experience higher rates of gender-based violence than white, African American, and Asian Pacific Islander women. According to the US Justice Department (2012), 46 percent of all Native American women have experienced rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner, one in three Native women will experience the violence and trauma of rape, and on some reservations Native women are murdered at a rate more than 10 times the national average. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2015) reports that murder is the third-leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaska Native women.

There is currently a crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women across the US and world, which has gained media attention through coalitions such as Idle No More and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), both Indigenous women-led organizations that advocate for the end of violence against Native women. Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive data collection system for reporting or tracking how many Native women in the US are missing. In 2018, the National Crime Information Center reported in a statement titled, "Missing and Murdered: Confronting the Silent Crisis in Indian Country," that at the end of 2017, Native American Indian females accounted for 0.7 percent of the active missing person cases, or 633 in all (Federal Bureau of

Investigation 2018). However, the actual number is likely much higher, as cases of missing Native women are often under-reported, and the data has never been officially collected.

Many people at Standing Rock understood the intersection between settler colonialism, resource extraction, and violence against Indigenous women. Fossil fuel infrastructure increases crime and sexual violence against women and girls in the communities they extract from by importing hundreds of workers that form “man camps,” or temporary housing facilities for thousands of men workers. The presence of contracted, temporary labor is linked to higher rates of reported domestic violence incidents and sexual assaults (Cook 2019). Many men do not fear prosecution for assault on reservations because of the confusing jurisdictional laws surrounding crimes committed in tribal nations. Federal Indian policy contends that if a sexual crime occurs by a non-Indian on tribal land, tribal authorities are not allowed to prosecute, and the case is handled by the US state. If the perpetrator is non-Indian, but the victim is Native, then the federal justice system takes over the case. Tribal courts lack the authority to sentence criminals to more than three years in prison, so almost all sexual assault cases are turned over to US state or federal jurisdictions, which do not prosecute more than 65 percent of rape cases on reservations (Crane-Murdock 2013).

In 2013, President Obama signed the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, or "VAWA 2013" that recognizes tribal nations have sovereign power to exercise "special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction" (SDVCJ) over certain defendants, regardless of their Indian or non-Indian status. However, this law applies to people who commit acts of domestic or dating violence or violate certain protection orders in tribal

nations (US Department of Justice 2015). The law only applies to cases of romantic and intimate partnerships and does not pose a threat to criminals temporarily passing through. Confusion surrounding jurisdiction has led many to claim that "criminals can get away with anything on Indian land" (Crane-Murdock 2013).

Many women in this study were keenly aware of the potential dangers of nearby man camps. Grace (Ottawa) explains how women were instructed to not wander far from the Standing Rock camps and to always pair up with someone because "oilers were snagging them up." She told a story of how she and a friend had to walk to Bismarck to attain a financial donation and how scared they were when "the oilers came out." She had a sharpened pencil up her sleeve the whole time as a potential weapon. Luckily, they were able to catch rides from people who were not oilers, but she says "Yes, you had to be very careful out there. If I didn't have that training from stuff I knew from trauma and school, I wouldn't have got to enjoy so much of the beauty."

Unfortunately, women were not only in danger of sexual assault outside the Standing Rock camps, but also inside. There were many rapes reported at Standing Rock. Headsman Dean (Dakota/Yankton Sioux/Ho-Chunk) received daily reports on security problems within the camps and says there were over thirty rapes reported, mainly reported by women, but also a few men and Two-Spirit people. In response, in late 2016, Dean and the other headsman helped to form the Oceti Sakowin Women's Society, which was made up of women with prior training regarding gender-based violence. If a rape or assault was reported, a woman from the Oceti Sakowin Women's Society was sent to assist the victim. The society formed a shelter for women victims and offered healing and guidance. He said he regretted not forming the society earlier in the movement, "But,

then again, nobody ever thought that rapes and shit were going to be happening. But now we know better." Many women were disappointed that sexual abuse and assault were a threat inside the camps. As Jewel (white) explains it, "It's like, god, if women are not even safe here. Where are we fucking safe?"

Gender and sexual violence in the Standing Rock camps reveal that colonial patriarchy and misogyny are entangled and co-produced in even the most progressive of social movements. The contradictory layers are complex. While the efforts at Standing Rock were to stop a pipeline in the name of Indigenous sovereignty, it also addressed intersecting issues, such as the relationship between oil pipeline construction and violence against Indigenous women. The Oceti Sakowin Women's Society exemplifies the movement's efforts to address internal sexual violence and intersectional problems. Nevertheless, personal and collective shadows were revealed and created problems within coalition work that were difficult to address.

Conclusion

The findings in the chapter argue that race, class, and gender hierarchies established and perpetuated by hegemonic US settler colonial culture created challenges in coalition work in the form of white blindness, supremacy, and privilege, historical and racial trauma, gender inequality and sexual violence. Race, class, and gender identity and performativity is complex and in flux, and is coalitional, interactional, relational, while also located in history (Butler 1990, Scott 2010). Shared and differing identities at Standing Rock served to both foster unity and create divisions.

White identity performativity, as perceived by Indigenous peoples, revealed a white blindness to their racial privilege and positionality. White privilege and blindness were most common amongst hippies and New Age activists and most obvious in the form of lack of awareness of power differentials and the ways behaviors impact the larger community, cultural appropriation and othering, lack of cultural etiquette and attunement, and whiteness informed discourses about environment and race. Race-class performativity was most problematic, as perceived by Indigenous activists, when whites acted as temporary allies and white saviors, without recognizing the ways they can be most effective toward assisting Indigenous-led movements, including monetary assistance and focusing on the ways white supremacy is perpetuated in their own communities.

Historical and contemporary experiences of racism and sexual violence and trauma was significant among Indigenous activists in this study and functioned to erode social trust in coalition work. It did not help that some white activists, particularly hippies, engaged in liberal discourse rooted in Civil Rights ideologies, rather than critical settler colonial understandings. Gendered expectations regarding expression of self through dress and emotions proved to be a challenging area of tension in coalition work for Indigenous men and women. Critical gendered Indigenous performativity was an act of empowerment and a political expression of anti-colonialism for many women. While hegemonic US military masculine identity, as perceived by some Indigenous activists, provided a battle advantage, and presented challenges to the ways Indigenous gendered performativity should be enacted in a war-zone setting. White feminist ideas about what equality means did not match with Indigenous women's conceptions and proved to be

most problematic for white women, such as Jewel, who ultimately united with other white women to meet their own needs. Finally, threats of sexual violence in and around camps created tensions and threats that reveal the ways sexual colonization penetrates all group dynamics, even progressive social movements seeking social justice.

CHAPTER 4
'IT WAS A WAR ZONE':
RISKS AND IMPACTS OF MILITARY VIOLENCE AT STANDING ROCK

Chapter Three describes the challenges in coalition work amongst activists in the Standing Rock camps as rooted in US settler colonial-informed racial, gendered, and classed hierarchies of power, which perpetuate white supremacy and privilege, and a subjective "white blindness," or inability to see privileges and advantages. Chapter Three also analyzed the ways historical and contemporary forms of racism, gender inequality, and sexual violence further eroded Indigenous activists social trust and hindered alliances across difference. This chapter broadens the examination of challenges in coalition work in the Standing Rock camps to examine the ways that outside actors and coalitions, specifically, public and private military forces, impacted activists and coalition work.

By far, this study finds the most challenging components to coalition building were instigated by suppression efforts enacted by an external coalition of public and private military forces (PPMFs). Abrahamson and Williams (2011) describe public/private militarized coalitions as "global security assemblages," or complex hybrid structures of actors, knowledges, technology and values that stretch across boundaries, but operate from national settings. As described in Chapter Two, Standing Rock publicly announced itself as a peaceful prayer camp that engaged in and taught non-violent, direct-action tactics. Yet, a wide range of public forces such as the Morton County Sherriff's department, local police, police from dozens of surrounding jurisdictions, Indian Bureau police, National Guard, Border Patrol, and Homeland Security were called in to control activists (Estes 2017). Energy Transfer Partners, a private, Texas based firm financing the Dakota Access Pipeline, hired several private military and security contractors (PMSCs),

who worked alongside public forces. The most prominent PMSC was TigerSwan, a North Carolina-based corporation, that originated in 2005 as a US military and state department contractor to help execute the global "War on Terror" and specializes in "corporate risk management for modern global threat" (tigerswan.com).

Accounts from interviewees in this study indicate that PPMFs at Standing Rock engaged in excessive militarized repression. Repression of social movements can be defined as "attempts by individuals, groups, or state actors (e.g., militaries, national police, and local police) to control, constrain, or prevent protest" (Earl 2013). Repression at Standing Rock was engaged by police, state, and federal institutions and private security and military forces that each enacted excessive and militarized repression in unique ways, based on jurisdiction.

Police repression is often referred to as "police brutality," and refers to excessive use of force, unwarranted coercion, verbal assaults, racial discrimination, psychological intimidation, false arrest or wrongful imprisonment, and/or sexual harassment and abuse (Lyle and Esmail 2016; Taylor 2013; The Law Dictionary 2022). US police forces have become increasingly militarized since the 1990s with the development of the Defense Departments 1033 program, which provides excess or unneeded military equipment to police departments (Defense Logistics Agency 2022). During and after the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, an increase of equipment, including vehicles capable of withstanding major explosives, grenade launchers, and military-level protection gear have been shared with thousands of law enforcement agencies across the country (Defense Logistics Agency 2022; Brooks 2020).

State repression is broadly defined as "the actual or threatened use of physical sanctions against an individual or organization, within the territorial jurisdiction of the state, for the purpose of imposing a cost on the target as well as deterring specific activities and/or beliefs perceived to be challenging to government personnel, practices or institution" (Goldstein 1978: xxvii in Davenport 2007). Excessive state repression can include harassment, surveillance/spying, bans, arrests, and torture or killing by government agents and/or affiliates within their territorial jurisdiction. Private security and military contractors are considered governmental affiliates when hired by federal agencies, such as the Department of Defense, but they are also hired by private corporations, as is the case at Standing Rock. Repression enacted by private security actors has not been clearly defined in political science or legal studies to date, but is making its way into legal discourses, particularly stemming from civil suit cases against private military and security contractors accused of torture during the Iraq war (Center for Constitutional Rights 2017).

Excessive militarized repression of Indigenous led social movements is nothing new. What makes the particularities of the use of PPMFs at Standing Rock unique is the specific context: the US has been engaged in an international "War on Terror" since 2001 and a new form of corporatized, private military, specializing in counterintelligence and counterterrorism, has grown out of that particular culture (Schotten 2018). Simultaneously, an emerging environmental crisis of climate change threatens economic and social norms. Although the political context and discourse have changed, a perceived threat to US sovereignty remains. Native Americans have always resisted settler

colonialism, only now they are stigmatized and surveilled as terrorists instead of "savages," as justification for excessive state response.

Specifically examining the policing of Indigenous movements within the context of the "War on Terror," Crosby and Monaghan (2018:11) use the term "security state" to capture the current character of policing that integrates public and private agencies and infuses national security resources and dramatically extended intelligence-led surveillance practices. Crosby and Monaghan argue that Indigenous autonomy and political calls and actions for decolonization are viewed as criminal politics that threaten settler sovereignty and extractive economy, and that security state policing institutions serve "as the ground-level enforcement of settler colonialism's project of eliminating Indigenous sovereignties" (20018:10).

This chapter highlights the tactics and methods of militarized suppression instigated by public and private military forces as experienced and witnessed by activists in the camps at Standing Rock. This study asks the following research question: *What can we learn about settler colonial culture by examining the corporatized and militarized responses to the movement? How was militarized suppression and violence experienced on the ground by activists and how did it impact coalition work?* In the interviews, I quickly found that activists were traumatized by their experiences with PPMFs at Standing Rock and that this trauma was compounded by experiences of historical trauma and violence. This finding led to the development of the following research question: *How do experiences of historical violence and trauma break down relations in practice? And ultimately, how do experiences of historical violence and trauma shape, produce, and reproduce settler colonial culture?* In addition to in-depth interviews with activists, a

qualitative document analysis of dozens of TigerSwan documents, leaked by a TigerSwan employee and published online by *Intercept* media in 2017, provides insights into the perspectives and tactics engaged by the security company (Brown, Perrish, and Speri 2017). The data collected from the document analyses provides political context and historical insight into the events that occurred at Standing Rock and bolsters interviewee accounts.

As this chapter will fully demonstrate, the tactics and methods enacted by PPMFs at Standing Rock constitute as excessive militarized repression. A coalition of public and private military forces surrounded the camps day and night and employed the use of militarized vehicles, equipment, riot gear, and weapons, creating a war-zone like environment. This military coalition engaged in a range of tactics typically used in warfare, including intimidation, infiltration, intelligence gathering, reconnaissance, surveillance, and a range of violent actions including racial discrimination, sexual harassment and assault, and direct assault.

This study finds that excessive militarized repression at Standing Rock inflicted serious harm and trauma upon activists at Standing Rock. Trauma was compounded for many because it was layered upon already existing historical trauma. Violence and trauma incurred by the external public/private military coalition created complex challenges for internal coalition work, primarily because it negatively impacted mental health, including development and/or exacerbation of post-traumatic stress disorders and generated profound, negative psychological feelings including fear, distrust, and paranoia. Further, violence and trauma enacted by PPMFs endangered the physical health of activists, including injury, disability, and, in one instance, death.

"These individuals [working for private military] hadn't been, I don't even know if this is a proper word, but perhaps demilitarized. You know? Because you join the military as a civilian, they break you down and build you up in to this, you know, military guy or gal. And then you get out of the military and you have to come down off that high almost, you know? And you become a normal person in society again. These people have never experienced that transition. You know? From getting out of the military and yeah, maybe they change uniforms, but they're still doing the same job, you know. And I can tell you that I am a completely different, I probably wouldn't even recognize the person I was in Afghanistan and Iraq, you know? Because my way of thinking was just so completely different, you know? In the military, we can justify anything because we're following orders, you know? That is exactly what the guys on the other side of the bridge were doing. They can spray people and kids and women and shoot rubber bullets at us because they're just following orders, you know?"
-Matt (white), activist at Standing Rock

War Zone

All activists in this study described their impression of the public/private military presence at Standing Rock as creating and perpetuating a war zone-like environment. Matt (white), a US military veteran and activist in the camps, described it in this way, "They were prepared for war. I mean they had MRAPs there. An MRAP is basically a shielded tank on wheels, not on tracks, but, you know, they're used in Iraq and Afghanistan to run over bombs. And they had them at Standing Rock, at a peaceful protest." Everyone in this study described the military presence as terrifying, using affective words like "alarming," "ominous," "disorienting," "antagonistic," "scary," and "intimidating," among others. Many felt it was deliberately designed this way to intimidate activists. As Jamil Dakwar, Director of ACLU Human Rights Program, described it, "Local law enforcement agencies, led by the Morton County Sheriff's Department, aggressively deployed militarized gear and weapons — designed for use in

war — to intimidate peaceful protesters and violently crack down on a historic indigenous-led movement” (Dakwar 2017). Bill (white/Jewish), a US military veteran who served in the Vietnam War, describes it in this way,

> I can tell you it was intimidating. I mean, the surveillance was everywhere. The antennas and everything like that and we had to go to more cryptic forms of communication. Uh, it was militarized, it was designed to be intimidating. It was, it was designed to say don’t, you know, we, we can, if we choose, take you all out any time we want. That’s what it, that’s what it was designed for. Um, and uh, it didn’t feel very, it honestly didn’t feel very good.

The excessive militarized response from PPMFs created emotional distress that impacted activists’ abilities to engage and relate effectively and functioned to escalate social distrust and tensions. Kik (Muskogee/Creek) said PPMFs sent the wrong message because “it looked like they were ready for war” and instead of engaging with de-escalation techniques, he primarily witnessed attempts to escalate situations. Certain tactics resemble interrogation tactics used against war prisoners and terrorist suspects in Guantanamo Bay and other prison facilities in the “War on Terror,” such as the use of menacing dogs and sleep deprivation tactics (Apuzzo, Fink, and Risen 2016). As Maritz (Taos Pueblo/Diné/Latinx) describes it, “It was super intrusive. It was obviously this gigantic psychological game to them. They had the lights that were on 24/7 so it doesn't really ever get dark. They had this stupid plane flying around everywhere, the helicopters, the snipers, and the fucking missile launcher that they had.”

Many media news outlets captured the use of guard dogs deployed by private security forces. Moti (Muskogee/Cherokee) remembers “our people being unmercifully and unnecessarily attacked by those dogs.” Maritz (Taos Pueblo/Diné/Latinx) recalls thinking the use of dogs was “beyond normal” and “When I saw that, I was like, "This is

another level. This is like we're going back to the 1960s and siccing dogs on people of color. That's what it is, is they're siccing dogs on people of color."

Racialized Ideologies and Tactics

PPMFs relied on a racist targeting campaign to create chaos and internal divisions. The pipeline project itself is a form of corporate-state environmental racism because planners originally proposed to have the pipeline cross the Missouri River north of Bismarck, but rejected this plan based on the risk of potential oil pipeline ruptures that could contaminate the water supply of the primarily white population of Bismarck (Dalrymple 2016). Many Native activists in this study described experiencing race/ethnic-based discrimination when they went to Bismarck to run errands and believed the primarily white populated state was opposed to the movement and their efforts. Daniel Sheehan of Lakota People's Law Project, who successfully defended several Standing Rock activists from criminal charges, argues that Energy Transfer Partners was aware of a prejudice against Native people in the state and took advantage of this social dynamic and argues this was a violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (Montare 2018).

Racial discrimination came in overt forms. Grace recalls a situation in which a militarized vehicle with several security officers in it approached their peaceful prayer circle and created a chaotic situation. She recalls the men in the vehicle rolled down their window and through a bull horn said,

> 'Put down your bow and arrows, we see your bow and arrows, we will not arrest you. Please put down your bow and arrows. We will not arrest you' I'm like, 'Oh my God, did he say bow and arrows?' This was their way of stirring the pot, to intimidate and stereotype us. He knew this would stir the pot. I've seen this all my life.

On May 27, 2017, the media source *Intercept* leaked documents that revealed TigerSwan daily memos, emails, intelligence reports, and Powerpoints slides that frequently engaged with racialized discriminatory discourses regarding the movement. Discourse was heavily influenced by "War on Terror" terminology and ideologies. TigerSwan described its security mission to "defeat pipeline insurgencies" and described activists as religiously driven jihadist terrorists. Several reports singled out activists with Middle Eastern descent (Brown, Parrish, Speri 2017). For example, an intelligence report dated September 22, 2016, singled out a Palestinian activist and claimed, "the presence of additional Palestinians in the camp, and the movement's involvement with Islamic individuals is a dynamic that requires further examination." In an Intel email from October 12, 2016, a woman is singled out at as a "strong Shia Islamic" who has "made several trips overseas. Strong female Shia following." An intelligence report dated February 27, 2017, states that since the movement "generally followed the jihadist insurgency model while active, we can expect the individuals who fought for and supported it to follow a post-insurgency model after its collapse" (Brown, Parrish, Speri 2017).

It is clear in the discourse used by TigerSwan that Standing Rock activists were viewed as insurgents and potential terrorists. Terrorism is defined by the Department of Defense Dictionary (2021:215) as "The unlawful use of violence or threat of violence, often motivated by religious, political, or other ideological beliefs, to instill fear and coerce individuals, governments or societies in pursuit of terrorist goals." An insurgent is defined as "The organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region" (U.S. Department of Defense 2021:106). This is

terminology rooted in Islamophobia, or hatred and fear of Muslims or their politics and culture. Critical terrorism studies have made significant scholarly contributions toward the connection between counter-terrorism discourse, Islamophobia, and racism (Groothius 2020; Lauwers 2019; Topolski 2018). Counter-terror discourses serve to control and regulate Muslim peoples, promote Western values and a national security narrative, and "normalize and perpetuate anti-Muslim sentiment and construct Muslims as 'suspect' communities at every possible opportunity. This process draws on a 'post-colonial fantasy' and re-uses established practices of 'race consumption' to control brown bodies" (Patel 2017:1).

TigerSwan reports were also interested in white and Native divisions in the camps. In a Powerpoint slide titled, "Daily Intelligence Update" on October 16, 2016, activists are described as "rioters" multiple times, with "divisions within the camps (i.e. Natives vs. Whites and inter-tribal conflicts)." The use of the term "riot" and "rioters" is racialized and problematic. To riot means to create violent public disorder and has historical and contemporary racialized dimensions as it has long been used by media and historians to describe images of black protests and protestors (Kunkel 2019). The word "riot" is used to mute racial discrimination and socioeconomic disparities that often precede protests and uprisings. It is a term used by police and media to uphold white supremacy structures and diminish Black-white trust (Kunkel 2019).

In a report dated November 5, 2016, a chief security officer describes an area of interest, "Sacred Stone camp has the least amount of Native Americans, likely where MS (Mississippi Stand) members will attempt to set up their self-sustaining camp because MS leaders have expressed disinterest in working with Native American elders."

Mississippi Stand was a primarily white populated camp in southwestern Iowa near the construction of DAPL under the Mississippi River and worked in solidarity with the Standing Rock movement. Mississippi Stand was well known for its direct actions to disrupt construction work and was highly surveilled by TigerSwan in the reports. There was no indication from anyone in this study that there were anti-Native sentiments expressed by MS activists in Iowa. It is clear from the reports, that TigerSwan specifically researched and sought out race/ethnic divisions, most likely to provoke tensions and distrust. This did not surprise Arin (Oglala Dakota/white) who explains this has been a tactic used by the military for a long time,

> That was one of their operational goals, was to create divisions between the Natives and the non-Natives because that's what they've been doing for 150 years here, for 250 years in Kentucky and 350 years in North Carolina. You know, that's been like that first goal is we can't, we can't have the poor white people and the poor Native people figure out that they've got a mutual enemy and we're screwing them both.

Militarized Tactics and Operations

Military tactics and operations used by PPMFs at Standing Rock were what is called in military discourse as intelligence, reconnaissance, and surveillance (ISR) measures. ISR is a military operative approach intended to help "decision makers anticipate change, mitigate risk, and shape outcomes" (Hayden 2016 in Congressional Research Service Report 2020). The Department of Defense defines ISR as "an integrated operations and intelligence activity that synchronizes and integrates the planning and operation of sensors, assets, and processing, exploitation, and dissemination systems in direct support of current and future operations." (Brown 2014 in Congressional Research Service Report 2020).

It is important to define each aspect of ISR, as it is understood in military defense discourse. Intelligence is defined as "The product resulting from the collection, processing, integration, evaluation, analysis, and interpretation of available information concerning foreign nations, hostile or potentially hostile forces or elements, or areas of actual or potential operations" (CRS Report 2020:2). Reconnaissance is "A mission undertaken to obtain, by visual observation or other detection methods, information about the activities and resources of an enemy or adversary, or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographic, or geographic characteristics of a particular area" (U.S. Department of Defense 2021:180). Surveillance is defined as "The systematic observation of aerospace, cyberspace, surface, or subsurface areas, places, persons, or things by visual, aural, electronic, photographic, or other means" (U.S. Department of Defense 2021:206). These are military terms and operations typically used in international armed combat and war-zone settings.

TigerSwan specializes in "risk mitigation and security and stability operations," including emergency assistance, risk assessment and intelligence and data protection and is renowned for its ISR capabilities (tigerswan.com). A TigerSwan corporate security update from October 16, 2016, detailed its ISR plans for Standing Rock, "Reconnaissance and Surveillance will be conducted overtly by all security personnel of any/all potential or actual protestors. Purpose is to collect evidentiary photographic and video evidence." The purpose of the intelligence operations was to "Collect information that is relative and timely to the tactical situation on the ground and supports the pipeline effort and support Law Enforcement efforts for prosecution of violations of ROW and Equipment sanctity as well as any assaults on pipeline personnel. Information collected

of a strategic value will be assessed and forwarded to corporate headquarters for analysis and processing." One of the primary strategies for implementing ISR was infiltration, defined as "to enter or become established in gradually or unobtrusively usually for subversive purposes" and "to pass into or through by filtering or permeating" (Webster Dictionary 2022). Almost everyone in this study had a story about an infiltrator, or an undercover security officer, or about overt and/or covert surveillance.

One of the most vulnerable activist groups for infiltration and ISR tactics were the US military veteran activists. Their background, identities, and profiles made it easy for private/public military personnel to impersonate and penetrate. Many PMSC founders and employees were US military veterans themselves and understood military culture, behaviors, and ideologies. For example, TigerSwan was founded by James Reese, former Lt. Colonel of the special operations unit Delta Force, and its employees are often trained military veterans who fought in Iraq or Afghanistan. The infiltration of veteran activists' camps created immense levels of distrust, paranoia, and chaos. One story shared by US military veteran and activist, Shepard (white/Melungeon), reveals how dangerous and life-threatening the entrenched undercover security personnel could be, as well as the ways ISR methods functioned to inhibit alliances and social trust in the camps.

Shephard had begun assisting the Standing Rock movement in the fall of 2016 with supply runs. After three successful supply runs and organizing a prayer ceremony on the Missouri River, he was contacted by a woman who claimed to be with the Vets for Standing Rock organization. She asked him if she could coordinate a supply run with him and he agreed. A few days later, three men arrived in a Uhaul, and they traveled to Standing Rock together. He began noticing suspicious activity from his travel partners

right away, like they were not eager to work and once they got to the camps, they immediately met up with a group of other men they seemed to know, but with whom their stories did not add up – with inconsistencies and what seemed to be "fake relations with one another."

He quickly began to suspect they were infiltrators and estimated there were approximately twelve men in this undercover group, including the three men he traveled with. More and more indicators pointed him toward this line of thinking. For example, while most people's phones did not work well in camp, Shepard noticed the group all had the exact same phone and that they all worked. He asked four of these men, at different times, if he could use their phones and was given different excuses for why he could not each time. They had military style laptops and expensive cameras. They were very careless with their trash and used sexist and vulgar language to describe the women in the camps. When one said, "These bitches are hot up here" and another one commented that he would "like to fuck that bitch until she bled," he knew these guys had bad intentions.

Acting as a central organizer in the large veteran's tent they occupied, Shepard began to realize that the undercover agents assumed he was "one of them." At the same time, other vets and Indigenous leaders in surrounding camps were vetting Shepard to find out if he was an infiltrator. Nobody knew for sure how many PMSC actors were involved, and it was very confusing. He found himself immersed in the middle of one of their operations and they were not sure where he stood. At one point, in the nearby casino, believing he was one of them, one of his traveling partners blatantly asked him who had the "football" because he needed it to receive the $20,000 in his contract and

congratulated him on getting a room on the same floor as the rest of the crew and to enjoy his shower. Shepard did not have a room in the Casino that night.

On the fourth night in camp, there was a fierce blizzard. Chaos erupted all around the veterans' tent. In the chaos, Shepard asked several of the suspected men to reinforce tent straps due to high winds, yet later found several tent straps had been cleanly snapped. A fire broke out in the tent next door. Several of the suspected infiltrators had started a massive bonfire for warmth, which was spreading sparks all around due to high winds. When he confronted the suspected infiltrators about the safety of the fire, they ignored him. A few nights later, everything finally came to a breaking point when Shepard realized he had been dosed with some kind of hallucinatory drug. It was at this time that he openly confronted the men he suspected as being infiltrators. Although they all denied it, he could tell tensions were brewing. He realized he had probably interfered with, if not completely messed up, their operations. Fearing for his life, he decided to leave Standing Rock. He says he refused to drive back with a fellow veteran for fear they might "accidently" die in a car crash. He got a ride to the airport from non-veterans instead and said he was followed by three large white Suburban's with men in full camo gear and walkie talkies, who were openly and blatantly following and watching him.

He thinks he was targeted because he was heavily involved in his home city with organizing for the Standing Rock movement. He had helped organize a mass, public prayer ceremony that had made national and regional news. He had been coordinating and talking with several Native Chiefs who were significant leaders in the movement. He had also lost his sister the month before he went to Standing Rock and believes if they had targeted and studied him, they knew this was a vulnerable time in his life. The whole

experience caused severe trauma for him. In the years since this event, he has feared they might "come after him." He called journalists and told them his story theorizing that if he stayed in the public eye, they might not kill him. He was still so scared the first time I interviewed him that he refused to talk to me about the story unless I visited him in person (we had been on zoom due to the pandemic for the first interview). He said he would not allow any technological devices or digital recordings of the story. I agreed and visited him in person. He said during both interviews that he suspected I was an undercover TigerSwan employee trying to feel out how much he knew and/or recruit him for future work since he could advise them on how to do undercover work better.

Shepard's story was so incredible, I honestly had a hard time believing it at first. I reached out to two veterans who knew Shepard and were involved in the Standing Rock movement with him. Both corroborated his story and vouched for his integrity as an honest person. Shepard's experiences reveal how dangerous infiltration operations were for the physical and mental health of the activists in camps. He witnessed what he believes was intentional fire-setting, damage to winter shelters, and believes he was drugged. ISR techniques function to gather intelligence, but ultimately threaten human lives. The tactics simultaneously function to create significant levels of tensions, paranoia, distrust, and chaos and to inhibit actions and coalition building in the camps. As Lily (Dakota, Nakota, Lakota) explains, it got to the point where "we couldn't trust anybody."

Shepard's story of infiltration is one of many that were told by interviewees in this study. Many activists talked about witnessing examples of infiltrators doing damage to property in the camps that could have led to serious physical injury, illness, or death.

Examples include seeing thirty propane tanks unscrewed outside of one of the main kitchens, paper shoved into chimney pipes that caused smoke damage, the bottoms of canoes slit open, and metal shavings thrown into wind turbines. Others told of infiltrators who pretended to be journalists, making it hard to know which media to trust. Some infiltrators intentionally spread troubling rumors that spread like wildfire and generated fears, while others pretended to make friends and be in support of the cause. It created a constant sense of distrust and danger.

The majority of activists in this study, like Shepard, described having problems with their phones and social media accounts while they were in the camps and believed it was due to surveillance techniques. In one intelligence report, TigerSwan describes how they had "harnessed a URL coding technique" to discover hidden social media profiles and gain access to private information (Brown, Parrish, and Speri 2017). It is likely that stingray devices were used at Standing Rock. A stingray is an electronic surveillance tool that simulates a cell phone tower that tracks mobile phones and has the capacity to collect data and communications from phones in bulk (Zetter 2020). Stingray's have been used by police and FBI since the 1990's, and in 2015, the Justice Department implemented a policy, not a law, that a probable cause search warrant must be issued before using a stingray in criminal investigations (Department of Justice 2015). However, for issues that concern "exigent circumstances or exceptional circumstances," such as national security threats, exceptions can be made (Department of Justice 2015).

Simone (Ponca/Lakota) said images were taken from her phone, and that it often "blacked out," and that at one point her Facebook account was taken down. She says her white friends did not have this happen to them and believes she was targeted because she

is Native American. She says, “The BIA trucks, they would park them strategically and they had the satellites up of course. Um, and I’m certain they were just spying on people all day long. Like, infringing on our privacy in that way.” Chelon (Thaki Sac and Fox/Ioway) said his entire phone was wiped clean and reset to original factory settings while at Standing Rock. Alliah (Native Ecuadorian) said her phone would often shut off completely when she tried to use it. Maritz (Taos Pueblo/Diné/Latinx) describes it in this way,

> They were killing everybody's cell phones and whatnot. It was such a black ops deal. You know what I mean? Like I was saying, action movies don't excite me anymore because I've seen that shit. That shit is real. It's not even funny. That shit is for real. My friend got her Google account hacked and all this crazy shit. Yes. They were plugging into people's phones, and Googles, and Facebooks, and all kinds of stuff. Listening in, pinging audio, it's just all very terrifying. I definitely have some trauma from it, just from the whole experience. Seeing this actually happen, and seeing genocide in real time, and being with my relatives that are experiencing that. They're losing all of these sacred places to them, and also their water source. At the same time, that's my water source too. I was not physically harmed, but I definitely would say psychologically traumatized.

Overt Violence

In addition to covert ISR militarized tactics, overt violent actions were regularly engaged by PPMFs. It should be emphasized again that Standing Rock publicly announced itself as a peaceful, non-violent, direct-action movement consistently throughout its ten-month effort. Direct actions, or actions that involve attempting to achieve a goal through direct or symbolic action, were taken by activists at Standing Rock and are nothing new in Indigenous-led movements. Coulthard (2017:407) argues Indigenous direct-action tactics are commonly viewed as problematic, militant, threatening, violent, and/or disruptive, especially actions like,

> …temporarily blocking access to Indigenous territories with the aim of impeding the exploitation of Indigenous peoples' lands and resources, or in rarer cases still, the more-or-less permanent reoccupation of a portion of Native land through the establishment of a reclamation site which also serves to disrupt, if not entirely block, access to Indigenous people's territories by state and capital for sustained periods of time.

Coulthard argues these actions should be considered peaceful direct actions because they are undertaken by subjects of colonial suppression to loosen internalized colonialism and build skills and social relationship required for Indigenous communities to construct alternatives to colonial relationship (Coulthard 2017). While he admits that forms of direct actions such as blockading and other explicitly disruptive oppositional practices are reactive, they are also important. These types of direct actions are embodied "no" responses to settler colonial degradation and elimination practices and embodied "yes" responses to the affirmation of being and relating differently to the world.

One of the main focal points of PPMF suppression was the Backwater Bridge, which was located a half-mile north of the main encampment at Standing Rock. Interestingly in this example, the PPMFs are the enactors of the blockade. A barrier had been formed by authorities to block Highway 1806 to prevent activists from getting near the path of the pipeline and disrupting construction. One of the most violent nights in the movement occurred November 20-21, 2016, on the Backwater Bridge. Numerous media sources showed brutal images of the police using rubber bullets, tear gas, baton rounds, pepper balls, flash bang grenades, and water cannons in below freezing temperatures against activists on the bridge. There were multiple people in this study who witnessed the events of this evening and numerous examples of excessive, overt violence were shared. One story stood out amongst the rest that exemplifies the overt violence enacted and the threat to human life demonstrated by PPMFs. The following story is a

combination of two Indigenous activists' recalling of that night and their witnessing of the death of an activist.

By November it was very cold in North Dakota, many nights were below freezing weather, and people were starting to get sick. Leaders in the camps began requesting the bridge blockade be removed so that the route to the closest hospital could be more accessible. After weeks of promises from authorities that they would end the bridge blockade, activists became frustrated. Kik (Muskogee/Creek) explains he was part of the fateful group that decided to begin physically removing the barricades on the night of November 20th. He was in a semi-truck used to pull the concrete blockades from the bridge when the violent responses from PPMFs began. He remembers hearing screaming and seeing people getting hit by batons and rubber bullets. In the midst of this chaos, a concussion grenade hit his Lakota and US military veteran friend, Raph, in the chest. He says he remembers Raph falling to the ground, seeing blood, and feared he was dying. At the same time, a tear gas can crossed Kik's path and was so hot it melted his contacts. He was covered in ice and felt hypothermia setting in. He quickly rushed to a medic tent to find help for his friend and to "scrape his contacts off."

Moti (Muskogee/Cherokee), a mental health worker, responded to Kik's urgent request to help Raph and was joined by a medical doctor. Moti says not long after they got the man's wet clothes off to check his pulse, they realized he was in cardiac arrest. Moti says, "I saw him lift up his hand and point his finger, and started circling around toward the west, and he began to sing his death song. And I knew, no doubt, that he was seeing the ancestors coming for him." Then, just as quickly, "He died in that truck. The

doctor knew it, and I knew it because I felt it the minute he collapsed." Moti felt that this was not the man's time to go and knelt down and started whispering in his ear,

> Brother, the ancestors have not come to take you. They've come to give you courage. They've come to give you strength. They've come to send you back so that you can tell your story to many people about what has happened to you, so you can be an inspiration so that this does not happen again. They need you to stay here brother.

Moti says he was channeling those words from the Creator. He continued talking to the man until suddenly "I saw fire come through the ethers and hit my hand and vortexed through my body and I felt it go into his body." He says at that point the man was revived "back to life." Moti says he stayed with him for the rest of the night. He says, "That was one of the most powerful, powerful moments in my entire 70 years."

Many more people were seriously injured on the Backwater Bridge that night, including Sophia Wilanksy (white/Jewish) who nearly lost her arm from a concussion grenade (Domonoske 2016) and Vanessa Dundon (Diné), who lost the ability to see out of her right eye after being hit with a tear gas cannister (May 2016). The Standing Rock Medic and Healer Council reported they treated 300 people for injuries that night, with 26 transported by ambulance with gashes, internal bleeding, and eye trauma (Hawkins 2016). All injuries came from the excessive militarized public/private police response.

Violent Arrests

Many people in this study described violent and abusive treatment in the process of arrest. As mentioned earlier, Grace (Ottawa) was arrested during a prayer circle in the north camp. She provided me with a copy of her "Potential Plaintiff/Witness Intake Form" taken by a lawyer from the Water Protector Legal Collective at Standing Rock a few days after she was released from jail. The 8-page handwritten form details the entire

incident. Grace says the group was peacefully praying when a large number of unidentified men in "black and tan uniforms" approached the group, "smacking batons on their hands and sticking their chests out to be intimidating." As described earlier, they began using racial slurs on the bullhorn to stir up tensions. Grace said she and the group remained in a prayerful state, but that she was becoming fearful. The police aggressively moved into the prayer circle. She said activists were holding sacred prayer objects like feathers, medicine bags, sage, and blades of sweetgrass. As the PPMFs moved in, they grabbed people, and "feather and sage" were thrown around. The authorities took off the layers of a sweat lodge and pulled people out.

The police began throwing people to the ground, pressing their knees into their backs, and using zip ties to tie their hands. Many were hogtied, meaning both hands and feet were tied. She saw people's hands turning purple and blue because they were tied so tightly. Grace says people were not resisting, but the treatment was harsh and aggressive anyway. "They were pulling their arms way back, way more than necessary." She says they arrested the men first, then the women, then the elders. At one point, they tackled a praying elder in his 70s. Eventually, an officer made it to Grace, and she was arrested. She told an officer that her zip ties were too tight and that she needed to go to the bathroom but was ignored and denied privileges. After over an hour, she was finally allowed to urinate on the ground after a woman officer pulled her pants down for her because her hands were tied. Grace was taken to Morton County jail, given a number on her arm, and put in a 10' x 10' chain-linked cage. She says, "I felt like I was an animal." Grace was charged with conspiring to endanger by fire, maintaining public nuisance, and engaging in a riot. Two of these charges were completely illegitimate as the "dangerous"

fire was the sacred fire lit and maintained by a prayer circle and there was no riot. She was released on bond and later charges were dropped.

Kik (Muskogee/Creek) described an arrest story in which PPMF's used excessive violence and sexual assault. He says he and two friends were outside the camps looking for his missing drone. They were then approached by twelve men on snow mobiles who started yelling for them to get out of the truck. Trying to get away, they got stuck in the snow. Two PPMF officers jumped on the hood of the truck and started smashing the windshield and one cop fell off and got stuck underneath the truck. He figures the cops assumed the man was injured or killed and this is when the live ammunition began. A man pointed an M16 in his face and said, "Don't you fucking move a muscle, unless you want to fucking go home in a body bag." His friend left the truck first and was hit in the head with a baton. Kik says, "I heard the baton hitting his skull." Kik finally got out of the truck and pled the fifth amendment of silence. The next thing he remembers haunts him every day,

> Whilst all this was happening, I looked over, and they were sexually assaulting that girl in the car, and she was screaming for help. I don't know-- She didn't have her clothes removed, but I think what they were doing was groping her, touching her, and they did it with so much force. They were laughing, and they were trying to get her out of the car, and on the ground to do whatever they wanted to do with her, with so much force that they actually broke my seatbelt. At that point, I knew it was happening. I heard her screaming, and it was a scream that I've never heard before, and I never want to hear again.

Kik and his friends were arrested. The PPMF officer who fell under the truck was not injured and later all charges were dropped against them.

In total, over the ten-month span of the movement, over 800 people faced charges in over 400 separate DAPL-related criminal cases in North Dakota (waterprotectorlegalcounsel.org). The Water Protector Legal Collective, an Indigenous-

led legal nonprofit founded during the Standing Rock movement that provided on-the-ground legal support and advocacy for people who were arrested, helped close most of those cases and most people's charges were dropped. However, some activists did get prison time and/or federal surveillance probation. The Water Protector Legal Collective refers to prisoners serving time from their actions at Standing Rock as political prisoners. The threat of arrest was constant in the camps and created tensions for people every day. As John (white) explains it,

> There were a bunch of people that ended up in jail, arrested. They were treated, treated like the despised POWs. Uh, they were denied rights. It was a huge litmus test in a very isolated location, a focal point, which exposed systemic pathology in our society. It's so far reaching. I know now, I see it with such clarity. Um, yeah, so it left a big impression on me.

The threat of arrest was more severe for Natives, as many felt they were specifically targeted and arrested more often than whites. Many Native activists in this study shared stories of being targeted, harassed, and treated unjustly by police and the justice system prior to their efforts at Standing Rock. For example, Dean (Dakota/Yankton Sioux/Ho-Chunk) says he was on "high risk" probation for four years after serving time for federal charges, while most white prisoners get six months. He said when his parole officer realized this she admitted "that was a little bit racist." Grace described years of being in abusive relationships, battling alcoholism, and serving prison time before going to Standing Rock where says she had become completely "institutionalized." Grace remembers several younger white activists who were arrested on the same day she was, who were "flipping out on the way to jail." She tried to guide them by reminding them, "You are supposed to remain in prayer. You have to remain in prayer," and showed one woman how to loosen her zip ties, a technique she had learned

in a prior arrest. Later, she says the white women interviewed with media sources about their arrests, even though they were advised not to by camp leaders based on legal concerns. She says it was obvious that many of the white activists had never been arrested before and that the entire process was shocking for them. Even to her, someone who had served time in prison before, the violence she witnessed against a peaceful prayer circle that day was "way bigger than the one-on-one police violence I've seen."

Layered Historical and Contemporary Violence, Trauma, and PTSD

The stories shared above are just a few, among many, of escalated aggression and violence enacted by PPMFs against activists in the Standing Rock camps. As a result of the war-zone setting, racialized tactics and ideologies, ISR military operations, and overt violent assaults and arrests engaged by PPMFS, many people in this study reported that they were traumatized at Standing Rock. Trauma is defined by the American Psychological Association (2022) as "an emotional response to a terrible event." In nearly every interview in this study, people cried while telling their stories. Deep expressions of sorrow and pain extended from three sources: prior experiences of historical violence and trauma, witnessing or experiencing violence from PPMFs in the camps, or a combination and layering of both. Prior trauma was undoubtedly a recurring theme expressed by activists that created problems for coalition building. As Sam (white/Jewish) describes it, "a lot of people who showed up were so broken that they weren't able to effectively function as support. They got in the way. My guess is that if someone were to be able to somehow magically poll everyone who's there, my guess is that 99% had suffered some serious, previous trauma."

My intention in this section is to analyze the ways historical trauma and prior experiences of violence and trauma interacted and layered upon traumatizing violence incurred by PPMFs at Standing Rock to understand how trauma negatively impacts individual mental and physical health and coalition efforts in a social movement context. The following sections will specifically examine four specific types of traumas experienced by activists at Standing Rock prior to engaging in the movement: 1) Native American historical trauma, 2) U.S. military veteran war-related trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder, 3) Jewish Holocaust historical trauma, and 4) sexual and gender-based violence and trauma.

In each examination of prior or historical trauma, I look at the ways violent tactics and actions taken by PPMFs further traumatized activists, or added insult to injury, creating what I call a "layered trauma effect." When traumas accumulate over time, and become layered, they may be associated with more severe and complex psychological reactions (Briere & Spinazzola, 2009; Edmond and Bland 2011). Many people in this study found the layered trauma effect, or layering of historical trauma with trauma incurred from experiences or the witnessing of violence enacted by PPMFS at Standing Rock, made it difficult to maintain social trust, which impeded coalition efforts in the camps, and created mental health issues that left lasting scars for many years after they left.

Native American Historical Trauma

As described in Chapter Three, historical trauma is understood as the result of violent events targeted at a specific community that has effects across generations through a range of mechanisms, including physical and mental health impacts (Walters et

al. 2011). In the 1960s, knowledge regarding historical trauma emerged in research studying Jewish Holocaust survivors and later, in the 1990s, Native American communities (Walters et al. 2011; Brave Heart et al. 2011; Myhra 2011: Dashorst et al. 2019; Yehuda et al. 2015). Early research on historical trauma for Native Americans examined the ways contemporary problems may be the result of “a legacy of chronic trauma and unresolved grief across generations” enacted on them by settler colonial dominant culture (Brave Heart & DeBruyn 1998:60).

Over time, accumulative research on historical trauma reveals a conceptual framework that includes three successive phases (Sotero 2006). The first phase entails the perpetration of mass trauma and violence on a population, the second phase is when the original population responds to the trauma with physical and mental health symptoms and societal problems, and the third phase is when the initial responses are then conveyed to successive generations through physiological, environmental, and social pathways (Sotero 2006). In the early years, most research on the intergenerational cycle of trauma response was qualitative, but recent advances in epigenetic research, reveal the trauma response can now be quantified through the study of gene methylation and the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis in the stress response (Jian et al. 2019). While research on historical and intergenerational trauma has become more widely accepted in medicine and psychology in recent decades, it should be noted that for many Native healers and medicine peoples this information is not new. Many have long known of intergenerational transmission of trauma and it’s mental, physical, social, and environmental impacts and it is considered “common knowledge in Native oral traditions” (Bitsoi 2013 in Pember 2016).

Historical trauma, as experienced for Native North American peoples, is devastating on a number of levels, including cultural, societal, individual, familial, and economic. This is a direct result of settler colonial violence that was racially, economically and politically-motivated, and is rooted in US capital-colonial justifications for land theft, elimination of Native populations, and deliberate negation or control over tribal sovereignty. Adding insult to injury, most historical violence appears to be forgotten in mainstream US settler colonial culture and education, and, when revealed or discussed, is often met with intense denial and controversy (Faimon 2004). Research shows that responses to deliberate and intentional perpetration of violence and trauma, such as federally enacted genocide, forced removal, and assimilation policies, versus responses to accidents or natural causes, creates a profound sense of dismay and threatens the "intrinsic invulnerability and worthiness of the individual" (Sotero 2006:95). A combination of the violence itself, physically, structurally, and symbolically, its intentionality, and then the subsequent colonial denial creates significant negative impacts for Native peoples in the US.

Native Americans experience historical trauma in a variety of ways that are unique and different for each nation, culture, family, and individual. Historical trauma often creates intergenerational shame, guilt, and distrust that effects systems of attachment and meaning that link an individual with their community (Faimon 2004). The impacts of historical trauma are linked to high rates of depression, substance abuse, and suicide in Native communities and tribal nations (Braveheart et al. 2011; Myrah et al. 2011). For the Dakota nation, Faimon (2004:240) describes historical trauma as the experience of "indescribable terror" and the legacy of terror that remains after 140 years,

is evidenced by “repression, dissociation, denial, alcoholism, depression, doubt, helplessness and devaluation of self and culture.”

As described in Chapter Two, Standing Rock was a place-based movement rooted in place-based thought and identity, which is intimately intertwined with the personality and agency of the land itself and the historical and ongoing colonial violence and trauma inflicted on the land and beings who live there. The Standing Rock movement, then, can be understood as an embodiment of an Indigenous trauma-informed approach to resisting colonial oppression and seeking environmental justice. In other words, the movement was grounded in an understanding that historical trauma is an unhealed, bleeding wound of settler colonialism and that it must be tended to alongside resistance to *ongoing* settler colonial violence. Experiences of poverty and environmental discrimination cannot be disentangled from the historical injustices experienced by Native peoples. As Estes (2019) writes, “Our history is the future.”

Many Indigenous people in this study said they felt their experience at Standing Rock was healing for historical trauma in some ways, but at the same time, witnessing the violent actions taken by PPMFs was re-traumatizing. For many, the layered trauma effect led to significant feelings of mistrust and fear. For example, Arin (Oglala Dakota/white), describes how he grew up in the 1970s near a Native reservation that had high levels of Indigenous activism and resistance, as well as and local, tribal, and federal-level police enacted violence. This experience was traumatizing for him. As a result of his childhood being “all hyped up all the time,” he says he became a chain smoker and an “adrenaline junkie.” He says the violence he witnessed from PPMFs at Standing Rock

was “triggering” for him because he realized things had not changed much since his childhood. He says,

> And so, I’m thinking, you know, before I went [to Standing Rock] that the United States has advanced on these issues. Things are, you know, more equitable. It’s not, and it was just a shock to me because it just felt like I was right back in that place again. It’s like I’m, you know, a kid in the middle of a war zone. You know, and it’s like 40 years later and this shit is still happening like this, you know. It was just kind of, in a lot of ways, I mean, I saw so many parallels, so many parallels…And you know, those kinds of psychological wars, almost to me, are worse than the physical things they [US government] have done. Because you know, it tears apart families, it tears apart communities, and it lasts forever. I mean, where I grew up is still all that, like that 10 years of terror in the 70s, you still see on both sides, so much fear and mistrust and hatred and racism.

Similarly, Chelon (Thaki Sac and Fox/Ioway) experienced racial violence and trauma as a child and feels, as an adult, he has been racially profiled by the police for being Native American. At Standing Rock, he witnessed several violent incidents enacted by PPMFs against activists and thinks that he was surveilled by TigerSwan during and after his involvement at Standing Rock. When he returned home from Standing Rock, he was brutally attacked and severely beaten by a group of white men. Based on the things the men said and did during the attack, he believes the attack was racially and politically motivated based on his ethnicity/race and affiliation with the movement. Historical trauma layered with contemporary violence and trauma created a deep sense of distrust for Chelon and inhibited his abilities to form alliances with activists both before, during, and after his participation in the camps. His trauma remains and creates exasperating social anxiety on a daily basis for him. His trauma has led to severe hypervigilant behaviors. He says, “I wear a bodycam. I bought a GoPro and I put it on, and I turn it on. I put it on every time I leave the house. I’ve got 3 knives on me and another one you will

have a hard time finding. I don't go anywhere without complete paranoia because I feel like they'll come and kill me."

US Military Veteran War-Related Trauma

Toward the end of 2016, thousands of US military veterans, organized through groups such as Veterans for Peace and Veterans Stand, arrived at the Standing Rock camps in support of the cause. In a military news article in *Task & Purpose* titled, "Why They Went," it was described in this way, "A potent new political force had emerged as if out of nowhere: veterans mobilizing en masse to draw national attention to the failings of the government they once served" (Lineham 2016). While the mass of veterans was certainly political and powerful, the historical war-related traumas they brought with them, as well as the layered trauma effect developed at Standing Rock, came with disadvantages and challenges in coalition work.

Most of US military veterans in this study said they suffered from war-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) prior to and while in the Standing Rock camps. PTSD was first identified in the 1970s by psychologists working with Vietnam War veterans. It was added to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) in 1980 (Kolk 2014). In 2013, diagnostic criteria were revised in the DSM-5 to include the following five criteria. First, the person has been "exposed to death, threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, or actual or threatened sexual violence, through direct exposure, witnessing the trauma, learning a relative or close friend was exposed to a trauma, or indirect exposure to details of the trauma, usually in the course of professional duties" (American Psychiatric Association 2013). The second criterion is that the traumatic event is persistently re-experienced through unwanted

upsetting memories, nightmares, flashbacks, emotional distress, or physical reactivity. Third, there is voidance of trauma-related stimuli such as thoughts or feelings and reminders. Fourth, PTSD is present if negative thoughts or feelings worsen after the trauma, including inability to recall key features, exaggerated blame of self or others, decreased interest in activities, or feeling isolated. Fifth, PTSD can also be distinguished by trauma-related arousal and reactivity such as irritability or aggression, risky or destructive behavior, hypervigilance, or difficulty concentrating or sleeping (American Psychiatric Association 2013).

While original studies of PTSD in the 1970s and 80s were derived from and focused on Vietnam War veterans, research since indicates that war-related PTSD continues to afflict contemporary war veterans in significantly negative ways. Approximately 2.7 million service members served in both Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001, over half deployed more than once, and it is estimated that 1.8 million returned with an officially recognized disability as a result of the war (Brown University 2021). Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have much higher levels of PTSD, suicide, mental illness, homelessness, and drug and alcohol abuse than civilians (Brown University 2015). Many report suffering from physical and moral injury (Shay 2014), physical and emotional trauma (Hick, Weiss and Coll 2016), and transition issues related to gendered ideas about trauma (Shields, Kuhl and Westwood 2017). Moral injury is defined by Shay (2014:183) as when "1) there has been a betrayal of what's right 2) by someone who holds legitimate authority 3) in a high stakes situation." Based on veteran accounts in this study, moral injury was a major factor in their PTSD and was compounded by witnessing violence from PPMFs at Standing Rock. Many felt betrayed by the government regarding the true

intentions of the war they fought in, and many felt further betrayed by the government regarding the true intentions of the excessive militarized repression they witnessed at Standing Rock.

Dealing with PTSD is very challenging on an individual level. When groups of people with PTSD come together for a political social cause, those challenges are compounded. US military veteran, Matt (white) described the challenges of working with veterans suffering from PTSD in this way,

> You know, and you're organizing all these people, you know, you don't want to send in someone with a traumatic brain injury or really hard core Post Traumatic Stress Disorder because I saw it happen you know? I saw one guy literally freak out. We had to fly him home. That was another one of the medical situations I had. But, um, you know, the veteran population is uh, is a unique population and there are a lot of things that you have to um, consider when you're like, 'Hey! 10,000 veterans, let's go to this protest!' You know, in the middle of winter where, you know, these guys [laughs] are militarized police forces and everybody is angry, you know?

Matt says he felt like one of the reasons many combat veterans were called to Standing Rock is because it was like being back in combat and they wanted to re-experience a war like situation, even though, and maybe because they had been traumatized by it. He says, "I think a lot of veterans saw Standing Rock and they thought of it like war, right? And, they wanted that rush again, you know, they wanted like that scared rush."

Moral injury and PTSD is further compounded with the intersection of settler colonial induced historical and racial trauma. American Indians and Alaska Natives serve in the military at much higher rates than the national average and have the highest per-capita pre-9/11 period of service involvement of any race/ethnic population in the United States, at 19.9% and 13.3%, respectively (US Department of Veterans Affairs 2017). The Matsunaga Vietnam Veterans Project was a study that occurred in the 1990s to better

understand the ways American Indian Vietnam veterans were readjusting to civilian life (US Department of Veterans Affairs 2019). As part of the project, veterans on or near two large tribal reservations, one in the Southwest and the other in the Northern Plains, were surveyed and interviewed. The Matsunaga Study's key finding were that exposure to war zone stress and other military danger places veterans at risk for PTSD several decades after military service and Native Hawaiian and American Indian Vietnam in-country veterans had relatively higher levels of exposure to war zone stress and higher levels of PTSD than other veteran populations (US Department of Veterans Affairs 2019).

As discussed in Chapter Three, many Indigenous activists at Standing Rock shared experiences of racial and historical trauma. Indigenous peoples are survivors of a relentless and violent genocide that continues today in the form of exploitation and destruction of their lands, resources, and bodies (Barker 2017). The layering of war-related PTSD and historical and racial and trauma was described by Moses (Diné),

> A lot of Native Americans had already experienced trauma, life trauma, prior to military. Going on to the military, it was just a snow-ball effect with the trauma. So, we got our trauma just being brown, being Native American, being discriminated against, um, being singled out, being hazed and harassed and whatever, you know. But, you know, war is different. The trauma that we've seen on the battlefield just adds on to what we've already been through.

For Moses, layered trauma proved to have both positive and negative implications for coalition work. On the one hand he says his PTSD symptoms were quelled and he felt a sense of peace at Standing Rock. He says,

> My heart was at peace. I didn't suffer any. I was, my PTSD, I was, had major depression. Suicidal, homicidal, you know, I had anxiety attacks and nightmares. I just like, a lot of other veterans, they were going through that same thing. They had that heightened sense of fight or flight and there it was just peace. I have not,

> after I came back, it was like night and day. I wanted to go back there. I wanted that peace again. But being there with the other veterans and experiencing what they went through, what we talked about is like a BIG therapy session. I was like, people hugging each other saying, 'How are you doing brother?' You know, it was like a huge therapy session. I loved it! You know, I didn't want to come back. You know, I missed it. This very day. If there was ever a call out again, I would definitely go. And I'm sure a lot of veterans would go for a good reason if there was ever a call out again.

At the same time, he says he witnessed many veterans suffering from PTSD who were ready to fight and even die for the cause. He says, "A lot of veterans were ready fight. Literally, they were angry, a lot of them were suffering from PTSD and they were ready to fight. Whatever the cause was, they were ready to take it to them. They were ready to die… We fought wars, you know, over the last 50 years, 100 years, you know. We went to other countries, you know. People lost their lives there and they never came back. Some came back but they're all messed up." He describes a range of complex feelings of healing, through unity with the veteran activist community, as well as pain from PTSD symptoms triggered by PPMF actions, moral injury, and historical and ongoing settler colonial violence.

Jewish Holocaust Trauma

For US military veteran and physician Bill (white/Jewish), it was a combination of historical trauma from the Jewish Holocaust layered with Vietnam war trauma that motivated him to participate in the Standing Rock movement. He was raised in an inter-generational home with his Ukrainian, Jewish, first-generation immigrant grandmother who he recalled repeatedly tried to get her family to the US during and after WWII. In the early 1950s, when Bill was eight years old, his grandmother discovered that her entire family, including seven siblings and both parents, had been killed by the Nazi's. He says

it was “unspeakable in terms of the grief and was a real imprinting” on his life. He compared the “genocidal” activities of Nazi’s to the US military invasion of Vietnam, “it was so clear what was going on by 1969 and the position of the United States military…was a war against the people and the land itself.” He compared the same genocidal approach to what he was witnessing PPMFs enact at Standing Rock and was “one of the reasons I needed to be there.” Like Moses, Bill found the camaraderie with fellow veterans therapeutic. He says,

> I was surprised to see how much of our generation found this to be therapeutic. I felt that way. It was, you know, it was a chance to reacquaint, and you know, with those who had been in more recent wars. Uh, and some of us actually had developed some pretty significant paternal feelings for the recent vets, they’ve been through a lot. They had had multiple tours. They were, in many ways, had it a lot tougher. And, they had a lot of re-entry problems, uh, a lot of other issues like that.

At the same time, he reveals the challenges. He says many of the “recent Iraq veterans were a real problem” because they were too close to recent war dangers and their PTSD was triggered. He says some veterans should not have been at Standing Rock because “confrontation with the militarized police was really triggering…all you have to do is have somebody that is emotionally unstable and however that manifests – bad things can happen. Really, these people [PPMFs] were armed and it was hair trigger in terms of when those arms might be used.”

Gender-based and Sexual Violence and Trauma

Research on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was expanded in the 1980s to include victims of sexual and gender-based assault and violence. Many Indigenous women in this study described experiencing historical, racial, and gender-based and sexual violence and traumas prior to going to Standing Rock. As described in Chapter

Three, sexual and gender-based violence and trauma is inextricably part of the settler colonial project and deeply impacts the health of Native individuals, families, and communities. The epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women is a contemporary attribute of settler colonial tactics of sexual violence enacted to control and eliminate Indigenous peoples. The gendered targeting of Indigenous women and non-binary peoples creates trauma that is layered with historical and intergenerational traumas. The layered trauma effect created psychological problems for many Native women in this study.

For Bee (Métis/Anishinaabe/white), being at Standing Rock triggered emotional responses for her based on the gender-based violence and intergenerational historical trauma in her family. She said that her mother, three aunts, and grandmother all married white men that were physically, emotionally, and spiritually abusive. One of her aunts was murdered by a white partner. The effects of the abuse led to alcoholism, substance abuse, depression, and problems adjusting in society for all the women in her family, and their children. Bee describes the impacts on her family's health in this way,

> There are bodily effects of this trauma. My um, and this is sort of like the inherited piece of it, I suppose, at least in a biological way. Um, my mom and aunties and uncles, my grandma, all of her siblings, at least those 2 full generations, there are autoimmune disorders, there's diabetes, there's obesity. There's all of these like, health issues that should not exist in this concentrated of a space between all of these people. And yet, statistics uphold that like, this happens in Native families because intergenerational historical trauma.

She describes how past gender-based violence in her family was brought to the surface after witnessing the violence enacted by PPMFs Standing Rock,

> And I mean, I bore witness to that happening to my own mother and then you know, heard the stories of my grandma and my aunties experiences. Um, and so, that has uh, sort of direct correlation for me when I was seeing particularly

women water protectors particularly um, older women water protectors having violence and abuse like, happening to them by especially white law enforcement authority type figures. Um, it definitely like, had like emotional connections inside of me that I am like, this is no different. This feels, it looks the same, it feels the same. It's more colonial violence whether it's happening in my own home or on a North Dakota Plains. It's, it's all the same version of the same thing. It's all different versions of the same thing rather.

"I mean, it's, I think it's, it's probably a bigger deal than most people think it is. You know? Um, I mean, you can see it happening around the country, right? With Black Lives Matter protest or whatever. Like, we're just we're just increasingly moving toward privatized military. You know? Um, or we're moving to our police force becoming more of a, like a military unit, you know? So, I think it's scary right? Because you look at every other country, yeah, they might have a SWAT team for, you know, bomb issues. Every single, you know, police force in the country have some type of militarized aspect of their police force, you know? So, I don't know. It's scary, and uh, if you, if you follow history at all, you know, kind of the first thing dictatorships do is militarized their police force. And then the second thing they do is take rights away from citizens. They take away their second amendment, right? They did it in Cambodia with Khmer Rouge, they did it in the Philippines, they've done it kind of everywhere. And you can kind of just see, they're starting to really take away our rights."
-Matt (white), activist at Standing Rock

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates the challenging components to coalition building at Standing Rock instigated by militarized suppression efforts enacted by a coalition of public and private military forces (PPMFs). There are a number of economic and political shifts and perceived threats that help explain this response, including the militarization of the police and increased state use of privatized militia since the beginning of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, the passing of the Patriot Act in 2001 and post-9/11 "War on Terror" ideologies, federal and state interpretations of environmental issues as threats to national security since the 1990s, and, finally, a long racialized and discriminatory

colonial history of "Indian War" logics, ideologies, and rhetoric that perceive Native American social movements as radical threats to US sovereignty.

This study argues that the militarized repression enacted by public and private forces, including creating a war-zone like setting, the use of racialized ideologies, militarized tactics and operations, and overt violent actions and arrests, was excessive and inflicted harm and trauma upon activists at Standing Rock. This study clearly demonstrates the ways each of these forms of repression impacted activists and hindered coalition work. The war zone setting was designed to be intimidating and created emotional distress that impacted activists' abilities to engage and relate effectively. Racialized ideologies and tactics escalated social distrust and tensions. The ISR tactics of intelligence gathering, reconnaissance, and surveillance measures generated paranoia and distrust, with the use of infiltrators specifically creating immense levels of chaos and significant threats to human safety and health. Overt violence and direct assault tactics incurred serious injuries and posed threats to human life. And, finally, violent arrests that involved excessive use of force, sexual harassment and abuse, and dehumanization tactics generated fear and threatened the mental and physical health and safety of activists.

As a result of the abovementioned acts of repression, many people in this study were traumatized at Standing Rock. Trauma was compounded for many because it was layered upon already existing historical and/or prior trauma. This study examined four specific types of prior trauma: Native American historical trauma, US military veteran war-related trauma, Jewish Holocaust historical trauma, and sexual and gender-based violence and trauma. This study demonstrates the ways that prior trauma interacted with and was layered with traumatizing violence incurred from PPMFs, creating a layered

trauma effect. The layering of trauma created challenges in coalition efforts because it generated social distrust and fear, and negatively impacted individuals mental and physical health.

In conclusion, this analysis of the private/public military coalition at Standing Rock reveals that fossil fuel reliance and land usage are protected by an interlocking assemblage of security state and corporate forces. In the face of resistance and opposition, this study reveals that public/private forces are willing to take excessive repressive actions that possibly impede democratic principles and definitely impact human health and safety. These are serious concerns for the future of US democracy as we continue to face increasing threats of climate change. These concerns are most pertinent for Indigenous-led environmental justice activists who already endure unjust treatment in the form of treaty violations, land dispossession, poverty, environmental contamination, and disproportionate impacts of climate change.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

This study sought out to better understand coalition politics, or how and why people across difference come together in the name of social and environmental justice and the ways powerful institution respond to those efforts. My interest in these dynamics stems from several concerns and questions. First, as mentioned in the introduction, the impacts and implications of climate change reveal that extensive social change is obligatory to continue life on the planet. How well will humanity succeed in making the necessary changes and can we do it in ways that uphold respect for each other and the Earth? Second, the political divisions we have witnessed in the US in the past decade, centered on ideological, religious, racial, ethnic, economic, and party differences, have been described by many as a cold civil war (Kay 2021). How do we seek social justice and change while also not perpetuating fear, division, and violence? Third, Indigenous environmental movements are important leaders in twenty-first century global environmental politics because of their offerings of long practiced environmental stewardship systems and insistence that democratic settler colonial governments uphold their treaty responsibilities and be accountable to promised rights. How can settlers and Natives work together harmoniously to create a shared peaceful future with our profoundly violent past? This study examined the remarkable coalition politics that occurred at Standing Rock to gain insights into the politics, possibilities, challenges and risks involved in answering these questions.

This study has potential limitations and shortcomings. I only interviewed a small sample of people who went to Standing Rock. I suggest future qualitative research that extends the interview sample size and I recommend studies on coalition work in other

contemporary Indigenous-led environmental and social justice movements for cross reference and comparison. Despite the practice of encrypted Zoom recordings and the use of pseudonyms, issues of anonymity and confidentiality might have limited who chose to participate in this study due to pending criminal charges and court cases regarding their participation at Standing Rock. Future studies would benefit from in-person interviews that are more convenient for interviewees and that might provide greater trust building. I also do not know extensive background or demographic information of the podcast interviewees as most shared only their gender, race, or tribal membership or affiliations, but did not go into detailed accounts of their lives. This limited the depth of analysis for that portion of the sample. Finally, while more than 100 TigerSwan documents were leaked, this is still a limited amount in comparison to the 16,000 security documents produced by Tigerswan and provided to Energy Transfer Partners. Fortunately, in 2022, the North Dakota state Supreme Court ruled that all of these documents are now public documents ("State Supreme Court" 2022). More extensive research on these documents, as well as TigerSwan as an entity, with a focus on the ethics of their institutional practices, is highly recommended.

This study tells the coalition story of Standing Rock and offers knowledge and insights on the ways people coalesced and got along, ways place united them across differences, and what the challenges and risks for alliance were, both internally and externally. As described in Chapter Two, place and placework strengthened coalition at Standing Rock across social differences. While the movement was anchored in Indigenous place-based knowledges and traditions, identities of activists and the political actions of the movement were consistently configured in critical response to settler

colonial-capital traditions and conceptions of place. This enacted a “call and response” form of politics, based on shared callings to protect and steward, and shared critical responses to settler colonial-capital culture. The “call of place” varied across social difference and was deeply configured by personal identity, relationship to a sense of place and home, and critical responses to US settler colonial-capital traditions, practices, and ideologies of dispossession. Land, property, and environmental forms of dispossession and displacement were experienced by many, albeit differentially across social identities, but it was the shared critical responses toward such experiences of loss that ignited a shared political purpose.

As discussed in Chapter Two, many scholars (Tuck, McKenzie, and McCoy 2014) ask how place can be reinhabited by settlers without it functioning as a desire for settler emplacement, meaning “the desire to resolve the experience of dislocation implicit in living on stolen land” (Morgensen 2009). Or how can white settlers work alongside Natives in the name of decolonization without implicitly ensuring settler futurity? Many white settler activists in this study asked similar questions. Rana (white) described a book he read by Wes Jackson called *Becoming Native to this Place* (1996) that inspired him to ask a lifelong question of, “how do I become Native to place?” When I asked Amanda (white) what Indigenous sovereignty meant to her, she compared herself to an invasive plant species and asked, “As an invasive, how could I possibly support Native peoples and cultures in a way that is helpful?”

This coalition story reveals that the answers to such question are not clear-cut. As this study demonstrates, many activists at Standing Rock were “entangled” in multiple identities that belie the settler/Native binary. Their stories reveal how the call to place

cannot easily fit into simple descriptions of settler desire for emplacement or Native desires for decolonization. Various personal experiences with place, including various forms of dispossession and even living in the Standing Rock camps, were unsettling and conjured deep questions for both white settler and Native activists regarding their motivations, intentions, purpose, as well as the meaning of place and home and what a future home might be like.

I argue that for everyone in this study, connections with place, land, and environment were rooted in a longing for a sense of home, a feeling deeply tied to being human. A longing for relationship to place, is deeply linked to longing for a sense of self and identity, and both are forms of longing for a sense of home, or rootedness. Settler colonial culture disrupts a sense of home and rootedness for both the colonized and the settler. The disruption is not evenly distributed and creates stratified systems of inequality. Standing Rock reveals the ways this shared longing, across social difference, can bring people together to reach common political goals, while keeping Indigenous peoples and epistemologies as a political foundation and anchor.

Many activists, across social differences, expressed relationships with place, environment, and home that were deeply connected and grounded in embodiment. Place generates coalitional possibilities, specifically when identity + embodiment + place is made conscious and politicized. The lived experience of the body is the foundation of human identity. It also shapes our experiences in society – the way we interact with others and form relationships. Our bodies are implicated in the reproduction of social power and thereby the resistance to power structures and norms. It is through our bodies

that we find home. Our bodies take us to places on the Earth that call for cohabitation, mending, coalition, and connection.

In its barest form, to cohabitate is to be in coalition. We live together in a shared home, the Earth. In the face of environmental degradation and climate disasters, the activists at Standing Rock, led by Indigenous epistemologies, offer a successful and effective example of human coalition in the name of care and protection of our shared home. At Standing Rock, an Indigenous-informed "sociality of ceremonial opposition," in which prayer, nonviolence, interdependency, and reciprocity were practiced, taught, and enacted, created a diverse and robust coalition to be emulated for many generations to come.

Simultaneously, the Standing Rock coalition story offers insights into the challenges that arise when attempting to work together across difference in a settler colonial context. Most challenges presented in this study are rooted in US settler colonial-informed racialized hierarchies of power, which perpetuate white supremacy and privilege, and a subjective "white blindness," or inability to see privileges and advantages. Historical and contemporary expressions of racism, gender inequality, and sexual violence, rooted in settler colonial-capital logics of elimination and minimization of Indigenous sovereignty, eroded social trust and hindered alliances across difference. So, how then do we address the pain of genocide, theft, racism, sexism, and environmental degradation alongside the possibilities for a future of sustainability and connection, under the reign of white patriarchal supremacy and exploitive capitalism? The findings in this study led me to several possible suggestions that can be applied to two areas: the relational and the institutional.

First, for relational suggestions, the most consistent complaint from Indigenous people in this study was regarding white people's lack of awareness of their privilege and racial status and the power it confers. Undoubtedly, there remains a pervasive, invisible, consistent cultural message that whites are superior to all other races and US culture is exceptional. As Devon Oldman explained it at the 2019, Iliff School of Theology, *Redskin, Tanned Hide* conference**,** "That is the presumption of white America. They think that they understand what we go through on a daily basis, when you have no idea…You still believe that you are superior to us. You still believe that you have the answer to our healing, and you don't. You must heal yourselves from what you have committed on this earth to our people" (Hamm 2022). Until whites can fully heal their own personal and collective histories and traumas, and embrace an unblinded political consciousness, they cannot fully engage in assisting marginalized groups effectively. At the same time, human kindness, compassion, and respect cannot be reduced to politics, they must be embodied, enacted, and regularly practiced for their full impact and power to be felt.

My suggestion to white activists, including myself, who are seeking to ally with Indigenous peoples and causes is to take Regan's (2011) advice to "unsettle the settler within" and examine the history and impacts of settler colonialism in your own life. White settlers must undergo their own personal process of decolonization and relinquish historical mythology that negates the real destructive legacy of the United States (Mackey 2016). Addressing personal and societal shadows and practices of blindness and the ways settler colonial racist, sexist, and heteronormative framings have infiltrated their own

ways of relating to self, others, and place is the only way whites can truly participate in transformative possibilities of reconciliation (Stark 2016).

The dominant "commonsense" of US culture needs a series of rupturing's to create space for alternative possibilities (Buryneel 2019). Standing Rock was a rupturing and an unsettling experience for many that led to questions around accountability and responsibility and that led to new and reshaped practices of cohabitation, coalition, and care for our shared society and home. Lorde (1984:101) argues that differences must not be merely tolerated but "seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic. Only then does the necessity for interdependency become unthreatening. Only within that interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways of being in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters."

Considering how small the Native population is in the US, "how the non-native majority of the population responds to Indigenous activism will have a fundamental impact in shaping the success or failure of twenty-first-century anti-colonial resistance movements" (Keefer 2010:78). In order to ally effectively with Indigenous political movements seeking decolonization, white settlers must first learn to be led by Indigenous peoples and leaders. This means following, listening, and respecting. White settler activists need to acknowledge that what they might feel is counterculture or rebellious, such as the hippie practices or New Age spiritualities demonstrated in this study, are often forms of cultural appropriation and do not support efforts toward sovereignty or decolonization. "Alternative" white settler individuals and cultures must learn to stop romanticizing Indigenous cultures, practices, and traditions and instead respect them as

views that come from “an exceptionally long-term habitation and commitment to place” (Kuletz 1998:190).

Second, for institutional suggestions, the challenges described in this study regarding settler colonial-based race, class, and gender hierarchies and inequalities are perpetuated and reproduced by a consistent lack of attention toward these subjects in dominant US culture and education systems. US society is built upon a historical aphasia, or a complete denial, erasure, and minimization of violent, criminal, and unjust stories in national history. Byrd (2011) and Dunbar (2014) argue that the US empire has a birthing point in which European colonialist agendas shaped the appropriation of Indigenous lands, knowledges, presences, and identities for its own use, and until this origin story is told truthfully, the value of dishonesty and an internal pathology guides the nation and its relations. Buryneel (2019:313-14) argues that a deeply informed politics of memory about “the interconnected structures of enslavement, colonialism, and heteropatriarchy that continue to shape the present” would promote social change. As Barker and Pickerill (2012:321) argue, “Until you see how it is all interconnected you cannot support anything. It’s like confronting with one hand and supporting with another.”

The education system is one of the most powerful socialization institutions in US society. Lack of accurate historical knowledge regarding the diverse, heterogenous Native American tribal cultures and the sovereignty of tribal nations perpetuates the racialization and elimination logic of settler colonialism. Education, at all levels, from primary to higher education, must address and teach about historical and ongoing forms of violence, wounding, and trauma perpetuated by racist and sexist ideologies if we want a future in which diverse peoples can call this nation a home. The grief that comes from

settler colonial practices and conceptions must be addressed in education. Race literacy and accurate historical knowledge can be powerful tools toward the process of personal and collective healing. Education that is not "whitewashed" would remedy some problems of aphasia and recalibrate the future toward one in which many voices and stories are heard. Amanda (white) eloquently explains her feelings about education and its potential after going to Standing Rock,

> I feel betrayed by my education. As the goody-two-shoes student who always paid attention, I feel like I was lied to. Here's US history. Of it, we're going to leave out the parts that might affect you or that don't affect you, that affect people you might care about. I feel betrayed by my education, robbed of the opportunity to more fully live out my destiny to the best of my ability. I'm trying to be a decent person, to leave things better than I found them, like I was taught in Girl Scouts, you know…Like how do we know what that even means if we don't know how messed up things are and why they're messed up?

US settler colonial culture relies on a cyclical pattern of violence, enacted by military and police forces, to uphold and justify its land theft. The cyclical pattern of violence has changed over time based on specific contexts, but in many ways, it very much stays the same. Chapter Four demonstrates the ways that contemporary public/private military forces, using racialized ideologies, excessive militarized tactics and operations, and overt violent actions and arrests, continued this cyclical pattern of violence by enacting repression and inflicting harm and trauma upon activists at Standing Rock.

Chapter Four's findings bring to light policy implications and suggestions concerning the ethics and laws surrounding public/private military forces, specifically concerns regarding democratic principles of accountability, regulation, and the potential risk of increased violence against citizens (Grossman 2019). While the ethical use of

PMSCs in international wars has attracted increased attention from scholars of law and foreign relations regarding balance of state power and proper regulation (Singer 2003; Avant 2005; Pattison 2014; Torroja 2017; Tonkin 2011; Liu 2015), there is a dearth of literature that examines their use in domestic disputes, specifically regarding environmental activism. The conclusions of this study argue that in civil-military domestic relations, particularly involving Indigenous leadership and environmental justice activism, the use of PMSCs alongside public forces creates a diffusion of accountability and raises serious concerns regarding the health and safety of citizens.

Regarding accountability, unlike public forces, such as police and sheriff departments, PMSCs are for-profit entities and are not accountable to high levels of legal constraints and oversight. This means that employees can do things police cannot legally do such as unreasonable search and seizure, arrests without Miranda rights and warnings, and obtain evidence through unauthorized searches (Sparrow 2014; Marx 1987; Sklansky 2011). Because of this lack of governmental accountability, there is a risk of violation of civil liberties.

As for regulation, when PMSCs are engaged in international war and armed conflicts, the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) subjects PMSCs to court-martial if they commit crimes while in the field (Arnpriester 2017). This does not apply to the Standing Rock protest because it was not an armed conflict and took place on (contested) state and private lands. When PMSCs are engaged in domestic disputes, like all corporations, they are subject to state and local laws, are susceptible to tort laws, and must have a business license (Grossman 2019; Andreopoulos and Brandle 2012). The only state regulating body that specifically oversees PMSCs activities is the Private

Investigation and Security Board, and it is limited in its scope, as it primarily deals with small scale private investigation companies and licenses, not large scale, global, corporations that are typically contracted to work in international armed combat zones. The State of North Dakota Private Investigation and Security Board filed a complaint in 2017 against TigerSwan for conducting security services without a license, but the case was dismissed in 2019 because TigerSwan voluntarily left North Dakota and did not plan to return (Hageman 2019). Due to lack of enforcement mechanisms and low-level state regulation, PMSCs are not held accountable at the same level as public forces. More legal accountability and regulation, at both the state and federal level, are needed to oversee PMSCs directly, as well as public/private coalitions, to uphold democratic principles of accountability.

The findings in this study indicate that the ethical implications of PMSCs working alongside public police to deploy ISR and direct assault tactics pose serious threats to human life and that greater regulation is needed. In a study conducted by the United Nations Human Rights Council's Working Group on the effects of activities of PMSCs on human rights, they found that greater contact with civilians led to situations in which serious human rights abuses could and did occur (Patel 2013). In 2014, the US Department of Justice asked police chiefs from across the country to consider the ethical implications of PMSCs working alongside public police. They listed five benefits, including increased effectiveness and efficiency, and seven risks including lack of accountability, threats to civil liberties, and threats to public safety (Sparrow 2014). The police chiefs in the study concluded, "Military units are more oriented toward the use of decisive force against enemies, and less toward apprehending violators and achieving

peaceful solutions" and that private companies had profit motivation that could create "perverse incentives" (Sparrow 2014:12-13).

This study finds that the use of militarized gear and weaponry by public or private forces is not safe for the public. The assumed safety of the use of "riot control agents," or chemicals that "produce rapidly in humans' sensory irritation or disabling physical effects that disappear within a short time following termination of exposure" (U.S. Department of Defense 2021:187) is proven false by the testimonies of activists at Standing Rock. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018) claims riot agents can cause serious health problems in the case of prolonged exposure and "may lead to long-term effects such as eye problems including scarring, glaucoma, and cataracts, and may possibly cause breathing problems such as asthma." Tear gas cannisters are often thrown at crowds randomly, and as Kik's story reveals, can cause severe injury due to the heat and force of the cannister alone.

Kinetic impact projectiles (KIPs), often referred to as "non-lethal" projectiles, such as rubber bullets and concussion grenades, can be lethal, as demonstrated in this study. This finding is backed by a 27-year study on the impacts of KIPs in crowd control settings that indicate they cause significant morbidity and mortality, "much of it from penetrative injuries and head, neck and torso trauma" (Haar et al. 2017). The authors of the KIP study conclude, "Given their inherent inaccuracy, potential for misuse and associated health consequences of severe injury, disability and death, KIPs do not appear to be appropriate weapons for use in crowd-control settings. There is an urgent need to establish international guidelines on the use of crowd-control weapons to prevent unnecessary injuries and deaths" (Haar et al. 2017).

Research on violence enacted by police at protests was studied in three federal commissions between 1967 and 1970. All concluded that when police escalate force, including the use of tear gas and weapons, they create more violence. This led to policing practices taking a “negotiated management” approach, or “the minimum necessary force is used to carry out duties such as protecting person or property and arresting lawbreakers” in the 80s and 90s (McPhail, Schweingruber, and McCarthy 1998:54). I argue that since the events of 9/11, the increased militarization of police departments, and the emergence of private military security firms for hire by corporations in domestic disputes, policing has reverted to “escalated force” practices that are dangerous for civilian populations engaging in protest.

In addition to concerns regarding accountability, regulation, and public safety, transparency is an important democratic ethical concern regarding the use of PMSCs because, as private corporations, they are not legally bound to share information with the public. In fact, quite the opposite is true, most PMSCs are renowned for their “zero footprint” approach, or no trace of actions left behind (Chase and Pezzullo 2016). Transparency is “the capacity of outsiders to obtain valid and timely information about the activities of government or private organizations” (Johnston 2014) and “is key to corruption control in a representative democracy” (Grossman 2019:3). The use of TigerSwan and other private security companies was not made known to the public and was not discussed in the media during the ten-month Standing Rock movement. The TigerSwan documents were leaked several months after the camps were evicted. To make informed decisions about the ethical use of PMSCs during domestic environmental justice protests, the public needs to know more information about their activities.

Finally, the right to assemble and protest is protected by the First Amendment in the US Constitution. It clearly states, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances” (US Constitution, Amendment 1.3.2.2). Yet, since the Standing Rock movement, 56 anti-protest laws have been introduced in 30 states, with many passing (Carpenter and Williams 2018). In February 2017, hours after the final eviction of the Standing Rock camps, North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum signed four measures that increase punishments for demonstrators, expand the definition of criminal trespass, and raise the penalty for a riot conviction. Since Standing Rock, many state laws rely on the narrative of threats to “critical infrastructure,” often narrowly focused on oil and gas pipelines, as national security threats. The federal and state legal response to Standing Rock can be viewed as a criminalization of dissent, targeted at environmental and Indigenous movements.

Historical, social, political, and cultural dominance and violence has been and continues to be inflicted upon Indigenous peoples as a way to maintain power and a hierarchy in which colonial-capital interests dominate. Settler colonialism was and continues to be enacted through violence and trauma that negatively impacts people, communities, and entire nations, for generations. Standing Rock is a visible reminder that the past is the present and the future (Estes 2019). As Standing Rock activist Mekasi Camp Horinek explains to the *Intercept*, “I wanted the world to see this militarized force coming in like it’s the 1800s with their gatling guns and their advanced weaponry” (Brown, Parrish, and Speri 2017). If the US is to move forward in a way that upholds

democracy it must address historical wounds, protect, not criminalize, constitutional rights of dissent, and bring accountability, regulation, and concern for the health and safety of humanity and the environment to the forefront of legal and civic discourses and policies.

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VITA

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